

4.1 AESTHETICS

This section analyzes impacts of the proposed project related to aesthetics based on a visual assessment conducted as part of the preparation of this EIR. The assessment includes preparation of photo simulations developed by local architect, Leif Rideout, which graphically depict potential new development on the Santa Cruz Wharf.

This section also draws from the City of Santa Cruz *General Plan 2030* EIR (SCH#2009032007), which was certified on June 26, 2012, regarding background information on aesthetics and scenic views. The General Plan EIR is available for review at the City of Santa Cruz Planning and Community Development Department (809 Center Street, Room 101, Santa Cruz, California) during business hours: Monday through Thursday, 7:30 AM to 12 PM and 1 PM to 3 PM. The General Plan EIR is also available online on the City's website at: <http://www.cityofsantacruz.com/Home/Components/BusinessDirectory/BusinessDirectory/102/1775>.

Public and agency comments related to visual impacts were received during the public scoping period in response to the Notice of Preparation (NOP). Issues raised in these comments include:

- Assessment of impacts on scenic views of Monterey Bay and impact on views of the Wharf from Main Beach, Cowell Beach, and East Cliff and West Cliff Drives and from existing Wharf restaurants as a result of construction of: three new public space buildings that include heights of up to 45 feet; the East Promenade expansion; and the Westside Walkway, as well as infill of existing commercial areas.
- Potential adverse impacts of a new 45-foot tall building at the end of the Wharf, including lighting and potential blockage of ocean views.
- Assessment of potential significant visual impacts related to the new entry gate, the gate sign's height and span and aesthetics of steel piles instead of traditional wood piles.

To the extent that issues identified in public comments involve potentially significant effects on the environment according to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and/or are raised by responsible agencies, they are identified and addressed within this EIR. Public comments received during the public scoping period are included in Appendix A.

4.1.1 Environmental Setting

Regulatory Setting

There are no known federal regulations regarding aesthetics or project design review. City regulations and permits related to development and design are summarized in the following section.

City Regulations and Permits

The Santa Cruz Wharf is zoned Beach Commercial (CB) in the City Municipal Code. Development in this zone is limited to a height of 3 stories and 40 feet for commercial and mixed-used projects. The Zoning Code (Municipal Code section 24.22.162) defines building height as the vertical distance from average grade to the average midpoint of the highest pitched roof. Section 24.12.150 of the Zoning Code indicates that the height limitations do not apply to roof structures for the housing of elevators, stairways, tanks, ventilating fans, air conditioning, or similar equipment used solely to operate and maintain a building.

The City's Zoning Code requires a "design permit" for most new construction in the City of Santa Cruz, including new construction of commercial structures. The purpose of the design permit is to promote the public health, safety and general welfare through the review of architectural and site development proposals and through application of recognized principles of design, planning and aesthetics and qualities typifying the Santa Cruz community. Pursuant to the Design Permit requirements (Zoning Code Section 24.08.430), findings must be made that address 17 identified criteria before the City issues a design permit. Some of the criteria to be addressed in findings for a Design Permit include: consistency with General Plan and Local Coastal Program (LCP) policies; compatible exterior design and appearance with other existing buildings and structures in neighborhoods which have established architectural character worthy of preservation; maintaining a balance of scale, form and proportion, using design components which are harmonious, and materials and colors which blend with elements of the site plan and surrounding areas; protection of views along the ocean and of scenic coastal areas; encouraging alternatives to automobile travel by automobile where appropriate, through the provision of facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit; and provision of complementary signs.

Regional Setting

The visual character of the City of Santa Cruz is influenced by a blend of natural features, historic neighborhoods and other development. Santa Cruz is strongly characterized by its coastal location along Monterey Bay, which defines the city's entire southern boundary. Open space areas, including those that make up the City's greenbelt, also are significant contributors to Santa Cruz's natural setting. The Santa Cruz Mountains and its foothills on the north provide a backdrop of open space views and offer panoramic views of the City and ocean (City of Santa Cruz, April 2012, DEIR volume). Key natural and open space features include:

- The coastline and beaches,
- The San Lorenzo River and other watercourses, parks and open space, and
- The background view of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

According to the City's General Plan, varied topography shapes the city's character and creates many public views throughout the community, including views of Monterey Bay and the City as a

whole. Arroyos and steep coastal cliffs are identified as providing the greatest variation in the City’s topography. Other features include pronounced hills—most notably the coastal terraces of the UCSC campus, Pogonip, the Carbonera area, and DeLaveaga Park; smaller hills—such as Beach Hill and Mission Hill—act as community landmarks; and shallow slopes toward Monterey Bay (City of Santa Cruz, June 2012). Ridgelines along Escalona Drive and Grandview Street mark significant changes of elevation.

Open space areas, including those that make up the City’s Greenbelt, are significant contributors to Santa Cruz’s natural setting and aesthetic quality. Pogonip, DeLaveaga Park, Arana Gulch, Neary Lagoon, Younger Lagoon, Antonelli Pond, Arroyo Seco Canyon, the Moore Creek Preserve, and the Jessie Street Marsh are identified in the General Plan as being important natural features that provide scenic amenities and contribute to the identity of surrounding residential neighborhoods (City of Santa Cruz, June 2012).

