
3.3 VISUAL QUALITY

Introduction

This visual quality section documents the existing visual characteristics and community character surrounding the Kaiser Permanente Redwood City Medical Center. The analysis considers the proposed project's effect on community character, its consistency with the City's adopted visual and urban design policies, and its functional and visual relationship to the City's Downtown and scenic views and resources.

Community Character. Character is defined here in terms of development patterns of the built environment (i.e., the appearance and function of the downtown entrances/gateway parcels, and the general location, orientation, massing, height, and scale of buildings in the vicinity); the architectural style, appearance, and lot coverage of adjacent parcels and structures; the streetscape, landscaping, building façades and setbacks along principal travel and pedestrian corridors in the project vicinity; and views of natural settings or physical landmarks. Changes to components of the visual setting of the Medical Center that result from the proposed project are evaluated qualitatively in this section.

Consistency with City Plans/Policies. The conformance of the project with Redwood City's urban design goals and policies is evaluated in this section through consistency analysis with the City's *General Plan Urban Design and Visual Policies*, *Redevelopment Plan for Redevelopment Project #2*, and the draft *Downtown Area Plan*, and draft *Kaiser Master Plan Urban Design Guidelines*.¹

Medical Center's Relationship to Downtown/Downtown Image. Chief among the City's goals is the importance of creating a positive relationship between the Master Plan and the City's downtown retail core. For example, the Medical Center development of downtown gateway parcels (located on Main Street) should foster a positive City image and help to orient/invite pedestrians/autos to the downtown. Downtown building orientation and strong building design and pedestrian connections/linkages to the downtown are recommended. Building massing, height, scale and architectural detailing should reflect a positive, pedestrian-friendly image within the urban context of the larger downtown district. This section uses computer-generated photomontages to illustrate the visual effect of the proposed Medical Center at the gateway parcels.

¹ The draft *Kaiser Master Plan Urban Design Guidelines* (Appendix C) have been developed for incorporation into a Precise Plan for the Kaiser Redwood City Medical Center campus. The Precise Plan will be adopted, in whole or in part, at the time of certification (or shortly thereafter) of the Master Plan Final EIR. The Precise Plan will be used to guide future growth and development of the Medical Center's Downtown context and economic vitality potential; building orientation and pedestrian circulation; downtown gateways; Redwood Creek enhancement; circulation, parking and emergency vehicle access; and architectural character and image.

Scenic Views/Resources. As noted in the Initial Study (see Appendix B), there are no scenic vistas that include the Medical Center site as a major part of the view. The project would also not result in substantial obstruction or impairment of views from an identified scenic roadway corridor or other publicly accessible location and does not include any scenic resources, such as rock outcroppings, ridgelines or other topographic forms, that could be affected by proposed development. To address adverse impacts from new sources of light and glare, the Initial Study specifies appropriate mitigation measures to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, these topics are not discussed further in this EIR section.

Setting

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

Redwood City, incorporated as a city in 1867, is one of the oldest settlements on the San Francisco Peninsula. The urban setting of Redwood City is shaped by its natural features including Redwood Creek, the foothills, and the San Francisco Bay. The City's downtown area is characterized by street-oriented retail shops, offices, and the historic San Mateo County Courthouse, distinctive because of its dome constructed in the early 1900s. Due to its central location and height, the Courthouse dome is visible from several locations approaching the downtown area and often serves as a point of orientation. Several other historic structures and landmarks are visible along the downtown streets. Neighborhood parks and streetscape elements within the downtown area also contribute to creating a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Development Pattern

Much of the physical development pattern for Downtown Redwood City is rooted in the City's history as a point of shipment for lumber to San Francisco during the Gold Rush. Lumber was transported from Santa Cruz to San Francisco via Redwood Creek. Main Street, which is located parallel to the creek, established the City's downtown street layout. The proposed project site is located within the downtown sub-district known as the "Veterans Corridor." Development in this area is generally larger scale than other parts of downtown and consists of a series of freestanding buildings and a strip of connected retail stores, surrounded by large surface parking lots.

Architectural characteristics vary within Redwood City and include both contemporary and traditional styles popular in the Bay Region. Architectural characteristics featured in the area include Gothic revival, Italianate, American colonial residences, Queen Ann "Victorian," Mission revival, California Bungalow, Monterey revival, and other Bay Region styles. Although many different architectural styles exist within the project vicinity, modernist styles are most prevalent in the project area.

The Medical Center is surrounded by three distinctive development styles: low-rise shopping centers to the north; dense, multi-story development to the southeast, east, and west; and large-scale office buildings to the southwest. Across Veterans Boulevard to the north, development is predominantly dense retail including fast food and shopping centers (see Figure 3.3-1A), combined with some light industrial structures to the northeast. Buildings along Veterans Boulevard include a series of low-rise shopping centers with surface parking lots set back approximately 25 to 30 feet from the curb. Development along this street is dense and parking lots include small street trees and bushes.

Several multi-story residential apartments (see Figure 3.3-1B), a six-story convalescent home, auto parts and retail stores, and motels are located to the east and west of the project site. These buildings are mostly concrete with regularly spaced windows. The buildings are located fairly close to one another forming fairly dense blocks immediately surrounding the project area, and are often directly adjacent to the curb. Parking is located in surface lots adjacent to the buildings. A few scattered, larger trees line Marshall, Maple, and Main Streets surrounding these buildings.

