4.A Aesthetics and Visual Resources

4.A.1 Introduction

This section describes existing aesthetics and visual resources within the Project Site and vicinity. It also analyzes and evaluates the impacts of the Project Site development on aesthetic and visual resources. Feasible mitigation measures are identified as necessary to minimize significant impacts.

4.A.2 Environmental Setting

Definitions Related to Aesthetic and Visual Resources

An aesthetic resource is a combination of numerous elements, such as landforms, vegetation, water features, urban design, and/or architecture, that impart an overall visual impression that is pleasing to, or valued by, its observers. Factors important in describing the aesthetic resources of an area include visual character, scenic resources, and scenic vistas. These factors together not only describe the intrinsic aesthetic appeal of an area, but also communicate the value placed upon a landscape or scene by its observers. These factors are defined as follows:

- *Visual Character* broadly describes the unique combination of aesthetic elements and scenic resources that characterize a particular area. The quality of the Project Site and surrounding area's visual character is qualitatively assessed considering the overall visual impression or attractiveness created by the particular landscape characteristics. In urban settings, these characteristics largely include land use type and density, urban landscaping and design, architecture, topography, and background setting.
- *Scenic Resources* are visually significant hillsides, ridges, water bodies, and buildings that are critical in shaping the visual character and scenic identity of the Project Site, Brisbane, and the surrounding region.
- *Scenic Vistas* are defined as panoramic views of important visual features, as seen from public viewing areas. These views include San Francisco Bay, striking or unusual natural terrain (such as Icehouse Hill), or unique urban or historic features. This definition combines visual quality with information about view exposure to describe the level of interest or concern that viewers may have for the quality of a particular view or visual setting.

Overview of Existing Visual Character

Surrounding Area

Brisbane is in an urban setting located on the eastern shore of the San Francisco Peninsula. The city is surrounded by urban communities dominated by single-family small lot and suburban-style homes to the north and west, San Bruno Mountain State Park to the south, and US Highway 101 and San Francisco Bay to the east with the East Bay Hills beyond. As viewed from US Highway 101, the community lies within a low density "cove" setting between the highly urbanized cities of San Francisco to the north and South San Francisco to the south.

The Central Brisbane neighborhood is located directly west of the southern portion of the Project Site, across Bayshore Boulevard. Central Brisbane consists of both residential and commercial development. It is developed primarily with one- to two-story commercial buildings along Visitacion Avenue and one- to two-story single-family houses throughout. Northeast Ridge, which lies northwest of Central Brisbane and west of Guadalupe Canyon, consists of single-family houses and higher-density residential buildings.

Non-residential uses in the city include one- to two-story industrial buildings in Crocker Park and mid-rise office buildings and hotels at Sierra Point. The visual character of nearby areas in Daly City (west of the Project Site) and San Francisco (north of the Project Site) is defined by commercial buildings along Geneva Avenue and Bayshore Boulevard, and industrial and residential uses north of the San Francisco/San Mateo border.

Project Site

Figure 4.A-1 is an aerial view of the Project Site and surroundings. Views from the viewpoints identified in Figure 4.A-1 are depicted and discussed in **Table 4.A-1**. Consistent with its historic and current uses and shown in Figure 4.A-1, the Project Site is characterized by mostly undeveloped and disturbed land in the eastern and southern portions of the Site, primarily devoted to Brisbane Lagoon and soil processing and stockpiling operations on the former landfill area north of the lagoon. Industrial uses and the former Southern Pacific Railyard occupy much of the western portion of the Project Site. The north end of the site includes lumberyards, the Recology Solid Waste Transfer Facility (Recology), and the Bayshore Caltrain station. The Project Site's visual character is in significant contrast to the open space and natural setting of San Francisco Bay and San Bruno Mountain, as well as the nearby urbanized areas of Brisbane, San Francisco, and Daly City.

The western edge of the Project Site is bordered by Bayshore Boulevard, while US Highway 101 and San Francisco Bay border the Project Site to the east. The Project Site is partially screened from view along US Highway 101 as well as Bayshore Boulevard due to vegetative growth along the highway and the boulevard. However, the northern approach to the Project Site along US Highway 101 does afford a brief but encompassing view of the Project Site, with San Bruno Mountain in the background.

No state "Scenic Highways" are located in the vicinity of the Project Site (see description of the State of California Scenic Highway Program in Subsection 4.A.3, *Regulatory Setting*, below).

The north end of the Project Site is bounded by the Recology facility located within both Brisbane and the City and County of San Francisco. As noted above, the Recology facility is included within the Project Site boundaries. As described in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, however, the facility is only included within the CPP and CPP-V scenarios, and the expansion of Recology is proposed only within the CPP-V scenario. The Recology facility is assumed to remain in its current use in the CPP, DSP, and DSP-V scenarios. The still-active Union Pacific freight and Caltrain commuter rail lines bisect the Project Site along a north-south axis.

SOURCE: Dyett & Bhatia; ESA

Brisbane Baylands . 206069

Figure 4.A-1
Viewpoint Locations

Vegetation and the wildlife habitat it supports have been, and in some cases continue to be, highly disturbed over the majority of the Project Site. The site is dominated by non-native ruderal and grassland species, with landscaped areas containing non-native trees and shrubs aligning Tunnel Avenue, Lagoon Way, and the Project Site's eastern boundary (see Figure 4.C-1 in Chapter 4.C, *Biological Resources*, of this EIR*)*. Native vegetation types, including coastal scrub and perennial grasslands, are confined to relatively small areas on Icehouse Hill in the western portion of the Project Site, to the tidal and freshwater wetlands along the edges of drainage channels and Brisbane Lagoon, and to seasonal wetlands in the western portion of the site. Visitacion Creek is a drainage channel that bisects the Project Site along an east-west axis and currently provides a limited amount of riparian vegetation and habitat. In addition, the Project Site encompasses the open water/estuarine communities of Brisbane Lagoon, which is tidally connected to San Francisco Bay, which is located just east of US Highway 101.

One of the most prominent visual elements affecting the Project Site is the Kinder Morgan Energy Tank Farm (Kinder Morgan Energy Partners, L.P. fuel storage facility) (see Figure 4.A-2f), which is surrounded by but not part of the Project Site. Kinder Morgan's large light-colored tanks are visually distinct from the surrounding natural features, such as Icehouse Hill and Brisbane Lagoon. The tank farm is partially screened from Central Brisbane and ridgeline residential development by Icehouse Hill; however, it can be seen from many locations within the Project Site.

The patchwork of current uses within the Project Site, in the context of surrounding development and the larger natural setting of the area, creates a visually incongruent visual atmosphere overall. Older industrial buildings, undeveloped and barren parcels, the Recology facility, soil processing operations and related large soil stockpiles, and the abandoned railyard all contribute to an overall visual character that is in contrast to nearby established urban and suburban communities and the area's scenic resources. Although much of this onsite industrial activity is screened from major roadways along the site periphery (as mentioned above), views across and into the Project Site from higher elevations and more distant vantage points capture many of these elements.

Scenic Resources within the Project Site

Existing scenic resources located within the Project Site include Icehouse Hill, Visitacion Creek, Brisbane Lagoon, and the historic Roundhouse building. The Lazzari Charcoal Building, a warehouse building located about 150 feet north of the Roundhouse, lacks the historical associations and physical integrity to convey historical or architectural significance. As such, it is not considered a significant historic resource (see Section 4.D, *Cultural Resources*, of this EIR) and is therefore not considered to a significant scenic resource. Icehouse Hill, located between the railroad tracks and Bayshore Boulevard at the end of Guadalupe Canyon Parkway, is a natural promontory habitat area and scenic overlook (see **Figure 4.A-2a**). Visitacion Creek is a drainage channel that bisects the Project Site and currently provides a limited amount of riparian vegetation and habitat (see **Figure 4.A-2b**). Brisbane Lagoon (see **Figure 4A-2c**), located in the southern portion of the Project Site, was created when US Highway 101 was constructed. The lagoon shoreline is characterized by low grasses, occasional shrubbery, and the riprap embankment supporting the railroad tracks along the eastern edge. Fishing along the lagoon's eastern shoreline and bird watching are some popular recreational activities, enhanced by scenic views of San Bruno Mountain in the background.

Figure 4.A-2a: Icehouse Hill. *Icehouse Hill provides habitat area for local wildlife, as well as a visual barrier between Central Brisbane and the Kinder Morgan Energy Tank Farm.*

Figure 4.A-2b: Visitacion Creek. *Visitacion Creek is the drainage channel passing through the center of the Project Site.*

Figure 4.A-2c: Brisbane Lagoon. *Brisbane Lagoon was created when US Highway 101 was constructed, occupying the area between the southern extent of the landfill and the highway. Today it is a bird habitat as well as a recreational and aesthetic resource.*

The Roundhouse (see **Figure 4.A-2d**), a historic brick railroad roundhouse, is also considered a valuable visual resource to the Brisbane community; extant railroad buildings are shown in **Figure 4.A-2e**. In addition, as shown in **Figure 4.A-2f**, the historic Machinery & Equipment, Inc. building, a former ice manufacturing plant that served the railroad, is located off Bayshore Boulevard south of Icehouse Hill. The Machinery & Equipment, Inc. building is across the railroad tracks from the Kinder Morgan Energy Tank Farm and is surrounded by but not located within the Project Site. This building, like the Roundhouse, is of unreinforced masonry construction. While it could be maintained as a scenic resource if restored, it presents a seismic hazard until upgraded. Details about historic resources on and adjacent to the Project Site, including the Roundhouse and Machinery & Equipment, Inc. building, can be found in Section 4.D, *Cultural Resources*, of this EIR.

