
3.3 AESTHETICS

Introduction

This section describes the existing aesthetic resources and visual characteristics of the Project site and its immediate vicinity, along with existing plans and policies that are relevant to visual resource issues within the City. This section also evaluates the effect on existing visual resources associated with implementation of the Project. Potential impacts to aesthetic and visual resources due to implementation of the Project at the West Campus are evaluated based on a review of photographs, visual simulations, view studies, shadow simulations, site reconnaissance, and Project data. The specific impacts examined in this section pertain to the Project's potential to change the visual quality and character of the Project area and to create new sources of light, glare, or shadows.

Issues identified in response to the Notice of Preparation (NOP) (Appendix 1) were considered in preparing this analysis. Applicable issues that were identified pertain to increased building heights and the landscape plan. Commenters also requested that simulations of the West Campus development be provided.

The change in the Conditional Development Permit (CDP) at the East Campus would not result in visual impacts. Therefore, Project impacts at the East Campus are not discussed further in this section.

Applicable Plans and Regulations

Local

City of Menlo Park General Plan. The General Plan guides development and use of land within the City. Several goals and policies of the General Plan apply broadly to aesthetics across the City. The following policies from the Land Use Element¹ of the General Plan pertain to the Project:

Policy I-G-7: Public access to the Bay for the scenic enjoyment of the open water, sloughs, and marshes shall be protected.

Policy I-G-10: Extensive landscaping should be included in public and private development, including greater landscaping in large parking areas. Where appropriate, the City shall encourage placement of a portion of the required parking in landscape reserve until such time as the parking is needed. Plant material selection and landscape and irrigation design shall adhere to the City's Water Efficient Landscaping Ordinance.

¹ City of Menlo Park, Menlo Park General Plan, adopted December 1, 1994 with amendments through December 7, 2010.

The following goals and policies from the Open Space and Conservation Element² of the City's General Plan pertain to the Project.

Goal 2: To encourage the enhancement of boulevards, plazas, and other urban open spaces in residential, commercial, and industrial neighborhoods.

Goal 3: To retain the unique appeal and visual amenities of Menlo Park's baylands.

Policy 2: Include landscaping and plazas on public and private lands and well-designed pedestrian facilities in areas of intensive pedestrian activity. Require greater landscaping in extensive parking areas.

Policy 5: Provide public access to the bay for the scenic enjoyment of the open water, the sloughs, and the marshes.

Policy 6: Protect conservation and scenic areas, historic and cultural sites from deterioration or destruction by vandalism, private actions or public actions.

Action Program 8: The City will continue architectural and site review for all development (except single family dwelling) within the City since this process has improved site planning and building design.

Menlo Park Municipal Code, Chapter 13.24, Heritage Trees. Chapter 13.24³ protects the health and maintenance of Heritage Trees, those being a tree or group of trees of historical significance, special character, or community benefit; all oak trees native to California (*Quercus*) which have trunks of 31.4 inches or greater circumference and all trees other than oaks which have a trunk with a circumference of 47.1 inches or more, measured 54 inches above natural grade.

Menlo Park Municipal Code, Chapter 16.64, Fences, Walls, Trees and Hedges. The Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 16.64)⁴ includes standards for fences in non-residential and residential areas. In non-residential areas, fences, walls, hedges, and similar structures located between the building and front lot line are required to obtain approval by the Community Development Director. The following features must be considered when obtaining approval: structural stability; aesthetics; general health, safety, and welfare of the community; and clear lines of sight for vehicular and pedestrian traffic or other safety factor.

Design Guidelines for Signs. The Design Guidelines for Signs⁵ provides regulations for the design of signs in residential and non-residential areas. The stated intent of the guidelines is to "encourage

² City of Menlo Park, Menlo Park General Plan, Open Space and Conservation Element, adopted June 26, 1973.

³ City of Menlo Park, Municipal Code, Title 13: Streets, Sidewalks, and Utilities, passed August 23, 2011, website: <http://www.codepublishing.com/CA/menlopark/>, accessed September 29, 2011.

⁴ City of Menlo Park, Municipal Code, Title 16: Zoning, passed August 23, 2011, website: <http://www.codepublishing.com/CA/menlopark/>, accessed September 29, 2011.

⁵ City of Menlo Park, Community Development Department, Planning Division, "Design Guidelines for Signs," updated August 2008, website: <http://www.menlopark.org/departments/pln/signdesnguide.pdf>, accessed July 29, 2011.

signage that helps maintain the positive image of the area enjoyed by the residents and businesses of the City. Every Menlo Park business is encouraged to post an attractive sign stating the name of the business. The sign should be at a scale appropriate to the pedestrian and vehicular streetscape and the nature of the business.” All new and modified signs require approval by the Director of Community Development or his/her designee.

Architectural Control. Per Action Program 8 of the Open Space and Conservation Element and Section 16.68.020 of the Municipal Code,⁶ any proposal for a new structure, addition to an existing structure, or change to the exterior of a structure that requires a building permit (with the exception of single-family dwellings, duplexes, and accessory buildings) requires that the Planning Commission conduct architectural control review with regard to the following findings:

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

Existing Conditions

Visual Quality

The visual quality of an area is based on the physical appearance and characteristics of the built environment; the proximity and balance of man-made structures with open space or landscaping; and views of public open space or of more distant landscape features such as hills, water bodies, or built landmarks, such as bridges. These elements help define a sense of place and a physical orientation in a larger visual setting.

Regional Setting

The City of Menlo Park is a 19-square-mile municipality situated approximately 30 miles south of San Francisco and about 20 miles north of San Jose on the San Francisco Peninsula. Menlo Park is one of over a dozen cities located on the flatter portions of the western margin of San Francisco Bay (Bay), east of the San Andreas Fault zone. The municipalities of Atherton and Redwood City border Menlo Park to the north, and Palo Alto and East Palo Alto border Menlo Park to the south.

Urban development within the region is largely concentrated between the Bay and the Interstate 280 (I-280) corridor. In general, the Peninsula is developed with low-density uses within distinct neighborhoods that include commercial, retail, and residential buildings. Larger-scale development, such as office parks and industrial buildings, tend to be located between the Bay and US 101. Some

⁶ City of Menlo Park, Municipal Code, Chapter 16.68: Buildings, passed December 14, 2010, website: <http://www.codepublishing.com/CA/menlopark/>, accessed July 28, 2011.

high-rise office, apartment, and hospital buildings are located between US 101 and I-280; however, these buildings are mainly concentrated along the US 101 and El Camino Real corridors.

The Bay and its natural features are visible key visual components in the eastern and northern portions of the City. The principal topographic feature visible from the City is the Santa Cruz Mountain Range, which runs the length of the Peninsula and forms a barrier between the Pacific Ocean and the Bay. The mountain range is visible from adjacent cities and the majority of Menlo Park, especially to the north and east of US 101. The portion of the mountain range visible from Menlo Park and the adjacent cities is Skyline Ridge, rising over 2,400 feet in height and located approximately 15 miles south of the Project site.

Local Setting

The visual and urban design character in the Project site vicinity is influenced by both the undeveloped areas along the Bay and by the mix of developed uses in the area that include industrial, office, residential, and commercial uses. Within a 0.25-mile radius of the Project site, land uses include the Bay, salt ponds, and Ravenswood Slough to the north, east, and west; the Belle Haven neighborhood with residential, commercial, and industrial uses to the south; and industrial buildings and warehouses to the west. Further to the northwest, across the salt ponds, is the hilly open space of Bedwell-Bayfront Park (Bayfront Park) and the Bay beyond. Glimpses of the Dumbarton Bridge to the east can be seen from portions of the East Campus.

