

Appendix 5

Aesthetics and Visual Resources

5 Aesthetics

5.1 Introduction

This document describes the potential for aesthetic changes and effects upon existing visual resources that could be caused by implementation of the proposed project. The primary visual and aesthetic issues under review include potential obstruction of public views or vistas, impacts to locally important scenic resources such as existing trees and coastal dune landscape, changes in visual quality from key vantage points such as a State highway and public parks, and the potential for additional sources of light and glare. Information used to prepare this document came from the following resources:

- Aerial/Satellite Imagery
- Site visit photographs and field analysis
- Project design and engineering drawings
- Visual simulations

5.2 Determination of Existing Visual Quality

Key viewing points (KVPs) were selected to represent the most critical locations from which the proposed project would be seen from public viewpoints. These locations were selected based on their usefulness in evaluating existing landscapes and potential impacts on aesthetics with various levels of viewer sensitivity, in different landscape types and terrain, and from various vantage points. Locations typically considered for the establishment of KVPs include those: 1) along major or significant travel corridors; 2) along local roads; 3) along recreational access areas, public parks and trails; 4) at designated vista points; and 5) from locations that provide good examples of the existing landscape context and viewing conditions.

When analyzing existing aesthetic conditions, the elements of visual quality, viewer concern, visibility, number of viewers, and duration of view are considered. These parameters are then factored into an overall rating of viewer sensitivity.

Visual Quality. Visual quality is an expression of the visual impression or appeal of a given landscape (e.g. landforms, rock forms, water features, vegetative patterns, and cultural features). Visual quality is rated from low to high. Landscapes rated low are often dominated by visually discordant human alterations. Landscapes rated high generally are memorable because of the way the individual landscape features combine in a coherent and harmonious visual pattern. Also, those landscapes are typically free from discordant human alterations, so they retain their visual integrity.

Viewer Concern. Viewer concern addresses the level of interest or concern (from low to high) of viewers regarding an area's aesthetic values and the potential for visible change to the landscape. Viewer concern is closely associated with viewers' expectations for a given viewshed (i.e. an area of land or water visible from a fixed vantage point) and reflects the importance placed on the human perceptions of the intrinsic beauty and visual interest of the existing landscape characteristics. Official statements of public values and goals and adopted local public policy pertaining to aesthetics or visual resources also

reflect viewers' expectations regarding a visual setting and are given weight in determining levels of viewer concern.

Land uses associated with designated parks, monuments, and wilderness areas; scenic highways and corridors; recreational areas; conservation areas; and historic residential areas are generally considered to have high viewer concern. However, existing landscape character may temper viewer concern on some State and locally designated scenic highways and corridors. In general, people driving for pleasure or engaged in recreational activities tend to have high viewer concern.

Travelers on other highways and roads, including those in rural or agricultural areas, may have moderate or high viewer concern depending on viewer expectations as conditioned by regional and local landscape conditions in these areas.

Commercial uses, including business parks and hotels, typically have low-to-moderate viewer concern, although some commercial developments have specific requirements related to visual quality with respect to landscaping, building height limitations, building design, and prohibition of certain uses.

Industrial uses and their occupants typically have the lowest viewer concern because employees generally work in utilitarian surroundings with relatively low visual value. However, some areas of lower visual quality and degraded visual character may contain particular views of substantially higher visual quality or interest to the public.

Visibility. Visibility is a measure of how well an object can be seen. Visibility depends on the angle or direction of views; viewing distance; extent of visual screening; and elevated topographical relationships between the object and key public viewpoints (scenic vistas). Visibility takes into consideration any and all obstructions that may be in the sightline, including landforms, trees and other vegetation, buildings, transmission poles or towers, general air quality conditions such as haze, and general weather conditions, such as fog.

Number of Viewers. Number of viewers is a measure of the number of viewers per day who would have a view of a proposed project or a visual resource and can range from low to high. The types of viewers can include residents, employees, motorists, and recreationists.

Duration of View. Duration of view is the amount of time to view a project site or a visual resource. For example, a high or extended view of a project site is one experienced over the course of two minutes or more (e.g. in a park). In contrast, a low or brief duration of view is available in a short amount of time — generally less than 10 seconds (e.g. travelling on a public road).

Viewer Exposure. Viewer exposure is a function of three elements previously listed: visibility; number of viewers; and duration of view. Viewer exposure can range from low to high. A partially obscured and brief background view for a few motorists represents low viewer exposure, and an unobstructed foreground view from a large number of residences represents a high viewer exposure.