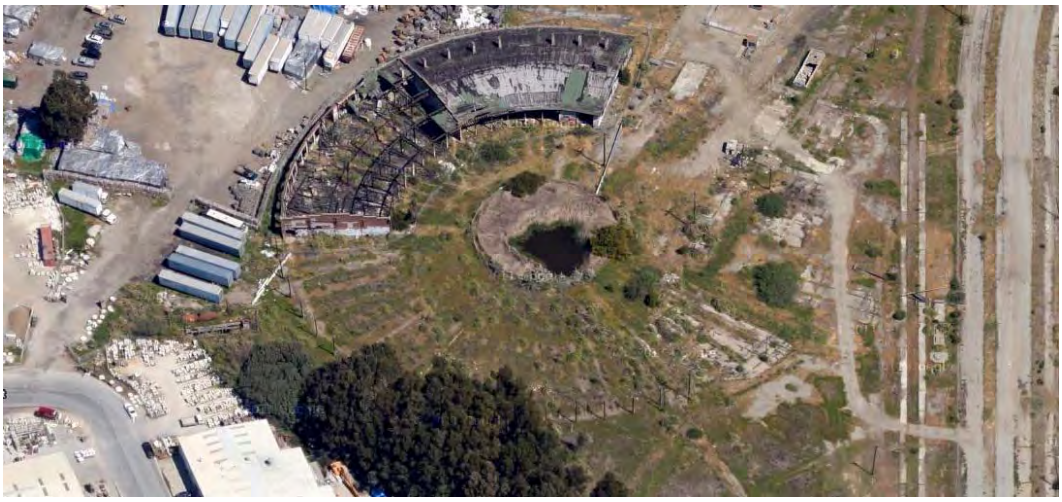


Figure 4.A-2d: Aerial View of the Roundhouse. *The Roundhouse is a historic landmark located east of Bayshore Boulevard.*

Figure 4.A-2e: Extant Historic Railroad Buildings on the Project Site. *Looking northwest (facing away from the Caltrain tracks), the Roundhouse is on the left and the Lazzari Fuel Company building is on the right.*

Figure 4.A-2f: Industrial Structures. *The Project Site surrounds the Kinder Morgan Energy Tank Farm (round tanks) and the Machinery & Equipment, Inc. building (brick building in front of tanks; former ice manufacturing plant). These structures are not a part of the Project Site.*

Scenic Vistas

Scenic vistas represent public viewing opportunities that provide visual access to scenic resources, including views of the Bay, striking or unusual natural terrain, or unique urban or historic features. For purposes of this analysis, a scenic vista includes two components. The first relates to defining what constitutes the "scenic resource" being viewed. Onsite scenic resources are described in the previous subsection. However, there are also a number of "scenic resources" that are offsite but can be viewed either from the Project Site or across the Project Site from offsite locations. These offsite scenic resources include San Francisco Bay, Bayview Park, Candlestick Point, John McLaren Park, San Bruno Mountain, the East Bay hills, and high-rise buildings of the San Francisco financial district. The second component of a scenic vista is the public viewing opportunity, whether onsite or offsite. If a site from which a scenic resource is viewed does not provide a public viewing opportunity it is not considered a scenic vista for purposes of this analysis.

Viewpoints and existing views of the Project Site are identified in Figure 4.A-1 and in Table 4.A-1. Additional views from within the Project Site, which assist in describing the visual character of the Project Site and are included for informational purposes only, are provided in Figures 4.A-3a-3d.

Views from the Project Site

At some higher locations within the Project Site, important visual features can be seen in every direction. These visual features include San Francisco Bay and the East Bay hills to the east (see **Figure 4.A-3a**); John McLaren Park, the San Francisco financial district, and Candlestick Point State Recreation Area to the north (see **Figure 4.A-3b**); and San Bruno Mountain and Central Brisbane to the southwest (see **Figure 4.A-3c**). Views southward across the lagoon from Lagoon Road provide visual access to Sierra Point, Oyster Point, and San Bruno Mountain (see **Figure 4.A-3d**). Visibility of US Highway 101 is limited due to the Project Site's topography and landscaping along the freeway edge. Figure 4.A-3b from Icehouse Hill[1] and Figure 4.A-3d from Lagoon Road also depict views from publicly accessible locations and are therefore defined as scenic vistas.

Views Into and Across the Project Site from Surrounding Areas

As shown in Table 4.A-1, virtually the entire Project Site is visible from surrounding areas. Areas of San Francisco and/or Daly City that offer views of the Project Site include the Sunnydale neighborhood, John McLaren Park, Visitacion Valley, commercial areas along Geneva Avenue, and the Candlestick Point State Recreation Area. Other areas of Brisbane with views of the Project Site include the Northeast Ridge residential neighborhood west of Guadalupe Canyon Parkway, Central Brisbane, and the Bay Trail at Sierra Point. As previously described, the Project Site is partially screened from view along US Highway 101 as well as from Bayshore Boulevard due to vegetative growth along the highway and the boulevard, and the northern approach to the Project Site along US Highway 101 does afford a brief but encompassing view of the Project Site.

[1] While Icehouse Hill is not currently accessible to the general public, and is therefore not considered to be a public viewing area in the baseline case, the proposed development of trails on the hill would provide for public access.

***Figure 4.A-3a: View from Visitacion Creek**, Looking East toward the East Bay Hills*

***Figure 4.A-3b: View from Icehouse Hill**, Looking North toward John McLaren Park, San Francisco, and Candlestick Point*

***Figure 4.A-3c: View from Visitacion Creek**, Looking Southwest toward San Bruno Mountain*

***Figure 4.A-3d: View from Lagoon Road**, Looking South toward Oyster Point*

Important visual features that can be seen across the Project Site from these surrounding areas include San Francisco Bay, Bayview Park, Candlestick Point, John McLaren Park, San Bruno Mountain, the East Bay hills, and high-rise buildings of the San Francisco financial district. While Table 4.A-1 shows numerous viewpoints from publicly accessible locations, not all viewpoints provide significant visual access to important visual features. As such, Viewpoints 4 and 9 are not considered scenic vistas, but are included for informational purposes and to support the analysis of Project Site visual character changes.

Existing Light and Glare

The Project Site, lacking substantial development, generates only minimal glare and nighttime light. Night lighting is limited to the areas around the existing industrial uses in the northern and southwestern portions of the Project Site. This allows for substantial nighttime visibility, including views of the city lights of the East Bay, as seen from residences at higher elevations of the Brisbane hills. The existing lack of nighttime lighting within the Project Site also allows views of the lights of San Francisco in the distance from vantage points to the south. Nighttime views of the Bay are available from higher-elevation neighborhoods in the southern portion of San Francisco due, in part, to the darkness at the Project Site. However, nighttime views from these neighborhoods are affected by existing residential and street lighting and existing reflected light emanating from Daly City, San Francisco, and US Highway 101.

The Project Site currently contains mainly soil cover and vegetation and, as a result, generates little daytime glare relative to neighboring urbanized areas.

4.A.3 Regulatory Setting

Development within the Project Site must comply with federal, state, and local regulations. The requirements listed below will affect the way development may occur with the Project Site development in regard to aesthetics.

State Regulations

State Scenic Highway Program

In 1963, the California legislature established the state's Scenic Highway Program, intended to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from changes that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. The Scenic Highway Program, a provision of the Streets and Highways Code, is administered by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The Scenic Highway Program includes highways that are either eligible for designation as scenic highways or have been designated as such. As noted above, no state Scenic Highways are located in the vicinity of the Project Site.

San Francisco Bay Plan

A portion of the Project Site is within a 100-foot shoreline band that surrounds San Francisco Bay and is under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

(BCDC), a state agency. BCDC is the federally designated state coastal management agency for the San Francisco Bay segment of the California Coastal Zone. BCDC's purpose is to protect and enhance San Francisco Bay for public and environmental benefit and to encourage responsible use. BCDC ensures that development within the shoreline band is consistent with the *San Francisco Bay Plan*, which contains policies and findings that guide appearance, design, and scenic views of future development around the Bay and encourage new shoreline development to provide public access to the Bay to the maximum extent feasible. Applicable Bay Plan policies include the following:

- All bayfront development should be designed to enhance the pleasure of the user or viewer of the Bay. Maximum efforts should be made to provide, enhance, or preserve views of the Bay and shoreline, especially from public areas, from the Bay itself, and from the opposite shore. To this end, planning of waterfront development should include participation by professionals who are knowledgeable of the Commission's concerns, such as landscape architects, urban designers, or architects, working in conjunction with engineers and professionals in other fields.

- Structures and facilities that do not take advantage of or visually complement the Bay should be located and designed so as not to impact visually on the Bay and shoreline. In particular, parking areas should be located away from the shoreline. However, some small parking areas for fishing access and Bay viewing may be allowed in exposed locations.

- In order to achieve a high level of design quality, the Commission's Design Review Board, composed of design and planning professionals, should review, evaluate, and advise the Commission on the proposed design of developments that affect the appearance of the Bay in accordance with the Bay Plan findings and policies on Public Access; on Appearance, Design, and Scenic Views; and the Public Access Design Guidelines. City, county, regional, state, and federal agencies should be guided in their evaluation of bayfront projects by the above guidelines.

- Views of the Bay from vista points and from roads should be maintained by appropriate arrangements and heights of all developments and landscaping between the view areas and the water. In this regard, particular attention should be given to all waterfront locations, areas below vista points, and areas along roads that provide good views of the Bay for travelers, particularly areas below roads coming over ridges and providing a "first view" of the Bay (shown in Bay Plan Map No. 8, Natural Resources of the Bay).

Local Regulations

The Project Site is primarily located within the Brisbane city limits and is thus subject to the City of Brisbane's planning, zoning, and subdivision controls, as well as other ordinances.

Brisbane General Plan

The Brisbane General Plan calls for a specific plan to be developed for the Project Site. The specific plan must be fully consistent with the goals and objectives of the General Plan. General Plan policies and programs that specifically pertain to aesthetic and visual resources include the following:

Chapter V: Land Use

Policy 15: Adopt development standards which protect and enhance the quality of life in Brisbane.

Program 15a: When drafting development standards, consider preserving a sense of openness in the design of structures and sites and the access to sky and sunlight for both new construction and renovation projects.

Program 330b: Specific Plans shall address the heights of buildings and building groups to achieve the following:

a. diversity of height within the subarea;

b. creative excellence in architectural and site design;

c. visual acceptability when seen from above;

d. a complementary relationship to the overall topography, especially the Lagoon, San Bruno Mountain and the Bay, and the entrance to Central Brisbane;

e. open space and open areas.

Development south of the Bayshore Basin drainage channel shall maintain a low profile permitting low or mid rise buildings, not to exceed six stories in height, in order to preserve the existing views of San Francisco and San Francisco Bay as seen from Central Brisbane, and to maximize the amount of landscape and open space or open area in this portion of the subarea.

