4.1 AESTHETICS/VISUAL RESOURCES

This section evaluates potential project impacts to aesthetic and visual resources within and adjacent to the project site, including visual character and quality, scenic views, and light and glare. Figure 4.1-1 shows the locations from and directions in which all subsequent photos shown in this section were taken.

4.1.1 Setting

a. Visual Character and Scenic Resources. The project site is a roughly triangular parcel of undeveloped land located between two existing business parks in western Goleta. Development along Cortona Drive and Castilian Drive in the vicinity of the project site, as shown in figures 4.1-2 (a-c), is typified by business parks with flat-roofed, two-story buildings and surface parking lots. Tall palm trees line Cortona Drive and form a prominent visual feature near the project site.

As shown in Figure 4.1-3, the primary visual features of the site from the perspective of Cortona Drive are several Canary Island palm trees, coast live oaks, and Deodar cedars clustered on a small rise on the eastern portion of the site. To the west of this cluster of trees is an approximately eight-foot-tall rock pile, along with 12 temporary storage containers for construction debris. The central and western portions of the project site are characterized by ruderal vegetation. The northern edge of the project site, adjacent to the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way (UPRR ROW), is thickly covered with native shrubs on both sides of the property line. In addition, the site contains a staging area for construction and site maintenance along the western property line, partially enclosed by a chain-link fence.

In terms of topography, the project site has a gentle slope (1.6% average) draining in a predominately northwest to the southeast direction. On-site elevations range from 49 feet above mean sea level (msl) at the northwest corner of the property to 31 feet above msl at Cortona Drive. At the southeastern corner of the property, the elevation increases noticeably from Cortona Drive to a height of 39 feet above msl, with the small rise highlighted by a large Canary Island palm and a Deodar cedar.

As the project site is mainly covered by low-growing ruderal vegetation, it offers largely unobstructed views to the north of agricultural hills along Cathedral Oaks Road and of the Santa Ynez Mountains in the background. Pursuant to Policy VH 1.1 in the Visual and Historic Resources Element of the Goleta General Plan the City has designated the foothills and the Santa Ynez Mountains as scenic resources. From the standpoint of Cortona Drive, these views across the project site are bracketed in the foreground by palm trees lining the roadway. Through the eastern portion of the project site, however, the cluster of trees and shrubs on-site obstructs views of the Santa Ynez Mountains to the north, as shown in Photo 7 in Figure 4.1-3. Vegetation on the northern edge of the project site and along the UPRR ROW abutting the northern property line effectively conceal the railroad tracks and permit partial views of the southbound on-ramp from Storke Road to U.S. Highway 101, immediately behind the UPRR ROW. The mainline of U.S. 101 is not visible from the project site.

Southward views from the project site are completely obstructed by buildings and landscaped grounds on the Raytheon commercial site across Cortona Drive, and by trees and shrubs on the business park to the southwest. Consequently, the project site does not offer views of the Hollister Avenue corridor or of the coastline to the south.

Legend

Project Location

Photo Location/Direction

N

0 150 300

Scale in Feet

Locations and Directions of Aesthetics Photos

Figure 4.1-1

Photo 1: View from the project site of business parks to the east along Cortona Drive.

Photo 2: View from Cortona Drive of a business park adjacent and to the west of the project site.

Adjacent Commercial Developments Figure 4.1-2a

City of Goleta

Photo 3: Adjacent building along Castilian Drive.

Photo 4: Business park building on Castilian Drive.

Adjacent Commercial Developments Figure 4.1-2b

Photo 5: Business park building on Castilian Drive.

Photo 6: Business park building on Cortona Drive.

Adjacent Commercial Developments Figure 4.1-2c

Photo 7: Northward view of vegetation, rock pile, and storage containers on the project site.

Photo 8: View of northwest corner of project site, looking toward Storke Road/Highway 101 overpass.

Existing Site Conditions

Figure 4.1-3

b. Scenic Corridors. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) designates highways throughout California as scenic highways. For a highway to be declared as scenic, the government with jurisdiction over the abutting land must adopt a "scenic corridor protection program" that limits development, outdoor advertising, and earthmoving around the highway. The City has one highway eligible for state designation and several locally designated scenic corridors. U.S. 101 is eligible for state designation as a scenic highway in the City and throughout Santa Barbara County. Additionally, the City's Visual and Historic Resources Element lists the following roadways near the project site as local scenic corridors, which pass through, or provide visual access to, areas of high scenic value:

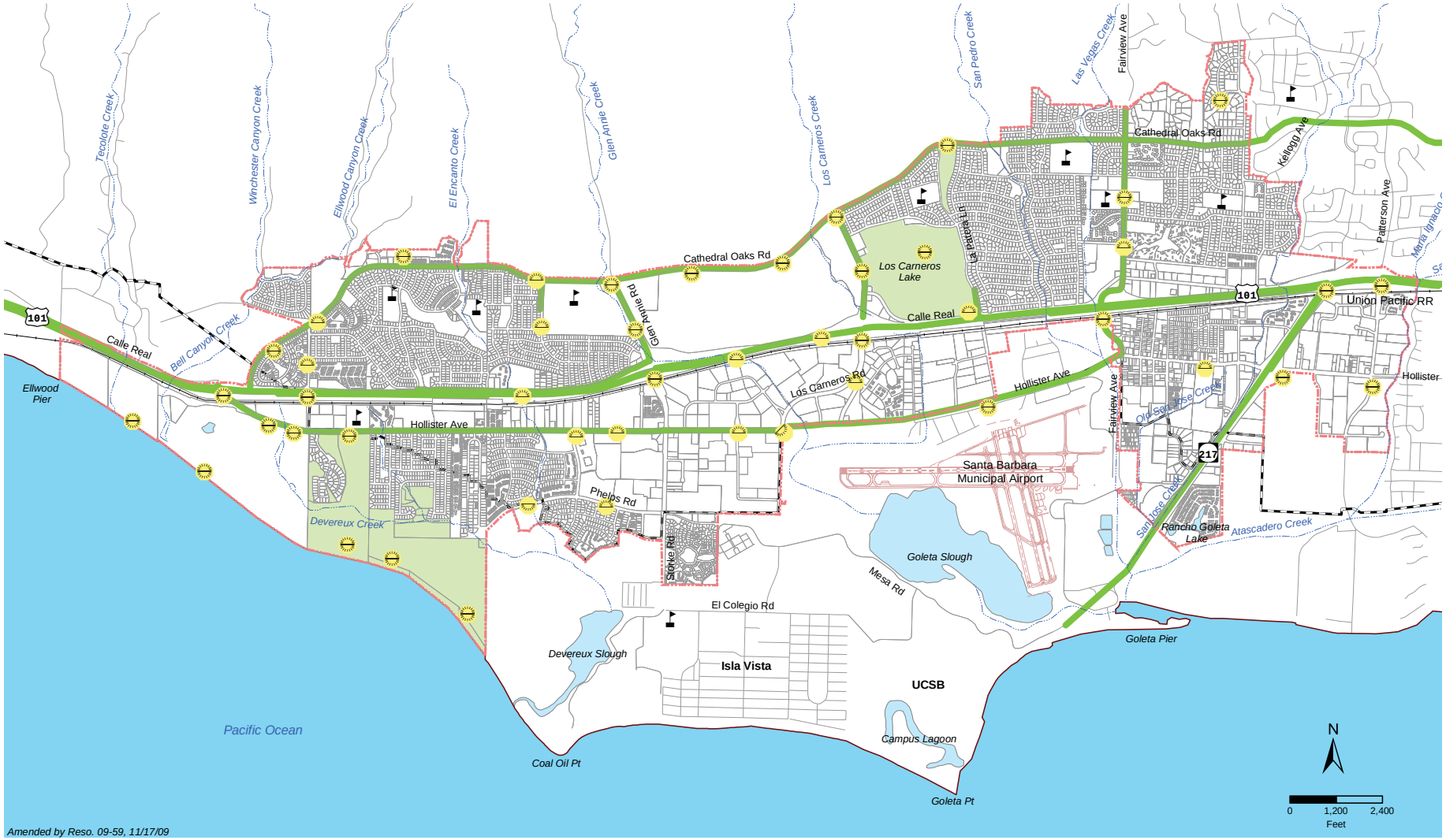
- *U.S. 101*
- *Glen Annie Road (between Cathedral Oaks and U.S. 101), including the U.S. 101 overpass*

Although the project site itself does not contain any designated scenic corridors, it is located in the vicinity of two designated scenic corridors: U.S. 101 and Glen Annie Road. The centerline of U.S. 101 is approximately 300 feet north of the project site, while the overpass of Glen Annie/Storke Road is approximately 300 feet to the northwest.

Views from Glen Annie/Storke Road Overpass of U.S. 101. As shown in Figure 4.1-4, scenic views in all directions from the Glen Annie/Storke Road overpass of U.S. 101 and from the north-bound Storke Road approach to the overpass are protected pursuant to Policy VH 2.2 and Figure 6-1 in the Goleta General Plan. This overpass also is identified in the Goleta General Plan as an important "gateway" to the community, and is the highest-elevated public street location in the vicinity of the project site. Intermittent views of the project site are available to vehicles traveling northward on Storke Road as they approach and turn onto the southbound on-ramp to U.S. 101; these views are partially screened by eucalyptus trees and other vegetation along the UPRR ROW to the south of the on-ramp. In addition, as shown in Figure 4.1-5, on the southerly descent from the crest of the overpass, the project site is briefly visible to vehicles and pedestrians above the guard-rail on the eastern side of Storke Road. Southward views from the overpass over the project site also include More Mesa and the Santa Barbara Channel near Goleta Beach. From the north side of the crest of the overpass, the project site is not visible.

Views from the U.S. 101 Mainline. As discussed above, the Goleta General Plan lists U.S. 101 as a local scenic corridor throughout Goleta. In the vicinity of the project site, the southbound on-ramp from the freeway's interchange with Glen Annie/Storke Road generally blocks southward views of the site, as the on-ramp is elevated above the grade of the highway mainline. However, northbound vehicles on U.S. 101 briefly have views of the project site and of the palm trees lining Cortona Drive across the UPRR tracks to the south.

Views from Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Right-of-Way (ROW). Although not a designated scenic corridor in the General Plan, the 100-foot wide UPRR ROW abuts the project site's northern property line. The project site is part of the view available to train passengers traveling through Goleta. The engineered track sits atop a rock bed ballast, which is set back approximately 50 feet from the property line. The UPRR track currently ranges from one to five feet higher than the ground surface at the northern edge of the project site. As shown in Figure 4.1-6, from the perspective approximately six feet above ground level, shrubs and small trees along the ROW generally obstruct views across the project site. Since the upper tier of passenger train car windows is approximately 8 feet higher than the ballast and approximately 10 to 11 feet above the adjacent ground surface elevation of the ROW, passengers may currently have brief, partially obstructed views of the project site.



Source: City of Goleta General Plan, 2009.

Scenic and Visual Resources in the City of Goleta

Figure 4.1-4

Photo 9: View from the Storke Road/Highway 101 overpass across the project site toward the coast.

Photo 10: Simulation of view from the overpass after construction of the proposed project.
Source: Interacta Inc., 2012

Existing and Simulated Views from Storke Road Figure 4.1-5

Photo 11: Existing view from the Union Pacific Railroad east toward the project site.