To the southwest of the project site, four-story concrete office buildings with opaque windows front directly onto the curb (see Figure 3.3-2A). These buildings are massive and located close to one another with medium size trees lining Marshall Street. Limited parking is located along the street in front of the buildings. The major Downtown thoroughfares are located further to the south of the project area and include historic buildings. The larger project vicinity, beyond the immediate retail and residential buildings, is characterized by industrial buildings. The main Kaiser Hospital building, at approximately 100 feet in height, is the tallest building in the general project vicinity.

Gateways, Corridors, and Project Site Views

The visual impression of a neighborhood, district, or community is derived in two ways: 1) by views observed from the major travel corridors along and through the area, and 2) by the impressions/experience one has at the pedestrian-level while walking along neighborhood streets. Views provide a sense of orientation for those traveling/walking through an area. This section of the visual setting describes the character of the streets in the project vicinity in terms of use, vegetation, and views of the project site when applicable.

Gateways. There are two types of gateways defined by the City's draft *Downtown Area Plan*, as described below.

Primary Gateways. The Medical Center campus lies to the northeast of the downtown core of Redwood City. The City's draft *Downtown Area Plan* identifies four major gateways to the downtown at Jefferson Street and Veterans Boulevard, El Camino Real and Broadway, El Camino Real and Main Street, and Woodside Expressway and Broadway. None of the four major gateway intersections border the Medical Center campus.

Secondary Gateways. The draft *Downtown Area Plan* also identifies Main Street and Veterans Boulevard as a secondary gateway that provides a sense of entry into downtown. The two Main Street gateway parcels of the Kaiser Medical Center campus (on either side of Main Street) are strategic sites

Slipsheet for Figure 3.3-1A & 3.3-1B

Slipsheet for Figure 3.3-2A & 3.3-2B

because they signal entry into the downtown, both visually and functionally. Special land uses and design features can help convey the importance of these downtown gateway parcels. The Medical Center's Maple Street and Veterans Boulevard parcels also provide access to the downtown and provide an opportunity to reflect a positive downtown/city image.

Travel Corridors. Travel corridors are travel ways/walkways that offer views of the project site and help convey the character and visual setting of the project vicinity.

Veterans Boulevard. Veterans Boulevard is a major arterial road within the project vicinity. This major east-west thoroughfare defines the northerly edge of the Medical Center and is characterized by auto-oriented commercial and professional offices with a fast-paced, high intensity, commercial character. Six lanes run along Veterans Boulevard in the vicinity of the project site, divided by a small island of street trees in front of the main Hospital building. A continuous median strip runs along the middle of Veterans Boulevard with scattered trees located intermittently along the median. Mervyn's Plaza, a one-story shopping center, is located directly across from the Medical Center. The 100-foot tall main Hospital building is highly visible from Veterans Boulevard.

The existing Medical Center can be seen traveling east and intermittently when traveling west on Veterans Boulevard, between the street trees and landscaping. The existing campus is not significantly visible from vehicles approaching the site from north of the Main Street and Veterans Boulevard intersection, but is visible at the pedestrian level. Looking east on Veterans Boulevard, the view does not include the coastal mountains. The view includes trees and streetlights and the road eventually curves further north. Looking west on Veterans Boulevard (see Figure 3.3-2B), the coastal mountains are partially visible in the distance, but are blocked on north and south sides of the street by trees and buildings.

Main Street. Main Street is a two-lane, pedestrian-oriented street that runs in a north-south direction and serves as a direct gateway to the City's downtown retail core. Main Street is characterized by significant historic structures in the downtown vicinity and by residential and commercial development in the project site vicinity. Two Kaiser campus surface parking lots are on either side of Main Street, just south of Veterans Boulevard.

Southward views along Main Street are of the hills in the distance beyond downtown Redwood City. Views to the north include the shopping center and some larger structures and trees. The existing Medical Center can be seen when traveling/walking along Main Street north of Marshall Street.

Marshall Street. Marshall Street, which also lies close to the Downtown District and borders the southerly edge of the Medical Center, is a two-lane street in the project vicinity. This street runs east-west through the downtown area and is characterized by residential and medical buildings with street trees. The main Hospital building and several parking garages are highly visible from Marshall Street, although site landscaping helps to screen the buildings.

Views to the west along Marshall Street do not include the surrounding hills in the distance, because downtown buildings screen the view. Views to the east include apartment buildings. The main Hospital building is also visible along Marshall Street between Main Street and Maple Street, with larger buildings further east and west of the immediate project vicinity screening this view.

Maple Street. Maple Street is also a two-lane street and downtown gateway entrance that runs north-south through the Medical Center. Maple Street is characterized by residential and office developments in the project vicinity along with the medical buildings located on the campus. Views along Maple Street facing south mostly contain downtown buildings with little view of the hills. Looking north on Maple Street, views include trees and shopping center buildings beyond Veterans Boulevard.