The following design approaches shall not be included in any specific plan or development proposal:

Buildings or building groups that block view corridors to the Bay, or appear as “fortresses” or “walls” lining the Bayfront, the Lagoon or any arterial street.

Section XII.12 of the Brisbane General Plan provides the following policies applicable to the Project Site:

Chapter XII: Policies and Programs by Subarea

Policy 333: Establish a safety buffer around and provide for visual screening of the Tank Farm.

Policy 335: Give aesthetic consideration to views of San Bruno Mountain, the Bay and the Baylands development itself from Central Brisbane as well as views from the Baylands in the design of any development.

Policy 339: Develop design guidelines as a part of every Specific Plan for the subarea. In the design guidelines, incorporate standards for roofs, emphasizing color, materials and screening, so as to consider views from above.

Policy 348: Enhance the natural landform and biotic values of Icehouse Hill and preserve its ability to visually screen the Tank Farm.

Brisbane Municipal Code

Chapter 17.42 of the Brisbane Municipal Code requires a design permit to be obtained "for the construction of any new principal structure…" Prior to the issuance of a design permit, the Planning Commission must make the following findings:

A. The proposal's scale, form and proportion, are harmonious, and the materials and colors used complement the project.

B. The orientation and location of buildings, structures, open spaces and other features integrate well with each other and maintain a compatible relationship to adjacent development.

C. Proposed buildings and structures are designed and located to mitigate potential impacts to adjacent land uses.

D. The project design takes advantage of natural heating and cooling opportunities through building placement, landscaping and building design to the extent practicable, given site constraints, to promote sustainable development and to address long term affordability.

E. For hillside development, the proposal respects the topography of the site and is designed to minimize its visual impact. Significant public views of San Francisco Bay, the Brisbane Lagoon and San Bruno Mountain State and County Park are preserved.

F. The site plan minimizes the effects of traffic on abutting streets through careful layout of the site with respect to location, dimensions of vehicular and pedestrian entrances and exit drives, and through the provision of adequate off-street parking. There is an adequate circulation pattern within the boundaries of the development. Parking facilities are adequately surfaced, landscaped and lit.

G. The proposal encourages alternatives to travel by automobile where appropriate, through the provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles, public transit stops and access to other means of transportation.

H. The site provides open areas and landscaping to complement the buildings and structures. Landscaping is also used to separate and screen service and storage areas, break up expanses of paved area and define areas for usability and privacy. Landscaping is generally water conserving and is appropriate to the location. Attention is given to habitat protection and wildland fire hazard as appropriate.

I. The proposal takes reasonable measures to protect against external and internal noise.

J. Consideration has been given to avoiding off-site glare from lighting and reflective building materials.

K. Attention is given to the screening of utility structures, mechanical equipment, trash containers and rooftop equipment.

L. Signage is appropriate in location, scale, type and color, and is effective in enhancing the design concept of the site.

M. Provisions have been made to meet the needs of employees for outdoor space.

In addition, Chapter 15.70 of the Brisbane Municipal Code requires the preparation of a Landscape and Irrigation Design Plan (including a maintenance schedule) be prepared for the Project Site development.

4.A.4 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Significance Criteria

Criteria outlined in the CEQA Guidelines were used as thresholds in evaluating the significance of identified impacts on aesthetic and visual resources. Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines indicates that a project would have a significant effect on the environment if it would:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, hillsides, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway;
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings; or
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Impact Assessment Methodology

Aesthetics and visual resources are subjective by nature, and therefore the level of visual impact associated with each Project development scenario is difficult to quantify. For this reason, the visual resources analysis for each development scenario was conducted qualitatively, assessing the aesthetic effects of each scenario, as described below under each criterion.

Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impact 4.A-1: Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Impact Significance by Scenario (before Mitigation)			
DSP	**DSP-V**	**CPP**	**CPP-V**
SM	SM	SM	SM
SU = Significant Unavoidable SM = Significant but Mitigable LTS = Less than Significant - = no impact			

Impacts on Scenic Vistas – Assessment Methodology

Establishing the Viewpoints

The analysis of changes to public views of scenic resources is accompanied by a series of photographs and visual simulations for 12 representative public viewpoints from within and surrounding the Project Site (see Figure 4.A-1 and Table 4.A-1). The selected representative viewpoints consist of five viewpoints from Brisbane outside the Project Site (Viewpoints 7, 9, 10, 11, and 12), five viewpoints from San Francisco (Viewpoints 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6), one viewpoint from Daly City (Viewpoint 4), and one viewpoint from within the Project Site (Viewpoint 8). Although Viewpoints 4 and 9 do not provide significant visual access to important visual features and therefore are not classified as scenic vistas, they are included for informational purposes and to support the analysis of Project Site visual character changes. Overall, these viewpoints represent a reasonable range of public viewpoints and include specific views identified in comments received as part of the scoping process for the EIR. As such, the photographs and visual simulations for these viewpoints provide a reasonable basis for evaluating the effects of the Project Site development on scenic vistas.

Building the 3-D Conceptual Models

To evaluate the impacts of the Project Site development scenarios on existing scenic vistas, geo-referenced site photographs from the viewpoints described above were taken with a 35-millimeter (mm) lens at 50-mm focal length. A digital three-dimensional model of the Project Site and surrounding area was constructed, incorporating the proposed grading plan provided in the draft Infrastructure Plan (see **Appendix B** of this EIR), using SketchUp™, a three-dimensional modeling program. The model of the Project Site and the surrounding area was used as a base for conceptual models of the DSP and CPP development scenarios, which were placed in the Project Site and surroundings model using geo-referenced locations per Google™ earth (see discussion of DSP-V and CPP-V development scenarios under "Building the Visual Simulations," below).

The Project Site development scenarios are not development projects but rather land use scenarios with development intensities established for various land uses. This means that numerous allowable variations of specific building massing and locations throughout the Project Site could occur under each development scenario. Thus, each three-dimensional model represents a reasonable outcome of several potential development configurations. The development scenario models were generally built to demonstrate worst-case potential for view obstruction of scenic vistas given applicable development requirements of the various Project Site development scenarios, such as total amount of allowable building area, allowable building heights, setbacks, and floor area ratios (FARs). The DSP and CPP models represent the result of applying assumptions for typical building widths, FARs, and floor level heights, combined with the maximum heights for a few buildings within the same land use districts. It is important to understand that the models do not reflect *maximum* building widths, FARs, and building heights proposed for each possible building site within each development scenario, since maximizing the building width, FAR, and height for each building site would result in building square footages that exceed the maximum overall amount of development permitted under the various Project Site development scenarios (see Tables 3-3 and 3-4 in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, of this EIR).

Moreover, the Project Site development scenario models do not illustrate precise design assumptions, such as building shape, architectural style, articulation, setbacks, fenestration (windows), or cladding materials. This level of design detail cannot be known until site-specific development projects are actually proposed, nor is it pertinent to the assessment of changes to scenic vistas. Similarly, while development of open space areas and parks as proposed in the development scenarios would change the appearance and character of the site, the models do not reflect those changes as they would not affect scenic vistas.

Building the Visual Simulations

The three-dimensional models were used in conjunction with Google™ earth and site photos to create visual simulations of DSP and CPP development scenarios from the selected viewpoints. The visual simulations illustrate changes to the existing setting that would occur as a result of development under the DSP and CPP scenarios. Simulations were not created to show interim changes in visual character, such as site preparation and grading activities during construction and phased development, as such changes would not impair the visibility of existing scenic vistas.

A separate model and associated visual simulations were not created for the DSP-V scenario because the variant would not be substantially different from the conceptual massing of the DSP scenario. Although the DSP-V would include a different building height layout within the northeast portion of the Project Site, including height limits for the arena that would be 25 feet taller than building heights allowed under the DSP (see Table 3-3), the revised height limits would be similar to those of the DSP and the parcels with the maximum height limit of 160 feet would remain unchanged. Overall, while the type, and therefore character, of specific buildings proposed for this area under the DSP-V would differ from the DSP, because impacts on scenic vistas are determined based on the degree to which views are blocked by proposed structures, differences in view blockage between the DSP and DSP-V scenarios would be insubstantial. In addition, the types and character of buildings proposed were not modeled in the visual simulations and would not result in a change in the impact on scenic vistas. Therefore, for the analysis of impacts on scenic vistas, the DSP-V is considered together with the DSP.

Similarly, the CPP-V is considered together with the CPP and relies on the simulations created for the latter. As described in Chapter 3, the CPP-V's proposed land uses and associated development standards would be the same as for the CPP, aside from the proposed southward expansion of the Recology facility, which would replace other uses proposed in the CPP. The Recology expansion contemplated under the CPP-V would include lower building heights and FARs than expected within this same area under the CPP. As such, the CPP-V would not be substantially different from the conceptual massing simulated for the CPP. Further, given that impacts on scenic vistas are determined based on the degree to which views are blocked by proposed structures, subtle differences in massing would not result in different visual impacts. Therefore, for the analysis of impacts on scenic vistas, the CPP-V is considered together with the CPP.

Summary

As stated previously, a scenic vista is defined as a public viewing opportunity providing panoramic view access to important visual features, including views of the Bay, striking or unusual natural terrain, or unique urban or historic features. The level of significance for each Project Site development scenario is determined by assessing the potential for new development to substantially block public views of important visual features, including views of identified scenic resources, as discernible from the representative viewpoints. A Project Site development scenario is considered to have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista when visual access to important visual features becomes completely or substantially obstructed to the point where the obstruction diminishes the aesthetic value of the scenic vista. The views analyzed for this EIR are listed and described in **Table 4.A-1** and mapped in **Figure 4.A-1**. Of the 12 viewpoints depicted and analyzed, all are publicly accessible, and all but Viewpoints 4 and 9 are considered scenic vistas.

The scenic vista impact analysis evaluates the four scenarios by overlaying a conceptual model of DSP and CPP development scenarios at buildout over each view. The existing characteristics of each view are described, followed by a description of how the existing condition could be affected by site development proposed under the DSP/DSP-V and CPP/CPP-V scenarios.