Overall Visual Sensitivity. Visual sensitivity is derived from three elements previously listed: visual quality; viewer concern; and viewer exposure and is a concluding assessment of an existing landscape's susceptibility to an adverse visual outcome. A landscape with a high degree of visual sensitivity is able to accommodate only a lower degree of adverse visual change without resulting in a significant aesthetic impact. A landscape with a low degree of visual sensitivity is able to accommodate a higher degree of

adverse visual change before exhibiting a significant aesthetic impact. Visual sensitivity can range from low to high.

5.3 Environmental Setting

This section presents information on aesthetic conditions in the study area. The current condition and quality of aesthetic resources is used as the baseline against which to compare potential impacts of the project.

5.3.1 Visual Landscape Along the Busway Corridor

The visual and aesthetic setting of each segment of the project area is described below:

Segment 1 – Marina Transit Exchange to Palm Avenue

This segment consists of public roadways within the City of Marina. The visual setting in this urban location consists of businesses, pavement, streetlights and other improvements typical of Reservation Road and Del Monte Boulevard. The area accessed by Palm Avenue and Marina Drive contains apartment buildings and a nearby school. The TAMC right-of-way in this location is essentially a dirt corridor with the existing rail line and is used for parking by local residents. This segment is viewed primarily by motorists and residents. See [Figure 5-1](#) for photographs within Segment 1.

Segment 2 – Palm Avenue Corridor to 5th Street Station

The visually dominant visual features along this segment consist of Highway 1 overpasses, Highway 1, the Monterey Bay Recreational Trail, Beach Range Road and the coastal dune habitats within Fort Ord Dunes State Park. Public viewpoints are available from Beach Range Road, the recreation trail, and from Highway 1. At the 5th Street Station location on the inland side of the highway, the visual setting is characterized by abandoned military buildings of the former Fort Ord, pavement and Monterey cypress trees along the highway. See [Figures 5-2](#) and [5-3](#) for photographs within Segment 2.

Segment 3 – 5th Street Station to California/Fremont/Monterey/SR 1 Interchange (California Avenue Connection)

This segment of the busway alignment, as viewed from public viewpoints from Beach Range Road and Highway 1, provides wide vistas into Fort Ord Dunes State Park, with glimpses across Monterey Bay toward Monterey, Pacific Grove and Point Pinos in the background. The dune habitat areas support native and non-native plants, including large mats of iceplant. From Beach Range Road the rail corridor and highway are visually dominant, contrasting with the open, undisturbed setting of the dunes and State Park. From Highway 1, the TAMC corridor and rail line can be seen occasionally in the foreground, with dunes and vegetation in the background. Water views of Monterey Bay are only rare glimpses. Approaching California Avenue, the visual setting is once again dominated by the highway overpass, as well as larger dunes in the vicinity of the Monterey Bay Shores Resort property. See [Figures 5-4](#), [5-5A](#) and [5-5B](#) for photographs within Segment 3.



View from Palm Avenue Looking North



View from Del Monte Boulevard and Reservation Road Looking South

Source: Kimley Horn, 2020; Google Earth Pro, 2020



Marina Transit Exchange and Reservation Road Looking South

Figure 5-1: Segment 1 Views

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Marina Drive at Palm Avenue Looking South



Below SR1 Ramps Looking South



North of Imjin Parkway Looking South



8th Street Bridge Looking South

Source: Kimley Horn, 2020

Figure 5-2: Segment 2 - Views from Public Rights of Way
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Beach Range Road Approaching 8th Street Bridge Looking North



