4.B  AESTHETICS

This section describes and analyzes the potential impacts of the Seawall Lot 337 and Pier 48 Mixed-Use Project (proposed project) related to scenic vistas, scenic resources, visual character and quality, and light and glare. The section presents photographic views, describes the existing visual conditions for the project site and its surroundings, identifies existing scenic vistas and scenic resources in areas that could be affected by the proposed project, describes the existing visual character of the project site and its surroundings, and identifies the potential for new sources of light and glare. The impact discussion identifies the considerations applied when evaluating the significance of impacts on visual quality. It describes and evaluates impacts on visual resources and visual quality by using visual simulations of the proposed project. This section also considers whether the proposed project, in combination with other reasonably foreseeable development projects in the vicinity of the project site, would make a considerable contribution to cumulative environmental impacts related to aesthetics.

Issues identified in response to the Notice of Preparation (NOP) (Appendix 1) were considered in preparing this analysis. The NOP comments related to aesthetics focused on impacts on viewpoints along the waterfront and in surrounding areas, which are discussed under Impacts AE-1, AE-2, and AE-3. In addition, a number of comments expressed concern over proposed building heights; these are also discussed under Impacts AE-1, AE-2, and AE-3. However, it is important to note that the proposed building heights under review in this Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) were reduced following release of the NOP in response to neighborhood concerns. Those adjusted, reduced heights were approved by the voters with the passage of Proposition D in 2015.

As discussed in Chapter 4, Environmental Setting and Impacts, the proposed project meets most of the criteria associated with SB 743 (i.e., it is an infill site located within a transit priority area), which states that aesthetic and parking impacts of residential, mixed-use residential, or employment-center infill projects located in transit priority areas are not considered significant impacts on the environment under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). However, it does not fully meet the criteria of being a mixed-use project, because mixed-use projects typically include residential, commercial, and some light industrial uses but not industrial uses. Because the proposed project would include an industrial use (i.e., the proposed industrial use, specifically analyzed as a proposed brewery use, on Pier 48), it would not fit within the generally accepted classification of a mixed-use residential development. Although the majority of the proposed project would include residential and commercial uses, and the industrial use would constitute only an estimated 10 percent of the approximately 2.5 million gross square feet (gsf) of proposed development, this Draft EIR nevertheless applies a conservative interpretation of SB 743. Thus, an analysis of the proposed project’s impacts on aesthetics is provided below.
ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

REGIONAL VISUAL SETTING

The greater San Francisco Bay region is a complex system of mountain ranges, valleys, and waterways that, together, create a unique area that not only defines the character of the region but also contributes to the overall character of California. Some notable areas include the distinctive urban center of San Francisco, the cliffs of the Marin Headland and Pacific Ocean coastline, and the San Francisco Bay (Bay). The region is characterized by panoramic views from the Santa Cruz Mountains and the East Bay Hills, the rolling hillsides, and the numerous waterways.

VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE PROJECT VICINITY

The project site is adjacent to the Mission Bay South Redevelopment Plan area of San Francisco, shown in Figure 4.A-3 in Section 4.A, Land Use and Planning, which is characterized by large parcels of land and streets that generally follow a grid pattern. Topographic features in the project vicinity are minimal, and the grading is generally flat. However, Mission Creek, China Basin, the Bay, and Interstate 280 (I-280) represent physical barriers that visually separate Mission Bay from other portions of the city. Therefore, for the purposes of this analysis, the project vicinity is defined as the area bounded by the Bay to the east and I-280 to the west. It extends northward to include development immediately across Mission Creek and China Basin and southward to 16th Avenue. These areas generally correspond to the Mission Bay North¹ and Mission Bay South² Redevelopment Plan boundaries that surround the project site.

The 303-acre Mission Bay district has experienced and continues to experience visual transformation in the form of redevelopment. As such, the visual setting of the project vicinity is varied in character. Common visual conditions in the vicinity include paved lots where older industrial development has been removed to make way for redevelopment. In addition, once vacant lots are being developed at numerous construction sites, and rehabilitation activities are preserving older buildings so they can remain viable. Redevelopment in Mission Bay is creating a new urban fabric in the district that comprises an array of architectural styles, some of which correspond to signature styles associated with the designers of each development. Therefore, building massing, scale, materials, and architectural character (with respect to age and architectural style) do not conform to any strongly discernible overall pattern in areas that surround the project site; rather, many developments are visually unique with respect to one another.

Much of the development in Mission Bay has been constructed within the past 10 to 15 years, resulting in contemporary architectural styles. Most structures that were built during the period when the area was an active rail yard and dominated by port uses (i.e., 1880s to 1990s) have been demolished. The remaining historical structures in the immediate vicinity of the project site are limited to pier structures and their ancillary buildings along the Bay, Lefty O’Doul Bridge on Third Street, the former San Francisco Fire Department station at the northeast corner of Third Street and China Basin Street, which has been incorporated into the new San Francisco Public Safety Building, Pier 50 Office Building, ATSF Car Ferry Slip, and the Fourth Street/Peter Maloney Bridge.

China Basin is directly north of the project site, situated in the area where the mouth of Mission Creek meets the Bay. Mission Creek once extended from the Mission neighborhood to the Bay but is now channelized west of China Basin to approximately I-280 and undergrounded west of I-280. AT&T Park (a focal point in foreground views from the project vicinity), South Beach Yacht Club, and South Beach Harbor Marina are located north of the project site, across China Basin. These recreational sites, especially AT&T Park, attract millions of viewers to the vicinity annually and provide access to the Bay.

Pier 50, located south and east of the project site, is an active maritime industrial pier with four warehouse sheds on more than 14 acres. Pier 50 provides a ready-reserve berthing facility for the U.S. Department of Transportation Marine Administration (MARAD). Two MARAD transport ships are currently berthed on the east face of Pier 50. Towing and tugboat services, operated by Westar, are located in Shed C, and numerous small, interim tenants use the pier for storage and parking. In addition, a restaurant is located in an approximately 3,400 gsf building at the pier.

The recently completed San Francisco Public Safety Building and multi-family residential uses are located south of the project site; a hotel (under construction) and additional multi-family residential uses are located to the west (on Mission Bay Block 1, see Figure 4.A-3 in Section 4.A, Land Use and Planning). The offsite multi-family housing throughout Mission Bay is in the form of high-rise buildings that include commercial spaces, such as coffee shops, restaurants, and banks, usually at street level. The University of California, San Francisco campus occupies a large portion of the project vicinity in the Mission Bay South Redevelopment Plan area, southwest of the project site. Several existing parks in the vicinity provide open green spaces and vegetation. As shown in Figure 4.I-1 in Section 4.I-1, Wind and Shadow, these include Giants Promenade/AT&T Plaza, Mission Creek Park, Mission Creek Park South, Mission Creek Park Esplanade, Mission Bay Kids’ Park, Mission Creek Park, and Dog Run Park.

Parcel (block) sizes in the vicinity are variable and either rectangular or triangular in shape. Angular and perpendicular road patterns define the edges. Major traffic flow through the vicinity is provided by Third Street, which travels north–south, and Mission Bay Boulevard North and Mission Bay Boulevard South, which travel east–west. Smaller roadways provide additional access.
LIGHT AND GLARE

Light pollution includes all forms of unwanted light in the night sky, such as glare, light trespass, sky glow, and overlighting. Sources of light and glare are abundant in the urban environment of the project vicinity, including streetlights, parking lot lights, security lights, vehicular headlights, internal buildings lights, and reflective building surfaces and windows. On baseball game nights or evenings with other special events, AT&T Park is a source of light, with its event field lighting, exterior stadium lighting, and emergency lighting.

VIEWS FROM THE PROJECT VICINITY

Foreground views in the project vicinity include newer architecture associated with adjacent development; roadways, sidewalks, and associated infrastructure; paved lots; piers; parks and recreational facilities; and the Bay. Middle ground and background views\(^3\) are limited to the north, west, and south by surrounding development. Middle ground views to the east include views of the Bay, the Bay Bridge, and Yerba Buena Island, while the East Bay Hills and Oakland skyline are visible in the background to the east, across the Bay. Views from the project vicinity are discussed in more detail below.

VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE PROJECT SITE

VISUAL CHARACTER

As shown in Figure 2-1 (Chapter 2, Project Description, page 2-7), the approximately 28-acre project site is bounded by Mission Creek and China Basin to the north, the Bay to the east, Mission Rock Road to the south, and Third Street to the west. Separate from the proposed project, plans exist for a segment of the San Francisco Bay Trail (Bay Trail) to run through the project site,\(^4\) along Terry A. Francois Boulevard, to connect on-street segments that already exist to the north and south.

Regional vehicular access to and from the project site is provided by Interstate 80 (I-80), I-280, and US 101. Local vehicular access to the project site is currently provided via Third Street, Terry A. Francois Boulevard, and Mission Rock Street. As shown in Figure 2-3 (Chapter 2, Project Description, page 2-12), the project site comprises several areas: Seawall Lot 337, Parcel P20, Pier 48 and the adjacent marginal wharf, China Basin Park, and Terry A. Francois Boulevard.

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\(^3\) There are three distinct distance zones for assessing potential visual impacts. These are foreground views (approximately 0 to \(\frac{1}{4}\)–\(\frac{1}{2}\) mile), middle ground views (approximately \(\frac{1}{4}\)–\(\frac{1}{2}\) mile to 3–5 miles), and background views (approximately 3–5 miles to beyond).

Seawall Lot 337 is an approximately 14.2-acre paved site that is currently used for parking during AT&T Park baseball games and other events as well as commuter parking (Lot A), in addition to pop-up retail and special events. Lot A provides approximately 2,170 delineated parking spaces; an additional 16 spaces are provided for buses on the eastern side of Seawall Lot 337, along Terry A. Francois Boulevard. An additional 16 buses can be parked along the east–west segment of Terry A. Francois Boulevard north of the Seawall Lot 337 site; however, this area is closed during games.

The northwest corner of Seawall Lot 337 currently includes a temporary pop-up installation called The Yard at Mission Rock, which is constructed out of 16 recycled shipping containers. The Yard hosts food vendors, public gatherings, and programming opportunities for the communities. Temporary structures are erected periodically throughout the year to accommodate events on the site. Except for two portable pay-station kiosks and a billboard, Seawall Lot 337 does not contain any permanent structures; it functions as a surface parking lot and an area for pop-up retail.

Parcel P20 is a 0.3-acre, approximately 20-foot-wide paved strip of land that borders the south side of Seawall Lot 337, along the north side of Mission Rock Street. Under the Mission Bay South Redevelopment Plan, the parcel was originally intended to act as a narrow landscape separation between residential uses on the south side of Mission Rock Street and industrial uses at Seawall Lot 337. However, there are no visual barriers or separations between Seawall Lot 337 and Parcel P20, which is also used for parking and special events. Therefore, Parcel P20 and Seawall Lot 337 look like a visual continuation of one another.

The project site also includes approximately 3.5 acres of Terry A. Francois Boulevard, which is located east of Parcel P20. This street curves around Seawall Lot 337 from Third Street to the northwest to Mission Rock Street to the southeast.

Pier 48 is a 261,000 gsf pile-supported facility with two one-story warehouse spaces (Shed A and Shed B) that are connected by Shed C, also a one-story structure. The enclosed warehouse spaces were completed in 1929, with the connector shed (Shed C) built in 1938. Because of fire damage, Shed C was renovated by the Port of San Francisco (Port) in 2002. The three connected sheds on Pier 48 are all approximately 40 feet in height. The sheds form a “U” shape, with the uncovered interior “valley” open to the sky.

The southern berth of Pier 48 is occupied by tugboat operations and maintenance facilities for ferry boats. The northern apron is red-tagged,5 vacant, and not actively used for any purpose. Public access has never been available to the aprons because they are in varying states of disrepair or encumbered by existing maritime industrial uses that are incompatible with unrestricted public access.