TABLE 4.A-1
VIEWPOINTS

Viewpoint 1: Blythedale Avenue at Brookdale Avenue in Sunnydale neighborhood, facing east

Existing View

Higher ground in the Sunnydale neighborhood allows a view of San Francisco Bay and its shoreline. To the north (left), limited views of Bayview Park are available.

DSP/DSP-V

New buildings with maximum heights of 160 feet located near the Project Site's eastern boundary would cover some existing views of the Bay shoreline. However, the majority of the views of the Bay would be preserved.

CPP/CPP-V

Although several high-rise buildings with a maximum height of 80 feet located near the Project Site's eastern boundary would be seen above the Bay shoreline, visual access would be maintained and the shoreline still would be observed.

TABLE 4.A-1 (Continued)
VIEWPOINTS

Viewpoint 2: Overlook point at John McLaren Park, facing east

Existing View

The overlook point at John McLaren Park provides an uninterrupted view of the Bay, Brisbane Lagoon, Bayview Park (not shown in photo), and San Bruno Mountain (right).

DSP/DSP-V

Taller buildings (up to 160 feet in height) along the eastern edge of the Project Site would largely maintain existing views of the Bay shoreline. Although the taller high-rises near the shoreline could alter Bay views, views of the majority of the Bay, Brisbane Lagoon, and San Bruno Mountain would be preserved.

CPP/CPP-V

Buildings near the shoreline (eastern edge of Project Site) would be limited to 80 feet in height, allowing the majority of the Bay to continue to be seen from this vantage point. Views of San Francisco Bay, the Bay shoreline, Brisbane Lagoon, and San Bruno Mountain would be preserved.

TABLE 4.A-1 (Continued)
VIEWPOINTS

Viewpoint 3: Goettingen Street at Wilde Avenue in Visitacion Valley, facing south

Existing View

The higher elevation in Visitacion Valley allows views of the Bay (left) and San Bruno Mountain beyond.

DSP/DSP-V

Potential high-rise building (up to 90 feet to160 feet) along the eastern boundary of the Project Site would block a substantial portion of the view of the Bay and its shoreline. The view to San Bruno Mountain would be preserved. The Project Site could be viewed as a solid mass of buildings

CPP/CPP-V

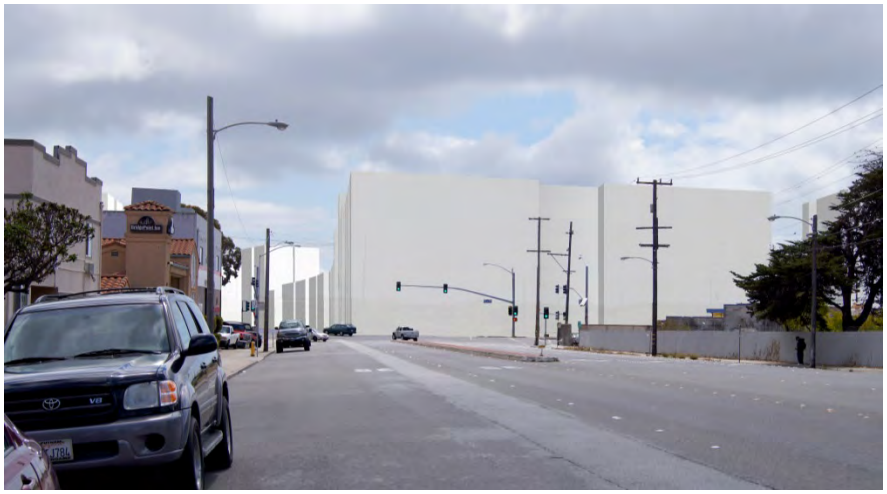
Due to an 80-foot height limit, new R&D buildings located along the Project Site's eastern boundary would not impede the view of the Bay, shoreline, or San Bruno Mountain. With less building area (compared to the DSP/DSP-V), open areas between buildings could be seen.

TABLE 4.A-1 (Continued)
VIEWPOINTS

Viewpoint 4: Geneva Avenue at Talbert Street, facing east

Existing View

Views along Geneva Avenue are limited to one- and two-story residential and commercial buildings along the north side and utility structures along the south side of the street. Views to the East Bay hills can be seen but are too faint to be considered as a scenic vista from this viewpoint.



DSP/DSP-V

At buildout, views into the Project Site would change to include views of tall buildings (shown at approximately 125 feet in height) along the planned Geneva Avenue extension and Bayshore Boulevard. Loss of distant views would occur, but the new buildings would not block views of scenic vistas.

CPP/CPP-V

At buildout, views into the Project Site from Geneva Avenue would be changed to include new tall buildings (with a 160-foot height limit) along the planned Geneva Avenue extension. Loss of distant views would occur, but the new buildings would not block views of scenic vistas.

TABLE 4.A-1 (Continued)
VIEWPOINTS

Viewpoint 5: US Highway 101 at the San Mateo County line, facing south

Existing View

Tall trees along the edge of southbound lanes block views to the east, but near the county line the higher elevation allows a view of San Bruno Mountain.

DSP/DSP-V

A high-rise building (160 feet in height) and mid-rise buildings (90 feet in height) along the eastern edge of the Project Site would block a substantial portion of the views of San Bruno Mountain. Because existing trees are within Caltrans right-of-way, it is assumed they would remain.

CPP/CPP-V

A new R&D campus with an 80-foot maximum height limit would be constructed parallel to the freeway and be visible behind new raised berms and existing trees along US Highway 101. New buildings would largely block views of San Bruno Mountain but would retain views of the majority of the ridgeline.

TABLE 4.A-1 (Continued)
VIEWPOINTS

Viewpoint 6: Candlestick Point State Recreation Area, facing southwest

Existing View

Scenic views from the outlook points of Candlestick Point State Recreation Area include the Bay (foreground) and San Bruno Mountain (background). This photo captures the Project Site north of Visitacion Creek (left) and the Project Site's northern boundary (right).

DSP/DSP-V

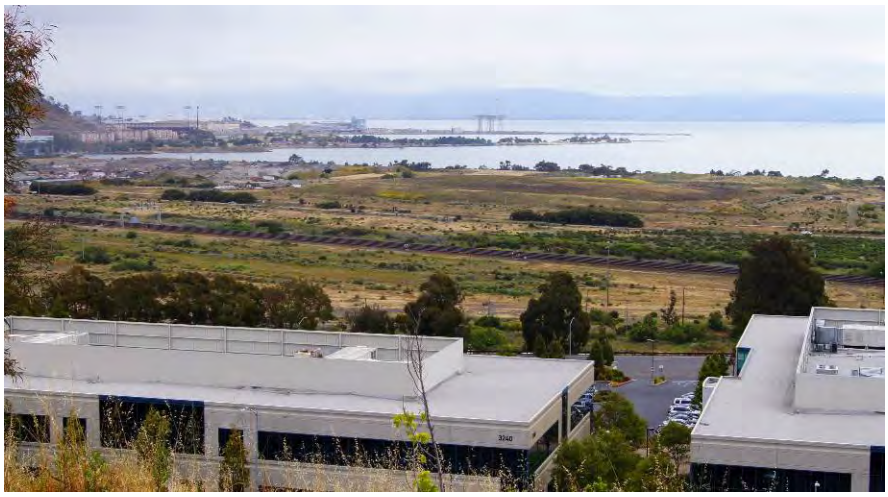
Buildings at a maximum height of 90 feet and 160 feet near the Project Site's eastern boundary (north of Visitacion Creek) would partially block views of the lower portions of San Bruno Mountain. However, the main ridgeline and the majority of the view would be maintained.

CPP/CPP-V

Taller buildings along Geneva Avenue (up to 160 feet in height) would partially block views of residential areas on the lower part of the hills. Views of R&D buildings (mid-rise buildings shown at the left side of the photo) would be limited to 80 feet in height. Views of San Bruno Mountain would be maintained.

TABLE 4.A-1 (Continued)
VIEWPOINTS

Viewpoint 7: Mission Blue Drive off Guadalupe Canyon Parkway (Northeast Ridge), facing east



Existing View

Scenic views from Mission Blue Drive include Bayview Park and Candlestick Point (left), the Bay, and shoreline.

DSP/DSP-V

New buildings, including the high-rise building at the eastern edge of the Project Site, would break uninterrupted views of the Bay and its shoreline. Bayview Park and Candlestick Point would remain visible from this viewpoint.

CPP/CPP-V

The new buildings would not impede views of the Bay and its shoreline, Candlestick Point, or Bayview Park.

TABLE 4.A-1 (Continued)
VIEWPOINTS

Viewpoint 8: Icehouse Hill, facing northeast

Existing View

Scenic vistas from the top of Icehouse Hill include the Bay, Candlestick Point, Bayview Park, high-rise buildings in San Francisco's financial district, and John McLaren Park (not shown in photo).

DSP/DSP-V

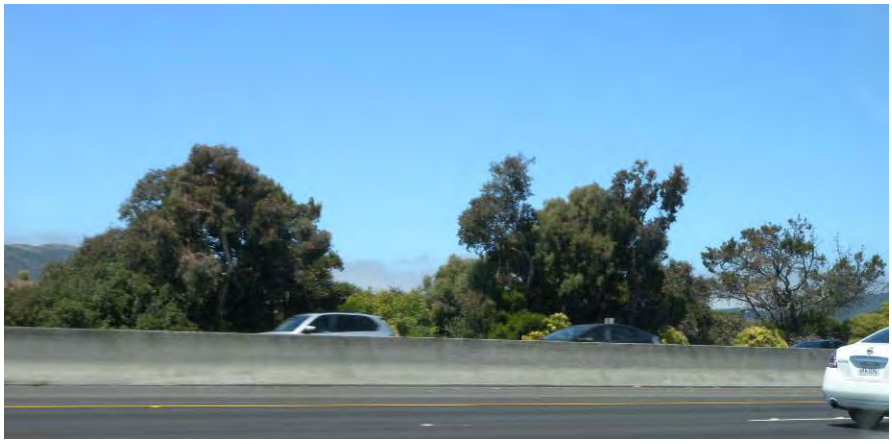
Taller buildings along the Project Site's eastern boundary would block views of portions of the shoreline and Bay. Other scenic views would be maintained.

