

4.1 AESTHETICS

This section of the Focused Tiered Final EIR presents potential aesthetic impacts of the Creative Arts and Holloway Mixed-Use Project (Project). Preparation of this Focused Tiered Final EIR was preceded by the Tiered Initial Study, which determined that an EIR would be prepared to consider the potential for the Project to result in new significant impacts related to aesthetics or substantially more severe impacts compared to those identified in the Campus Master Plan (CMP) EIR. Section 4.1 of the 2007 CMP Draft EIR (SF State 2007a) addresses the aesthetic effects of campus growth under the 2007 CMP (SF State 2007b).

This section presents the environmental setting, impacts of the Project on the environment, and proposed measures to mitigate any identified significant impacts. Information is incorporated by reference from the 2007 CMP EIR, from which this EIR is tiered, as described in Chapter 2.

Public and agency comments related to aesthetics were received during the public scoping period in response to the Notice of Preparation, and are summarized below:

- The EIR need not consider the aesthetics of a project in determining if a project has the potential to result in significant effects, if it meets the definition of a Transit-Oriented Project in accordance with CEQA Statutes Section 21099.¹
- SF State should have iconic buildings that are beautiful and inviting, and that impress young minds.
- See also Section 6, Alternatives, for additional scoping comments related to aesthetic impacts and alternatives.

To the extent that issues identified in public comments involve potentially significant effects on the environment according to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and/or were raised by responsible and trustee agencies, they are identified and addressed in this EIR. For a complete list of public comments received during the public scoping period refer to Appendix B.

4.1.1 Environmental Setting

Section 4.1 of the 2007 CMP EIR addresses the existing environmental setting for aesthetics (SF State 2007a). The following discussion summarizes information presented in the “Environmental

¹ CEQA Statutes Section 21099 applies to “transit-oriented infill projects” that meet particular criteria. This Project does not fully meet the criteria for a transit-oriented infill project under CEQA and, therefore, the provisions of this section were not applied to the Project. As a result, aesthetics impacts of the Project are considered in this EIR.

Setting” subsection of Section 4.1 of the 2007 CMP EIR, updated with current and site-specific information as necessary.

Study Area

The study area for the aesthetics analysis includes the southern portion of the San Francisco State (SF State) campus near the Project site and the areas within 0.5 mile of the southern portion of the campus in all directions from which the Project site is visible. The term “campus” refers to the 144-acre main campus (see Figure 3-3 in Chapter 3). See Chapter 3 for further description of the 144-acre campus. The existing SF State campus is located in the southwestern corner of the City and County of San Francisco, in California (see Figure 3-2 in Chapter 3). The campus lies within an urban context along the 19th Avenue corridor. Mostly dense urban and suburban development lies to the north, south, and east of the campus and mostly open space uses lie to the west of the campus toward the Pacific Ocean.

The approximately 3.6-acre Project site is located in the south campus, with one parcel (Block 6) on the south side of Holloway Avenue between Cardenas and Varela Avenues, and one parcel (Block 1), referred to as the Tapia Triangle, bounded by Tapia Drive, Holloway Avenue, and Font Boulevard (see Figure 3-1 in Chapter 3). The Project site is part of University Park South, which was purchased by SF State between 2000 and 2005 and includes a portion of the original Parkmerced development, which extends beyond the campus boundaries to the south. Block 1 and Block 6 are composed primarily of two-story housing around the perimeter of the block, with an interior courtyard.

Visual Character of SF State near the Project Site

Campus Context

The campus is composed of more than 50 buildings that were built between 1939 and the present. The existing buildings range in size from fairly small (less than 1,000 gross square feet (gsf)) to fairly large (more than 600,000 gsf). Most academic and residential buildings on the SF State campus are two to six stories tall. However, there are a few notable exceptions, including: The Towers at Centennial Square just south of the parking garage (17 stories), Hensill and Thornton halls near 19th Avenue (eight and nine stories), and the apartment towers in University Park North (10 stories). Residential buildings in the University Park North area are generally low-lying two- to three-story apartment buildings and 10-story apartment towers, as noted above. Residential buildings in the University Park South (UPS), including those on the Project site, are two stories.

In general, campus land uses are grouped geographically. Academic buildings, library, and administration building surround the Quad and make up the academic core of the campus, which is north of the Project site. Groups of residential buildings lie to the north, west, and

south of the academic core, such as UPS, which is located south of the academic core. Student, administrative and support services are spread throughout the campus.

One of the major campus entrances is located at the intersection of 19th and Holloway Avenues, just northeast of Block 6. Additionally, a major pedestrian circulation corridor exists along the east-west connection provided primarily on Holloway Avenue and Font Boulevard, adjacent the Project site.

The campus landscaping is dominated by mature stands of Monterey Cypress, Monterey Pine, and Eucalyptus located in and around the Quad and the campus core, which are north of the Project site. These trees, which dictated the location and footprint of many of the campus buildings, formerly stood amid agricultural fields and constitute the only surviving pre-campus vegetation. Along Holloway Avenue, near Block 6, and Tapia Drive and Font Boulevard, near Block I, only street trees and other developed landscaping exist. The West Campus Green is located just northwest of Block I.