View from 8th Street Bridge Looking North



Existing Building at Proposed 5th Street Station Location Looking North

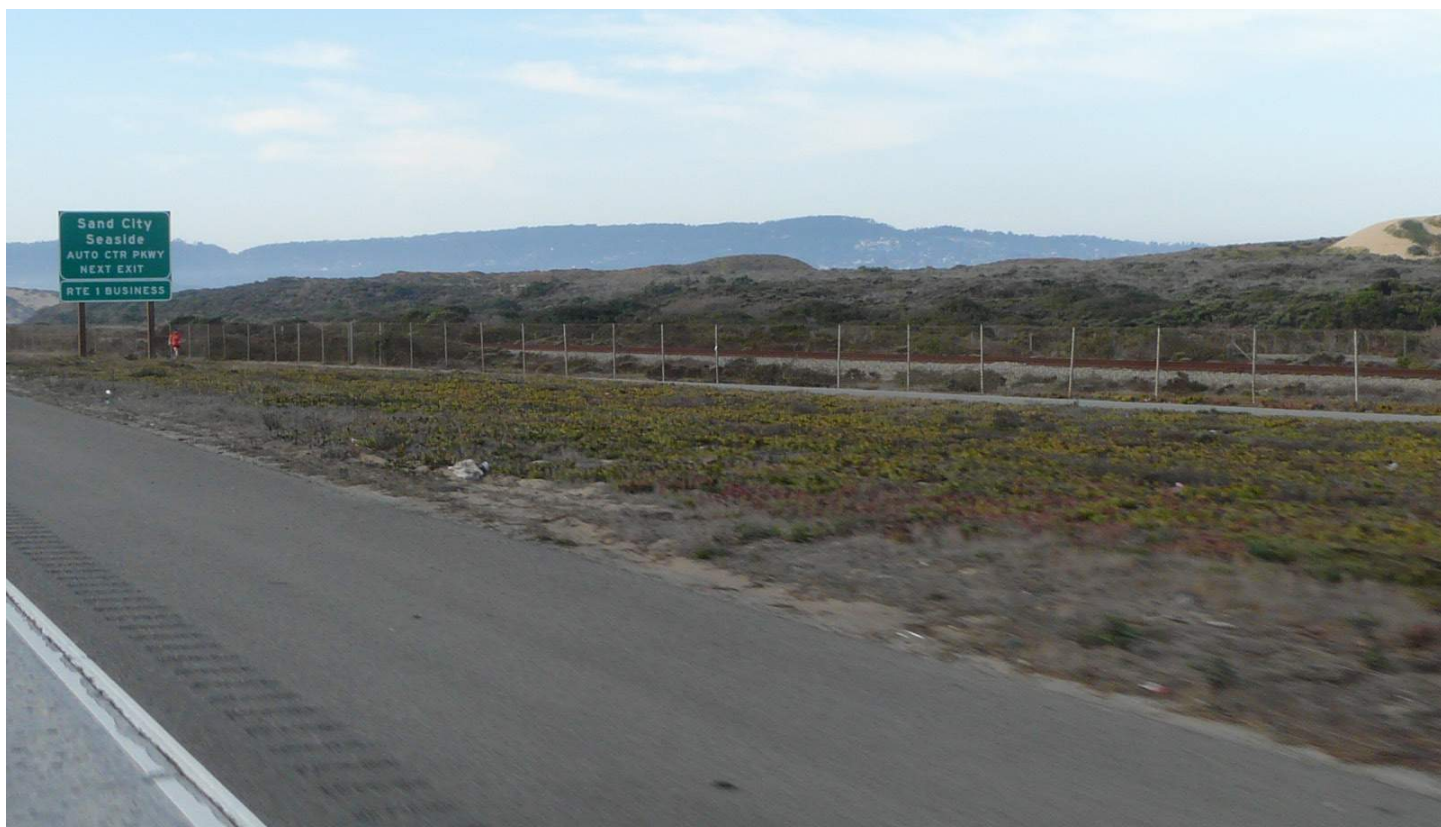
Source: Kimley Horn, 2020

Figure 5-3: Segment 2 - Other Views

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South of Lightfighter Drive Looking South



North of Fremont/Del Monte Exit Looking South

Source: Kimley Horn, 2020



Beach Range Road Looking North



View from Beach Range Road Toward Future Campground Area



View from Future Campground Area Toward Highway 1



View from Future Campground Area Toward Highway 1

Source: Kimley Horn, 2020

Figure 5-5A: Segment 3 - Public Views from within Fort Ord Dunes State Park
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Future State Park Entrance Location (1st Street Underpass) Looking North



View from Existing State Park Road Toward Highway 1



View from Project Right-of-Way Toward Future Campground Area

Source: Kimley Horn, 2020

Figure 5-5B: Segment 3 - Public Views from within Fort Ord Dunes State Park
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Segments 4 and 5

These two segments are visually similar, consisting of public roadways adjacent to the shopping centers in Sand City. Within the 100-foot busway corridor in Segment 4, the right-of-way consists of dirt and iceplant along the rail line, bordered by California Avenue and commercial/industrial buildings that front Del Monte Boulevard. Further south within Segment 5, the rail corridor is encroached with commercial and industrial uses as the route continues through Sand City to its terminus at Contra Costa Street. Segment 5 will utilize Del Monte Boulevard for the foreseeable future. See **Figures 5-6 and 5-7** for photographs within Segments 4 and 5.