Walnut Street. Walnut Street is also a two-lane road that runs north-south through the Medical Center from Veterans Boulevard to Marshall Street. Walnut Street provides a vehicular entrance into the Medical Center and is characterized by medical and office development. As part of the proposed project, this street would be narrowed between Veterans Boulevard and Bradford Street. The City also intends to eventually convert Walnut Street to a two-way, two-lane street from Marshall to Broadway, in order to provide a more direct and improved way to travel to the Downtown core.

Kaiser Redwood City Medical Center

Existing On-Campus Facilities. The Medical Center is currently composed of buildings that vary in character and height. The existing campus layout is shown in Figure 2-2 in Section 2, Project Description. The campus contains two massive structures including the 100-foot-tall Hospital and the eight-story Parking Structure A located at Maple Street and Veterans Boulevard. Besides these two structures, only one other building on campus is four stories tall (the MRI structure); all of the other structures are one to two stories. Other structures on campus have a temporary appearance such as the Aspen, QA/UR building, Controllers Office, and several (occupied and unoccupied) construction trailers. Building styles also vary, from grey, one- and two-story concrete block buildings with an institutional style containing the Kaiser logo, to buildings that are made of wood or stucco. Overall, the buildings are scattered throughout various parts of the campus in a fragmented pattern. There is little uniformity among the different building architectural styles or characteristics of the campus.

Main Hospital. This seven-story concrete structure is located along the northern side of the Medical Campus and is set back in the campus interior, off Veterans Boulevard. Opaque windows and vegetation filter light in the building's interior and help maintain privacy. The main Hospital building fronts Veterans Boulevard and is segmented by a vertical tower in the center, giving the building a vertical character that differs from the rest of the buildings on the campus, as seen in Figure 3.3-3A. This structure is 100 feet in height, making it the tallest and most visually prominent structure in the project vicinity.

Cypress Building. This two-story medical clinic, illustrated in Figure 3.3-3B, fronts Veterans Boulevard at the northern edge of the Medical Center. The building is concrete and is characterized by the typical medical institutional style of the campus. Street trees line the front of the building and

Slipsheet for Figure 3.3-3A & 3.3-3B

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screen it from view from Veterans Boulevard. A stone two- to three-foot-high wall fronts the side of the building that faces Maple Street.

Laurel Building and adjacent Service Building. Both buildings are small single-story structures that are mostly screened from Marshall Street by trees. The structures are both concrete and box-shaped with windows that are not highly visible.

Oak Building. A one-story medical clinic, the Oak Building (illustrated in Figure 3.3-4A), is located on Maple Street directly south of the Cypress Building. The building is cement with smooth, thick, round decorative columns located on the side.

Aspen Building. This building is a temporary, modular clinic including administrative offices and maintenance trailers located west of Marshall Court. The building is a one-story wood structure with an attached pharmacy.

Maple Building. This single-story building is located on the northeastern corner of Maple and Marshall Streets. The building is characterized by rock face, long ribbon windows, and a red roof, giving the appearance of a single-family home. As a result, the building differs from the majority of the other buildings on the campus that have a more institutional feel.

Willow Building and the QA/UR. The Willow Building is a single-story concrete block administrative office. The QA/UR Building is a single-story temporary trailer building. Both buildings are located off Marshall Street at the eastern border of the campus and are small, box-shaped institutional-style structures.

Walnut Building. This building is a two-story medical clinic located on the southwest corner of the intersection of Walnut and Bradford Streets. The building is an institutional-style, concrete structure screened by trees along Walnut Street.

MRI Building. This building is a four-story, concrete structure located to the west of the main hospital building off of Walnut Street. The building has the institutional character that is typical of most of the buildings on the Medical Center; however, trees located in the parking lot soften its appearance.

Poplar Building. This building is a single-story, concrete-block administrative office located on Marshall Street just east of Marshall Court. The building is largely screened from view by trees along Marshall Street.

Magnolia Building. This building is a single-story, concrete block administrative office located on Marshall Street just east of the Poplar Building at the corner of Maple and Marshall Streets. The building is also largely screened from view along Marshall Street by trees.

Parking Structure 'A'. An eight-level parking structure forms the northeastern corner of the Medical Center at Veterans Boulevard and Maple Street. The building is made of smooth concrete without windows, but includes open air spaces between parking levels.

Slipsheet for Figure 3.3-4A & 3.3-4B

Off-Campus Facilities. Off-campus Kaiser buildings in Redwood City reflect either the institutional style buildings of the campus or the surrounding non-medical office buildings in the project area.

1400 Veterans. This four-story building, as illustrated in Figure 3.3-4B, is largely made of glass and concrete and fronts Veterans Boulevard just northeast of the Medical Center. This clinical/medical office building is set back from the street by a surface parking lot. The north-facing building façade is predominantly windows with some shrub and tree landscaping in front. The amount of windows and the more modern variation in architectural style of the building slightly diverges from the institutional character of the rest of the Medical Center buildings.

Birch Building. This building, located off-campus at the southeastern corner of the intersection of Walnut and Marshall Streets near the Medical Center, is a two-story building of the typical medical institutional style.