Visual Character of Project Site

The visual character of the campus near the Project site, on the east-west corridor along Holloway Avenue and Font Boulevard consists of the original edge of the campus. Former Parkmerced residential development now owned by the campus is located mostly along the south side of this corridor, with the exception of Block I, and other campus development is located along the north side of the corridor. The campus buildings along this corridor have key character features consistent with a mid-century modern architectural style popular in the 1950s when the original campus buildings were constructed, many of which still remain. These features include flat roofs, long horizontal groupings of windows with raised frames and eyebrow overhangs, and smooth plain wall surfaces of painted concrete or stucco. Newer buildings, like the J. Paul Leonard Library, while representative of modern construction, have incorporated some of these key features.

Former Parkmerced garden apartments, including those on the Project site, are located mostly on the south side of the east-west corridor along Font Boulevard and Holloway Avenue. The exception to this pattern is the Block I portion of the Project site, which is located north of this corridor on Tapia Drive. This site is also referred to as the Tapia Triangle. SF State acquired the northernmost blocks of the original Parkmerced development (north of Serrano Drive and Pinto Avenue) for student housing. Although these blocks are not part of the current Parkmerced complex, they continue to relate visually, architecturally, and spatially more to the Parkmerced complex than to the SF State campus (CCSF 2010). Photographs of the garden apartments on the SF State campus are provided in Chapter 4.4.

As documented in the Parkmerced Project EIR (CCSF 2010), the two-story (up to 40-foot-tall) garden apartments are attached, concrete or stucco-clad, rectangular volumes lining the perimeter of the residential blocks. Substantial jogs in the block façade articulate separate smaller-scaled volumes to provide visual interest in a play of volumes and light and shadows. This effect is accentuated on each block by a palette of alternating colors. The garden apartment buildings are all simple rectilinear volumes embellished with Colonial Revival-inspired architectural elements, including hipped and gabled roof lines, dormers and cupolas, porticos, columns, decorative railings, and pedimented door surrounds to mark the entrances to the buildings. The overall effect of the garden apartment blocks is to provide some variety in what are otherwise similar, repetitive, cohesive buildings. Most garden apartment blocks include a laundry courtyard, interior courtyards, and one or two attached carports in the interior of the block.

The circulation plan of Parkmerced contributes to its visual character (CCSF 2010). The streets of Parkmerced are laid out in a hierarchical radial pattern centered on an elliptical central plaza (the Commons) ringed by a central circular hub street (Juan Bautista Circle). Broad landscaped drives (Font Boulevard, Crespi Drive, Bucareli Drive, and Grijalva Drive) radiate from (or converge at) the Commons. The broad landscaped drives intersect, via roundabouts, with a network of secondary streets that provide access to residential blocks and shared open spaces. From the secondary streets, automobiles are led into carports, garages, and areas of designated street parking. Pedestrian circulation through the site is provided by a system of concrete and asphalt sidewalks. Pedestrian circulation is organized in much the same way as vehicular circulation, progressing through a hierarchy of public and semi-public spaces to individual apartment courtyards, terraces, and units. The Project site, including Block 1 and Block 6 of the original Parkmerced area, is located on the northern edge of this circulation system.

The vegetation associated with the Parkmerced complex consists of a relatively limited palette of cultivated California native and non-native species (CCSF 2010). The vegetation includes mature specimen trees, geometrically-shaped lawns, and a variety of shrubs and ornamental plantings. The overall landscape design includes the careful siting of specimen trees, shrubs, and ornamental plantings within broad areas of lawn, along landscaped drives, around exterior block façades, in shared open spaces, and in interior courtyards, such as those within Block 1 and Block 6.

Visual Character of Surrounding Area

East of the SF State campus and Project site lies 19th Avenue (State Route 1), a major six-lane roadway corridor, which includes a San Francisco Muni rail line down the center median. This route is a north-south connector between Interstate 280 and Highway 101. This route is typically congested, especially during the morning and evening commute periods. The Ingleside neighborhood, composed of one- and two-story single-family residential homes, is also east of

the SF State campus and Project site. Those homes closest to the campus and Project site along 19th Avenue face away from the roadway corridor and the campus. Back yard fence lines are visible along this portion of roadway corridor. On Holloway Avenue, east of the campus and Project site, the elevations rise toward Twin Peaks.

West of the SF State campus and Project site lies Lake Merced Boulevard, Lake Merced, and the Harding Park Municipal Golf Course. Lake Merced is composed of four lakes, including: North Lake, South Lake, East Lake, and Impound Lake. East Lake is the portion of Lake Merced that is in proximity to the SF State campus, and is also visible from the intersection of Lake Merced Boulevard and Winston Drive. Lake Merced is also an important recreational resource, providing for boating, fishing, golfing, jogging, bicycling, and other activities. The Harding Park Municipal Golf Course is located immediately adjacent to Lake Merced Boulevard, and is visible through the trees that line the boulevard.

South of the SF State campus and the Project site lays the remainder of the original Parkmerced neighborhood. See the description under “Visual Character of Project Site,” above.