Photo 12: Existing and simulated views of the project site from the perspective of Cortona Drive.
Source: Interacta Inc., 2012

Views from the
Union Pacific Railroad and Cortona Drive

Figure 4.1-6

Views from Cortona Drive. As discussed under Visual Character and Scenic Resources and shown by Photo 7 in Figure 4.1-3 and Photo 12 in Figure 4.1-6, the project site offers views of the Santa Ynez Mountains from Cortona Drive. Nevertheless, these views are brief from the perspective of moving vehicles on Cortona Drive, and the roadway is not designated as a scenic view corridor in the Goleta General Plan. Furthermore, Cortona Drive primarily accommodates traffic associated with local businesses, rather than tourists or recreational users concerned with scenic views.

Views from Other Public Roads. Although not scenic corridors, there are other public roads in the vicinity of the project site including Calle Real, parallel and to the north of U.S. 101, and Hollister Avenue to the south. Calle Real, a major arterial road, is separated from the project site by at least 370 feet, with the U.S. 101 and UPRR transportation corridors in between. Vegetation along these corridors blocks southward views of the project site. Hollister Avenue, located approximately 730 feet south of the project site, is designated as a "local scenic corridor" and provides a scenic view of the Santa Ynez Mountains over the business parks along Cortona Drive. The project site is minimally visible from Hollister Avenue due to intervening landscaping on these business parks.

Private Views. The project site is visible to varying degrees from adjacent business parks along Cortona Drive. The northern side of the Raytheon property to the south has broad views of the Santa Ynez Mountains and foothills across the project site. However, at the business parks to the east and west of the project site, views across the site and toward the mountains are almost entirely obstructed by intervening vegetation, as shown by photos 1 and 2 in Figure 4.1-2(a).

c. Existing Light and Glare Conditions. Although the project site is undeveloped and lacks on-site sources of illumination, it receives indirect lighting from off-site sources at neighboring business parks and along roadways. Sources of illumination at the business parks include light fixtures on the exterior of buildings and lighting emanating from windows. In addition, the southern portion of the project site receives lighting from two nearby street lamps on the north side of Cortona Drive. The western portion of the project site is in the vicinity of street lamps lining Storke Road. Other sources of light and glare include headlights from passing vehicles on Cortona Drive, Storke Road, and the southbound on-ramp to U.S. 101, and from cars entering and exiting parking lots at neighboring business parks.

d. Regulatory Setting . The City of Goleta has adopted numerous policies pertaining to the aesthetics of development and the preservation of scenic resources in the Visual and Historic Resources Element of the Goleta General Plan. Policies that are relevant to the proposed project are summarized below.

VH 1.1 Scenic Resources. The City shall support the protection and preservation of scenic resources including the open waters of the Pacific Ocean/Santa Barbara Channel, Goleta's Pacific shoreline, sloughs, riparian corridors, agricultural areas, Lake Los Carneros, and prominent natural landforms such as the foothills and the Santa Ynez Mountains.

VH 1.2 Scenic Resources Map. Views from public vantage points for viewing scenic resources, as identified in Figure 6-1 of the Visual and Historic Resources Element, shall be protected by minimizing any impairment that could result from new development.

VH 1.4 Protection of Mountain and Foothill Views. Views of mountains and foothills from public areas shall be protected through development practices such as limitations on the height and size of

structures; downcast, fully shielded lighting; and selection of colors that harmonize with the surrounding landscape.

VH 1.5 Protection of Open Space Views. Views of open space, including agricultural lands, from public areas shall be protected during the development process first through site selection and then by use of design alternatives that enhance rather than obstruct or degrade such views.

VH 1.6 Preservation of Natural Landforms. Natural landforms such as mature trees, native vegetation, drainage courses, prominent slopes, and bluffs shall be protected. Protection associated with development should be accomplished first through site selection to protect natural landforms and then by use of alternatives that enhance and incorporate natural landforms in the design.

VH 1.8 Private Views. Project development and architecture shall be considerate of private views.

VH 2.1 Designated Scenic Corridors. The *Scenic Resources Map* in Figure 6-1 identifies corridors that pass through, or provide visual access to, areas of high scenic value. These corridors, or segments of corridors, include but are not limited to the following:

a. US-101
b. Cathedral Oaks Road
c. Hollister Avenue
d. Los Carneros Road
e. Fairview Avenue
f. Calle Real

VH 2.2 Preservation of Scenic Corridors. The aesthetic qualities of scenic corridors shall be preserved through retention of the general character of significant natural features; views of the ocean, foothills, and mountainous areas; and open space associated with recreational and agricultural areas including orchards, prominent vegetation, and historic structures.

VH 2.3 Development Projects Along Scenic Corridors. Development adjacent to scenic corridors should not degrade or obstruct views of scenic areas.

VH 2.4 Public Improvements. Public improvements visible from scenic corridors including landscaping, street lighting, signage, medians, noise attenuation walls, and other hardscape elements shall include a high level of design through appropriate detailing and use of high quality, durable materials.

VH 3.1 Community Design Character. The city's agricultural heritage, open spaces, views of natural features, established low-density residential neighborhoods, and small-scale development with few visually prominent buildings contribute to the visual character of Goleta. Residential, commercial, and industrial development should acknowledge and respect the desired aspects of Goleta's visual character and make a positive contribution to the city through exemplary design.

VH 3.2 Neighborhood Identity. New development shall preserve the unique qualities and character of each neighborhood through compatibility with existing architectural styles of adjacent development, except where poor quality design exists.

VH 4.4 Multifamily Residential Areas. This policy establishes standards for multi-family residential development such as varied roof lines, clustering of multiple structures to maximize open space, common open space, three-dimensional façades, and landscaping to soften building edges and provide a transition between adjacent properties.