Broadway Hearing Aid Center. This building is a small, one-story white brick building located at the corner of Maple Street and Broadway and is not immediately adjacent to the Medical Center. The building is part of a small strip commercial shopping center.

Applicable Plans and Regulations

Several City policy documents and plans contain visual and urban design policies that are relevant to the Kaiser project site. Applicable documents include the *General Plan Urban Design and Visual Policies* and the *Redevelopment Plan for Redevelopment Project #2*. Relevant policies have been abstracted and are presented later in Tables 3.3-1 and 3.3-2, under “Impacts and Mitigation Measures.”

The *Redwood City Downtown Area Plan* is currently in draft form, but is anticipated to be adopted by early to mid-2003. Therefore, this EIR also includes a discussion of the project’s consistency with this policy document.

The draft *Kaiser Master Plan Urban Design Guidelines* (Appendix C) have also been developed and will be adopted as part of a Precise Plan by the City of Redwood City in whole or in part at the time of Final EIR certification or shortly thereafter. The *Kaiser Master Plan Urban Design Guidelines* include recommendations for:

- building design and landscaping;
- gateway parcels;
- streets and street frontages along Main Street, Marshall Street, Maple Street, Walnut Street and Veterans Boulevard;
- the development of MOB 1;

- open space including the Central Open Space, pedestrian ways, and supporting open spaces; and
- signage and wayfinding.

Although the details of building design and layout for the Kaiser Medical Center are not available at this stage in the planning process, building materials, façades, architectural treatment, and other programs identified in the *Kaiser Master Plan Urban Design Guidelines* would be incorporated into each phase of project development and reviewed by the City prior to construction.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Significance Criteria

Potential impacts resulting from a change in visual character are partially subjective. To some, any development and change in the existing setting, regardless of the design, is considered significantly adverse; others may consider any development to be beneficial. This EIR identifies significance criteria based on CEQA and general urban design principles. According to the CEQA Guidelines and the Environmental Checklist Form suggested by the CEQA Guidelines, significant visual impacts would arise if the proposed project:

- substantially degrades the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings; or
- conflicts with any applicable land use plan, policy or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

Environmental Analysis

As described in Section 3.1, for each impact, a level of significance is determined and is reported in the impact statement. Conclusions of significance are defined as follows: significant (S), potentially significant (PS), less than significant (LTS), and no impact (NI). If the mitigation measures would not diminish potentially significant or significant effects to a less-than-significant level, the impacts are classified as “significant unavoidable effects (SU).” For this section, VQ refers to Visual Quality.

The Higher Occupancy Scenario described in Section 2 would result in the same increase of GSF as the proposed project, and would therefore represent the same change in mass and scale as the proposed project. In addition, the Higher Occupancy Scenario would result in the same campus configuration and project phasing as the proposed project. Therefore, effects on visual character, corridors and gateways, and visual and urban design policies would be the same under the Higher Occupancy Scenario as anticipated with the proposed project. As a result, visual quality impacts would be similar to those under the proposed project.

VQ-1. *Building Mass and Scale* - *Under the proposed project and the Higher Occupancy Scenario, the Master Plan (if developed as proposed) would result in an increase in mass and scale of the Medical Center, but the intensification of development would not have an adverse visual impact on the surrounding area because of the existing pattern, mass, and scale of nearby development. (LTS)*

As mentioned in the setting, the Medical Center is surrounded by three distinctive development styles. Across Veterans Boulevard to the north, buildings are characterized by multiple single-story shopping centers set back approximately 25-30 feet from the curb. This area is distinctively different from the Medical Center because development is typically single story in height and surrounded by large expanses of parking. The shops also have colorful signage and similar architectural styles, typical of a mall or a shopping center.

Structures located to the southeast, east, and west of the Medical Center include multi-story apartment complexes made of concrete with regularly spaced windows. These buildings are large scale and tend to be located close to one another. Continuing east from the project site beyond the multi-story apartment buildings, the area becomes more industrial. Buildings to the west as well as to the southeast also include residential multi-story buildings, but tend to also incorporate buildings of a more commercial nature, such as delis, repair shops, and offices. The Medical Center is located directly adjacent to the residential apartment buildings east of the campus. Buildings to the southeast and west also vary in style, but in terms of mass and scale, they are visually similar to the Medical Center.

Large office buildings are located to the southwest of the Medical Center. These buildings are four-story, massive structures. Buildings increasing in mass extend further southwest into the main thoroughfare of Downtown Redwood City. Currently, the western portion of the Medical Center campus provides a visual contrast to these large-scale structures.

The proposed development under the Master Plan would increase the mass and scale of buildings on campus. Parking structures would range from four to eight levels and the main Hospital would become larger (from 203,955 GSF to 440,000 GSF) and taller (from 100 feet to 160 feet, or from seven to ten stories). Other clinical buildings would be up to 5 stories tall. Buildings, including parking structures, would be more massive with a net increase of 1,371,250 GSF (from 620,150 GSF to 1,991,400 GSF). In general, development of the Master Plan would triple the square footage of the campus, making the Medical Center development more dense. Structures would also average four and a half stories in height, which is twice as tall as the majority of the existing medical facilities.