Scenic Views and Vistas

Views from the Campus and Project Site

Ground-level views from the campus of off-site locations are available mainly from the periphery of the campus boundaries, such as near the Project site located along the southern edge of the campus, and consist primarily of short- to mid-range views of adjacent areas. From the eastern boundary of the campus on 19th Avenue near Block 6, short- to mid-range views are available to the north and south along the 19th Avenue corridor. These views are of a major six-lane roadway corridor, which includes a San Francisco Muni rail line down the median, with residential development to the east.

From the southern boundary of the campus and Project site, which runs from east to west along Holloway Avenue, Serrano Drive, Font Boulevard, Pinto Avenue, Arballo Drive, and Vidal Drive, short-range views are available of adjacent residential development in the Parkmerced area.

None of these ground-level views from the campus and Project site of off-site locations constitute scenic views or vistas, as they are not expansive, unique, or of particularly high quality. Long-range views in various directions may be available from high-rise buildings on campus, but typically are not afforded from publicly accessible vantage points. No other long-range views of off-site locations are available from public vantage points on the campus or Project site, due to topography and/or adjacent development, which blocks such views.

Views from Off-Campus

As indicated in the CMP EIR, a scenic vista or view is defined as an expansive view of a unique or highly valuable landscape that is observable from a vantage point that is accessible to the public.

Views of the campus from off-site locations are available mainly from areas immediately adjacent to the campus and consist primarily of short- to mid-range views of the campus. From areas to the east of the campus, short-range views of the campus are available primarily along the 19th Avenue corridor and from the residences along this roadway. These views are of two- to eight-story campus buildings and stands of Monterey cypress and pine trees, which are immediately adjacent to the roadway. The trees somewhat screen and/or soften the appearance of campus development from these locations. The Project site is not visible from immediately east of the campus, such as from 19th Avenue, due to intervening buildings and trees.

Longer-range views toward the Pacific Ocean are available further to the east as the elevations rise toward Twin Peaks. Expansive scenic views that include the Project site and the Pacific Ocean beyond are available from some public vantage points, such as public parks within the west-facing hills and foothills of the San Francisco Peninsula Coastal Range that run generally north to south, east of the Project site. These views, especially at higher elevations, are more expansive and consist of urban development in the fore- and mid-ground with the open spaces around Lake Merced and the Pacific Ocean in the background. From these longer-range views, the campus is distinguishable from other urban development in this portion of San Francisco by its taller trees and buildings. Tall buildings also exist to the south of the campus in the Parkmerced area, which is also visible from these locations farther east of the campus. Figure 4.1-1, View Looking West from Brooks Park, shows the view from Brooks Park to the east of the campus with public views looking west toward SF State campus, Parkmerced and the Pacific Ocean. Twin Peaks to the east of the campus is designated as an important vista point to be protected in the San Francisco General Plan. The campus is not distinguishable from Twin Peaks. There are no other prominent, publicly accessible vantage points with views of the SF State campus, including the Project site, to the east of the campus.

From areas to the south, short- and mid-range views of the campus and Project site are available from adjacent residential areas in Parkmerced. These views are of the two-story UPS residential buildings and of other campus buildings (ranging in height from two to six stories) and trees along Holloway Avenue and Font Boulevard. Longer-range views of the campus and Project site from the south are not available due to intervening development and trees. None of the available views of the campus and Project site from the south are considered scenic views or vistas, as they are not expansive, unique, or of particularly high quality.

From areas to the west, short-range views of the campus are available along Lake Merced Boulevard and intermittent mid-range views of the campus are available from the eastern side

of the Harding Park Municipal Golf Course through the trees along Lake Merced Boulevard. These views are of two- to six-story campus buildings and groves of trees in the valley on campus. Longer-range views of the campus from the west, such as from John Muir Drive, Skyline Boulevard, and the pedestrian path along the west side of Lake Merced, are not available due to intervening topography and trees associated with the Harding Park Municipal Golf Course. None of the available views of the campus from the west are considered scenic views or vistas, as they are not expansive, unique, or of particularly high quality. Additionally, the Project site is not visible from the west of the campus due to intervening development.

As the Project site is not visible from the north of the campus, views from these off-campus vantage points are not described in this EIR.

Scenic Resources

The only scenic resource on the SF State campus identified in the CMP EIR is a small grove of Monterey Cypress and Monterey Pine located in and around the Quad, located north of the Project site. Views of this small grove from the Project site are limited and consist of views between buildings from Block 6, such as near the Administration Building on Holloway Avenue. There may be other locations along Holloway Avenue, Font Boulevard, and Tapia Drive where the grove is visible above buildings.

There are no designated scenic roads in the vicinity of the campus and Project site. The CMP EIR indicated that there are no other scenic resources on or immediately adjacent to the SF State campus.

Light and Glare

Sources of light and glare on and adjacent to the campus and Project site are generally limited to the interior and exterior lights of buildings, lighting visible through windows, parking lot and path lighting, and lighting along campus and city streets. These sources of light are typical of those in a developed urban area. In addition, cars and trucks traveling to, from, and within the area, as well as parked cars, represent another source of glare.

Campus Design Review Process

The California State University System uses a design review process at all of its campuses. This process involves the appointment of an outside master plan architect by the president of each campus. The architect reviews new construction projects for appropriateness of design and quality based on guidelines established in the current master plan for the campus, which for SF State is the 2007 CMP. The 2007 CMP provides architectural and urban design standards, and landscape and site design guidelines. At SF State, the outside architectural review is then evaluated and interpreted by the Deputy Building Official on campus, who has the ultimate

responsibility for determining how the review will affect the ultimate design of a new building project. Schematic designs are then reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees of the California State University.