VH 4.9 Landscape Design. Landscaping shall conform to the natural topography, protect or replace existing specimen trees, emphasize the use of native and drought-tolerant vegetation, avoid the use of invasive plants, and be incorporated into the whole site design.

VH 4.10 Streetscape and Frontage Design. A unified streetscape shall be created to improve the interface between pedestrians and vehicles.

VH 4.12 Lighting. Outdoor lighting fixtures shall be designed, located, aimed downward or toward structures (if properly shielded), retrofitted if feasible, and maintained in order to prevent over-lighting, energy waste, glare, light trespass, and sky glow.

4.1.2 Impact Analysis

a. Methodology and Significance Thresholds. The assessment of aesthetic impacts involves qualitative analysis that is inherently subjective in nature. Viewers react to viewsheds and aesthetic conditions differently based on personal and cultural perspectives. This evaluation measures the existing visual resources against the proposed development, analyzing the nature of the anticipated change and its compatibility with the visual character of the area.

The City's *Environmental Thresholds Guidelines Manual* refers to CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. Pursuant to the Appendix G, potentially significant impacts would occur if development of the project site would:

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

b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures.

Impact AES-1 The proposed project would not impact scenic resources identified in the City's Visual and Historic Resources Element, including without limitation, the Santa Ynez Mountains, coastal mesas, bluffs, and the Pacific Ocean. Impacts to such scenic resources would be Class III, *less than significant.*

The proposed project would be located on a vacant parcel in Goleta's coastal plain near U.S. 101, between the foothills of the Santa Ynez Mountains to the north and the coastline to the south. The project site does not include scenic resources identified in Policy VH 1.1 of the Visual and Historic Resources Element of the Goleta General Plan including the open waters of the Pacific Ocean, the

shoreline, Goleta and Devereux Sloughs, creeks and riparian vegetation, agricultural areas, Lake Los Carneros and surrounding woodlands, and prominent landforms. Impacts to designated views of these scenic resources from view corridors are discussed separately under Impact AES-2. In addition, impacts to natural landforms, such as mature trees and rock outcroppings, are discussed below in Impact AES-3. Because implementation of the proposed project would not impair scenic resources identified in the Goleta General Plan impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures. Mitigation is not required as impacts would be less than significant.

Residual Impact. Impacts would be less than significant without mitigation.

Impact AES-2 The proposed project would convert an undeveloped parcel into a multi-family housing complex with two- and three-story buildings. Due to the location of the site with respect to designated scenic view corridors and the heights of proposed buildings on-site, the project would not substantially affect designated view corridors of the Santa Ynez Mountains to the north or the coastal plain to the south. Therefore, impacts to scenic view corridors, views of mountains, and private views would be Class III, *less than significant.*

As discussed in the *Setting*, the 8.8-gross acre project site is currently open and undeveloped, with ruderal vegetation on the majority of the site and a cluster of trees along the eastern property line. The proposed project would alter the existing conditions through the construction of eight apartment buildings with associated amenities, parking spaces, and landscaping. Four two-story apartment buildings (# 1, 2, 7 and 8) with median heights of approximately 26 feet (as calculated by zone code standards for flat pads) and peak heights of approximately 28 feet would be located in the front and center of the site. Four three-story apartment buildings (# 3, 4, 5, and 6) would be located on the northern/back portion of the site. Three of these buildings are stepped with an average height of approximately 32 feet (as calculated by zone code standards) and peak heights of approximately 39 feet. One building (#6) , farthest from Cortona Drive, would have a median height (on flat pad) of 35 feet and a peak height of approximately 37 feet. As discussed in Section 4.9, *Land Use and Planning*, the building heights are consistent with height limits as measured pursuant to the City's Inland Zoning Ordinance.

Construction on the project site has the potential to affect a designated view corridor. As shown in Figure 4.1-5, the entire site is visible from the Glen Annie/Storke Road overpass at U.S. 101, which the General Plan lists as a designated scenic viewpoint and an important "gateway" to Goleta. This overpass currently affords south and southeast views over the project site of More Mesa and the Santa Barbara Channel near Goleta Beach.

Based on the simulated view from the southern portion of the overpass shown in Figure 4.1-5, the proposed apartment buildings would rise to a level slightly higher than the horizon, slightly obstructing views of the coastline and More Mesa to the southeast, which are designated scenic resources pursuant to Policy VH 1.1 in the Visual and Historic Resources Element of the General Plan. In this simulated view, the coastline appears to be obscured by cloud cover, which is a common occurrence in Goleta. Nevertheless, as the photo of existing conditions from the overpass demonstrates, on relatively clear days More Mesa and a slice of the Santa Barbara Channel are visible. In addition, the simulated viewpoint appears not to show the proposed sound wall at the northern boundary of the project site,

which would add an artificial linear aspect to the view corridor. Nevertheless, the proposed buildings would not substantially alter the south scenic view corridor from the overpass and the existing views of these scenic resources over the adjacent business park to the southeast. Therefore, the project would have a less than significant impact on views from the vantage point of the Glen Annie/Storke Road overpass view corridor.

As discussed in the *Setting*, the project site is also intermittently visible from the southbound on-ramp from Glen Annie/Storke Road to U.S. 101. However, the project site is almost 90 degrees out of the line of sight of drivers on the freeway ramp and obscured by trees along the UPRR ROW. Thus, any changes to views from this perspective would not be substantially evident, and impacts to this portion of the scenic corridor would be less than significant.

The proposed multi-family housing complex would also affect views of the project site from the perspective of vehicles traveling northbound on U.S. 101, which the Conservation Element of the Goleta General Plan lists as a scenic view corridor. Existing views, however, are brief and limited to the project site and adjacent business parks, rather than encompassing the larger coastal plain. The proposed project would not affect more scenic and expansive views to the north, which include the Santa Ynez Mountains and foothills. Therefore, corridor impacts from the perspective of the U.S. 101 mainline would be less than significant.