5.3.2 Scenic Vistas

Scenic vistas are typically areas of elevated expansive views toward a landscape or scenery of high visual quality. The recreation trail and Beach Range Road along the alignment provide several vista points looking toward and into Fort Ord Dunes State Park and toward Monterey Bay and the Monterey Peninsula. Views while driving (southbound and northbound) do not provide significant vista opportunities as the freeway elevation is mostly below the dune topography on the ocean side of the highway. While there are glimpses of the ocean and the Monterey Peninsula beyond, most views from the highway are screened by topography and landform, limiting views of open vistas.

5.3.3 Key Viewpoints (KVPs)

The 6-mile long project area can be viewed from several publicly accessible viewpoints, but is most visible from Highway 1 and Fort Ord Dunes State Park. As shown in **Figure 5-8: Key Viewpoint Locations** and **Figures 5-9A to 5-12B**, the KVPs were selected based on the overall potential for project visibility within the public viewshed. While there are many points along the alignment that could be considered “key viewpoints”, these locations are considered representative of the most sensitive locations along the busway alignment. These locations were selected for visual simulations.

- KVP 1 – Highway 1 North of Imjin Parkway
- KVP 2 – Highway 1 South of Lightfighter Drive (looking toward future State Park campgrounds)
- KVP 3 – Beach Range Road (near future State Park campground access road)
- KVP 4 – Beach Range Road (looking toward the 8th Street Bridge)



View from Playa Avenue Looking North



Project Right of Way Approaching Playa Avenue Looking South

Source: Kimley Horn, 2020; Google Earth Pro, 2020



View from Contra Costa Street Looking North



View from Playa Avenue Looking South

Source: Google Earth Pro, 2020



Source: Kimley Horn, 2020; Nearmap, 2020

Figure 5-8: Key Viewpoint Locations
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Existing Condition



Post-Project Condition

Source: Kimley Horn, 2020



Source: Kimley Horn, 2020

Post-Project with Bus

Figure 5-9B: KVP 1

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Existing Condition



Post-Project Condition

Source: Kimley Horn, 2020



Source: Kimley Horn, 2020

Post-Project with Bus

Figure 5-10B: KVP 2

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Existing Condition



Post-Project Condition

Source: Kimley Horn, 2020



Source: Kimley Horn, 2020

Post-Project with Bus

Figure 5-11B: KVP 3

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Existing Condition



Post-Project Condition

Source: Kimley Horn, 2020



Source: Kimley Horn, 2020

Post-Project with Bus

Figure 5-12B: KVP 4
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View of Monterey Bay



View of Coastal Dune Habitat

Source: Kimley Horn, 2020

KVP 1 – Highway 1 North of Imjin Parkway

KVP 1 was selected to characterize the aesthetic and visual condition in a location of expansive views of coastal dunes, as seen to motorists traveling southbound on Highway 1.

Visual Quality: *High.* Views from this location are relatively unobstructed by buildings or other man-made structures, with the exception of the Monterey Bay Coastal Recreation Trail and existing rail bed in the foreground.

Viewer Concern: *Moderate to High.* While this viewpoint does include some roadway, fencing and trail improvements, high quality views are anticipated by drivers along this section of coastline and therefore concern over changes could be expected to be in the moderate to high range.

Viewer Exposure: *High.* Highway 1 is heavily travelled by both commuters and visitors to the Monterey area.

Overall Visual Sensitivity: *Moderate to High.* While the viewpoint is slightly compromised by existing improvements in the foreground, it is generally in an area of interesting and expected views and has high viewer exposure.

KVP 2 – Highway 1 South of Lightfighter Drive

KVP 2 was selected to characterize the aesthetic and visual condition as seen from Highway 1, looking toward the general area proposed for future State Park campgrounds.

Visual Quality: *High.* This viewpoint is mostly unobstructed from signs, buildings and other improvements, and provides a colorful mix of both native and non-native vegetation. Rows of Monterey cypress trees in the vicinity of the future campgrounds provide a canopy and visual interest in this location. The existing railbed is just visible beyond the fencing.

Viewer Concern: *Moderate to High.* Similar to KVP 1, this viewpoint does include some visible roadway and fencing improvements. However, high quality views are anticipated by drivers along this section of coastline and therefore concern over changes could be expected to be in the moderate to high range.

Viewer Exposure: *High.* Highway 1 is heavily travelled by both commuters and visitors to the Monterey area, providing continuous exposure.

