
7. VISUAL FACTORS

This EIR chapter identifies potential visual impacts that may result from implementation of the proposed Project and identifies mitigation measures as necessary. The analyses and descriptions in this chapter were prepared with the assistance of the EIR consulting urban designers, Bottomley Design & Planning. The chapter describes the visual context of the Project Area and identifies relevant policies from the City of San Francisco General Plan, Planning Code, and other City policy documents. The chapter includes an assessment of Project buildout scenario impacts on the Visitacion Valley viewshed based on computer-generated "before" and "after" visual simulations from key vantage points produced by the EIR visual simulation consultants, Environmental Vision.

7.1 SETTING

7.1.1 Visual Quality of the Project Area

(a) Existing Structures and Uses. The Project Area contains two visually distinct subareas: Zone 1 on the east side of Bayshore Boulevard, which includes the former Schlage Lock site and adjacent dormant industrial parcels owned by Union Pacific and Universal Paragon; and Zone 2 primarily on the west side of Bayshore Boulevard, which includes properties fronting on the west side of Bayshore Boulevard and both sides of Leland Avenue, plus properties within the Blanken Triangle, all currently in mixed use.

Zone 1. The primary component of Zone 1 is the Schlage Lock site, which was home to a hardware manufacturing facility that operated between 1926 and 1999. Six large industrial buildings, ranging from one to three stories in height, and from approximately 30,000 to 190,000 square feet in footprint area, currently sit vacant in Zone 1. In addition, the vacant three-story, Spanish Colonial style "Old Schlage Lock Administration Building" located at the north end of Zone 1, is a prominent and distinctive existing visual feature. Other smaller industrial buildings, including former storage sheds and a security office, are located within Zone 1. In total, Zone 1 contains an estimated 570,000 square feet of mostly vacant industrial building space.

Existing buildings in Zone 1 are predominantly large and "boxy," with little architectural articulation, with the exception of the clerestory roof forms on the main Schlage Lock manufacturing structure, which are typical of older manufacturing facilities, and the "Old Schlage Lock Administration Building." Expansive, blank wall frontages are typical throughout Zone 1. The stark, blank building walls are particularly noticeable along the Bayshore Boulevard frontage. Open yard and parking areas are located along the Caltrain railroad line on the easterly portion of Zone 1. There are few landscape materials within Zone 1; a small number of street trees exist along Bayshore Boulevard, and a small landscaped courtyard (mostly hidden from public view) is located within the Schlage Lock facility.

Zone 2. In Zone 2, frontages along Bayshore Boulevard are characterized by a much more "fine-grained" variety of predominantly commercial land uses, with varying building sizes, heights, styles and occupancies. Building heights along the frontage vary from one to three stories. A few scattered street trees are located along the roadway edge.

Leland Avenue is the Visitacion Valley neighborhood's "main street," a traditional neighborhood commercial district of a type found throughout San Francisco. Commercial storefront buildings line the eastern segment of the street closest to Bayshore, typically with neighborhood-serving businesses on the first floor and residential apartments above. Buildings along Leland become more residential in character toward the west. The Leland corridor also contains several civic uses, including a branch post office, branch library and small park (Hans Schiller Plaza). The corridor also contains a significant number of vacant and underused properties.

(b) Existing Visual Character. Visitacion Valley is formed by the topographic basin located southeast of McLaren Park and reaching out to San Francisco Bay. The slopes of McLaren Park create and separate the Valley from the rest of San Francisco.¹ Geography and street grid features link more directly to cities to the south--i.e., Brisbane and Daly City--than to central San Francisco.

Bayshore Boulevard. Bayshore Boulevard, which extends through the Project Area in a generally north-south direction, is a four-lane roadway that is the primary connection between Visitacion Valley and the rest of San Francisco. The Boulevard contains the city's newest light rail extension, the Muni Metro T line, with track and boarding platforms located in the center median of the right-of-way. Curbside parking is located along both sides of the Boulevard. The east frontage contains the large bulk, older industrial buildings of Zone 1 (Schlage Lock site); the west frontage is comprised of a more fine-grained mix of smaller mixed-use commercial buildings of Zone 2, as well as underused parcels and vacant lots. A handful of street trees, varying in size and condition, are located along both sides of the street frontage at irregular patterns.

Bayshore Boulevard is not a particularly attractive street, lacking the streetscape-related pedestrian amenities that typify a number of San Francisco's transit corridors, although new streetlights and station shelters installed as part of the Muni Metro T line extension add visual interest and unity to the Boulevard. Sidewalks along both sides of the Boulevard are relatively narrow. There are no consistent street tree plantings, sidewalk furnishings, or enhanced pedestrian crossings to encourage pedestrian activity.

Subarea Differences. The two Project Area subareas, Zone 1 and Zone 2, have distinct, almost opposite visual characteristics. Most of Zone 1 (including the Schlage Lock site) is generally monolithic in appearance, consisting for the most part of large-footprint, large-volume, single-use structures with, other than the "saw-tooth" clerestory roof features, little variety in building form or architectural design. Building heights range from approximately 25 to 40 feet. A nearly solid building wall lines the east frontage of Bayshore Boulevard, with none of the existing neighborhood streets north of Sunnydale Avenue extending across Bayshore into the subarea. With the exception of the Spanish Colonial style "Old Schlage Lock Administration Building," a particularly prominent and distinctive visual feature located at Bayshore Boulevard and Blanken Avenue, existing structures in Zone 1 along the east side of the Boulevard were designed to be

¹City and County of San Francisco Planning Department, *Profiles of Community Planning Areas: San Francisco's Eastern Neighborhoods*; 1999-2007.

utilitarian, with few doors, windows, or other elements to add architectural interest. As a result, most of Zone 1 has the appearance of being “walled off” from Visitacion Valley neighborhood areas on the opposite side of Bayshore Boulevard.