5 Structures that have been red-tagged are severely damaged, to the degree that the structure is too dangerous to occupy.
Pier 48 is the southernmost pier structure within the Port of San Francisco Embarcadero Historic District (Embarcadero Historic District), which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). The Embarcadero Historic District encompasses an approximately 3-mile stretch of the city’s northeastern waterfront, from Pier 45 to the north to Pier 48 to the south. Pier 48 is identified as a contributory resource to the Embarcadero Historic District but is not individually listed as a historic structure.

The 1.4-acre Pier 48 and Pier 50 access areas are located directly west and south of Pier 48. To the south, between Pier 48 and Pier 50 and east of Terry A. Francois Boulevard, is a 0.50-acre area that is currently referred to as the Pier 48 marginal wharf. A portion of the marginal wharf is currently leased on a month-to-month basis to the One Big Man & One Big Truck Moving Company and Westar, providing for parking, truck access, and truck turnaround areas in the interim period until the proposed project is developed. A portion of the southern end of the marginal wharf is leased by a restaurant; the rest of the marginal wharf is vacant.

China Basin Park makes up the northern portion of the project site. The park includes a lawn with a single row of 26 nonheritage trees, viewing areas, benches, picnic areas, lighting, a small baseball diamond, historic markers representing the Giants from 1958 through 1999, a statue of former Giants player Willie McCovey, and a paved bicycle/pedestrian perimeter pathway. The park provides scenic urban views of China Basin, AT&T Park, and surrounding urban development as well as views of the Bay, Bay Bridge, and East Bay Hills.

**LIGHT AND GLARE**

Nighttime lighting at the project site is variable, ranging from low when the parking lot is not being used for night games at AT&T Park to fairly well-lit when there are night games. Without night games, the lower lighting levels are created by street lighting, vehicle headlights on local streets, exterior security lighting associated with the onsite pop-up retail and pier sheds, and interior and exterior lighting from buildings located offsite. When there are night games, lighting levels at the project site increase because parking lot lighting is turned on and there are more vehicle headlights in the area as patrons of AT&T Park access parking areas. Sources of daytime and nighttime glare include reflections from pavement, vehicle windows and surfaces, onsite and offsite building windows and surfaces, and nearby water bodies.

**VIEWS FROM THE PROJECT SITE**

Foreground views from the project site are similar to those from the project vicinity (as described above) and include views of the newer architecture associated with redevelopment in Mission Bay; roadways, sidewalks, and associated infrastructure; paved and vacant lots;

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6 Note that the pier numbering convention used by the Port assigns odd numbers to facilities north of the Ferry Building and even numbers to facilities south of the Ferry Building.
piers; and parks. AT&T Park is a focal point, facing north. Similarly, middle ground and background views to the north, west, and south are limited by surrounding development; however, middle ground views to the east include views of the Bay, the Bay Bridge, and Yerba Buena Island. The East Bay Hills and Oakland skyline are visible in the background across the Bay, facing east. The project site offers predominantly nondescript views of a large parking area and port warehouse structures. However, although the developed areas surrounding the site are in a state of flux because of redevelopment, there are higher-quality scenic views available from the project site toward AT&T Park, the Bay, and the surrounding Bay Area.

The project site is flat, lacking an elevated perspective out and over the Bay. Although limited, east-facing views are available along Terry A. Francois Boulevard near China Basin Park, between Piers 48 and 50, and near China Basin Park because no foreground development is present to obscure the views. This area includes views of the Bay and sailboat masts associated with the South Beach Harbor Marina in the foreground, the Bay in the foreground to background, the Bay Bridge in the middle ground, and the East Bay Hills and development associated with Oakland and Alameda in the background.

**SCENIC AND VISUAL RESOURCES**

Scenic resources are elements in the environment such as topographic features, trees, rock outcroppings, or other features of the built or natural environment that contribute to a scenic public setting. Scenic resources may be protected by federal, state, or local regulations or highly valued by the local community.

“Scenic vista views” are views from public areas that generally encompass a wide area with long-range views to surrounding elements in the landscape. Scenic vista views are often of local and regional value. Such views are often visible because of a flat landscape with little vegetation or an elevated viewing point that allows for views out and over the surrounding landscape. Vistas also have a directional range, which is to say that some viewpoints have scenic vistas with a 360-degree view in all directions, while others may be limited in one direction in a manner that reduces the line-of-sight angle and amount of vista that is visible. In such cases, narrower vista views are often confined by topography, development, and vegetation. Scenic vista viewsheds allow the public to access panoramic views of natural features, including the ocean, striking or unusual natural terrain, or unique urban or historic features that are identified in adopted policies or plans. The term “view corridor” refers to views of important features along a path, roadway, or other horizontal corridor where the view is confined by obstructions such as development or vegetation. As such, a view from a view corridor has limited lateral visibility. This is referred to as a “channelized view.”
PROJECT SITE SCENIC RESOURCES

No state or local designated scenic routes are associated with the project site. The project site is also not located on any street segment that has been identified in the San Francisco General Plan (General Plan) for the quality of its views (refer to the Regulatory Framework for the General Plan Urban Design Element map, Street Areas Important to Urban Design and Views).7 Pier 48 is not individually listed as a historic resource but is identified as a contributory resource to the Embarcadero Historic District. For purposes of this analysis, the Embarcadero Historic District is considered a scenic resource.

VIEWS OF THE PROJECT SITE FROM THE SURROUNDING AREAS

Public viewing points within the city include parks, publicly accessible buildings, and public rights of way that offer views of the urban and natural landscapes that make up the Bay Area viewshed. Development patterns within the city overlay undulating topography, and the range of building heights creates gaps, peaks, and dips that allow taller buildings to stand out in profile against the sky. This tension in the skyline between conformity and variety results in a recognizable visual identity for San Francisco. It also creates elevated vantage points and gaps in development that allow views to the surrounding local and regional Bay Area landscape. Many areas are visible from the project site, and the project site is visible from several surrounding areas, as discussed below.

Adjacent Streets. From Third Street, bordering the project site, complete views of the Bay Bridge are mostly obscured by trees within China Basin Park and AT&T Park between Terry A. Francois Boulevard and Channel Street. From Channel Street and the southern half of the block, the upper towers of the Bay Bridge can be seen above the tree line. From midblock south to Mission Rock Road, Yerba Buena Island and portions of the towers and deck of the Bay Bridge can be seen; however, views of the water are not available. The East Bay Hills can be seen between gaps in development. Views from Third Street are available because the project site is flat and, for the most part, without built structures.

Bay Trail. The project site is also visible from bicycle and pedestrian trails located in the vicinity, as shown in Figure 4.E-5 in Section 4.E, Transportation. The Bay Trail, which travels along the San Francisco waterfront and the Embarcadero, is a series of existing and planned regional bicycle and hiking trails that are administered by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). The trails will eventually connect and provide a continuous trail system around the perimeter of the San Francisco and San Pablo Bays, linking 47 cities with 500 miles of trails.8

The portion of the Bay Trail in the project vicinity runs along the San Francisco waterfront south of AT&T Park and currently ends at Lefty O’Doul Bridge. Per the San Francisco Southern Waterfront Bay Trail map, plans exist for a Bay Trail connection from Lefty O’Doul Bridge, through China Basin Park, to a segment along Terry A. Francois Boulevard. Because of the natural Bay setting in the foreground and background views of Twin Peaks and other hillsides throughout the area, the portion of the Bay Trail adjacent to AT&T Park is considered scenic. Views toward the north and east encompass the panoramic and expansive scenery of the Bay, the Bay Bridge, and the East Bay Hills. Depending on the location of the bicyclist/pedestrian on the Bay Trail, certain features, such as the trees in China Basin Park and Pier 48, are visible to the south, across China Basin.

**I-80 and I-280.** Elevated views toward the project site and surrounding Bay Area are also available from freeways, including northbound I-280 in the project vicinity, approximately 0.5 mile west of the project site, and westbound I-80 as it crosses the Bay, approximately 1 mile north of the project site. I-280, from the I-80 interchange in San Francisco to State Route (SR) 17 in San José, and the Bay Bridge/I-80, from I-280 in San Francisco to SR 61 in Oakland, are eligible State Scenic Highways (although not officially designated) under the state’s Scenic Highway Program. The portion of I-280 through the project area is a part of the 49-Mile Scenic Drive. In addition, Map 2 of the General Plan Urban Design Element, Plan for Street Landscaping and Lighting, notes that I-280 has important views that should not be blocked by landscaping. Portions of I-280 that are identified on the map as having important views in the project vicinity have, however, been obscured in many cases by new development. Small segments still retain urbanized views toward the Mission Bay district and its associated development, with small portions of the East Bay Hills visible between gaps in development. Views of the Bay and East Bay Hills from I-280 are limited and available mostly from the freeway, looking down the Mission Creek channel, and the 6th Street exit off of I-280, which is at a higher elevation than I-280, looking down the Mission Creek channel and Mission Bay Boulevard roadway corridor. This narrow view corridor includes views of the project site.

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Scenic vista views from I-80 (Bay Bridge) are expansive, offering direct, unobscured views of port areas along the shoreline, the project site, and urban development in the city. In addition, the Santa Cruz Mountain Range is visible beyond John McLaren Ridge and the San Bruno Mountains.

**San Francisco Hillsides.** San Francisco’s numerous hills offer expansive, long-range scenic views of the Bay and the Mission Bay area, including views from Potrero Hill, with its middle ground views of the project site, and Twin Peaks, with background views of the project site. Views from these neighborhoods are available from local roadways, parks, and developed areas on the hillsides. The long-range scenic vista views are extensive, allowing views to the background. These include views to the city, the East Bay, Yerba Buena Island, the Bay Bridge, the San Francisco Peninsula (Peninsula), and the Santa Cruz Mountains. From these elevated vantage points, the high-rise buildings of the San Francisco Financial District are visible next to the southern towers of the Bay Bridge and Yerba Buena Island. The high-rise buildings transition to low- and mid-rise buildings in areas that surround the Financial District, including downtown, South of Market, Mission District, The Castro, and Noe Valley. From the hillsides, views of the city’s port areas are limited when looking toward the project site because inland development often obscures such views.

**Other Views.** The city’s port areas and other development are visible from the East Bay. Broader forms and patterns are most apparent as well as large, distinct features (e.g., lightly colored port cranes, the Bay Bridge). Finer details, including features at the project site, are not discernable because of distance. Commonly occurring atmospheric haze and fog, as well as silhouetting during the evening hours, reduce the ability to see detailed views of the city from the East Bay.

**PROJECT SITE VIEWERS**

Immediate project site viewers include residential, recreational, and commercial viewers as well as viewers on local roadways. Residential viewers living next to the project site have high visual sensitivity to changes occurring at the project site. Although residential viewers are accustomed to views of surrounding development and nearby construction activities, they view the project site for extended periods of time. Therefore, residential viewers are likely to have a high sense of ownership over such views, especially views of AT&T Park, South Beach Harbor Marina, the Bay, the Bay Bridge, Yerba Buena Island, and the surrounding Bay Area. However, it is important to note that private views are not considered scenic under the City’s CEQA significance criteria. They are discussed here for informational purposes only.

Recreational viewers have moderate/high visual sensitivity because they are more likely to value the natural and urban environments, appreciate the visual experience, have a strong sense of ownership, and be sensitive to changes in views. Recreational viewers use parks, waterways,

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13 Moderate and moderate/high sensitivity includes viewer groups who would be affected by changes to the existing visual character. The potential exists for these viewer groups to express concern over visual impacts.
trails, and roadways. They are likely to enjoy the local urban scenery and seek out the scenic views associated with the Bay. Local recreationists tend to have a higher sense of ownership over views and resources than visiting recreationists; however, it is likely that visiting recreationists would be familiar with the area and therefore would also place a high value on existing views.

Commercial viewers include business owners and workers (i.e., occupants) as well as patrons of the businesses. Business occupants have moderate visual sensitivity because, although they are likely to have a sense of ownership over local views, they are more focused on operating their businesses and more likely to see additional development as a favorable source of new patrons. Business patrons are likely to have moderate/low visual sensitivity because they are more focused on visiting the businesses than on views of the project site. They have intermittent and limited views of the project site.