Overall Visual Sensitivity: *Moderate to High.* While the viewpoint is slightly compromised by existing improvements in the foreground, it is generally in an area of interesting and expected views and has high viewer exposure.

KVP 3 – Beach Range Road (near future State Park campground access road)

KVP 3 is located within Fort Ord Dunes State Park. The photo location is looking north to the general location where State Parks is planning an access road to a parking area, tent camp area and RV camping. This location was chosen as a point that would be visible to park users, trail users and future campers accessing the campground. The existing rail bed is visible as a linear feature just below the cypress trees.

Visual Quality: *High.* This viewpoint from Beach Range Road is typical of the high-quality views provided along this park road/pathway, which is currently closed to vehicle traffic. The Monterey cypress trees, colorful vegetation and old fenceposts contribute the visual character of the State Park.

Viewer Concern: *High.* As a recreation area within a State Park, viewer concern for adverse changes or alterations would be expected to be high.

Viewer Exposure: *Moderate.* While in a public park setting, this view is limited to mainly park users and cyclists. The route is popular and well used, but is not visually exposed to highway traffic in this location.

Overall Visual Sensitivity: *Moderate to High.* While the view is of high quality and concern, exposure is moderate and some improvements or changes on or adjacent to State Park property would not be unexpected over time.

KVP 4 – Beach Range Road (looking toward 8th Street Bridge)

KVP 4 was selected as a more elevated viewpoint within Fort Ord Dunes State Park. This viewpoint provides an open view of the busway alignment and provides blue water views of Monterey bay from several spots in this immediate vicinity.

Visual Quality: *Moderate to High.* While this viewpoint does provide some bay/water views and views of the distant Santa Cruz Mountains, the viewpoint is also somewhat compromised by the existing railroad tracks and rail bed along Beach Range Road.

Viewer Concern: *Moderate to High.* As a recreation area within a State Park, viewer concern for adverse changes or alterations would be expected to be high.

Viewer Exposure: While in a public park setting, this view is limited to mainly park users and cyclists. The route is popular and well used but is not visually exposed to highway traffic in this location.

Overall Visual Sensitivity: *Moderate to High.* While the view is of high quality and concern, exposure is moderate and some improvements or changes on or adjacent to State Park property would not be unexpected over time.

5.4 Applicable Regulations, Plans, and Standards

5.4.1 Federal

None applicable.

5.4.2 State

In 1963, the California Legislature established the State's Scenic Highway Program, which is intended to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from changes that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. The state laws governing the Scenic Highway Program are found in the Streets and Highways Code, Section 260 et seq.

The State Scenic Highways program, established by the Streets and Highways Code, is administered by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The State Scenic Highway System includes highways that are either eligible for designation as scenic highways or have been designated as such.

For Caltrans to grant an eligible route official status as a California State Scenic Highway, the local jurisdiction must implement a Corridor Protection Program by either adopting ordinances, zoning, and/or planning policies to preserve the scenic quality of the corridor, or documenting that such regulations already exist in various portions of local codes. Policies to prevent visual degradation of

these view corridors might include restriction of dense and continuous development, reflective surfaces, ridgeline development, extensive cut and fill grading, disturbed hillsides and landscape, exposed earth, and non-native vegetation (Caltrans, 2014).

Highway 1 is an officially designated State Scenic Highway from the Carmel River to Highway 68 in Monterey, and from the Santa Cruz County line to the City of Half Moon Bay. The section of Highway 1 along the SURF! busway alignment is eligible for designation, but not officially designated at this time.

5.5 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

5.5.1 Significance Criteria

The following significance criteria for aesthetics were derived from the Environmental Checklist in CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. These significance criteria have been amended or supplemented, as appropriate, to address lead agency requirements and the full range of potential impacts related to this project.

An impact of the project would be considered significant and would require mitigation if it would meet one or more of the following criteria.

- Cause 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, coastal scenic resources, or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage points.)
- In an urbanized area, conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

A significant aesthetic impact could occur if the proposed project's incremental aesthetic impact would be cumulatively considerable.

Impact Assessment Methodology

To determine potential impacts, the impact significance criteria identified above were applied to the construction and operation of the proposed project. Impacts are identified as being either short-term or long-term in nature.