Visual Character of the Project Area and Wharf

The Santa Cruz Wharf is located within the developed commercial beach area of the City. The Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk is located to the east of the Wharf, and numerous hotels, motels and other commercial development are found along Beach Street. The multi-use West Cliff path, Lighthouse Field State Park, and Lighthouse Point are situated to the west of the Wharf.

The visual character of the surrounding area is characterized by a mix of developed and undeveloped lands with Monterey Bay being a prominent natural and visual feature in the area. The bay surrounds the Wharf, and public beaches are located on both sides of the Wharf; the city-owned Main Beach is on the east and Cowell Beach is on the west. The Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk to the east side of the Wharf is the prominent development in the area. The Boardwalk and its many rides, including the “Giant Dipper” rollercoaster, is illuminated every night between May and September and weekends and holidays during the rest of the year. There is a mix of visitor serving and commercial uses along Beach Street. The Dream Inn, located on a coastal bluff along West Cliff Drive west of the Wharf, is a visually prominent structure in the area due to its 10-story height.

The Santa Cruz Wharf structure is characterized by its linear form that extends approximately 2,700 feet into Monterey Bay where it turns to the west for a distance of approximately 500 feet. Commercial buildings line the majority of the western side of the Wharf, and the Wharf road and paved parking areas dominate the remainder of the Wharf. Most buildings on the northern landward half of the Wharf are older one-story buildings. A combination of one- and two-story buildings exists in the southern portion of the Wharf with the one-story Dolphin building at the end of the Wharf. Existing two-story structures on the Wharf reach a height of approximately 27 feet. The Wharf’s 27-foot tall pile driver can be seen near the northern portion of the Wharf. Views from the Wharf are dominated by the Main Beach, Boardwalk and existing development to the east, and the tree-lined West Cliff and development to the west. Monterey Bay is the prominent

visual feature from all locations on the Wharf with distant Santa Cruz Mountains visible to the east.

The Wharf currently has a system of light fixtures along the pedestrian walkways, roadway, and parking area. According to City staff, existing lighting on the Wharf consists of 83 pedestrian lights and 32 street lights for a total of 115 existing lights that stand between 14 feet tall (pedestrian lights) and 22 feet tall (street lights). All light fixtures are hooded. The approximate street light poles are spaced at intervals of approximately 100 feet. The 14-foot tall pedestrian walkway light poles are spaced at approximate 50-foot intervals. These light fixtures are located on the western edge of the Wharf from the parking gates to approximately 1,100 feet; along the entire eastern edge; along an approximate 1,800-foot long strip internally next to the business facades; and, another 400-foot strip within the East Parking Lot. Other lighting consists of building façade lighting along the sidewalk adjacent to the buildings.

Existing light fixtures include LED lights that are rated at 3100 lumens for the street light fixtures and 1875 lumens for pedestrian lights. Existing building lights are generally in the range of 900-1025 lumens each. The hooded lights provide downward illumination with little illumination of adjacent bay waters. The 2014 Wharf Engineering Report notes that the Santa Cruz Wharf is clearly identified on nautical navigation charts, is well lit, and has two “obstruction” lights on each corner of the end.

The Santa Cruz Wharf is prominently visible from a number of locations along West Cliff Drive and the adjacent Main and Cowell Beaches, as well as from the edge of the small park on top of San Lorenzo Point off of East Cliff Drive and along a short segment of East Cliff Drive. Representative views of the Wharf from West Cliff and East Cliff Drive are shown on Figure 4.1-1¹. As shown, the Views from West Cliff Drive feature the Wharf as a linear feature framed by Monterey Bay in the foreground. The Boardwalk, other development and distant treeline and mountains form the background view. The Boardwalk, especially the Coconut Grove, Giant Dipper roller coaster and other rides, is a prominent visual feature in the background of the northern portion of the Wharf as seen from West Cliff Drive. The distant Santa Cruz Mountains provide a prominent background view, and the distant Monterey Peninsula at the southern end of Monterey is visible beyond the end of the Wharf. Existing motels and homes in the beach area and Beach Hill also are visible on the north side of the Wharf.

From East Cliff Drive and San Lorenzo Point off of East Cliff Drive, the Wharf also has a linear appearance framed by the Monterey Bay in the foreground and distant tree cover and larger homes along West Cliff Drive in the background. From this viewpoint, closer views of the Boardwalk and the tall Dream Inn are prominent visual features.

¹ All figures are included in Chapter 7 at the end of the document for ease of reference as some figures are referenced in multiple sections.

Views of the Wharf from Main Beach and Cowell Beach range from close-up views where only the nearest portion of the Wharf is visible to longer-range views from the far ends of each beach.

Scenic Views

The project site consists of the Santa Cruz Wharf. Maps developed for the City's *General Plan 2030* and included in the General Plan EIR identify the Wharf as being within a mapped panoramic view as seen from West Cliff Drive (City of Santa Cruz, April 2012-DEIR volume). Panoramic views are also mapped along East Cliff in the LCP (Map CD-3) and from a small park on San Lorenzo Point above the San Lorenzo River mouth, from which the Wharf is visible. According to the City's LCP and General Plan EIR maps, 360-degree panoramic views are available at the end of the Wharf that include the Monterey Bay to the east, south and west and nearshore development and distant mountains to the north. Representative views of the Wharf from West Cliff Drive and from East Cliff Drive are shown on Figure 4.1-1.