Local roadway users include commuters traveling to and from work, shoppers, recreational travelers, and drivers of commercial vehicles. Roadway users travel at speeds up to the posted speed limit, typically 30 miles per hour in the project area (such as Third Street and Fourth Street). Depending on speed and the amount of traffic, drivers and passengers are able to take in brief views of the scenery around them. Most views from the project site are of surrounding development, including the focal point of the area, AT&T Park. However, motorists generally focus their attention on the roadway ahead.

There are also viewers outside the vicinity who can see the project site within the middle ground and background of their viewsheds. These distant viewers of the project site include residential, recreational, and commercial viewers as well as viewers on freeways and local roadways. Distant viewers of the project site would have sensitivities ranging from moderate/low (i.e., far away, views mostly obscured) to moderate/high (i.e., closer, scenic vistas available).


REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

FEDERAL

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR’S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION AND ILLUSTRATED GUIDELINES FOR REHABILITATING HISTORIC BUILDINGS

The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (the SOI Rehabilitation Standards and the SOI Guidelines, respectively) provide guidance for reviewing work to historic properties.\(^\text{14}\) Developed by the National Park Service for reviewing certified rehabilitation tax credit projects, the SOI Rehabilitation Standards have been adopted by local government bodies across the country for reviewing proposed work to historic properties under local preservation ordinances. The SOI Rehabilitation Standards provide a useful analytical tool for understanding and describing the potential impacts of changes to historic resources, including new construction inside or adjoining historic districts.

REGIONAL

SAN FRANCISCO BAY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION BAY PLAN AND PUBLIC ACCESS DESIGN GUIDELINES

The San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) is responsible for protecting and enhancing the Bay as well as encouraging responsible and productive use of the Bay for this and future generations. A portion of the project site falls within the shoreline band and is subject to BCDC review for consistency with the Bay Plan. Bay Plan policies call for the preservation of scenic Bay views; the provision of diverse and accessible water-oriented recreational facilities, such as marinas, launch ramps, beaches, and fishing piers, around the Bay; and encouragement for the development of water-oriented commercial recreational establishments, such as restaurants, specialty shops, private boatels, recreational equipment concessions, and amusements in urban areas adjacent to the Bay. In addition, the Bay Plan encourages the preservation of historic structures and districts, including public access to the exterior and, where appropriate, the interior of these structures.

\(^{14}\) U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, Preservation Assistance Division. 1992. Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. The standards, revised in 1992, were codified as 36 CFR Part 68.3 in the July 12, 1995, Federal Register (Vol. 60, No. 133). The revision replaces the 1978 and 1983 versions of 36 CFR 68 entitled The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Historic Preservation Projects. The 36 CFR 68.3 standards are applied to all grant-in-aid development projects assisted through the National Historic Preservation Fund. Another set of standards, 36 CFR 67.7, focuses on “certified historic structures,” as defined by the IRS Code of 1986. The standards in 36 CFR 67.7 are used primarily when property owners are seeking certification for federal tax benefits. The two sets of standards vary slightly, but the differences are primarily technical and nonsubstantive in nature. The guidelines, however, are not codified in the Federal Register.
The purpose of the BCDC Public Access Design Guidelines for the Bay is to provide the Bay region with a design resource for development projects along the shoreline of the Bay. These guidelines provide suggestions for site planning as well as recommendations for designing and developing attractive and useable public access areas. The guidelines are not legally enforceable standards but are an advisory set of design principles aimed at enhancing shoreline access while providing for the protection of Bay resources, regional livability, and local economic prosperity.\(^\text{15}\) The proposed project would be generally consistent with these policies through its proposed preservation of the existing structures on Pier 48 consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s standards, the proposed provision of public access to these structures for restaurant, active/retail, tour, and exhibition uses as well as meeting space, the proposed provision of public pedestrian access to presently inaccessible apron areas, and the proposed connection to and expansion of the Blue Greenway pedestrian and bicycle access to the shoreline.

**LOCAL**

**SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL PLAN**

The General Plan provides policies and objectives to guide urban design decisions. City and County of San Francisco (City) decision-makers will evaluate the proposed project in accordance with provisions of relevant plans and policies. Policies of the General Plan related to the topic of aesthetics are found in the Urban Design Element and, to a lesser extent, other elements, as listed below.

The following policies from the Recreation and Open Space Element of the General Plan are applicable to the proposed project:

- Policy 1.12: Preserve historic and culturally significant landscapes, sites, structures, buildings, and objects.
- Policy 3.3: Develop and enhance the City’s recreational trail system, linking it to the regional hiking and biking trail system, and consider restoring historic water courses to improve stormwater management.

The following policies from the Transportation Element of the General Plan are applicable to the proposed project:

- Policy 2.3: Design and locate facilities to preserve the historic city fabric and the natural landscape and protect views.

• Policy 24.1: Preserve existing historic features such as streetlights and encourage the incorporation of such historic elements in all future streetscape projects.

• Policy 30.1: Ensure that new or enlarged parking facilities meet need, locational, and design criteria.

The following objectives and policies from the Urban Design Element of the General Plan are applicable to the proposed project:

• Objective 1: Emphasis of the characteristic pattern that gives the city and its neighborhoods an image, sense of purpose, and means of orientation.

• Policy 1.1: Recognize and protect major views in the city, with particular attention to those of open space and water.

• Policy 1.3: Recognize that buildings, when seen together, produce a total effect that characterizes the city and its districts.

• Policy 1.5: Emphasize the special nature of each district through distinctive landscaping and other features.

• Policy 1.8: Increase the visibility of major destination areas and other points for orientation.

• Objective 2: Conservation of resources that provide a sense of nature, continuity with the past, and freedom from overcrowding.

• Policy 2.3: Avoid encroachments on San Francisco Bay that would be inconsistent with the Bay Plan or the needs of the city’s residents.

• Policy 2.4: Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural, or aesthetic value and promote the preservation of other buildings and features that provide continuity with past development.

• Policy 2.5: Use care in remodeling of older buildings in order to enhance rather than weaken the original character of such buildings.

• Policy 2.6: Respect the character of older development nearby in the design of new buildings.

• Policy 2.7: Recognize and protect outstanding and unique areas that contribute in an extraordinary degree to San Francisco’s visual form and character.

• Objective 3: Moderation of major new development to complement the city pattern, the resources to be conserved, and the neighborhood environment.

• Policy 3.1: Promote harmony in the visual relationships and transitions between new and older buildings.
• Policy 3.2: Avoid extreme contrasts in color, shape, and other characteristics that will cause new buildings to stand out in excess of their public importance.

• Policy 3.3: Promote efforts to achieve high quality of design for buildings to be constructed at prominent locations.

• Policy 3.6: Relate the bulk of buildings to the prevailing scale of development to avoid an overwhelming or dominating appearance in new construction.

• Policy 3.7: Recognize the special urban design problems posed in development of large properties.

• Policy 3.8: Discourage accumulation and development of large properties, unless such development is carefully designed with respect to its impact upon the surrounding area and upon the city.

• Policy 4.12: Install, promote, and maintain landscaping in public and private areas.

• Policy 4.13: Improve pedestrian areas by providing human scale and interest.

• Policy 4.14: Remove and obscure distracting and cluttering elements.

• Policy 4.15: Protect the livability and character of residential properties from the intrusion of incompatible new buildings.

The following policies from the Community Facilities Element of the General Plan are applicable to the proposed project:

• Policy 3.5: Develop neighborhood centers that are multipurpose in character, attractive in design, secure and comfortable, and inherently flexible in meeting the current and changing needs of the neighborhood served.

The following policy from the Arts Element of the General Plan is applicable to the proposed project:

• Policy 1.1: Promote inclusion of artistic considerations in local decision-making.

In addition to the policies above, the Plan for Street Landscaping and Lighting, Map 2 of the Urban Design Element, notes that I-280 has important views that should not be blocked by landscaping. The Street Areas Important to Urban Design and Views map of the Urban Design Element identifies streets according to the quality of their views, with an emphasis on the protection of public views of open space and water bodies. Within the project vicinity, Third Street between Mission Boulevard and 16th Street is identified as an “Important Street View for Orientation,” but, as noted above, the project site would not be visible from this location because of existing development and street trees that block views of the project site. In addition, Channel Street from I-280 to Third Street is identified as a “Street that Extends the Effect of Public Open Space” because it is located directly adjacent to Mission Creek Park and Mission Creek Garden. However, the triangular area created by Fourth, Channel, and Third Streets
(Mission Bay Block 1) is being developed and will not be open space. Therefore, the segment of Channel Street between Fourth and Third Streets is not considered a scenic resource because of its views of the Bay.

Voters approved Proposition D (the Mission Rock Affordable Housing, Parks, Jobs, and Historic Preservation Initiative) on November 3, 2015. Prior to its passage, General Plan Urban Design Element Map 4 (Urban Design Guidelines for Height of Buildings) stated that buildings within the western portion of Seawall Lot 337 should range from 161 to 240 feet in height and that buildings within the eastern portion of Seawall Lot 337 and Pier 48 should range from 0 to 40 feet in height. The 40-foot height restriction reflected rezoning of the project site to the Mission Bay Open Space Use District in 1991 as part of an earlier Mission Bay Redevelopment Plan that the Board of Supervisors later rescinded, without rescinding the rezoning. Proposition D amended the height and bulk restrictions for the project site by establishing the Mission Rock Height and Bulk District, codified at Section 291 of the Planning Code and described below. The district provides for a range of height limits on the project site that are consistent with the proposed project and amended Urban Design Element Map 4. The height limits established pursuant to Proposition D apply rather than the prior height limits that reflected the rescinded 1991 redevelopment plan. Regarding bulk controls, prior to the passage of Proposition D, Urban Design Element Map 5 (Urban Design Guidelines for Bulk of Buildings) established the following guidelines for buildings within the portion of Seawall Lot 337 located along Third Street and above a height of 80 feet:

- Maximum plan dimension of 110 feet, and
- Maximum diagonal plan dimension of 125 feet.

The remainder of the project site was not subject to any bulk restrictions, pursuant to Urban Design Element Map 5, prior to the passage of Proposition D, which amended Map 5 so that the prior bulk guidelines would not apply. Instead, Proposition D called for the creation of design controls, consistent with the purposes of Proposition D and Planning Code Section 251, Height and Bulk District Purposes.

**San Francisco Planning Code**

**Section 291.** The San Francisco Planning Code (Planning Code), which incorporates by reference the City’s zoning maps, implements the general plan and governs permitted uses, densities, and building configurations within the city. Proposition D amended Zoning Map Sheet HT08 to change the height and bulk classifications of the project site from OS and 40-X to those of a new Mission Rock Height and Bulk District. Proposition D amended the Planning Code by adding a new section, Section 291, which governs the new Mission Rock Height and Bulk District. Section 291 establishes height limits for the project site, which are consistent with the proposed project, and requires the adoption of design controls to guide the design of improvements within established height limits. The Vision and Design Intent document (Vision
Document) is an overarching planning document that was prepared for the project. It contains a broader urban design vision that guides the Design Controls, Sustainability Strategy, Infrastructure Plan, and Transportation Plan for the project site. The proposed project also includes design controls, which would become final upon Planning Commission approval of the Mission Rock Design Controls (Design Controls) as part of project approval. The Design Controls outline the controls and describe to developers, designers, and permitting agencies how the comprehensive design of the proposed project comes together to achieve the vision for the proposed project. The Design Controls guide the proposed development with respect to open space, streets, bulk, massing, setbacks, landscaping, and other physical design and use aspects of the proposed project.

