
5. VISUAL FACTORS

This EIR chapter identifies potential visual impacts that may result from implementation of the proposed project. The analyses and descriptions in this chapter were formulated by the EIR consulting urban designer, Bottomley Design & Planning. The chapter describes the visual context of the project site and identifies relevant policies from the Redwood City Strategic General Plan, Redwood City Zoning Ordinance, and Redwood City Planning Division Urban Design Guidelines. The chapter also includes an assessment of viewshed impacts based on analysis of “before” and “after” visual simulations produced from key vantage points by the EIR visual simulation consultants, Environmental Vision. Mitigation measures are identified for potentially significant adverse visual impacts, keyed to the adopted City policies identified in section 5.2 (Pertinent Plans and Policies) and the CEQA-based significance criteria identified in subsection 5.3.1 (Significance Criteria).

The City of Redwood City is currently in the process of preparing a *Bayfront Study* that discusses new land use, urban design, and circulation guidelines for the project site. The *Bayfront Study* will help define and promote the community's vision for this unique portion of Redwood City. The study will specifically address issues of building height and architectural character.

5.1 SETTING

5.1.1 Visual Quality of the Site

(a) Existing Structures and Uses. The site is comprised of two distinct and separate properties: the southern Peninsula Marina property and the northern Pete's Harbor property. These properties are separated by the Bair Island Marina, the adjacent "Villas at Bair Island" apartments, and an 80-foot-wide PG&E easement over U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) land.

(1) *Peninsula Marina Property*. The Peninsula Marina property currently consists of three distinct subareas; north, central, and south (see Figure 3.3 in chapter 3, Project Description). The north subarea of the property is the former marina. The marina docks, slips, and pilings were removed in November 2001, leaving approximately 14.1 acres of open water, riprap/vegetated banks, and an abandoned road and parking area around the marina's perimeter. Along the Bair Island Road frontage there are a few evergreen trees, approximately 10 to 15 feet tall.

The central subarea of the Peninsula Marina property contains one 2-story and four 3-story

commercial buildings that overlook the former marina. These buildings are bordered on the south and east by a 754-space surface parking lot. The buildings are visible from the surrounding areas and have a "nautical" or Cape Cod theme consisting of grey clapboard with lighter trim and pitched roofs. Windows are recessed under pitched roof overhangs. There is minimal perimeter landscaping around the parking lot and buildings. The project site is approximately ten feet above Bair Island Road in this area, with a fairly steep slope topped by a row of evergreen trees about 15 feet tall.

In the south subarea of the Peninsula Marina property, the land is vacant, disturbed, and overgrown. This area is basically flat and lies at approximately the same elevation as Bair Island Road and slightly below the elevated adjacent U.S. 101 freeway (Highway 101). Informal paths cross the area from the Redwood Creek pedestrian bridge.

(2) *Pete's Harbor Property (Inner and Outer)*. The Inner Pete's Harbor property consists of a variety of uses surrounding an active approximately 2.9-acre/116-slip marina. From the Uccelli Boulevard approach, the appearance is somewhat cluttered and disorganized. There are several visually unrelated buildings, including a one-story clapboard residence surrounded by a fence and metal storage structures, a two-story wood-shingled restaurant/harbor master office, wooden outbuildings including the marina restrooms and a kiosk, a metal shed R.V. repair shop, and a variety of metal shipping containers and prefabricated storage sheds. There are also parked cars, boats, trailers, and trucks. The property is haphazardly landscaped, with palm trees, some top-of-bank ornamental plantings of perennials, shrubs and small trees, some weed and ice plant covered banks, and miscellaneous windbreak plantings of small evergreen trees and shrubs.

The Outer Pete's Harbor property includes a 147-slip marina.

(b) Existing Visual Character. The two properties of the project site are physically and visually separate, and distinct in character. The Peninsula Marina property is a coherent development in terms of building style, function, and layout. Pete's Harbor has an eclectic, somewhat random appearance that has evolved over time. Open water space is a central feature of each property, and waterways surround much of the site. However, the marinas are not visible from Bair Island Road or from much of the project site itself, although sailboat masts are visible in the active Pete's Harbor marina. Redwood Creek is not visible from the interior portions of the site. Smith and Steinberger Sloughs are visible north of the Marina Pointe townhouses, which are located across Bair Island Road, west of the project site.

5.1.2 Character of the Project Vicinity

(a) Overall Character of the Redwood City Bayfront Area. The visual quality of the Redwood City Bayfront Area is characterized by open and expansive views of horizon, sky, and the hills surrounding South San Francisco Bay. The viewshed extends from the Peninsula hills to the west; to Redwood Shores, Foster City and the San Mateo Bridge to the north; to the East Bay hills to the east; and to the Dumbarton Bridge and beyond to the south. Throughout the

Bayfront Area, shorelines and open inland areas provide views to marshlands, sloughs, and waterways. From many locations where water is not directly visible, the masts of docked or passing sailboats are visible indicators of the active waterways that are central to the Bayfront character.

For most of the Bayfront Area, including the project site, the foreground is defined by the height of mature trees, which is approximately 50 feet. Most existing development within the area is below or near this height, creating continuity of horizon that allows for distant views from surrounding areas.

(b) Adjacent Visual Features. The following visual features are adjacent to the project site:

(1) *East Bayshore Road.* Vehicular access to the project site is from the Whipple Avenue interchange at Highway 101 via East Bayshore Road. East Bayshore Road is a narrow frontage road that parallels Highway 101 and is separated by a chain-link topped K-rail. Along the north street frontage there are one-story buildings containing industrial and auto sales uses, and a 12-screen cinema complex with an extensive parking lot. Existing structures--metal shed buildings, glass-fronted auto showrooms and tilt-ups--are not consistent in architectural style, orientation, or relation to the street frontage. Parking lots, including car sales lots, dominate much of the frontage. Landscaping is intermittent.

(2) *Bair Island Road.* Across Bair Island Road from the southern end of site are one-story tilt-up buildings, surface parking, and the four-story Bayport Marina Plaza, a concrete block office building. This building is the tallest occupied structure in the immediate vicinity, and is located across from the Peninsula Marina office cluster. Marina Pointe, a compact development of two-story Mediterranean-style townhouses, is located just north of the Bayport Marina Plaza office building. Buildings are earth-toned stucco with shingled roofs, front porches, and perimeter landscaping.

(3) *Gap Area.* Separating the project site properties is an approximately 80-foot-wide swath of USFWS land on which Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) towers and overhead transmission lines are located. The approximately 204-foot-tall towers are the most prominent visual structures in the area; however, they are open-frame steel structures that do not block views. A parking lot for the Bair Island Wildlife Refuge occupies the western end of the USFWS land, while the eastern end remains an undeveloped field. Adjacent to the USFWS parcel are the "Villas at Bair Island," a marina/apartment complex. The buildings are four stories with housing above ground-level parking garages. The buildings are Mediterranean in style, with varied earth tone stucco facades articulated with balconies, arched openings, tile roofs, and varied roof lines. This high-density development (approximately 30 residential units per acre) is visually prominent from adjacent sites.

