
IV. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

A. AESTHETICS

INTRODUCTION

This section addresses the subject of aesthetics with respect to the project and includes a description of the existing visual character of the project site. This section also addresses visibility of the project site from offsite viewpoints as well as an evaluation of potential aesthetic impacts associated with implementing the project, including impacts to scenic resources, views, visual character, and light and glare. Aesthetics refers to visual resources and the quality of what can be seen or overall visual perception of the environment, and may include such characteristics as building height and mass, development density, design character, and landscaping. View analysis evaluates visual access and obstruction of prominent visual features, including both specific visual landmarks and panoramic vistas.

The visual character of a project site is typically evaluated with respect to its physical components and within the context of its neighborhood through an analysis of its compatibility with the land uses of the immediately surrounding areas. The inherent subjectivity of issues and values relative to visual character often makes it difficult to form a conclusive determination of what constitutes a "significant impact" under CEQA. Visual impacts are also analyzed through an examination of views and/or viewsheds. Viewsheds refer to the visual qualities of a geographical area that are defined by the horizon, topography, and other natural features that give an area its visual boundary and context, or by development that has become a prominent visual component of the area. Public views are those which can be seen from vantage points that are publicly accessible, such as streets, freeways, parks, and vista points. These views are generally available to a greater number of persons than are private views. Private views are those which can be seen from vantage points located on private property. Private views are not considered to be impacted when interrupted by land uses on adjacent blocks, particularly if the project complies with the zoning and design guidelines applicable to the site. Viewshed impacts are typically characterized by the loss and/or obstruction of existing scenic vistas or other major views in the area of the site which are available to the general public.

Light and glare impacts are analyzed by considering the qualitative aesthetic characteristics of the existing nighttime lighting and daytime glare environments on the site and the modifications the proposed project would make to those environments.

The photos presented throughout this discussion include views from vantage points at the project site and from areas surrounding the project site from which the site is visible. These photos are not meant as an exhaustive collection of the views from all vantage points that include the project site, but instead are intended as representative views from within the project site as well as views of the site from the surrounding areas.

METHODOLOGY

The relative views of the project site were assessed by conducting field reconnaissance of the project site and surrounding areas on February 26, 2006, March 4 and 5, 2006, February 1, 2007, and February 22, 2007 by Christopher A. Joseph & Associates (CAJA). Numerous site photos from within the project site and from locations in the project area were taken in order to analyze the representative views and the potential aesthetic impacts associated with the proposed project. Furthermore, computer-generated visual simulations illustrating “before” and conceptual “after” visual conditions at the project site as seen from five representative, public vantage points are presented as part of the analysis. Digitized photographs, computer modeling, and rendering techniques were used to prepare the simulation images. Various view protection and conservation guidelines, policies and regulations, as established by San Mateo County’s General Plan, zoning regulations and Local Coastal Program were also reviewed and considered in the project impact analysis.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Regional Visual Character

The general topography of the San Mateo County area is characterized by sub-parallel, northwest trending mountain ranges and intervening valleys. The relatively flat-lying, alluviated San Francisco Bay plain is situated to the east, and the uplifted Santa Cruz Mountains are located to the west. Seventy-four percent of County land, primarily in the area west of Interstate (I-280), is in agricultural, watershed, open space, wetlands or parks use. Mild climate, abundant natural resources, rolling green foothills, stands of old redwoods, and creeks characterize western San Mateo County, providing many areas with high visual quality.

Western San Mateo County is primarily accessed by State Route-1 (Highway 1), which follows the Pacific coast from Leggett in Mendocino County (where it joins US Highway 101) to Dana Point in Los Angeles County (where it joins Interstate I-5). Along the San Mateo County coastline, Highway 1 (Cabrillo Highway) is a well-known, highly recognized county designated scenic road.

Local Visual Character

The area in which the project site is located is a relatively flat coastal area with marshes and rocky cliffs and is characterized by low-density development, agricultural uses, commercial uses, airport uses, and open space. According to the San Mateo County General Plan, the project site is located in the Montara-Moss Beach El Granada community plan area (CPA). The CPA extends along the Pacific Coast from Martini Creek, at the base of Montara Mountain, to the northern city limits of Half Moon Bay. The CPA is characterized by a series of streams and arroyos, the Pacific Ocean, eucalyptus and cypress trees, as well as the Montara Mountains. The CPA includes the communities of Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, and Princeton by the Sea. Princeton by the Sea is a small, commercial and recreational harbor community located between Moss Beach and Half Moon Bay, and directly south of the project site. Princeton by the Sea and the project site are located between Highway 1 (Cabrillo Highway) and the

Pacific Ocean. See Figure III-4 (Aerial of the Site and Surrounding Area). From the north, Highway 1 passes by the Half Moon Bay Airport (to the east of the project site) and is used to access Princeton by the Sea via Capistrano Road, as well as the communities of Moss Beach and Montara, further to the north. Access to the project site from Capistrano Road is provided via local streets.

Princeton by the Sea is characterized by the Pillar Point Harbor, one- and two-story mixed retail/service (e.g., gas station, café), industrial, and residential uses (refer to Figure III-8, Views of the Surrounding Uses, Views 4 and 6).