By contrast, Zone 2, including the westside Bayshore Boulevard frontage, the Leland Avenue commercial district, and the Blanken Triangle, consists of primarily small, relatively narrow lots with small-footprint, small-volume, mixed-use structures that create a more “fine-grained” and interesting visual character. The mixture of commercial and residential land uses in Zone 2 generates significant pedestrian activity, and frontages along both Leland Avenue and Bayshore Boulevard vary lot-by-lot in terms of building facades, rooflines, heights, styles, and occupants. However, there is consistency between Zone 1 and Zone 2 in terms of the overall age of structures, with many buildings in both subareas generally dating to the early 1900s (see further discussion of this characteristic in chapter 10, Cultural and Historic Resources).

Railroad Tracks. The existing Caltrain rail line is located along the eastern edge of Zone 1. The new, recently relocated Caltrain Bayshore station is located at the southeast corner of Zone 1. Additional Union Pacific railroad trackage runs parallel to the Caltrain tracks, with a spur curving inward in a southeast direction in the southern portion of Zone 1 (see Figure 3.3). A railroad tunnel is located adjacent to the northern edge of Zone 1 just south of Blanken Avenue. The four-track railroad right-of-way along the east edge of the subarea is approximately 100 feet wide and is a distinct visual feature. Such multi-track rail corridors are generally a visual “disamenity,” with negative visual effects on adjacent and nearby properties.

7.1.2 Visual Character of the Project Area Vicinity

(a) Visitacion Valley Neighborhood. The Project Area lies at the foot of the Visitacion Valley neighborhood, as illustrated by Figure 3.3 in chapter 3 (Project Description). The Visitacion Valley neighborhood exhibits characteristics typical of other San Francisco residential neighborhoods, with small lots, generally consistent building setbacks, varied building heights, and a collection of different, older architectural styles. The pattern of local streets and blocks changes north and south of Leland Avenue; north of Leland Avenue, blocks are longer in the east-west direction, while south of Leland Avenue blocks are longer in the north-south direction. Along Leland Avenue itself, blocks along the north frontage are approximately twice as long as those on the south.

(b) Little Hollywood. The Little Hollywood neighborhood is located north and east of the Project Area along Blanken Avenue between the dormant industrial district (Zone 1) and Highway 101. Building types and heights, parcel sizes, and block configurations are similar to Visitacion Valley neighborhood areas south of Leland Avenue; however, this neighborhood is visually distinguished by its collection of Southern California-style bungalows.

7.1.3 Views of the Project Area From Surrounding Areas

The Project Area is located in the relatively low-lying basin at the foot of Visitacion Valley. Portions of the Project Area are of course immediately visible from the Bayshore Boulevard segment running through the area, as well as from the Bayshore Boulevard approaches to the Project Area. Primary hillside vantage points with views of the Project Area include neighborhood areas to the northwest, as well as McLaren Park, Bayview Park, and the slopes of San Bruno Mountain to the south. The east edge of the Project Area is also visible from passing Caltrain trains.

The view of the Project Area from the northbound Bayshore Boulevard approach immediately to the south in the city of Brisbane (viewpoint 1 on Figure 7.1, Viewpoint Locations) is illustrated by the "Existing View" photo on Figure 7.2. The view of the Project Area from the southbound Bayshore Boulevard approach immediately north of the area (viewpoint 2 on Figure 7.1) is illustrated by the "Existing View" photo on Figure 7.3.

Views of the Project Area from Visitacion Valley hillside vantage points to the north and northwest (viewpoints 3, 4, and 5 on Figure 7.1) are illustrated by the "Existing View" photos on Figures 7.4, 7.5, and 7.6. A typical view of the Project Area from more distant vantage points to south in the city of Brisbane (viewpoint 6 on Figure 7.1) is illustrated by the "Existing View" photo on Figure 7.7.

As indicated by these "Existing View" photos, the Bayshore Boulevard views of the Project Area are generally characterized by a solid wall of large, high-bulk, industrial/warehouse buildings in Zone 1 on the east side of the Boulevard, and more fine-grained groupings of neighborhood-scale commercial, residential and mixed use buildings in Zone 2 on the west side of the Boulevard. Similarly, from the hillside vantage points to the north and northwest, the Project Area viewscape is dominated by the large, flat-roofed structures and expansive parking and outdoor storage yard areas of Zone 1 east of Bayshore Boulevard, in contrast to the fine-grained building pattern and varied "roofscape" patterns in Zone 2 to the west.

7.1.4 Outward Views from the Project Area

Outward views from the Project Area to the northeast, north, west, and south are contained by attractive hillside slopes, including McLaren Park to the northwest and San Bruno Mountain to the southwest. Existing buildings are not tall enough to block external views of surrounding natural features or other visual amenities. Adjacent residential development on the lower slopes of the Visitacion Valley basin to the north and west is directly visible from Project Area vantage points. Views towards the east and south from Zone 1 vantage points are less attractive, encompassing the Caltrain railroad tracks to the east and the vast, cleared former railroad switching yard lands of the Baylands area in Brisbane to the south.

7.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

7.2.1 Relevant General Plan Policies

The San Francisco General Plan is comprised of ten elements. The *Urban Design Element* is the most relevant to assessment of visual impacts. The General Plan also contains ten area plans that specify more localized urban design goals and objectives for selected neighborhoods and districts of the City; Visitacion Valley is not subject to an area plan.

General Plan *Urban Design Element* objectives and policies pertinent to consideration of the visual impacts of the Project are listed below:

- *Moderation of major new development to complement the City pattern, the resources to be conserved, and the neighborhood environment. (Objective 3)*
- *Make use of street space and other unused public areas for recreation. (Policy 4.11)*

- *Improve pedestrian areas by providing human scale and interest.* (Policy 4.13)

Also, the General Plan *Commerce and Industry Element* contains the following relevant policy:

- *Promote high-quality urban design on commercial streets.* (Policy 6.7)

In addition, as described in chapter 4 (Project Consistency with Local and Regional Plans) of this EIR, the recent voter passage of Proposition M, the Accountable Planning Initiative, added section 101.1 to the City Planning Code to establish eight General Plan "Priority Policies." These policies are included in the preamble to the General Plan and serve as the basis upon which inconsistencies in the General Plan are resolved. The "Priority Policy" most relevant to visual factors is policy (2), which calls for existing housing and neighborhood character to be conserved and protected.

