

B. VISUAL QUALITY

This section evaluates the effects of the proposed Master Plan on visual resources in the vicinity of the project site. This analysis also considers the proposed Master Plan's consistency with applicable visual resources-related policies. Photographs are included to illustrate the site's visual qualities. Visual simulations that show "before" and "after" representations of proposed Master Plan buildings and landscape changes have been prepared for six representative vantage points in the vicinity of the site, along with a visual animation of a trip through the campus, which can be found in a CD attached to the back cover of the EIR. The visual simulations are intended to convey an impression of the location, scale and massing of the buildings that could be constructed at the project site, and to demonstrate potential effects of the proposed project on visual resources. As noted in Chapter I, Introduction, the Master Plan is currently proposed at a conceptual level, and individual developments within the Master Plan area would be subject to additional environmental review, including supplemental visual study, as appropriate. The visual simulations and analysis in this section are based on the conceptual plans and massing studies prepared by the project sponsor in December 2007.

1. Setting

The following section describes the visual character of the project site and its surroundings, as well as views in the vicinity of the site. Views of and from the project site are provided in Figures V.B-2 through V.B-7. These photos correspond to the viewpoint locations (1 through 6) noted on Figure V.B-1. For a detailed description of the physical characteristics of the project site, refer to Section V.A, Land Use.

a. Existing Visual Character of the Project Site. The project site is generally flat and consists of a 40-acre area developed with 17 one- and two-story buildings containing research and development and office uses, and associated surface parking and landscaping. Mature trees are located throughout the project site, including along the site perimeter and internal roadways. Lakeside Drive divides the northern and southern portions of the project site. Figure V.B-2 and Figure V.B-3 depict typical views within the project site.

b. Views from the Project Site. Views from the project site of surrounding land uses are generally limited due to development on the project site. As shown in Figure V.B-2 and V.B-3, existing one- and two-story buildings, along with the trees that have been planted along Lakeside Drive, generally block views of surrounding areas to the north and east. There is a clear view corridor at the intersection of Reef Drive and Lakeside Drive looking west. At this location, there are unobstructed views of some of the residential uses located to the west of the project site. There is also a clear view of the Mariner's Point Golf Links from the portion of Lakeside Drive at the northern part of the campus. Views to points around the project site are discussed below.

(1) North of the Project Site. The project site is bordered to the north by Vintage Lake, the Electronics for Imaging (EFI) campus, and East Third Street. From the project site, views to the north are generally obstructed by the existing buildings and landscaping on the campus. However portions of Vintage Lake and the EFI campus are visible from the project site. San Francisco Bay, located to the north of the site, is not visible from any viewpoint on the campus, due to existing buildings on the EFI campus, the flat topography of the site, and the levee along the bayfront.

(2) **East of the Project Site.** The project site is bordered to the east by Vintage Park Drive (a four-lane roadway), Vintage Lake, and the EFI campus. Views from the southeast portion of the site looking east are generally obstructed by trees planted along Vintage Park Drive. In particular, the one- and two-story office and light industrial buildings east of Vintage Park Drive are not visible from the project site due to the mature trees planted along Vintage Park Drive and the flat topography of the area. Vintage Lake is also visible from certain eastern portions of the campus. From the northwestern corner of the project site, views to the east include the EFI campus.

(3) **South of the Project Site.** The southern portion of the project site is divided by Lakeside Drive. The project site is generally bordered to the south by Home Depot and the Hilton Garden Inn, both of which are located on Chess Drive. Views south of the project site are generally obstructed by landscaping; however, there are views from the site of the back of the Home Depot, as well as the six-story Hilton Garden Inn.

(4) **West of the Project Site.** The project site is bordered to the west by Mariners Island Boulevard. One-, two-, and three-story single-family and multi-family homes line Mariners Island Boulevard to the west. Views of and across Mariners Island Boulevard are generally obstructed by existing landscaping and mature trees bordering the project site, although the roadway and adjacent residential uses are visible from portions of the campus.

c. Views of and Through the Project Site. The project site is generally not visible from surrounding areas due to the existing predominantly one- and two-story buildings and the landscaped areas that surround the site, including numerous mature trees that generally obstruct views of the interior of the campus. Key views of and through the project site from surrounding public areas to the north, east, and west of the site are described below. Views of the site are limited due to obstruction by existing urban development and landscaping.

(1) **Views from San Francisco Bay.** Views of the project site from the portion of the San Francisco Bay shoreline west of the Mariner's Point Golf Links are shown in Figure V.B-4. From this viewpoint, the views of the rest of the project site are obstructed by buildings on the EFI campus and by trees and other landscaping that have been planted around the perimeter of the project site.