Offsite Visual Character

The Half Moon Bay Airport to the east of the project consists of runways and hangars (refer to Figure III-7, Views of the Surrounding Uses, View 2). Additionally, there are several ridgelines east of the site that make up the Rancho Corral de Tierra, which is within the County Coastal Zone Scenic Corridor and is designated by the 1986 General Plan as Open Space. To the west, Pillar Point Marsh, Pillar Point, the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, the Air Force Radome, and forested hills, are located between the project site and the Pacific Ocean (refer to Figures III-8, Views of the Surrounding Uses, View 6 and III-7, Views of the Surrounding Uses, View 3). A manufactured home park is located to the north of the project site (refer to Figure III-7, Views of the Surrounding Uses, View 1). Views to the north are partially obstructed by a chain-link and wooden-slat fence of approximately six feet. The land to the north of the manufactured home park is currently undeveloped and in agricultural production.

Onsite Visual Character

The project is comprised of two parcels, a northern and a southern parcel totaling approximately 19.4 acres, separated by a natural drainage swale and riparian corridor. The parcels are undeveloped and have been utilized primarily for agricultural crop production. The parcels are level and are disked regularly, and therefore do not include visual features. The swale drains to the Pillar Point Marsh and the riparian vegetation extends along the western property boundaries as wetland. The mostly flat site slopes gradually from north to south, with the elevation ranging from approximately 17 feet above mean sea level (msl) at the north end of the project site to approximately 10 feet above msl at the southern end of the project site. This trend in elevation continues, reaching sea level at Pillar Point Harbor to the south. The topography rises to the west to Pillar Point (elevation approximately 54 feet above msl), and gradually to the east to approximately 100 feet above msl (70 feet above msl at the northern end of the airport) before rising sharply to the ridgelines that are visible from the site (approximately 350 feet above msl).

Views of the Project Site

The San Mateo County General Plan defines public views as: “a range of vision from a public road or other public facility.” In the vicinity of the site examples of these would include, but are not limited to, public views from Airport Street, Airport Street/Stanford Avenue, West Point Avenue, the North Trail, and Highway 1. The following discussion is based on an assessment of site visibility. The photographs

presented in this discussion include views from vantage points in areas surrounding the project site from where the site is visible. In no way is this grouping of photographs meant as an exhaustive collection of all the views that include the project site from all vantage points, but is meant to show representative views of the site from the surrounding areas.

The visibility of the project site from offsite locations is dependent on the surrounding topography, weather conditions, and the observation point in relation to the site. The representative views of the project site from five offsite locations are discussed below. The five vantage points are shown on Figure IV.A-1 and are consistent with the location of the visual simulation viewpoints, discussed later in this section.

Airport Street

The view from Airport Street looking south on to the project site is of currently fallow fields in the foreground. Refer to Figure IV.A-2, View 1. Pillar Point Marsh, Pillar Point, and forested hills are visible in the background. These offsite features are designated as Open Space by the 1986 General Plan. This view is representative of motorists traveling southbound on Airport Street. The El Granada Mobile Home Park located north of the project is located just outside of the frame of this photo. The project site is visible from the El Granada Mobile Home Park.

Airport Street/Stanford Avenue

The view from the intersection of Airport Street and Stanford Avenue looking north is of fallow fields on the project site in the foreground and Pillar Point Marsh and forested hills in the background. Refer to Figure IV.A-2, View 2. These offsite features are designated as Open Space within the 1986 General Plan. This view is representative of motorists traveling northbound on Airport Street.

West Point Avenue

The view from West Point Avenue at the Mavericks parking lot looking northeast is of the Pillar Point Marsh in the foreground and the Montara Mountains in the distance. Refer to Figure IV.A-2, View 3. The project site is visible in the background but is partially obscured by the development to the south of the project site as well as by existing vegetation. This view is representative of motorists traveling northbound on West Point Avenue. The project site is also generally visible from the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve and Pillar Point Marsh (County-designated Open Space), which runs along the coastal bluffs and beaches directly to the west.

North Trail

The view from the North Trail looking south is of the El Granada Mobile Home Park in the foreground and Pillar Point Harbor in the background. Refer to Figure IV.A-3, View 4. The project site is visible in the middle of the view. Additionally, the Half Moon Bay Airport is visible to the east. This view is representative of pedestrians utilizing the trail.

Highway 1

The view from Highway 1 (Cabrillo Highway), which is a County-designated scenic road, looking southwest is of the Half Moon Bay Airport in the foreground and the project site and forested hills in the background. Refer to Figure IV.A-3, View 5. The land from this vantage point is located within the Airport's southern approach zone. Therefore, this view to the site is not expected to be obstructed by vegetation or development. This view is representative of motorists traveling north and southbound on Highway 1.

Scenic Vistas

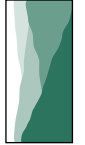
The San Mateo County General Plan and the County LCP do not define or include a description of scenic vistas. In general, a "scenic vista" is typically considered an aesthetically-pleasing view, as seen through an opening or passageway. The General Plan does not include a description or list of vantage points within the County from which vistas are considered "scenic." Given the many steep-trending hillsides, hilltops, knolls, and ridgelines in the County, a multitude of potential "scenic vistas" are available throughout the region. However, at several vantage points in the project vicinity, various surrounding topographic characteristics partially obstruct these vistas. The project is located in a generally flat area that provides vistas to the Montara Mountains, Pillar Point, and forested hills and ridgelines. Additionally, views from the ridgeline to the west of the project site provide a vista of Pillar Point Harbor and Half Moon Bay.