The *Generalized Neighborhood Commercial Land Use and Density Plan* map of the General Plan designates properties along the westerly frontage of Bayshore Boulevard in the Project Area as a "Moderate-Scale Neighborhood District" with building heights of one to four stories. Leland Avenue is designated on the map as a "Small-Scale Neighborhood District" with building heights of one to two stories.

The *Urban Design Guidelines for Height of Buildings* map of the General Plan designates the entire Project Area for a building height range of 0 to 40 feet.

7.2.2 Relevant Planning Code Provisions

The existing Planning Code (Zoning Map) designations for Zone 1 are "M-1" Light Industrial (the former Schlage Lock property) and "M-2" Heavy Industrial (the former Southern Pacific Railroad properties). The Planning Code designations for parcels in Zone 2 along the west side of Bayshore Boulevard and along Leland Avenue are "NC-3" Moderate-Scale Neighborhood Commercial District and "NC-2" Small-Scale Neighborhood Commercial District, respectively, with maximum building heights of two stories and four stories. Properties in the Blanken Triangle portion of Zone 2 are designated "NC-1" Neighborhood Commercial. These existing designations are intended to preserve the existing scale and character of the area.

7.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

7.3.1 Significance Criteria

Based on the CEQA Guidelines and standard practice, the proposed Project (the redevelopment program) would be considered to have a significant impact on visual quality if it would:

- (1) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of the City of San Francisco, including but not limited to the San Francisco General Plan and Planning Code, adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating and environmental effect;
- (2) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;

- (3) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings;
- (4) Require substantial terrain modifications;
- (5) Significantly alter public views or view corridors;
- (6) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area;
- (7) Result in a building scale that is not consistent with the surrounding community; or
- (8) Substantially shadow public open space (other than public streets and adjacent sidewalks) between 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM from September 21 to March 21.

7.3.2 Policy Documents Included in Proposed Project

The proposed Redevelopment Plan and associated Design for Development were prepared based on extensive community input and contain goals, policies, development controls, and design guidelines formulated to enhance the visual quality of the local physical environment. The land use and circulation layout, urban design framework, building form, development control, design guidelines and "green strategy" recommendations of these Project documents are described in sections 3.6 (Proposed Redevelopment Plan) and 3.7 (Proposed Design for Development) of chapter 3 (Project Description), herein.

The Design for Development document would have the most substantive effects on the visual character of Project-facilitated development. The Design for Development is intended to be the primary companion document to the Redevelopment Plan, building upon the 2002 Concept Plan and incorporating the 2006 Leland Street Design Project. The draft Design for Development contains specific development controls and design guidelines which incorporate, expand upon and refine the land use circulation and urban design concepts identified in the Concept Plan. The Design for Development development controls and design guidelines are intended to apply in combination with associated underlying General Plan amendments and Planning Code changes to regulate future development within the Project Area.

Zone 1 represents the portion of the Project Area considered for significant reuse. Future development proposals within both Zone 1 and 2 would be required to comply with all applicable requirements of the Redevelopment Plan, Design for Development, and underlying General Plan and Planning Code provisions as amended.

(a) Urban Design Framework. The Design for Development first describes an urban design framework upon which the more detailed development controls and design guidelines are based. The overall vision for redevelopment of the two zones calls for creation of a "vibrant, mixed use community including new retail, residential uses and open space areas integrated with the existing community, and designed to the highest levels of design and environmental quality."¹ The Design for Development "Urban Design Concept Plan" illustrating these themes, is illustrated on Figure 3.6 (Proposed Design for Development "Urban Concept Plan") in chapter

¹January 2008 Draft Design for Development, page 16.

3 of this EIR. Similar to the 2002 Concept Plan, the 2008 Design for Development states that "Visitacion Valley's east/west streets will continue across Bayshore Boulevard into the Schlage Lock site and integrate the site with the larger Visitacion Valley neighborhood."¹ Development within the Zone 1 would contain a mid-sized grocery store, ground floor retail at specific locations, and housing of various sizes and affordability levels throughout the zone, as well as new parks and preservation and conversion of the "Old Schlage Lock Administration Building" on Blanken Avenue into a new community center.

(b) Building Form Recommendations. The Design for Development also describes a proposed "ideal building form that ranges in height from three to eight stories throughout the site,"² with "frequent breaks in [building] facades to reduce apparent building mass and bulk."³ Three residential building types are envisioned:

- mid-rise podium buildings providing higher density multi-family units at limited locations;
- courtyard podium buildings where housing units encircle a common open space; and
- attached row house units.

The revised building height limitations called for in the draft Design for Development are illustrated on Figure 3.8 (Proposed Building Height Limitations) in chapter 3 of this EIR. The following Design for Development-recommended building height ranges are generally illustrated by Figure 3.8:

- 3-4 story buildings in the area north of Visitacion Avenue and along Bayshore Boulevard;
- 3-5 story commercial (mixed use) buildings in the southwest corner of Zone 1, with residential above ground-floor retail or, should housing construction prove to be infeasible due to associated soil remediation requirements, single-story retail only;
- 5-6 story podium buildings in the southeast residential portion of the site; and
- 8-story mid-rise building locations at two sites along the adjacent railroad tracks, one fronting on a proposed new "Leland Park" immediately west of the tracks on the north side of the Visitacion Avenue extension, and a second immediately west of the tracks on the north side of the Sunnydale Avenue extension.

(c) Development Controls and Design Guidelines. The 2008 Design for Development contains a comprehensive set of proposed specific Development Controls and Design Guidelines (DCDG's) for Zones 1 and 2 which, in combination with underlying General Plan policies and Planning Code requirements as amended, are intended to regulate future development within the Project Area. The DCDG's have been formulated to implement the "urban design framework" and "building form" concepts described above.

¹Design for Development, page 16.

²Design for Development, page 20.

³Design for Development, page 20.

The proposed "Development Controls" are intended to be mandatory requirements essential to achieving the project goals and objectives. The proposed "Design Guidelines" are intended as recommendations that are not mandatory, but are designed to direct building and site design to be of the character and quality specified by the community through the workshop process.