Chapter 3, Project Description, also provides design guidelines that would apply to Block 6 to ensure compatibility with the adjacent Parkmerced complex, as specified in CMP EIR Mitigation AES-3 (SF State 2007a). These guidelines were prepared for compatibility, ~~consistency~~, where relevant, to the Parkmerced Design Standards and Guidelines (SOM 2014) and the Parkmerced Special-Use District (CCSF 2011), and include building massing, design, exterior treatments and design details, and building heights as specified by CMP EIR Mitigation AES-3.

4.1.2 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

2007 CMP EIR Standards of Significance

As indicated in the CMP EIR, the significance criteria used to evaluate the impacts of the Project related to aesthetics are based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines; applicable agency plans, policies, and/or guidelines; and agency and professional standards. Based on the above, a significant impact related to aesthetics would occur if the Project 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 a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Additionally, in San Francisco substantially reducing sunlight or significantly increasing shadows in public open space areas under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Recreation and Park Commission is typically considered to be a significant impact. San Francisco Planning Code, Section 295 generally prohibits development above a height of 40 feet if it would cause significant new shadow on open space under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Recreation and Park Commission between 1 hour after sunrise and 1 hour before sunset, at any time of year, unless conditions under Section 295 are met. Although SF State is not subject to local regulations for activities on state land, the 2007 CMP and the Project would not result in increased shadows on public open space areas under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Recreation and Park Commission, as there are no such open spaces adjacent to the Project site that could be impacted by Project development.

Analytical Method

Section 4.1.1, Environmental Setting, provides a description of the physical setting on and surrounding the SF State campus and the Project site to illustrate the backdrop against which impacts of the Project are evaluated. Aesthetics are, by definition, subjective and open to interpretation by decision makers and members of the public. A proposed project would be considered to have a significant adverse effect on visual quality under CEQA only if it would cause a substantial and demonstrable negative change.

As indicated in Section 4.1.1, a scenic vista or view is defined as an expansive view of a unique or highly valuable landscape that is observable from a vantage point that is accessible to the public. The CMP EIR determined that there are no scenic views or vistas of or from the SF State campus that meet this criterion. Therefore, this topic was not evaluated further in the CMP EIR. As there may be such scenic views available from more distant locations to the east of the campus, this EIR includes an evaluation of this topic to determine whether there could be new significant or substantially more severe impacts compared to those identified in the CMP EIR (see Project Impact AES-0, below).

The analysis of whether the Project would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the campus and its surroundings takes into consideration the scale of proposed development in the context of existing campus development and surrounding off-campus development. This analysis does not consider the visual impacts of specific building designs because that information is not fully known given that the design process is currently underway. However, as described in Campus Design Review Process, above, the campus design review process would be implemented for the Project. Visual simulations were also not prepared for the aesthetics analysis given that building design information is not yet available. However, conceptual massings for the Project are included in Chapter 3, Project Description (see Figures 3-8 and 3-10 in Chapter 3).

CMP EIR Mitigation Measures Included in Project

The adopted mitigation measures included in the 2007 CMP EIR that are applicable to the Project are presented below. These measures are already being implemented as part of the CMP and the adopted CMP EIR Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, and therefore they are considered to be part of the Project, as described in Chapter 3.

CMP Mitigation AES-3: Expand the proposed Campus Master Plan to provide for appropriate architectural and urban design guidelines that apply specifically to the proposed redevelopment of a portion of the existing University South Park (UPS) buildings. These guidelines will require that any proposed new structures in UPS respect the existing visual characteristics of the adjacent

Villas Parkmerced neighborhood. The guidelines should consider building color and design, exterior treatments and design details, and building heights such that the proposed new development is visually compatible with the adjacent Villas Parkmerced neighborhood.

CMP Mitigation AES-4A: New campus lighting will be consistent with the most recent LEED-NC [Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design] guidelines for light pollution reduction. These guidelines require that directional and other lighting methods be used to minimize light trespass from buildings and outdoor areas. Available methods include but are not limited to: directional and design methods to reduce spillage, automatically controlled turn off of interior spaces during non-business hours, lighting exterior areas only for safety and comfort, and using lower intensity lights.

CMP Mitigation AES-4B: Reflective metal, mirrored glass or any other reflective building materials shall not be used as primary building materials for facades.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Tiered Initial Study Results

As described in the Tiered IS (Appendix A), the 2007 CMP EIR determined that the impacts of CMP buildout on scenic vistas and scenic resources would be less than significant. The impacts related to visual character and light and glare were determined to be less than significant with identified mitigation measures.