Section 139. San Francisco Planning Code Section 139, Standards for Bird-Safe Buildings, focuses on buildings, both public and private, that create location-specific hazards (i.e., the building location increases bird injury and mortality) and building-feature hazards (i.e., increased bird injury and mortality regardless of location). Location-specific hazards apply to buildings in or within 300 feet of an Urban Bird Refuge having a direct line of sight. Section 139 requires 90 percent of glazing in the Bird Collision Zone (60 feet above grade, plus 60 feet above an adjacent vegetated roof, 2 acres or larger) to be treated to increase its visibility to birds (i.e., fritted, stenciled, frosted, or covered with netting, screens, grids, or bird-visible ultraviolet patterns). Lighting must also be minimized.

For location-specific hazards involving new buildings, the following requirements apply:

- Façade Treatments: A bird-safe glazing treatment is required such that the Bird Collision Zone consists of no more than 10 percent untreated glazing. Building owners are encouraged to concentrate permitted transparent glazing on the ground-floor and lobby entrances to enhance visual interest for pedestrians.

- Lighting Design: Minimal lighting shall be used. Lighting shall be shielded. No uplighting shall be used. No event searchlights should be permitted for the property.

16 These Mission Rock Design Controls document, which is in draft form as of the date of the publication of this DEIR, is subject to minor modifications and is provided in Appendix 2 to this DEIR. All references to Design Controls throughout this DEIR are to this draft document, which would be finalized by the time the project is approved.


18 Fritted glass refers to glass with ceramic or metal particles that have been fused to the glass to create an opaque or textured surface. The particles are generally opaque and can be applied to either the entire surface of the glass or just particular areas to create decorative patterns.
In addition to regulating buildings that pose a locational hazard to birds (i.e., buildings in and within 300 feet of an Urban Bird Refuge), Section 139 applies similar standards to all new or substantially remodeled buildings in San Francisco with certain features (i.e., feature-related standards). Specifically, all free-standing glass walls, wind barriers, skywalks, balconies, and greenhouses on rooftops that have unbroken glazed segments approximately 24 square feet and larger in size must be treated with a bird-safe glazing treatment, such as fritting, netting, permanent stencils, frosted glass, exterior screens, physical grids placed on the exterior of the glazing, or ultraviolet patterns that are visible to birds. For both locational and feature-related hazards, vertical elements of the window patterns should be at least ¼ inch wide, with a minimum spacing of 4 inches, or have horizontal elements at least ⅛ inch wide, with a maximum spacing of 2 inches.

MISSION BAY SOUTH REDEVELOPMENT PLAN AREA

The Mission Bay South Redevelopment Plan, established in 1998, created the basic land use controls for the Mission Bay South Redevelopment Plan area. Parcel P20 is the only portion of the project site within the Mission Bay South Redevelopment Plan area. The proposed project would remove Parcel P20 from the Mission Bay South Redevelopment Plan area. Once removed, the entire project site would be directly adjacent to the Mission Bay South Redevelopment Plan area to the south and west. For informational purposes, the urban design objectives and policies of the plan include:

• Objective 3: Emphasize in Mission Bay South the characteristic of San Francisco development patterns, which give its neighborhoods image and means of orientation.
• Policy 1: Provide pedestrian scale and interest in ground-floor treatments of buildings through the use of treatments such as clear glass fenestration, cornice treatments, and detailed faces.
• Policy 2: Design in consideration of protecting major views of the Bay, the Bay Bridge, and the downtown skyline from Mission Bay South and, if feasible, the elevated I-280 freeway along Mission Bay South, using street view corridors, open space, the careful placement of building forms, and building massing.
• Policy 3: Create visual and physical access to the San Francisco Bay and the channel of China Basin.
• Policy 4: Recognize that buildings, open space, and view corridors, seen together, will create the character of Mission Bay South.

• Policy 5: Achieve high-quality design for buildings and landscaping.

• Policy 6: Emphasize the importance of intersections by encouraging higher-density uses, taller buildings (one or two stories or the tallest portion of buildings), and architectural variety on street corners.

• Policy 7: Avoid extreme contrasts in color, shape, and other characteristics, which will cause new buildings to stand out in excess of their public importance.

• Policy 8: Promote building forms that enhance sun exposure on public open spaces.

• Objective 4: Create a building form for the Mission Bay South area such that the scale of new development relates to the adjacent waterfront and to adjacent buildings.

• Policy 1: Building heights should decrease as they approach the water’s edge.

• Policy 2: Provide variety in building design within a block to break up the perception of bulk and to achieve a visually interesting streetscape.

PORT COMMISSION RESOLUTION 04-89 AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW GUIDELINES FOR PIER AND BULKHEAD WHARF SUBSTRUCTURES

The Port of San Francisco Historic Preservation Review Guidelines for Pier and Bulkhead Wharf Substructures (Guidelines) identify how the SOI Rehabilitation Standards should be interpreted and applied to historic resources within the Port of San Francisco Embarcadero Historic District. The Guidelines are used in the review of pier and bulkhead wharf substructure projects that are subject only to approval by the Port. Projects that would affect Port of San Francisco Embarcadero Historic District resources and are subject to review and approval through any of the following agency programs are considered projects that have undergone SOI Rehabilitation Standards compliance review by those agencies and, therefore, are not subject to the Guidelines: (a) federal undertakings that require Section 106 consultation, (b) federal historic preservation tax credit projects that require State Office of Historic Preservation and National Park Service approvals, or (c) San Francisco Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board projects that are subject to Planning Code Article 10 provisions for City landmarks and City historic districts.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

This section describes the impact analysis related to aesthetics for the proposed project. It describes the methods used to determine the impacts of the proposed project and lists the thresholds used to conclude whether an impact would be significant. As applicable, measures to mitigate (i.e., avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, eliminate, or compensate for) significant impacts accompany the discussion of each identified significant impact.
**Significance Criteria**

The proposed project would have a significant effect under CEQA if it would result in any of the conditions listed below.

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and other features of the built or natural environment that contribute to a scenic public setting.
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area or substantially affect other people or properties.

**Methods for Analysis**

The visual quality of an area relates to the physical appearance and characteristics of the built environment, the proximity and balance of human-made structures with open space or landscaping, and views of public open space or more distinct landscape features such as hills, water bodies, or built landmarks. These elements help define a sense of place and a physical orientation in a larger visual setting. The project site is not located in a pristine natural environment or rural area; instead, the project site is within a human-made environment that is part of an established community. Visual conditions within the vicinity of the project site are defined by a mix of local roadways, large blocks that are either vacant or under construction, and industrial, office, recreational, residential, and commercial development. The interplay of these elements of the visual setting varies, depending on the viewer location. Implementation of the proposed project would change the appearance of the project site and the surrounding community by constructing up to 2.7 to 2.8 million gsf of residential, commercial, production, and active/retail uses on 11 proposed development blocks on Seawall Lot 337 and rehabilitating and reusing Pier 48 for industrial, restaurant, active/retail, tour, and exhibition uses. The blocks on Seawall Lot 337 would be developed with building heights ranging from 90 feet (approximately seven stories) to a maximum of 240 feet (approximately 23 stories), excluding the mechanical and other accessory penthouse roof enclosures, which would extend an additional up to 20 feet (40 feet on Block F) above the rooflines.

Design and aesthetics are, by definition, subjective and open to interpretation by decision-makers and the public. However, as with all CEQA impacts, the effects of a project must be considered in the physical context of the project site and compared to existing conditions. A proposed project would, therefore, be considered to have a significant adverse effect on visual quality under CEQA only if it were to cause a substantial and demonstrable negative change in the physical environment that affects the public in one or more ways, as outlined in the
significance criteria, above. Changes to private views resulting from the proposed project would not be considered to be substantially degrading to the existing visual character of the environment because they would not affect the public at large.

Potential impacts on aesthetic and visual resources due to the proposed project are evaluated below, based on a review of photographs and project data as well as site reconnaissance. The project site has been photographed from a range of publicly accessible vantage points. Eight representative viewpoints are included in this Draft EIR to show the project site and the surrounding visual context. Photosimulations are used below to depict proposed project conditions. These vantage points are representative viewer locations and include parks, sidewalks, and roads that offer a view of the urban and natural landscapes that make up the viewsheds.

Figure 4.B-1 (page 4.B-22) shows the eight locations from which photographs were taken; these views are used to depict visual simulations of the proposed project.

- View 1: AT&T Park/Bay Trail, looking southwest (Figure 4.B-2, page 4.B-25)
- View 2: I-280 (above Mission Channel), looking northeast (Figure 4.B-3, page 4.B-26)
- View 3: Potrero Hill neighborhood, looking northeast (Figure 4.B-4, page 4.B-28)
- View 4: Potrero Hill Recreation Center, looking northeast (Figure 4.B-5, page 4.B-29)
- View 5: Twin Peaks, looking northeast (Figure 4.B-6, page 4.B-32)
- View 6: Bay Bridge (western span), looking southeast (Figure 4.B-7, page 4.B-33)
- View 7: Third Street (at Mission Rock Street), looking north (Figure 4.B-8, page 4.B-40)
- View 8: Third Street (at Mission Bay Boulevard South), looking north (Figure 4.B-9, page 4.B-42)

Figures 4.B-2 through 4.B-9 present views of existing and proposed project site conditions. While Figures 4.B-2 through 4.B-7 present mid- and long-range views of the project site, Figures 4.B-8 and Figure 4.B-9 present more close-up views of the project site and are used to discuss project impacts on surrounding areas. The existing condition views (denoted on the figures as “existing”) represent the baseline visual conditions for the project site and its vicinity. These views include areas around the project site from which the proposed project would be prominent and important public views of San Francisco’s cityscape, with the project site visible from notable public vantage points (such as Twin Peaks and the Bay Bridge). Computer-generated photomontages that show the proposed project superimposed within the existing visual setting (denoted on the figures as “proposed”) are presented as part of the figure. The photomontages appear on the same page as the view of existing conditions,
allowing the reader to compare existing views with photosimulations of the proposed project within the visual context of the project. However, it is important to note that the site plans and photosimulations for the proposed project are for purposes of this analysis; the building envelopes are flexible and have not yet been precisely determined. The exact architectural detailing, coloring, and surface treatments have not yet been developed. Although these details are currently unknown, the maximum square footage, the number of buildings, and the heights have been established and are evaluated as proposed in this section. Therefore, any changes to orientations or the locations of buildings within the parcels would not result in a change to the conclusions presented in this section or a substantial change in views.

**Land Use Assumptions**

This analysis considers the potential range of development that could occur under the High Commercial Assumption (refer to Figure 2-7 in Chapter 2, Project Description, page 2-33) and the High Residential Assumption (refer to Figure 2-8, page 2-34). Both development assumptions fall within the height limits allowed under the Mission Rock Height and Bulk District, as prescribed under Section 291 of the Planning Code (refer to Figure 2-4, page 2-21). The two land use assumptions would have the same visual appearance (e.g., building footprints, street layouts, park modifications, etc.), except buildings on Blocks H, I, and J could be up to 30 feet taller under the High Residential Assumption than under the High Commercial Assumption. Therefore, to provide a conservative analysis, the visual simulations depict the High Residential Assumption, the scenario with taller buildings and also assume the maximum volumes or massing for those buildings. However, it should be noted that for most viewpoints, the buildings on Blocks H, I, and J are not visible; therefore, for those viewpoints, both land use development assumptions are analyzed as the “proposed project.” Where the differences between the assumptions are perceptible, this is noted in the analysis.

**Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

Impact AE-1. The proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. (Less than Significant)

As described above, a scenic vista is a vista from a public location with high visual quality, including harmonious, visually interesting, and broad views. In the areas surrounding the project site, the locations from which scenic vistas could be affected by the proposed project are the Bay Trail, I-280, the Potrero Hill neighborhood, Potrero Hill Recreation Center, Twin Peaks, and I-80. These locations offer expansive views of the natural setting of the Bay, the Santa Cruz Mountain Range, Yerba Buena Island, Treasure Island, and the East Bay Hills. In addition, these locations include views of notable architectural features, such as AT&T Park and the Bay Bridge. Viewers who use these scenic vistas can be considered sensitive viewers because they are generally aware of their surroundings.
**Views from the Bay Trail (View 1).** As shown in existing View 1, the project site is visible in the middle ground from the Bay Trail near AT&T Park (Figure 4.B-2 on the following page), facing south across China Basin. In particular, the trees in China Basin Park and Pier 48 are visible. Beyond the project site, development in Potrero Hill and on the Twin Peaks ridge is fairly visible over the existing buildings in Mission Bay.