Within the City of Santa Cruz, prominent scenic views are primarily those that are oriented toward Monterey Bay and the Pacific Ocean or toward the Santa Cruz Mountains that frame the northern boundary of Santa Cruz (City of Santa Cruz, April 2012, DEIR volume). There are no designated scenic highways or roads within the City. The General Plan 2030 defines a scenic highway or scenic route as "a highway, road, drive, or street that, in addition to its transportation function, provides opportunities for the enjoyment of natural and man-made scenic resources and access or direct views to areas or scenes of exceptional beauty or historic or cultural interest." West Cliff Drive, East Cliff Drive and Bay Street are identified as scenic drives in the LCP.

Scenic Resources

The Wharf is a prominent feature of the Santa Cruz waterfront. According to maps developed for the City's *General Plan 2030* and included in the General Plan EIR, the Wharf is identified as a "visual landmark". Landmarks are distinctive built and natural features that are highly visible or that help to define the identity of a particular place (City of Santa Cruz, April 2012-DEIR volume). In addition to historical landmarks as discussed in Section 4.3, Cultural Resources, the General Plan 2030 defines "landmark" as a "visually prominent or outstanding structure or natural feature that functions as a point of orientation or identification." The Giant Dipper roller coaster at the Boardwalk (and/or Boardwalk), Depot Park and Lighthouse Point also are identified as visual landmarks in the General Plan. The City's LCP identifies "visually distinctive structures" (Map CD-3). In the project area, the Giant Dipper at the Boardwalk and the Dream Inn are identified as "visually distinctive structures" in the LCP.

The Wharf does not contain trees nor is it located adjacent to a state-designated scenic highway. It is visible from some segments of West Cliff and East Cliff Drives, which are identified as scenic drives in the City's LCP. The project site is located adjacent to Monterey Bay, which is considered a scenic resource.

4.1.2 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Thresholds of Significance

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); State CEQA Guidelines (including Appendix G); City of Santa Cruz plans, policies and/or guidelines; and agency and professional standards, a project impact would be considered significant if the project would:

- AES-1 Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- AES-2 Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, or historic buildings within a state scenic highway, or visually prominent trees or historic-landmark buildings in other locations within the City;
- AES-3 In non-urbanized area, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings, or, if the project is in an urbanized area, conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality; or
- AES-4 Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Analytical Method

The analysis reviews potential visual impacts based on visual assessments conducted for this EIR. Photo simulations were prepared by local architect, Leif Rideout, to show existing views and views with development recommended in the Wharf Master Plan.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The following analysis assesses impacts on scenic views (AES-1), scenic resources (AES-2), the visual character of the site and surrounding area (AES-3), and light and glare (AES-4).

Impact AES-1: Scenic Views. Implementation of the Wharf Master Plan and future development accommodated by the Wharf Master Plan would not have a substantial adverse effect or obstruct a visually prominent or significant scenic vista (AES-1). This is considered a *less-than-significant* impact.

Adoption and implementation of the Wharf Master Plan and future construction of new facilities, including construction of the two near-term planned projects – relocation of the Entry Gate and construction of the East Promenade – would result in new structural development, but would not eliminate, obstruct or substantially adversely affect a scenic view. Therefore, potential impacts to scenic views would be *less than significant* as explained below.

Wharf Master Plan

Adoption and implementation of the Wharf Master Plan would result in expansion of the Wharf with the East Promenade, two new boat landings, new structural development that includes three new public use buildings, infill and second story expansion of existing buildings near the Events Pavilion as recommended in the Master Plan, and potential expansion of the Lifeguard Headquarters. The Master Plan also recognizes potential expansion of existing buildings to include rooftop dining and upper floor commercial uses. New development would be located on the west side of the Wharf where existing buildings are located. Figure 3-3 in Chapter 3, Project Description, shows a model of the Wharf with the three new buildings: the Gateway Building near the proposed relocated entry, the Events Pavilion, and the Landmark Building at the end of the Wharf. An artist rendering from the Wharf Master Plan of the Landmark Building from the end of the Wharf, which includes background views of the Boardwalk, is shown on Figure 4.1-2. The Wharf Master Plan also includes a new stepped overlook at the end of the Wharf that would enhance access and views of the bay at the end of the Wharf.

Views from the Wharf are considered panoramic views, and the Wharf is within panoramic views as seen from West Cliff Drive and East Cliff Drive. Some of the buildings and improvements proposed in the Master Plan would be visible from these areas. Figures 4-1-3A and 4.1-3B provide representative views from West Cliff Drive that depict existing views and views with new development on the Wharf. As shown, new structural development would not alter the foreground views of the ocean or background views of the Boardwalk. Distant mountain views as seen behind the Wharf would be maintained as seen from West Cliff and East Cliff Drives, although a limited portion of the distant view may be obscured by the planned Landmark Building in some locations along West Cliff Drive. The new buildings would not obscure or change the prominent views of the bay that are visible in the foreground and to the south of the Wharf.

