CHAPTER 5
VISUAL RESOURCES

5.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

5.1.1 Introduction/Region of Influence

This chapter addresses visual quality issues related to the proposed projects. The visual character of the project area is described, and potentially sensitive visual resources are identified. In addition, local policies relating to the maintenance of visual quality are summarized. The ROI for the visual resources analysis encompasses the bluff and beach portion of the project area, as well as those portions of the adjacent residential area and Monterey Bay viewshed, visible in the line-of-site of the proposed projects.

5.1.2 Regulatory Considerations

Chapter 5, Conservation and Open Space Element of the 1994 General Plan and LCP for Santa Cruz County (Santa Cruz County 1994b), contains objectives and policies associated with visual resources to which the proposed projects would be subject. The major policies and objectives are summarized below.

Objective 5.10a Protection of Visual Resources

Identify, protect, and restore the aesthetic values of visual resources.

Objective 5.10b New Development in Visual Resource Areas

Ensure that development is appropriately designed and constructed to have minimal to no adverse impact on identified visual resources.

Policy 5.10.1 Designation of Visual Resources

Designate on the General Plan and LCP resources maps and define visual resources as areas having regional public importance for their natural beauty. These include the following areas: vistas from designated scenic roads, Coastal Special Scenic Areas, and unique hydrologic, geologic, and paleontologic features.

Policy 5.10.2 Development Within Visual Resource Areas

Recognize that visual resources of Santa Cruz County possess diverse characteristics and that resources worthy of protection may include . . . ocean views . . . . Require projects to be evaluated against the context of their unique environment and regulate structure height, setbacks and design to protect these resources consistent with the objectives and policies of this section . . . .

Policy 5.10.3 Protection of Public Vistas

Protect significant public vistas, as described in Policy 5.10.2, from all publicly used roads and vista points by minimizing disruption of landform and aesthetic character caused by grading operations, timber harvests, utility wires and poles, signs, inappropriate landscaping, and structure design. Provide necessary landscaping to screen development that is unavoidably sited within these vistas.

Policy 5.10.6 Preserving Ocean Vistas

Where public ocean vistas exist, require that these vistas be retained to the maximum extent possible as a condition of approval for any development.

Policy 5.10.7 Open Beaches and Bluff Tops

Prohibit the placement of new permanent structures that would be visible from a public beach, except where allowed on existing parcels of record, or for shoreline protection and for public beach access. Use the following criteria for allowed structures:

(a) Allow infill structures (typically, residences on existing lots of record) where compatible with the pattern of existing development.

(b) Require shoreline protection and access structures to use natural materials and finishes to blend with the character of the area and to integrate with the landform.

Policy 5.10.10 Designation of Scenic Roads

East Cliff Drive from 33rd Avenue to 41st Avenue is valued for its vistas. The public vistas from roads and highways valued for their vistas shall be afforded the highest level of protection.

Policy 5.10.12 Development Visible from Urban Scenic Roads

In the viewsheds of urban scenic roads, require new discretionary development to improve the visual quality through siting, architectural design, landscaping, and appropriate signage.

Policy 5.10.13 Landscaping Requirements

All grading and land disturbance projects visible from scenic roads shall conform to the following visual mitigation conditions:

- Blend contours of the finished surface with the adjacent natural terrain and landscape to achieve a smooth transition and natural appearance; and

- Incorporate only characteristic or indigenous plant species appropriate for the area.

Policy 5.10.18 Signs Visible from Scenic Roads

Actively discourage the placement of signs that would be visible from scenic roads; where allowed, require strict compliance with the county sign ordinance to minimize disruption of the natural scenic qualities of the viewshed. Give priority to sign abatement programs for scenic roads.

5.1.3 Significant Visual Features, Scenic Corridors, and Public Views/Vistas

Significant visual features at the project area are the Pacific Ocean (Monterey Bay) and the adjacent beach and coastal bluff. The Santa Cruz Mountains also are an important background visual feature.

A scenic corridor is associated with a road that has been designated by either Caltrans or a local agency, such as Santa Cruz County, as being a scenic highway or road. Scenic highways are recognized as having exceptional scenic qualities or as affording panoramic views. As stated above, Policy 5.10.10 of the General Plan designates East Cliff Drive from 33rd Avenue to 41st Avenue as a "County Scenic Road." The adjacent area also is considered an important coastal scenic resource in the General Plan. East Cliff Drive is the only significant stretch of coastal bluff in the Live Oak area that offers a continuous, unobstructed view of Monterey Bay. No roads in the project area are listed as eligible or are officially designated as scenic highways by Caltrans (Caltrans 2001).