Currently, Hollister Avenue offers a designated view corridor of the Santa Ynez Mountains to the north, over the business parks along Cortona Drive. From the perspective of motorists driving on Hollister Avenue, the project site is not visible due to intervening buildings and landscaping on these business parks. With a maximum height of 37 feet, the proposed buildings would not substantially affect the urban foreground in scenic views of the Santa Ynez Mountains and foothills from Hollister Avenue.

The proposed project would also alter public views of the site from Cortona Drive and the railroad ROW, although the City has not designated this route as scenic corridor. Currently, the project site is open and undeveloped, allowing a brief view of the Santa Ynez Mountains from Cortona Drive. As shown in Figure 4.1-6, the proposed project would almost entirely block these minimal existing views, due to the installation of a coast live oak tree and palm trees at the site entrance and to construction of a two-story clubhouse and three-story buildings with a maximum roof height over 37 feet in the center of the view. However, the City does not recognize Cortona Drive as a scenic corridor, and nearby roadways such as Hollister Avenue and Storke Road offer far more expansive views of the mountains and coastal plain. Therefore, impacts to public views from Cortona Drive would be less than significant.

Although not a City-designated view corridor, views of the project site from passenger trains on the UPRR ROW are partially obscured by thick vegetation lining the northern property boundary. A total of four passenger trains pass the project site daily on Amtrak's Pacific Surfliner route. The proposed project would involve removal of much of this vegetation and construction of an eight-foot masonry wall with a burnished face block or stucco finish at the property boundary. Due to the lack of existing views of the site, the proposed project would not impact scenic vistas from the ROW.

Although not a designated view corridor, the proposed project could potentially affect private views of the Santa Ynez Mountains, as seen through the project site, from business parks to the east, west, and south of the site. Currently, north-facing windows on the Raytheon site across Cortona Drive to the south offer expansive views through the project site of the mountains. The proposed buildings and landscaping would almost entirely block these northward views. Private views over the project site from

the business parks to west (which includes GE Sensing, Inc.) and east (Toyon Research Corporation) are largely obscured by existing vegetation at those properties. Due to the lack of existing scenic vistas to the mountains from the business parks to the east and west, construction of the proposed project would not substantially alter these views. Policy VH 1.8 of the Visual and Historic Resources Element of the Goleta General Plan requires development to be considerate of private views. Scenic views of the mountains from a single private property, Raytheon, would be affected; however, this does not constitute a significant impact pursuant to CEQA, which is primarily concerned with public views.

Based on the above, overall impacts to scenic corridors would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures. Mitigation is not required as impacts would be less than significant.

Residual Impact. Impacts would be less than significant without mitigation.

Impact AES-3 Construction of the proposed multi-family housing development would involve removal of mature trees and shrubs on the eastern and northern portions of the site. However, important specimen trees would be transplanted to off-site locations, and existing oak saplings would remain where feasible at the east property line. Therefore, impacts to natural landforms would be Class III, *less than significant*.

The project site is flat and undeveloped. The majority of the project site is comprised of ruderal, non-native vegetation with little scenic value. However, a prominent belt of woody trees and palm trees exists on the eastern portion of the site. According to an Arborist Report from August 2009, this area contains 21 Canary Island palm trees, 12 coast live oak trees, and six Deodar cedars (McPherson, 2009). A survey conducted in June 2013 found that no additional trees beyond those surveyed in 2009 exist on the project site (see Section 4.3, *Biological* Resources.) As shown in Figure 2-11 in Section 2.0, *Project Description*, a group of Canary Island palms in the southeast corner of the project site is visible from the perspective of Cortona Drive. This species is a distinctive type of palm, with a thick trunk and a wide crown of arching feather-shaped leaves. Another group of coniferous Deodar cedars and broad-leaved coast live oaks in the northeast corner of the project site is briefly visible to northbound vehicles on U.S. 101.

The proposed project would involve removal of all existing trees in the southeast corner of the site, but would preserve several specimens to the north. Based on the site plans, a mature coast live oak with multiple trunks (up to 24 inches in diameter at breast height) and smaller oak (up to 12 inches in diameter) would remain between the proposed buildings 1 and 3. Another mature oak (24 inches in diameter) would be preserved to the north of building 3, along the northern property line. In addition, two mature Deodar cedars would be saved to the east of building 3. According to the Preliminary Landscape Plan, existing coast live oak saplings along the eastern property line would be saved where possible. All Canary Island palm trees with a trunk height of at least eight feet would be boxed and transplanted off-site.

The proposed project also would add a number of specimen trees to the site, including a prominent coast live oak at the site entrance to the south. A wide range of deciduous and evergreen trees would be planted adjacent to proposed buildings and in common open space areas throughout the site.
As a result of these changes in landscaping, the proposed project would remove prominent trees such as mature Canary Island palms and Deodar cedars. However, the largest native oak specimens and Deodar

cedars would be preserved, and the loss in scenic trees would be offset by the planting of dozens of trees throughout the site.

The central and eastern areas of the project site also have several scattered, man-made rock piles. The most prominent, located to the west of the belt of trees, rises to a height of approximately eight feet above the existing grade. Such man-made rock-piles are not considered to be scenic resources or important landforms pursuant to CEQA, and their removal would not result in a substantial visual effect.

Based on the above analysis, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact on natural landforms.

Mitigation Measures. Mitigation is not required as impacts would be less than significant.

Residual Impact. Impacts would be less than significant without mitigation.

Impact AES-4 The proposed project would permanently alter the project site, replacing open and undeveloped land with a residential complex. However, the visual character of proposed buildings and landscaping would be compatible with that of surrounding business parks. Impacts to the visual character of the site and surroundings would be Class III, *less than significant*.