(4) *Surrounding Shorelines.* The Pete's Harbor property is surrounded by water on the west, north, and east. PG&E transmission towers and lines run north past the property's western edge, across the tip of Bair Island. The Bair Island Wildlife Refuge, part of the Don Edwards

San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, is located across Steinberger and Smith Sloughs to the west. Marshlands and tidal plains offer unobstructed views to the north and west. Across Redwood Creek to the east is Seaport Center, an office park of two- and three-story buildings that are composed primarily of tinted glass and concrete with flat roofs. There is mature landscaping and a perimeter jogging/bike path along the Seaport Center creek bank.

Across Redwood Creek from the Peninsula Marina property are vessels moored at Docktown Marina. The boats of Docktown are a varied collection of traditional houseboats, sailboats, cruisers, floating cabins, and barges. Beyond Docktown Marina, the sand and gravel mounds and industrial machinery of Granite Rock company are visible.

(5) *U.S. 101*. U.S. 101 (Highway 101) is adjacent to the southern tip of the project site. The highway is approximately 160 feet wide and is slightly elevated above the site as it crosses Redwood Creek. Across the highway south of the project site are one- to four-story office buildings. The tallest is a five-story office building at Walnut Street, about 1,000 feet south of the project site.

(c) Outer Seaport Boulevard. Farther east and northeast of the project site, the Port of Redwood City and its related industrial features dominate the landscape, including large storage tanks and silos, sand and gravel piles, and loading facilities. The tallest occupied structures are the five- and six-story glass and steel office buildings of the Pacific Shores Center at the east end of Seaport Boulevard. The tallest unoccupied structures are the storage silos on the RMC site at the northern tip of Seaport Boulevard next to Pacific Shores.

5.1.3 Views of the Project Site from Surrounding Areas

The Pete's Harbor property is surrounded on three sides by public waterways and shorelines, and is directly visible from these locations. The public trails and pedestrian paths of the Bair Island Wildlife Refuge and Seaport Center offer direct views of the Pete's Harbor property. The property is also directly visible from the Seaport Center's creekside office buildings, the "Villas at Bair Island," and a number of the Marina Pointe townhouses.

The Peninsula Marina property is visible from Bair Island Road and the properties on its north street frontage, the PG&E easement/Bair Island Wildlife Refuge parking lot, the "Villas at Bair Island," and Docktown. There are prominent views of the Peninsula Marina property from the Maple Street and Whipple Avenue overcrossings, which are major links between Downtown Redwood City and the greater Bayfront area. There is an unobstructed view of the Peninsula Marina property from both directions of U.S. 101.

The entire project site is clearly visible from the hillsides of Redwood City and adjacent communities. The site is also visible from the public trails along the southern perimeter of the Redwood Shores neighborhood.

5.1.4 Outward Views from the Project Site

From the Pete's Harbor property, views to the west and north include waterways and marshland, extending to the Peninsula hills, the large-scale office developments of Foster City and Redwood Shores, the San Mateo Bridge, and the East Bay hills. Views to the east and northeast across Redwood Creek are bounded by the Seaport Center office park. Views to the south are bounded by the "Villas at Bair Island."

Views from the Peninsula Marina property are more limited. To the north, the PG&E towers are visually prominent but do not block views. The view is bounded by the "Villas at Bair Island" across the marina and USFWS land. Views to the south and east across Redwood Creek are to the vessels of Docktown. Granite Rock and the South Bay hills are visible beyond the marsh and slough. To the south, U.S. 101 dominates the foreground view, with mid-rise office buildings on the opposite side of the freeway and the Peninsula hills clearly visible beyond. Views to the west are bounded by low-rise buildings, parking lots, the Bayport Marina Plaza office building, and adjacent Marina Pointe townhouses. From the northeast corner of the Peninsula Marina property, there are views to the north and west of Bair Island Wildlife Refuge, the Peninsula hills, Foster City, Redwood Shores, the San Mateo Bridge, and the East Bay hills.

5.2 PERTINENT PLANS AND POLICIES

Adopted City of Redwood City plans and policies regarding visual quality include provisions of the Redwood City Strategic General Plan, the Redwood City Zoning Ordinance, and the Redwood City Planning Division Urban Design Guidelines. These provisions are identified below for consideration in evaluating the visual impacts of the project. In addition, as noted in the introduction to this chapter, the *Bayfront Study*, currently under preparation, is anticipated to contain specific recommendations and guidelines drafted specifically for the Bayfront Area, including the project site. When completed, these guidelines are intended to be directly pertinent to consideration and refinement of the proposed project design and its visual aspects.

5.2.1 Relevant Strategic General Plan Policies

The Redwood City Strategic General Plan contains few policies related specifically to visual quality, though a number are related indirectly. These are contained in the *Land Use, Open Space, and Conservation Elements*, as listed below.

- *Residential neighborhoods should be protected from the encroachment of incompatible activities or land uses which may have a negative impact on the residential living environment.* (Land Use Policy L-1, page 6-5)
- *Achieve and maintain a harmonious relationship between the natural environment and man's use of the land.* (Open Space Objective 1, page 9-3)
- *The City should preserve and enhance the natural terrain, vegetation, and beauty of*

Redwood City's various geographical areas. (Open Space Policy O-5, page 9-3)

- *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.* (Open Space Policy O-7, page 9-4)
- *Environmentally unique open spaces such as San Francisco Bay, its tributaries, sloughs, and marshlands should be protected and enhanced for conservation and recreation purposes.* (Conservation Policy C-3, page 10-4)
- *The visual qualities of the community should be preserved and improved.* (Conservation Policy C-7, page 10-4)

5.2.2 Other Pertinent City-Adopted Policies

In addition to the pertinent adopted General Plan policies listed above, the Redwood City City Council adopted the following more recent relevant policy on September 10, 2001:

- *It is the policy of the City of Redwood City that in the design of public and private projects, high priority be given to creating comfortable, enjoyable, and aesthetically pleasing public spaces.*

5.2.3 Relevant Zoning Ordinance Provisions

The Redwood City Zoning Ordinance contains regulations applicable to the site, including height regulations for the *General Commercial*-zoned Peninsula Marina property. It also contains standards to be specifically applied in the approval of Architectural Permit applications and the Precise Plan application, which would be required for the proposed project. Provisions relevant to visual factors are listed below.