Public views and vistas are areas that provide the public with clear, panoramic views of significant regional features, such as the Pacific Ocean. Important visual features include beaches, waterways, mountains, or pastoral lands that comprise the overall visual essence of a region. The length of the project area offers exceptional public views and vistas and, because East Cliff Drive is designated as a "County Scenic Road," public vistas along this road are afforded the highest level of protection. The General Plan also specifically designates Pleasure Point Park and The Hook, including both the overlook and parking area, as coastal priority sites to preserve coastal access and views. The proposed Sanctuary Scenic Trail also designates the Pleasure Point Park site, the area near 35th Avenue, and The Hook area as minor or major interpretive and viewing sites for Monterey Bay.

5.1.4 Visual Landscape

The project area is in the central California coast region. The visual elements of the area include both natural and developed features. Monterey Bay (the Pacific Ocean) is the dominant regional feature of the visual landscape, while the beach and coastal bluff are significant secondary features.

Existing visual conditions at the proposed site were documented with photographs from many different viewpoints (see Appendix A). Monterey Bay to the south is the dominant visual feature in the project area (Appendix A, Photo 31). Land surrounding the project area is characterized by residential development, which dominates the foreground visual field inland from East Cliff Drive (Appendix A, Photos 13 and 14). This development is characterized by single-family

homes and small multi-family units that vary in design features and lack a consistent visual character.

The project area between 33rd Avenue and 35th Avenue contains few major visual obstructions and affords expansive views of the ocean and surrounding area (Appendix A, Photo 13). Upcoast and ocean views from the central portion of the project area, between 35th Avenue and 38th Avenue, also are extensive (Appendix A, Photo 10) but downcoast views are constrained in places by topography, trees, and residences on the bluff top. The project area between 38th Avenue and 41st Avenue offers expansive views of the ocean but these views are substantially more obstructed by topography, residences, and trees (Appendix A, Photos 7, 8, 18, 19, and 21).

In the foreground, looking up or downcoast along the bluff, or inland from the beach and water, the bluff face and beach area are the dominant visual landforms (Appendix A, Photos 13, 24, and 31). The bluff ranges in color from light to dark brown and in height from 20 feet to 35 feet. The lower portion of the bluff consists of fine-grained Purisima rock that, in places, extends out from the bluff in broken slabs undercut by wave erosion (Appendix A, Photos 5 and 6). Above the Purisima rock are coarse terrace deposits, which are lighter in color and heavily textured by erosion and slope failure (Appendix A, Photo 6 and 11). Low shrubs and succulent coastal vegetation cover the bluff face in many locations, with patches of grasses and small shrubs in other areas (Appendix A, Photos 11, 12, and 13). Monterey pine, cypress, eucalyptus, and various ornamental trees are found along the bluff near the O'Neill house (Appendix A, Photo 5) and in the downcoast portions of the project area (Appendix A, Photos 7, 8, and 20).

Many developed features found along the bluff detract from the overall visual integrity of the site; these range from small features, such as stormwater outfall pipes, signs, and guardrails (Appendix A, Photos 9, 12, and 27), to large features such as bluff stabilization structures, residences, stairways, and restrooms (Appendix A, Photos 2, 8, and 21). Smaller features are scattered throughout the project area and are prominent foreground features, especially in the open areas between 33rd Avenue and 38th Avenue where there are few visual obstructions (Appendix A, Photos 2, and 13).

Three private residences are located on the bluff on the ocean side of East Cliff Drive: the O'Neill house at 35th Avenue (Appendix A, Photo 5); the Breidenthal house at Larch Lane (Appendix A, Photo 8); and the Clanton house at 41st Avenue (Appendix A, Photo 21). All three houses are dominant visual features, especially from close viewpoints where they dominate foreground views. The effect on the visual character of each is different due to their location and screening. The O'Neill house is a prominent visual feature in the upcoast part of the project area, although it is constructed of dark, wood materials, which are visually more consistent with the natural surroundings, and is heavily screened with trees. Trees are the dominant visual feature in the middle ground for upcoast and downcoast views (Appendix A, Photos 10 and 13). The Breidenthal and Clanton residences are much more visually dominant foreground features due to the topography in this portion of the site, which tends to confine viewsheds, and their prominent locations on the bluff. Although the Clanton house is partially screened by vegetation and trees, both of these residences are dominant visual features.

Bluff armoring has been conducted at 32nd Avenue (Appendix A, Photo 1 and 2), 38th Avenue, (Appendix A, Photo 8), Larch Lane (Appendix A, Photo 7), and 41st Avenue (Appendix A, Photo 15) and has substantially influenced the visual character of the site. Much of the older bluff armoring is uniform in color and texture and contrasts sharply with the surrounding natural bluff face (Appendix A, Photo 16). Smaller retaining walls within the project area, such as the concrete crib wall adjacent to the 38th Avenue stairway (Appendix A, Photo 10) and a small wood retaining wall near the Pleasure Point Park site (Appendix A, Photo 1), are also significant features that differ substantially from the natural bluff in terms of line, form, and color, and detract from the overall visual integrity of the project area. The new emergency soil nail walls constructed in 2004, however, resemble the natural bluff closely (see Figure 5-1a).