The Project would involve construction of three buildings on two sites in the southern portion of the SF State campus: the Creative Arts replacement building and the concert hall on Block I also referred to as the Tapia Triangle, and the student housing/mixed use building on Block 6, located on the south side of Holloway Avenue. Although the proposed uses are included in the CMP building program, the student housing/mixed-use building would be substantially taller than contemplated in the 2007 CMP and CMP EIR. Additionally, there is information in the Parkmerced Project EIR (SCH No. 2009052073) (CCSF 2010) about the visual characteristics of Parkmerced buildings that was not previously available during preparation of the 2007 CMP EIR. Given the above, the Tiered IS concluded that the EIR will evaluate potential aesthetic impacts related to scenic vistas, scenic resources, visual character, and light and glare to

determine whether there may be new or increased impacts over and above those identified in the 2007 CMP EIR. This analysis is provided below.

Project and Cumulative Impacts

For each impact presented below, the CMP EIR impact is presented first in gray text for easy reference to the CMP EIR's prior impact conclusions. The Project impact is presented second and emphasizes whether new significant or substantially more severe impacts would result with the Project.

However, there is only a Project impact presented for impacts on scenic vistas, as the CMP EIR determined that there are no scenic views or vistas of or from the SF State campus that meet the stated criterion that could be impacted and therefore scenic vistas were not evaluated further in the CMP EIR. As there may be such scenic views available from more distant locations to the east of the campus, this EIR includes an evaluation of this topic (see Project Impact AES-0, below).

Project Impact AES-0: The Project would not have a substantial adverse impact on a scenic vista (*Less-than-significant impact / New impact*).

As indicated in Section 4.1.1, Environmental Setting, expansive scenic views that include the Project site and the Pacific Ocean beyond are available from some public vantage points, such as public parks, within the west-facing hills and foothills of the San Francisco Peninsula Coastal Range that run generally north to south, east of the SF State campus and Project site. These views, such as from Brooks Park, consist of urban development in the fore- and mid-ground with the open spaces around Lake Merced and the Pacific Ocean in the background (see Figure 4.1-1).

Buildout of the Project on two blocks in the southern portion of the SF State campus would increase the scale and density of development on the Project site. Two-story residential apartments with interior courtyards would be replaced with three, multi-story buildings, including the Creative Arts replacement building and the concert hall on Block 1, and the student housing/mixed-use building on Block 6. The buildings would be up to 90 feet in height, which would be substantially taller than the existing residential buildings on these blocks, but similar in height to other SF State buildings in the southern portion of the campus, such as the new administration building and the new J. Paul Leonard library.

From Brooks Park and other longer-range public vantage points to the east, the visual character of the Project site would appear somewhat denser, more urban, and similar to other campus development in the southern portion of the campus along Holloway Avenue and Font Boulevard (see Figure 4.1-1). Project buildings would not block scenic views from public vantage

points to the east. From public parks, such as from Brooks Park, or other prominent public vantage point to the east of the Project site, expansive distant views toward the Pacific Ocean would continue to be available with implementation of the Project. There are no other prominent, publicly accessible vantage points with views of the SF State campus, including the Project site, to the north, south, or west of the campus.

As the Project would not substantially obstruct or detract from an expansive scenic view from a public vantage point, the impact would be less than significant. This is considered to be a new less-than-significant impact, as the CMP EIR did not identify any scenic vistas near the campus from which campus development would be visible.

Project Mitigation AES-0: Mitigation not required.

CMP Impact AES-I: Development under the Campus Master Plan would not substantially damage the small groves of Monterey Cypress and Monterey Pine located in and around the Campus Core landscape zone that constitute scenic resources on the campus (*Less-than-significant impact*).

Project Impact AES-I: The Project would not substantially damage the small groves of Monterey Cypress and Monterey Pine or otherwise substantially damage a scenic resource (*Less-than-significant impact / No new impact*).

The Project would not directly or indirectly damage the small grove of Monterey Cypress and Monterey Pine located in and around the Quad, identified as a scenic resource in the CMP EIR. The Project site is located south of this resource and would not otherwise damage or degrade this resource. There are no designated scenic roads or other scenic resources on or immediately adjacent to the SF State campus, including the Project site. Therefore, the Project would not substantially damage a scenic resource and the impact would be less than significant. The Project would not result in new or increased impacts to scenic resources compared to those identified in the CMP EIR.

Project Mitigation AES-I: No additional mitigation required.

CMP Impact AES-2: Development under the Campus Master Plan would not substantially degrade the existing visual character of the existing SF State campus (*Less-than-significant impact*).

Project Impact AES-2: The Project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character of the existing site or SF State campus surroundings (*Less-than-significant impact / No new impact*).

The Project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character of the SF State campus surroundings on and near the Project site. The Project provides for the replacement of older residential buildings in UPS, and construction of the Creative Arts buildings and the student housing/mixed-use building. Overall, the scale and density of development on the Project site would increase. However, this increase in scale and density would not substantially degrade the existing visual character of the SF State campus, as (1) the amount of open space on campus would be similar; (2) the existing and planned pattern of development would be maintained; (3) the building heights of new development would be compatible with other existing and planned campus development; and (4) other design standards and guidelines of the 2007 CMP and this Project, would maintain or further enhance the existing visual character of campus lands.

Urban Open Space. Students living in the new housing, as well as local visitors to the neighborhood retail, would be able to use the urban open spaces planned for Block 6, including an open-air interior courtyard with tables and seating and an exterior plaza with benches. The Tapia Drive street vacation would also create open space for pedestrian and bicycle use, as it would result in a major east/west walkway connecting the central academic core with sites to the west. While the existing open spaces on the Project site consisting of interior courtyards in the garden apartments on Block 1 and Block 6 would be removed, the overall amount of open space would be similar with the Project.