As depicted in Figure 4.B-2, with implementation of the proposed project, foreground, middle ground, and background views would be altered. Within the foreground view, several silos would be added to the north side of Pier 48, blocking some of the view of Pier 48 from AT&T Park/Bay Trail. Also, the proposed buildings, which would be up to 240 feet in height (with up to approximately 20 feet [40 feet on Block F] above rooflines), would be visible from the Bay Trail immediately across from China Basin. The flexible development blocks (H–J) would be visible from this location, but this would not block additional views from the Bay Trail. Under the proposed project, the taller structures would block the majority of the views of development within Mission Bay, block all views of Potrero Hill, and decrease views of Twin Peaks. Views from the Bay Trail near AT&T Park generally focus on areas away from the project site and more toward the north and east where the views encompass the panoramic and expansive scenery of the Bay, Bay Bridge, and East Bay Hills. Because of flat terrain, distance, and development in Mission Bay, south-facing views toward the project site are not as remarkable as those facing north and east. The proposed project would not block the majority of scenic views as seen from the Bay Trail near AT&T Park.

**Views from I-280 (View 2).** Elevated views toward the project site and surrounding Bay Area are available from northbound I-280. As shown in existing View 2 (Figure 4.B-3, page 4.B-26), views of the Bay and East Bay Hills from I-280, approximately 0.5 mile west of the project site, are limited and available mostly from the freeway, looking down the Mission Creek channel. This narrow view corridor includes views of the surface parking lot at the project site and the trees in China Basin Park. As seen in the existing view, buildings located south of Mission Creek that are closer to the Bay are shorter (five to eight stories) than the buildings located closer to the freeway (14 to 17 stories). The shorter stature of the buildings helps retain some views of the tops of the East Bay Hills and provides a visual transition from the increasing heights closer to the freeway to the decreasing heights closer the Bay’s shoreline.

As depicted in proposed View 2 from I-280 (Figure 4.B-3), with project impacts, some of the proposed buildings would be visible. The taller structures on Blocks A, G, and F would obscure views of Blocks H–K, regardless of the land use development assumption, and the existing high-rise development in Mission Bay would block views of the proposed buildings located on the southern portion of the project site. Existing development would also prevent most views of the lower levels of the proposed buildings throughout the project site, as seen from this segment of I-280. Along this
Figure 4.B-2
View 1 — View from AT&T Park/Bay Trail
Looking Southwest

Source: Square One Productions, 2016.
Figure 4.B-3
Existing

View 2 (Daytime) — View from I-280 Looking Northeast

Proposed

Source: Square One Productions, 2016.
corridor, the proposed buildings would not appear to be taller than existing development along Mission Creek, closer to the freeway. However, at up to 240 feet (approximately 23 stories), the proposed project would be taller than the existing development adjacent to the project site.

Although not fully designed, it is anticipated that the proposed architectural detailing, coloring, and surface treatments would be consistent with the existing development surrounding the site and would not stand out as being visually obtrusive within this vista. The primary change in the view resulting from the proposed project is that the proposed buildings would constrict views of the Bay’s inlet to Mission Creek, portions of the South Beach Harbor Marina, and some the East Bay Hills. However, Mission Creek, AT&T Park, and a segment of the East Bay Hills would continue to be visible from this location.

As discussed above, I-280 is an eligible State Scenic Highway (although not officially designated),\(^{20}\) is part of the 49-Mile Scenic Drive,\(^{21}\) and is identified in the general plan as having important views. However, the view from I-280 is not considered sensitive. This highway is highly traveled, and motorists have only fleeting views of the Bay and East Bay Hills because of the permitted speed. In addition, the attention of motorists is generally focused on the road ahead. It is not expected that it would be focused on the proposed buildings on the project site. Passengers, however, would have fleeting views of the Bay and East Bay Hills.

**Potrero Hill Neighborhood (Views 3 and 4).** As shown in existing Views 3 and 4 (Figures 4.B-4 and 4.B-5 on the following pages), local roadways and parks on Potrero Hill include middle ground views of the project site. These include views to the city, the East Bay, Yerba Buena Island, the Bay Bridge, the San Francisco Peninsula (Peninsula), and the Santa Cruz Mountains. From these elevated vantage points, the high-rise buildings of the San Francisco Financial District are visible next to the southern span of the Bay Bridge and Yerba Buena Island.

As shown in proposed View 3 from the Potrero Hill neighborhood (Figure 4.B-4), which has middle ground views of the project site, intervening development would obscure views of the lower portions of the proposed project buildings from this vantage point. In addition, the proposed taller structures associated with Blocks A–G and existing development would obscure most views of Blocks H-K; however, the upper portions of the proposed towers associated with Blocks H and I would be visible. In addition, as seen in the existing view, development of variable heights is common in the project vicinity and neighboring portions of the city. Therefore, although the heights of the buildings at the project site would vary, this is generally


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Figure 4.B-4
View 3 — View from Potrero Hill Neighborhood
Looking Northeast

Existing

Proposed

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Figure 4.B-5

View 4 — View from Potrero Hill Recreation Center
Looking Northeast
characteristic of the cityscape as seen in this scenic vista. The proposed buildings on Blocks A, C, D1, G, and F would be perceivably taller than the existing development immediately surrounding the site within this scenic vista. This would create a peak in building heights seen from View 3 under proposed conditions compared to existing conditions. As shown in the view of existing conditions, the building heights currently allow for fairly comprehensive views of the Bay, Bay Bridge, Yerba Buena Island, and the East Bay Hills. As shown in the proposed view, the project buildings would constrict views of these features, resulting in visual obstruction of portions of the Bay, reduced and segmented views of Yerba Buena Island and the eastern span of the Bay Bridge, and slightly reduced views of the East Bay Hills.

As shown in proposed View 4 from Potrero Hill Recreation Center, at 801 Arkansas Street (Figure 4.B-5, on the previous page), which also has middle ground views of the proposed project, intervening development would obscure views of the lower portions of the proposed buildings on the project site from this vantage point. Only the upper portions of the towers associated with Blocks A, C, and D1 (which can be seen in Figure 2-4 in Chapter 2, Project Description) would be visible; the upper portions of the Block F tower would not be seen behind the Block D1 tower. Portions of Blocks H–K would be visible from Potrero Hill; however, the difference between the two land use assumptions would not be perceivable from this distance.

Under existing conditions in View 4, the Bay, Bay Bridge, Yerba Buena Island, Treasure Island (seen below the western span of the Bay Bridge), and the East Bay Hills are focal points of existing views. As shown in the proposed view, the proposed buildings would partially limit views of these features. Views of Treasure Island would be reduced, some of the middle portions of the western span of the Bay Bridge would be hidden up to the deck level and segmented, and Bay views would be slightly reduced. In addition, the proposed project would result in a visual interruption by creating a smaller focal point that would disrupt the continuous nature of the Bay Bridge as it spans the Bay from Yerba Buena Island. However, the proposed buildings would not substantially affect the vista from the Potrero Hill neighborhood and the recreation center because of the distance from the viewers to the project site and the superior position of the viewers relative to the project site. The project site is located more than 1 mile northeast of the Potrero Hill neighborhood and its recreation center. Therefore, intervening structures and the built-out urban nature of the city would block and detract from the majority of views of the proposed buildings. In addition, the neighborhood and recreation center currently include an expansive view of city development, including the high-rise buildings in the Financial District and South of Market, the Bay, the Bay Bridge, and the East Bay Hills, features that would continue to be visible with project implementation. The proposed buildings on the project site would be only a minor element of this view and would not substantially alter views from this vantage point.
Views from Twin Peaks (View 5). Existing long-rang views from Twin Peaks encompass expansive city development, the Bay, the East Bay Hills, Yerba Buena Island, and the Bay Bridge. From this elevated vantage point, the high-rise buildings of the San Francisco Financial District are visible next to the southern towers of the Bay Bridge and Yerba Buena Island. As shown in the proposed View 5 from Twin Peaks (Figure 4.B-6 on the following page), which has middle ground views of the proposed project, existing development would obstruct views of the lower levels of the proposed project buildings. Development of variable heights is common in the project vicinity and neighboring portions of the city, as seen in the existing view, with a concentration of taller buildings in the Financial District and South of Market. These buildings, development in the East Bay, the East Bay Hills, and the Bay are the focal points of this vista.

The variable heights and form associated with the proposed project are characteristic of the cityscape seen in this vista. The form and character (e.g., architectural detailing, coloring, surface treatments) of the proposed project is not expected to interrupt the existing focal points associated with this view. The proposed project would not be visually apparent or notable within the view, given the expansive nature of this vista. In addition, there would not be a notable difference between the two land use assumptions.

Views from I-80/Bay Bridge (View 6). Similar to views associated with View 5, scenic vistas from westbound I-80 on the Bay Bridge (Figure 4.B-7, View 6, page 4.B-33) would not be greatly affected by the proposed project. Existing scenic vistas from the Bay Bridge are expansive and offer direct, unobscured views of the city’s port areas, the project site, urban development associated with the city, John McLaren Ridge, San Bruno Mountain, and the Santa Cruz Mountain Range. Within this view, focal points include the Bay, port areas, the cityscape, hillsides back-dropping the city, and immediate views of the Bay Bridge towers and cabling. Development of variable heights is common in the project vicinity and neighboring portions of the city, as seen in the existing view. The variable heights and form associated with the proposed project are similar to the cityscape seen in this vista and appear to be a continuation of the variable heights and forms seen with existing development located along the shoreline between I-80 and Mission Creek. The form and character of the proposed project would not interrupt the existing focal points associated with this view. Although visible, the proposed buildings would not stand out as a notable, independent visual feature. Given the distance between this viewpoint and the project site, any differences in appearance between the High Residential Assumption and the High Commercial Assumption would not be perceptible.
Figure 4.B-6
View 5 — View from Twin Peaks
Looking Northeast

Existing

Proposed

Source: Square One Productions, 2016.
Figure 4.B-7
View 6 — View from the Bay Bridge
Looking Southeast

Source: Square One Productions, 2016.
Other Views. The tops of the proposed buildings could be partially visible from other surrounding locations in the city, such as local streets; however, none of these areas afford scenic vista views. In addition, views of the project site from the East Bay would not be affected by the proposed project because of the distance. In such views, the form and character of the proposed project would not stand out as a notable, independent visual feature from across the Bay.

Overall Impacts on Scenic Vistas. As explained above, the proposed project would result in additional height, bulk, and massing from development of the proposed buildings on the project site. However, the increased development would represent a small portion of the overall urban vista, as viewed from the Potrero Hill neighborhood, Potrero Hill Recreation Center, Twin Peaks, and I-80. From these locations, except for views from I-80, the lower levels of the proposed buildings would be blocked by existing intervening development. The upper levels of the proposed buildings would be visible and, in the case of views from the Potrero Hill Recreation Center and the Potrero Hill neighborhood, would block portions of the existing view of Yerba Buena Island, the Bay Bridge, or both, although these landmarks would still remain partially visible. Overall, from these locations, the proposed project would appear as one element within the surrounding expansive urban development. In addition, views for motorists and their passengers on I-80 and I-280 are momentary, providing, at best, brief opportunities to view scenic vistas. Although the proposed development would block a portion of the view of the East Bay Hills from I-280, existing development in Mission Bay already blocks the East Bay view from this location, and portions of the East Bay Hills would still be visible with project development. The proposed buildings would be highly visible from the AT&T Park/Bay Trail looking southwest and block views of Potrero Hill and Twin Peaks. The silos at Pier 48 would also be visible from this location but would not block views. However, viewers in this vista are more likely to focus on views to the north and east, areas where the views encompass the Bay, the East Bay Hills, and the Bay Bridge. Views to the southwest from this location are of a fairly flat terrain, with buildings in the distance across from China Basin and hills in the city still farther away. In the future, development of buildings of varying heights would be visible immediately across from China Basin rather than the flat terrain and distance hills; however, this view in the future would very likely be similar to the current view of the immediately surrounding urban development to the west in Mission Bay North.