The contrast between the differing land uses and the natural setting of the Bay provides limited unity and inconsistent visual patterns. Development in the Project area ranges from large industrial buildings and warehouses to low-density single-family residential units. The Belle Haven neighborhood, to the south of the Project site, generally consists of one- to two-story houses on medium-sized lots, with ample street setbacks, landscaped front yards, mature street trees, and well-maintained sidewalks. The neighborhood also features open space areas, parks, a small commercial retail area adjacent to Willow Road/State Route (SR) 114, and Belle Haven Elementary School. The Dumbarton Rail Corridor separates the Belle Haven neighborhood from the industrial uses to the north (and to the west of the Project site). These industrial uses are located on large parcels of land and feature low-rise, boxy buildings with limited windows and no decorative façades. The buildings are surrounded by paved parking lots and sparse landscaping.

Pedestrian and bicycle trails are located in the vicinity of the Project site. A Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) Public Shore Trail borders the East Campus and runs along the perimeter, providing its users with views of the salt ponds, marshes, the Bay, and the Santa Cruz Mountain Range, as well as the East Bay Hills on clear days. The trail is evenly-paved and includes some maintained vegetation, benches, and trash receptacles. In addition, the Bay Trail travels along Bayfront Expressway. The Bay Trail is a series of existing and planned regional hiking and bicycle trails administered by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) that will eventually connect continuously around the perimeter of the San Francisco and San Pablo Bays and link 47 cities with 500 miles of trails.⁷ This portion of the Bay Trail runs to the north of Bayfront Expressway, west of the

⁷ Association of Bay Area Governments, “Overview,” website: <http://www.baytrail.org/overview.html>, accessed July 12, 2011.

East Campus, travels over the Bayfront Expressway/Willow Road intersection, and continues along the southern portion Bayfront Expressway, to the east. The trail is evenly paved, but otherwise does not include other features, such as benches and landscaping.

Project Site Setting

As described in Section 2, Project Description, the Project site refers to both the East Campus and the West Campus. These two sites collectively comprise 79 acres. The East Campus and West Campus are separated by the six-lane Bayfront Expressway/SR 84, which runs in an east-west direction between the two campuses. There is an existing undercrossing beneath Bayfront Expressway, originally intended to link the two Raychem campuses (now the East Campus and West Campus). The two campuses are currently developed and both sites are built on Bay fill lands that formerly consisted of salt and brackish water marshes.

East Campus. The 56.9-acre East Campus is currently accessible from the main egress/ingress point at 1601 Willow Road, which is adjacent to the intersection of Bayfront Expressway and Willow Road. A second access point for vehicles coming from the East Bay is located off of Bayfront Expressway in the eastern portion of the site (right-in and right-out only). The East Campus is bound by Ravenswood Slough and the salt ponds to the north and east, Bayfront Expressway to the east and south, and Bay marshlands and salt ponds to the west. Further to the north is the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. The site is enclosed by a chain-link fence and dense landscaping along its perimeter. Due to these features, the East Campus is isolated from other light-industrial and office development in the area.

The East Campus is developed with nine buildings, totaling more than one million square feet (sf). The buildings range in height from 31.5 feet to 47 feet to the top of the parapet. As shown in Figure 3.3-1a, the buildings surround an interior courtyard with ample landscaping, paved walkways, and plazas. This courtyard is not visible offsite. The buildings are surrounded on all sides by an expansive paved surface parking lot with capacity for 3,450 vehicles and a roadway network (Figure 3.3-1b). In addition, the northwest corner of the site, as shown in Figure 3.3-1c includes an athletic field and basketball courts. Overall, the East Campus is well-maintained and consists of manicured vegetation, paved surfaces, and modern two- to three-story buildings. The buildings at the East Campus are significantly set-back from Bayfront Expressway and are blocked from view by dense, mature landscaping along the perimeter of the property. This vegetation creates a visual border and emphasizes the separation between the adjacent streets and on-site buildings.

In the southwest portion of the East Campus, adjacent to the main entry, an undercrossing travels under Bayfront Expressway and connects with the West Campus. As shown in Figure 3.3-1d, the tunnel consists of concrete and metal railings and is approximately 10.5 feet in height and 32 feet in width. This tunnel, which was originally intended to link the two Raychem campuses, is currently closed to pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.



a. East Campus Interior Courtyard



b. East Campus Building 10 facing North



c. Existing Bayfront Expressway Tunnel facing Southeast



d. East Campus Athletic Field facing North

West Campus. The West Campus is currently accessible by an unsignalized entrance on Bayfront Expressway. The driveway includes left- and right-turn in access, and right-turn out access. Emergency vehicle access is also currently provided via Constitution Drive along the southwestern edge. The West Campus is bound by Bayfront Expressway to the north, Willow Road to the east, the Dumbarton Rail Corridor to the south, and the TE Connectivity site to the west. The Belle Haven neighborhood is located across the Dumbarton Rail Corridor, further to the south. Similar to the East Campus, the site is enclosed by a chain-link fence and dense landscaping along its perimeter.

Visual Character. The West Campus consists of two parcels. The developed western portion, as shown in Figure 3.3-2a, includes two office buildings, a surface parking lot for 347 vehicles, a guard house, and landscaped islands with mature trees. The two buildings are two stories in height and feature floor-to-ceiling tinted windows, cement columns, and large tiled roofs. In addition, each building has three interior courtyards, which are not visible off-site. The second parcel (Figure 3.3-2b), to the east, is vacant and consists of paved surfaces covered in patches of weeds and groundcover. Some man-made features are present intermittently throughout the site, including pipes, fencing, and an abandoned storage unit.

The perimeter of the West Campus is surrounded on all sides by a chain-link fence with barbed-wires and moderate to dense landscape buffers, as depicted in Figure 3.3-2c. Utility wires and wooden poles run along the northern and southern perimeters of the West Campus. In addition, four lattice transmission towers and 60 kilovolts (kV) electrical transmission lines bisect the northern and eastern portions of the site.

On-Site Topography. The West Campus was undeveloped marshland and was filled prior to development of the Raychem facilities (now TE Connectivity). The fill source for the West Campus was reported to be from a road cut for I-280 construction.⁸ As such, the East Campus is relatively flat and is approximately five to nine feet above mean sea level (msl).

Vegetation. Vegetation on the West Campus differs between the developed western portion and the formerly developed eastern portion. In the western portion, vegetation is present within landscaped parking islands, along the entrance roadway, and around and between the buildings. The landscaping associated with the former development is overgrown with non-native annual grasses and forbs. The northern portion of this developed parcel features open space with unmaintained vegetation, three sports courts, and benches. Each building features three interior courtyards with vegetation and a courtyard with an unused decorative fountain is present between the two buildings. The eastern parcel features limited vegetation with natural groundcover and some unmaintained small shrubs; otherwise, the eastern parcel is barren.

⁸ Cornerstone Earth Group, *Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, 312-314 Constitution Drive, Menlo Park, California*, November 19, 2010.



a. West Campus Existing Buildings



b. Eastern Vacant Portion of West Campus



c. View of Belle Haven Neighborhood from West Campus facing South



d. West Campus Entry facing North

The perimeter of the entire West Campus is covered in moderate to dense trees and bushes, providing a visual barrier between the site and the exterior uses. In total, the arborist report prepared for the West Campus (included as Appendix 3.3 of this Draft EIR) identified 624 trees, consisting of 36 tree species. Of these, 233 trees qualify as heritage trees under the City's Tree Ordinance.⁹

Lighting and Shadows. Light sources at the West Campus are extremely limited due to the unoccupied nature of the site. Although there are some light fixtures on the existing buildings and around the paved parking areas, these are not currently in use. In addition, there is no lighting along the adjacent segment of SR 84, except for the cobra-style street lighting at the intersection of Bayfront Expressway/Willow Road, to the northeast. As such, the only existing sources of light at the West Campus include the intersection lighting, vehicle headlights from traffic traveling along Willow Road and Bayfront Expressway, and light spillage from the adjacent TE Connectivity site to the west.