Land Use Pattern. Compatibility between adjacent existing and future campus buildings was taken into consideration in identifying and locating development in the 2007 CMP. The pattern of existing and planned campus development consists of a centrally located academic core that surrounds the central Quad with groups of residential buildings located to the north, west, and south of the academic core. The Project would maintain this land use pattern. New campus housing with the Project would be sited in an area of existing housing in UPS. Additionally, the Creative Arts building and concert hall would be located within the academic core to the west of other academic development on a site designated for academic development. The extension of the academic core to the west would not substantially degrade the visual character of this portion of the campus.

Height Limits. The Project includes design guidelines that would apply to Project development. These design guidelines build on the CMP design guidelines. Given the anticipated changes at Parkmerced to the south and SF State's interest in providing student housing responsive to demand, the proposed building height would be greater than the 50-foot height limit referenced in the 2007 CMP for residential buildings in UPS, but would not exceed 90 feet.

This additional height would also allow for the possibility of a rooftop-mounted solar array to support the goals of zero net energy. The Creative Arts replacement building and concert hall would not exceed 90 feet, which is within the height limit of up to 100 feet identified for Creative Arts buildings in the 2007 CMP.

The 90-foot height would be substantially taller than the existing residential buildings on the Project site, but similar in height to other SF State buildings in the southern portion of the campus, such as the new Administration building and the new J. Paul Leonard library.

Other Design Standards. Implementation of other design standards provided for in the 2007 CMP and elaborated on for the Project would help to maintain or further enhance the existing visual character of the campus. See Chapter 3 for further information about the design guidelines for the Project.

In conclusion, Project development would not substantially degrade the visual character of the existing SF State campus. The impact of the Project on the visual character of the campus would be less than significant, as concluded in the CMP EIR. The Project would not result in new or increased impacts compared to those identified in the CMP EIR.

See Impact AES-3 below for an analysis of the effect of the Project on the existing visual character of the adjacent Parkmerced area.

Project Mitigation AES-2: Mitigation not required.

CMP Impact AES-3: Development of new housing in University Park South under the Campus Master Plan could potentially degrade the existing visual character of the adjacent Parkmerced neighborhood, if not properly designed (*Potentially significant impact / Less than significant with mitigation*).

Project Impact AES-3: The Project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character of the adjacent Parkmerced area given the implementation of design guidelines and compatibility with approved plans for Parkmerced (*Less-than-significant impact / No new impact*).

The Project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character of the Parkmerced area to the south of the campus and Project site. The Project would provide for the replacement of older residential buildings in UPS, and construction of the Creative Arts buildings and the student

housing/mixed-use building. Overall, the scale and density of development on the Project site would increase. However, this increase in scale and density would not substantially degrade the existing visual character of the Parkmerced area to the south.

The use of Block 6, south of Holloway Avenue, for student housing/mixed-uses is compatible with the housing and mixed-uses planned for in the City and County of San Francisco (City)–approved Parkmerced project to the south. After adoption of the 2007 CMP, Parkmerced’s development plan received City approval. The Parkmerced plan includes significantly higher density and height limits than the conditions that existed when SF State’s CMP and EIR were approved. Given the anticipated changes at Parkmerced and SF State’s interest in providing student housing responsive to demand, the proposed building height for Block 6 would be greater than the 50-foot height limit referenced in the 2007 CMP for residential buildings in UPS, but would not exceed 90 feet. This additional height would also allow for the possibility of a rooftop-mounted solar array to support the goals of zero net energy.

The use of Block 1, north of Font Boulevard, for academic uses is consistent with the most current 2014 Master Plan map for the campus and other adjacent academic uses on the SF State campus. The new Creative Arts replacement building would be two to three stories over a basement, with a maximum height of 90 feet, which is within the height limit of up to 100 feet identified for Creative Arts buildings in the 2007 CMP.

The maximum height of 90 feet for Project buildings, inclusive of parapets and mechanical equipment, is compatible with the Parkmerced Design Standards and Guidelines (SOM 2014) and the City’s Parkmerced Special Use District (CCSF 2011), which allows for mid-rise buildings of 85 to 145 feet, excluding parapets and mechanical equipment, as well as lower-rise buildings. Adjacent to the SF State campus’s southern edge, future Parkmerced mid-rise buildings likely range from 85 feet to 130 feet, according to Parkmerced’s maximum height plan (SOM 2014).

Additionally, the Project includes design guidelines that would apply to Project development. These design guidelines build on the CMP design guidelines and also ensure compatibility with the adjacent Parkmerced complex, as specified in CMP EIR Mitigation AES-3, shown above. These guidelines were prepared for compatibility, ~~consistency~~, where relevant, to the Parkmerced Design Standards and Guidelines (SOM 2014), and include building massing, design, exterior treatments and design details, and building heights as specified by CMP EIR Mitigation AES-3.

As the proposed scale and height of development would conform with the approved Parkmerced project and Parkmerced Special-Use District, and would implement design guidelines compatible with the Parkmerced Design Standards and Guidelines, the Project would

not substantially degrade the visual character of the Parkmerced area to the south. The impact of the Project on the visual character of the Parkmerced area would be less than significant, as concluded in the CMP EIR. The Project would not result in new or increased impacts compared to those identified in the CMP EIR.