Scenic Resource

In general, per the CEQA Guidelines for Aesthetics, scenic resources are thought of as objects, natural or manmade, that are aesthetically pleasing to view (i.e., trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State Scenic Highway). There are no rock outcroppings or historical structures located within the project site. Per the San Mateo County General Plan, visual resources are defined as: "those attractive visible elements of the natural and developed landscape, such as landforms, vegetative forms, water bodies, structures, and communities." Additionally, scenic corridors are defined as: "land adjacent to a scenic road right-of-way which, when seen from the road, provides outstanding views of natural landscapes and attractive man-made development." As further defined by the General Plan, a scenic roadway is: "a designated travel route providing outstanding views of natural landscapes and attractive man-made development." The General Plan has designated several "scenic" roadways within the County. The project site is visible from County-designated scenic Highway 1 (from Junipero Serra Freeway to the northern limits of the City of Half Moon Bay) and is located with the County Coastal Zone Scenic Corridor. The portion of Highway 1 from Half Moon Bay to the Santa Cruz County line is State-designated scenic roadway.



Source: Google Earth, Christopher A. Joseph & Associates, 2008.



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Figure IV.A-1
Photo-location Map for
Simulations



View 1: Looking south across the project site from Airport Street.

View 2: Looking west across the project site from the intersection of Airport Street and Cornell Avenue.



View 3: Looking northeast towards the project site from Mavericks Parking Lot.

Source: Christopher A. Joseph & Associates, 2009.





View 4: Looking southeast across the project site from North Trail.



View 5: Looking southwest across the airport towards the project site from Highway 1.

Source: Christopher A. Joseph & Associates, 2009.



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Figure IV.A-3
Views of the Project Site
Views 4-5

Open Space

Open space, as defined by Government Code Section 65560, is any parcel or area of land or water that is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open-space usage and that is designated in a local, regional or state open-space plan for preservation of natural resources, managed production of resources, outdoor recreation, or public health and safety.

The County-designated open space areas are overseen by the County Parks and Recreation Department in cooperation with the Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District. An open space land use designation is widely used by local agencies to preserve natural resources and protect important features, such as ridgelines. Lands to the west of the project site are designated for open space use. The General Plan establishes the uses that may be allowed on land with a General Open Space designation. Uses are limited to resource management and production, recreation and limited residential or service.

Ridgelines and Skylines

The General Plan defines ridgelines as: “the tops of hills or hillocks normally viewed against a background of other hills.” Meanwhile, skylines are defined as: “the line where sky and land masses meet.” The views to the east and west from the project site include both ridgelines and skylines. Views to the north and south predominately include residential and commercial uses, respectively.

Light and Glare Environment

“Light spill” is typically defined as the presence of unwanted and/or misdirected light on properties adjacent to the property being illuminated. Light spill can emanate from the interior of structures through windows or from exterior sources, such as street lighting, security lighting, and landscape lighting. Perceived glare is the unwanted and potentially objectionable sensation as observed by a person when looking directly into the light source of a luminaire fixture. Glare also results from sunlight reflection off of flat building surfaces, with glass typically having the highest degree of reflectivity.

There are currently no sources of light and glare on the proposed project site as the site is entirely undeveloped. Existing development is located to the north, south, and east of the project site, which does produce some light at night, especially the residential development to the north of the Office Park portion of the project site. Additionally, airport runways west of the project site are lit during the evening, but for the most part lighting is low-level, and not readily visible, particularly from the Wellness Center portion of the project site. Other sources of light or glare within the vicinity of the project site are from the headlights or windshields of vehicles on adjacent roads.

REGULATORY SETTING

The following describes the adopted regulations and planning policies that would apply to the proposed project upon approval.

Local

County of San Mateo General Plan

The Visual Quality chapter of the San Mateo County General Plan contains the following relevant goals and policies. The proposed project's consistency with each of these policies is analyzed in Section IV.I, Land Use, of this DEIR:

Visual Quality

4.1 Protection of Visual Quality

- Encourage positive visual quality for all development and minimize adverse visual impacts.

4.4 Appearance of Rural and Urban Development

- Promote aesthetically pleasing development in rural and urban areas.

4.14 Appearance of New Development

- A. Regulate development to promote and enhance good design, site relationships and other aesthetic considerations.
- B. Regulate land divisions to promote visually attractive development.

4.16 Protection of Coastal Features

- Regulate coastal development to protect and enhance natural landscape features and visual quality through measures that ensure the basic integrity of sand dunes, cliffs, bluffs and wetlands.

4.20 Utility Structures

- Minimize the adverse visual quality of utility structures, including roads, roadway and building signs, overhead wires, utility poles, T.V. antennae, windmills and satellite dishes.

4.21 Scenic Corridors

- Protect and enhance the visual quality of scenic corridors by managing the location and appearance of structural development.

4.35 Urban Area Design Concept

- A. Maintain and, where possible, improve upon the appearance and visual character of development in urban areas.

- B. Ensure that new development in urban areas is designed and constructed to contribute to the orderly harmonious development of the locality.

4.39 Scenic Roads

- Give special recognition and protection to travel routes in rural and unincorporated urban areas which provide outstanding views of scenic vistas, natural landscape features, historical sites and attractive urban development.

Urban Land Use

8.1 Urban Land Use Planning

- Plan for a compatible and harmonious arrangement of land uses in urban areas by providing a type and mix of functionally well-integrated land uses which meet general social and economics.