Figures 4-1-4A and 4.1-4B provide representative views from East Cliff Drive that depict existing views and views with new development on the Wharf. From East Cliff Drive, new and/or infill structures would not obscure or change the prominent views of the bay that are visible in the foreground and to the south of the Wharf. From this vantage point, the Monterey Bay, Main Beach, Wharf, Boardwalk and Dream Inn and other structural development are prominent visual features with tree canopies framing part of the background view. New structural development would slightly obscure a distant narrow view of the ocean as seen from San Lorenzo Point due to construction of the proposed Landmark Building. However, this would not be considered a substantial change as the predominant ocean views that are in front of the Wharf and to the south and southeast are the dominant features of the scenic views in this location and would not be substantially altered. Existing views of the bay/ocean beyond the Wharf are already obstructed by the Wharf and its structures, and the minimal increase in visual obstruction from the East Cliff Drive viewpoint would be minimal in relation to the existing views and would not result in a substantial adverse change.

Therefore, new or expanded buildings would not block or obstruct scenic views of the surrounding Monterey Bay and views toward the shoreline as seen from the vantage points along the Wharf. The proposed new “Landmark Building” at the end of the Wharf would not substantially block scenic views of the shore and distant mountains as seen looking toward the front of the Wharf as views would be available along the remainder of the Wharf. The existing Wharf and structures thereon already present visual obstructions, and the new development represents a minor and less-than-significant increase in visual obstructions, especially when considering the small area of obstruction when compared to the panoramic ocean views at most locations.

Near-Term Projects

Entry Gate Relocation. The proposed relocation of the Wharf entry gate would move the gate approximately 540 feet south onto the Wharf from its current location with construction of new gate and sign. The entrance gate would be constructed with six steel piles that span the Wharf width with roll-down transparent metal gates. The structure would have a narrow profile and would be transparent. The gate structure would be approximately 18 feet in height, and the gate height is similar to the height of the existing 22-foot tall light poles on the Wharf. A future Wharf sign potentially could add another six to eight feet in height on top of the gate.

The proposed new entry gate and sign would be most visible in the vicinity of the structure. From scenic vista points along West Cliff Drive, the narrow profile and height of the entrance gate would be difficult to distinguish from other surrounding development and the distant views of the Boardwalk rides as shown on the photo simulations presented in Figure 4.1-3A. This would also be true from East Cliff drive where the entrance gate would blend in with the other Wharf and background development, including the Dream Inn which is a prominent visual feature from this vantage point as shown on Figure and 4.1-4B. In either case, the new entrance gate and future sign would not eliminate, obstruct or substantially alter a scenic view. The prominent foreground bay views, sweeping bay views south of the Wharf, and background distant views, including those of identified “visual landmarks” would be unaffected by this planned improvement. Therefore, proposed near-term construction of the relocated entrance gate and sign would not result in a substantial adverse impact to a scenic view. The aesthetic impact of the new gate and sign upon the visual character of the surrounding area is assessed below in the Impact AES-3 discussion.

East Promenade. Construction of the East Promenade would result in expansion of the Wharf surface laterally by approximately 26 to 30 feet to the east at a slightly higher elevation than the existing Wharf surface. No structures would be sited on the promenade, although a new Small Boat Landing would be developed at the northern end at some unknown future date as would a Large Vessel Landing. The promenade would not affect scenic views from the Wharf and would expand public access and viewing on the east side of the Wharf. The promenade would not be visible from West Cliff Drive and would have no effects from this location. From East Cliff Drive, the eastward expansion would appear at the same height as the existing Wharf and would not block views of the bay. Therefore, proposed near-term construction of the East Promenade would not result in a substantial adverse impact to a scenic view.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required as a significant impact has not been identified.

Impact AES-2: Scenic Resources. Implementation of the Wharf Master Plan and future development accommodated by the Wharf Master Plan would not substantially damage or adversely affect a scenic resource (AES-2). This is considered a *less-than-significant* impact.

Master Plan

Adoption and implementation of the Wharf Master Plan and future construction of proposed facilities and buildings would not remove a scenic resource. The Wharf does not contain trees nor is it located adjacent to a state-designated scenic highway. The project site is located adjacent to Monterey Bay, which can be considered a scenic resource.

The Wharf itself is considered a visual landmark in the City’s General Plan, and it is a prominent feature of the Santa Cruz waterfront. However, there would be no removal or demolition of the Wharf structure. The development and improvements recommended in the Wharf Master Plan would enhance public access, including expansion of the Wharf that would result in a new open space area for public access and recreational use. As indicated in the Impact AES-1 discussion, some of the buildings and improvements proposed in the Master Plan would be visible from public areas where the Wharf is visible, such as West Cliff and East Cliff Drives and beaches adjacent to the Wharf, but implementation of future development would not result in adverse impacts to scenic views. The aesthetic impact of new structures on the visual character of the Wharf and surrounding area is assessed in the Impact AES-3 discussion, but as discussed would not result in a substantial degradation of the visual character of the area including the Wharf itself. Therefore, none of the improvements recommended in the Master Plan would damage the Wharf in an adverse way, and the project would not result in an impact to a scenic resource.

At some viewpoints along East Cliff Drive, new structural development would slightly obscure distant views of the Lighthouse at Lighthouse Point due to construction of the proposed Events Pavilion. Lighthouse Point is identified as a “visual landmark” on maps developed for the City’s *General Plan 2030* and included in the General Plan EIR. However, the distant view of the Lighthouse and Lighthouse Point would be blocked from very limited viewpoints, and distant views of the Lighthouse and Lighthouse Point would remain available at other locations along East Cliff Drive and in the surrounding area.

Future development on the Wharf would not affect visibility of other visual landmarks in the vicinity. None of the planned structures on the Wharf would obstruct views of the roller coaster or Boardwalk. Depot Park is not within the viewshed of the Wharf.