Project Mitigation AES-3: No additional mitigation required.

CMP Impact AES-4: Development under the Campus Master Plan would not create new sources of substantial light or glare on campus that could adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area (*Less-than-significant impact*).

Project Impact AES-4: The Project would not create new sources of substantial light or glare on or adjacent to campus that could adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area (*Less-than-significant impact / No new impact*).

Upward-directed lighting and excess site lighting can contribute to atmospheric light pollution that can hinder observation and enjoyment of the night sky. New sources of glare can also affect nearby residents, pedestrians, and passing motorists.

The CMP EIR indicated that new light sources associated with new development under the CMP could include streetlights, illuminated signage, exterior safety and wayfinding lighting, and light emitted from building windows. New lighting would be installed with proposed new Project development, but this lighting would not create a new source of substantial nightlight. This is because the campus is already fully developed and is located within an area with surrounding urban development. Therefore, the existing night lighting on and adjacent to the campus is typical of a developed urban area. New campus lighting, including that associated with the Project, would not change these nighttime conditions. Moreover, the 2007 CMP lighting standards require that Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for New Construction (LEED-NC) guidelines for light pollution reduction be followed. These guidelines require that directional and other lighting methods be used to minimize light trespass from buildings and outdoor areas. Available methods include but are not limited to: directional and design methods to reduce spillage, automatically controlled turn off of interior spaces during non-business hours, lighting exterior areas only for safety and comfort, and using lower intensity lights. CMP EIR Mitigation AES-4A, incorporated into the Project as indicated above, would require that these lighting standards are implemented with the Project, which would further reduce the impact.

The CMP EIR also indicated that the growth and development under the 2007 CMP could also increase glare from reflective building materials that would have the potential to affect nearby residents, pedestrians, and passing motorists. However, architectural standards provided in the 2007 CMP and included in CMP EIR Mitigation AES-4B, incorporated into the Project, would ensure that Project buildings would not use reflective building surfaces as the primary materials for building facades.

The Project would not create new sources of substantial light or glare that could adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area and the impact is less than significant. The Project would not result in new or increased impacts related to light and glare compared to those identified in the CMP EIR.

Project Mitigation AES-4: No additional mitigation required.

CMP Impact AES-5: Development under the Campus Master Plan, in conjunction with other vicinity development, would not result in significant cumulative impacts due to substantial degradation of the existing visual character of the area (*Less-than-significant impact*).

Project Impact AES-5: The Project, in conjunction with other vicinity development, would not result in significant cumulative impacts due to substantial degradation of the existing visual character of the area (*Less-than-significant impact / No new impact*).

The geographical setting for the discussion of cumulative impacts related to aesthetics consists of the southern edge of the SF State campus near the Project site and the Parkmerced area to the south. Reasonably foreseeable cumulative projects that may impact aesthetics in the immediate area of the Project site include the following:

- The approved Parkmerced project, including redevelopment of all of the two-story garden apartment buildings and removal of all of the interior landscaping on the Parkmerced Investors LLC property.
- Future redevelopment of Parkmerced’s eastern 2.75-acre commercial shopping center owned by Yousef Realty.
- Development contemplated under the 2007 CMP building program and most recently revised Master Plan map. In the southern portion of the campus, this includes the current redevelopment project of the former Parkmerced recreation area to construct the Mashouf Wellness Center and development on the West Campus Green, on Font Boulevard.

- The probable future build out of University Park South, as contemplated in the future vision included in the 2007 adopted Campus Master Plan, including redevelopment of all SF State garden apartment blocks in University Park South.²

As described under Impact AES-0, above, the Project would not substantially obstruct or detract from an expansive scenic view from a public vantage point. The Project would not contribute to a cumulative obstruction or degradation of expansive scenic views over the Project site, when considered with other anticipated development in the vicinity of the Project site. Project development along with other CMP development would be viewed within the context of a distant dense cluster of approved mid-rise and high-rise towers in the adjacent Parkmerced area. The visual gap located between the Parkmerced development and the more visible portions of the SF State campus, as seen from Brooks Park and other public vantage points to the east, would fill in somewhat and appear to be more densely developed with the Project and other cumulative campus development (see Figure 4.1-1). Cumulative development would not substantially obstruct or detract from an expansive scenic view from a public vantage point, such as that available from Brooks Park. Therefore, the impact of cumulative development on scenic vistas to the east would be less than significant. The Project would not contribute to a significant cumulative impact on scenic views.

The proposed scale and height of cumulative development would be compatible with the Parkmerced Special-Use District and such development would implement compatible design guidelines, as indicated in Impact AES-3. Although cumulative development would change the visual character of the Project vicinity, it would not substantially degrade the visual character of this area. The impact of the cumulative development on the visual character of the Project vicinity would be less than significant, as concluded in the CMP EIR. The Project would not contribute to a significant cumulative impact on visual character, nor would it result in new or increased cumulative impacts compared to those identified in the CMP EIR.

Project Mitigation AES-5: Mitigation not required.