CPP/CPP-V

New buildings would block a limited portion of the view of the shoreline. Other scenic views would be maintained.

TABLE 4.A-1 (Continued)
VIEWPOINTS

Viewpoint 9: US Highway 101 north of Brisbane Lagoon, facing northwest



Existing View

Views from the US Highway 101 northbound lanes are limited to glimpses of San Bruno Mountain behind street trees. The visual access to San Bruno Mountain is too limited to be considered as a scenic vista from this viewpoint.

DSP/DSP-V

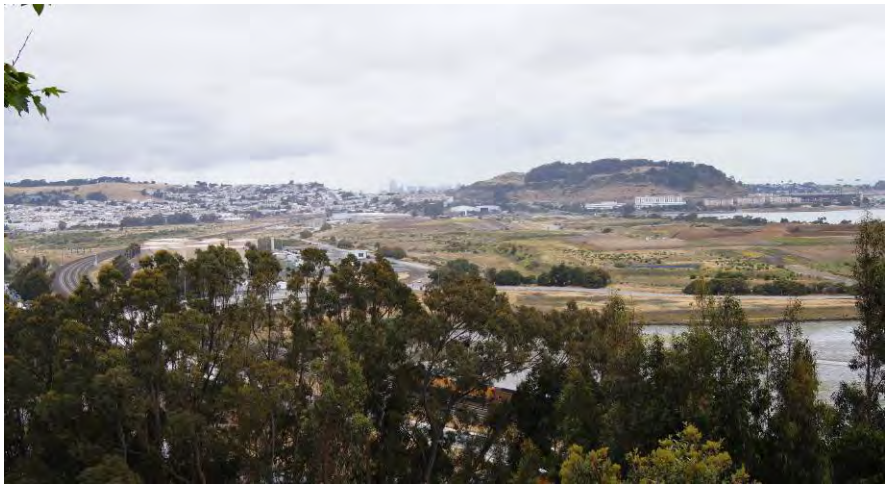
New buildings (middle and right) would block views of San Bruno Mountain. However, existing trees would in the foreground of views of San Bruno Mountain and would partially screen most of the new buildings.

CPP/CPP-V

Near US Highway 101, new buildings would be subject to a 55-foot height limit north of Visitacion Creek and a 25-foot height limit south of Visitacion Creek. Buildings within these height limits would be partially screened from view by existing trees.

TABLE 4.A-1 (Continued)
VIEWPOINTS

Viewpoint 10: Tulare Street off San Bruno Avenue in Brisbane, facing north



Existing View

From the residential areas in Central Brisbane, scenic views include Brisbane Lagoon (foreground), John McLaren Park (left), high-rise buildings in downtown San Francisco (middle background), the Bay, Bayview Park, and Candlestick Point (right).

DSP/DSP-V

New buildings would block views of the lower portion of Bayview Park, but views to Brisbane Lagoon, John McLaren Park (left), high-rise buildings in downtown San Francisco, the Bay, and Candlestick Point would not be affected.

CPP/CPP-V

New buildings would not impede views of existing scenic vistas from this viewpoint.

TABLE 4.A-1 (Continued)
VIEWPOINTS

Viewpoint 11: Kings Road and Beatrice Road in Central Brisbane, facing north

Existing View

Scenic views from Central Brisbane include John McLaren Park (left), Icehouse Hill, high-rise buildings of San Francisco's financial district (middle), Bayview Park and Candlestick Point (right), and the Bay.

DSP/DSP-V

Taller buildings near the eastern edge of the Project Site boundary would block views of the Bay shoreline. However, the majority of the view of the Bay and other scenic resources would be maintained.

CPP/CPP-V

New buildings would block views of a minimal portion of the Bay shoreline. All other scenic views would be maintained.

TABLE 4.A-1 (Continued)
VIEWPOINTS

Viewpoint 12: Bay Trail at Sierra Point, facing west

Existing View

Scenic vistas from the Bay Trail at Sierra Point near the Brisbane Marina include the Bay (foreground) and San Bruno Mountain.

DSP/DSP-V

New taller buildings along the Project Site's eastern boundary would partially block views of distant hillside landforms. However, views of San Bruno Mountain would not be impeded.

CPP/CPP-V

New buildings would be well below the ridgeline and would not impede views of San Bruno Mountain from this viewpoint.

Scenic Vista Impact Analysis – DSP and DSP-V

As demonstrated in Table 4.A-1, new development under the DSP would partially block views of important visual features from Viewpoints 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12. The DSP scenario provides for the development of buildings up to a height of 160 feet along the easternmost edge of the Project Site. These tall buildings would directly affect scenic views of the San Francisco Bay waters and shoreline, specifically from Viewpoints 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, and 11. Moreover, views of San Bruno Mountain from Viewpoint 5 would be reduced, although not completely blocked, by new development along the entire Project Site edge. The DSP scenario would also obstruct views from Viewpoint 10, including a small portion of the view of Bayview Park. Overall, development under the DSP scenario would substantially block visibility of these visual features such that the aesthetic value of the views from these publicly accessible viewpoints would be significantly diminished. Therefore, the DSP scenario would result in a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista and result in a significant impact in relation to this criterion; however, implementation of **Mitigation Measure 4.A-1**, listed below, would reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level.

The DSP-V includes a building height plan that would be only slightly different from that of the DSP. Like the DSP, the DSP-V would allow for building heights up to 160 feet in the northeast portion of the Project Site. Unlike the DSP, however, the DSP-V would provide for a large-scale arena up to 150 feet in height south of Geneva Avenue and east of the Caltrain tracks. It would also provide for a theater of up to 125 feet in height north of Geneva Avenue and east of the Caltrain tracks. While these taller structures would have slightly different impacts on existing scenic vistas compared to the impacts of the DSP scenario, the overall impact of the DSP-V scenario on scenic vistas from the Sunnydale neighborhood, John McLaren Park, Mission Blue Drive, and Icehouse Hill (as shown in Viewpoints 1, 2, 7, and 8) would remain the same. The adverse effects of the DSP-V scenario would be similar to those of the DSP scenario, as demonstrated by the eight public viewpoints listed above. Thus, the DSP-V scenario would also result in a substantial adverse effect on scenic vistas, and the impact would be significant. However, implementation of **Mitigation Measure 4.A-1a** would reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level.

Conclusion: The impact of the DSP and DSP-V scenarios on scenic vistas would be significant. **Mitigation Measure 4.A-1a** is recommended to decrease building height maximums and thereby reduce the significant impacts of the DSP and DSP-V on scenic views from, and across, the Project Site. Specifically, implementation of this mitigation measure would limit the potential blockage of scenic views of the Bay waters, Bay shoreline, and San Bruno Mountain as seen from the Sunnydale neighborhood, John McLaren, Park, Visitacion Valley, US Highway 101 southbound lanes, and Icehouse Hill.

Mitigation

Mitigation Measure 4.A-1a: Development within 350 feet of the eastern boundary of the Project Site (US Highway 101) shall be designed to avoid blockage of views of the Bay shoreline from Viewpoints 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, and 11. Each specific plan approved for development within the Project Site shall include development standards setting forth this requirement. These standards shall require that buildings within 350 feet of US Highway 101 be no taller than 80 feet in height.

Mitigation Measure Applicability by Scenario			
DSP	**DSP-V**	**CPP**	**CPP-V**
✓	✓	-	-
✓ = measure applies - = measure does not apply			

Conclusion with Mitigation: With implementation of **Mitigation Measure 4.A-1a**, building heights in the area where views of the Bay may be blocked would be reduced, providing for preservation of those views. As a result, impacts of the DSP and DSP-V scenarios on scenic vistas would be less than significant.

Scenic Vista Impact Analysis – CPP and CPP-V

As shown in Table 4.A-1, development under the CPP or CPP-V scenario would be visible from each of the 10 viewpoints representing scenic vistas. However, the proposed development would not result in a substantial loss of views of scenic vistas from these viewpoints and would therefore not have an adverse effect as the existing views of important visual features would not be substantially blocked. With a building height maximum of 80 feet along the eastern edge of the Project Site, development would not obstruct the existing scenic views of the San Bruno Mountain ridgeline, the Bay waters, or the Bay shoreline as seen from north, east, or south of the Project Site. The proposed research and development buildings, which would be built to a maximum height of 80 feet and set back from the eastern boundary of the Project Site, would block a small portion of the Bay shoreline visibility as seen from viewpoints to the west and northwest (Viewpoints 1, 2, 8, and 11). However, other scenic resources, including the Bay waters, Bayview Park, Candlestick Point, and John McLaren Park and the high-rise buildings in the San Francisco financial district, still would be visible from these viewpoints. Further, and in particular as seen in Viewpoint 1, several high-rise buildings with a maximum height of 80 feet located near the Project Site's eastern boundary would be seen above the Bay shoreline and obstruct visual access to the shoreline. The CPP and CPP-V scenarios would allow building heights of up to 160 feet in other areas of the Project Site; however, as these buildings would be located away from the eastern border, they would not substantially block scenic vistas.

Under the CPP and CPP-V scenarios, the extension of the San Francisco Bay Trail would bisect the eastern portion of the Project Site and would permit some new development in areas to the east of that extension, potentially obstructing views of the Bay from the trail.

Conclusion: The CPP and CPP-V scenarios would block some views of the Bay shoreline and therefore would have a significant impact. **Mitigation Measures 4.A-1b** is recommended to avoid blockage of scenic views of the Bay shoreline.

Mitigation

Mitigation Measure 4.A-1b: Development within 350 feet of the eastern boundary of the Project Site (US Highway 101) shall be designed to avoid blockage of views of the Bay shoreline from Viewpoints 1, 2, 8, and 11. Each specific plan approved for development within the Project Site shall include development standards setting forth this requirement. These standards shall include a requirement that buildings within 350 feet of US Highway 101 be no greater than 80 feet in height.

Mitigation Measure Applicability by Scenario			
DSP	**DSP-V**	**CPP**	**CPP-V**
-	-	✓	✓
✓ = measure applies - = measure does not apply			

Conclusion: With implementation of **Mitigation Measure 4.A-1b**, development in the eastern portion of the Project Site would be sufficiently low in height (maximum 80 feet) as to provide views of the Bay over the buildings, thereby reducing the impact to a less-than-significant level.