The draft Design for Development includes particularly detailed DCDG's for Redevelopment Zone 1 which specifically address permitted land use, building height, building massing, building setbacks, retail entrance characteristics, residential entrance characteristics, façade design, roof design, private open space, construction period site remediation and long-term green building design (LEED¹) performance standards, street grid and block layout characteristics, street design, public open space, public pathways, parking loading and access, and signage.

The Design for Development DCDG's for Redevelopment Zone 2 include revised building height and massing controls along the west side of Bayshore Boulevard and associated design guidelines to complement well-established existing General Plan and Planning Code provisions for Bayshore Boulevard and Leland Avenue.

7.3.4 Visual Simulations

For purposes of depicting the "before" and "after" visual impacts of the anticipated "with Project" development scenario, six viewpoints have been selected in consultation with City Redevelopment and Planning Department staff as representative of the Project Area's visibility. Figure 7.1 illustrates these selected viewpoints. Factors considered in selecting the viewpoints included relative Project visibility, the number and sensitivity of viewers, and views from public open spaces.

Figures 7.2 through 7.7 show "before" and simulated "after" views from the six selected viewpoints. The six selected viewpoints are:

- Figure 7.2: Viewpoint 1--From Bayshore Boulevard at Sunnydale Avenue Looking North. This view is from the center of Bayshore Boulevard at the city/county line near Sunnydale Avenue, looking north up Bayshore Boulevard. The Muni Metro T line extends down the center of the street. Redevelopment Zone 1 (including the vacant Schlage Lock site) is on the right side of the photo.
- Figure 7.3: Viewpoint 2--From San Bruno Avenue at Racine Lane Looking South. This view is from Racine Avenue looking south, with the intersection of Racine and Arleta Avenue in the foreground. San Bruno Mountain is visible in the distance.
- Figure 7.4: Viewpoint 3--From Alpha Street near Tucker Avenue Looking South. This view is from Alpha Street near Tucker Avenue in the hillside residential area located north and west of the Project Area, looking south and east. San Bruno Mountain encloses the view to the south.
- Figure 7.5: Viewpoint 4--From Goettingen Street Looking South. This view is from Goettingen street in the hillside residential area located north of the Project Area, looking south toward the Project Area. Zone 1 (including the vacant Schlage Lock site) is located in

¹LEED: Leadership in Energy and Environment Design green buildings standards established by the United State Green Building Council.

the center of the view with the Caltrain rail line and Tunnel Avenue to the left. San Bruno Mountain encloses the view to the south.

- Figure 7.6: Viewpoint 5--From McLaren Park Looking Southeast. This view is from McLaren Park with Ervine Street in the foreground, looking southeast over the Project Area. Zone 1 is located in the center of the view, with south San Francisco Bay and Candlestick Point in the distance.
- Figure 7.7: Viewpoint 6--From Bayshore Boulevard near Guadalupe Canyon Parkway Looking North. This view is from the east shoulder of Bayshore Boulevard near Guadalupe Canyon Parkway in Brisbane, looking north towards the Project Area. Zone 1 is located in the center of the view, with the Caltrain rail line at the right.

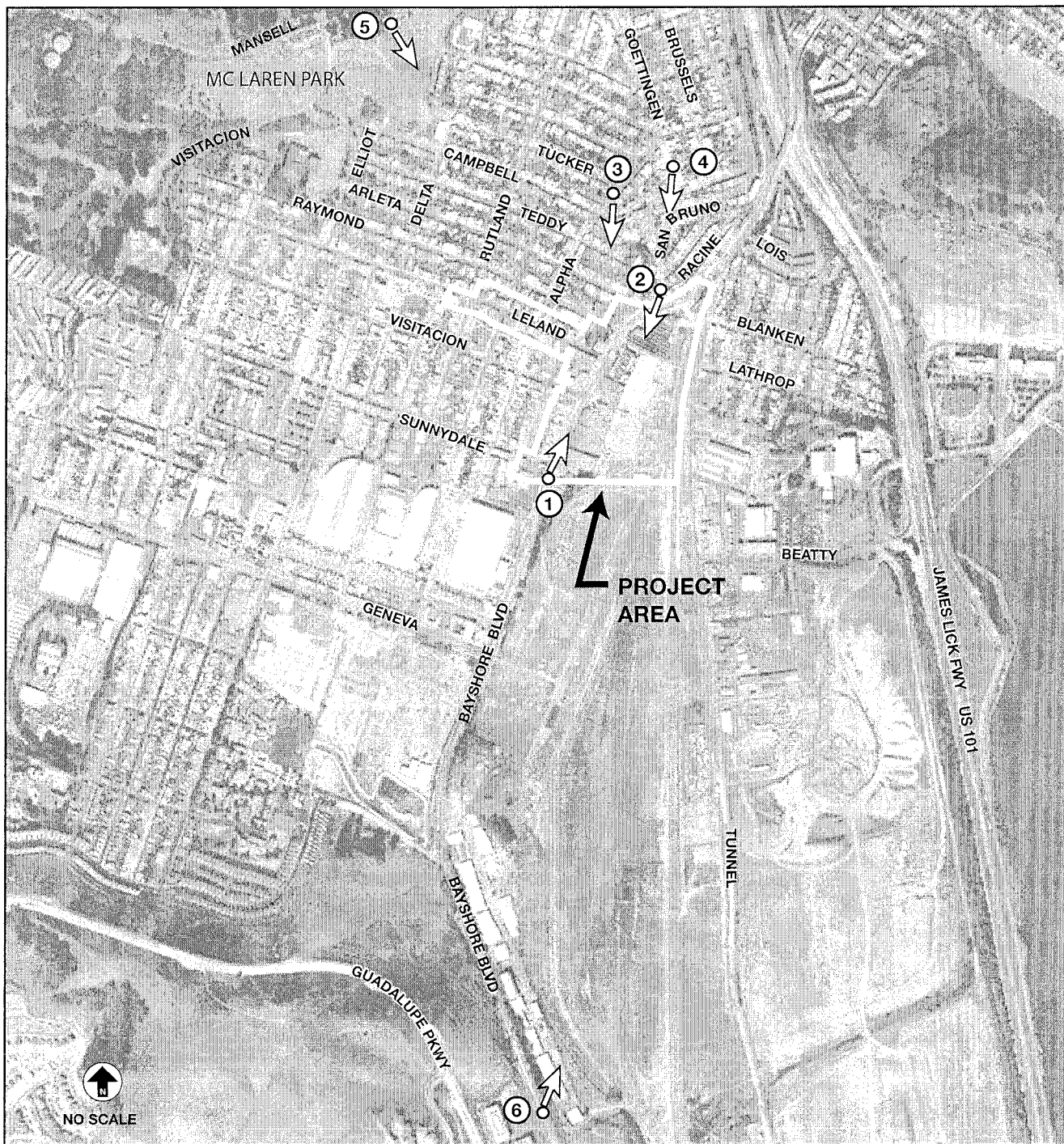
Figures 7.2 through 7.7 illustrate "before" (existing) and "after" (visual simulation) conditions. The computer-generated "after" simulations have been prepared for this EIR in "photo-montage" form by Environmental Vision, a visual analysis and computer modeling consulting firm.¹ The simulations indicate the location, scale, and massing of possible Project Area buildings based on the urban design framework, building form recommendations and DCDG's described in the Design for Development. The simulations have been prepared using objective computer modeling techniques. The images are accurate within the constraints of available site and Design for Development information. *The level of architectural detail that is depicted is minimal, however, and is not intended to reflect the specific architectural forms, materials, or detailing of future, as yet undesigned, individual development projects facilitated by the proposed Redevelopment Plan and Design for Development.*