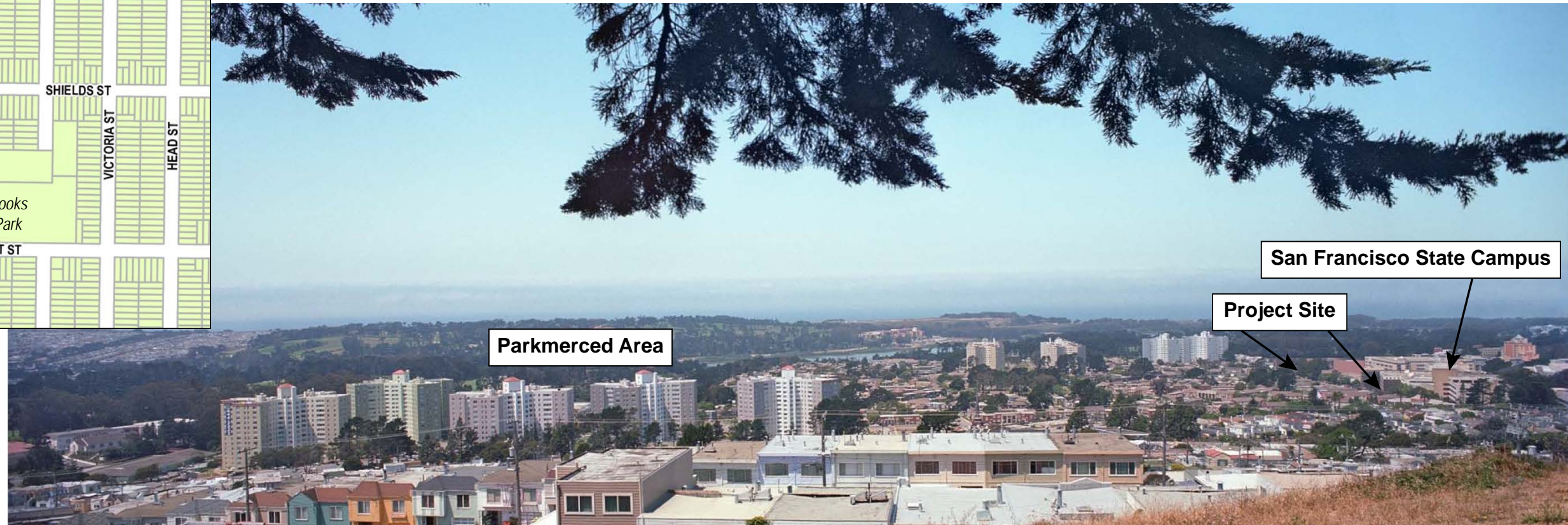
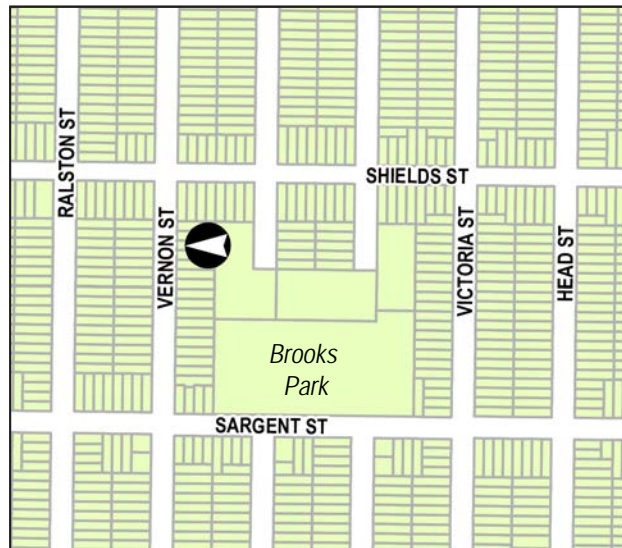
4.1.3 References

CCSF (City and County of San Francisco). 2010. *Parkmerced Project Environmental Impact Report* (SCH No. 2009052073). November 2010.

² The adopted 2007 CMP and map do not include future buildout of UPS during the buildout horizon for the CMP and there are no approved or adopted plans for such buildout. However, the CMP future vision beyond 2020 and the CMP objectives do consider development in this area. While the ultimate demolition of existing development in this area is reasonably foreseeable, the proposed land use, and scale and density of building is not reasonably foreseeable and therefore is not considered in the cumulative analysis above.

- CCSF. 2011. Parkmerced Special Use District. May 2011. Accessed September 2016.
http://default.sfplanning.org/publications_reports/parkmerced/PM_TextAmendments_LUCom_05-16-11.pdf.
- SF State (San Francisco State University). 2007a. San Francisco State University Campus Master Plan EIR (SCH No. 2006102050), Final. August 2007. Prepared by URS Corporation.
<http://cpdc.sfsu.edu/plan>.
- SF State. 2007b. San Francisco State University Campus Master Plan. Prepared by WRT, Solomon, E.T.C. July 2007. <http://cpdc.sfsu.edu/plan>.
- SOM. 2014. Parkmerced Design Standards & Guidelines.

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Existing



Future Conditions with Buildout of the Parkmerced Project

SOURCE: Square One Productions (2010); Turnstone Consulting (2010)

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