After completion of the proposed project, the site's visual character would change from open and undeveloped to medium -density residential development. The proposed development would have a footprint of 68,518 square feet, occupying 17.7 percent of the 8.8-gross acre parcel with heights varying from 26 to 35 feet. Landscaping would be 41 percent of the site. The buildings have flat and gable roof elements with heights as listed above in AES -2. The eight proposed apartment buildings would be clustered around common open space, a children's play area and a sand volleyball court. In total, common open space would represent 41.7 percent of the site (160,882 square feet).

Landscaped areas and surface parking also would contribute to changes in visual character. As shown in Figure 4.1-6, trees planted in the vicinity of the proposed two-story clubhouse would reduce the openness of the site and the depth of views from the perspective of Cortona Drive. Recreational areas such as the sand volleyball court, a tot lot, and picnic areas would be built. In addition, the project would include driveways with uncovered parking spaces and carports on the perimeter of the cluster of seven apartment buildings. As a whole, the proposed driveways, carports, and sidewalks would add a combined 149,851 square feet of paved, impervious surface to the project site.

As discussed in Section 2.0, *Project Description*, the architectural style of the project would be contemporary, with simple rectangular forms and mostly flat roofs. Simple gable roof elements would be juxtaposed with the rectangular elements and use a metal standing seam roof. These forms would use multiple colors to reinforce the geometry of the buildings. The buildings would use two earth-tones to create similarity with buildings on surrounding business parks and brightly accented walls in a primary color palette (red, blue and yellow) to add individual identity. The deck edges would be set at an angle creating additional contemporary geometry and would use metal rectangular mesh as the guardrail material. The window awnings would also be done in metal standing seam to reinforce the slightly industrial character. The project clubhouse, carports, trash enclosures and other ancillary facilities are designed to be consistent with this architectural style.

The apartment buildings have heights ranging from 26 feet to 32 feet similar to business park buildings in the vicinity. The overall massing on the project site would be comparable to that of surrounding development with simple rectangular forms and many flat roofs clustered on-site. Overall, the project would have a mass and scale comparable to that of nearby properties. For example, development at 26 Castilian Drive includes approximately 76,696 square feet of building area on a 4.91-acre lot, development at 50 Castilian Drive includes approximately 43,277 square feet of building area on a 3.35-acre lot, and 6740 Cortona Drive includes approximately 57,933 square feet of building area on a 3.14-acre lot. Development on all three of these properties includes two-story buildings of 25 feet or more in height (CSA Architects, 2014). These properties are shown on figures 4.1-2(b) and 4.1-2(c).

The business park development is composed of buildings that are large, singular and rectangular configurations, providing the appearance of substantial size, scale and bulk. The project would be composed of smaller rectangular buildings, with similar heights to neighborhood developments. While the number of proposed buildings and their site plan provide some variation from the neighborhood buildings, the resulting appearance would not be out of scale or detract from the character of the neighborhood. The overall size, bulk and scale of the project would be harmonious within the neighborhood context due to the appearance of the clustered buildings on the project site. The design using multiple buildings with the lower buildings at street-level reduces the visual effect of the proposed development.

Grading activities would reduce the grade differential across the site but leave the prevailing northwest-to-southeast topography. As described in the *Setting*, the project site has a gentle slope (1.6% average) draining in a predominately northwest to the southeast direction. On-site elevations range from 49 feet above mean sea level (msl) at the northwest corner of the property to 31 feet above msl at Cortona Drive, except for a small rise near the southeastern corner of the property to an elevation of 39 feet above msl. According to the preliminary grading and drainage plan for the project site, the largest change in elevation associated with grading would occur in the southeastern portion of the project site, currently occupied by the small rise. In that area, the final surface of the driveway would be approximately 34.8 feet above msl. In addition, the elevation of the northeast portion of the site under Building No. 6 would slightly increase after grading to 48.3 feet above msl. Across the majority of the site, however, grading activities would not substantially change the existing topography. Thus, the ground level of buildings would gradually increase from the clubhouse in the southern portion of the site (at 36.7 feet above msl) to the apartment buildings to the north (at up to 49 feet above msl).

Utility infrastructure such as electrical distribution lines, fiber optic lines, cable television lines, phone lines, gas lines, water lines, and sewer lines would be installed underground and would not affect the visual character of the site. However, components such as backflow preventers, transformers, water meter assemblies, gas meters, power meters, and cable TV pedestals would be installed aboveground. Mechanical equipment would be ground-mounted on concrete pads adjacent to the residential structures and would be screened with landscaping.

As shown in Figure 4.1-2(a-c), commercial buildings at surrounding business parks are generally two stories in height, with flat roofs, rectangular building footprints, and many have windows limited to the ground level. Four of the proposed apartment buildings would be three stories in height, which exceeds the level of most nearby commercial buildings. In addition, portions of the proposed buildings would have gabled roofs, a feature not shared by adjacent development. In both style and elevation, the rooflines would have a distinctive character along Cortona Drive. However, proposed structures on the project site would be designed with simple rectangular forms and ~~mostly~~ many flat roofs that provide

compatibility with the surrounding buildings in the neighborhood, consistent with Policy VH 3.2 for preserving neighborhood identities. Moreover, as discussed above, the overall massing of on-site would generally be comparable to that of surrounding business park development. Finally, under CEQA the adjacent business park development would not be considered as visually sensitive and the project site is not highly visible from public view areas within the neighborhood. Neighborhood compatibility will also be analyzed in detail by the City's Design Review Board which will review a project's site plan, floor plan, elevations, grading plan, landscape plan, and lighting plan to ensure consistency with surrounding development.

Since construction of the proposed apartment buildings would not substantially alter the site's existing topography, and the proposed visual character would be compatible on the whole with those of surrounding business parks, impacts to visual character and compatibility with existing land uses would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures. Mitigation is not required as impacts would be less than significant.