The existing buildings at the West Campus are two stories in height and are located far enough from the property line that they do not cast shadows onto adjacent properties, roadways, or open spaces. No shadows are cast on the Belle Haven neighborhood to the south. However, the lattice utility towers, power lines, and some of the taller vegetation cast shadows on Bayfront Expressway to the north. The shadows are the most extreme during the Winter solstice when they can reach past Bayfront Expressway to the Bay Trail, the salt ponds/marsh, and the East Campus parking lot.

Site Visibility and View Corridors

Due to the relatively flat topography of the Project site and its vicinity, and the prevalence of existing buildings and vegetation, views at street-level are largely restricted. There are, however, some longer-range views available from several locations within the Project site, such as from the entrances and exits of the East Campus and West Campus.

Views from the East Campus and West Campus differ. Within the interior of the East Campus, views are limited due to the flat topography, the existing two- to three-story buildings, and the perimeter levees, fencing, and vegetation. Looking north, east, and west, at ground-level, foreground views consist of the surface parking lots, the levees, and existing vegetation with channelized background views of the East Bay Hills. Views of the salt ponds, marshes, and Bay are obstructed from pedestrian-level viewpoints (Figure 3.3-2d); however, these natural features are most likely visible from the upper levels of the buildings. Facing south, foreground views encompass the parking lot, vegetated islands, perimeter landscaping, and a channelized view of the Bayfront Expressway/Willow Road intersection. Background views looking south include mainly obstructed views of the Santa Cruz Mountain Range.

As previously mentioned, the West Campus is relatively flat; therefore, views of the surrounding environment from the West Campus are limited. Facing north, foreground views include the on-site vegetation and partially blocked views of Bayfront Expressway. At the entry driveway, as depicted in Figure 3.3-2d, middleground views of the salt ponds are visible and background views of the East Bay Hills are visible on clear days. In addition, the roof of the existing buildings on the East Campus can be seen

⁹ SBCA Tree Consulting, "Tree Survey - Facebook West Campus," May 18, 2011, Survey Addendum, July 19, 2011.

looking northeast. However, due to dense vegetation, views facing east are limited to glimpses of vehicles travelling on Willow Road. To the south, the site provides foreground views of the unused Dumbarton Rail Corridor. Further to the south, industrial buildings, open lots, and single-family houses in the Belle Haven neighborhood are visible. Background views include partially obstructed views of the Santa Cruz Mountain Range. Figure 3.3-2c shows views from the West Campus, looking south. Facing west, views are limited to the existing on-site buildings and the industrial buildings at the TE Connectivity site.

Although portions of each campus are visible from public vantage points, the whole Project site is not visible in its entirety from a single, ground-level vantage point due to its large size, flat topography, and surrounding low-rise buildings. There are six prominent public vantage points and the views of the West Campus are discussed below. Since no construction would occur at the East Campus with implementation of the Project, and, therefore, there would be no significant change of its visual conditions, the discussion below focuses on views of the West Campus only.

BCDC Public Shore Trail. The West Campus is visible from the western portion of the existing BCDC Public Shore Trail, which runs along the perimeter of the East Campus, as explained above. Figure 3.3-3a depicts the existing view from the BCDC Public Shore Trail facing south towards the West Campus. From this vantage point, the foreground views feature the trail, the marsh, and the salt ponds. Middleground views include Bayfront Expressway, the vegetation on the West Campus, the rooftops of the existing West Campus buildings, and the electrical transmission towers and lines. Further south are primarily unobstructed, panoramic background views of the Santa Cruz Mountain Range. Due to the presence of the natural Bay features to the west and north, and the views of the Santa Cruz Mountain Range to the south, this viewpoint is considered a scenic view.

Bay Trail. The Bay Trail travels to the north of Bayfront Expressway, across the road from the West Campus. This segment of the Bay Trail, as shown in Figure 3.3-3b, runs between the salt ponds and marsh to the north and Bayfront Expressway to the south. Looking west, the perimeter vegetation along the West Campus boundary is visible in the middleground with background views of the Santa Cruz Mountain Range. Looking east, middleground views of the East Campus are visible. Further east, background views of the East Bay Hills are visible on clear days. Depending on the location of the bicyclist/pedestrian using the Bay Trail, the existing West Campus buildings are visible through the vegetation, to the south. However, other than these buildings, the flat topography, the center median of Bayfront Expressway, and the dense perimeter vegetation block the majority of the views of the West Campus. Due to the views of the natural Bay setting to the north and east, and views of the Santa Cruz Mountain Range and the East Bay Hills, this viewpoint is considered a scenic view.

Bayfront Park. Bayfront Park, located approximately 1.15 miles northwest of the Project site, was built on the site of a former landfill that has been redeveloped into a park. The park now contains grass-covered hills, bushes, and scattered eucalyptus and pine trees. The 155-acre park features large open space areas with trails for hiking and a 2.3-mile perimeter trail that is part of the Bay Trail system.¹⁰

¹⁰ Menlo Park Community Services Department, “City of Menlo Park – Recreation Facility Summary,” Katrina Whiteaker, email to Atkins May 25, 2011.



As shown in Figure 3.3-3c, foreground views from within the park looking southeast towards the Project site are of grassy vegetation, the marsh and salt ponds, and Bayfront Expressway. Due to the flat topography, background views from this location are limited. However, from the top of the low rolling hills of Bayfront Park (as depicted in Figure 3.3-3d), looking southeast towards the Project site and across Bayfront Expressway, the views are more expansive. Middleground views from this vantage point include low-rise structures of varying height and color along Constitution Drive to the north of the Dumbarton Rail Corridor, mature trees, and vegetation. In the background, the Santa Cruz Mountain Range is visible to the south and the East Bay Hills are visible to the northeast on clear days. Due to the distance and existing dense vegetation, the existing buildings at the West Campus are not visible from any location at Bayfront Park. Because of the expansive views of the Bay setting to the north, east, and west (from higher elevations of Bayfront Park), and views of the Santa Cruz Mountain Range, views from Bayfront Park are considered to be scenic.

Intersection of Bayfront Expressway and Willow Road. Bayfront Expressway is a major roadway that links the Dumbarton Bridge to US 101. This six-lane roadway runs between the southern boundary of the East Campus and the northern boundary of the West Campus. A concrete median, approximately three-feet in height, separates the eastbound and westbound lanes. Views of the West Campus from passing automobiles traveling either eastbound or westbound are mainly obscured by both the median and the existing dense perimeter vegetation.

Willow Road is one of three major roadways linking the Dumbarton Bridge to US 101. This four-lane roadway (plus turn lanes) runs parallel to the eastern boundary of the West Campus and crosses over the Dumbarton Rail Corridor. Along the segment of Willow Road, between Bayfront Expressway and the Dumbarton Rail Corridor, the street is lined with dense, mature vegetation and flanked mainly by unused parcels of land. To the east of Willow Road (south of Bayfront Expressway) is open marshland and to the west is the vacant West Campus property. There is also a driveway to a warehouse/storage complex that abuts a small portion in the southeast corner of the road segment (shown in Figure 3.3-4a).