As noted above, the proposed project buildings would be consistent with the height and bulk requirements set forth in Section 291 of the Planning Code for the Mission Rock Height and Bulk District. The Design Controls would serve as a guide to proposed development with respect to bulk, massing, setbacks, and other physical design and use aspects of the development. Implementation of the Design Controls would ensure that the proposed buildings would blend into the fabric of the existing neighborhood and include a design that would
encourage shared architectural elements and rhythms. Examples of guidelines or standards from the Draft Design Controls (on page 158) of how this would be accomplished include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Breaking down the mass of the buildings into several smaller masses. Massing changes should relate to the overall building design, design of the upper building, and other prominent building elements such as fenestration patterns and building entries.
- The length of streetwalls should be varied and articulated to create interest and diversity of experiences, forms, and materials along public ways. Variety is sought to avoid repetitive or oversized buildings and provide visual interest.
- Provide relationship between upper and base portions of buildings to give a sense of the upper building coming to the ground. A similar palette of materials, colors, and fenestration should continue from the upper building to the base building to create a unified composition.

Although the proposed project would add height, bulk, and massing at the project site, this change would not result in a significant impact on a scenic vista. Therefore, based on the above discussion, this impact would be less than significant.

**Impact AE-2. The proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic resource. (Less than Significant)**

As discussed above, Pier 48 is considered to be part of a scenic resource because it is a contributory resource to the Embarcadero Historic District. The Embarcadero Historic District is listed in the National Register and includes 24 contributing buildings and 26 contributing structures. Under the proposed project, the Pier 48 aprons and sheds would be rehabilitated to restore the structural integrity of these features. Improvements would comply with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (the SOI Rehabilitation Standards and the SOI Guidelines, respectively) and the Port Guidelines, which would result in the preservation and enhancement of the aesthetic character of the pier shed architecture.

No exterior expansion of the Pier 48 shed structures would occur. Exterior modifications would be limited to refurbishing existing windows; installing door systems, storefront windows within existing roll-up door openings, and potential new windows; and refurbishing certain areas of the roof. The proposed project would include the installation of a lightweight temporary canopy over a portion of the open-to-sky valley area, minor loading area modifications, and installation of approximately 10 removable grain and yeast silos, up to 50 feet tall, within the valley and north of Shed A at the north apron. Entry signage on the building façade would be recessed to preserve the historic integrity of the sheds. Changes to the roof would limit penetrations to accommodate new flues, vents, and potentially south-facing photovoltaic cells. The added silos
in the valley and the temporary canopy would be lower than the midpoint of the sloping roof and would not be visible above the Pier 48 roofline. An outdoor beer garden would be located north and west of Shed A in a partially enclosed open-air area.

In general, the only noticeable changes to Pier 48 would be the proposed signage and those features surrounding the structure, such as the proposed silos and the outdoor beer garden. Exterior signage on the building façade would be recessed to preserve the integrity of the Pier 48 sheds, and all historic ornamentation and signage, as well as the two flagpoles on the bulkhead buildings, would be retained and preserved. The beer garden could include features such as temporary seating, heating lamps, or screens, all of which would be removable and developed consistent with Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties to ensure that the integrity of Pier 48 would be maintained. For further discussion of compliance with these standards, refer to Section 4.D, Cultural Resources. All other renovations would be limited mainly to the interior. Therefore, because most of the changes at Pier 48 would be on the interior and not visible from the outside, the proposed exterior additions would not result in substantial changes to the visual character of Pier 48. In addition, the majority of Pier 48 historic materials would be preserved and rehabilitated according to the SOI Rehabilitation Standards, SOI Guidelines, and Port Guidelines. Therefore, the Embarcadero Historic District as a whole would still be able to convey its significance as a historical and scenic resource. The impact of the proposed project on scenic resources is considered less than significant.

**Impact AE-3. The proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on the visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. (Less than Significant)**

For the purposes of this analysis, a substantial adverse effect on existing visual character or quality would occur if the proposed project were to introduce a new visible element to the area that would be inconsistent with the overall quality, scale, and character of the surrounding development. The analysis considers the degree of contrast between existing and proposed features that represent that area’s valued aesthetic image, in addition to the degree to which the proposed project would contribute to the area’s aesthetic value. This analysis examines the changes in visual character and quality at the project site itself and how the proposed project would change existing visual character and quality as seen from surrounding areas.

**CONSTRUCTION**

Currently, the project site is an open parking lot, except for Pier 48, China Basin Park, and pop-up retail on the parking lot. The proposed project would introduce construction activities to viewsheds that are available to all viewer groups (residential, commercial, visitor, etc.). Although changes to the visual quality of the project site would be temporary (i.e., during the
construction period), the impacts would occur over a period that could last 6 years or more. Ground-level views of construction activities would be visible primarily from areas immediately adjacent to the project site, with direct views of security fencing and barriers surrounding the project site. Beyond these locations, ground-level views of construction would be obscured by terrain and development surrounding the project site. However, construction activities would become more apparent as the structures are erected. Viewers would be able to see construction workers, ground disturbances, heavy equipment, and associated vehicles such as backhoes, compactors, tractors, and cranes that would construct foundations and supports, erect the structures, and apply surface finishes and architectural detailing. These heavy construction activities would occur close to nearby viewers, both at the ground level and elevated off the ground (i.e., within the mid- to upper stories of existing buildings). Construction may also require nighttime lighting to operate in the dark.

Construction is anticipated to be completed over about four phases, and these phases would appear as a visual continuation that would transition across the site over 6 years or more. However, the majority of viewers in the vicinity are accustomed to seeing heavy machinery, construction fencing and signage, and construction activities related to redevelopment of Mission Bay over the past decade. Therefore, although construction would occur over an extended period of time, the proposed construction would be typical of larger city projects and projects within Mission Bay. The resulting visual conditions would be consistent with existing visual conditions within the project vicinity, resulting in less-than-significant impacts.

**Operation**

**Impacts on Onsite Character.** The proposed project would increase onsite building heights and the density of development. Currently, the project site consists of a paved surface parking lot (Lot A) for approximately 2,170 vehicles, pop-up retail, Pier 48, and China Basin Park. Except for the park, the project site does not include vegetation; the majority of the project site consists of urban and paved features in a human-made environment. The proposed project would add landscaping, bicycle/pedestrian connections and amenities, and modern buildings to the project site. The proposed project’s approximately 8 acres of new and expanded open spaces would include China Basin Park, Mission Rock Square, Channel Wharf, Channel Lane, Waterfront Promenade, pedestrian paseos, and new public access on the apron of Pier 48. The parks would be connected to a new pedestrian-oriented street network, including the pedestrian-privileged Shared Public Way, which would connect China Basin Park to Long Bridge Street and areas south of the project site. These areas would also provide access to the City’s proposed Blue 22The proposed project phasing, as presented in this document, is an estimate, providing the most conservative scenario. The phasing of project implementation would be subject to change due to market conditions and other unanticipated factors and could extend beyond 2023.
Greenway and the planned Bay Trail. As appropriate, the project would be designed to be consistent with the BCDC Bay Plan and Public Access Design Guidelines, discussed above under Regulatory Framework.

The proposed expansion of the existing China Basin Park to 4.4 acres (an expansion of 2.2 acres) would include a range of activities that would be connected to a waterfront promenade and offer waterfront access and views. China Basin Park would serve to connect the northern waterfront\textsuperscript{23} open space network via the Blue Greenway to the existing or planned central waterfront\textsuperscript{24} open space networks of Mission Bay, Pier 70, Hunters Point, and Candlestick Point to the south. The expansion of China Basin Park would provide greater access to open space at the project site. As discussed above, recreational opportunities associated with the park and the Waterfront Promenade would most likely increase the number of viewers at the park and provide for improved scenic urban views of China Basin, AT&T Park, and surrounding urban development as well as the scenic vista views of the Bay, Bay Bridge, and East Bay Hills. The viewer experience at the expanded China Basin Park and surrounding scenic vista views would be enhanced by improved park conditions and the creation of the Waterfront Promenade.

The project would include a tree planting plan for the entire project site, including parks, consistent with the proposed landscape plan and Design Controls (to be approved with the project entitlements). For example, street trees and open space trees would be an element of the Mission Rock master tentative map and would be installed with each phased final map and adjacent streetscape and open space improvements. Per the Design Controls, trees could be native or climate adapted, ranging in height at maturity from 30 to 60 feet. These could include species such as Monterey cypress, New Zealand Christmas tree, red-flowering gum, Chinese elm, strawberry tree, southern live oak, ginkgo, freeman maple, Brisbane box, red oak cultivar, Victorian box, California pepper, cork oak, or melaleuca. Native or climate-appropriate grasses, shrubs, and ground cover would also be planted. Permanent public art pieces would be located in China Basin Park, Mission Rock Square, and Channel Wharf. In addition, stormwater treatment gardens\textsuperscript{25} would be integrated within the programmatic land uses.

Although the visual simulations are conceptual and the architectural details have not yet been designed, it is expected that the proposed buildings would not stand out as being visually obtrusive. In addition, as noted above, the proposed project would further increase available open space areas through the creation of Mission Rock Square, Channel Lane, and Channel Wharf. These features would create a valuable amenity that would provide a visual reprieve.

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\textsuperscript{23} The northern waterfront extends from Pier 45 at Fisherman’s Wharf to AT&T Park along China Basin.
\textsuperscript{24} The central waterfront starts at Mission Bay and ends at Islais Creek.
\textsuperscript{25} Stormwater treatment gardens function as soil- and plant-based filtration devices to remove pollutants in runoff through a variety of physical and biological treatment processes.
within a dense urban setting. Other than from China Basin Park, ground-level scenic vista views from the project site are limited but available when looking north and east toward the Bay from Terry A. Francois Boulevard in locations where there is little to no foreground development to obscure views (i.e., near China Basin Park, between Piers 48 and 50, and near China Basin Street). Under the proposed project, Terry A. Francois Boulevard would terminate at the expanded China Basin Park. Channel Wharf (between Piers 48 and 50), the Blue Greenway, and the Waterfront Promenade would extend onto the project site. These new features would preserve ground-level scenic vista views from the project site. The resulting onsite character would be consistent with existing visual conditions in the project vicinity, resulting in less-than-significant impacts.

**Impacts on the Surrounding Areas.** Development at the project site would substantially increase building height, mass, and bulk compared to existing conditions; however, all height and bulk limits were approved by the voters with the passage of Proposition D in 2015. Buildings in Mission Bay are limited in height to 160 feet, while all Mission Bay development adjacent to Terry A. Francois Boulevard is limited in height to 90 feet. Existing buildings located south of Mission Creek that are closer to the Bay are shorter (five to eight stories) than buildings located farther east, closer to I-280 (14 to 17 stories). The 11 blocks on Seawall Lot 337 could be developed with building heights ranging from 90 feet (approximately seven stories) to a maximum of 240 feet (approximately 23 stories) for the tallest building, excluding mechanical and other accessory penthouse roof enclosures. The tops of upper buildings (towers) may extend up to 20 feet (40 feet on Block F) vertically above the maximum designated building height. These nonhabitable area elements, or wall extensions, would screen rooftop mechanical systems and allow for greater building differentiation and architectural expression. Therefore, the proposed project would result in greater height than that of the surrounding area.

The project site would not be substantially visible from most public view corridors, which, as described above, provide views of important features along a path, roadway, or other corridor where the view is confined by obstructions. Views of the project site from surrounding areas are further limited because of the flat topography, distance, and intervening structures and vegetation. As described above in Impact AE-1, the proposed project would be visible from the Bay Trail, I-80, and I-280. The proposed project would also be visible from Third Street, immediately adjacent to the project site, facing east on Channel Street and Long Bridge Street and facing north on Bridgeview Street. These impacts are discussed below.