7.3.5 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Potential Impacts on Scenic Vistas, Visual Character, Public Views, and Terrain. The Project is not expected to require substantial terrain modifications. Based on the DCDG's described in the Design for Development, and the Design-for-Development-based computer-generated simulations of potential full buildout of the Project Area shown on Figures 7.2 through 7.7, the Project would not have an overall substantial negative visual effect on scenic vistas, the existing visual character of the Project Area or its surroundings, public views, or view corridors, and therefore would have a ***less-than-significant*** impact on these features (see criteria 2, 3, 4, and 5 in subsection 7.3.1, "Significance Criteria," above).

Implementation of the Design for Development is expected to ensure that the visual character of future buildings within Zone 1 would be generally sensitive to and compatible with the existing Visitacion Valley neighborhood on the west side of Bayshore Boulevard, by extending the neighborhood street grid into Zone 1; promoting housing of various sizes and affordability levels throughout the zone; creating new park and other open space elements; preserving and rehabilitating the old Schlage Lock administration building for community use; dictating a variety of building forms and range of building heights from three to eight stories (40 to 85 feet) throughout the zone, with frequent breaks in building facades and rooflines to reduce apparent

¹The simulation photographs were created using a single lens reflex (SLR) digital camera with a 50-millimeter lens and a 40-degree horizontal view angle for Viewpoints 1, 2, 3, and 4, and a 28-millimeter lens and a 64-degree horizontal view angle for wide-angle Viewpoints 5 and 6.