Pleasure Point Park offers exceptional views of the ocean and the downcoast shoreline (Appendix A, Photo 13). Other than a few small tables, a portable toilet, and a split rail fence along the bluff top, the site has not been developed and lacks visual coherence. A dark wood fence separates the site from an adjacent residence. Most of the site is bare, sandy ground, although some landscape vegetation has been planted at the site.

The Hook also offers exceptional views of the ocean (Appendix A, Photo 17), although the downcoast shoreline views and, to a larger extent, upcoast views are limited by topography, residences that surround the park site, and trees located on the edge of the bluff (Appendix A, Photos 18 and 21). Developed features include a landscaped parking area with restrooms, a landscaped overlook with a wooden fence, picnic tables, a stairway, and large boulders separating the overlook from the road (Appendix A, Photos 19, 20, and 21). This site is more visually coherent than other parts of the project area because the previous development has made use of related materials such as wood in the fencing, stairways, benches, and ground cover that mimics the color and texture of the surrounding trees and provide visual integration.

The beach area offers a visual array of colors and textures, due to the mixture of dark Purisima, light-colored sand, and water, and has an irregular form and organic line that establishes an integrated visual field (Appendix A, Photos 10, 31, and 32). Concrete rubble and rock riprap have been placed in many locations throughout the project area and have substantially influenced the visual quality of the beach. Concrete rubble riprap placed on the beach between 32nd Avenue and 35th Avenue is lighter in color and has a more regular shape and texture than surrounding natural materials (Appendix A, Photo 4). This material is highly incompatible with the natural visual features of the beach and bluff face.

Rock riprap consisting of large boulders of varying size and shape, primarily limestone or granite quarried from outside the area, has been placed along the beach to protect the stairways at 41st Avenue (Appendix A, Photo 24), 38th Avenue (Appendix A, Photo 10), and 35th Avenue (Appendix A, Photo 29), as well as beneath the O'Neill residence (Appendix A, Photo 5). These boulders have a more natural appearance than artificial or highly structured bluff stabilization materials, but still contrast sharply with the lighter color and finer texture of the bluff face.

5.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Impact Methodology

General Plan policies and objectives pertaining to visual resources were identified through review of the General Plan and consultation with Santa Cruz County Planning staff. Site reconnaissance of the project area was conducted on June 20, 2001, to identify all potentially scenic views and features that could be affected by the proposed projects.

Visual impact assessment methodology used in this analysis is based on the *Visual Resources Assessment Procedure for US Army Corps of Engineer*s (Corps 1988). A summary/description of visual resources was presented in Section 5.1.4, and sensitive viewpoints were identified. Because East Cliff Drive between 33rd Avenue and 41st Avenue is designated as a "County Scenic Road" and because it is afforded a high level of visual protection, views from anywhere within the project area are considered to be sensitive. Specific attention is given to sensitive viewpoints at the Pleasure Point Park site and The Hook, which are identified in the General Plan as "Coastal Priority Sites" to preserve coastal access and views.

This section presents a visual impact assessment of the project area, including visual simulations for each alternative. Potential impacts on visual resources from the proposed projects described in Chapter 2 were assessed by estimating the amount of visual changes to the basic visual resource components, water, landform, vegetation, and man-made elements, as a result of the projects. Visual resource components typically are measured in terms of the amount of change in design elements, such as form, line, color, texture, and scale in the landscape. Within this context, the visual changes are evaluated in terms of the degree to which they may be visible to surrounding viewers (e.g., foreground, middle ground, and background), and the general sensitivity of the viewers to landscape alterations are considered.

Existing views of the project area from near Pleasure Point and Monterey Bay are shown in Figures 5-1a and 5-1b, respectively, and are used as a basis for comparison of changes in the visual character of the site under each of the alternatives. Simulations of the visual character of the site from each of these two views are presented for each of the alternatives.

Thresholds of Significance

The evaluation of potential impacts is based on the alternative's potential to alter the visual character of the project area. In this analysis, an alternative is considered to have a significant impact on visual resources if it would result in any of the following:

- Permanently alter a site so that a sensitive viewpoint is obstructed or adversely affected or if the scale or degree of change appears as a substantial, obvious, or disharmonious modification of the overall view;
- Prevent or substantially impair the view from a sensitive viewpoint for the duration of construction of the projects;
- Introduce physical features that are substantially out of character with adjacent developed areas; or
- Be inconsistent with the visual resource policies of the Santa Cruz County General Plan and LCP.

Source: Square One Productions 2005

Existing conditions at the project area include concrete rubble, sculpted and colored soil nail walls constructed as emergency repairs in 2004 (lower left-hand corner of picture), white protective railing around areas of failed roadway, nonnative vegetation and minimal beach area due to the concrete rubble and rock riprap.

Existing Conditions, Bluff View

Santa Cruz, California

Figure 5-1a

Tetra Tech, Inc.