Although the mass and scale of development on campus would be altered, the campus would not be incompatible with the development pattern, mass, and scale of the surrounding area. Surrounding development to the east, west and south are currently more massive than the existing Medical Center. Proposed development would be more comparable in size to the four-story office buildings located to the southwest, multi-story apartment buildings located to the east and west, and commercial buildings located to the southeast. Development to the north

would remain considerably lower in height than the proposed Medical Center and appears as a conglomeration of multiple single-story retail stores, but the area is separated from the Medical Center by six lanes of traffic across Veterans Boulevard and is set back from the curb. For this reason, changes in the building mass and scale of the proposed Medical Center would not have an adverse visual impact on buildings across Veterans Boulevard.

Development of the Medical Center would not visually conflict with development in downtown, since the downtown area is separated from the campus by tall and fairly massive buildings. Therefore, as proposed, development of the Master Plan would not visually conflict with the scale and mass of development surrounding the project site.

VQ-2. *Visual Character* - *Under the proposed project and the Higher Occupancy Scenario, the Master Plan (if developed as proposed) would substantially alter the visual character of the Medical Center, but the effect on the overall visual setting of the campus could be positive, because it would make the campus easier to navigate and more visually cohesive. (LTS)*

The current Medical Center campus building style, as described in the setting section, varies throughout the campus. Structures are scattered throughout the campus forming a fragmented and visually incoherent appearance. Buildings are not uniform in size or style. In addition, wayfinding for pedestrians and vehicles is difficult. Signage exists but is difficult to find and directions are not easily identifiable.

The proposed Master Plan would improve the visual cohesiveness and linkages on campus by defining a consistent architectural vocabulary for the buildings, establishing strong building edges and distinctive pedestrian pathways, and using landscaping to differentiate parts of the campus. The Master Plan recommends buildings that are similar to one another in size and scale as well as lighting, paving, and other features that would improve wayfinding between buildings. The Master Plan also includes pedestrian walkways to adjacent parking structures and would establish more pronounced entryways into the campus.

Therefore, the project would result in a substantial change in the character of the campus. However, this change would not introduce significant adverse visual effects; rather the Master Plan should make the campus easier to navigate and more visually cohesive.

VQ-3. *Views from Corridors & Gateways* - *Under the proposed project and the Higher Occupancy Scenario, the Master Plan (if developed as proposed) would alter views from major and minor travel corridors and gateways within and adjacent to the project area, but would not have a significant adverse visual impact on travelways or views. (LTS)*

Views in the project area are generally diverse. There are no scenic vistas or scenic resources located in the project area, but the mountains of the coastal ranges can be seen from some locations on the site and these views are considered scenic. Looking south on Main Street from Veterans Boulevard, the mountains of the coastal ranges are visible in the distance, but they are mostly screened by buildings such as the Bay Area Bank. Proposed development

under the Master Plan would not permanently alter these views. Views to the west along Marshall Street do not include the distant hills, because downtown buildings obstruct views of the hills.

The existing Medical Center can be seen traveling east and intermittently when traveling west on Veterans Boulevard and from Main Street to the north of Marshall Street (see Figure 3.3-5A). The main Hospital building is the most visually prominent structure in the project vicinity. The project site can be seen intermittently from Veterans Boulevard between the street trees and landscaping.

The proposed replacement Hospital would remain the most dominant visual structure in the project area. Although views of the Hospital would be partially blocked by the six-level parking structure proposed for development on the Main Street gateway parcel, the Hospital would still be visible traveling east and seen intermittently traveling west on Veterans Boulevard, and the surrounding views and the visibility of the Medical Center along Veterans Boulevard would not be adversely affected (see Figure 3.3-5B). As shown in the visual simulation in Figure 3.3-5B, looking southeast from Veterans Boulevard at Main Street, the proposed project would not substantially alter views of the gateway located at this intersection. If the proposed project were implemented, the campus would become more visually prominent. However, through the use of special landscaping and paving treatments, the gateway would function visually to signal entry into the downtown, although a parking structure is not recommended for this site per *Kaiser Master Plan Urban Design Guidelines* Policy #24. Overall, visual impacts to the gateway at the intersection of Veterans Boulevard and Main Street would be considered less than significant.

Street trees located along the northern frontage of Veterans Boulevard would help to mask the size and mass of campus structures, especially for pedestrians. Development of the proposed Medical Center along Veterans Boulevard, which includes the main Hospital, would have a minimal visual effect, on the northern facade of the Medical Center. The increase in size of the main Hospital would alter views, but would not substantially degrade the quality of views in the area or along the streetscape.

None of the proposed developments for the Medical Center would be located to the north of the existing campus. Development of the proposed project would have little visual effect, if any, on views from Main Street or Marshall Street because the Medical Center would remain visible and views of the surrounding hills would not be altered along these corridors.

Historic downtown Redwood City is not visible from the project site and the Medical Center is also blocked from view in the downtown retail core along Main Street by large buildings. The Master Plan would in general strengthen the secondary gateway to downtown by calling for special landscaping and paving to help define the entrance to the downtown. The *Urban Design Guidelines* (see Appendix C) recommend the development of complementary signature buildings, designed to create a sense of entry into the downtown along the east and west sides

of the Medical Center's Main Street parcels. The Guidelines, however, do not recommend development of the gateway sites with surface or structured parking (Policy #24).