(a) Article 15--CG (General Commercial) District (Section 15.5--Height Regulations):

- *No structure shall exceed seventy-five (75) feet in height.*

(b) Article 45--Architectural Permits (Section 45.8--Architectural Standards). In approving, conditionally approving, or denying any application for an Architectural Permit, the Zoning Administrator shall base his action upon the following factors:

- *A. The existence of sufficient variety in the design of the structure and grounds to avoid monotony in the external appearance;*
- *B. The size and design of the structure shall be considered for the purpose of determining that the structure is in proportion to its building site and that it has a balance and unity among its external features so as to present a harmonious appearance;*

- *C. The extent to which the structure conforms to the general character of other structures in the vicinity insofar as the character can be ascertained and is found to be architecturally desirable;*
- *D. The extent to which excessive ornamentation is to be used and the extent to which temporary and second-hand materials, or materials which are imitative of other materials, are to be used;*
- *E. The extent to which natural features, including trees, shrubs, creeks, and rocks, and the natural grade of the site are to be retained;*
- *G. The reservation of landscaping areas for the purposes of separating or screening service and storage areas from the street and adjoining building sites, breaking up large expanses of paved areas, separating or screening parking lots from the street and adjoining buildings sites, and separating building areas from paved areas to provide access from buildings to open space areas;*
- *H. In the case of any commercial or industrial structure, the Zoning Administrator shall consider its proximity to any [residential] R District and shall consider the effect of the proposed structure upon the character and value of the adjacent R District area.*

(c) Planned Community District/Precise Plan. On December 2, 2002, the Redwood City City Council adopted Ordinance No. 1130-315, which amended the Zoning Ordinance to add the *Planned Community District* (P District), which "is designed to provide for those uses, or combination of uses, appropriately requiring flexibility under controlled conditions not otherwise attainable under other districts." A Precise Plan must be adopted simultaneously with a P District, but a project-specific Precise Plan cannot be adopted until the required CEQA documentation for the project (in this case, an EIR) is certified by the City Council. Therefore, the adoption of a Precise Plan for the proposed project can be decided upon by the City Council only after this EIR is certified.

5.2.4 Redwood City Planning Division Urban Design Guidelines

(a) Introduction. The Redwood City Planning Division Urban Design Guidelines were drafted primarily for application in Downtown Redwood City; however, the text of the Guidelines does not limit their application solely to Downtown. The project site is one of a limited number of areas in Redwood City in which heights and density of development comparable to Downtown are contemplated. The Guidelines address a number of specific visual issues which apply to the proposed project, including sunlight and massing, setbacks, and landscape requirements. In summary, the Guidelines seek to improve the quality of individual projects, and this is controlled by the consideration of two important factors:

- ***Harmony***, which looks at how a project relates to its environment

- **Compatibility**, which is concerned with developing the most successful design for a given use...

The following Guidelines are pertinent to consideration of the project:

(b) Site Design and Project Orientation Guidelines:

- *Projects shall be designed to enhance the particular characteristics of their environment and specific aspects of the visual quality of the community...*
- *Natural sunlight provisions shall be encouraged for all projects, particularly in the case of residential developments and public and private outdoor areas. Buildings shall be stepped back where bulk and building mass issues arise.*
- *Building facades shall be stepped back from the street ... in order to avoid a "slab-like" appearance which generates strong wind conditions.*
- *Excessive density and bulk shall be disallowed for new developments...*
- *Bulk reduction in the form of additional setbacks at the upper floors of buildings should be integrated in the building design at stages appropriate to the overall mass of the building.*
 - *For structures over 30 and under 60 feet in height, a one-foot setback is recommended for every two feet in height above the third story or 30 feet, whichever is highest.*
 - *For structures over 60 feet in height, a one-foot setback is recommended for every foot above the sixth story, or 60 feet, whichever is highest.*
- *The bases of all buildings fronting on streets shall relate to the pedestrian scale by incorporating various amenities such as well-defined entrance areas, outdoor courtyards, public/private seating, and appropriate lighting conditions. The use of arcades, trellises, colonnades, landscaped pathways, judiciously located porches or porticos, and aesthetically designed entrance ways are also recommended for enhancing the streetscape.*
- *Parking facilities shall be less prominent than the principal structures which they serve, unless they are of exemplary architectural design quality.*
- *A sense of visual continuity with the adjacent structures, local streetscape, and general area shall be maintained.*

(c) Building Design Guidelines:

- *New developments ... shall be designed to relate to the general proportion, scale, and bulk of the surrounding area.*

(d) Landscaping Design Guidelines:

- *The general environmental characteristics of the site shall be respected, including orientation, views, drainage, and other site-specific conditions which determine the selection of plant materials as well as the appropriate location of appurtenances (including open space areas, windows and door placements, and drainage lines).*

5.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

5.3.1 Significance Criteria

Based on the CEQA Guidelines, the proposed project would be considered to have a significant impact on visual quality if it would:

- (1) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of the City of Redwood City (including, but not limited to, the Redwood City Strategic General Plan and Zoning Ordinance), the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), or the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect;¹
- (2) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;²
- (3) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings;³
- (4) Require substantial terrain modifications;
- (5) Significantly alter public views or view corridors;

¹CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G, item IX(b).

²CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G, item I(a).

³CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G, item I(c).

- (6) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area;⁴ or
- (7) Result in a building scale that is not consistent with the surrounding community.

5.3.2 Visual Simulations

Five viewpoints have been selected as representative of project visibility. They have been used to simulate the project in “photo-montage” form, using computer-generated visual simulation techniques. The simulations were independently prepared by Environmental Vision, EIR visual analysis and computer modeling consultants. Factors considered in selecting the viewpoints included relative project visibility, the number and sensitivity of viewers, and effects on views from public open spaces. The locations of the five viewpoints are identified on Figure 5.1, and described below:

- *Viewpoint 1* (Figure 5.2): Bair Island Wildlife Refuge Public Trail. The trails on Bair Island are used by about 250,000 visitors annually. The view is from the trailhead, looking east.
- *Viewpoint 2* (Figure 5.3): Highway 101 Southbound Near Whipple Avenue. Highway 101 is the Peninsula’s major regional and local transportation route. Based on Caltrans’ most recent counts (August 1998), approximately 116,500 vehicles per day pass this location. The view is to the southeast.
- *Viewpoint 3* (Figure 5.4): Highway 101 Northbound at Seaport Boulevard. Based on Caltrans’ most recent counts (August 1998), approximately 106,300 vehicles per day pass this location. The view is to the northeast.
- *Viewpoint 4* (Figure 5.5): Maple Street/Highway 101 Overcrossing. Maple Street will become an important link between Downtown Redwood City and the Bayfront area. This viewpoint is a primary “gateway” to the Bayfront area in general and the project site specifically. The view is from the northbound lanes looking northwest.
- *Viewpoint 5* (Figure 5.6): Edgewood Park. Edgewood Park is a popular public open space in the Redwood City hills. The view is also representative of views from a large portion of Redwood City’s hillside residential areas. The view is looking northeast.