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Source: Square One Productions 2005

A view of the existing conditions at the project site including emergency soil nail walls constructed in 2004.

Existing Conditions, Ocean View

Santa Cruz, California

Figure 5-1b

Tetra Tech, Inc.

5.2.1 Full Bluff Armoring (Alternative 1)

Significant Impacts

Impact 5.1 Long-Term Effect on Scenic Views from Bluff Stabilization

The bluff stabilization structures proposed under Alternative 1 represent the largest modification to the visual quality of the project area. Visual simulations of the site following implementation of Alternative 1 are presented in Figures 5-2a and 5-2b. The stabilization structures would be constructed in two layers, with the second layer being a sculptural element that would be shaped to replicate the form, texture, and scale of the existing bluffs. As shown in Figure 5-1a, the concrete would be stained to match the color of the terrace deposits along the top of the bluffs and the color of the Purisima sandstone below. While the project design would minimize changes to the visual elements of the landform (color, line, form, texture, or scale), the bluff stabilization structures would nevertheless impact middle ground and foreground views by creating a bluff face that is more uniform in appearance than currently. Some textural variation from natural vegetation and bluff composition and some color variation would be lost. However variations in color would be incorporated into the design, and would be expected to develop over time as staining applied to the concrete takes effect.

The structures also would represent a noticeable change in close foreground views where fine distinctions of texture, color, and form can be made and the artificial nature of the structure would be apparent to viewers. The structures may be most apparent at the margins where they intersect with the adjacent bluff stabilization structures or the natural bluff face. The western end of each stabilization structure would abut existing walls beneath private residences. The eastern end of the 32nd Avenue/35th Avenue stabilization structure would abut rock riprap. The eastern end of the 41st Avenue stabilization structure would abut the natural bluff face. These termination points would be the most visually distinct segments of the structures because there may be color contrast, differences in texture, and creation of distinct points of intersection, all of which would increase visual awareness of the structure. Because of the substantial amount of viewing along East Cliff Drive and the high degree of sensitivity to changes in the visual character of the site, construction of the stabilization structure would have a significant impact on scenic views in the project area.

Mitigation 5.1

To minimize visual impacts of the bluff stabilization structures, the Santa Cruz County Department of Public Works shall prepare a final parkway design plan that incorporates the measures included in Mitigations 5.1 and 5.2 below. The final design plan shall be submitted to the County Redevelopment Agency and Planning Department for review and approval prior to any ground disturbance.

- Vegetation shall be planted along the top of the bluff stabilization structure so as to replicate the pattern of natural vegetation that hangs over the bluff. These plantings shall be permanently maintained by the County Parks Department with appropriate drought-tolerant native vegetation.

Source: Square One Productions 2005

P/11762/Figure_5-2a/4-4-02/rv

The visual simulation for Alternative 1 shows the bluff armoring in the project area and the removal of concrete rubble. Parkway improvements would include fencing, two 8-foot paths, and landscaping. Any rock riprap would be relocated to stairway areas for added protection.

Visual Simulation, Alternative 1, Bluff View

Santa Cruz, California

Tetra Tech, Inc.

Figure 5-2a

Source: Square One Productions 2005

A visual simulation of the site following implementation of Alternative 1.

Visual Simulation, Alternative 1, Ocean View

Santa Cruz, California

Figure 5-2b

Tetra Tech, Inc.

P/11762/Figure_5-2b/4-4-02/rv

- At the ends of the bluff stabilization structure, the color, texture and other design features of the stabilization structure shall be designed to match the bluff face, while minimizing visually distinct meeting points.

Implementation of these mitigation measures would reduce this potential significant impact to a less than significant level.

Impact 5.2 Long-Term Effect on Scenic Views from Parkway Improvements

Alternative 1 also would include construction of many new features, such as the stairway at 33rd Avenue, and benches, railings, and signs along the parkway. Most of these features would be definite and regular in shape and contrast with the natural form of the bluff and beach.

Railings would be distinct geometric features that would be inconsistent with natural color, line, and form of the surrounding features. This is especially true of the railings at the edge of the bluff, where the geometric elements would be most visible in silhouette against the ocean and where it would contrast with the uneven line of the bluff top. The proposed new railings would be less visually obtrusive than the existing guardrails, temporary support railings, and temporary white wood barriers because these features lack any visually cohesive qualities in their design, placement, or construction. The proposed split-rail fencing would be unobtrusive, whereas the proposed metal railings could be visually inconsistent with the surrounding natural environment and materials. The proposed metal railings also may be less visible under certain ambient light conditions, such as bright sunlight or fog, when the distinct line and form of the railings would be softened by the highly reflective quality of the metal. Signs located along the parkway also would be distinct foreground features that, depending on their attributes and placement, would contrast with the surrounding organic features of the parkway design and bluff top.