As shown in Figure 3.3-4b, foreground views from the Bayfront Expressway/Willow Road intersection facing west include the intersection of Bayfront Expressway/Willow Road and fairly unobstructed views of the northwest portion of the West Campus. Other prominent features include traffic signal lights, cobra-style street lighting, West Campus vegetation, and the electrical transmission towers and wires in the northern and eastern portion of the campus. In the background, there are partially obstructed views of the Santa Cruz Mountain Range.

Belle Haven Neighborhood. As discussed above, the Belle Haven neighborhood contains mainly single-family residential units setback from the streets with mature and well-maintained landscaping. The residential features of the neighborhood are depicted in Figure 3.3-4c. However, the neighborhood also includes some industrial buildings and open parcels along the Dumbarton Rail Corridor, parks, small commercial retail areas, and institutional buildings such as Belle Haven Elementary School. Due to the flat topography, existing structures, and dense vegetation, background views of the areas surrounding the Belle Haven neighborhood are not visible at pedestrian level.



a. Willow Road facing North



b. Bayfront Expressway/Willow Road facing West



c. Madera Avenue (Belle Haven) facing North



d. Hamilton Avenue (Belle Haven) facing West

Due to the limited development directly abutting the Dumbarton Rail Corridor, there are channelized views of the West Campus from select streets in the Belle Haven neighborhood. Hamilton Avenue, as shown in Figure 3.3-4d, runs parallel to the Dumbarton Rail Corridor, but is separated from the right-of-way by industrial/warehouse uses and vacant parcels. As such, motorists driving along Hamilton Avenue have intermittent views of the West Campus. In addition, streets that run perpendicular to Hamilton Avenue, such as Hollyburne Avenue and Madera Avenue, have channelized view corridors of the West Campus. The existing buildings at the West Campus are visible looking north on Windermere Avenue and Hollyburne Avenue. Other streets, such as Madera Avenue (Figure 3.3-4c), have channelized views of the West Campus, but only the existing perimeter vegetation is visible.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Standards of Significance

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

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway.
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.
- Significantly shadow public open space other than public streets and adjacent sidewalks.

Methodology

Visual conditions within the Project area are defined by a mix of regional roadways and industrial, office, recreational, residential, and commercial development. The interplay of these elements of the visual setting varies from point to point, depending on viewer location. The appearance of the Project site (specifically the West Campus) and the surrounding community would change with implementation of the Project, which would result in the construction of new and taller buildings at the West Campus.

To illustrate the general appearance of the development proposed at the West Campus, photomontages (massing studies) from six vantage points were prepared, as shown in Figure 3.3-5. A photomontage is a photograph of the existing conditions with an image of the proposed buildings superimposed over the photograph through the use of computer imaging techniques. The photomontages have been constructed in a photo-realistic fashion to show how the proposed development would look inclusive of buildings, parking structures, and landscaping. The photomontages are used to illustrate the development that is proposed at the West Campus and provide a reasonable representation of the buildings' general massing, scale, and height upon Project completion. Since façade articulations and architectural designs have not yet been developed, these features are not included in the photomontages. The



photomontages, as included in Figure 3.3-6 through Figure 3.3-11, depict views of the Project at the West Campus from the following locations:

- Viewpoint 1: West Campus looking south from the BCDC Public Shore Trail
- Viewpoint 2: West Campus looking southeast from the Bay Trail and Bayfront Expressway
- Viewpoint 3: West Campus looking southeast from Bayfront Park
- Viewpoint 4: West Campus looking southwest from the intersection of Bayfront Expressway and Willow Road
- Viewpoint 5: West Campus looking north from Hollyburne Avenue in the Belle Haven neighborhood
- Viewpoint 6: West Campus looking north from Madera Avenue in the Belle Haven neighborhood

Prior to preparing the photomontages, field investigations were conducted to determine those locations that would offer maximum visual exposure of the Project from public vantage points (see Figure 3.3-5). The photomontage locations selected include both “existing” (without the West Campus development) and “proposed” (with West Campus development) views.

Impacts Not Evaluated In Detail

The Project would not substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway. SR 84 (Bayfront Expressway) and SR 114 (Willow Road) are not designated as a State scenic highway by the California Department of Transportation. The closest designated scenic highway is I-280, which is over 5.5 miles southwest from the Project site.¹¹ No views of the Project site can be seen from any portion of I-280. Therefore, although the Project would remove trees, *no impacts* related to scenic resources within a State scenic highway corridor would occur. Thus, this issue is not discussed below.

Environmental Analysis

AE-1 Alteration of Scenic Views. The Project at the West Campus would have a less-than-significant impact to scenic vistas in areas surrounding the Project site. (LTS)

Impacts to Scenic Vistas. For the purposes of this analysis, a scenic vista is defined as a vantage point with a broad and expansive view of a significant landscape feature (e.g., a mountain range, lake, or coastline) or of a significant historic or architectural feature (e.g., views of a historic tower). A scenic vista is a location that offers a high visual quality, harmonious, and visually interesting view.

¹¹ California Department of Transportation, “California Scenic Highway Mapping System, San Mateo County,” website: http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic_highways/index.htm, accessed July 29, 2011.

a. Existing



b. Proposed



a. Existing



b. Proposed



a. Existing



b. Proposed



a. Existing



b. Proposed



a. Existing



b. Proposed



a. Existing



b. Proposed



The City does not have any officially designated scenic views or vistas. However, in the areas surrounding the Project site, the locations that could be considered scenic vistas are the BCDC Public Shore Trail, the Bay Trail, and Bayfront Park. These areas feature expansive views of the natural setting of the marsh and salt ponds, with the Bay further to the north. In addition, viewers who use these facilities can be considered sensitive viewers, since they are aware of their surroundings during their recreational activities.

BCDC Public Shore Trail (Viewpoint 1). The proposed development at the West Campus would significantly increase massing, height, and bulk over existing conditions. As shown in Viewpoint 1, Figure 3.3-6a, existing views from the BCDC Public Shore Trail facing south include the marsh and salt ponds in the foreground, Bayfront Expressway and the perimeter vegetation of the West Campus in the middleground, and the Santa Cruz Mountain Range in the background. As depicted in Figure 3.3-6b, the foreground views would remain the same with implementation of the Project, but the background views would be altered due to development in the middleground. The proposed development at the West Campus would interrupt the panoramic and mostly unobstructed views of the Santa Cruz Mountain Range. Nonetheless, the continuous ridgeline would still be visible over the roofs and mechanical screening areas of Building 1 (74 feet in height), Building 2 (61 feet), Building 3 (66 feet), and the parking structure (56 feet). Since the ridgeline would still be visible from certain areas, the impact would not be significant.

Bay Trail (Viewpoint 2). Viewpoint 2 shows the existing and proposed conditions as seen from the Bay Trail, looking southeast towards the West Campus. Currently, views from this direction encompass Bayfront Expressway, the utility towers and lines, and perimeter vegetation at the West Campus. With Project development, as shown in Figure 3.3-7b, the five-story parking structure and the two- to four-story office buildings in the northern portion of the West Campus would be visible. While this would represent a significant increase in building mass over existing conditions, the buildings would not block views of scenic features, such as the Santa Cruz Mountain Range to the south and the salt ponds to the north. Therefore, the impact would not be significant.