Photographs were created by Environmental Vision using a 35 mm single lens reflex (SLR) camera with lenses ranging from 28 mm (Maple Street panorama) to 50 mm (Edgewood Park), and view angles ranging from 40 degrees (Edgewood Park) to 93 degrees (Maple Street panorama).

⁴CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G, item I(d).

Figure 5.1. Viewpoint Locations.

Figure 5.2. Viewpoint 1: From Bair Island Looking East.

Figure 5.3. Viewpoint 2: From Highway 101 Southbound near Whipple Avenue.

Figure 5.4. Viewpoint 3: From Highway 101 Northbound near Seaport Boulevard On-Ramp.

Figure 5.5. Viewpoint 4: From Maple Street Overcrossing.

Figure 5.6. Viewpoint 5: From Edgewood Park.

Figures 5.2 through 5.6 illustrate “before” and “after” visual conditions. The simulations show the location, scale, and visual appearance of anticipated project buildings and landscape features based on an objective analytical and computer modeling process. The images are accurate within the constraints of available site and project data. The architectural details depicted in the simulations were derived from project plans and elevations provided by the project architects. At this initial Precise Plan/Planned Development Permit application stage, the proposed project design, including architectural details, is conceptual and may change over time.

5.3.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impact 5-1: Project Inconsistency with City Height-Related Policies and Regulations. The City's General Plan states that "The visual qualities of the community should be preserved and improved" (Policy C-7). For *General Commercial* zoned properties such as the Peninsula Marina property, the City's Zoning Ordinance stipulates, "*No structure shall exceed seventy-five (75) feet in height.*" For *Residential Combining District* zoned properties such as the Pete's Harbor property, the Zoning Ordinance stipulates that building heights shall be determined through the City's design review (Architectural Permit) process. With respect to both the Peninsula Marina and Pete's Harbor properties, Article 25 of the City's Municipal Code states that the approval, conditional approval, or denial of any application for an Architectural Permit (the project will require design review and Architectural Permit approval) shall be based on, among other listed factors, "*The extent to which the structure conforms to the general character of other structures in the vicinity insofar as the character can be ascertained and is found to be architecturally desirable.*"

The proposed project, as presented by the applicant for review in this EIR, would include 13 residential towers ranging from 240 to 260 feet in height, 12 mid-rise residential and two office buildings of 74 to 84 feet in height, and two-story townhouses and retail buildings approximately 24 feet in height. The proposed residential towers on the Peninsula Marina property, which would extend up to approximately 260 feet, would exceed the current 75-foot height limit by up to approximately 185 feet. Assuming the same 75-foot limitation is applied to the Pete's Harbor property in the interest of "*conforming to the general character*" of project structures on the Peninsula Marina property, the proposed residential towers on the Pete's Harbor property, which would extend to approximately 240 feet, would exceed this height by up to 165 feet.

(continued)

Impact 5-1 (continued)

Unless the City approves the applicant-requested Precise Plan for the project site which permits these heights, the heights would be inconsistent with City policies and regulations. These heights would also result in a building scale that is not consistent with the existing surrounding community. These building heights would therefore represent a **significant adverse visual impact** (see criteria 1, 2, 5, and 7 in subsection 5.3.1, "Significance Criteria," above).

Mitigation 5-1. Implement one of the following two alternative mitigations:

- *Mitigation Alternative 5-1-1:* Reduce the maximum project building heights on both properties to 75 feet, which would reduce this policy and regulatory consistency impact to a **less-than-significant level**.

OR

- *Mitigation Alternative 5-1-2:* Adopt a Precise Plan for the project site that permits a building height in excess of 75 feet, and design the project accordingly. In conjunction with the new height allowance, formulate a set of *Precise Plan Standards and Guidelines* for the project site for adoption by the City's Architectural Review Committee, Planning Commission, and City Council that supersede current applicable City policies, standards, and guidelines pertaining to building form, height, shadow, conformity, setbacks, facades, etc., and permit current height limitations to be exceeded on the project site, provided that other specific provisions included in these *Design Standards and Guidelines* are incorporated into the project design to City (Architectural Review Committee) satisfaction. These measures would eliminate the project's policy and regulatory inconsistencies with respect to building height, but would not reduce the associated building scale inconsistencies to a less-than-significant level, and thus would result in a **significant unavoidable visual impact** (i.e., would require City adoption of a Statement of Overriding Considerations).

Impact 5-2: Visual Impacts on Views and Vistas and on the Character of the Surrounding Area. Current development and vegetation form a base visual plane that is approximately 50 feet in height and merges with the horizon as seen from surrounding areas. Proposed project buildings would extend significantly above this plane, impacting the visual quality characteristic of the Bayfront Area. The proposed project, as presented by the applicant for review in this EIR, would include 13 residential towers ranging from 240 to 260 feet in height, 12 mid-rise residential and two office buildings of 74 to 84 feet in height, and two-story townhouses and retail buildings approximately 24 feet in height. The proposed residential towers would extend approximately 190 to 210 feet above the 50-foot base plane. The mid-rise elements of the project extend approximately 24 to 34 feet above the plane. A portion of sky and distant views would be blocked, shifting the focus of views from natural features to the project development in the foreground.

As a result, the proposed project would have a substantial adverse effect on surrounding scenic vistas and would significantly alter public views and view corridors. The project would substantially alter the existing visual character of the surrounding area, which is currently characterized by open and expansive natural views. The project would diminish the quality of these views from numerous vantage points, including adjacent residential, commercial, and recreational areas, Highway 101, the Whipple Avenue and Maple Street overpasses, and the western hills. As a result, the project would have a **significant visual impact** on the character of the surrounding area (see criteria 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 in subsection 5.3.1, "Significance Criteria," above).

The visual quality of the overall Bayfront Area is created by the openness associated with marshes, waterways, and the Bay beyond. Clear and unobstructed views, a broad visual horizon, and an uninterrupted expanse of sky are key elements. Current development and vegetation forms a base visual plane that is approximately 50 feet in height and merges with the horizon as seen from surrounding areas. Proposed project buildings would extend significantly above this plane, impacting the visual quality characteristic of the Bayfront Area.

The project's visual effects are illustrated by the photo-simulations and described below.

- **Viewpoint 1** (Figure 5.2): Bair Island Wildlife Refuge Public Trail. Project buildings would extend above the base plane. From this distance and perspective, the towers would appear to be approximately five times the height of the base plane. The view focus would be shifted from the distant horizon to the foreground development. Vegetation along Pete's Harbor would be replaced by the facades of high- and mid-rise buildings.