Therefore, the Wharf Master Plan would not result in a substantial adverse impact to a scenic resource.

Near-Term Projects

Entry Gate Relocation. The proposed relocation of the Wharf entry gate would move the gate approximately 540 feet south onto the Wharf from its current location with construction of new gate and sign. The structure would have a narrow profile and would be transparent. The gate structure would be approximately 18 feet in height, which is similar to the height of the existing 22-foot tall parking lot light fixtures on the Wharf. A future Wharf sign potentially could add another six to eight feet in height on top of the gate. The proposed new entry gate and sign would be most visible in the vicinity of the structure, but would not be highly visible from distant viewpoints as discussed in Impact AES-1. The relocated entrance gate would have no effect on a scenic resource.

East Promenade. Construction of the East Promenade would result in expansion of the Wharf surface laterally by approximately 26 to 30 feet to the east at a slightly higher elevation than the existing Wharf surface. No structures would be sited on the East Promenade, although a new Small Boat Landing at the northern end and the South Landing are proposed in the Wharf Master Plan. The promenade would expand the Wharf, an identified landmark in the City's General Plan, but as discussed in the Impact AES-3 analysis, this expansion would not result in a substantial degradation of the visual character of the surrounding area. Therefore, proposed near-term construction of the East Promenade would not result in a substantial adverse impact to a scenic resource.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required as a significant impact has not been identified.

Impact AES-3: Visual Character of the Surrounding Area. Implementation of the Wharf Master Plan would result in future expansion and new development on the Santa Cruz Wharf, but would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality (AES-3). This is considered a *less-than-significant impact*.

As explained below, the planned improvements would not be out of scale with the surrounding area and would not substantially degrade the visual character of the surrounding area as explained in the following section.

Master Plan

Adoption and implementation of the Wharf Master Plan would result in expansion of the Wharf by approximately 2.5 acres with creation of the East Promenade and Westside Walkway. New structural development includes three new public use buildings, the East Promenade, two new

boat landings, and potential expansion/infill of existing structures. The potential impacts of the proposed Entry Gate Relocation and East Promenade are discussed in the next section. The addition and replacement of piles and the potential new refuse/recycling disposal system under the Wharf would not be highly visible, except from the Westside Walkway that is planned at a lower elevation than the existing deck. The new timber support piles have the same appearance as the existing Wharf structural elements and would not adversely affect the visual quality of the surrounding area.

The City of Santa Cruz is an “urbanized area” under the definition of the term in CEQA Guidelines section 15387. Therefore, the standard of review is whether or not a project would conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. Applicable regulations include height limits established in the zoning ordinance, requirements for approval of a Design Permit, and existing LCP Design Guidelines for the Wharf.

The Wharf is located within the Beach Commercial (CB) zone district. This district has a building height limit of 40 feet and three stories. The Wharf Master Plan Design Standards identify an overall building height of 35 feet on the Wharf, except the three new buildings may be up to 45 feet in height. The 35-foot height limit is below the 40-foot height limit allowed in the CB zone district in which the Wharf is located. However, the 45-foot height limit for the three new buildings is slightly higher than the 40-foot permitted height limit. Although height limits in the zoning ordinance are not established strictly in regard to governing scenic quality, the slightly higher heights for the three new buildings would be considered a conflict with existing regulations. However, the City’s zoning ordinance also allows variations to heights and other development standards under specified situations and with approval of a Planned Development Permit. Pursuant to section 24.08.720 of the zoning ordinance in the City’s Municipal Code, variations to height may be allowed, but not to exceed one story or twenty percent of height (in feet) over and above regulations established in district regulations for the district in which the project is proposed. Under these provisions, heights of up to 48 feet could be permitted in the CB district with approval of a Planned Development Permit for the three new buildings recommended in the Master Plan. Therefore, potential conflicts related to height limits would not be considered significant.

The CB district regulations also require that all development be in compliance with adopted Design Guidelines. The City’s LCP includes Design Criteria for the Wharf with the intent to “ensure that all development on the Wharf contributes to making it a unique and special place.” The criteria generally address architectural designs and colors, as well second story development, protection of views, and other features of the Wharf. The LCP Design Criteria call for a distinctive and coherent architectural “vocabulary” for the Wharf, use of light and bright colors, providing views through interiors of new buildings, and improved lighting. The Design Criteria also encourages neon signs and calls for establishment of a distinctive lighting scheme. Roof decks are allowed, and the Design Criteria calls for construction of a “visually-prominent theme building” near the end of the Wharf. The Wharf Master Plan includes Design Guidelines that provide refinement and more details on specific building and storefront design elements. Therefore, the proposed Master

Plan recommendations are consistent with existing and proposed design guidelines, including location of a prominent building at the end of the Wharf as is proposed in the Master Plan.

Future development would also be subject to approval of a Design Permit. One of the findings set forth in section 24.08.430 of the City’s zoning ordinance for approval of a Design Permit is that the site plan shall be situated and designed to protect views along the ocean and of scenic coastal areas. As discussed in Impact AES-1, future development accommodated by the Master Plan, including the three new public use buildings, would not result in significant impacts to existing scenic views. Section 24.08.250 also requires a finding with approval of a coastal permit that a development will maintain views between the sea and the first public roadway parallel to the sea. Future development projects would not be located between a road and the ocean, thus not resulting in conflicts with existing regulations.