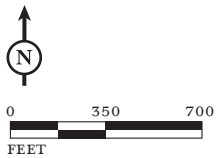
(2) **Views from Foster City Boulevard at SR 92.** Views of the project site from the elevated overpass of Foster City Boulevard at SR 92 are depicted in Figure V.B-7. The view of the project site is generally obstructed by the light industrial and office buildings located along Chess Drive and Vintage Park Drive, along with trees and other landscaping. There are no direct and open views of the site from this location. The Santa Cruz Mountains are visible in the distance from this vantage point.

(3) **Views from the Intersection of Reef Drive and Mariners Island Boulevard.** On the western portion of this intersection are several single and multi-family homes. As shown in Figure V.B-6, portions of the project site are visible from the residential uses located at this intersection. From this viewpoint, a small one-story building on the site is visible. Views of the rest of the project site are obstructed by the trees located around the perimeter of the site. In addition, while not shown in Figure V.B-6, buildings on the very northern portion of the campus are visible from this location.



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FIGURE V.B-1



Gilad Sciences Corporate Campus Master Plan EIR
Viewpoint Locations

SOURCE: GOOGLE EARTH, 2007.

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Existing view looking north along Lakeside Drive



Visual Simulation of the Proposed Project

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FIGURE V.B-2

Gilead Sciences Corporate Campus Master Plan EIR
Visual Simulations from Viewpoint 1



Existing view looking east along Lakeside Drive



Visual Simulation of the Proposed Project

LSA

FIGURE V.B-3

Gilead Sciences Corporate Campus Master Plan EIR
Visual Simulations from Viewpoint 2



Existing view from the northern levee, adjacent to San Francisco Bay



Visual Simulation of the Proposed Project

LSA

FIGURE V.B-4

Gilead Sciences Corporate Campus Master Plan EIR
Visual Simulations from Viewpoint 3



Existing view from the intersection of Foster City Boulevard and E. Hillsdale Boulevard



Visual Simulation of the Proposed Project

LSA

FIGURE V.B-5

Gilead Sciences Corporate Campus Master Plan EIR
Visual Simulations from Viewpoint 4



Existing view from the intersection of Reef Drive and Mariners Island Boulevard



Visual Simulation of the Proposed Project

LSA

FIGURE V.B-6

Gilead Sciences Corporate Campus Master Plan EIR
Visual Simulations from Viewpoint 5



Existing view from Foster City Boulevard at State Route 92 looking northwest



Visual Simulation of the Proposed Project

LSA

FIGURE V.B-7

Gilead Sciences Corporate Campus Master Plan EIR
Visual Simulations from Viewpoint 6

2. Regulatory Context

The following discussion describes relevant policies of the Foster City General Plan and the Vintage Park Design Guidelines.

a. Foster City General Plan. The Foster City General Plan contains the following policies related to the visual quality and character of development within the City.

Land Use and Circulation Element

- *Policy LUC-40: Design Review of Commercial and Industrial Projects.* The City will use a design review process for commercial and industrial projects to ensure that basic land uses, density, access, internal circulation, visual characteristics, noise, odors, fire hazards, vibrations, smoke, discharge of wastes and nighttime lighting do not negatively affect adjacent or nearby residential land uses. Residential projects to be located near existing commercial or industrial land uses shall be appropriately designed to reduce noise, traffic, visual, and other potential conflicts.

Parks, Open Space and Conservation Element

- *Policy PC-20: Landscaped Setbacks.* Provide landscaped setbacks from the street for all new and revitalized developments.
- *Policy PC-25: Scenic Waterfront Vistas.* Protect scenic vistas of and from waterfront property by preventing obstruction of views by new development.
- *Program PC-v: Architectural Review.* Review all new development or improvement proposals through the City's architectural review process for: (1) impacts on access to sunlight; (2) provision of street furniture in public open spaces; and (3) impacts to waterfront views.

b. Vintage Park Design Guidelines. The Vintage Park Design Guidelines (Guidelines) were created to implement the Vintage Park Master Plan principles. During the design review process, the Guidelines are used by the City when reviewing projects located in Vintage Park. The original Vintage Park Master Plan and associated Design Guidelines intended development in this area to be integrated into a planned open space system that would create a park-like setting. The Guidelines contain several policies related to the visual quality of the project site. All of policies discussed are found in Section C., Site Planning, of the Guidelines. The site planning policies are analyzed in this section because they are most applicable to the Master Plan, which is proposed at a conceptual level of design. Other policies that are applicable to site-specific design would need to be evaluated when individual projects are proposed within the Master Plan area. Site planning policies and the Master Plan's consistency with these policies are discussed below in Table V.B-1.

3. Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This section analyzes impacts related to visual quality that could result from the proposed project. The subsection begins with the criteria of significance, which establish the thresholds for determining whether an impact is significant. The latter part of this section presents the impacts associated with the proposed project. Mitigation measures are recommended, as appropriate.

a. Criteria of Significance. Implementation of the proposed project would have a significant effect on visual resources if it would:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway;

- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings;
- Create an incompatible change to the skyline of the City; or
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

b. Less-than-Significant Visual Quality Impacts. Development of the proposed project would result in the following less-than-significant impacts to visual resources.

(1) Scenic Vistas and City Skyline. Important view corridors in the vicinity of the project site, according to the Parks, Open Space and Conservation Element of the Foster City General Plan include views of the San Francisco Bay, Marina Lagoon, the San Francisco Bay shoreline, and the Santa Cruz Mountains. The General Plan includes policies to preserve public views from the waterfront. In consultation with City staff, six viewpoint locations were chosen for visual simulations of the proposed project. These viewpoint locations were chosen based on project site visibility and the locations that provided the most representative views of the project site. Figure V.B-1 shows the viewpoint locations. Figures V.B-2 through V.B-7 show existing views of the project site and visual simulations of the proposed project from each of the six viewpoint locations. The visual simulations were prepared using computer modeling and rendering techniques, and are based solely on site layout and maximum building height data provided by the project sponsor (because building materials, colors, architecture, and landscape schematics are not yet available for the proposed project, generic illustrations have been provided). Proposed building heights may vary slightly (no more than 5 feet) in order to meet building code requirements or to accommodate mechanical equipment. The potential addition of height would not be considered a significant change to the visual quality of the buildings as it represents a fraction of the total building height, and mechanical equipment would be located behind a parapet towards the center of a building. As noted previously, the analysis of impacts to existing views of the project site focuses on site views from public locations such as roadways and open space along the San Francisco Bay shoreline. Each viewpoint shown in the figures is described and evaluated below.

View from Lakeside Drive Looking North (Viewpoint 1). Figure V.B-2 depicts the view from a portion of Lakeside Drive located in the middle of the campus, looking north. The existing view from this location includes one- and two-story buildings, mature trees and landscaping, and a portion of a taller building located on the EFI campus. The visual simulation of the proposed project shows two new buildings, two and ten stories tall, that are proposed as part of the project. In addition, the simulation shows a portion of Lakeside Drive that would be removed and replaced with an emergency access road, sidewalks, and associated landscaping. The 10-story building visible from this vantage point would be located at the northern portion of the campus near Vintage Lake and the taller buildings of the EFI campus. No scenic views are available from this location. Therefore, the proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact on scenic vistas from Lakeside Drive (facing north).

View from Lakeside Drive Looking East (Viewpoint 2). Figure V.B-3 depicts the view from a spot on the portion of Lakeside Drive that runs through the southern portion of the campus, looking east. The existing view from this location includes one- and two-story buildings that line both sides of Lakeside Drive, and associated landscaping. No surrounding uses can be seen from this portion of the campus. The visual simulation of the proposed project shows that Lakeside Drive has been replaced

with an emergency access road, a sidewalk, and landscaping. On either side of this new pedestrian walkway are existing and new buildings that range in height from one to three stories. As shown in Figure V.B-3, the new buildings generally blend in with the existing one- and two-story buildings located on this portion of the campus. No scenic views are available from this viewpoint. As such, the proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact on scenic views from Lakeside Drive (facing east).

View from the Northern Levee Adjacent to San Francisco Bay (Viewpoint 3). Figure V.B-4 depicts the view from a publicly-accessible location adjacent to San Francisco Bay looking south. The existing view of the project site from this location includes undeveloped land, buildings located on the EFI campus, and landscaping. In addition, this viewpoint contains expansive views of the Santa Cruz Mountains. The visual simulation shows three new buildings on the project site, including two ten-story buildings and one three-story building. The long axis of Building NOB-3 would be parallel to the mountains and, in combination with Building NOB-2, would reduce the existing unimpeded mountain view by approximately 50 percent. While the buildings would obstruct a portion of a scenic resource in Foster City, they would not result in a significant impact to scenic resources. Views of the Santa Cruz Mountains are already partially obstructed from this viewpoint by existing buildings and vegetation. In addition, from other portions of the levee not shown in Figure V.B-4, the views of the mountains would remain mostly unobstructed. The visual simulation in Figure V.B-4 shows a static view from the levee; this view would change as a pedestrian travels along the levee trail, and subsequent views would be less obstructed. In addition, the General Plan anticipates increased density in this portion of Foster City, and does not include policies requiring the preservation of all scenic views from the levee. As such, the proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact on scenic views from this public viewpoint.