The proposed Master Plan would also include more landscaping along travelways and would be more pedestrian-friendly with added signage and pathways between buildings. Views of the hills would not be substantially degraded by the project. The main Hospital building would remain prominent and the campus would be enhanced by vegetation and designated open space. Views would be altered by the project but would not be adversely changed.

VQ-4. Consistency with City's Visual/Urban Design Plans and Policies - *Under the proposed project and the Higher Occupancy Scenario, the Master Plan (if developed as proposed) would be generally consistent with the visual/urban design and economic development policies of Redwood City's Strategic General Plan and Redevelopment Plan. While aspects of the proposed Master Plan are not fully consistent with the draft Kaiser Master Plan Urban Design Guidelines for the Kaiser Medical Center Master Plan, the City will require that Kaiser refine its designs prior to construction to ensure consistency these plans and guidelines. (LTS)*

Strategic General Plan and Redevelopment Plan, Project #2. If developed as proposed, the Master Plan would be generally consistent with the visual and urban design policies of the *Strategic General Plan* and the *Redevelopment Plan for Redevelopment Project #2*. Relevant policies from these planning documents are presented in Table 3.3-1 with an assessment of the project's features relative to the policies. It is noted, however, that the assessment is based on a conceptual Master Plan. The City will evaluate each phase and project of development as they are submitted to ensure compliance with the visual, urban design, and economic development policies of these planning documents.

Draft Downtown Area Plan and Kaiser Master Plan Urban Design Guidelines. Other important policy documents that will influence development in the Downtown District and at gateway locations are discussed below, in terms of how well the proposed Master Plan conforms to them.

Draft Downtown Area Plan. Although the *Downtown Area Plan* has not yet been adopted, it is anticipated to be adopted in 2003. As such, a discussion of the consistency of the Master Plan with draft *Downtown Area Plan* policies has also been included for discussion since it will influence the City's decisions and reviews of future development plans for the Kaiser Medical Center. While the Master Plan does not provide design details at this stage, a discussion below highlights the areas that the proposed Master Plan could conflict with draft *Downtown Area Plan* policies. The City will review the Master Plan gateway treatment, building location, orientation and architectural design details for consistency with the *Downtown Area Plan* prior to issuance of various building permits.

With respect to the *Downtown Area Plan*, the proposed Master Plan does not explicitly address in detail how the future development would celebrate Redwood Creek through interpretive design (Policy 4.11), take advantage of views of landmarks and natural resources (Policy

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Table 3.3-1
Consistency of Proposed Project with Applicable Visual Quality/Urban Design Plans, Policies, and Guidelines

Policy	Consistent	Rationale
City of Redwood City Strategic General Plan		
Policy L-6. The City should promote the revitalization, upgrading, and beautification of the Downtown, other shopping centers, and existing strip commercial areas.	Expected	<p>The project, which will double the size of the Kaiser Medical Campus over a 22-year period, proposes to replace its existing inpatient and outpatient medical facilities in five phases. The Kaiser Campus, particularly as it expands, is an important market for the downtown merchants. Kaiser employees and members could benefit from a closer interaction with the Downtown District. Thoughtful siting and orientation of new campus buildings as well as the incorporation of stronger pedestrian linkages from the Medical Center to the Downtown District can help to foster a closer relationship to the downtown and promote its revitalization. High quality building design and landscape improvements of the Medical Center's Downtown gateway parcels can also help to create a positive downtown image. In addition, development of people-occupied building spaces that frame downtown streets as public spaces can foster greater pedestrian activity in the downtown.</p> <p>The Master Plan is conceptual and details of building design are not available at this stage in the planning process. The City will review gateway treatment, building orientation and design details prior to construction of structures proposed by the Master Plan, to ensure consistency with the <i>General Plan</i> and the <i>Kaiser Master Plan Urban Design Guidelines</i> for the Master Plan prior to construction.</p>
Policy O-7. The City should preserve and enhance small parcels of open space in developed areas, wherever practical, especially in those neighborhoods with the greatest park deficiency.	Yes	<p>The proposed Master Plan includes two plaza areas: a 37,000-square-foot Main Central Plaza between the Hospital and MOBs 2 and 3; and a 30,200-square-foot plaza adjacent to the Veterans Boulevard and between the Hospital and Parking Structure D (proposed hospital expansion area). Over time, these plazas would consist of pedestrian walkways, benches, trellises, deciduous shade trees, and a mixture of shrubs and ground covers.</p>

(Continued)

Table 3.3-1 (Continued)
Consistency of Proposed Project with Applicable Visual Quality/Urban Design Plans, Policies, and Guidelines