Impact 4.A-2: Would the Project substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, hillsides, and historic buildings?

Impact Significance by Scenario (before Mitigation)			
DSP	**DSP-V**	**CPP**	**CPP-V**
LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
SU = Significant Unavoidable SM = Significant but Mitigable LTS = Less than Significant - = no impact			

Impacts on Scenic Resources – Assessment Methodology

Scenic resources within the Project Site are described in Subsection 4.A.2, *Environmental Setting*, above. Scenic resources located within the Project Site include Icehouse Hill, Visitacion Creek, Brisbane Lagoon, the historic Roundhouse building, and views of the Bay from the San Francisco Bay Trail. Scenic resources located outside the Project Site include the historic Machinery & Equipment, Inc. building. The Project Site development was evaluated for its potential to substantially damage these resources.

Scenic Resource Impact Analysis – DSP, DSP-V, CPP, and CPP-V

Development under all four Project Site development scenarios would include both preservation of and improvements to existing scenic resources within the Project Site, including Icehouse Hill, Brisbane Lagoon, Visitacion Creek, the historic Roundhouse, and views of the Bay from the San Francisco Bay Trail. Under all proposed development scenarios, existing historic structures would be rehabilitated and reused; the Visitacion Creek corridor, Icehouse Hill, and the edges of Brisbane Lagoon all would be improved and used for passive recreation; existing wetland and habitat areas would be improved and expanded; and the San Francisco Bay Trail would be extended to provide additional views of the Bay from the Project Site.

Under the DSP and DSP-V scenarios, the extension of the San Francisco Bay Trail would occur along the US Highway 101 frontage road on the east side of the Project Site, turning west and then again east in the northern portion of the Project Site. By comparison, the CPP and CPP-V

scenarios would place the Bay Trail along an alignment that bisects the east side of the Project Site. As shown in Figure 5.1 of the proposed Brisbane Baylands Specific Plan and Figures 3-13 through 3-14 of this EIR (see Chapter 3, *Project Description*), all four proposed development scenarios would allow some new development in areas to the east of the proposed Bay Trail extension in the northern portion of the Project Site, potentially obstructing views of the Bay from the trail; however, preservation of open space areas around the Visitacion Creek corridor and Brisbane Lagoon would include the 100-foot shoreline band areas around these features, which are under the jurisdiction of BCDC to ensure public access – including visual access – to the Bay.

Conclusion: In general, onsite scenic resources would be improved with implementation of any of the proposed development scenarios, as historic and natural scenic resources would be rehabilitated and restored. Also, development proposed for areas between the Bay Trail extension and the Bay would adhere to applicable *San Francisco Bay Plan* policies and findings (discussed above under Subsection 4.A.3, *Regulatory Setting*) intended to ensure that new developments maintain public access to the Bay to the maximum extent feasible. Thus, this impact would be less than significant for the Project Site development.

Impact 4.A-3: Would the Project substantially degrade the existing visual character of the site and its surroundings?

Impact Significance by Scenario (before Mitigation)			
DSP	**DSP-V**	**CPP**	**CPP-V**
SM	SM	SM	SM

SU = Significant Unavoidable
SM = Significant but Mitigable
LTS = Less than Significant
- = no impact

Impacts on Visual Character – Assessment Methodology

The analysis compares the visual character of the Project Site development scenarios with the existing visual character of the Project Site. The analysis also includes an evaluation of whether Project Site development under each of the proposed development scenarios would substantially degrade the visual character of the Project Site and surrounding area.

As discussed previously, determinations about aesthetics and visual resources are subjective by nature. Therefore, while it is recognized that one's assessment of whether a change from the existing conditions would be comparatively better (substantially improved) or worse (substantially degraded), this evaluation assumes that while well-designed and well-landscaped urban development that is compatible in scale and appearance with the surroundings may be substantially *different* from the surrounding visual character, it would not necessarily represent an *adverse* change (i.e., resulting in substantial degradation). Moreover, while development proposed within the Project Site would not *directly* affect the visual character of its surroundings, if Project Site development would result in poorly designed buildings or development, Project Site development could detract from nearby existing, relatively well-designed built or natural environments. This would be considered an adverse effect on the surrounding area.

Existing visible conditions on the Project Site include stockpiled and disturbed soils, soil processing operations, and aging, disjointed, existing industrial facilities. When considering

visual changes to the Project Site itself, this evaluation assumes that well-designed urban development of a scale and appearance suitable for the characteristics and context of the site would be quite different from what currently exists onsite. The analysis of visual changes would consider whether the proposed development would be consistent with the visual character of the broader context within observers' range of view.

The following analysis evaluates whether new development under the DSP, DSP-V, CPP, and CPP-V scenarios would substantially degrade the existing visual character of the Project Site, Central Brisbane, and surrounding areas.

Visual Character Impact Analysis – DSP, DSP-V, CPP, and CPP-V

Visual Changes Proposed by Project

As described in greater detail in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, of this EIR, buildout of the Project Site development would result in new buildings and open space amenities throughout the site. Each development scenario would alter the existing visual character of the Project Site by replacing existing undeveloped land, exposed dirt areas and existing uses, such as older industrial buildings, recycling operations and associated earth-moving equipment, holding ponds, and temporary construction-related uses and associated buildings with new street trees, open space and landscaping, and taller buildings that would range from 25 to 160 feet in height. The Project Site development also includes remediation of the former landfill and railyard areas, which would result in visual changes to areas that are either vacant or currently used for interim uses. Project Site development would also provide physical and visual access to new wetlands, open space, and currently inaccessible historical resources.

The Project Site development includes installation and operation of renewable energy uses, which would contribute to changes in the visual character of the Project Site. Under the DSP and DSP-V scenarios, renewable energy uses would include solar photovoltaic panels. These technologies would be installed within areas of the Project Site expressly dedicated for such uses, as well on rooftops and within developed areas such as parking lots. Wind turbine energy production is also proposed at the onsite water reclamation facility. Under the CPP and CPP-V scenarios, these technologies, along with small-scale wind turbines, likely would be installed on rooftops and in areas between buildings and would be of a scale suitable for urban settings. To the extent that their functionality would not be compromised, these technologies (as well as other roof-mounted and visible equipment) would be screened pursuant to existing City design permit and code requirements discussed previously.

Resulting Changes in Visual Character

The Project Site development would result in the urbanization of the Project Site, which would change its visual character as viewed from some of the locations of Central Brisbane and surrounding areas. New development proposed for the Baylands would be substantially more intense than existing development; buildings that would be developed under the Project Site development would be much taller, larger, and more abundant than existing buildings within Central Brisbane and nearby portions of Daly City and San Francisco. As shown in Viewpoint 4

in Table 4.A.1 above, buildings proposed along the Geneva Avenue extension would be larger and taller than existing buildings along Geneva Avenue, especially under the CPP and CPP-V scenarios.

New development pursuant to a specific plan, as required by the Brisbane General Plan, could be considered an aesthetic improvement over the existing visual character of the Project Site. The establishment of permanent open space and additional parklands within areas now devoted to soil stockpiling, as well as adaptive reuse of derelict historic structures as part of redevelopment of the former railyard area, are especially likely to be considered an aesthetic improvement over existing visual conditions. As noted in the methodology discussion above, however, visual improvements would only occur with implementation of development that is well-designed, well-landscaped, and compatible in scale with the surroundings in and around the Project Site. The Brisbane Baylands Specific Plan for the DSP and DSP-V scenarios sets forth design guidelines and landscape plans, along with programs to ensure their implementation (see **Appendix C**, Sections 4.10 and 4.12). Should either the CPP or CPP-V scenario be selected, the specific plan(s) that would be required to be prepared and approved prior to any development would also be required to include design guidelines to ensure Project Site development is well planned and landscaped.

Relevant City Requirements

As a further assurance that future development within the Project Site would be well designed and well landscaped, Brisbane Municipal Code Chapter 17.42 requires a design permit to be obtained for the construction of any new building, including the development proposed under the Project Site development. The Brisbane Planning Commission must make findings, including but not limited to the following: (1) the proposal's scale, form, and proportion are harmonious, and the materials and colors used complement the project; and (2) the orientation and location of buildings, structures, open spaces, and other features integrate well with each other and maintain a compatible relationship to adjacent development. Brisbane Municipal Code Chapter 15.70 also requires the preparation of a Landscape and Irrigation Design Plan (including a maintenance schedule).

The City of Brisbane, through implementation of the Design Review process, ensures that individual project building designs and the siting or relative orientation of groups of buildings do not degrade the visual quality of project sites. The City ensures this by requiring, as conditions of approval for specific development projects, implementation of measures such as adjustments to building height or massing, building treatments, use of decorative building materials or fenestration, and landscaping or other treatments designed to provide visually appealing building façades and streetscapes within the project vicinity. Under current City requirements, a specific project is required to be approved by the City prior to development, and applicants for site-specific development pursuant to an approved specific plan are required to provide a final design to the City prior to approval of a building permit. To further demonstrate the level of detailed review and consideration applied through this process that could reduce potential adverse effects on existing visual character, submittals to the City for design permits for specific development projects are required to include detailed site development and architectural plans.

Application of City Requirements to Project

Approval of a specific plan that is consistent with the Brisbane General Plan, along with implementation of the City's Design Review process, would guide individual project building designs as they are submitted, approved, and built. The process also considers the integration of two or more buildings relative to their surroundings. Overall, this established regulatory review and permitting processes would increase the likelihood for compatible and quality development to occur on the Project Site.

Incremental development consistent with design guidelines and landscape plans, and the City's Design Review process, would ensure that the substantially *different* development types and development intensities within the Project Site would not be visually *adverse* compared to existing conditions. The overall intensity of Project Site development is substantially greater than the development intensity set forth in the Brisbane General Plan, as well as substantially greater than the existing Brisbane community and areas surrounding the Project Site.