- *Viewpoint 2* (Figure 5.3): Highway 101 Southbound Near Whipple Avenue. Project buildings would extend above the base plane. The towers would appear to be approximately three times the height of the base plane.
- *Viewpoint 3* (Figure 5.4): Highway 101 Northbound at Seaport Boulevard. Project buildings would extend above the base plane. The towers would appear to be approximately three times the height of the base plane. Mid-rise and high-rise buildings would block views to the northern Peninsula hills, including views to San Bruno Mountain.
- *Viewpoint 4* (Figure 5.5): Maple Street/Highway 101 Overcrossing. Project buildings would extend above the base plane. The towers would extend above the base plane and would appear to be approximately four times the height of the base plane. The base visual plane in this photo is created by existing trees and the Redwood City Police substation in the foreground.
- *Viewpoint 5* (Figure 5.6): Edgewood Park. Project buildings would block views to portions of Redwood Creek, the Port of Redwood City, Seaport Center, portions of the Cargill Salt Ponds, and First and Westpoint Sloughs. Other than the two residences in the foreground, the project buildings would be the most prominent structures in the viewshed. From this distance and perspective, the project towers would appear to be approximately twice as tall as the RMC silos at the northerly end of Seaport Boulevard.

According to calculations prepared by the project applicant in April 2002, building footprints would cover approximately 43 percent of the site. Over 70 percent of that area would consist of buildings between 74 and 260 feet in height. Illustrative project cross-sections have been prepared by the EIR urban design consultant, Bottomley Design & Planning, to illustrate project relationships to the surrounding creeks and sloughs, and to the existing 50-foot visual base plane (see Figures 5.7 through 5.9). As the project cross-sections and the visual simulations illustrate, the project buildings would block views of the sky and distant hills from surrounding areas. View corridors between residential towers would be narrow, and depending on the viewpoint, would disappear entirely, creating an appearance of solid building mass.

The Redwood City Strategic General Plan *Open Space Element* (Policy O-5) states that the City should preserve and enhance the natural terrain, vegetation, and beauty of Redwood City's various geographical areas. *Conservation Element* Policy C-7 states that the visual qualities of the community should be preserved and improved. The Urban Design Guidelines state that projects shall be designed to enhance the particular characteristics of their environment and specific aspects of the visual quality of the community. The proposed project's intrusion above the existing visual horizon plane, and associated blocking of views,

Figure 5.7.

Figure 5.8.

Figure 5.9.

would detract from the visual qualities that characterize the Bayfront Area. Such conditions may be inconsistent with certain City policies and guidelines (see section 5.2, Pertinent Plans and Policies).

The Redwood City Strategic General Plan Conservation Element (Policy C-3) states that environmentally unique open spaces such as San Francisco Bay, its tributaries, sloughs, and marshlands, should be protected and enhanced for conservation and recreation purposes. Publicly accessible waterways and waterfront trails border the project site. The cross-sections illustrated on Figure 5.9 indicate the change in visual enclosure that would occur along adjacent waterways and trails as a result of the project. In general, angles of enclosure along the project site would double (e.g., as indicated by Section B-B, increasing from approximately 15 degrees to 30 degrees). This enclosure would significantly impact the natural character and openness associated with adjacent trails and waterways.

Mitigation 5-2. Implement the one following two alternative mitigations:

- *Mitigation Alternative 5-2-1:* Reduce project building heights to approximately 50 feet to merge with the visual base plane of the project site. At this height, buildings would not obstruct existing views of the sky and surrounding hills to a greater degree than existing buildings and vegetation. The buildings may be screened by perimeter trees, blending the project more sensitively into the natural Bayfront surroundings. (A similar condition currently exists along the Redwood Creek frontage of Seaport Center.) Also, set back project buildings from adjacent waterways and public trails to retain a more expansive open space character. The angle of enclosure created by new buildings generally should not exceed the angle created by existing trees and buildings which line Redwood Creek and Steinberger Slough. Implementation of these measures would reduce this impact (Visual Impacts on Views and Vistas and on the Character of the Surrounding Area) to a ***less-than-significant level***.

OR

- *Mitigation Alternative 5-2-2:* Implement *Mitigation Alternative 5-1-2* (adoption of a Precise Plan). Implementation of this measure would reduce the degree of project impacts on views and vistas and on the character of the surrounding area, but not to a less- than-significant level, and thus would result in a ***significant unavoidable visual impact*** (i.e., would require City adoption of a Statement of Overriding Considerations).

Impact 5-3: General Visual Compatibility Impact. The project's architectural

design concept is generally compatible with attractive new development in the immediate vicinity. However, the proposed project would substantially increase the height, mass, scale, and intensity of development on the site. The project's 13 residential towers, averaging 250 feet in height, would be over five times the height of the tallest structures in the immediate vicinity. The mid-rise residential and office buildings would be approximately two times the height of the tallest structures in the immediate vicinity. The project height would have a **significant visual compatibility impact** (see criteria 1 and 7 in subsection 5.3.1, "Significance Criteria," above).

Existing buildings in the surrounding area are typically low-rise structures of four stories or less. Approaching the project site from the west, the only structures over two stories in height are the four-story Bayport Marina Plaza office building and the Marina Pointe townhouses, which are two stories over garages. The "Villas at Bair Island" apartments, located between Peninsula Marina and Pete's Harbor, are three stories over a ground floor parking podium. Across Redwood Creek are Docketown's one- and two-story houseboats and Seaport Center's two- and three-story offices. Across Highway 101, the tallest building adjacent to the highway is a five-story office building approximately 1,000 feet south of the project site. The only structures of any significant height in the Bayfront Area are the RMC storage silos, over a mile to the northeast. The largest and most recent development in the greater Bayfront Area is Pacific Shores Center, which is also over a mile from the project site and consists of five- and six-story office buildings.

The proposed project's 13 residential towers, averaging 250 feet in height, would be over five times the height of the Bayport Marina Plaza office building or the "Villas at Bair Island." The project's mid-rise residential and office buildings, at six to nine stories, would be approximately 1.5 to 2 times the height of these adjacent structures. Figures 5.7 and 5.9 indicate the relative heights of buildings in the immediate vicinity to the heights of the project buildings. The height, mass, scale, and intensity of proposed project is inconsistent with that of the surrounding community.

The Redwood City Strategic General Plan Conservation Element (Policy C-7) states that the visual qualities of the community should be preserved and improved. The Peninsula Marina property is zoned *CG--General Commercial*. Zoning Ordinance section 15.5 states that no structure in an area zoned *General Commercial* shall exceed 75 feet in height. The Pete's Harbor property is zoned *CG-R--General Commercial-Residential Combining*, which does not have a maximum height limit for the residential portion of a parcel over 150 feet in average width and over 40,000 square feet in site area (e.g., the Pete's Harbor property), but which does have to meet the requirements for a Planned Development Permit. The Urban Design Guidelines (Site Design and Project Orientation Guidelines) state that a sense of visual continuity with the adjacent structures, local streetscape, and general area shall be maintained. The Guidelines (Building Design Guidelines) also state, "New developments... shall be designed to relate to the general proportion, scale, and bulk of the surrounding area." The height, mass, scale, and intensity of project is not consistent with Policy C-7, Zoning

Ordinance section 15.5, and the Urban Design Guidelines.