Alternative 1 would result in minor obstructions to views along East Cliff Drive and from the designated scenic overlooks at 32nd Avenue and 41st Avenue. In most cases, these modifications would represent a replacement of existing obstructions with newer features better suited to the visual character of the site.

While developing the site as a whole and including extensive design features would mostly ensure a unified visual character, improvements proposed as part of Alternative 1, such as the railings and benches, would have a significant impact on scenic views. The mitigation described below is proposed to minimize this impact to a less than significant level.

Mitigation 5.2

To minimize the visual impact of parkway-related improvements, the County RDA would incorporate the following design and construction elements into the proposed parkway development:

- Resin stabilized decomposed granite shall be used for paving in the pedestrian areas instead of asphalt wherever feasible, particularly near the bluff.
- Wood, recycled, and other natural appearing materials shall be used to the extent possible and where appropriate for all stairways, benches, railings, and signs. Although wood has a greater bulk than other materials, such as metal, and its use in

construction can result in greater obstruction of views, wood is more visually compatible with the colors and textures of the surrounding natural features and therefore is a more visually integrated building material. The stairs adjacent to the bluff protection structures shall be concrete to better match the structures where feasible. The proposed railing shall also be designed and placed to maximize gaps and openings to avoid obstruction of views. Split-rail fencing shall be used where there is landscaping between the path and the top of the bluff; otherwise, wooden posts with metal railings shall be used. Low-growing natural vegetation shall be used for landscaping whenever possible.

- A final sign plan shall be developed for the project area to ensure that the number of signs are minimized, and that signs are appropriately sized, compatible with the surrounding design and natural features, and located to avoid obstruction of scenic views. A single signpost shall be used for all signs, whenever possible, to minimize the placement of multiple signs.
- New trees planted along the bluff shall be located to preserve scenic vistas and, whenever possible, to obstruct views of surrounding human-made features. New landscape plantings would be installed as part of the parkway improvements.

Parkway-related mitigation would be submitted to County Planning staff for review and approval. Implementation of these mitigation measures would reduce this potential significant impact to a less than significant level.

Nonsignificant Impacts

Effect on Scenic Views during Construction

Under Alternative 1, construction of projects 1, 2, and 3 would obstruct views in the project area. Large construction equipment, such as a truck-mounted drill rig, excavator or large backhoe, crane with dragline or bucket, forklifts, lifts for workers and materials, concrete pumps, and trucks of various sizes, would be located within the right-of-way along East Cliff Drive and on the beach.

All construction under this alternative is projected to occur during the spring and summer, concurrent with peak use of the project area. Project 1 would be constructed in a progression from the western end of the project area to the eastern end. As a result, viewers at either end of the project area would be shielded from construction equipment at the opposite end by vegetative screening and residences. During project 2, construction would occur throughout most of the project area, but visual impacts would be slightly less because there would be no construction on the bluff face or beach. While the construction under Alternative 1 would present visual obstructions at sensitive viewpoints in the project area, these impacts would be temporary and would affect only portions of the site at any one time. Alternative 1 would have a less than significant impact on scenic views during construction.

Compatibility of Physical Features with Adjacent Development

The bluff stabilization structure would be similar to the emergency repairs at 32nd Avenue. The surrounding residential uses present a wide range of design elements and are not visually

cohesive. Modifications to the bluff and parkway would be visually compatible with the surrounding development and may provide some visual unification to the overall area. Alternative 1 would have a less than significant impact on surrounding developed areas.

Consistency with General Plan and LCP

The activities proposed under Alternative 1 would be consistent with, and in many cases would implement, specific objectives and policies of the General Plan and LCP in Section 5.1.2. Most notably, Alternative 1 in the long term would preserve scenic vistas in the project area (*Policy 5.10.3 Protection of Public Vistas*; *Policy 5.10.6 Preserving Ocean Vistas*). The projects would be designed to minimize visual impact by using natural materials and finishes, such as decomposed granite for the path, which would blend with the character of the area (*Policy 5.10.7 Open Beaches and Bluff tops*). The bluff stabilization structure would conform to the natural contours and would be stained to match the natural landscape (*Policy 5.10.13 Landscaping Requirements*). Other aspects of the projects, such as signs and landscaping, would be consistent with General Plan guidance (*Policy 5.10.13 Landscaping Requirements*; *Policy 5.10.18 Signs Visible from Scenic Roads*).

Beneficial Impacts

Long-Term Effect on Scenic Views from Parkway Improvement and Beach Cleanup

Parkway improvements to East Cliff Drive under Alternative 1, including developing Pleasure Point Park, installing landscaping, developing recreational trails, demolishing the abandoned restroom, concealing several retaining walls and stormwater outfalls, and removing guardrails and temporary safety barriers would have a beneficial impact on scenic views in the area. These activities would introduce a more consistent visual character to the area by providing a natural range of colors and textures and eliminating visually contrasting features that are definite and regular in shape and in colors that are incompatible with the natural surroundings. Cypress trees planted to replace unhealthy or recently removed trees near The Hook would be located back from the bluff face and would reduce the degree of visual obstruction, compared to the current tree locations. In addition, removing concrete rubble from the beach would enhance the visual quality of views from Pleasure Point Park, East Cliff Drive, and Monterey Bay.