8.14 Residential Land Use Compatibility

- A. Protect and enhance the character of existing single-family areas.
- B. Protect existing single-family areas from adjacent incompatible land use designations which would degrade the environmental quality and economic stability of the area.

8.15 Commercial Land Use Compatibility

- Ensure that commercial development is compatible with adjacent land uses.

8.17 Buffers

- Buffer commercial land uses when needed to protect contiguous residential uses.

8.27 Parcel Consolidation

- Where necessary to achieve quality site planning and greater design flexibility, encourage the consolidation of smaller parcels which are designed for intense land uses, including, but not limited to, Industrial, Medium High and High Density Residential.

San Mateo County Local Coastal Program

The San Mateo County Local Coastal Program contains the following goals and policies relevant to the proposed project. The proposed project's consistency with each of these policies is analyzed in Section IV.I, Land Use, of this DEIR:

Natural Features – Landforms

8.5 Location of Development

- A. Require that new development be located on a portion of a parcel where the development (1) is least visible from State and County Scenic Roads, (2) is least likely to significantly impact

views from public viewpoints, and (3) is consistent with all other LCP requirements, best preserves the visual and open space qualities of the parcel overall. Where conflicts in complying with this requirement occur, resolve them in a manner which on balance most protects significant coastal resources on the parcel, consistent with Coastal Act Section 30007.5.

Public viewpoints include, but are not limited to, coastal roads, roadside rests and vista points, recreation areas, trails, coastal accessways, and beaches.

This provision does not apply to enlargement of existing structures, provided that the size of the structure after enlargement does not exceed 150% of the pre-existing floor area, or 2,000 sq. ft., whichever is greater.

This provision does not apply to agricultural development to the extent that application of the provision would impair any agricultural use or operation on the parcel. In such cases, agricultural development shall use appropriate building materials, colors, landscaping and screening to eliminate or minimize the visual impact of the development.

- B. Require, including by clustering if necessary, that new parcels have building sites that are not visible from State and County Scenic Roads and will not significantly impact views from other public viewpoints. If the entire property being subdivided is visible from State and County Scenic Roads or other public viewpoints, then require that new parcels have building sites that minimize visibility from those roads and other public viewpoints.

8.6 Streams, Wetlands, and Estuaries

- A. Set back development from the edge of streams and other natural waterways a sufficient distance to preserve the visual character of the waterway.
- B. Prohibit structural development which will adversely affect the visual quality of perennial streams and associated riparian habitat, except for those permitted by Sensitive Habitats Component Policies.
- C. Retain the open natural visual appearance of estuaries and their surrounding beaches.
- D. Retain wetlands intact except for public accessways designed to respect the visual and ecological fragility of the area and adjacent land.

Natural Features – Vegetative Forms

8.9 Vegetative Cover

- Replace vegetation removed during construction with plant materials (trees, shrubs, ground cover) which are compatible with surrounding vegetation and is suitable to the climate, soil, and ecological characteristics of the area.

*Structural and Community Features – Urban Areas and Rural Service Centers*8.12 General Regulations

- A. Apply the Design Review (DR) Zoning District to urbanized areas of the Coastal Zone.
- B. Employ the design criteria set forth in the Community Design Manual for all new development in urban areas.
- C. Locate and design new development and landscaping so that ocean views are not blocked from public viewing points such as public roads and publicly-owned lands.

8.13 Special Design Guidelines for Coastal Communities

The following special design guidelines supplement the design criteria in the Community Design Manual:

A. Montara-Moss Beach-El Granada area:

- 1. Design structures which fit the topography of the site and do not require extensive cutting, grading, or filling for construction.
- 2. Employ the use of natural materials and colors which blend with the vegetative cover of the site.
- 3. Use pitched, rather than flat, roofs which are surfaced with non-reflective materials except for the employment of solar energy devices.
- 4. Design structures which are in scale with the character of their setting and blend rather than dominate or distract from the overall view of the urban scape.
- 5. To the extent feasible, design development to minimize the blocking of views to or along the ocean shoreline from Highway 1 and other public viewpoints between Highway 1 and the sea. Public viewpoints include coastal roads, roadside rests and vista points, recreation areas, trails, coastal accessways, and beaches. This provision shall not apply in areas west of Denniston Creek zoned either Coastside Commercial Recreation or Waterfront.

B. Princeton by the Sea

1. Commercial Development

Design buildings which reflect the nautical character of the harbor setting, are of wood or shingle siding, employ natural or sea colors, and use pitched roofs.

2. Industrial Development

Employ architectural detailing, subdued colors, textured building materials, and landscaping to add visual interest and soften the harsh lines of standard or stock building forms normally used in industrial districts.

Structural and Community Features – Rural

8.15 Coastal Views

- Prevent development (including buildings, structures, fences, unnatural obstructions, signs, and landscaping) from substantially blocking views to or along the shoreline from coastal roads, roadside rests and vista points, recreation areas, trails, coastal accessways, and beaches.

8.16 Landscaping

- A. Use plant materials to integrate the man-made and natural environments and to soften the visual impact of new development.
- B. Protect existing desirable vegetation. Encourage, where feasible, that new planting be common to the area.

8.19 Colors and Materials

- A. Employ colors and materials in new development which blend, rather than contrast, with the surrounding physical conditions of the site.
- B. Prohibit highly reflective surfaces and colors except those of solar energy devices.

8.20 Scale

- Relate structures in size and scale to adjacent buildings and landforms.