Residual Impact. Impacts would be less than significant without mitigation; however, the following Conditions of Approval are recommended regarding visual character related to building heights, utility infrastructure, trash/recycling enclosures, landscaping, graffiti, and trash generated by construction activities. With implementation of these conditions, the proposed structures and landscaping on the project site would be more visually integrated and compatible with surrounding business park development.

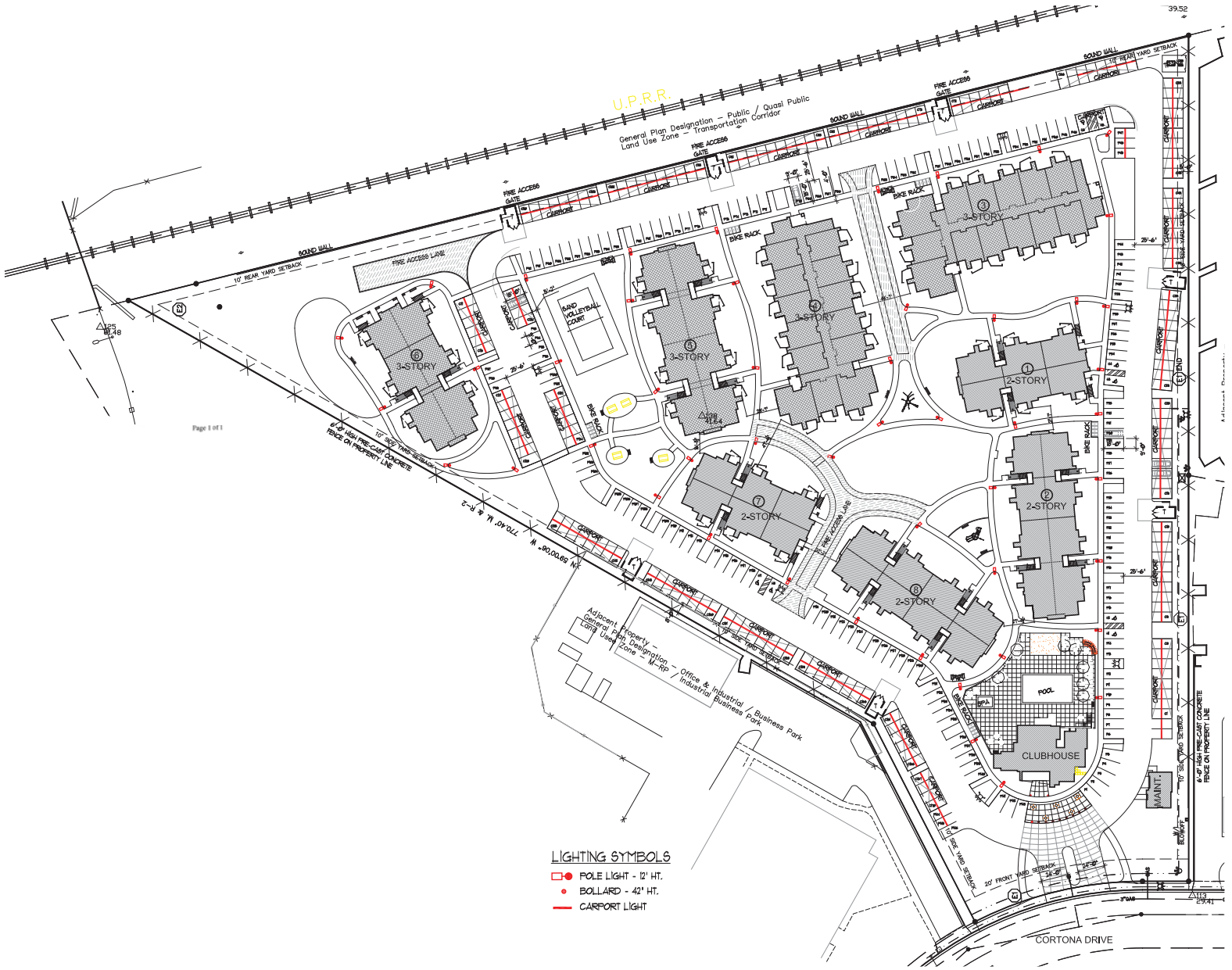
- ***Height Limitations.*** *The height of structural development shown on final plans must not be greater than the mean height and peak height shown on approved project exhibit maps.*
- ***Composite Utility Plan.*** *The permittee must submit a composite utility plan for City staff and DRB preliminary/ final review. All external/roof mounted mechanical equipment (including HVAC condensers, switch boxes, etc.) must be included on all building plans and designing this equipment to be integrated into the structure and/or screened in its entirety from public view.*
- ***Screening of Utility Connections.*** *All new utility service connections and above-ground mounted equipment such as backflow devices, etc. must be screened from public view and/or painting in a soft earth-tone color(s) (red is prohibited) so as to blend in with the project. Screening may include a combination of landscaping and/or fencing/walls. Utility transformers must be placed in underground vaults where they are completely screened from view, unless otherwise approved the by City Planning and Environmental Review Director, or designee. All gas and electrical meters and/or painting meters must be concealed to match the building. All gas, electrical, backflow prevention devices and communications equipment must be concealed in an enclosed portion of the building, on top of the building, or within a screened utility area. All transformers and vaults must be installed within the right-of-way below grade unless otherwise approved by the City Planning and Environmental Review Director, or designee, and then completely screening them from view.*
- ***Design of Trash/Recycling Enclosure.*** *The permittee must provide trash/recycling enclosures that are compatible with the architectural design of the project, of*

adequate size for trash and recycling containers (at least 50 square feet), and accessible by residents and for removal. The trash/recycling areas must be enclosed with a solid wall of sufficient height to screen the area, with a solid gate and a roof, to be maintained in good repair in perpetuity and must be included on final project plans and before the City issues a Land Use Permit for construction.