Therefore, the project would not conflict with regulations governing scenic quality, and the impact would be considered less than significant. However, the City also considered whether new development accommodated by the Wharf Master Plan would substantially degrade the visual character of the Wharf or surrounding area, taking into account the overall structural mass, height and scale of new development. The models, renderings and conceptual plans included in the Wharf Master Plan were used to develop visual simulations of new development that were superimposed onto existing photographs. These are shown on Figures 4.1-3 through 4.1-8.

The three new buildings would be of similar massing as the existing row of buildings on the Wharf. Infill of existing buildings near the Events Pavilion and the northern end of the existing buildings would result in expanding the building mass in this area. As a result, the west side of the Wharf would essentially be lined with a row of buildings that would be buffered on each side by open areas provided by the East Promenade and Westside Walkway. The three new buildings would be taller than existing buildings, which have a maximum height of approximately 27 feet, if the new buildings are constructed to a maximum 45-foot height envisioned in the Master Plan, but would not be substantially taller than the allowed 40-foot height and would be within a potentially permitted increased height to 48 feet with approval of a Planned Development permit.

The proposed Gateway Building near the relocated Wharf entrance gate would be somewhat larger and taller than adjacent buildings on the Wharf, especially as viewed from West Cliff Drive as shown on Figure 4.1-3A. From East Cliff Drive, the building mass is somewhat diminished by the presence of other existing development in the area, especially the Dream Inn as shown on Figure 4.1-4A. The building would be visible on the Wharf and from adjacent beaches with more limited views from the existing Wharf entrance as shown Figures 4.1-5, 6, 7 and 8.

The planned Events Pavilion would be similar in height to existing two-story buildings on the Wharf and would be most visible from West Cliff Drive as shown on Figure 4.1-3B. However, the structure as well as the potential infill of the existing buildings would not generally be different than the height and mass of existing buildings. Similarly, from East Cliff Drive, the infill area adjacent to the planned Events Pavilion would be similar in height and mass of existing buildings, and the top of

the Events Pavilion, while visible, would not be a prominent visual feature in the context of other existing development. The Events Pavilion would have limited visibility from other areas, except it would be visible from Cowell Beach, but would appear as part of the existing structures.

The proposed Landmark Building at the end of the Wharf would be somewhat larger and taller than other existing buildings on the Wharf and more visually prominent given its location at the end of the Wharf, especially as seen from West Cliff Drive, East Cliff Drive and Cowell Beach. The overall massing is similar to existing development on the Wharf, but the building is somewhat taller than existing development. See Figures 4.1-3B, 4.1-4B, and 4.1-8. Views are more limited from other vantage points as shown on Figures 4.1-5, 6, and 7. Although taller than existing buildings, it is noted that the Plan's actions call for construction of the new Landmark Building reminiscent in scale and industrial form of the large warehouse structure that once was located at the bayward end of the Wharf, which is consistent with existing LCP Design Guidelines as discussed below. The former building is shown on Figure 4.3-1 in section 4.3, Cultural Resources.

The photo simulations also show potential future expansion of the existing Lifeguard Station as recommended in the Wharf Master Plan. Specific site plans have not yet been developed, but City staff has indicated that the expansion would involve either a single-story remodel or remodel with a second floor addition. For the purpose of this analysis, a second story addition in the same style as the existing building was added. As shown on Figures 4.1-3A, 4.1-4A, and 4.1-5, 6, 7 and 8, the building would be of similar size, mass and height as existing buildings on the Wharf and would not be prominently distinguishable from other existing surrounding development, especially from East Cliff Drive.

Future development supported by the Wharf Master Plan would slightly increase overall structural height and massing, but would be located in areas of existing structural development and heights would be consistent with existing zoning requirements and other development in the vicinity. New structures would not out of scale with other larger structures in the vicinity, including the Coconut Grove building at the Boardwalk or the Dream Inn. Furthermore, the positioning of the buildings will break up the mass of the structures by placing the new buildings at the beginning, center and end of the Wharf. The Events Pavilion is envisioned as having tall glass doors that could be opened for combined utilization of indoor and outdoor space, which would also reduce the appearance of structural mass for this building. The relatively small square footage of the new buildings also reduces their visual prominence and helps keep them in character with development on the Wharf and surrounding area.

The Design Standards that are included in the Wharf Master Plan provide a framework to guide future expansion and remodeling of existing structures and to provide continuity and interest in design. According to the Master Plan, these standards, which are included as Appendix B, are aimed at improving the curb appeal of businesses and the pedestrian experience, as well as providing a stronger relationship between indoor and outdoor uses with creation of high quality design. The Design Standards address building form, building height, windows, roofs, signage, storefront displays and green building design among other design elements. With implementation

of the Design Standards, development of new structures and remodeling of existing buildings could result in compatible and unified building designs with an overall improvement of the visual appearance of the Wharf.