Legend



SOURCE: Wagstaff and Associates

Figure 7.1

SELECTED VIEWPOINT LOCATIONS



EXISTING VIEW FROM BAYSHORE BOULEVARD AT SUNNYDALE AVENUE LOOKING NORTH

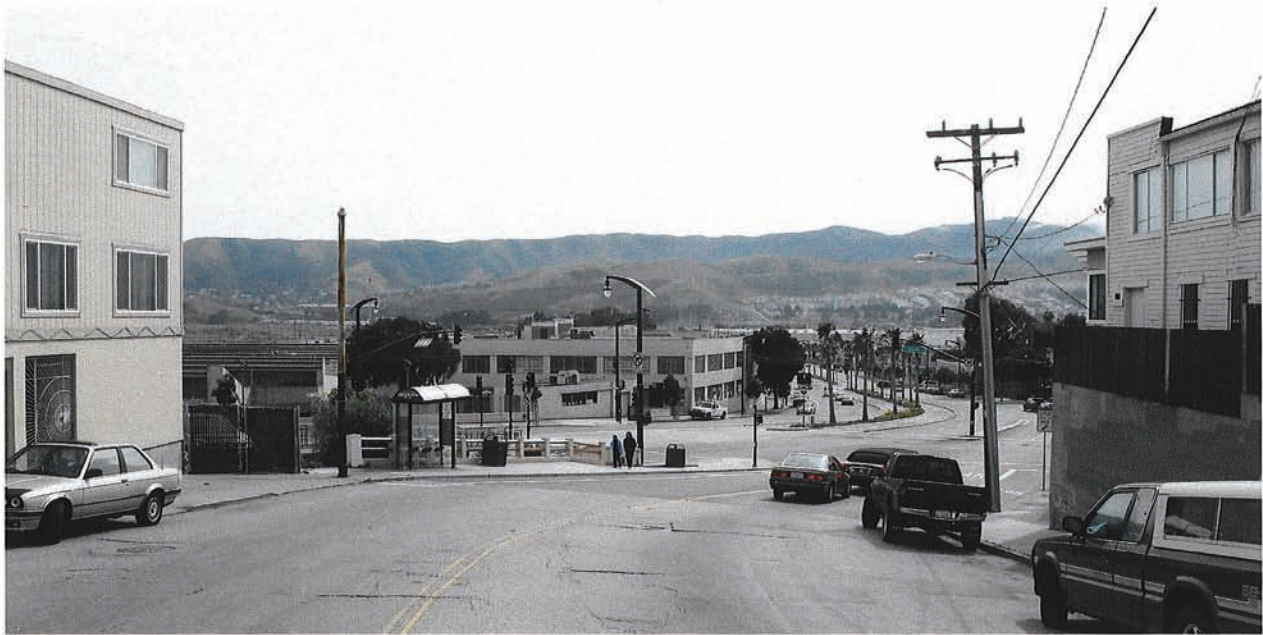


VISUAL SIMULATION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

SOURCE: Environmental Vision

Figure 7.2

VIEWPOINT 1: FROM BAYSHORE BOULEVARD AT SUNNYDALE AVENUE LOOKING NORTH



EXISTING VIEW FROM SAN BRUNO AVENUE AT RACINE LANE LOOKING SOUTH



VISUAL SIMULATION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

SOURCE: Environmental Vision

Figure 7.3

VIEWPOINT 2: FROM SAN BRUNO AVENUE AT RACINE LANE LOOKING SOUTH



EXISTING VIEW FROM ALPHA STREET NEAR TUCKER AVENUE LOOKING SOUTH



VISUAL SIMULATION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

SOURCE: Environmental Vision

Figure 7.4

VIEWPOINT 3: FROM ALPHA STREET NEAR TUCKER AVENUE LOOKING SOUTH



EXISTING VIEW FROM GOETTINGEN STREET LOOKING SOUTH



VISUAL SIMULATION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

SOURCE: Environmental Vision

Figure 7.5

VIEWPOINT 4: FROM GOETTINGEN STREET LOOKING SOUTH



EXISTING VIEW FROM McLAREN PARK LOOKING SOUTHEAST

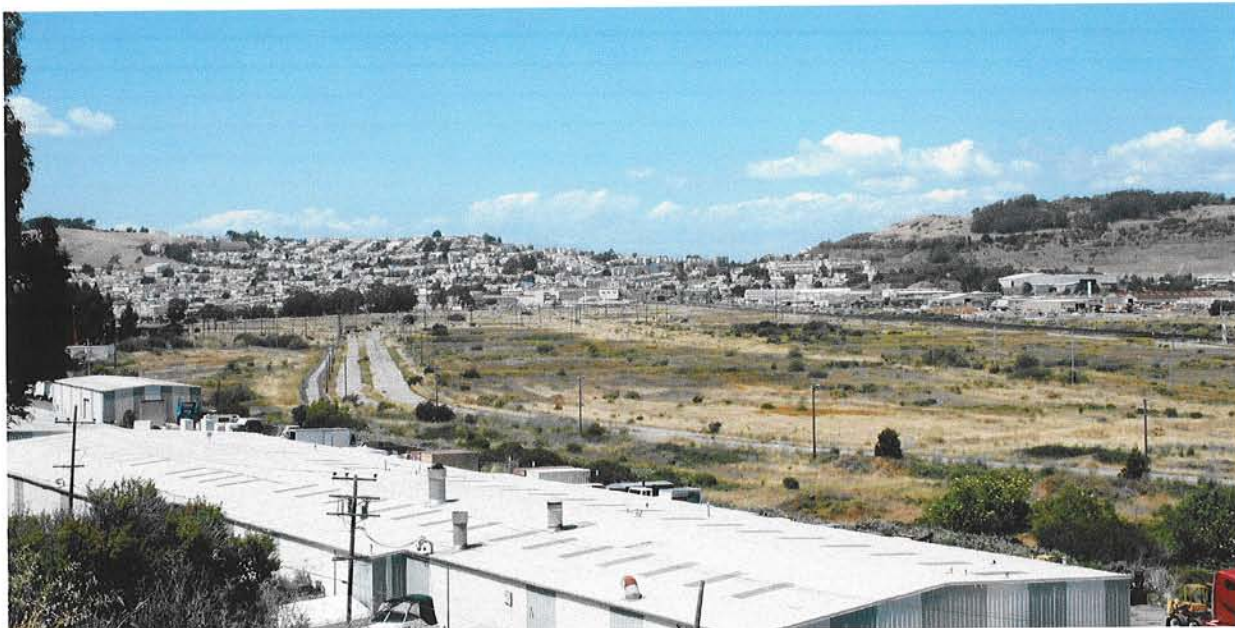


VISUAL SIMULATION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

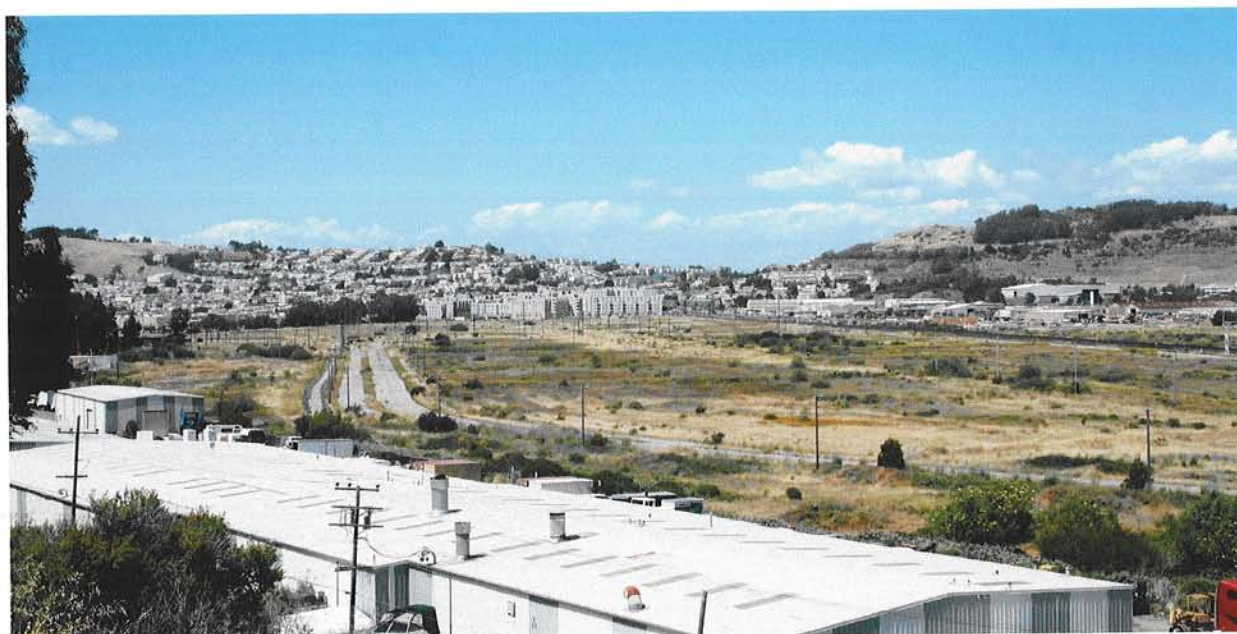
SOURCE: Environmental Vision

Figure 7.6

VIEWPOINT 5: FROM McLAREN PARK LOOKING SOUTHEAST



EXISTING VIEW FROM BAYSHORE BOULEVARD NEAR GUADALUPE CANYON PARKWAY LOOKING NORTH



VISUAL SIMULATION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

SOURCE: Environmental Vision

Figure 7.7

VIEWPOINT 6: FROM BAYSHORE BOULEVARD NEAR GUADALUPE CANYON PARKWAY LOOKING NORTH

mass and bulk; and incorporating pedestrian-oriented architectural detailing, and pedestrian-scale streets, parks, and other public spaces. These proposed Design for Development controls and design guidelines would promote a substantially improved visual character for Zone 1, guiding the replacement of the existing vacant industrial and warehouse buildings and yard areas with more visually compatible new residential and mixed-use development.

Similarly, implementation of the proposed Redevelopment Plan and Design for Development measures for Zone 2, including façade and streetscape improvements, district clean-up, and general economic development along Leland Avenue and Bayshore Boulevard, would be expected to improve the visual character of this portion of the Project Area.

The potential negative visual effects of the Project would be primarily associated with construction of new buildings taller than those that exist in the Visitacion Valley neighborhood today. As described in the proposed Design for Development and as illustrated by Figures 3.5 (Proposed Redevelopment Plan Land Use Districts), 3.6 (Proposed Design for Development "Urban Concept Plan") and 3.8 (Proposed Building Height Limitations) in chapter 3 (Project Description) of this EIR, the most visually substantive and noticeable new development in the Project Area would occur in Zone 1, particularly along the east edge of Zone 1 near the Caltrain tracks. A smaller and less conspicuous level of new development would occur on the limited number of infill sites in Zone 2 along the west side of Bayshore Boulevard, along Leland Avenue, and within the Blanken Triangle.

Despite the overall quantity and intensity of new development envisioned in Zone 1, significant buildings in terms of bulk and height already exist in the subarea (see "Existing View" vs. "Visual Simulation" portions of Figures 7.2 and 7.3). Under the proposed Design for Development DCDG's, new development in Zone 1 would be more visually organized, with greater architectural interest and unity, and substantially improved street landscaping and other visual amenity.

The visual effect of the anticipated new development in the Project Area would be highly noticeable at ground level. As depicted by Figures 7.2 and 7.3, buildings along Bayshore Boulevard could be a generally consistent 40 to 55 feet in height, with the exception of the area at the northeast quadrant of the Sunnydale/Bayshore intersection, where a maximum building height of 65 feet would be permissible.¹ Building bulk would be limited by controls on building length: maximum building lengths of 35 to 65 feet would be imposed along the Bayshore Boulevard edge of Zone 1.²