As part of the City's Design Review process, the Planning Commission must make findings that include a determination that the orientation and location of buildings, structures, open spaces and other features integrate well with each other and maintain a compatible relationship to adjacent development. The design guidelines set forth in the Brisbane Baylands Specific Plan for the DSP and DSP-V scenarios, and design guidelines required to be provided in the required specific plan(s) for the CPP and CPP-V scenarios, provide a basis for making such a determination in relation to compatible design relationships. The high-intensity character of proposed development and resulting substantial differences in proposed development intensity between the Project Site and surrounding areas do not support a determination of compatibility given currently proposed development intensities and building heights. The result would be an adverse effect due to the visual incompatibilities between Project Site development and its surroundings.

Conclusion: This impact would be significant. In addition to designing Project Site development to be consistent with the requirements described in Subsection 4.A.3, *Regulatory Setting*, above, **Mitigation Measure 4.A-3** is necessary to introduce specific design standards that, when adopted as part of required specific plan(s) for the Project Site and applied to all site-specific development projects, would ensure development of a cohesive urban aesthetic across the site and support a well-designed urban environment and positive visual character. The specific design guidelines, landscape plans, and implementation program outlined in the Brisbane Baylands Specific Plan for the DSP and DSP-V scenarios (see Appendix C, Sections 4.10 and 4.12) would be approved with the Specific Plan and therefore incorporated as guidance for those two development scenarios.

Although there are differences that could occur under the DSP, DSP-V, CPP, and CPP-V scenarios, the following design guidelines address design elements that largely contribute to the overall visual character and continuity of a site as large as the Project Site. Adherence to these specific guidelines, in combination with the City's Design Review process, would reduce the impact of the Project Site development on the visual character of the Project Site and its surroundings to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation

Mitigation Measure 4.A-3: All site-specific development projects within the Project Site shall be subject to the following minimum standards, which shall be set forth in required specific plan(s) prepared for development of the Project Site:

Mitigation Measure Applicability by Scenario			
DSP	**DSP-V**	**CPP**	**CPP-V**
✓	✓	✓	✓
✓ = measure applies - = measure does not apply			

- ***Landscaping/Open Space*:** Landscaping and open space areas shall be designed to provide usable outdoor spaces; to provide a pedestrian orientation within residential (DSP and DSP-V scenarios) and non-residential development areas; and to avoid the appearance of a solid mass of buildings as viewed from within the Project Site, from US Highway 101, from Bayshore Boulevard, and from the representative viewpoints shown in Figure 4.A-1.

- ***Development Intensity, Setbacks, Stepbacks, and Building Heights*:** Variations, including reductions in the development intensity of site-specific development sites within the Project Site from the maximum allowable development intensity, shall be provided to maintain compatibility with the development intensity of surrounding neighborhoods and community areas. Variations in building heights (including reductions from maximum allowable heights), along with appropriate building setbacks and provision of provision of buildings stepbacks in height, shall be employed to maintain a feeling of openness within Project Site open space areas; to maintain compatibility with the scale of historic structures being preserved onsite; and to reduce the perceived intensity of development as viewed from the Geneva Avenue extension, Bayshore Boulevard, and Viewpoints 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, and 11.

- ***Roofs*:** Roof design shall be compatible with the building design and articulation, emphasizing color, form, and materials. Rooftop mechanical equipment shall be screened from visibility from the representative viewpoints shown in Figure 4.A-1. Roofs shall incorporate opportunities for solar panels, which when installed need not be screened from view.

- ***Fenestration*:** Window patterns shall be well proportioned to the building, shall be varied to achieve diversity in architecture, and shall provide adequate light and air to interiors.

- ***Building Articulation*:** Facade articulation of a minimum of five feet shall be required at minimum intervals of 80 feet.

- ***Building Materials*:** Materials shall be high quality with textures and colors that further accentuate building design. Changes in building materials along a building face shall relate to building massing.

- ***Signage*:** Signage shall complement building design in material, scale, lettering, and lighting and enhance the public realm.

- ***Transparency*:** In retail buildings along publicly accessible frontages, 40 to 60 percent of ground-floor wall areas shall be transparent.

- ***Building Facades*:** Building design shall avoid large flat wall areas unbroken by protections, recesses, or other architectural features. Entrances shall be appropriately scaled and easy to find.

- ***Outdoor Storage and Mechanical Equipment*:** Any permitted outdoor storage or mechanical equipment shall be fully screened from view from areas accessible to the general public, as well as from the representative viewpoints shown in Figure 4.A-1.

- ***Parking:*** Podium or structured parking shall be wrapped with active uses at ground level and not exposed to the street. As part of the approval of specific plan(s) for development within the Project Site, the City shall first make the finding that the design standards and guidelines contained in the specific plan set forth, at a minimum, these standards.

  As part of the approval of all subsequent site-specific development within the Project Site, the approving body for such development shall first make the finding that the site-specific development being reviewed meets the standards and guidelines set forth in the applicable specific plan implementing the requirements of this mitigation measure.

Conclusion with Mitigation: With implementation of **Mitigation Measure 4.A-3**, this impact would be less than significant for each Project Site development scenario.

Impact 4.A-4: Would the Project create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Impact Significance by Scenario (before Mitigation)			
DSP	**DSP-V**	**CPP**	**CPP-V**
Nighttime Lighting			
SU	SU	SU	SU
Daytime Glare			
SM	SM	SM	SM

SU = Significant Unavoidable
SM = Significant but Mitigable
LTS = Less than Significant
- = no impact

Light and Glare Impacts – Assessment Methodology

This threshold encompasses two distinct issues: nighttime lighting and daytime glare, both of which are considered in this analysis.

Nighttime Lighting

Nighttime lighting is caused by street lighting, building and parking lot lighting for safety, lighting for accent of building features and landscaping, and indoor lighting. Spillover of light onto adjacent properties has the potential to interfere with vision, sleep, privacy, and general enjoyment of the natural nighttime condition. Nighttime lighting can also interfere with the ability to see stars at night (dark night sky). Light-sensitive uses include residential uses, some commercial and institutional uses and, in some situations, open space and natural areas.

The analysis of effects of nighttime lighting considers whether a project's lighting would adversely affect nighttime views by (1) routinely spilling over into adjacent light-sensitive land use areas, (2) substantially reducing nighttime views of distant lights (e.g., across the Bay or in San Francisco), (3) substantially reducing nighttime views of stars in a dark night sky, or (4) reducing the quality of existing habitat for nocturnal species present in the area.

Daytime Glare

Glare results from sharply reflected light caused by sunlight or artificial light reflecting from highly finished surfaces such as paving, roofing, or glass. The level of glare is measured using the albedo concept, which calculates the relative reflectivity of surfaces. For example, soil cover has an albedo of 0.17, which indicates that approximately 17 percent of solar radiation hitting a soil-covered ground would be reflected. Grass cover has an albedo of 0.20, indicating a solar reflectivity of approximately 20 percent, or slightly more glare than soil cover. In general, darker or mirrored glass would have a higher solar reflectivity—or glare—than clear glass.

While solar panels are typically dark in color, they are about half as reflective as standard glass used in residential or commercial applications. Solar panels are comprised of numerous solar cells, which differ from a typical reflective surface in that they have a microscopically irregular surface designed to trap the rays of sunlight for the purposes of energy production. Moreover, the intent of solar technology is to increase efficiency by *absorbing* as much light as possible, which *reduces* its reflection and glare (relative to regular dark or mirrored glass typically observed in common large-scaled residential and commercial development). Solar glass sheets (the glass layer that covers photovoltaic panels) are typically tempered glass that is treated with an anti-reflective or diffusion coating that further diffuses the intensity of glare produced. Solar panels without an anti-reflective coating have a solar reflectivity of approximately five percent; with an anti-reflective coating, the solar reflectivity is reduced to approximately three percent (ESA, 2012).

High albedo or glare can cause daytime interference with activities in sensitive land use areas, as well as public roadways or air travel patterns where automobile and plane operators can be temporarily blinded by glare, thus causing a safety concern. As such, analysis of the effects of daytime glare considers whether new development would result in an adverse effect by creating a new source of substantial glare.

Light and Glare Impact Analysis – DSP, DSP-V, CPP, and CPP-V

Nighttime Lighting

Nighttime lighting on the Project Site is currently minimal, especially compared to adjacent developed areas, given that the site is predominantly undeveloped. Existing nighttime lighting is limited to the areas around the existing industrial uses in the northern and southwestern portions of the Project Site. Project Site development would create new nighttime light resulting from building security and accent lighting, interior building lighting, and street and public space lighting.

Effects on Sensitive Land Uses and Views. The industrial land uses directly abutting the Project Site are not considered sensitive uses with respect to nighttime lighting. However, proposed residential uses under the DSP and DSP-V scenarios are considered sensitive with respect to nighttime lighting, as is the Little Hollywood neighborhood immediately to the north of the Project Site in San Francisco.

Project Site development would add light to the nighttime sky. The addition of nighttime lighting over as broad an area as the Project Site, which is currently largely dark at night, would affect the nighttime views currently available to existing residents of Central Brisbane. The Project Site

development would affect nighttime views across the Bay and toward downtown San Francisco city lights from residential areas north, west, and south of the Project Site by placing a large-scale source of light in the foreground of those views. To the extent that nighttime lighting would not be fully shielded and directed downward, views of stars in the nighttime sky could be affected. The DSP-V proposes entertainment-oriented uses (a sports arena, concert theater, and multiple-screen cinema) that would result in additional nighttime lighting due to building accent lighting and light displays. While the entertainment uses within the Project Site would be located east of the rail corridor and away from sensitive residential land uses in Visitacion Valley and most surrounding residential development, onsite residential development and the Little Hollywood neighborhood (located immediately north of the Project Site in San Francisco) would be significantly affected by Project Site lighting. Light spillage from development under the DSP, DSP-V, CPP, and CPP-V scenarios also would affect surrounding sensitive uses, including the Little Hollywood neighborhood. Additionally, the proposed recreational facility located south of Visitacion Creek in the "Regional Use Area Public Use Envelope" would increase ambient nighttime lighting if nighttime use of the recreational facility is permitted, thereby affecting nighttime views from Central Brisbane.