8.21 Commercial Signs

- A. Prohibit off-premise commercial signs except for seasonal temporary agricultural signs.
- B. Design on-premise commercial signs as an integral part of structure they identify and which do not extend above the roof line.
- C. Prohibit brightly illuminated colored, rotating, reflective, blinking, flashing or moving signs, pennants, or streamers.
- D. Design and minimize information and direction signs to be simple, easy-to-read, and harmonize with surrounding elements.

Special Features

8.27 Natural Features

- Prohibit the destruction or significant alteration of special natural features through implementation of Landform Policies and Vegetative Form Policies of the LCP.

Community Design Manual

The San Mateo County Community Design Manual contains the following relevant goals and policies. The proposed project's consistency with each of these policies is analyzed in Section IV.I, Land Use, of this DEIR:

Site Design

- Structures and accessory structures should be located, designed, and constructed to retain and blend with the natural vegetation and natural land forms of the site (i.e., topography, rock outcroppings, ridgelines, tree masses, etc.), and should be complementary to adjacent neighborhood structures;

Grading

- To ensure minimal impact on the physical setting of the site and adjacent properties, site preparation, grading and structure location should be carefully controlled to reduce erosion, soil exposure, impacts on natural drainage systems, and to maintain surface runoff at or near existing levels. Grading or removal of vegetation which could contribute to the instability of the site or adjacent property should not be permitted;

Vegetation Preservation

- Structures should blend with the natural vegetative cover of the site and only that vegetation should be removed which is necessary for the construction of the structure;
- Structures should be designed around major trees or tree stands;

Landscaping

- Landscaping material should have an informal character and should provide a smooth transition between the development and adjacent open space areas;
- Only tree and plant materials native to the area should be used to assure against non-native plant intrusion to reduce irrigation and maintenance requirements, and to minimize visual impact;

Water

- With the exception of trails and paths, and related appurtenances, structural development should be set back from and not permitted to be constructed where such development will adversely affect a stream, drainage area, or body of water;

View Preservation

- Views should be preserved by limiting structure height. Introduced vegetation should be located so as to not block views from uphill structures or views from scenic corridors and vista points;
- Public views within and from scenic corridors should be protected and enhanced, and development should not be allowed to significantly obscure, detract from, or negatively affect the quality of these views. Visual screening or increased setbacks may be used to mitigate such

impacts;

- Structures should be located to retain views of prominent scenic features, i.e., bodies of water, mountains, valleys, etc;

Open Space Preservation

- Structures should be sited to retain maximum open space and to reduce the visual impact in scenic open space areas;
- Where possible, structures should be clustered near existing natural and man-made vertical features such as tree masses, hills, and existing structures;

Cliffs and Bluffs

- Structures should be set back from bluffs and cliffs so as to not destroy natural land forms;
- Intrusion of structures into views from scenic areas should be minimized;

Accessory Structures

- Fences should be built to fit the natural contours of the land. Use of living (vegetative) fences in conjunction with earth berms, and fences made of natural materials are encouraged;

Paved Areas

- Paved areas such as parking lots, driveways, sidewalks, etc., should be well integrated into the site, relate to existing and proposed structures and landscaped to reduce visual impact;
- Small separate paved parking lots are preferred to large single paved lots;
- Parking areas should be screened from residential areas and from scenic roadways;
- Driveways should be shared when feasible to reduce curb cuts, especially along major arterials and scenic roads;
- Paving materials used for pathways, sidewalks, driveways, and parking areas should be varied, textured, colored or patterned to add visual interest, especially where visible from above; and,

Scale

- Structures should relate in size and scale to adjacent buildings and to the neighborhood in which they are located.

Montara-Moss Beach-El Granada Community Plan

The Montara-Moss Beach-El Granada Community Plan contains the following relevant goals and policies. The proposed project's consistency with each of these policies is analyzed in Section IV.I, Land Use, of this Draft EIR:

1.2 Design Characteristics

- Encourage good design in new construction which reflects the character, and is compatible with the scale of the neighborhood in which it is located.

2.7 Commercial Development Buffers

- Buffer commercial areas from surrounding residential development with landscaping, fencing, and/or buildings designed for compatibility between these land uses.

2.9 Appearance of Commercial Development

- A. Employ the design guidelines of the Community Design Manual in all new commercial development.

3.1 Circulation System

- Develop a circulation system, and road standards for residential streets, which complement the small-town character of the community.

4.1 Housing Design

- Build housing which relates to its physical setting, does not destroy the natural features of the land, and is compatible with the neighborhood scale and coastal character of the community.

7.1 Preserving Visual Quality

- Preserve and enhance the visual qualities of the coastal community which give it a unique character and distinguish it from other places.

7.2 Preserving Community Character

- A. Maintain community character and ensure that new developments are compatible with existing homes in scale, size, and design.
- B. Maintain the small-town character of the area by preventing construction of massive structures out of scale with the community.

7.3 Preserving Natural Amenities

- Preserve the natural amenities of the community through appropriate location of new structures designed to harmonize with their surroundings.

7.6 Protection of Scenic Vistas

- Preserve and protect scenic vistas of ocean, beaches, and mountains for residents of the community.

7.7 Tree Planting

- Encourage the planting of trees along streets and walkways.

7.8 Preservation of Landforms and Vegetation

- Preserve the existing landforms and vegetation.

7.11 Design Review

- Apply the Design Review Overlay Zoning District in the urbanized areas of the community to regulate siting of structures, to protect natural features, and to provide for design compatibility with surrounding development.