Bayfront Park (Viewpoint 3). Viewpoint 3 depicts a lower-elevation view from Bayfront Park under existing and proposed conditions. As shown in Figure 3.3-8b, the West Campus is at a significant distance from the park (approximately 1.15 miles). As such, views of the proposed development are mainly obstructed by foreground views of the marsh and salt ponds and middleground views of Bayfront Expressway and vegetation. Buildings 1 and 2 and the parking structure would be visible from the lower elevations of Bayfront Park; however, due to distance, the proposed buildings blend with their surroundings and are hardly visible. Therefore, the visual impact to Bayfront Park would not be significant.

Overall Impacts to Scenic Vistas. The Project would result in additional height, bulk, and massing from the proposed buildings and associated mechanical screening areas that would interrupt existing views of the Santa Cruz Mountain Range; however, the increased development would represent a small portion of the overall vista. Views from all of the scenic

viewpoints generally tend to focus away from the West Campus and more towards the north, where views encompass panoramic and expansive scenery of the marsh, salt ponds, Bay, and the East Bay Hills. Since Bayfront Expressway and other manmade features, such as large transmission towers and lines, are located between the salt ponds and the West Campus, the views facing south towards the West Campus are not as significant as those facing north.

It is also important to note that the views of the West Campus change as the viewer adjusts position. As the viewer approaches the site along the BCDC Shore Trail or Bay Trail, the development would appear larger and would block a greater amount of background views. However, the development at the West Campus would appear smaller against the backdrop of the mountains as the viewer retreats away from the site. For example, from Viewpoint 1, the ridgeline of the Santa Cruz Mountain Range would be unobstructed even with the development of the West Campus buildings. However, as the viewer travels south along the BCDC Shore Trail, the buildings would appear larger and would block the majority of the mountains, including the ridgeline. Therefore, since the viewer would be in motion along these trails, background views would be different from any given location.

Although the development at the West Campus would considerably increase height, mass, and bulk at the site, this change would not have a significant impact on scenic vistas. As stated above, the scenic vistas from these sensitive viewer locations are mainly facing north, away from the West Campus; therefore, the proposed buildings would not significantly alter the scenic vistas. As such, the proposed development at the West Campus would have a *less-than-significant* impact on scenic vistas from the BCDC Public Shore Trail, the Bay Trail, and Bayfront Park.

AE-2 Degradation of Existing Visual Character or Quality. The Project at the West Campus could substantially alter the existing visual character. However, compliance with the City's design review and landscaping requirements would help reduce the potential aesthetic degradation of the visual character of the surroundings. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant. (LTS)

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

Impacts to On-site Character or Quality. The West Campus is not a visually significant area since it consists of two office buildings, a surface parking lot for 347 vehicles, a guard house, landscaped islands with mature trees, and paved surfaces covered in patches of weeds and

groundcover. The vacant buildings, unmanaged vegetation, and unkempt land that do not complement the natural quality of the salt ponds and marshes to the north or the Belle Haven neighborhood to the south. The mix of uses in this area, which includes the office complex of the East Campus to north, residential uses to the south, and office/light-industrial uses to the west, generally results in an inconsistent visual pattern.

The Project would redevelop the West Campus with five separate main buildings arranged with the long axis of each building along an east-west orientation. In total, the five main buildings and the amenities buildings would consist of approximately 440,000 sf. The office buildings would be organized around a courtyard consisting of open spaces, landscaped areas, ancillary buildings/meeting rooms, and pedestrian linkages. The site would also include a five-story parking structure in the western portion of the site, adjacent to the existing TE Connectivity site.

Landscaping would be provided throughout the West Campus in a manner that supports sustainability goals, encourages active use of the outdoors, and reflects the various adjacent native environments. Four stormwater gardens would be located adjacent to the proposed buildings. These stormwater retention and treatment areas would serve as landscape elements to reduce drainage impacts and function as soil and plant-based filtration devices to remove pollutants through a variety of physical, biological, and chemical treatment processes.¹²

Currently, a dense vegetative barrier is present along the perimeter of the West Campus, providing a visual buffer between the site and Bayfront Expressway, Willow Road, portions of the Belle Haven neighborhood, and portions of the TE Connectivity site. The majority of these trees and shrubs would remain with implementation of the Project, continuing to obstruct views of the West Campus to outside areas.

There are 624 existing trees at the West Campus. Of these trees, 233 are considered to be “Heritage Trees,” per Section 13.24 of the City’s Municipal Code. Under the existing site plans, 91 Heritage Trees and 286 non-Heritage Trees would be removed. However, per the Municipal Code requirements, 147 trees would be planted to offset the Heritage Tree removal, which would result in 76 new trees at the West Campus in excess of the required heritage tree replacement. Of the 91 heritage trees to be removed, the majority are located in the interior of the site, rather than along the perimeter; therefore, the visual impact of their loss is reduced. The only perimeter vegetation that would be removed would be at the northwest corner of the site and along Willow Road.¹³ As such, the majority of the existing vegetative barrier would remain with implementation of the Project.

While the development at the West Campus would substantially increase on-site building height, mass, and bulk, the Project would have a less-than-significant impact on on-site visual character. Currently, the site consists of vacant buildings, unmaintained vegetation, and unoccupied land that does not complement the natural quality of the salt ponds and marshes to

¹² San Mateo County, San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program, Chapter 6.1, page 68.

¹³ Gensler, “Facebook @ Menlo Park,” August 5, 2011.

the north and the Belle Haven neighborhood to the south. The proposed development at the West Campus would provide increased unity with its surroundings by creating contiguous landscape areas and buildings that reflect a similar architectural design.

Impacts on Public View Corridors. The public view corridors identified under Existing Conditions include Willow Road, Bayfront Expressway, and the residential areas of the Belle Haven neighborhood. In addition, the BCDC Public Shore Trail, the Bay Trail, and Bayfront Park also have public view corridors; however, these are considered scenic vistas and are discussed in detail under Impact AE-1, above.

Bayfront Expressway/Willow Road Intersection (Viewpoint 4). As shown in Figure 3.3-9a, foreground views from Bayfront Expressway facing southwest include the intersection of Bayfront Expressway/Willow Road and fairly unobstructed views of the northwest portion of the West Campus. The background features nearly panoramic views of the Santa Cruz Mountain Range. With development of the proposed buildings at the West Campus, the buildings would obstruct the majority of the Santa Cruz Mountain Range from Viewpoint 4. As depicted in Figure 3.3-9b, Buildings 3 (66 feet) and T2 (47 feet) are visible in the foreground, while there are channelized views of portions of Buildings 1, 2, and 4. These multi-story structures would add significant height and bulk at the southwest corner of Bayfront Expressway/Willow Road. However, this viewpoint is not considered sensitive. These roadways are highly-traveled and motorists only have fleeting views of the Santa Cruz Mountain Range due to the permitted speeds. Therefore, the views from the Bayfront Expressway/Willow Road Intersection do not constitute sensitive views and motorists along these corridors are not considered sensitive viewers, resulting in a less-than-significant impact.

Belle Haven Neighborhood (Viewpoints 5 and 6). As discussed above, the Belle Haven neighborhood mainly features single-family residential units setback from the streets with mature and well-maintained landscaping. Due to the flat topography, existing structures, and dense vegetation, background views of the areas surrounding the Belle Haven neighborhood are not visible. However, as shown in Figure 3.3-10a and Figure 3.3-11a, streets that run perpendicular to Hamilton Avenue, such as Hollyburne Avenue and Madera Avenue, have channelized view corridors of the West Campus.