**Views from Third Street.** Views from Third Street, facing the project site, encompass regional landmarks (AT&T Park, Yerba Buena Island, the Bay Bridge, and East Bay Hills) that are also considered scenic resources. As shown in View 7 (Figure 4.B-8 on the following page), Lefty O’Doul Bridge, AT&T Park, and the western span of the Bay Bridge are currently visible from the Mission Rock Muni Metro light rail station platform on Third Street (at Mission Rock Street).
Figure 4.B-8

View 7 — View from Third Street (at Mission Rock Street) Looking North

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Vertical and horizontal aerial visual intrusions within this existing view currently create visual clutter. Vertical intrusions include train signals, streetlight posts, street signs, light rail shelters, light rail platforms and ramp railings, and green posts that signify light rail stops. Horizontal aerial visual intrusions include roofs on light rail shelters, traffic light arms attached to light posts and overhanging light standards, and crisscrossing overhead electrical contact wires. These intrusions are more apparent in the existing view where they are back-dropped against the sky.

In general, the proposed project would help to reduce the appearance of vertical and horizontal visual intrusions because the intrusions would be back-dropped against darker buildings, allowing them to blend better with the surroundings. The proposed buildings would eliminate a substantial portion of the visible sky, as seen in the existing view; they would also obstruct views of the Bay Bridge’s western span and reduce available views of AT&T Park. However, views of the project site are not focal points of the Third Street view corridor, which is dominated instead by dense urban uses, vehicles, public transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians. The proposed project would alter the Third Street view corridor, but it would not deteriorate the view. Further, views of AT&T Park would be partially maintained.

Farther south along Third Street, bordering the project site, views of AT&T Park under existing conditions are still available but are less apparent, as seen in the existing view for View 8 (Figure 4.B-9, on the following page), and the Bay Bridge is not visible because of existing intervening structures. AT&T Park is identifiable, with its sloped seating and stadium lighting. Because of the distance and intervening vertical and horizontal roadway intrusions, the existing buildings lining the street in the immediate foreground are more of a focal point in this view than AT&T Park. As seen in the proposed view, the proposed project would emulate a form and visual character that would be consistent with and complementary to the existing buildings along Third Street. Although a portion of the ballpark would be blocked by the proposed project, the Third Street corridor would appear densely developed and more visually complete with the inclusion of the proposed building, as is expected in dense urban settings.

Views from Other Streets. Views of the proposed project would also be available from the western side of Third Street, along Channel Street and Long Bridge Street, facing east. These streets are in the Mission Bay South Redevelopment Plan area. Objectives and policies of the Mission Bay South Redevelopment Plan (as discussed above) encourage the protection of major views of the Bay, Bay Bridge, and the downtown skyline; visual access to the Bay and the channel of China Basin; and recognition that buildings, open spaces, and view corridors, as seen together, create the character of the neighborhood.

Views from streets in the Mission Bay South Redevelopment Plan area are channelized, meaning that the view corridors have limited lateral visibility because of dense development on both sides of the streets. Regardless, the proposed project would preserve the existing channelized view toward the project site because the proposed project would not alter the
Figure 4.B-9

View 8 — View from Third Street
(at Mission Bay Boulevard South) Looking North

Source: Square One Productions, 2016.
existing street pattern. Both Channel Street and Long Bridge Street would continue in an east–west orientation through the project site. Channel Street would terminate at Mission Rock Square, and Long Bridge Street would continue to Terry A. Francois Boulevard, allowing unobstructed channelized views of Pier 50 through the project site. Bridgeview Street would also continue through the project site. When facing north, there would be channelized views of the project site from Bridgeview Street, toward China Basin Park. These views would continue because Bridgeview Street would extend in a north–south orientation through the project site. The proposed project would replicate the Mission Bay street grid by effectively extending all proposed streets north–south and east–west through the site, allowing for the preservation of existing views.

**Conclusion Regarding Impacts on Onsite Visual Character and Surroundings.** The proposed project would create new landscaped open space areas and construct buildings that would reflect an architectural design that would be generally compatible with that of the surrounding development. As described above, existing views from Third Street are blocked mainly by existing intervening structures. The proposed buildings would provide a visual continuation of these features by adding new buildings to the project site. In addition, the proposed project would continue existing streets (Channel Street, Long Bridge Street, and Bridgeview Street) through the project site, preserving existing views and the street grid in the Mission Bay South Redevelopment Plan area. As described above, the proposed project would adhere to the Design Controls, which guide physical development on the project site. Implementation of the Design Controls would ensure that the proposed buildings would be visually consistent with their setting. They would be of a scale, proportion, and level of detail that relates to the fabric of the existing neighborhood. Examples from the Design Controls (on pages 161 and 172) for how this would be accomplished include the following:

- For buildings over 160 feet in height, sculpting of the upper building helps to create visually pleasing, elegant forms that reduce in bulk as they rise toward the sky.
- The design of the façade should consider the relationship of solid to void, bays and recesses, and the creative use of contrasting colors, textures, and patterns. A residential scale and proportion may be achieved using the following design measures:
  - Break the façade up into a greater number of smaller elements toward the base (street level), with fewer larger moves toward the top of the building;
  - Balconies, projections, and changes in plane can be used to break up the massing of both the streetwall and upper building;
  - The longer the façade, the more significant the change in plane, color, or material should be.

Based on the above, the impact on onsite visual character or quality and the surroundings would be **less than significant**.
Impact AE-4. The proposed project would not create a substantial adverse effect on light and glare. (Less than Significant)

Nighttime lighting at the existing project site is variable. The project site can be fairly well lit by vendor lighting and vehicle headlights during night games or events at AT&T Park or events at the project site itself. Stadium lighting at AT&T Park also increases visible lighting at the project site. Lighting levels at the project site are lower during nonevent days at AT&T Park when the site is lit only by street lighting, vehicle headlights on local streets, exterior security lighting associated with onsite pop-up retail and pier sheds, and interior and exterior lighting from buildings located offsite.

When seen in the middle ground and background from surrounding vantage points, such as Twin Peaks, Potrero Hill, and I-80, nighttime lighting associated with the proposed project would be indistinguishable from that of existing development surrounding the project site. In addition, from a distance, the forms of the tallest structures (Blocks A, D1, and F) would be more apparent at night when lit against the night sky; however, such forms are already characteristic of San Francisco’s nighttime skyline, which is viewed as a distinct and scenic skyline. The proposed project would contribute to the existing skyline by adding lighted buildings and would not detract from these valued nighttime scenic vista views. Nighttime and daytime glare associated with the project site would not be distinguishable as separate from existing development surrounding the site.

Similar to distant views, many existing views of the project site within the project vicinity are largely screened by the existing development that surrounds the site, as shown in nighttime View 2 (Figure 4.B-10 on the following page). AT&T Park is in use in this view, as evidenced by the illuminated main scoreboard. Parking lot lighting at the project site is not visible from this vantage point on I-280. Bright stadium lighting and the stadium lighting’s reflective glare on Mission Creek are a main focal point in this nighttime view. Lighting from development in the East Bay is visible across the Bay as a concentrated orange and yellow band along the shoreline, which provides a secondary focal point in existing views. In addition, ambient light glow creates a wider yet dissipated band of warm-colored light that radiates up into the night sky from the East Bay and creates a halo around stadium lighting at AT&T Park.

As seen in Figure 4.B-10, the proposed views illustrate that the proposed project would screen part of the East Bay lighting and light glow from this vantage point. However, it would not screen nighttime lighting associated with AT&T Park from this vantage point. The proposed project would introduce new sources of nighttime lighting that, as seen from this vantage point, would be associated mostly with interior lighting, which would be visible through windows. Although this would increase lighting associated with the project site, it would create more of a visual balance in lighting when AT&T Park is in use. Lighting associated with the project site would be more of a focal point from this vantage point when the stadium is not in use at night.
Figure 4.B-10
View 2 (Nighttime) — View from I-280
Looking Northeast

Existing

Proposed

Source: Square One Productions, 2016.
In addition, the lights in the adjacent buildings surrounding the project site are not illuminated within the existing buildings in both the existing and proposed views, which would not be a typical condition. At the time these photos were taken, the buildings were in the process of being constructed. Construction is a temporary activity and the buildings under construction would be finished at these locations by the time the proposed project is operational. Therefore, for the purpose of this analysis, it is assumed that these existing buildings would be occupied and illuminated at night, as depicted for the proposed project. As a result, it is anticipated that nighttime lighting associated with the project site would blend with existing development in Mission Bay and would not constitute a new substantial source of nighttime lighting.

Project impacts resulting from light and glare are most likely to occur at locations that have immediate foreground views of the project site. From street-level vantages points within the project vicinity and near the project site, site lighting would blend in with lighting associated with other development and would not stand out as being out of character or substantially increase lighting levels in the vicinity. However, standard exterior lighting and light-emitting diode (LED) lighting, if used, could affect sensitive receptors if not properly designed. LED lights, in particular, can negatively affect humans by increasing nuisance light and glare, in addition to increasing ambient light glow, if proper shielding is not provided and blue-rich white light (BRWL) lamps are used. This would result in a substantial source of project-related nighttime light and glare that could adversely affect nighttime views in the area.

Similarly, windows would be the most prominent source of daytime glare and could affect viewers in the mid- to upper-level stories of nearby existing buildings to the south and west as well as viewers who are outside or driving to the north of the project site. Glare is most likely to be an issue on proposed building faces that are not located next to existing development, which would block the sun, such as where the buildings would be taller than surrounding development (Blocks A, D1, F, and K) and where proposed building faces would be exposed along the outer edge of the development and shoreline (Blocks A, G, and K and Blocks H–J), as seen in proposed View I in Figure 4.B-2 (page 4.B-25). Glare is most likely to occur in the morning as the sun is rising from the east and in the early evening when the sun is setting to the west. Lower sun angles cause sunlight to hit and reflect off of windows, resulting in glare and specular highlighting. However, the Design Controls that would guide physical development on the project site would ensure that the buildings would not result in substantial light and

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glare impacts on the surrounding community. The Design Controls (on page 180) specify that all exterior light must be suitable for a given “Lighting Zone,” as defined by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) and Illuminating Engineering Society of North American (IESNA). All lighting would be shielded to prevent glare at private and public uses, especially residential units. The angle of maximum candela from each interior luminaire located in the buildings would intersect opaque building interior surfaces and not exit out through windows. All proposed lighting would incorporate cut-off controls to enable compliance with the Green Building Specifications attached to the Design Controls as well as the “Light Zone” credit requirements found in the USGBC’s current Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards for new construction. All luminaires would be at least semi-cut-off types (directed light designs to shield against light pollution), with non-cutoff types only as permitted, subject to review and approval. The Design Controls would also encourage all surfaces that are visible to the exterior to be studied for luminance ratios and glare, because illuminated surfaces, rather than the light source itself, can often be the major source of glare from a building. All lighting adjacent to the Bay would be designed and oriented so that lighting would face inward and toward the shoreline, minimizing light trespass into adjacent waters.

Windows installed within proposed project buildings would be selected for their ability to minimize glare. Per City Planning Commission Resolution 9212, the proposed project would be prohibited from using mirrored or reflective glass on buildings. To the extent feasible, windows would be designed to effectively reduce the refractive index of glass windows and prevent interior light from being emitted brightly through the glass. This could be achieved by a low-emissivity coating on exterior glass surfaces of proposed structures. To achieve a baseline minimum of daylighting and reduce reflectance, 90 percent of all glazing would have at least a 55 percent or higher visible light transmittance (Tvis) value. Additionally, the proposed project would be required to adhere to Planning Code Section 139, the San Francisco Bird-Safe Building Ordinance, which focuses on buildings that create location-specific hazards and building-feature hazards with respect to bird collisions. Section 139, requires 90 percent of glazing in the Bird Collision Zone (i.e., 60 feet above grade, plus 60 feet above an adjacent vegetated roof, 2 acres or larger) to be treated (i.e., fritted,\textsuperscript{27} stenciled, frosted, or covered with netting, screens, grids, or bird-visible ultraviolet patterns, as defined in Section 139). The Bird-Safe Building Ordinance specifies façade treatments for glazing and lighting design, as outlined above.