San Mateo County Zoning Regulations

The San Mateo County Zoning Regulations contains specific provisions pertaining to lighting, signage, building height, setbacks, and other design elements specific to the zoning designations of the project site. In the County, development and building improvements requiring a building permit are subject to review according to their adherence with County standards, regulations, and policies. Compliance is ensured by conditions of approval attached to discretionary development permits.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Thresholds of Significance

In accordance with guidance provided in Appendix G of the State *CEQA Guidelines*, the proposed project could have a potentially significant impact if it were to result in one or more of the following:

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway;
- c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings; or

- d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Proposed Project

As described in detail in Section III (Project Description) of this DEIR, the project consists of an office park and residential health center to be developed on two adjacent parcels (approximately 20 acres) that are separated by a natural drainage swale. The Office Park would be developed on the northern parcel and would consist of four three-story buildings totaling 225,000 square feet plus associated common areas, a communications building, and a 640-space parking lot. Building heights would not exceed 45 feet 6 inches, with the four building footprints totaling 78,000 square feet. Setbacks are proposed at 153 feet from the eastern project site boundary and 40 feet from the western project site boundary. The proposed Communications Building would be two-stories in height (maximum height of 32 feet) and have a footprint of 2,000 square feet, bringing the total building footprint for the northern parcel to 80,000 square feet. The Communications Building would be located on the southeast corner of the proposed parking lot. Two 36-inch microwave dishes would be mounted on the east face of this building.

The Wellness Center would be developed on the southern parcel, and would include a maximum of 70 apartment style and single-story style residential units for use by up to 50 DD residents and 20 staff members. The Wellness Center includes a 73-space parking lot. A 100-foot setback is proposed from the sensitive habitats associated with the drainage swale and marsh. The proposed 20,000 square foot storage facility associated with the Wellness Center would be located within the Half Moon Bay Airport Overlay (AO) along the north side of the property.

A six-foot willow wattle fence would be installed around the site to protect the adjacent habitat from the development activities and provide security for the community residents. The proposed 1.6 acres of walkways/trails include: (1) a multipurpose bike/pedestrian trail proposed to run along Airport Street; (2) a proposed wetlands trail for viewing restored wetland areas; and (3) a "North Trail" which would run along the northern portion of the property connecting to the wetlands trail. All trails would be designed to be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant and would be available to the public.

The project also proposes an onsite wastewater treatment plant that would include storage tanks and three drain fields. Additionally, solar panels and wind turbines would be installed on building roofs in both the northern and southern parcels. Both the wind turbines and the solar panels are anticipated to extend an additional four feet above the top of buildings. The project would also relocate and underground the power lines to the east side of the site.

The project proposes a five-acre native plant nursery onsite. Additional agricultural activities would take place on existing offsite farms.

Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impact AES-1 Substantial Adverse Effect on Public Views and Scenic Vistas

The proposed project would result in a significant aesthetics impact if it would have a substantial adverse impact on a scenic vista or public views. The County General Plan and Local Coastal Program do not specifically identify scenic vistas within the County. In general, a “scenic vista” is typically considered an aesthetically-pleasing view, as seen through a narrow passage. In absence of a specific “scenic vista” designation, this analysis will focus on the definitions and designations that are included in the 1986 General Plan and Local Coastal Program.

The views to the east and west from the project site include both ridges and skylines, which are identified by the General Plan as important aesthetic features. Visual simulations of the proposed project were prepared that illustrate the project site immediately following construction with all landscaping planted as well as the project site fifteen years following construction with full tree growth (refer to Figures IV.A-4 through IV.A-8). The visual simulations for the five viewpoints described previously are discussed below.

Airport Street

As shown in Figure IV.A-4 (View 1.A), immediately following construction, views to the south of the Pillar Point Marsh would be fully obstructed for pedestrians and motorists traveling south along Airport Street. While the landscaping would not be mature several years after construction, views to the west would be partially obstructed but Pillar Point and the forested hills would still be visible. Partial views would still be available through the new landscaping at several vantage points and full views of the drainage swale would be available. Therefore, even though the landscaping would not be fully mature for several years after project construction, this impact would be *less than significant*.

As shown in View 1.B, in fifteen years, views to the west of Pillar Point and the forested hills would be fully obstructed by landscaping. However, as partial views would be available through the landscaping at some vantage points and full views of the drainage swale would be available, this impact fifteen years following construction with full tree growth would be *less than significant*. Additionally, although views from the El Granada Mobile Home Park are private, it should be noted that it is not anticipated that all views from the El Granada Mobile Home Park to Pillar Point and the forested hills would be impacted by the proposed project’s four-story buildings and landscaping, as the project would primarily block views to the south from the mobile home park and these features are located to the west of the mobile home park and the project.

Airport Street/Stanford Avenue

As shown in Figure IV.A-5 (View 2.A), immediately following construction, views of the forested hills would be largely obstructed for pedestrians and motorists traveling north on Airport Street, at Stanford Avenue. Although the landscaping would not be mature immediately following construction and for

several years thereafter, partial views would be available through the landscaping at some vantage points and full views would be available at the drainage swale. Therefore, this impact a few years after construction would be *less than significant*.

In fifteen years (View 4.B), these views would be more obstructed by landscaping but the forested hills would remain partially visible. However, as partial views would be available through the landscaping at some vantage points and full views would be available at the drainage swale, this impact fifteen years following construction with full landscaping growth would be *less than significant*.