As a result, buildings along the eastern side of Bayshore Boulevard (the Zone 1 edge) could be slightly taller than those that line the frontage today. These potential building height differences would have minimal effect on views from Bayshore Boulevard of nearby hillsides or sky. In fact, as shown on Figure 7.2, the overall visual and neighborhood character of the Boulevard would be improved, with occupied residential and commercial buildings replacing vacant warehouse and industrial structures. Proposed street trees and other amenities, in combination with the recent Muni Metro T line street lighting and station improvements, would also be expected to improve and unify the visual character of the Boulevard.

¹Based on Design for Development Figure 2-3, Height Zones.

²Design for Development, page 36.

A noticeable change in the Boulevard character would occur along the west side in Zone 2, where infill development could result in increased building heights (from an existing permitted maximum of 40 feet or four stories to a new permitted maximum of 55 feet or five stories) (see Figure 3.8 (Proposed Building Height Limitations) in chapter 3 and Figures 7.2 and 7.3 in this chapter). Distant views from Bayshore Boulevard of hillside residential areas to the north would be obstructed, but these obstructed views do not constitute major scenic vistas.

The infill development along the west side of Bayshore Boulevard could have a potentially significant adverse visual impact on existing "finer grained" residential properties to the west. While the Figure 7.2 and 7.3 simulations depict Design-for-Development-recommended building mass stepbacks at the front of properties fronting on Bayshore Boulevard, it may also be appropriate for new buildings to incorporate similar stepbacks and/or other architectural articulation at the rear of these properties to reduce the effects of introduced four-to-five story building mass on abutting (rear) residential properties. This potential impact concern is further addressed under Impact 7-1 and accompanying Mitigation Measure 7-1 which follow.

The view south toward the Project Area from southbound Bayshore Boulevard would change substantially under the with-Project buildout scenario, as depicted by Figure 7.3. The maximum building heights at the northern end of Zone 1 would be increased from approximately 30 feet to a maximum of 55 feet along the frontage. As a result, views of the lower portion of San Bruno Mountain could be obstructed from this viewpoint. However, the obstruction would not extend to viewpoints immediately to the north and south--i.e., uphill on Bayshore Boulevard and downhill around the curve at Arleta Avenue, respectively. Similar to the view north along Bayshore Boulevard (Figure 7.2), the overall visual character of the frontage would be improved, with occupied residential and commercial building space replacing vacant warehouse and industrial structures. Proposed street trees and other amenities would further improve the visual character of the frontage.

Views of the Project Area from Visitacion Valley hillside areas to the north and northwest, as depicted by Figures 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6, would also be affected. Views of the valley floor would change substantially from some vantage points, but the effects would not be significantly adverse. As depicted by Figure 7.5, views of the Caltrain rail line and vacant lands to the south would be slightly obstructed by the taller buildings, up to a maximum of 85 feet (7 to 8 stories) permitted by the Design for Development at two locations along the rail line. These hillside vantage point views are already largely comprised of foreground and intermediate background urbanization, and are not particularly unique or scenic, and therefore the Project-facilitated change would not constitute a significant adverse visual impact. The most noticeable effect on the various hillside vantage point views would be a change in the "roofscape" of Zone 1 from large-footprint, generally flat-roof warehouse and industrial building form to a more "fine grained," varied and visually interesting pattern of mixed use rooftops, similar to other existing neighborhood areas in the viewshed. This effect would be consistent with Design for Development policies to promote a physical character of new development that complements what exists in the area today. Views from these hillside vantage points of surrounding Bay, San Bruno Mountain, and other local hillside areas would be unaffected.