Implementation of the Design Controls for the proposed buildings, City Planning Commission Resolution 9212, and Planning Code Section 139 would ensure that all light and glare impacts on surrounding areas are less than significant.

\textsuperscript{27} Fritted glass refers to glass with ceramic or metal particles that have been fused to the glass to create an opaque or textured surface. The particles are generally opaque and can be applied to either the entire surface of the glass or just particular areas to create decorative patterns.
CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

This analysis of the contribution of the proposed project to cumulative aesthetics impacts is based on consideration of the reasonably foreseeable future projects identified in Table 4-1 in Chapter 4, Environmental Setting and Impacts. The reasonably foreseeable projects that are closest to the project site and included within the geographic context of the cumulative scenario include Mission Bay Blocks 1, 3E, 4E, 6E, 6W, 9, 9A, and 12E.

Impact C-AE-1. The proposed project, in combination with other foreseeable development in the surrounding area, would not have a significant cumulative impact on visual character or the quality of scenic vistas or public view corridors and would not cumulatively contribute to new sources of light, glare, or shadows. (Less than Significant)

Similar to the proposed project, each of the reasonably foreseeable projects involves the infill of urban land uses within the vicinity of or immediately adjacent to the project site. Under the guidance of the Mission Bay South Redevelopment Plan, the surrounding area is undergoing an ongoing intensification of land uses from previous conditions. Similar to the proposed project, build out of the other reasonably foreseeable projects entails replacing numerous parking lots, vacant lots, and light industrial uses with pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use (mainly residential) developments that are characterized by a variety of building forms, heights, and architectural detailing. Other than the Embarcadero Historic District, no other scenic resources exist in the area.

SCENIC VISTAS

Views from the Bay Trail. In addition to the proposed project, reasonably foreseeable development along Mission Creek could also be visible from the portion of the Bay Trail next to AT&T Park. The foreground views of China Basin would remain the same, but the middle ground and background views would be altered with development of cumulative projects. The new buildings could be visible from the Bay Trail because of the increased massing and height, but the majority of buildings from other development would most likely be blocked by proposed structures at the project site. Taller structures associated with the proposed project would block the majority of views of development within Mission Bay, block all views of Potrero Hill, and decrease views of Twin Peaks from the Bay Trail. With implementation of other projects along Mission Creek, views of the Twin Peaks ridge would most likely still be visible through the Mission Creek view corridor. Views from the Bay Trail near AT&T Park generally focus on areas away from the project site and other development along Mission Creek and more toward the north and east where views encompass the panoramic and expansive

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28 Given the construction schedule for Mission Bay Block 1, the following sections assume this project is in the baseline: 4.F, Noise; 4.G, Air Quality; 4.I, Wind and Shadow. Block 1 was not under construction at the time the visual simulations were prepared and, as such, is shown in the cumulative condition rather than the baseline.
scenery of the Bay, Bay Bridge, and East Bay Hills. Therefore, the proposed project, in combination with other development projects in the vicinity, would not block the majority of scenic views, as seen from the Bay Trail near AT&T Park.

**Views from I-280.** As shown in proposed cumulative View 2 from I-280 (Figure 4.B-11 on the following page), similar to the proposed project, projects along Mission Creek would introduce development with tall buildings close to the Bay. The architectural detailing, coloring, and surfacing treatments of the reasonably foreseeable buildings would be guided by the Mission Bay Design for Development, which also has guided the architectural detailing, coloring, and surfacing treatments of existing buildings constructed within Mission Bay. Therefore, development along Mission Creek would be consistent with existing development surrounding the site and would not stand out as being visually obtrusive within this vista. The primary change in scenic vista views resulting from the reasonably foreseeable projects is that a greater concentration of taller buildings would be introduced in proximity to the Bay’s shoreline and further constrict views; therefore, greater portions of views of the Bay, South Beach Harbor Marina, and the East Bay Hills would be hidden.

**Views from the Potrero Hill Neighborhood.** Within middle ground views, existing development prevents views of the lower portions of reasonably foreseeable projects in the same fashion it would for the proposed project, as shown in proposed cumulative View 3 from the Potrero Hill neighborhood (Figure 4.B-12, page 4.B-51). The upper portions of the towers associated with taller reasonably foreseeable structures would be visible and would obscure portions of the towers associated with the proposed project but would not be taller than the proposed project or further obstruct views of the Bay, Bay Bridge, Yerba Buena Island, or the East Bay Hills. In addition, the general form of the variable heights associated with the reasonably foreseeable projects would be characteristic of the cityscape seen in this vista view.

Depending on the view, however, reasonably foreseeable developments may seem slightly inconsistent with the existing development within scenic vista views, as shown in proposed cumulative View 4 from the Potrero Hill Recreation Center (Figure 4.B-13, page 4.B-52). Within this view, the visual character of buildings associated with reasonably foreseeable projects could seem slightly inconsistent with the existing development with respect to their architectural detailing, coloring, and surfacing treatments. For example, the residential dwellings in the foreground are small two- or three-story buildings and colored predominantly in white, beige, and taupe, with grey, orange, and brown flat or peaked roofs. The other projects are likely to appear greyer because of the predominance of the windows that are typically used in high-rise buildings, which would be similar to those of the proposed project. The taller structures associated with the reasonably foreseeable projects would be visible, and although these projects would not be taller than the proposed project, they would still appear taller than surrounding development and further obstruct views of the Bay, Bay Bridge piers, and Treasure Island from this vista view. However, these would not stand out as being visually obtrusive within this vista.
Figure 4.B-11

View 2 — View from I-280

Looking Northeast
View 3 — View from Potrero Hill Neighborhood
Looking Northeast

Figure 4.B-12

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Figure 4.B-13
View 4 — View from Potrero Hill Recreation Center
Looking Northeast

Existing

Proposed (Cumulative)

Source: Square One Productions, 2016.

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Views from Twin Peaks. Within background views, existing development prevents views of the lower portions of other projects in the same fashion it would the proposed project, as shown in proposed cumulative View 5 from Twin Peaks (Figure 4.B-14 on the following page). The architectural detailing, coloring, and surfacing treatments associated with the reasonably foreseeable buildings would likely be consistent with existing development surrounding the sites and therefore would not stand out as being visually obtrusive within this vista. The upper portions of taller structures would be visible but would not be taller than the proposed project or surrounding development. Given the expansive nature of this vista, the proposed project and the other proposed buildings would not interrupt the existing focal points associated with this scenic view to the degree that the reasonably foreseeable projects would not be visually apparent or notable within the view.

Views from I-80/Bay Bridge. Similar to views associated with View 5, scenic vista views from the westbound I-80 Bay Bridge (Figure 4.B-15, View 6, page 4.B-55) would not be greatly affected by the other development projects. The architectural detailing, coloring, and surfacing treatments associated with the reasonably foreseeable buildings would most likely be consistent with existing development surrounding the site and therefore would not stand out as being visually obtrusive within this vista. The upper portions of taller structures would be visible, and although taller than surrounding development, these buildings would not be taller than the proposed project. However, as seen in the existing view from this vantage point, development of variable heights is common in the project vicinity and neighboring portions of the city. Therefore, the proposed project, in combination with the other foreseeable projects, would not be visually apparent or notable within the view. In addition, the other development would not interrupt existing focal points within this scenic vista view associated with the city, John McLaren Ridge, the San Bruno Mountains, and the Santa Cruz Mountain Range.

Conclusion Regarding Impacts on Scenic Vistas. As with the proposed project, the other reasonably foreseeable projects are likely to be consistent with the design requirements set forth in respective design controls. In addition, the architectural detailing, coloring, and surfacing treatments of the reasonably foreseeable buildings would be guided by the Mission Bay Design for Development, which also has guided these design aspects of existing buildings constructed within Mission Bay. Although the proposed project and the other development would add height, bulk, and massing to the project vicinity, this change would not result in a significant impact on a scenic vista. The increased development would represent a small portion of the overall urban vista, as viewed from the Potrero Hill neighborhood, Potrero Hill Recreation Center, Twin Peaks, and I-80. From these locations, except for views from I-80, the lower levels of the other project buildings would be blocked by existing intervening development. The upper levels would be visible and, in the case of views from the Potrero Hill Recreation Center and the Potrero Hill neighborhood, would block portions of the view.
Figure 4.B-14
View 5 — View from Twin Peaks
Looking Northeast

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of Yerba Buena Island, the Bay Bridge, or both, although these landmarks would remain partially visible. Overall, from these locations, the proposed project, along with other cumulative development, would appear as one element within the surrounding expansive urban development.

Although other development and the proposed project would be highly visible from the Bay Trail, views from this vista are focused more toward the north and east where views encompass the Bay, the Bay Bridge, and the East Bay Hills.

Although the proposed project and nearby development would add height, bulk, and massing to the project vicinity, this change would not result in a significant impact on a scenic vista. Thus, cumulative impacts on scenic vistas would be \textit{less than significant}.

\textbf{SCENIC RESOURCES}

Although there are no state-designated scenic routes associated with the other reasonably foreseeable projects, I-80 and I-280 are eligible State Scenic Highways with scenic vista views. Cumulative impacts on these vista views are analyzed above and not considered under this impact. Other than the Embarcadero Historic District, no other scenic resources exist in the area.

As discussed for the project analysis, the proposed project would not degrade scenic resources associated with Pier 48, a contributing resource to the Embarcadero Historic District. No other foreseeable development projects are expected to affect the Embarcadero Historic District as a historical or scenic resource. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to scenic resources would be \textit{less than significant}.

\textbf{VISUAL CHARACTER}

As analyzed above under scenic vistas, the visual character of the other reasonably foreseeable project buildings would be mostly consistent with existing development surrounding the sites and would most likely not stand out as being visually obtrusive from the standpoint of architectural detailing, coloring, and surface treatments. Existing development in the area adheres to the Design for Development guidelines outlined in the Mission Bay South Redevelopment Plan. The reasonably foreseeable projects listed above would also be required to adhere to these guidelines, which establish height limits for buildings as well as land coverage, density, setback, design, and sign criteria along with other design controls for development. Therefore, the other projects would not be expected to change the quality of the area in a way that would be incompatible with the existing visual character. Similar to the proposed project, the other existing and reasonably foreseeable projects are likely to improve views and increase available open spaces through implementation of the guidelines. These features would be valuable amenities that would provide a visual reprieve within a dense urban setting and improve the quality of views associated with cumulative projects.
As described above, the proposed project would not degrade the visual character or quality of the project site or its surroundings. Although, similar to the proposed project, other cumulative development would substantially increase building height, mass, and bulk compared to existing conditions, all proposed development would be required to adhere to their respective design controls and consider the existing environment and views. Therefore, cumulative impacts on onsite and offsite visual quality would be less than significant.

LIGHT AND GLARE

The other cumulative development in the area could include new illumination sources that would increase nighttime lighting, ambient light glow, and glare levels (e.g., from interior and exterior building lighting, street and pedestrian pathway lighting, parking lot lighting, and vehicle headlights). Reflective building surfaces or buildings that include large expanses of windows would also increase glare. The other cumulative projects would involve redevelopment or infill of urban sites that already generate light and glare or receive light and glare from surrounding existing sources. Therefore, these buildings are not anticipated to be large enough in scale to result in a substantial increase in nighttime lighting and glare conditions in the area. In addition, cumulative projects would apply the Design for Development guidelines in the Mission Bay South Redevelopment Plan, which address light and glare issues, and, similar to the proposed project, adhere to City Planning Commission Resolution 9212 and Planning Code Section 139. The proposed project would be required to implement the Design Controls, Resolution 9212, and Planning Code Section 139, which would ensure that the project’s impact related to light and glare is less than significant. Thus, cumulative impacts from daytime and nighttime lighting and glare would be less than significant.