5.2.2 Partial Bluff Armoring with Full Improvements (Alternative 2)

Significant Impacts

Impact 5.3 Long-Term Effect on Scenic Views from Bluff Stabilization Structures

Impacts on scenic views under this alternative would be similar to but slightly less than those described under Alternative 1. There would be less bluff armoring under Alternative 2 and, despite the potential for additional interfaces among the structure and the bluff, the natural variation of the bluff face would be maintained to a greater degree. Visual simulations of the appearance of the project area under this alternative are depicted in Figures 5-3a and 5-3b.

Source: Square One Productions 2005

P/11762/Figure_5-3a/4-4-02/rv

Alternative 2 would involve armoring the lower Purisima Formation and several washout areas. Concrete rubble would be removed, and parkway improvements would be the same as those under Alternative 1.

Visual Simulation, Alternative 2, Bluff View

Santa Cruz, California

Tetra Tech, Inc.

Figure 5-3a

Source: Square One Productions 2005

P/11762/Figure_5-3b/4-4-02/rv

A visual simulation of the site following implementation of Alternative 2.

Visual Simulation, Alternative 2, Ocean View

Santa Cruz, California

Figure 5-3b

Tetra Tech, Inc.

Bluff stabilization under Alternative 2 would be limited to the Purisima Formation, except in limited areas where it would extend to the bluff top, and would therefore take advantage of the natural geologic strata for visual integration of the stabilization structure with the natural bluff face or beach. The structures would nevertheless represent a substantial change in foreground views where fine distinctions of texture, color, and form can be made and the artificial nature of the structure would be apparent to viewers. The bluff stabilization structures would have to be horizontally integrated with the natural bluff face along the length and top of the structure, in addition to at the ends of the structures and in areas where they extend to the bluff top.

Existing retaining walls would be covered by the bluff protection structure, except for the retaining wall near Manzanita and 38th avenues. New retaining walls would likely be built on an emergency basis in response to future bluff failures.

Mitigation 5.3

In order to minimize the impacts from bluff retaining structures proposed under Alternative 2 and their long-term effects on scenic views, mitigation measures identified under Mitigation 5.1 are also proposed for Alternative 2. In addition, new retaining walls shall be constructed to be visually compatible with the natural features of the shoreline. Retaining walls should be colored to blend with the adjacent bluff.

Implementation of these mitigation measures would reduce this potential significant impact to a less than significant level.

Impact 5.4 Long-Term Effect on Scenic Views from Parkway Improvements

Parkway improvements, such as recreational paths, landscaping, and railings are the same under alternatives 1 and 2. The only difference between the two alternatives is that the stairs proposed under Alternative 2 would be constructed of wood rather than concrete where they are adjacent to the bluff protection structure.

Mitigation 5.4

Mitigation would be the same as that proposed under Alternative 1. Implementation of these mitigation measures would reduce this potential significant impact to a less than significant level.

Nonsignificant Impacts

Effect on Scenic Views during Construction

Construction activities would be the same as those described under Alternative 1, except that construction may be of shorter duration. Alternative 2 would not have a significant impact on scenic views during construction.

Compatibility of Physical Features with Adjacent Development

Similar to Alternative 1, Alternative 2 would have a less than significant visual impact on surrounding developed areas.

Consistency with General Plan and LCP

The activities proposed under Alternative 2 would be consistent, and in many cases would implement, specific objectives and policies outlined in Section 5.1.2. While this alternative may be more effective in achieving certain General Plan policies, such as minimizing disruptions to landform and aesthetic character (*Policy 5.10.3 Protection of Public Vistas*), it also would be less effective at protecting the bluff from further erosion and therefore would be less effective at achieving other General Plan policies to protect and enhance visual resources, such as scenic overlooks and the designated scenic route along East Cliff Drive (*Policy 5.10.1 Designation of Visual Resources*; *Policy 5.10.10 Designation of Scenic Roads*).

Beneficial Impacts

Long-Term Effect on Scenic Views from Parkway Improvement and Beach Cleanups

Similar to Alternative 1, parkway improvements under Alternative 2 and removal of concrete rubble from the beach would enhance the quality of scenic views along East Cliff Drive and from Monterey Bay.