An adverse aesthetic (visual) impact occurs within public view when: (1) an action perceptibly changes existing features of the physical environment so that they no longer appear to be characteristic of the subject locality or region; (2) an action introduces new features to the physical environment that are perceptibly uncharacteristic of the region and/or locale; or (3) aesthetic features of the landscape become less visible (i.e. partially or totally blocked from view) or are removed. Changes that seem uncharacteristic are those that appear out of place, discordant, or distracting. The degree of the aesthetic impact depends upon how noticeable the adverse change may be, and conclusions can be

subjective. The noticeability of an adverse aesthetic impact is a function of project features, context, and viewing conditions (e.g. angle of view, distance, primary viewing directions, and duration of view).

Views and viewpoints were assessed in the field by walking and driving all publicly accessible areas in the vicinity of the project alignment to search for and photograph prominent public vantage points.

5.5.2 Summary of No and/or Beneficial Impacts

State-Designated Scenic Highway

The project site is not located within the viewshed of a state-designated scenic highway, and therefore would not impact or substantially alter scenic resources related to a scenic highway. While many segments of Highway 1 are officially designated as a scenic highway, the segment parallel to the busway is not.

Conflict with Applicable Zoning and Other Regulations Governing Scenic Quality in an Urbanized Area

The project is a designated busway within TAMC-owned right-of-way that has been used historically as a transportation corridor. While the corridor touches the coastal zone of the City of Marina, Monterey County and San Jose with overlying land uses, it is comprised of parcels owned by TAMC and Caltrans (e.g. 5th Street Station) and dedicated for transportation use. The busway project would construct travel lanes within the corridor at ground level, and would not conflict with local land use, zoning or scenic policies along the alignment. See also **Appendix 9** for a more detailed land use and coastal zone consistency analysis.

5.5.3 Impacts of the Proposed Project

Impact AES-1: The project could affect or alter views as seen from a scenic vista. This is a less-than-significant impact.

Construction

The temporary aesthetic effects of project construction are more appropriately discussed in the context of visual character or quality. Please see discussion under impact AES-2.

Operation

There are several publicly accessible locations and views from within Fort Ord Dunes State Park near the proposed busway corridor that could be considered “scenic vistas” based on the elevated nature of the views and/or visibility of a sweeping landscape. Most of these viewpoints are experienced from Beach Range Road, in the area parallel to Segment 2 and Segment 3 of the busway alignment. Beach Range Road provides elevated views as it crests a hill near Lightfighter Drive, as well as dramatic views of the coastal dune habitat and Monterey Bay. See **Figure 5-13** for representative examples.

The focal point for these views is toward the ocean, while the busway location would be located near and parallel to the highway. In the hilltop example, the busway lanes would be visible in the distance; however, compared to the existing railroad tracks in the right of way, any visibility would not be considered substantial or adverse as the roadbed would not be substantially different from the existing

tracks and railbed. From other locations along Beach Range Road, the view and vistas provided are focused toward the ocean, and therefore the introduction of the busway lanes (and occasional bus vehicle) would not interfere or impact these open views.

The northern and southern ends of the busway are located in urban public rights-of-way and are not located in areas with significant vistas. Similarly, viewpoints from the highway do not provide significant vistas due to topography and the fact that highway travel speeds result in views that are of short duration.

For these reasons, the project's potential effect on existing scenic vistas is considered **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

Impact AES-2: The project could substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. For construction, this is a significant, although temporary, impact of the project. However, project operations would result in less-than-significant impacts.

Construction

Construction of the project will entail the removal of existing trees, grading, excavation and construction activity along the alignment, particularly within Segments 2 and 3. This activity would continue over a period of approximately 18 to 24 months. While temporary, the visual character and quality of the site in the immediate area where work is occurring would be degraded while construction is underway within the TAMC right of way. Light and heavy construction equipment (excavators, scrapers, dump trucks, paving equipment etc.) would be staged along the alignment as the work progresses. This construction activity and equipment would be highly visible from Highway 1, the recreation trail and Beach Range Road, temporarily degrading the driver and user visual experience.

Typical construction mitigation measures such as construction fencing or screening would not be practical along this linear project site and could cause additional visual impacts if such fencing were erected. However, as construction is temporary and work (and equipment) will continually move along the corridor as work progresses, the visual effects will be limited at any given location and quickly passed by vehicles and trail users. No mitigation is warranted for these temporary effects.

Operation

Visual character is the overall perceptible aesthetic quality of an area created by its unique combination of visual features such as form, bulk, scale, texture, color and viewing range. The key factors in determining the potential for an adverse effect on visual character are (1) substantial changes to the existing physical features of the landscape that are characteristic of the region or locale; or (2) the introduction of new features to the physical landscape that are perceptibly uncharacteristic of the region or locale that become visually dominant from common view points. Within the Coastal Zone, trees can also be considered a "visually integral" part of the scenic coastline and local visual character.