Policy	Consistent	Rationale
Policy O-8. Encourage the preservation of heritage trees as defined in the tree preservation ordinance.	Not applicable	Per the Initial Study, the proposed project site does not include any heritage trees as defined by the tree preservation ordinance. The City, as a condition of project approval, will require Kaiser to replace many of the non-heritage campus trees that may be lost as a result of the proposed project.
Policy C-7. The visual qualities of the community should be preserved and improved.	Yes	<p>Based on the preceding assessment and recommended mitigation, the project would not result in significant impacts to scenic views, scenic resources, or the visual quality of the site. If the Medical Center is developed as proposed, it would also provide more continuity in scale and height on the campus, improving the overall visual quality of the site.</p> <p>The Master Plan as submitted is conceptual and details of building design are not available at this stage in the planning process. However, the City will review gateway treatment, orientation and design details at the time of more complete plan submittals to ensure consistency with the General Plan policies and the <i>Kaiser Master Plan Urban Design Guidelines</i> for the Master Plan prior to construction.</p>
Redevelopment Plan for Redevelopment Project #2		
Land devoted to public purposes may include all public rights-of-way, accessways, public grounds, parking, open spaces and any other public and quasi-public uses which will enhance the potential of the Project. (Section V.4(A)) (This policy only addresses ‘public’ spaces.)	Yes	<p>If the Medical Center is developed as proposed it would be consistent with Section V.4(A) of the Redevelopment Plan, and would enhance public grounds through incorporation of public paving, perimeter street landscaping, lighting, signage, and improved public access to Redwood Creek.</p> <p>The Master Plan as submitted is conceptual and details of building design are not available at this stage in the planning process. However, the City will review gateway treatment, building location, orientation and design details to ensure consistency with the Redevelopment Plan policies and the <i>Kaiser Master Plan Urban Design Guidelines</i> for the Master Plan prior to construction.</p>

Source: EIP Associates, 2002.

4.13), or form a defined edge with visual interest at the pedestrian level (Policies 4.34 and 4.35). While these design aspects are expected to come into much greater focus as future buildings/projects are submitted to the City, the absence of discussion in the Master Plan means that these items may be inconsistent with the draft *Downtown Area Plan*.

The draft *Downtown Area Plan* also contains specific design recommendations for appearance and function of the Veterans Boulevard and Main Street streetscapes because of their role as a secondary gateway to downtown (Policy 4.41). The proposed project supports many of the urban design considerations. The Master Plan, however, does not address the undergrounding of utilities and major utility facilities that could have the beneficial effect of strengthening streetscapes and reinforcing the building edge along the sidewalks. For example, the storm drain pump station at the Veterans Boulevard/Maple Street intersection is housed in a large, boxy structure with appurtenant mechanical equipment visible. However, this pump station is not on Kaiser property nor is it part of the project. This street also contains overhead utility wires.

Kaiser Master Plan Urban Design Guidelines (Refer to Appendix C). The project could potentially be inconsistent with Policy 15 from the *Kaiser Master Plan Urban Design Guidelines* that specifies that parking structures should not exceed the height of occupied buildings. Six- and eight-level parking structures are proposed on Veterans Boulevard and Marshall Street and could be taller than adjacent four- and five-story medical office buildings at the Medical Center. A five-level parking structure is also proposed on Main Street adjacent to the proposed two-story Cancer Care Center (see Figure 2-7A).

The project could also conflict with Policy 18 from the *Kaiser Master Plan Urban Design Guidelines* that states that utilities should be undergrounded in conjunction with new construction wherever possible. Details of construction for utilities have not been specified in the Master Plan and could therefore potentially be inconsistent with this policy if they are built above ground; however, it is the intent of Kaiser to construct all utilities underground. In addition, the storm drain pump station, located at the Veterans Boulevard/Maple Street downtown gateway intersection on Redwood City property, provides services to properties in and around the Medical Center campus. If the City finds that a nexus can be established between the pump station and the Medical Center campus, Kaiser may be required to contribute their fair share towards visual improvements to this gateway intersection which may include one of the following options: undergrounding the entire pump station facility including overhead wires; undergrounding the overhead wires to the pump station and aesthetic improvements to the pump station facility; or only make aesthetic improvements to the pump station facility.

The project does not support Policy 24 from the *Kaiser Master Plan Urban Design Guidelines* that states that the parcel at Main Street and Veterans Boulevard should not be used for parking. The proposed project calls for a four-level Parking Structure B at this gateway location.

The project also could also be inconsistent with policies related to Redwood Creek included in both the *Kaiser Master Plan Urban Design Guidelines* and the *Downtown Area Plan*. Details of the Redwood Creek frontage are not available at this stage in the planning process and details of creek enhancement and connection to downtown have not been formulated. Therefore, the proposed project could potentially be inconsistent with envisioned improvements along the creek.

The project may also conflict with Policy 45 from the *Kaiser Master Plan Urban Design Guidelines* that states that a children's play area should be incorporated in an accessible indoor and outdoor space. A children's play area is not currently in the Master Plan, which could potentially result in conflict with the *Kaiser Master Plan Urban Design Guidelines*.