West Point Avenue

As shown in Figure IV.A-6 (View 3.A), immediately following construction the views of the Pillar Point Marsh and the Montara Mountains would not be obstructed for motorists traveling northbound on West Point Avenue. However, existing views would change from seeing a small cluster of development in the background to seeing a largely developed area in the background. In fifteen years (View 4.B), views would remain substantially unchanged due to the elevation at this location. Views of the project site from this roadway segment constitutes a small portion of the field of view, and while development on the project would be noticeable, the project would not significantly affect the overall value of the views from this roadway. Implementation of the project would not obstruct views of the Pillar Point Marsh and the Montara Mountains from this vantage, and therefore impacts fifteen years following construction with full tree growth would be *less than significant*.

North Trail

As shown in Figure IV.A-7 (View 4.A), immediately following construction views to the south of Princeton by the Sea would be partially obstructed but views of Half Moon Bay would be unobstructed. Existing views showing a large area of intervening development (Mobile Home Park) would show a larger area of development, remaining substantially unchanged. In fifteen years (View 4.B), views would remain substantially unchanged due to the elevation at this location. Therefore, the project would not block views of pedestrians using the North Trail and impacts fifteen years following construction with full tree growth would be *less than significant*.

Highway 1

As shown in Figure IV.A-8 (View 5.A), immediately following construction the views of the Pillar Point, the forested hills, and the skyline would not be obstructed for motorist traveling north and southbound on Highway 1. However, existing views of spare development in the background would be replaced with views of an intervening right-of-way of buildings in the background. In fifteen years (View 5.B), views would remain substantially unchanged due to the elevation and distance from the project site at this location. Views of the project site from this roadway segment constitutes a small portion of the field of view, and while development on the project would be noticeable, the project would not affect the overall value of the views from this roadway. Implementation of the project would not obstruct views of Pillar Point and the skyline, and therefore impacts would be *less than significant*.



View 1.A: Looking south across the project site from Airport St with immature landscaping.



View 1.B: Looking south across the project site from Airport St with mature landscaping.

Source: Christopher A. Joseph & Associates, 2009.





View 2.A: Looking northwest across the project site from Airport St with immature landscaping.



View 2.B: Looking northwest across the project site from Airport St with mature landscaping.

Source: Christopher A. Joseph & Associates, 2009.





View 3.A: Looking northeast towards the project site from Mavericks Parking Lot with immature landscaping.



View 3.B: Looking northeast towards the project site from Mavericks Parking Lot with mature landscaping.

Source: Christopher A. Joseph & Associates, 2009.





View 4.A: Looking east towards the project site from North Trail with immature landscaping.



View 4.B: Looking east towards the project site from North Trail with mature landscaping.

Source: Christopher A. Joseph & Associates, 2009.





View 5.A: Looking southwest across the airport towards the project site from Highway 1 with immature landscaping.



View 5.B: Looking southwest across the airport towards the project site from Highway 1 with mature landscaping.

Source: Christopher A. Joseph & Associates, 2009.



Impact AES-2 Substantially Damage Scenic Resources, including, but not Limited to Trees, Rock Outcroppings, or Historic Buildings within a State Scenic Highway

The proposed project would result in a significant aesthetic impact if it would damage scenic resources, including open space, trees, rock outcroppings, or historic buildings within a State-designated scenic highway. As noted, the project is located within the Highway 1 (Cabrillo Highway) County-designated scenic corridor, while Highway 1 is State-designated to the south of the site (from Half Moon Bay to the Santa Cruz County line). The project is proposed on land that has been utilized for agricultural (crop) production, and does not include scenic resources. There are no trees, rock outcroppings or historical structures located within the project site. Therefore, as noted in the discussion for Impact AES-1, the impact on the view from Highway 1 would be *less than significant*.

Open Space

An open space land use designation is widely used by local agencies to preserve natural resources and protect important features, such as ridgelines. The 1986 General Plan establishes the uses that may be allowed on land with a General Open Space designation. Uses would be limited to resource management and production, recreation and limited residential or service. The entire Pillar Point Marsh and the drainage swale that separates the project sites are County designated Open Space, as are the hills that rise sharply to the east. The project is designed to avoid the Pillar Point Marsh, and establishes a 100-foot setback from the marsh and the swale. The open space to the east is far enough in the distance, and the elevation of the ridgelines are high enough, that the views of the open space would not be affected by the project. Therefore, the impact to open space would be *less than significant*.

Impact AES-3 Significantly Degrade the Existing Visual Character or Quality of the Site and its Surroundings

The proposed project would result in a significant aesthetic impact if it would significantly degrade the existing visual character or the quality of the site and its surroundings. Development of the project as proposed would result in changes to the existing character of the site. Implementation of the project would result in development including four office buildings to a height of 45 feet 6 inches, up to 70 residential units, a limited community center with outdoor recreation, storage facilities and parking lots. Incorporating buildings, plantings, paving for pedestrians, and other pedestrian treatments, would visually connect the proposed Office Park and Wellness Center facilities. Landscaped areas and restored wetlands areas would provide a buffer between the proposed project and the existing residential uses to the north.