As described in the Environmental Setting, the visual quality of the alignment and lands on either side of the alignment is dominated by Highway 1, the existing railroad tracks and railbed, the coastal dune topography and the Monterey Bay beyond. The relative change to the visual character of the site and its

surroundings once the project is constructed is best illustrated from the key viewpoints (KVPs) identified previously:

KVP 1 – Highway 1 North of Imjin Parkway. From this highway viewpoint, the railroad tracks that blend in with the topography would now also have the paved busway travel lanes in the foreground. From this point and several similar viewpoints, the visibility of the travel lanes would change depending on the topography and visual obstructions in the foreground. KVP 1 shows a location where the lanes would be most visible and elevated. While the lanes are visible, the aesthetic character of the area is not substantially altered, and the lanes are similar in appearance to other improvements such as the recreation trail and highway shoulders. **Figures 5-9A and 5-9B** provide visual simulations of the pre-and post-project conditions. It should be noted that bus headways are 10 minutes apart, meaning that a bus would only be visible for a few seconds as it passes by any given location. The degree of these changes would not be considered a substantial degradation of the visual character from this viewpoint.

KVP 2 – Highway 1 South of Lightfighter Drive. Post-project views of the project site from this vantage point would be similar to baseline conditions. The busway lanes may be visible from the Highway, but not prominent. Even with the occasional bus vehicle, the visual quality of the view and aesthetic character of this location near the future State Park campground area would not be significantly impacted. **Figures 5-10A and 5-10B** provide visual simulations of pre- and post-project conditions from this viewpoint to support these conclusions.

KVP 3 – Beach Range Road (near future State Park access road). From this viewpoint within Fort Ord Dunes State Park the railroad tracks within the project corridor are visible but overgrown with vegetation. Stands of Monterey cypress trees within the TAMC and Caltrans right-of-way provide a distinctive canopy and help screen the highway in the background.

As shown in **Figures 5-11A and 5-11B**, the busway lanes would be located on the inland side of the railroad tracks. This would require some clearing and grading, including removal of vegetation and some smaller trees that have begun growing within the corridor. The busway lanes (and occasional bus) would be visible, but the introduction of new road surface is not uncharacteristic of the existing visual character of these surroundings, as there are road surfaces on either side of the project corridor. The removal of some vegetation and small trees would alter views as seen from this location and others like it along Beach Range Road and the recreation trail; however, tree removal would be very selective, would involve smaller, younger trees and would not impact the overall density of canopy along the corridor. The resulting degree of visual and aesthetic change would be **less than significant**, as the changes would not substantially degrade the existing visual character of the site or its surroundings. Although not directly related to this project, it should be noted that future vehicle traffic and signage associated with the future State Park campgrounds at this location may further alter the aesthetic characteristics along this segment.

KVP 4 – Beach Range Road (looking toward 8th Street Bridge). This viewpoint is representative of several similar viewpoints along this popular segment of Beach Range Road. This area is heavily used due to the availability of public parking and ample road width and provides views of the bay and Santa Cruz Mountains.

As shown in **Figures 5-12A and 5-12B**, the double railroad tracks and ballast are wide in this location and relatively free of vegetation. Introduction of the busway lanes over and/or adjacent to the tracks is

visually insignificant, as the project would simply exchange one type of transportation improvement for another. No significant views would be blocked or obscured, the busway lanes can be considered characteristic of the area and existing setting and would not substantially degrade the site or its surroundings. For these reasons, visual and aesthetic impacts are **less than significant** from this location.

Other Viewpoints. For this analysis views and aesthetic changes were considered from other viewpoints, including the northbound Highway 1 travel lanes, views and visual character around the 5th Street Station location, and views from the interior of Fort Ord Dunes State Park.

Views from the northbound highway lanes are no more sensitive or remarkable than the views southbound and are more distant from the project's busway lanes. For these reasons, there are no new or different conclusions or impacts from these vantage points. Similarly, views from the highway toward the 5th Street Station are heavily obscured by existing vegetation, and views inland are not of high quality. Changes to the visual character at this location should result in improvements over the existing visual condition that is currently dominated by dilapidated buildings of the former Fort Ord. Finally, from within the accessible areas of the State Park and future campground areas, the existing sloped topography and stands of Monterey cypress trees block the line of sight toward the busway corridor, located several hundred yards away. The busway should not be visible or obtrusive to campers or park users once the campgrounds are established. An occasional bus may be visible to park visitors or RV campers, but with 10-minute or longer headways, buses moving along the corridor would not be considered a substantial degradation or intrusion upon the park's visual and aesthetic characteristics.