With implementation of the Project, the taller buildings (Buildings 1, 2, and 3) would be set back from the Belle Haven neighborhood and along Bayfront Expressway in order to reduce the visual impacts to the neighborhood. The parking garage and Buildings 4 and 5 would be the most visible from the Belle Haven neighborhoods. From Viewpoint 5 at Hollyburne Avenue (Figure 3.3-10b), the 53-foot-tall Building 5 would be visible beyond the light-industrial uses that abut the Dumbarton Rail Corridor to the south. However, the majority of Building 5 would be blocked by existing vegetation along the right-of-way that would remain with implementation of the Project. In addition, the terracotta tiled roof of one of the existing West Campus buildings is currently visible, as shown in Figure 3.3-10a. With implementation of the Project, this building would be demolished and replaced by the entry court. As such, although a new building would be added, the increase in building mass from this view would not be

substantial due to the demolition of the existing structure and the intervening vegetation and structures. Therefore, the impact is less than significant.

Viewpoint 6 from Madera Avenue (Figure 3.3-11b) would include views mainly of the 53-foot-tall Building 4. In addition, the rooftops of the other proposed buildings on the campus would also be visible. Nonetheless, the proposed buildings would be visually separated from the Belle Haven neighborhood by existing mature vegetation in the neighborhood and along the Dumbarton Rail Corridor and other dominant structures. Although no existing West Campus development is currently visible from Madera Avenue, as shown in Figure 3.3-11a, the increase in building mass would be less than significant.

Overall Degradation of Existing Visual Character or Quality. While the Project at the West Campus would substantially increase on-site building height, massing, and bulk, the Project would have a less-than-significant impact on on-site visual character. Currently, the site consists of a partially vacant lot with two unused buildings, unmaintained vegetation, and broken pavement. The Project would replace the abandoned site with new buildings, enhanced landscaping, and bicycle/pedestrian amenities that would complement the existing office development at the East Campus and the TE Connectivity site. The proposed site plan at the West Campus would provide increased unity with its surroundings by creating contiguous landscape areas and buildings that reflect a similar architectural design.

Although it is unknown at this time what types of façade articulation and architectural design will be used for the buildings, it is expected that they will be harmonious with each other and their surroundings. The buildings would likely develop an architectural language of massing, materiality, transparency of façade, and interconnectivity of buildings that links the campus visually to its broader context. The design of the parking structure would also attempt to reduce the visual impact of the structure with architectural elements, such as step-backs, trellises and other features. In addition, the Project Sponsor would be required to adhere to the City's architectural review, as outlined in Section 16.68.020 of the Municipal Code and described above.

Implementation of the Project would substantially change the visual character of the site, but would not significantly alter the character of the surrounding areas due to the dense perimeter vegetation and flat topography. As such, although the upper levels of the proposed buildings would be visible from surrounding areas, this would not change the overall views to the extent that the visual character of the area would be substantially different. Therefore, the Project would have a *less-than-significant* impact on the overall degradation of existing visual character and quality and may be considered an improvement over existing conditions.

AE-3 New Sources of Light and Glare. The Project at the West Campus could create new sources of light or glare that could adversely affect day or nighttime views. Therefore, this impact would be potentially significant. (PS)

Exterior Lighting. Exterior lighting would be added to an area where there currently is little to no lighting. The West Campus is visible from Bayfront Expressway and Willow Road and could serve as a nuisance or distraction to the motorists. Increased lighting at the site could also impact residents in the Belle Haven neighborhood.

Proposed development at the West Campus would include nighttime lighting from vehicles, the interior streets, the parking lots, buildings, and security. The increase in buildings heights would make building lights more visible to motorists along Bayfront Expressway and Willow Road and residents in Belle Haven, but some of the interior lights would be screened by the perimeter vegetation and potentially by window overhangs and awnings.

Due to the urbanized nature of the surrounding area to the south and west, a significant amount of ambient nighttime lighting currently exists, affecting views of the nighttime sky. However, areas to the north and east, which include the salt ponds, marshes, the East Campus, and open spaces, contain a limited amount of nighttime lighting. The lighting performance standards set by Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) would be followed and light pollution would be considered. Energy-efficient site lighting and design to meet the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) lighting density and control standards would attempt to minimize light pollution. Nonetheless, the increase in buildings and on-site activity at the West Campus would result in a *potentially significant* increase in lighting in the area.

Glare from Buildings. Glare is caused by light reflections from pavement, vehicles, and building materials, such as reflective glass and polished surfaces. During the daylight hours, the amount of glare depends on the intensity and direction of sunlight. Glare can create hazards to motorists and nuisances for bicycles/pedestrians and other sensitive viewers.

With implementation of the Project, highly reflective surfaces at the West Campus could pose the most significant impacts along major road corridors, such as Bayfront Expressway and Willow Road. At this time, the types of building materials and glass surfaces are unknown. As such, it is conservatively assumed that the Project at the West Campus would result in *potentially significant* glare impacts.

Vehicle Headlights. The proposed five-story parking garage would be located immediately adjacent to the light-industrial uses to the south and east and the Belle Haven neighborhood to the south. In addition, the parking structure would be visible to motorists traveling along Bayfront Expressway. As such, light and glare from vehicle headlights on the levels of aboveground parking could be a nuisance to occupants of the surrounding light-industrial uses and the residential uses, and motorists on Bayfront Expressway.

There are currently no proposed design and architectural features for the parking structure; therefore, it can be assumed that vehicle headlights from the parking garage could spill onto adjacent properties. The exterior wall of the parking structure could conceal headlights of most sedans, but it is not certain that the walls could obstruct lighting from higher vehicles that would also use the garage. Light and glare impacts from vehicle headlights within the aboveground parking levels would, therefore, be *potentially significant*.

MITIGATION MEASURES. Implementation of Mitigation Measure AE-3.1, AE-3.2, and AE-3.3 would reduce potential light and glare impacts at the West Campus to a *less-than-significant* level. (LTS)

AE-3.1 Design Lighting at the West Campus to Meet Minimum Safety and Security Standards. Concurrent with the building permit submittal, the Project Sponsor shall incorporate lighting design specifications to meet minimum safety and security standards. The comprehensive site lighting plans shall be subject to review and approval by the Planning Division prior to building permit issuance of the first building on that site. The following measures shall be included in all lighting plans:

- Luminaries shall be designed with cutoff-type fixtures or features that cast low-angle illumination to minimize incidental spillover of light onto adjacent private properties. Fixtures that shine light upward or horizontally shall not spill any light onto adjacent private properties.
- Luminaries shall provide accurate color rendering and natural light qualities. Low-pressure sodium and high-pressure sodium fixtures that are not color-corrected shall not be used, except as part of an approved sign or landscape plan.
- Luminary mountings shall be downcast and pole heights minimized to reduce potential for back scatter into the nighttime sky and incidental spillover light onto adjacent properties and undeveloped open space. Light poles shall be no higher than 20 feet. Luminary mountings shall be treated with non-glare finishes.

AE-3.2 Treat Reflective Surfaces at the West Campus. The Project Sponsor shall ensure application of low-emissivity coating on exterior glass surfaces of the proposed structures. The low-emissivity coating shall reduce visible light reflection of the visible light that strikes the glass exterior and prevent interior light from being emitted brightly through the glass.

AE-3.3 Provide Obstruction for Glare from Vehicle Headlights in the West Campus Garage. The Project Sponsor shall ensure that the design for the parking garage provides concrete barriers and/or landscaping along the entire perimeter of all parking levels of the garage. These barriers shall be at a height so that glare from vehicle headlights is screened from off-site viewers.