The Master Plan provides a preliminary estimate that potential remodels and intensification within the existing commercial building footprint could result in a 20-30% increase in building space separate from the three new buildings, which would be approximately 12,000-18,000 square feet based on the existing total square feet of buildings on the Wharf. The Master Plan does not propose specific locations for potential intensification other than the two infill locations, nor is it known when such expansion and intensification may occur. This expansion could result in second floors and/or rooftop dining areas on about a third of the existing buildings. Since there are no site-specific proposals, locations or architectural styles for this potential future development, it is not possible to visually depict what this may look like. However, given the Master Plan's Design Standards, buildings would be limited to 35 feet in height, and thus, overall height, building mass, and scale would be consistent with existing structural development on the Wharf. It is also noted that potential expansion of existing structures could occur under existing conditions with or without implementation of the Master Plan.

A comment on the EIR NOP raised concerns regarding impacts on views from restaurants as a result of construction of a new Westside Walkway. The City typically does not consider impacts from private development. However, the Westside Walkway would be constructed at a lower elevation than the existing Wharf so that people would not be visible to patrons of restaurants on the Wharf. (See cross section of the walkway and adjacent development on the Wharf on Figure 3-4 in Chapter 3, Project Description.

Near-Term Projects

Entry Gate Relocation. The proposed relocation of the Wharf entrance gate would move the existing entry gates and booths approximately 540 feet further south from its current location at the landward end of the Wharf. The entrance gate would be constructed with six steel piles that span the Wharf width with roll-down transparent gates. The gate structure would be approximately 18 feet in height. The gate height is similar to, but less than, the height of existing 22-foot tall light fixtures on the Wharf and is within the height limits established in the zoning ordinance.

The gate would be most visible from the Wharf road entrance off of Beach Street and from locations in proximity to the sign. Figures 4.1-5 and 4.1-6 show views of the relocated entrance gate as seen from the existing Wharf entrance and from the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Visitor Center. As can be seen, the gate would appear as a narrow span in front of existing buildings and would be lower in height than existing light fixtures and buildings. The entrance gate would be visible from Main Beach and Cowell Beach as shown on Figures 4.1-7 and 4.1-8, but due to the open design and minimal structural features, it would not substantially degrade the visual character of the Wharf or surrounding area.

From more distance viewpoints, such as along West Cliff Drive, the gate would not be prominently visible due to its narrow width and openness in design as shown on Figure 4.1-3A. Additionally, the new entrance gate would not be easily discernible from some of the taller Boardwalk rides that are visible in the background. Similarly, from East Cliff Drive, the new entrance gate would be not be visually distinctive given surrounding views of other development with coastal bluffs in the background as shown on Figure 4.1-4A.

Six 14-inch steel piles are proposed to for structural support, but visibility would be limited to views from the beach or water. The pile size is slightly larger than the 12-inch timber piles otherwise used to support the Wharf, but would not be noticeably larger. The dark color of the steel piles, which would not be stainless steel, would not contrast or sharply differ from timber piles, and the surrounding timber piles would constitute the prominent visual feature under the Wharf, and the six steel piles would not be visually prominent among the other timber piles.

Therefore, the relocated Wharf entrance gate would not adversely degrade the visual character of the Wharf or surrounding area.

The Master Plan proposes installation of an approximate 6 to 8-foot high, seventy foot long sign at the relocated entrance gate that may read:

S A N T A C R U Z W H A R F
Gateway to Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

Although an example is provided in the Master Plan as shown on Figure 3-6 in Chapter 3 of this EIR, the Master Plan indicates that mock-ups of the proposed gateway signage, addressing size, shape, color and potential illumination, should be constructed for review before the graphic design of the sign is finalized. A Wharf entrance sign is included as part of the entry gate facility, but a design has not yet been developed or reviewed. The sign would be within the general dimensions identified in the Master Plan. When proposed, a design will be developed through a public process, taking into account the surrounding visual characteristics, to ensure that a future sign is compatible with the surrounding area. The visual simulations prepared for this EIR used a simple design to show the potential height and size of the entrance gate sign, but is only for conceptually depicting the overall size. The actual sign design will be developed and selected at a later time.

East Promenade. Development of the East Promenade would not result in construction of buildings, but would expand the Wharf’s surface by 26-30 feet to the east for enhanced public access and recreational uses. To create continuity with the bayward end, the promenade will also extend through the East Parking Lot. To do so without a loss of parking, the Wharf also will be extended eastward approximately 26 feet in this area. This expansion represents an approximate 15 to 22 percent increase in the width of the Wharf. When viewed from the edge of the Wharf as

typical from the beach or coastal bluffs, this expansion would not have a significant impact on existing views.

The wooden-decked East Promenade would be of similar scale as the current Wharf surface, and it would have a low-profile appearance as no structures are proposed. The project would expand the open space pedestrian areas of the Wharf, and would generally be blocked from view along West Cliff Drive due to existing buildings along the Wharf. From San Lorenzo Point, the extension would be on a similar plane as the existing Wharf deck and roadway and would not be highly discernable.

Below the stepped edge of the East Promenade at the bayward end of the Wharf, ten outriggers will extend 25 feet to the east at the elevation of the existing ledgers and in the same plane to provide horizontal bracing. Given the distance, these features would blend with the existing Wharf structure and would not be highly visible. These wood features would be visible from the Main Beach and East Cliff Drive, but would appear as part of the piles and structural elements of the wharf. Given the distance to East Cliff Drive, these features would blend with the existing Wharf structure and would not be highly visible. The Master Plan indicates that aesthetically, the outriggers also create an interesting intertwining of the bay and the structure of the Wharf.