Where fencing is required for boundary demarcation or safety along the State Park interface, the project would utilize fencing type that is consistent with existing State Park fencing or similar types that blend with the environment and provide maximum visibility, such as a type in the photograph below.



Impact AES-3: **The project would introduce new sources of light and glare to the project site and project area. This is a less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated.**

Construction

Construction activity associated with the project would not result in unusual or permanent light sources that would significantly affect day or nighttime views in the area. During darker winter months, however, some flood lighting or work lighting may be necessary during the early morning or late afternoon hours. All lighting required for construction would be temporary, and no nighttime construction is proposed. While construction lighting would be of short duration, mitigation measure MM AES 3-1 below would serve to limit unnecessary lighting.

Operation

At the north and south end of the busway alignment (within Segments 1, 4 and 5) the project is within urbanized areas and would be using public streets with existing lighting sources. Any ancillary lighting required for the busway in these locations would be for safety or signalization and would not be a significant new source of light or glare in this environment.

Direct lighting from bus headlights and interior cabin lighting travelling along the busway lanes would introduce a new source of light during nighttime hours. However, with infrequent 10-minute headways between buses (and less frequent headways during the night), headlights and vehicle lights would not be considered a significant new source of lighting in the area compared to existing conditions. The majority of Fort Ord Dunes State Park would be closed to visitors during the night, and the future campground areas are visually screened from the busway by topography and vegetation. In addition, any additional lighting generated by buses would be insignificant compared to existing headlights from vehicles traveling along the nearby highway. For these reasons, bus headlights and the introduction of this limited light sources within the corridor is considered less than significant.

Within Segments 2 and 3 (within the TAMC corridor), no fixed lighting is proposed along the majority of the dedicated bus lanes or adjacent to Fort Ord Dunes State Park. For safety purposes however, limited overhead lighting would be required at key locations where the busway intersects with the bicycle/pedestrian trail network. These locations include the recreation trail crossing on the new platform at Palm Avenue, at the 5th Street Station undercrossing (undercrossing and trail/busway interface), and at the new roundabout at the California Avenue connection. Mitigation measure AES 3-1 would ensure that lighting at these locations would be controlled to minimize potential effects on the nighttime environment, coastal zone, and biological resources of the adjacent coastal dune habitat.

MM AES-3.1 Limit New Sources of Lighting

The final construction drawing package shall include a final Lighting Plan indicating the type and location of proposed lighting sources. Construction lighting shall be directed away from sensitive habitat areas if required during evening hours. The Lighting Plan shall include specific products and photometric data demonstrating how new lighting sources necessary for project operational safety shall be shielded or baffled to minimize unwanted light spill and direct light away from the State Park. As the alignment is located within airport Safety Zone 7 of both the Marina Municipal and Monterey

Regional airports, the project's Lighting Plan shall also be submitted to the respective airport manager of each airport for review and approval consistent with ALUC standard conditions.

5.5.4 Cumulative Impact Analysis

The geographic context for the analysis of cumulative aesthetic impacts includes a large area along the existing transportation corridor. As a unique transportation project that crosses multiple jurisdictional boundaries, the project's cumulative contribution to visual and aesthetic changes are best analyzed in the context of general plans and other planning documents of the local land use agencies.

Impact AES-4: The project would not significantly contribute to cumulatively considerable visual or aesthetic impacts. This is a less-than-significant impact of the project.

This linear transportation project is located along a corridor that has historically been used for transportation and envisioned for future transportation within local planning documents. The General Plans, specific plans and individual projects located in the cities of Marina, Seaside and Sand City include land uses and policies that are generally supportive of public transportation modes, as indicated by land uses and projects that include transit-oriented development. The project would not significantly contribute to any environmental concerns that are substantially different or more severe than those effects that have been evaluated within the EIR documents for each agency's approved plans. As such, the project's potential cumulative contribution has been directly or indirectly considered and would not result in new or significantly different impacts.

5.6 References

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2015. State Scenic Highway Program. Available at: http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/faq.htm, accessed September 14, 2015.

City of Marina. 1982. *Local Coastal Program Volume I Land Use Plan* (certified 1982, amended November 2013).

City of Marina. 2000. *City of Marina General Plan*.

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