AE-4 New Sources of Shadows. Shadows cast by the proposed structures at the West Campus would not shade open spaces or public areas for an extended period and are, therefore, considered to be less than significant. (LTS)

Significant shading of public open spaces could be considered an adverse impact if new shadows change the usability or comfort of a space. Recreational fields, pathways, plazas, and courtyards within the Project site are considered to be private open spaces. As such, these areas are not considered in the analysis. However, the Bay Trail, which is located to the north of Bayfront Expressway, is the closest public area to the West Campus that could be affected.

Shadow simulations have been created for critical periods of the day during March 20 (Spring equinox), June 21 (Summer solstice), September 23 (Fall equinox), and December 22 (Winter solstice) to depict the maximum and minimum shadows cast by the Project at the West Campus. Shadow impacts are most noticeable during the day between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. To estimate the shade effects throughout the year, the shadow simulations include 9:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., and 3:00 p.m. The shadow simulations are presented in Figure 3.3-12 through Figure 3.3-15.

As shown in the figures, no public parks, open space areas, or private residences would be affected by shadows cast by the proposed office buildings and parking structure. The only shadows cast off-site by the Project would be towards Bayfront Expressway. At 3:00 p.m. on the Winter solstice (Figure 3.3-15), the Project would cast shadows onto all lanes of Bayfront Expressway. However, impacts on Bayfront Expressway would be less than significant because the shadows would be noticeable for only a few seconds by motorists. As shown in Figure 3.3-15, the only shadows from the West Campus that would reach the Bay Trail would be from the existing transmission towers. Since this is an existing condition and would not be altered with implementation of the Project, there would be no shadow impacts on the Bay Trail from the proposed development at the West Campus.

As depicted in Figure 3.3-12 through Figure 3.3-15, shadows would be restricted to the West Campus during the Summer solstice and the Spring and Fall equinoxes, resulting in no shadow spillage onto adjacent properties or public spaces. The shadows during the Winter solstice would extend to just north of Bayfront Expressway, but as explained above, this would not be considered significant since it would not impact public open space. As such, the Project would result in *less-than-significant* shadow impacts.



March 20, 9 am



March 20, 12 pm



March 20, 3 pm



Source: Genster, 2011.



June 21, 9 am



June 21, 12 pm



June 21, 3 pm





September 23, 9 am



September 23, 12 pm



September 23, 3 pm



Source: Genster, 2011.



December 22, 9 am



December 22, 12 pm



December 22, 3 pm



Source: Genster, 2011.

Cumulative Impacts

The geographic context for cumulative aesthetic impacts is generally confined to areas visible to and from the Project site that could combine to cause a cumulative impact. For the Project, the cumulative context includes the West Campus plus adjacent development along Bayfront Expressway and in the Belle Haven neighborhood. Proposed projects in the City on the other side of US 101 are not included because the distance, flat topography, and intervening development serve as a visual barrier between the two areas. As such, the cumulative analysis only includes development to the north and east of US 101.

As with the Project analysis above, the cumulative analysis does not include the East Campus, since the changes at the East Campus would not result in visual impacts. No exterior alterations at the East Campus would be implemented with the Project; therefore, the cumulative analysis below only includes the development at the West Campus in combination with proposed Tier 1 and Tier 2 projects, as listed in Section 3.1.

C-AE-1 Cumulative Alteration of Scenic Views. The Project at the West Campus, in combination with other foreseeable development in the surrounding area, would not have a significant cumulative impact on scenic views. (LTS)

Tier 1

The West Campus is visible from the BCDC Public Shore Trail, the Bay Trail, and Bayfront Park. In addition, the West Campus development would be visible from public corridors such as Bayfront Expressway, Willow Road, and the Belle Haven neighborhood. Tier 1 projects that could be visible from these areas include the Menlo Gateway Project to the east, the police station along Willow Road to the south, and the residential development at 297 Terminal Avenue to the southeast. Due to the flat topography, distance, intervening vegetation and development, and the relatively low-scale characteristics of the proposed development at 1283 Willow Road and 297 Terminal Avenue, it is unlikely that these projects would be visible from the BCDC Public Shore Trail, the Bay Trail, and Bayfront Park. The police station and the residential development would both be visible from select locations in the Belle Haven neighborhood. Given the distance of these projects from the West Campus, there would be no cumulative impact from viewer locations in the Belle Haven neighborhood. Therefore, the Project, in combination with these projects, would not result in a cumulative impact on scenic views and vistas.

Due to the large-scale development under the Menlo Gateway Project along Bayfront Expressway, it is likely that both the West Campus buildings and the Menlo Gateway buildings would be visible from all three scenic areas and, potentially, the Belle Haven neighborhood. From the BCDC Public Shore Trail and the Bay Trail segment across Bayfront Expressway from the West Campus, the buildings at the West Campus would be in the foreground to middleground views, while the buildings at the Menlo Gateway site would appear in the background views. From Bayfront Park and the Bay Trail segment

across Bayfront Expressway from the Menlo Gateway site, the buildings at the Menlo Gateway site would appear in the foreground, while the West Campus buildings would appear in the background. Views from the Belle Haven neighborhood have the potential to include both sites; however, this would be restricted to certain locations due to distance and flat topography.

The West Campus and the Menlo Gateway site are approximately one mile apart. As such, depending on the view point, the closer development would appear as a dominant feature, while the other development would appear to blend with surrounding vegetation, Bayfront Expressway, intervening structures, and its general surroundings. As discussed above, development at the West Campus would not result in a significant Project-level impact to scenic views or vistas. Therefore, the Project, together with the Menlo Gateway Project, would not result in a cumulative impact on scenic vistas. The Project's cumulative impacts would be *less than significant*.

Tier 2

The Tier 2 projects illustrated in Figure 3.1-1, Section 3.1, consist of programmatic land use plans or large development projects that are either outside the City, somewhat speculative, or in the early stages of project planning. The projects to the north and east of US 101 include the East Palo Alto Specific Plan, the Saltworks Project, and the Dumbarton Rail Corridor Project. Due to flat topography and distance from the Project site, it is unlikely that these projects, especially development contemplated under the East Palo Alto Specific Plan, would be visible from the portions of the BCDC Public Shore Trail and the Bay Trail adjacent to the Project site. Although the Saltworks Project would be adjacent to Bayfront Park, the Project would be on the other side of the park. As such, viewers would need to look east for views of the West Campus and look west for views of the Saltworks Project; in other words, viewers could not see both sites together from a single vantage point and there would be no cumulative impact from development of the Tier 2 projects and the Project on scenic views.

In addition, a station for the Dumbarton Rail Corridor could be constructed at a location along its right-of-way. At this time, it is expected that the station will be to the south of the Dumbarton Rail Corridor and to the east of Willow Road, approximately 0.17 miles southeast of the West Campus.¹⁴ The height and bulk of the station is currently unknown. Due to the close proximity, if the station is large enough to be visible from the surrounding area, this could result in a significant cumulative visual impact. However, since this project is speculative, visual impacts are unknown at this time. Therefore, cumulative impacts from Tier 2 projects are considered *less than significant*.

¹⁴ City of Menlo Park Administrative Services Department, Staff Report #11-180, "Discuss and Confirm the Selection of the Site for the Future Dumbarton Transit Station in Menlo Park," November 1, 2011.