The Wellness Center would generally be physically and functionally compatible with existing uses to the southwest, recognizing building heights, landscaping, artificial lighting, and other design elements similar to compatible commercial and industrial development. Maximum building heights on the project site would be 45 feet six inches (three stories). While the proposed building heights of the Office Park would be taller than the building heights at the El Granada Mobile Home Park, the use of setbacks, landscaped buffers, and building placement would allow for the development of the Office Park site with taller structures without resulting in a significantly incompatible aesthetic relationship with surrounding uses.

Although the existing character of the site would be altered by implementation of the project, the change would not be a substantial degradation. Development onsite would be subject to the policies of the San Mateo County 1986 General Plan, the San Mateo County Local Coastal Program and the San Mateo County Community Design Manual, and Section 6565.1 of the San Mateo County Zoning Regulations (Design Review District). The project would be required to comply with all applicable County visual quality policies, which would, "...promote and enhance good design, site relationships, and other aesthetic considerations," and would, "...promote visually attractive development." Therefore, the project would not result in a substantial degradation to the visual character of the project area and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Impact AES-4 Create a New Source of Substantial Light or Glare which would Adversely Affect Day or Nighttime Views in the Area

A significant impact may occur if a project introduces new sources of light or glare on the project site that would be incompatible with the areas surrounding the project site or which pose a safety hazard, such as to motorists utilizing adjacent streets. As previously discussed, there are currently no sources of light and glare on the project site as the project site is undeveloped.

The proposed project would introduce additional sources of lighting and reflective surfaces to the project site, as compared to the site's existing conditions. New lighting sources would include outdoor street lighting and security lighting, indoor lighting, and light generated by vehicle headlights. Lighting would be used as a design tool to highlight architectural elements and landscaping. Lighting would also provide security and safety in parking areas, service passages, and common areas of the project. As noted in Section III, Project Description, a detailed lighting plan is not available at this time. The applicant has indicated that all outdoor lighting will be low-level to illuminate walkways and provide safe access to parking. While it appears the project would not introduce new sources of light or glare on the project site that would be incompatible with the areas surrounding the project site or which pose a safety hazard, until a detailed lighting plan is prepared, impacts would be *significant*.

The following mitigation measure is recommended to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level:

Mitigation Measure AES-4 Create a New Source of Substantial Light or Glare which would Adversely Affect Day or Nighttime Views in the Area

- Prior to the approval of final project plans, a detailed lighting plan shall be submitted to San Mateo County for review and approval, consistent with their requirements. The lighting plan shall prohibit light spillover across property lines and limit lighting to the minimum necessary for security and exterior lighting purposes, as determined by the Community Development Director. All lighting shall be designed to be compatible with surrounding development. The project shall not propose light sources that are atypical of the surrounding environment.
- Reflective glass or other glaring building materials shall be discouraged. The exterior of the proposed building shall be constructed of non-reflective materials such as, but not limited to:

high-performance tinted non-reflective glass, metal panel, and pre-cast concrete or cast in-place or fabricated wall surfaces. The proposed materials shall be reviewed and approved by the Community Development Director prior to approval of the Final Map.

Impact AES-5 Temporary Construction/Grading Impacts

During project construction, dump trucks and other trucks would access the site via local roadways, including Airport Street. The delivery and removal of equipment, other machinery, and the delivery of materials would involve trucking activities. As with onsite activities, the visual aspect of trucks loaded with debris and/or soils may be interesting to some viewers and unsightly to others. Daily construction times would be restricted to between the hours of 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM (Monday –Friday) and 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM (Saturday).

Development would be coordinated with surrounding land uses, vehicular circulation, emergency access routes, and pedestrian systems, so that visitors are clearly guided and that there are logical transitions within the circulation network. Flagmen would be used, as necessary, to control traffic during the arrival and departure of trucks and equipment. Further, during the construction period, there would be temporary construction fencing installed onsite to screen most activities from adjacent, surrounding uses. All construction staging would occur within the project site boundaries, including the requirement that all associated construction workers would park onsite.

Thus, construction-related visual impacts would be ***less than significant*** and no mitigation measures are required.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The related projects listed in Section III, Project Description, are primarily residential projects, with some commercial and industrial park developments. As shown in Table III-1, none of the related projects are in immediate proximity to the project site, with the exception of related project #3, Ruben Building, the proposed industrial development at 151 Vassar Avenue, which is located approximately 0.13 miles (685 feet) southeast of the project site in the developed Princeton area. Numerous intervening structures are located between these two sites therefore, although this related project is close enough to be seen within the same viewshed as the proposed project, the Ruben Building will be located within an already developed area while the project site is located outside of the developed area of Princeton. Therefore, the cumulative impact of these two projects is not anticipated to combine. Project impacts related to scenic vistas or other scenic resources, visual character, and light and glare would be limited to the project site and areas immediately surrounding the site. As the building sites for all related projects are outside of the proposed project vicinity or located within the developed Princeton area to the south of the project site, the aesthetics of the related projects would not contribute to the aesthetic impacts of the project site. Additionally, each related project would be required to be consistent with the San Mateo County 1986 General Plan, the San Mateo County Local Coastal Program and the San Mateo County Community Design Manual, and Section 6565.1 of the San Mateo County Zoning Regulations (Design Review District). The additional changes brought about by the related projects in conjunction with the proposed

project would yield less-than-significant cumulative impacts. Overall, cumulative impacts to aesthetics would be *less than significant* and no mitigation measures are required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

With implementation of the development standards included as part of the proposed project as well as the proposed Mitigation Measures, project impacts on visual character, light and glare, and scenic resources would be *less than significant*.