Effects on Nocturnal Species. Light spillage from nighttime lighting of development within the Project Site into habitat areas would have a negative effect on nocturnal species. Plants and animals are typically attuned to the 24-hour seasonal cycle of light and dark. Mating behaviors, sleep, and predation are all determined by the length of nighttime darkness. Introducing artificial nighttime lighting into habitat areas can disrupt these activities. Artificial nighttime lighting can disrupt an animal's movements. This issue is discussed in Section 4.C, *Biological Resources*, of this EIR. Owls and bats, for example, can lose the advantage of specialized night vision that enables them to hunt without being seen. Nighttime lighting favors other predators, as the nocturnal animals that are their prey lose the cover of darkness to hide.

Migrating birds such as songbirds can be affected by human-built structures because of their propensity to migrate at night, their low flight altitudes, and their tendency to be disoriented by artificial light, making them vulnerable to collision with obstructions. Both tall structures such as wind turbines and windows on buildings provide collision hazards to migrating birds. A majority of bird strikes occur when birds do not recognize windows on buildings. Thus, operation of the wind turbines and tall residential (DSP and DSP-V scenarios) and non-residential buildings would pose collision hazards to migratory birds since effects associated with the lighting of the towers can alter the flight patterns of migratory birds and substantially increase bird strike collisions with the structures. As discussed in Section 4.C, *Biological Resources*, of this EIR, due to the potential for bird strikes at tall buildings associated with construction of dense urban development with many windows adjacent to the Bay and within the Pacific Flyway, an increase in bird strikes would occur. Mitigation measures set forth in Section 4.C, *Biological Resources*, would reduce impacts related to tall structures and increased lighting to less-than-significant levels by incorporating design features that would help minimize bird strikes, including design features making structures, especially glass surfaces, more visible from the outside.

Conclusion: Project Site development would create new sources of substantial nighttime lighting that would adversely affect nighttime views in adjacent residential areas, thereby resulting in a significant impact.

The Brisbane Baylands Specific Plan prepared for the DSP and DSP-V scenarios contains the following nighttime lighting guidelines:

Street and Parking Facility Lighting

- Street lighting should emphasize the use of shorter, pedestrian-scaled fixtures, rather than tall cobra head fixtures; when larger fixtures are required, both pedestrian- and automobile-oriented luminaires should be provided, either separately or on combined poles.
- Light fixtures should be selected that produce a warm light and focus the light downward onto the pedestrian zone.
- Use a consistent style and size of light standards and fixtures along a single street or within a district is recommended (Illuminating Engineering Society of America (IESNA) Guidelines recommended).
- Use minimal foot candle levels acceptable for public safety as a guide for street and parking lot lighting, rather than the upper limits typically recommended.

Accent Lighting

- Sodium lamp types are discouraged in order to preserve color rendition and public safety.
- In-ground up-lights with diverter shields should be used where vandalism is a greater concern.
- Typical building features that benefit from illumination include corner towers, entry façades, arcade columns, gable-type structures, special detailing, and relief. Shadows of trees and structures can also be cast on blank building wall surfaces.
- Special landscape features within entry zones and gathering areas should be emphasized with accent lighting.
- Retail district entry elements, columns, and rows of trees should be lighted. In public and private gathering spaces, special landscape features should be accented at night.

While these guidelines would be helpful in avoiding significant nighttime lighting, they are written in the form of recommendations, rather than requirements. As such, even with these guidelines significant impacts could result.

Because General Plan requirements for concept plans focus on proposed land uses, rather than design issues, and a specific plan has not been prepared for the CPP and CPP-V scenarios, no lighting guidelines for those scenarios are available.

For nighttime lighting, **Mitigation Measure 4.A-4a** is recommended to apply specific guidelines that address lighting of the night sky and to reduce the nighttime lighting effects that would occur under each of the four Project Site development scenarios.

Mitigation

Mitigation Measure 4.A-4a: All development within the Project Site shall comply with the following lighting design standards in order to minimize project lighting to the extent required for safety and comfort only in order to reduce nighttime lighting effects:

Mitigation Measure Applicability by Scenario			
DSP	**DSP-V**	**CPP**	**CPP-V**
✓	✓	✓	✓
✓ = measure applies - = measure does not apply			

- Limit light spill across the property lines, such that illumination at the property line of any use within the Project Site that is attributable to the subject property does not exceed 0.1 foot-candles on business properties and 0.05 foot-candles on residential properties and open space areas. Onsite lighting of site-specific development within the Project Site shall result in zero direct-beam illumination leaving the site.
- Street lighting shall be comprised of shorter, pedestrian-scaled fixtures, rather than tall cobra head fixtures.
- Laser source lights and searchlights, and any other high-intensity light for outdoor advertising or entertainment used to attract attention to commercial activities or community events, shall be prohibited.
- Light fixtures that produce a warm light and focus the light downward onto the pedestrian zone shall be selected.
- Exterior lighting shall be kept to the minimum required for safety; purely decorative lighting displays shall be prohibited.
- All parking lot, recreational area, walkway, and trail lighting shall have no light emitted above 90 degrees.
- Project lighting shall be designed to control light energy and ensure that exterior lighting is directed downward and away from adjacent streets and buildings in a manner designed to minimize offsite light spillage.
- A master plan for street and parking lot lighting shall be approved by the City prior to final approval of design plans for roadways within the Brisbane portion of the Project Site.
    - All streets within the Brisbane portion of the Project Site shall have uniform lighting standards with regard to style, colors, and materials in order to ensure consistency with design.
    - Parking lot lighting shall be of the same source of illumination as street lighting so as to ensure uniformity of night lighting color.
    - Due to their high energy efficiency, long life, and spectral characteristics, Narrow-Spectrum Amber LEDs shall be the preferred illumination source throughout the Brisbane portion of the Project Site.

- A photometric analysis and lighting plan shall be prepared for each development project. The photometric analysis shall include an assessment of potential lighting impacts based on the height, location, light fixtures, direction, illumination intensity, and hours of operation. This analysis shall identify any potential light spill beyond the boundary of the specific plan, as well as light spill beyond the boundaries of individual sites within the Project Site Lighting performance standards as described above shall apply. The lighting plan shall demonstrate maintenance, to the maximum extent feasible, of ambient light levels as measured from 100 feet from the individual site. The lighting plan shall be submitted to the Community Development Department and City Engineer for final approval prior to approval of a building permit.

Conclusion with Mitigation: Implementation of **Mitigation Measure 4.A-4a** would not reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level for the Project Site development. The impact would remain significant after mitigation, primarily given the level of nighttime lighting levels typical of the proposed uses (especially the entertainment-oriented uses proposed in the DSP-V scenario that would involve prominent, lighted displays), compared to the minimal nighttime lighting that currently exists on the Project Site, and the existence of nearby surrounding nighttime-light-sensitive uses (residences) that would be affected. Therefore, after implementation of **Mitigation Measure 4.A-4a**, this impact would be significant unavoidable for all four development scenarios.

Daytime Glare

Glare can cause daytime interference with activities at sensitive land use areas. The Project Site currently contains mainly soil cover and vegetation. As a result, the Project Site's albedo, or percent reflectivity, ranges from 0.17 in soil-covered areas to 0.20 in grass-covered areas (see further discussion of the albedo concept under "Assessment Methodology" above).

Project Site development would change the overall solar reflectivity, or glare, of the Project Site and result in new sources of daytime glare. While the new development resulting from the CPP and CPP-V scenarios would be less intense than that proposed under the DSP or DSP-V scenarios, Project Site development would increase daytime glare from new building materials, exterior glass, and roofing materials with a high solar reflectivity index, as discussed below. New materials including asphalt, trees, concrete paving, and buildings (roofing) would replace the existing soil and grass cover. Building and site materials would have the greatest impact on solar reflectivity and ultimate glare from new development. In particular, use of "cool" roofing materials to reduce heat island effect and increase building energy efficiency would result in higher albedo and glare, often up to four times that of grass or soil. For instance, the United States Environmental Protection Agency Energy Star rating for cool roofs is up to 0.65 for slightly sloped surfaces. Exterior building surfaces, including glass, also would increase reflectivity of the sun during daytime hours.

In addition to building and site materials, solar panels can also increase glare during daytime hours compared to existing conditions. However, as previously discussed under "Impact Methodology" above, solar panels on the Project Site would absorb visible light and would not be a substantial source of glare. Moreover, the panels would be located in the middle portion of the

Project Site and would be blocked from visibility from drivers on US Highway 101 by mature trees and other vegetation. The relatively small scale of solar energy development possible on the proposed 19-acre solar farm in the DSP and DSP-V scenarios would not substantially contribute to the increase of daytime glare that could adversely affect daytime views.

Overall, a substantial amount of new development would occur on the Project Site (as illustrated in Table 4.A-1). New buildings and structures would include highly finished surfaces that could be seen from nearby US Highway 101, air traffic, and nearby residential neighborhoods, causing a substantial increase in glare. The glare resulting from Project Site development could adversely affect motorists along US Highway 101 by impairing vision, as well as produce nuisance effects in adjacent residential neighborhoods to the north of the Project Site and (in the DSP and DSP-V scenarios) residential neighborhoods of the Project Site itself.

Conclusion: Project Site development would create new sources of substantial daytime glare in proximity to US Highway 101, residential neighborhoods, and air traffic, impairing the safety of motorists and pilots and resulting in nuisance effects within neighborhoods. Thus, for daytime glare, implementation of design features and locational/orientation review required by **Mitigation Measure 4.A-4b** is recommended.

Mitigation

Mitigation Measure 4.A-4b: All building exteriors within the Project Site shall be composed of textured and other non-reflective materials, including high-performance tinted non-mirrored glass. Reflective materials on building exteriors that have a light reflectivity factor greater than 30 percent shall be limited to less than 50 percent of any wall area.

Mitigation Measure Applicability by Scenario			
DSP	**DSP-V**	**CPP**	**CPP-V**
✓	✓	✓	✓
✓ = measure applies - = measure does not apply			

Conclusion with Mitigation: With the inclusion of **Mitigation Measure 4.A-4b**, this impact would be less than significant for all Project development scenarios.

Overall Conclusion

With the inclusion of **Mitigation Measure 4.A-4a**, impacts related to a substantial increase in nighttime lighting would be significant unavoidable under all Project Site development scenarios. With the inclusion of **Mitigation Measure 4.A-4b**, impacts related to a substantial increase in daytime glare would be less than significant under all Project Site development scenarios.

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