The project's design and materials are visually compatible with the architectural quality of newer development in the Bayfront area, such as Pacific Shores and the "Villas at Bair Island." The project would be more visually compatible with new area development than the existing variety of storage structures and unrelated buildings at Pete's Harbor, or with the vacant land at the southern end of the project site.

Mitigation 5-3. Implement one of the following two alternative mitigations:

- *Mitigation Alternative 5-3-1:* Reduce project building heights to a maximum of four stories and/or 50 feet, consistent with the general scale of adjacent and nearby development. Orient project buildings to relate to existing adjacent buildings and open spaces (also see *Mitigation 5-5*). Implementation of this measure would reduce general visual compatibility impact to a **less-than-significant level**.

OR

- *Mitigation Alternative 5-3-2:* Implement *Mitigation Alternative 5-1-2* (adoption of a Precise Plan). This mitigation would substantially reduce project visual compatibility impacts, but not to a less-than-significant level, and thus would result in a **significant unavoidable visual impact** (i.e., would require City adoption of a Statement of Overriding Considerations).

Impact 5-4: Potential Light and Glare Impacts. Lighting in the outdoor spaces of the proposed project and interior lighting emanating from structures could create light and glare impacts on surrounding residences, commercial properties, and recreational areas. Additionally, daytime light reflection from the windows of the tower structures could create glare impacts on the surrounding areas. These effects may have a **potentially significant impact** (see criteria 1 and 6 in subsection 5.3.1, "Significance Criteria," above).

The proposed project would contain roadways, circulation paths, and open spaces at ground level, and semi-private circulation, recreation, and open spaces at podium level (approximately 36 feet aboveground). Lighting of these outdoor spaces could create light and glare impacts on the adjacent residences (including Marina Pointe, the "Villas at Bair Island," and houseboats and live-aboards at Docketown and Outer Pete's Harbor), offices, commercial uses, and public recreational areas. Nighttime lighting emanating from the residential towers and mid-rise residential and office buildings could similarly create light and glare impacts on

the same adjacent areas.

Nighttime lighting would make the project's structures a prominent visual feature of the area, highly visible from nearby and distant residences and public areas. Nighttime lighting would illuminate the buildings above the visual base plane; interfere with "dark sky" views of sky, stars, and horizon; and emphasize the disparity in height and mass between project buildings and surrounding structures. These effects may have a potentially significant impact.

Discussion under *Impact 5-2* (Visual Impacts on Views and Vistas and on the Character of the Surrounding Area) and *Impact 5-3* (General Visual Compatibility Impact) are relevant to potential light and glare impacts.

Mitigation 5-4. Implement the following measures:

- Design project lighting to confine illumination to the project site, minimizing light spillage to adjacent residences, offices, commercial uses, and public open space and recreational areas. Use cut-off fixtures for outdoor areas. Provide structural or vegetative screening from sensitive adjacent uses.
- Reduce project building heights to approximately 50 feet, as noted in *Mitigation Alternatives 5-2-1 and 5-3-1*, to minimize interference with dark sky views. If buildings taller than 50 feet are developed, some degree of tinting should be considered for glazing to reduce the nighttime visual impact of residential units.

Implementation of these measures would reduce potential light and glare impacts to a ***less-than-significant level***.

Impact 5-5: Shadow Impacts. The project would cast substantial shadows on adjacent residential, commercial, office, and public waterfront areas during part of the year. Additionally, a significant portion of the buildings and open space within the project site would be shadowed throughout the year.

Project buildings would cast shadows during morning hours September through March over portions of the Marina Pointe townhouses and Outer Pete's Harbor. During the longest shadow periods in December, project buildings would also cast shadows over portions of the Bair Island Wildlife Refuge in the morning; over the "Villas at Bair Island" and Bair Island Marina throughout the day; and over Redwood Creek and offices of Seaport Center during the afternoon. Portions of the proposed public park on the USFWS parcel would be in shadow throughout the afternoon hours of September through March.

These shadowing effects, as illustrated by Figures 5.10 through 5.15 in this EIR, would have a **significant visual impact** (see criteria 1 and 3 in subsection 5.3.1, "Significance Criteria," above).

Shadow analysis diagrams have been prepared by Environmental Vision using plans and elevations provided by the project architects. The longest and shortest shadow periods during the four seasons are illustrated in Figures 5.10 through 5.15. Redwood City Strategic General Plan Land Use Element Policy L-1 states, "*Residential neighborhoods should be protected from... land uses which may have a negative impact on the residential living environment.*" The shadows cast by the proposed project would have a potentially significant impact on the residences surrounding the project site, substantially degrading the visual quality of the site and its surroundings.

Within the project site, a significant portion of buildings and public open space would be in shadow throughout the year. During the longest shadow period, shown in the December diagrams (Figures 5.10 through 5.12), almost all open space would be shaded with the exception of the pedestrian path along Redwood Creek at the south end of the site. In fact, this section of shoreline path is the only open space within the project site that would not be in shade throughout much of the year. Public walkways within the project surround the proposed canals, which are oriented east-west. Adjacent towers and building masses would block southerly sun angles to these spaces. The effect from September through March (Figures 5.13 through 5.15) would be patches of light moving through dark open spaces over the course of the day, rather than patches of shadow moving through sunlit open spaces. The placement of trees as shown in the applicant's landscape plans (Figures 3.7 through 3.9 in chapter 3, Project Description) compounds the shading effect along a number of the public pathways and open spaces.

Figure 5.10. Project Shadow Patterns: Summer and Winter Mornings.

Figure 5.11. Project Shadow Patterns: Summer and Winter at Noon.

Figure 5.12. Project Shadow Patterns: Summer and Winter Afternoons.

Figure 5.13. Project Shadow Patterns: Spring and Fall Mornings.

Figure 5.14. Project Shadow Patterns: Spring and Fall at Noon.

Figure 5.15. Project Shadow Patterns: Spring and Fall Afternoons.

Redwood City Strategic General Plan Open Space Element Policy O-7 states, "The City should preserve and *enhance* small parcels of open space in developed areas..." (emphasis added). The Urban Design Guidelines state that natural sunlight provisions shall be encouraged for all projects, particularly in the case of residential developments and public and private outdoor areas. The degree of shadowing in project open spaces would reduce rather than enhance the quality of open space and recreational opportunities within the project site, rendering such opportunities less attractive and functional, especially during winter months when solar access is most important.