5.2.3 Partial Bluff Armoring with Limited Improvements (Alternative 3)

Significant Impacts

Impact 5.5 Long-Term Effect on Scenic Views from Bluff Stabilization Structures

Impacts on scenic views under Alternative 3 would be less than those described for Alternative 1 and slightly less than those described under Alternative 2. Visual simulations of the appearance of the project area under this alternative are depicted in Figures 5-4a and 5-4b. Bluff stabilization under Alternative 3 would be limited to the Purisima Formation and would therefore take advantage of the natural geologic strata for visual integration of the stabilization structure with the natural bluff face or beach. The structures under Alternative 3 would nevertheless represent a substantial change in foreground views where fine distinctions of texture, color, and form can be made and the artificial nature of the structure would be apparent to viewers. Because bluff stabilization would be limited to the Purisma Formation, the margins where they intersect with the adjacent bluff stabilization structures or the natural bluff face would be limited and therefore the potential visual impact would be less than under alternatives 1 or 2. Existing retaining walls would not be covered by the bluff protection structures so new retaining walls may have to be built on an emergency basis in response to future bluff failures.

Mitigation 5.5

To minimize visually distinct meeting points, the design and construction plans for the bluff protection structures shall include the following components:

- The bluff stabilization structures shall be modified at the interface with existing walls, riprap, or natural bluff face to gradually transition the color, texture and other design features of the wall to match the appearance of the adjacent material.

Source: Square One Productions 2005

P/11762/Figure_5-4a/4-4-02/rv

Alternative 3 would involve armoring only the lower Purisima Formation. Existing retaining walls would not be armored. As with Alternatives 1 and 2, the concrete rubble would be removed. Parkway improvements would be similar to those under Alternatives 1 and 2, except that there would be only one multiuse lane.

Visual Simulation, Alternative 3, Bluff View

Santa Cruz, California

Figure 5-4a

Tetra Tech, Inc.

Source: Square One Productions 2005

A visual simulation of the site following implementation of Alternative 3.

Visual Simulation, Alternative 3, Ocean View

Santa Cruz, California

Figure 5-4b

Tetra Tech, Inc.

P/11762/Figure_5-4b/4-4-02/rv

- Before the public hearing on certification of the EIR for the projects, the Santa Cruz County Redevelopment Agency shall submit to County Planning staff for review and approval written or pictorial information on how this measure would be accomplished.

Implementation of these mitigation measures would reduce this potential significant impact to a less than significant level.

Impact 5.6 Long-Term Effect on Scenic Views from Parkway Improvements

Although parkway modifications proposed under Alternative 3 would be of a slightly different design, improvements would still be similar and impacts on scenic views would be comparable to those described for Alternative 1. Also, improvements to scenic views from parkway modifications would not last as long as those in Alternative 1 because of the lower level of bluff protection. Mitigation as described for Alternative 1 is proposed.

Mitigation 5.6

Mitigation would be the same as that proposed under Alternative 1. Implementation of these mitigation measures would reduce this potential significant impact to a less than significant level.

Nonsignificant Impacts

Effect on Scenic Views during Construction

Construction activities would be similar to those described under Alternative 1, except that construction may not take quite as long due to fewer parkway improvements. Alternative 3 would not have a significant impact on scenic views during construction.

Compatibility of Physical Features with Adjacent Development

Similar to Alternative 1, Alternative 3 would have a less than significant visual impact on surrounding developed areas.

Consistency with General Plan and LCP

Consistency of Alternative 3 with the General Plan and LCP would be comparable to those described under Alternative 2.

Beneficial Impacts

Long-Term Effect on Scenic Views from Parkway Improvements

Parkway modifications proposed under Alternative 3 would be slightly different than under alternatives 1 and 2 but would involve the same types of improvements and would have comparable beneficial impacts. Similar to alternatives 1 and 2, removal of concrete rubble from the beach would enhance the quality of scenic views along East Cliff Drive and from Monterey Bay. Long-term visual improvement to the parkway would be less than alternatives 1 or 2 due to the limited bluff protection afforded by this alternative.

5.2.4 Groins and Notch Infilling (Alternative 4)

Significant Impacts

Impact 5.7 Long-Term Effect on Scenic Views from Parkway Improvements

Although parkway modifications proposed under Alternative 4 would be slightly different, improvements would still be similar and impacts on scenic views would be comparable to those described for Alternative 3. Because there would be no armoring of the bluffs and no groins constructed at The Hook under Alternative 4, the designated scenic overlook at 41st Avenue (The Hook) and segments of the designated scenic route along East Cliff Drive that are threatened by bluff erosion eventually would be lost. Such erosion would be addressed through emergency repairs by Santa Cruz County, but these actions would not be adequate to preserve the bluff.

Mitigation 5.7

Mitigation proposed for this impact is the same as that described for Alternative 1. Implementation of these mitigation measures would reduce this potential significant impact to a less than significant level.

Nonsignificant Impacts

Long-Term Effect on Scenic Views from Groin Construction

Impacts on scenic views under Alternative 4 would be less than those described for alternatives 1, 2, or 3. The groins proposed under Alternative 4 would alter primarily the middle- to foreground views along the bluff or beach, or in the near-shore parts of Monterey Bay. Visual simulations of the appearance of the project area under this alternative are depicted in Figures 5-5a and 5-5b.