Therefore, construction of the East Promenade would not adversely degrade the visual character of the Wharf or surrounding area or result in a significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures as a significant impact has not been identified.

Impact AES-4: Introduction of Light and Glare. Implementation of the Wharf Master Plan and construction of recommended structures and improvements would result in new development and lighting, but would not result in introduction of a major new source of light or glare or result in a substantial increase in lighting over existing conditions (AES-4). This is considered a *less-than-significant impact*.

Adoption and implementation of the Wharf Master Plan would result in some expansion of existing Wharf lighting that would be consistent with existing Wharf light fixtures. The project is located within a developed area with existing sources of lighting, and the limited addition of lighting would not be considered a new source of substantial light or glare. Thus, the impact would be *less than significant*.

Master Plan

Adoption and implementation of the Master Plan would result in future changes in Wharf lighting. One of the “Actions” in the Policy section is to: “Provide for a row of efficient high quality light fixtures on the east side of the parking spine and remove the light fixtures on the west side that

constrain pedestrian movement.” This action also calls for incorporation of lighting into the building frontages and storefronts for the sidewalk area.

The lighting concept for the vehicular and parking areas set forth in the Master Plan calls for the placement of light fixtures along the western edge of the East Promenade and on both sides of the parking area. This will result in the placement of 26 light fixtures every 75 feet on center and in line with the seat wall along the parking lot edge with an additional six light fixtures on the opposite side in the parking lot, for a total of 32 new light fixtures. The light fixtures will be approximately 18 feet in height, which is slightly lower than existing light poles on the Wharf, and will be the same type and intensity as existing lights.

The new lights along the East Promenade would replace the existing street lights along the eastern edge of the Wharf. Specific light locations have not been identified, but are graphically depicted in the Master Plan (see cross section in Figure 3-4); potential changes in lighting along the eastern side of the Wharf are conceptually shown on Figure 4.2-2. The proposed lighting will provide adequate lighting for the East Promenade as well as the vehicular access and parking areas, and with additional canopy lighting along the sidewalk, will eliminate the need for light fixtures on the sidewalk adjacent to commercial uses. Lighting is not anticipated along the Westside Walkway due to adequate lighting from buildings and it is not anticipated that the walkway would be accessible in evening hours. According to the Master Plan, the lighting concept is designed to protect the night sky, enhance views to the shore and highlight the commercial storefronts.

New lighting would be compatible with existing Wharf lighting and is located within an area that already has extensive nighttime lighting at the Wharf and nearby Boardwalk and other developments in the area. Therefore, implementation of the Wharf Master Plan would not result in the creation of a new source of substantial light or glare in the area. Furthermore, construction of the East Promenade will move parking lot lighting further from the edge of the Wharf along most of the eastern side of the Wharf. Limited lighting will occur along the boat ramps, and no lighting will be placed along the new Westside Walkway. Light structures adjacent to the buildings will no longer be required as they will be replaced by lights inserted into a continuous canopy adjacent to the building facades, which will direct light to the pedestrian paths only and will not be directly visible by the surrounding marine environment. The store-front pedestrian lights will be changed from overhead lamp-post type lighting to integrated and shielded lighting within the pedestrian canopies. Implementation of the other Wharf Master Plan recommendations results in the overall reduction of lights by removing lights from pedestrian areas near the buildings and lowering pedestrian lights along the eastern edge and only including smaller foot-level lights at ramp areas for safety. Interior lighting of the three new 45-foot tall building may be visible at times when there is use of the building at night, but interior would not create a substantial source of new exterior lighting. Exterior building lighting will be further reviewed as part of the Design Permit review for future site-specific buildings. Furthermore, section 24.14.266 of the City’s Municipal Code prohibits direct or sky-reflected glare from floodlights or other sources.

Therefore, the project would not result in a significant impact related to creation of a new source of substantial light or glare.

Near-Term Projects

Entry Gate Relocation. The proposed relocation of the Wharf entrance gate would move approximately 540 feet further south from its current location with construction of an approximate 18-foot tall entrance gate. The gate would span the Wharf deck and would have roll-down gates within a gate frame that would also have lighting, although the type of lighting is not specified. However, the lighting would be within the gate frame and directed downward. Given the extent of other existing lighting in the area, the new entrance gate lighting and fixtures would not create a new source of substantial light or glare in the area. As previously indicated, a sign on the entry gate is recommended in the Master Plan, but is not part of the current proposal, and will be designed and reviewed at a future time at which time potential lighting or illumination will be reviewed.

East Promenade. Future development of the East Promenade would not result in construction of buildings, but would expand the Wharf's surface further to the east for enhanced public access and recreational uses. An 18-inch high seat wall will be built along the parking side of the East Promenade to provide additional separation from the adjacent parked vehicles and an informal resting place. According to the Master Plan, new light fixtures and leaning rails that also serve as bike racks will be placed in line with the seat wall. It would be expected that new lighting along the seat wall would be the same height or lower than existing light fixtures on the Wharf and would be directed downward and shielded as is typical of these types of fixtures. Details of lighting will be provided in accordance with Master Plan provisions as part of the detailed design and building plans. As indicated above, new lighting on the Wharf would be compatible with existing Wharf lighting and is located within an area that already has extensive nighttime lighting at the Boardwalk and other developments in the area. Therefore, the construction of the East Promenade would not create a new source of substantial light or glare in the area.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required as a significant impact has not been identified.