C-AE-2 ***Cumulative Degradation of Visual Character or Quality.*** *The Project at the West Campus, in combination with other foreseeable development in the surrounding area, would not have a significant cumulative impact on visual character or quality. (LTS)*

Tier 1

Cumulative Tier 1 projects consist of four residential developments, nine non-residential, and two mixed-use projects. Only cumulative projects that are in the immediate vicinity of the Project site could contribute to degradation of the visual character or quality of the existing neighborhood. The other cumulative projects are too far from the Project site to combine with the Project to degrade visual character or quality; the majority of the Tier 1 projects are clustered near and in the downtown, Atherton, and the Linfield Oaks area, and three projects are far to the south in West Menlo Park and Stanford Hills. The public view corridors identified under Existing Conditions include Willow Road, Bayfront Expressway, and the residential areas of the Belle Haven neighborhood. Thus, for purposes of this analysis, the projects visible from these view corridors at 1283 Willow Road, the Menlo Gateway Project, and the 297 Terminal Avenue projects are considered together with the Project to determine the Project's cumulative impact on visual character and quality.

Most projects in the City are required to undergo architectural review pursuant to Section 16.68.020 of the Municipal Code. Any proposal for a new structure, addition to an existing structure, or change to the exterior of a structure that requires a building permit (with the exception of single-family dwellings, duplexes, and accessory buildings) requires that the Planning Commission conduct architectural control review to ensure that the general appearance of the structures is in keeping with character of the neighborhood. Thus, the Tier 1 projects would be expected to be consistent with architectural and design guidelines and would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of their surroundings. As described above, the existing West Campus consists of vacant buildings, unmanaged vegetation, and unkempt land that does not complement the natural quality of the salt ponds and marshes to the north or the Belle Haven neighborhood to the south. The proposed development at the West Campus would provide increased unity with its surroundings by creating contiguous landscape areas and buildings that reflect a similar architectural design. Therefore, the Project, together with the Tier 1 projects, would not result in a substantial degradation of visual character or quality of the surroundings, and the cumulative impact would be *less than significant*.

Tier 2

The Tier 2 projects that could cumulatively contribute to a degradation of visual character or quality of the surrounding neighborhood are those in proximity to the Project site. These would include the Saltworks, the East Palo Alto Specific Plan, and the Dumbarton Rail Corridor projects. The Saltworks project would develop approximately half of a 1,436-acre property in the City of Redwood City to the northwest of the Project site with housing, retail and commercial uses, with half dedicated for habitat/wetlands, parks, a sports field

complex, and multi-use open space and waterways. The East Palo Alto Specific Plan would guide development in this area, and would permit a mix of residential, retail, R&D/industrial, office, civic, and park/trail uses. The Dumbarton Rail Corridor project passes through several jurisdictions and abuts the West Campus. In addition, a station for the Dumbarton Rail Corridor project could be constructed approximately 0.17 miles southeast of the West Campus. However, it is unknown at this time whether the station would actually be constructed and, if constructed, how large it could be.

The General Plans of Redwood City and East Palo Alto contain design goals and policies that address historic preservation and the design of buildings, civic uses, public ways, public art, and infrastructure.^{15,16} These policies, in addition to provisions in their Municipal Codes, provide design and architectural standards to promote compatibility of development and aesthetic design. Similarly, development along the Dumbarton Rail Corridor would be subject to the General Plans and Municipal Codes of the jurisdictions through which it passes, including Redwood City, Menlo Park, and East Palo Alto. The potential station along near West Campus would require compliance with the Section 16.68.020 of the City's Municipal Code. Adherence to these policies would ensure that development of the cumulative projects would be compatible with adjacent development and pleasing from an aesthetic standpoint. As noted, the proposed development at the West Campus would provide increased unity with its surroundings by creating contiguous landscape areas and buildings that reflect a similar architectural design. Therefore, the Project, together with the Tier 2 projects, would not result in a substantial degradation of visual character or quality of the surroundings, and the cumulative impact would be *less than significant*.

C-AE-3 Cumulative Sources of Light and Glare. Implementation of the Project at the West Campus, in combination with foreseeable development, would not create new sources of light or glare that could adversely affect day or nighttime views. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant. (LTS)

Tier 1

Cumulative development or redevelopment could include direct illumination of Project structures, features, and/or walkways, and could increase ambient nighttime lighting levels in the Project area. The proposed police station and new residential development in the Belle Haven neighborhood (as discussed above) would not likely contribute to cumulative light and glare impacts due to the small-scale development and the low amount of lighting that would be used at these sites.

¹⁵ City of Redwood City, General Plan, The Built Environment Element: Urban Form and Land Use, adopted October 11, 2010, website: http://www.redwoodcity.org/phed/planning/generalplan/FinalGP/01.2_Built_Environment_Urban_Form_Lnd_Use.pdf, accessed September 26, 2011.

¹⁶ City of Palo Alto, Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 2: Land Use and Community Design, revised July 17, 2007, website: <http://cityofpaloalto.org/civica/filebank/blobload.asp?BlobID=8170>, accessed September 26, 2011.

Menlo Gateway is large enough to contribute to a cumulative lighting impact and would include direct illumination of project structures, features, and/or walkways, as well as increased light and glare from vehicle headlights entering and exiting the site. Building surfaces could also increase glare if they are reflective or if the structures contain large expanses of windows. Since the final design of Menlo Gateway is unknown, the increase in ambient nighttime lighting levels and glare in the area could be significant, even though a substantial amount of ambient light and glare currently exists as a result of the urbanized nature of the area. This is a potentially significant impact. Similar to the Project, Menlo Gateway would be required to comply with all requirements of the Municipal Code with respect to lighting and architectural surfaces. However, Mitigation Measures AE-3.1, AE-3.2, and AE-3.3, as listed above, would reduce potential Project-level and cumulative light and glare impacts at the West Campus, and the Project's contribution to a cumulative light and glare impact would not be cumulatively considerable. Therefore, the Project's cumulative impact associated with ambient nighttime light and glare would be *less than significant*.

Tier 2

Only the Tier 2 projects that are in the immediate vicinity of the Project site would contribute to a cumulative light and glare impact. The Tier 2 projects to the north and east of US 101 include the East Palo Alto Specific Plan, the Saltworks Project, and the Dumbarton Rail Corridor Project. Light and glare effects diminish with distance from the source and must be viewed directly in order to affect the viewer. In addition, the Project area is subject to a substantial level of light and glare due to its urbanized nature. Given the distance of the Tier 2 projects from the Project site and intervening structures and vegetation, these projects would likely not cumulate with the Project to result in substantial increases of light and glare that would affect daytime or nighttime views. All Project impacts with regard to light and glare are reduced to less than significant through mitigation measures. Therefore, the Project's cumulative impact would be *less than significant*.

C-AE-4 Cumulative Shadow Impacts. Shadows cast by the proposed structures at the West Campus, in combination with other foreseeable development, would not shade open spaces or public areas for an extended period and are, therefore, considered to be less than significant. (LTS)

Tier 1 and Tier 2

Shadows from the development at the West Campus would extend over an extremely small geographic area and no foreseeable projects would result in shadow impacts in combination with the Project. The shadow impacts of the Project would be restricted to the interior of the West Campus and a small portion of Bayfront Expressway and, therefore, would not directly combine with shadows from other proposed projects in the area.

Although shadows from identified related projects would not overlap with shadows from the Project, there could be an overall increase of shadows in the area. The proposed police station, multi-family residential development, and the Dumbarton Rail Station are not expected to increase shadows in the area due to their probable limited mass and height. However, shadows in the Project area could be increased by the Menlo Gateway Project, which would allow buildings up to 140 feet in height. The shadows from Menlo Gateway could have the potential to extend across Bayfront Expressway to the Bay Trail and Bayfront Park to the north. As such, Menlo Gateway has the potential to affect public open spaces. However, as stated above, the shadows from the proposed structures on the West Campus would not extend to adjacent public open spaces, such as the Bay Trail. The Project would not contribute considerably to any cumulative shadow impacts. Therefore, this cumulative impact is considered *less than significant*.