View from the Intersection of Foster City Boulevard and East Hillsdale Boulevard (Viewpoint 4). Figure V.B-5 depicts the view from the intersection of Foster City Boulevard and East Hillsdale Boulevard, which is located near City Hall. Existing views from this vantage point do not include any direct views of the project site. Views of the site are obscured primarily by trees, electrical towers, and buildings. The visual simulation, included in Figure V.B-5, shows a ten-story building located to the west of Foster City Boulevard. While the building rises above the skyline, it would not be incompatible with the existing skyline because of the prominence of the electrical towers, which add visual clutter to the skyline. As such, the proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact on views from this location, and on the City's skyline.

View from the Intersection of Reef Drive and Mariners Island Boulevard (Viewpoint 5). Figure V.B-6 depicts the view from the intersection of Reef Drive and Mariners Island Boulevard. This is a viewpoint from the residential neighborhood located west of Mariners Island Boulevard. Existing views of the project site are generally blocked by existing vegetation, though some one- and two-story buildings are visible. The visual simulation of the proposed project shows the five-deck parking structure at the corner of Reef Drive and Mariners Island Boulevard, and portions of two- and ten-story buildings. While these structures would change the viewshed, no scenic views of San Francisco Bay, the City skyline, or the Santa Cruz Mountains would be obstructed. In addition, the ten-story buildings would not be located immediately adjacent to Mariners Island Boulevard, but instead would be constructed farther away from the lower residential buildings, and closer to the EFI campus, where they would blend in with existing buildings. As such, the proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact on views from this location.

View from Foster City Boulevard Exit at SR 92 (Viewpoint 6). Figure V.B-7 depicts the view from the Foster City Boulevard SR 92 overpass, looking west towards the project site. Existing views of the project site from this location are generally obstructed by office and light industrial buildings around Foster City Boulevard, Chess Drive, and Vintage Park Drive, along with trees and other landscaping. The Santa Cruz Mountains are also visible from this vantage point. The visual simulation included in Figure V.B-7 shows two ten-story buildings on the project site and the very top of a three-story building. The ten-story buildings would be visible against the City skyline as seen from the roadway and would obstruct a small portion of the view of the distant mountains. Since the majority of the mountain view would still be visible to motorists as they approach the project site, the proposed project would have a less-than-significant effect on views from Foster City Boulevard at SR 92. Similarly, the changes to this viewpoint would not represent an incompatible change to the City skyline because scenic views of the mountains would be largely preserved.

(2) Scenic Resources within a State Scenic Highway. Although sections of SR 92 are eligible for designation within the California Scenic Highway System, the scenic highway designation does not apply to SR 92 within the vicinity of the project site.¹ The proposed project would not result in the removal of trees, rock outcroppings, of historic resources, nor would it substantially damage scenic resources within a State scenic highway.

(3) Visual Character. Development of the proposed project would change the visual character of the project site. Up to eight one- and two-story office and laboratory buildings, along with associated surface parking lots would be replaced with up to seven office and laboratory buildings that range in height from two to ten stories, two parking garages, and surface parking lots. Mature trees and existing landscaping would be removed from portions of the site and replaced with new trees and landscaping. The proposed project would also provide an inviting pedestrian environment with the partial closure of Lakeside Drive, and the provision of a pedestrian walkway, sidewalks and open space areas in place of roadways and other built areas. Buildout of the Master Plan would increase the number of employees on the campus, and would change the circulation pattern on the site. These changes would likely increase pedestrian activity in and around the site. The proposed Master Plan would increase the intensity of development on the site and would result in the development of a more unified campus with a stronger visual relationship with Vintage Lake. The increased intensity of uses would not conflict with the existing land uses on the site since the two- and three-story buildings would be located among the existing one- and two-story buildings, while the ten-story buildings would be located at the perimeter of the site next to the relatively large visual expanse of Vintage Lake. Vintage Lake would serve as a buffer between the taller buildings and the office and light industrial uses to the east of the project site. As such, development anticipated as part of the Master Plan would generally be compatible with existing uses on the project site and other surrounding land uses. For these reasons, the proposed project would not adversely affect the visual character of the site.