The groins would be constructed to replicate the form, texture, scale, and color of the Purisima sandstone formation, and would extend only a short distance above ground or water level. Sand trapped by the groins would slightly alter the land and water features of the site by expanding the beach and concealing the groins. The visual effect of the beach expansion would vary with seasonal changes in beach size and daily variations in tidal coverage. The ocean would shift slightly from the foreground during periods of maximum beach exposure and low tide. Such shifts would be within the normal range of variation in the region and would not represent a substantial change in the visual character of the site.

Construction of groins under Alternative 4 would not have a significant impact on scenic views.

Effect on Scenic Views during Construction

Parkway construction activities under Alternative 4 would be similar to Alternative 3 and would obstruct views in the project area. Construction would take place during the spring and summer, concurrent with peak use of the project area. Unlike other alternatives, groin construction would require placing equipment farther into Monterey Bay, which would make it visible from more of

Source: Square One Productions 2006

R: New/11762/Figure_5-5a.cdr 03-27-06 YE

Alternative 4 would involve constructing three groins, which would extend from the existing Purisima Formation. The addition of the groins would increase the size of the beaches in the project area. Concrete rubble would be removed, and parkway improvements would be the same as those described under Alternative 3.

Visual Simulation, Alternative 4, Bluff View

Santa Cruz, California

Figure 5-5a

Tetra Tech, Inc.

Source: Square One Productions 2006

A visual simulation of the site following implementation of Alternative 4.

Visual Simulation, Alternative 4, Ocean View

Santa Cruz, California

Figure 5-5b

Tetra Tech, Inc.

R: New/11762/Figure_5-5b.psd 03-29-06 YE

the project area and would affect more scenic viewpoints. While construction under Alternative 4 would obstruct and alter views from sensitive viewpoints in the project area, these impacts would be temporary and would affect only portions of the site at any one time. Construction activities under Alternative 4 would have a less than significant impact on sensitive viewpoints.

Compatibility of Physical Features with Adjacent Development

Modifications to the bluff and parkway under Alternative 4 would be compatible with surrounding development and may actually provide visual unification to the overall area. Groins would be compatible with developed uses and would be similar to other structures in the surrounding area, such as the groins constructed near Capitola. Similar to alternatives 1 and 2, Alternative 4 would have a less than significant impact on surrounding developed areas.

Consistency with Local Plans and LCP

Consistency of Alternative 4 with the General Plan and LCP would be comparable to that described under Alternative 2. Eventual loss of the scenic overlook and roadway (which provides vehicular access to the area) due to lack of bluff protection could lead to the area being inconsistent with LCP provisions regarding designated scenic views and roads. Also, the visual landscape would remain the same in regard to existing infrastructure, including the views of exposed drainpipes, guardrails, and concrete rubble and rip rap on the beach.

Beneficial Impacts

Long-Term Effect on Scenic Views (Parkway Improvement and Beach Cleanup)

Similar to Alternative 3, parkway improvements under Alternative 4 and removal of concrete rubble from the beach would enhance the visual quality of views along East Cliff Drive and from Monterey Bay.

5.2.5 No Action Alternative

Effect on Scenic Views

Under the No Action Alternative, no bluff protection structures would be constructed and the natural appearance of the bluff would be retained. The quality of scenic views in the project area would continue to degrade under the No Action Alternative as a result of continued erosion. The designated scenic overlook at 41st Avenue (The Hook) and segments of the designated scenic route along East Cliff Drive would continue to be threatened by bluff erosion. While such erosion would be addressed through emergency repairs by Santa Cruz County, portions of these sites would nevertheless be lost to erosion in the near future. Efforts to maintain the site would likely include additional soil nail walls.

Consistency with Local Plans and LCP

The No Action Alternative would be consistent with objectives and policies of the General Plan and LCP, as outlined in Section 5.1.2. While the No Action Alternative would lead to further degradation of the visual character of the East Cliff Drive area, as well as eventual loss of designated scenic views and roads, no actions would be taken that would conflict with the General Plan. Objectives and policies of the General Plan and LCP related to enhancing visual

resources along East Cliff Drive would not be implemented (*Objective 5.10a Protection of Visual Resources*, *Policy 5.10.3 Protection of Public Vistas*, and *Policy 5.10.10 Designation of Scenic Roads*).

Effect on Scenic Views during Construction

No planned construction would occur under the No Action Alternative. Emergency repairs would be anticipated but the timing and frequency of these activities cannot be predicted. These activities would likely require large equipment.

Compatibility of Physical Features with Adjacent Development

No planned construction would occur under the No Action Alternative, and therefore it would not have a significant impact on surrounding developed areas. The visual landscape would remain the same in regard to existing infrastructure, including the views of exposed drainpipes, guardrails, and concrete rubble and riprap on the beach.