Mitigation 5-5. Implement one of the following two alternative mitigations:

- *Mitigation Alternative 5-5-1:* Reduce in height, step back, and/or relocate the towers within the proposed project to reduce shadow impacts on sensitive areas and uses, including perimeter waterways, recreational and public open spaces, residences, and internal project water areas and pedestrian courtyards. Minimize winter shadow impacts on Smith Slough/Outer Pete's Harbor, the Marina Pointe townhouses, and the "Villas at Bair Island"/Bair Island Marina. Implementation of this mitigation would reduce project shadow impacts to a ***less-than-significant level***.

OR

- *Mitigation Alternative 5-5-2:* Implement *Mitigation Alternative 5-1-2* (adoption of a Precise Plan). This mitigation would substantially reduce project visual compatibility impacts, but not to a less-than-significant level, and thus would result in a ***significant unavoidable visual impact*** (i.e., would require City adoption of a Statement of Overriding Considerations).

Impact 5-6: Inconsistency with City Urban Design Objectives. The proposed project, as presented by the applicant for review in this EIR, would not create the on- and off-site design relationships necessary for successful achievement of the City's urban design objectives (i.e., the Redwood City Planning Division Urban Design Guidelines). The proposed project buildings would not relate adequately to adjacent public spaces, including Bair Island Road, Redwood Creek, and perimeter public trails. On the current project plans, residential towers do not appear arranged to create a distinctive skyline composition, and they shade unique, publicly accessible open space areas. Open space and landscape design aspects of the project are at a preliminary stage, and the character and function of internal and perimeter project open spaces are not yet readily discernible. Nevertheless, the project would be

inconsistent with City-adopted urban design objectives and would have incompatible, visually adverse effects on adjacent development and the quality of adjacent public spaces. These effects would constitute a **significant adverse visual impact** (see criteria 1, 3, 5, and 7 in subsection 5.3.1, "Significance Criteria," above).

(a) Background. As noted in subsection 5.2.4, the Redwood City Planning Division Urban Design Guidelines provide a degree of urban design policy guidance, as does the City's "Nice Places Policy" cited in subsection 5.2.2. However, when completed, the *Bayfront Study* will provide the City's most specific urban design and development guidelines for the project site and surrounding Bayfront Area. The impact discussion in this section reflects a combination of generally accepted urban design principles, existing City policies, and community input received to date on the *Bayfront Study*.

The goal of urban design is to create a city or town that adds up to more than the sum of its physical parts. This requires that buildings, streets, and community open spaces relate to one another. Social interaction is encouraged. Buildings face streets and other important open spaces. Internally oriented developments and clashing building styles are discouraged. Special streets, buildings, and open spaces are designed and located to function as attractive and memorable community landmarks.

Public space--primarily of streets, pedestrian ways, parks, and small open spaces--holds a community together. A key aspect of urban design is configuring development to orient to and add value to public spaces. Cities and towns are a collective investment, and sharing investment through the medium of public space adds value to the community-at-large.

(b) Project-Related Public Spaces. Public and publicly accessible spaces on the project site and in the immediate vicinity include Bair Island Road, the PG&E/USFWS lands, pedestrian and bicycle pathways proposed around the perimeter of the project site, internal project water areas, and the external waterways that border the site (Redwood Creek and Smith Slough). In urban design terms, these public spaces should establish a framework for project site planning and building orientation.

(c) Project Layout and Building Orientation. On the proposed project plans presented by the applicant for review in this EIR (see chapter 3, Project Description), project buildings and internal open spaces are arranged on an architectural grid, with the long axis of buildings oriented east/west to parallel internal project water areas. This orientation generally ensures that publicly accessible spaces within the project are "positive" (i.e., intentionally shaped) and contributes to an intricate and interesting public space network. However, such an arrangement results in "negative," unintentional, and seemingly leftover spaces along Bair Island Road, Redwood Creek, and perimeter public pathways. Rather than face or orient to these existing public spaces, buildings and project courtyards abut them at a variety of angles. As a result, oblique building masses and triangular spaces alternate in an irregular fashion along the perimeter of the project.

The Bair Island Road frontage on the Peninsula Marina property appears haphazard, without

coherent building lines or setbacks. No project building faces the street directly. The corners of three 23-story residential towers abut Redwood Creek directly across from the houseboats of Docktown which line the waterway. Buildings on the Pete's Harbor property are configured out of parallel with the adjacent "Villas at Bair Island"; a corner of one of the project mid-rise buildings appears to be located within ten feet of the adjacent "Villas at Bair Island" property line.

Buildings directly south of the PG&E/USFWS lands and the proposed public park face and frame the area in an orderly arrangement. The mid-rise project building along Uccelli Drive on the Pete's Harbor property aligns with the street and adjacent Villas apartment buildings in an orderly way as well.

The northerly edge and point of the project site provides attractive and dramatic views of Redwood Creek, Smith Slough, the Bair Island Wildlife Refuge, adjacent wetland areas, and Seaport Center's waterfront trail. Project plans indicate three 21-story towers, including two- and three-story parking garages, adjacent to this area, with one tower located within the northern point. Though public space along the waterfront is indicated in project plans, these buildings are likely to dominate this waterfront area visually, potentially making it seem less public than intended. These buildings would shade the public space provided during a significant portion of the year as noted previously (see *Impact 5-5, Shadow Impacts*), making the space less attractive to potential open space users.

(d) Building Height and Composition. As illustrated by the project plans and photo-simulations, residential towers do not appear arranged to create an intentional overall "skyline" design composition. Tower heights are relatively consistent throughout the project, with towers on the Peninsula Marina property two stories taller than those on the Pete's Harbor property; heights including parking are 23 stories and 21 stories, respectively. In plan, the towers do not appear to have a consistent design relationship to one another or to particular on- or off-site features (e.g., distances between towers varies in a seemingly random fashion). An exception is the northernmost tower, located at the point where Smith Slough and Redwood Creek meet. This would create a dramatic visual composition but, as noted above, would also dominate and shade a potentially unique publicly accessible open space.

To create a skyline composition, towers could be grouped on either the Peninsula Marina or Pete's Harbor property to create a visual center for the project. Towers could be aligned parallel to (though not necessarily abutting) Bair Island Road or Redwood Creek. Tower heights could be varied to step up and down to frame internal project water areas, to respond to sun/shade angles, and/or to more sensitively relate to adjacent development and public open spaces.

The Redwood City Planning Division Urban Design Guidelines recommend a stepback in height for taller buildings, with a one foot setback for every foot of building height above the sixth story or 60 feet, whichever is highest. For the project towers this would require setbacks

of approximately 200 feet from the lower building mass. This guideline is not realistic from a design and construction standpoint for buildings of this height.