Mitigation. No significant impact has been identified, and therefore no mitigation is required.

Impact 7-1: Potential Location-Specific Building Scale Compatibility Impacts (West Side of Bayshore Boulevard).

The San Francisco General Plan contains an *Urban Design Guidelines for Height of Buildings* map that designates the entire Project Area for a height range of 0 to 40 feet (4 stories), as shown on Figure 3.7 (Existing Building Height Limitations) of this EIR. Under the proposed Design for Development and associated General Plan and Planning Code changes, the maximum permitted building height for new infill development along the east and west frontage of Bayshore Boulevard would increase to 55 feet (five stories), as shown on Figure 3.8 (Proposed Building Height Limitations) of this EIR. This permitted infill building height increase could have a potentially significant adverse visual impact on existing "finer grained" residential properties along the west edge of Zone 2. The building height increase could result in a pronounced change in building scale relationships at specific infill sites, with potentially substantial adverse visual compatibility, light, and shadow impacts on abutting (rear) smaller scale residential properties fronting on Desmond Street. The proposed Design for Development design guidelines do state that "building heights should be varied within and across blocks to create visual interest and avoid the appearance of monolithic development;" however, specific "stepback" requirements for application at the rear of these west-side Bayshore Boulevard frontage properties sufficient to substantially reduce scale incompatibility and light and shadow impacts on abutting (rear) residential properties are not included in the draft Design for Development. These possible visual effects along the Zone 2 west edge represent a **potentially significant impact** (see criteria 3 and 7 in subsection 7.3.1, "Significance Criteria," above).

Mitigation 7-1. Add to the Design for Development additional building bulk and/or building articulation controls specifically tailored to reduce the potential visual effects of introduced greater building height and mass on the west edge of Zone 2 on abutting residential properties to the west. The amended controls could include, for example, a 10-to-15-foot building "stepback" and or "relational height limit" requirement at the third or fourth story along the west edges of Zone 2 that abut existing residential properties, for purposes of avoiding incongruous building height and scale relationships and associated light and shadow impacts. Formulation of these or similar measures by a qualified urban design professional and their incorporation into the Design for Development would reduce this potential for building scale and mass compatibility impacts to a **less-than-significant level**.

Impact 7-2: Potential Nighttime Light and Glare Impacts. Although the Visitacion Valley community is an already urbanized area with a myriad of exterior lighting and nighttime illumination sources, nighttime lighting associated with new, Project-facilitated development in Zone 1 could have adverse effects on nighttime views of and within the Project Area from surrounding and internal neighborhood vantage points. Lighting of new outdoor spaces and recreation areas and interior lighting emanating from new four-to-eight-story residential structures in Zone 1 could be substantially more prominent in the nighttime viewshed than the vacant one- and two-story industrial, warehouse and office structures that exist there now, and could create significant new light and glare impacts on views from adjacent neighborhood areas and surrounding hillside neighborhood and recreation area vantage points. These possible light and glare effects represent a ***potentially significant impact*** (see criterion 6 in subsection 7.3.1, "Significance Criteria," above).

Mitigation 7-2: Add to the Design for Development a set of Development Controls and Design Guidelines for "Lighting," focusing on nighttime internal and exterior lighting of multi-story buildings and nighttime lighting of new outdoor spaces, including the following or similar measures:

- prohibit exterior illumination of any new building elements above 40 feet;
- require tinting of outward-oriented glazing above 40 feet sufficient to reduce the nighttime visual impacts of internal lighting; and
- to minimize glare and "sky glow" from new outdoor area lighting, require adequate shielding of light sources, use of fixtures that direct light downward, light sources that provide more natural color rendition, possible use of multiple light level switching (for reducing light intensity after 10 PM), non-reflective hardscapes, and avoidance of light source reflection off surrounding exterior walls.

Formulation of these or similar measures by a qualified urban design professional and their incorporation into the Design for Development would reduce this potential for light and glare impacts to a ***less-than-significant level***.

Shadow Effects. During the initial environmental review phase for the Project, it was determined that the project would have a ***less-than-significant*** environmental impact related to shadow, as documented in the January 2007 Initial Study (see Initial Study section VI in EIR appendix 20.2). As explained in this section of the Initial Study, section 295 of the *San Francisco Planning Code* was adopted in response to Proposition K (passed November 1984) in order to protect certain public open spaces from shadowing by new structures during the period between one hour after sunrise and one hour before sunset, year round. *Planning Code* section 295 restricts net new shadow on public open spaces under the jurisdiction of, or to be acquired by, the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department by any structure exceeding 40 feet unless the Planning Commission, in consultation with the Recreation and Park Commission, finds the impact to be less than significant. As illustrated by Figure 3.8 (Proposed Building Height Limitations) in chapter 3 of this EIR, no buildings greater than 40 feet would be permitted along Leland Avenue with the Project. However along the west side of Bayshore Boulevard in Zone 1 and throughout Zone 1, Project-proposed height limitations exceed 40 feet.

The closest public open spaces or other properties under the jurisdiction of, the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department to the Project Area include: Hans Schiller Plaza; a portion of the Visitacion Valley Greenway; the Visitacion Valley Community Center (which sits immediately adjacent to the northwestern portion of the Project Area); Visitacion Playground, located 100 feet west of the Project Area; and Little Hollywood Park, located 750 feet to the east of the Project Area. New shadows created by individual new buildings over 40 feet in height within the Project Area may impact existing public open space under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department. However, since all new development in the Project Area would be subject to *Planning Code* section 295, as referenced in the Design for Development, requiring shadow studies to determine potential impacts on open spaces, no additional study or mitigation would be necessary to avoid significant shadow impacts on San Francisco Recreation and Park properties.