VQ-5. *Project Phasing* - *Under the proposed project and the Higher Occupancy Scenario, the Master Plan (if developed as proposed) would be implemented in five phases between 2003 and 2025. As portions of the campus could be under construction for lengthy periods of time, parts of the site could be unsightly and create a potentially significant visual impact. (See Table 2-9 and Figures 2-7A through 2-7I.) (PS)*

Since the project would be implemented in five phases over 22 years, between 2003 to 2025, various buildings on- and off-site would be demolished and constructed during different stages in the process. Phases I through V would include construction of the following buildings: MOB 1 during Phase I (2003); the Cancer Care Center Clinic Building (2004); Hospital and CUP, Parking Structure B, Parking Structure C with administrative building, and partial Main Plaza during Phase II (2009-2013); MOB 2 and the administrative building (west of Main) during Phase III (2010-2015); MOB 3, Parking Structure D, and the Main Plaza during Phase IV (2010-2020); and MOB 4 and Parking Structure E during Phase V (2011-2025).

As buildings are constructed and demolished, the campus would be further fragmented by partial development. As described in the setting section, the more modern style of the developed facilities could potentially be incompatible with existing temporary trailers currently located on the campus and with institutional and other varying architectural-style structures. A specific phase, for example Phase I of the Master Plan, would involve the development of the new, five-story, modern-style MOB 1 on the corner of Maple Street and Veterans Boulevard (2003). This new building would be 120,000 GSF, adjacent to Kaiser's existing traditional-architectural style eight-level parking structure. In addition, Kaiser's two-story concrete-block Cypress building would be maintained in its existing style until Phase IV, or roughly 2020, and would be located across Maple Street from the modern-architectural style building, MOB 1, to be constructed in 2003.

Phase II A through D (2004-2013) of the Master Plan would involve construction of the proposed Cancer Care Center (2004) on Main Street (east); and (2009-2013) demolition of the existing Central Utilities Plant (CUP), the existing Hospital, the MRI building, the Laurel and the Poplar buildings; and construction of the replacement Hospital, CUP, Parking Structure C with administrative building, Parking Structure B, an interim surface parking area and partial

open space area within the future Main Plaza, and an interim parking area between the Hospital and the Cypress building off Veterans Boulevard between 2004 and 2013. Demolition of the existing CUP would create an open lot area on Maple Street adjacent to the replacement Hospital. This area is designated for development as the Main Central Plaza for open space amenities, but the plaza would not be completed until Phase IV between 2015 to 2020. In the meantime, this area designated for a future Main Plaza would be partially used as a parking lot and partially as open green space, but would be considered visually altered and degraded by the changes. The lot between the replacement Hospital and the Cypress building would also be vacant and used for surface parking, and would similarly be altered and degraded by these changes.

Phasing would lead to multiple years between construction of various facilities and potentially vacant lots or open areas between construction on parcels such as the Main Plaza described above. The Phasing Plans (see Figures 2-7A through 2-7I) in Section 2, Project Description, depict the changes to individual parcels in more detail. Based on the possible fragmentation and inconsistency between campus buildings described above, the project could potentially create an adverse effect on the visual quality of the site. The Medical Center is located within an area that is currently developed and Kaiser would be responsible for maintenance, landscaping, and upkeep of the facilities in the interim. Some parts of the campus may also serve alternate purposes in the short-term, such as parking, and construction staging areas with the intention of future development. However, the project could result in a change to the visual character of the site surroundings through segmented construction that could last for 22 years. Therefore, impacts to the existing visual quality of the site would be potentially significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE. The following measures would reduce phased construction impacts on visual quality to less than significant. (LTS)

VQ-5.1 Implement Construction Demolition Phasing Plan to Reduce Visual Quality Degradation by Phased Construction. Prior to the start of construction, the project sponsor shall prepare and submit to the City a construction staging and demolition plan that addresses visual, noise, dust, odor, parking, and traffic impacts during the various stages of development. With respect to visual considerations, the project sponsor shall agree to make visual improvements to construction zones within a given development phase and between phases if the zone is not scheduled for construction activity or will remain unused for a period greater than six months. Construction zones subject to this mitigation measure shall be defined by the Community Development Director, and shall consider the size of the area, the nature of the construction activity, and the proximity or visibility of the area to public vantage points or residential uses. The visual improvements shall be implemented by the project contractor(s) and must be approved by the Community Development Director. The intent of these improvements is to aesthetically improve portions of the campus that would remain unimproved for an extended period and screen the

construction zone from view by passerbys along the public streets and sidewalks, or to make the zone usable for Kaiser employees, patients, and the public. Possible improvements include, but are not limited to, the following (if timelines other than six months are specified below, the shorter of six months or the time specified below shall apply):

- a. The project sponsor shall clear a construction zone of construction debris and remove construction equipment whenever construction is not anticipated for at least two weeks.
- b. If a site is a construction zone, but no construction activities are scheduled for more than one month, the project sponsor shall be responsible for regular garbage removal and watering of any existing landscaping.
- c. The project sponsor shall remove or visually treat fencing around construction zones that front onto a public street, an on-campus plaza, or Redwood Creek, in a manner deemed acceptable by the Community Development Director, in order to promote safety, connectivity through the site, and pedestrian friendliness.
- d. If a site is not in use as a construction zone for more than six months due to demolition or construction of a structure, the project sponsor shall improve the site with landscaping (e.g., trees, shrubs and groundcover), passive recreation/open space facilities (e.g., benches, picnic tables), decorative fencing and/or seating walls, and pedestrian and bicycle routes that connect to adjacent open spaces and pedestrian/bicycle networks as defined by and to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director.