In addition, the proposed project would be subject to the Foster City Design Review process as part of the Specific Development Plan/Use Permit for each building. Building permits would not be issued until design approval has been obtained. Design Review would ensure that the design of each

¹ California Department of Transportation, 2008. California Scenic Highway Program. Website: www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic/schwy.html. July 26.

building is consistent with the City’s objectives and policies related to project design. Building height would be reviewed during the design process as well. Therefore, the proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact on the visual character of the project site and surroundings.

(4) Policy Consistency. The proposed Master Plan would generally be consistent with applicable General Plan policies, in that specific projects would be subject to the City’s design review process prior to approval of specific site plans. The proposed Master Plan would also generally be consistent with the Vintage Park Design Guidelines, as shown below in Table V.B-1.

Table V.B-1: Vintage Park Design Guidelines Policy Consistency

Guideline Text	Project’s Relationship to Guideline
Establish an environment maximizing the visual impact of the Vintage Lake from within and without.	The proposed Master Plan would maximize the visual impact and views of Vintage Lake by establishing a pedestrian and open space axis that runs diagonally from buildings 342 and 344 to Vintage Lake.
Maintain diagonal lake axis and views with plazas, pedestrian spaces and landscape elements.	The proposed Master Plan would maintain a diagonal lake axis and views by creating a pedestrian and open space area that runs diagonally from buildings 342 and 344.
Maintain common building orientation perpendicular and parallel to the southern boundary at Fashion Island Shopping Center.	The Master Plan proposes up to two new buildings near the southern boundary of the project site. Building NLB-2 would be oriented perpendicular to the southern boundary, while Building NLB-1 would be oriented parallel to the southern boundary. The orientation of the new buildings would create a clear southern edge to the project site.
Orient buildings to maximize lake views while providing continuous pedestrian lake edge access.	The proposed Master Plan would maintain diagonal lake axis and views by creating a pedestrian and open space area that runs diagonally from buildings 342 and 344 to the lake. In addition, open space would be established around the western and southern shore of Vintage Lake, providing pedestrian access to the lake.
Create pedestrian plazas between buildings which enhance participation with Vintage Lake.	The proposed Master Plan would include pedestrian plazas and other open space areas in between buildings and around Vintage Lake.
Peripheral lot 6 buildings are limited to building heights of 20 feet to 55 feet.	The proposed Master Plan would not exceed these building height restrictions. The project would include buildings along the peripheral portion of the site that range in height from 40 feet to 52 feet. Even though proposed buildings would be below the permitted height limits, the project applicant proposes an amendment to the Guidelines which would extend the maximum allowable height of buildings in the periphery of lot 6 to 68 feet.
Lakeside lot 6 buildings are limited to building heights of 20 feet to 110 feet.	The proposed Master Plan would exceed these building height restrictions. The Master Plan would include buildings along Vintage Lake that would have a maximum height of 162 feet. However, the project applicant proposes an amendment to the Guidelines which would extend the maximum allowable height of buildings to 162 feet. If the proposed amendments were to be approved, the proposed Master Plan would be consistent with the Guidelines. Even without an amendment, the proposed building heights in and of themselves would be appropriate for the location within the site and would not result in significant environmental effects.

Source: Vintage Park Design Guidelines, 1984; LSA Associates, Inc., 2008.

c. **Significant Visual Quality Impacts.** Development of the proposed project would result in one significant impact.

Impact VIS-1: The proposed project would create additional sources of day and nighttime light and glare in Foster City. (S)

The proposed project would include new sources of light in Foster City. One- and two-story buildings currently located on the project site are generally obstructed by mature trees and landscaping. These uses would be replaced with two- to ten-story structures, some of which would be visible against the City skyline. During daylight hours, pedestrians and motorists could experience some degree of glare due to light reflecting off the new building facades. During nighttime hours, lighting fixtures incorporated into the design of each building would add new sources of light to the nighttime sky. In order to reduce potential light- and glare- related impacts to a less-than-significant level, the following two-part mitigation measure shall be incorporated during the construction phase of the project:

Mitigation Measure VIS-1a: The specific reflective properties of project building materials shall be assessed by the City during Design Review prior to approval of each Specific Development Plan for the proposed project. Design review shall ensure that the use of reflective exterior materials is minimized and that proposed reflective material would not create additional daytime or nighttime glare.

Mitigation Measure VIS-1b: Specific lighting proposals shall be submitted and reviewed as part of each Specific Development Plan for each new building on the project site and shall be approved by the City prior to issuance of a building permit. This review shall ensure that any outdoor night lighting for the project is downward facing and shielded so as not to create additional nighttime glare and shall conform to the performance standards established by Section 17.68.080 of the Zoning Code. (LTS)