- ***Landscaping.*** *Approximately 75 percent of landscaping on the project site must consist of drought-tolerant native and/or Mediterranean type plants which adequately complement the project design and integrate the site with surrounding land uses. Landscaping must be used to partially screen on-site parking areas and structures. Plant materials must be compatible with the Goleta climate pursuant to Sunset Western Garden Book's Zone 24 published by Sunset Books, Inc., Revised and Updated 2012 edition.*
- ***Landscape Installation and Maintenance Agreement.*** *The permittee must enter into a maintenance agreement, in a form approved by the City Attorney, with the permittee to maintain required landscaping and water-conserving irrigation systems on private property for an appropriate time period set by the City.*
- ***Graffiti Removal.*** *The permittee must promptly remove any graffiti at the project site. The permittee must execute a maintenance agreement approved by the City Attorney's Office, including at least a 5-year maintenance period.*
- ***Trash Control.*** *The permittee must prevent construction and/or employee trash from blowing offsite by providing covered receptacles on-site before commencement of any grading or construction activities; picking up waste weekly or more frequently as directed by City staff; and designating and providing to City staff the name and phone number of a contact person(s) to monitor construction trash/waste and organize a clean-up crew. Additional covered receptacles must be provided as determined necessary by City staff.*

Impact AES-5 The proposed project would introduce on-site sources of lighting and glare to an open, undeveloped parcel that currently has none. Impacts would be Class II, *significant but mitigable*.

The project site is currently open and undeveloped, without any on-site sources of illumination. As discussed in the *Setting*, the site does receive indirect lighting from off-site sources at neighboring business parks and along Cortona Drive and Storke Road. The proposed multi-family housing complex would introduce sources of lighting and glare to the site. Exterior lighting would be installed for safety and security purposes. According to the proposed lighting plans, as shown in Figure 4.1-7, 12-foot-tall pole-top lights would be installed at regular intervals around proposed apartment buildings, along with 42-inch-tall shielded bollards in front of the proposed clubhouse, and carport lights in parking areas along the perimeter of the complex. Headlights on cars entering and exiting the parking areas on-site also could produce glare. Although six-foot-high masonry privacy walls along the eastern and western property lines would reduce the perception of light and glare from adjacent business parks, and eight-foot high masonry walls along the northern property line would reduce light and glare effects on motorists traveling on U.S. 101, the new sources of illumination could have adverse effects on surrounding properties at night-time and on the City's night sky unless properly shielded. Therefore, lighting impacts would be significant but mitigable.



Source: CSA Architects, July 2012

Preliminary Lighting Plan

Figure 4.1-7

Mitigation Measures. The following measures are required to address potential light and glare impacts.

AES-5 **Lighting Specifications.** Any exterior lighting installed on the project site must be of low intensity, low glare design, and must be hooded to direct light downward onto the subject parcel and prevent spill-over onto adjacent parcels and must otherwise meet dark night sky requirements. Exterior lighting fixtures must be kept to the minimum number and intensity needed to ensure public safety. These lights must be dimmed after 11 p.m. to the maximum extent practical without compromising public safety as determined by the Planning and Environmental Review Director or designee. Upward directed exterior lighting is prohibited. Lighting fixtures must be appropriate for the architectural style of the structure and surrounding area. The final lighting plan must be amended to include identification of all types, sizes, and intensities of wall mounted building lights and landscape accent lighting, and a photometric map must be provided. "Moonlighting" type fixtures that illuminate entire tree canopies should also be avoided.

Plan Requirements and Timing: The locations of all exterior lighting fixtures, complete cut-sheets of all exterior lighting fixtures, and a photometric plan prepared by a registered professional engineer showing the extent of all light and glare emitted by all exterior lighting fixtures must be reviewed and approved by the DRB, and the Planning and Environmental Review Director or designee, before the City issues a building permit for construction.

Monitoring: Before the City issues a certificate of occupancy, the Planning and Environmental Review Director, or designee, must inspect exterior lighting features to ensure that they have been installed consistent with approved plans.

Residual Impact. By minimizing the number of lighting fixtures and intensity of lighting on the project site, shielding lights to reduce glare, dimming during nighttime hours, and ensuring the compatibility of lighting with on-site and surrounding architecture, the implementation of Mitigation Measure AES-4 would reduce impacts to less than significant and there would be no residual impacts.

c. Cumulative Impacts. Cumulative development in and around Goleta, including the proposed project, would add 2,746 residential units (including 1,000 student beds in a new dormitory at UCSB) and more than 1.5 million square feet of commercial and industrial space (see Tables 3-1 and 3-2 in Section 3.0, *Related Projects*). Additional development would be located on infill sites throughout the community, as well as large tracts of undeveloped open spaces along the area's urban perimeters. Although much of the new development will generally be of a type and intensity similar to existing urban uses, a perceptible transformation of the community through increased urbanization would be apparent. In particular, the intensity of land use would increase near the intersection of Hollister Avenue and Storke Road, with construction of the proposed project to the northeast and of the approved mixed-use Westar development on the northwest side. However, the cumulative aesthetic impact from combined development in the Goleta area would remain minimal within the urban boundary due to the existing built-up environment. The areas in which cumulative development would

occur have been predominantly identified in the General Plan as appropriate areas for growth. Furthermore, the proposed project's contribution to cumulative impacts related to the visual character of the site and the introduction of new sources of light and glare would not be cumulatively significant, as the project site is minimally visible from surrounding roadways and, with mitigation incorporated, would be consistent with the height and design of the majority of surrounding business park development. Cumulative impacts to visual and aesthetic resources would be less than significant.

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