(e) Configuration of Parking Garages. Two- and three-story parking garages are located beneath almost all project buildings. The garages would be faced by townhouses along interior project driveways and walkways. This is consistent with the general internal orientation of project buildings and open spaces. However, these two- and three-story garages are exposed along almost all of the project perimeter, facing Bair Island Road, Redwood Creek, Steinberger Slough, the PG&E/USFWS lands proposed for a public park, and Outer Pete's Harbor. Though project renderings indicate a high quality of architectural materials and detailing, and landscaping is indicated that could screen garage openings, this arrangement of garages is likely to create perimeter public space frontages that are inactive and less visually interesting than frontages within the project.

(f) Building Form and Materials. As described by the project architect, principal materials for the project would be cement plaster walls, a mix of tile and standing seam metal roofs, and deeply-inset, metal frame windows. Cast stone columns and metal railings are proposed to add texture to facades. These types of forms and materials are compatible with nearby residential development, including the "Villas at Bair Island" apartments and the Marina Pointe townhouses, as well as the forms and materials of residential buildings within Redwood City generally. Project illustrations and the applicant's description indicate that buildings would have a base created with richer surface materials and finer detailing. These building bases would enhance pedestrian-oriented spaces. However, it is not clear if "base" design and materials would be applied to the parking structures.

As illustrated by the photo-simulations (Figures 5.2 through 5.6), residential towers would be composed of a center panel of concrete plaster with inset windows. Building corners would be notched slightly and more extensively glazed, which would make them recede somewhat visually. The overall effect would somewhat reduce the visual impact of building mass. The combination of inset windows, larger glazed panels, notches in building mass, and rooftop penthouses would add visual interest. The material colors for concrete plaster surfaces would be generally neutral and would not contrast dramatically with background sky. However, shadows and the darker appearance of glazing at the corner notches does appear to significantly contrast the background sky in all photo-simulation views.

(g) Open Space and Landscape Design. Project plans imply a range of public open spaces, from streetscapes to creekside trails and internal project courtyards, to small waterside plazas and a public park (although the proposed park is on land currently owned by the USFWS and not considered part of this proposed project). However, project plans do not indicate the design approach and/or specific function for these spaces. As noted in (c) above, most of the spaces along the project perimeter appear to be leftover from the project's architectural grid.

Similarly, a variety of tree types and other landscape materials are indicated on project plans

(see Figures 3.7 through 3.9 in chapter 3, Project Description). With the exception of the main entrance drive on the Peninsula Marina property, however, there is little indication of a strong landscape design approach which would create memorable public places and/or tie together the project's open space network. Internal project landscape materials appear to be "episodic," generally configured as building foundation plantings. Perimeter landscape materials do not imply continuous, clearly defined spaces along Redwood Creek, Outer Pete's Harbor, or Bair Island Road.

Mitigation 5-6. The project architect and City staff have participated in an ongoing series of meetings to address the potential visual effects of the proposed project. The following additional mitigation measures shall be incorporated in future project design refinements:

- Vary the project architectural grid as needed to create an intentional design response toward perimeter public spaces, particularly Bair Island Road, Redwood Creek, and Smith Slough/Outer Pete's Harbor, and to create an orderly relationship to the north side of the "Villas at Bair Island" apartments.
- Arrange the residential towers according to a design concept for a composed and memorable skyline. Vary project building heights as appropriate for the skyline design concept to minimize shadow impacts on adjacent development and on public as well as open spaces.
- Minimize the visual effect of two- and three-story perimeter parking garages and/or change the project design to enhance adjacent public spaces, including Bair Island Road, Redwood Creek, PG&E/USFWS lands proposed for a public park, and Outer Pete's Harbor. Face exterior parking structures with townhouses, stairs and landings, and enhanced architectural details.

(continued)

Mitigation 5-6 (continued)

- Consider massing, glazing, and/or surface material changes to reduce the corner shadowing effect of the project's residential towers.
- Prepare more-detailed open space and landscape design plans to indicate the design approach to all publicly accessible open spaces. Note on the plans which areas are open to the general public and during what hours of the day. Include a description of the function and design intent of perimeter public open spaces. Prepare enlarged design plans and cross sections for Bair Island Road; public ways along Redwood Creek, Steinberger Slough, and Smith Slough/Outer Pete's Harbor;

and publicly accessible ways along interior project water areas.

Implementation of these measures would reduce urban design related visual impacts to a ***less-than-significant level***.

Impact 5-7: Internal Visual Relationship of Project Development to Electrical Transmission Lines. The quality and livability of the closest project residences could be substantially impacted by views of the PG&E electrical transmission lines and associated towers that traverse the easement between the Peninsula Marina property and the Pete's Harbor property. These visual effects would represent a ***potentially significant visual impact*** (see criteria 2 and 3 under section 5.3.1, "Significance Criteria," above).

The site plan for the project (see Figure 5.8) includes a proposed community park, with picnic areas, playground equipment, and overlooks, situated along the PG&E transmission tower right-of-way, on land owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The applicant wishes to acquire development rights for the approximately two acres within the PG&E right-of-way in order to implement this open space aspect of the project. (The USFWS recently acquired rights to this acreage from the Peninsula Open Space Trust.) The project proposes residential development (including residential towers) directly south of the transmission tower right-of-way.

PG&E easement provisions require that the area within the easements be kept free of structures and other permanent physical obstructions to maintenance access. Landscaping and fencing would be acceptable. The proposed site plan layout shown on Figure 5.8 would be consistent with these limitations. No project residential structures or yards would be located within these easements. Beyond these easement requirements, PG&E has not adopted any additional guidelines or criteria with respect to residential setbacks from transmission lines.

The proximity of the PG&E tower lines to the closest project residences could nevertheless be expected to result in prominent visual distractions and visually detract substantially from the quality of views from these residences and local public areas toward the lines.

Mitigation 5-7. The following measures shall be implemented to reduce the degree of electrical transmission line visual impact: (1) no residential structure shall be located within 100 feet of the edge of the easement; (2) prospective residents of all project residential units within 200 feet of the edge of the transmission line easement shall be notified in writing by the developer that there are transmission lines within that distance; this notification shall be achieved by including such disclosure in the sales materials to be signed by project residents; (3) reduce the visual impact of the

existing transmission towers and lines through incorporation in the project landscaping plan of strategic planting along the length of the overhead transmission line easement, subject to approval by the Community Development Services Department and Public Works Services Department, indicating tree planting on the project's border with the easement; and (4) similarly, use strategic landscaping at other key on-site vantage points with views of these transmission lines and towers to reduce their adverse impact on the visual quality of the community (i.e., strategic streetside and median planting along affected segments of the key project roads, etc.). Even with implementation of these four recommended measures, however, the adverse visual impact of these tower lines, given the height and prominence of the existing tower lines, would not be concealed or reduced to less-than-significant levels and would therefore represent a **significant unavoidable impact** (i.e., would require City adoption of a Statement of Overriding Considerations).

