

3.1 Aesthetics

This section describes the existing conditions for aesthetic or visual resources in the vicinity of the proposed Larkspur Ferry Service Expansion and Parking Project (Project) in the City of Larkspur. Also described are the potential aesthetic or visual resource impacts that would result from implementation of the Project. Mitigation measures to lessen any significant impacts, where feasible and appropriate, are identified. Impacts related to the No-Project Alternative are discussed in Chapter 5, Alternatives to the Project. This aesthetic/visual analysis follows the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) 2015 *Guidelines for the Visual Impact Assessment of Highway Projects* (FHWA 2015).

3.1.1 Existing Conditions

3.1.1.1 Regulatory Setting

The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District), as the owner of the Larkspur Ferry Terminal (LFT), is the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Lead Agency for the Project and has prepared this Draft Environmental Impact Report to evaluate potential impacts and identify required mitigation to avoid or reduce potentially significant impacts. The federal, state, and regional and local regulations applicable to the Project are provided in this section.

Federal and State

There are no federal regulations or plans, relevant to visual or scenic resources, that are applicable to the Project. CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Title 14, Natural Resources Division 6, Resources Agency Chapter 3, Section 15000 to 15007, Appendix G) includes four questions related to aesthetic or visual resources that must be evaluated to inform permitting agencies and the public about the potential environmental effects of the Project.

Local

Marin County General Plan

The 2023 *Marin Countywide Plan* is the comprehensive long-range general plan for the county, which includes the following goals, policies, and implementing programs pertaining to aesthetic, visual, and scenic resources that are relevant to the Project (Marin County 2023):

- **Policy BIO-4.7 – Protect Riparian Vegetation.** Retain riparian vegetation for stabilization of streambanks and floodplains, moderating water temperatures, trapping and filtering sediments and other water pollutants, providing wildlife habitat, and aesthetic reasons.
- **Goal DES-4 – Protection of Scenic Resources.** Minimize visual impacts of development and preserve vistas of important natural features.
- **Policy DES-4.1 – Preserve Visual Quality.** Protect scenic quality and views of the natural environment—including ridgelines and upland greenbelts, hillsides, water, and trees—from adverse impacts related to development.
- **Implementing Program DES-4a – Protect Key Public Views.** Work with community groups to identify, map, and protect important view corridors. Establish design standards for development in these areas as part of the design review requirements and individual community plans (see DES-3.b).

- **Implementing Program DES-4b – Minimize Visual Impacts of Public Facilities.** Amend applicable codes and procedures to require appropriate placement, design, setbacks, and native landscaping of public facilities (including soundwalls, medians, retaining walls, power lines, and water tanks) to reduce visual impacts, and encourage local agencies to adopt similar standards.
- **Implementing Program DEC 4c- Regulate Mass and Scale.** Ensure that the mass and scale of new structures respect environmental site constraints and character of the surrounding neighborhood (see Program DES-3.b), are compatible with ridge protection policies (see Program DES 4.e), and avoid tree-cutting (especially on wooded hillsides) and grading wherever possible. Community plans should consider regulations concerning home size.
- **Goal DES-5 – Attractive and Functional Streets and Parking Areas.** Design automobile use areas to fit the character of the community, and comfortably accommodate travel by pedestrians and bicyclists, while still meeting health, safety, and emergency access needs.
- **Policy DES-5.1 – Achieve Streetscape Compatibility.** Ensure that roadways, parking areas, and pedestrian and bike movement are functionally and aesthetically appropriate to the areas they serve.

City of Larkspur General Plan

The *City of Larkspur 2040 General Plan* is the comprehensive long-range general plan for the City of Larkspur, which includes the following goals, policies, and action programs pertaining to aesthetic and visual resources that are relevant to the Project (City of Larkspur 2024):

- **Policy CHAR-1.3:** Visually integrate the various segments of the community.
- **Action Program CHAR-1.3.a:** Adopt design standards for public spaces to ensure consistent streetlamps, signage, street trees, streetlamp banners, and landscaping as appropriate to the area. The standards should consider appearance, function, public safety, cost, energy efficiency, water conservation, maintenance, and the ability to withstand vandalism when determining the type of streetlamps, signs, trees, and other objects.
- **Goal LU-10:** A wide variety of public transportation options in the San Quentin Peninsula.
- **Policy LU-10.1:** Support retention of the ferry terminal on the San Quentin Peninsula.
- **Goal CIR-6:** Attractive alternatives to the use of private automobiles in order to reduce automobile traffic, vehicle miles travelled, and transportation-related sources of air pollution.
- **Policy CIR-6.7:** Encourage continuation of the Larkspur Ferry Terminal at its present site.
- **Action Program CIR-6.7.a:** Support improvement of bicycle and pedestrian connectivity between the planned Larkspur SMART [Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit] station and the ferry terminal.
- **Goal ENV-2:** Protected water and riparian resources.
- **Policy ENV-2.3:** Continue to designate the wetlands along Corte Madera Creek, Piper Park, Redwood High School, the Larkspur Ferry Terminal, and the shoreline between East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and the Bay waters as Shoreline/Wetland Conservation areas.
- **Goal ENV-5:** Reasonable visual and physical public access to natural resources without adversely impacting natural habitats and species.

3.1.1.2 Environmental Setting

Regional Location

The Project's regional location and setting provide the context for characterizing changes to the existing visual environment. The Project is on public land in the City of Larkspur adjacent to San Francisco Bay to the east. The Town of Corte Madera is to the south, while the City of San Rafael is to the north. Portions of unincorporated Marin County are to the west. The natural and cultural (built) environments near the Project area are described as follows.

The Project area is in the San Francisco Bay Area region of Northern California. The regional natural environment is in the Marin Hills Ecological Region (6o) according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Level IV Ecoregions (EPA 2013). This ecoregion "consists of mountains and hills between San Francisco Bay and the San Andreas Fault. Soil temperature regimes are mostly mesic and thermic, with some isomesic. Soil moisture regimes are mostly xeric. Vegetation is mostly coast live oak, annual grasslands, coastal scrub, and some tanoak and Douglas-fir. Ecoregion 6o has less relief and coniferous forest than Ecoregion 1k. Most of the smaller streams are dry by the end of the summer" (Griffith et al. 2016). The region is visually notable for its varied natural topography, with mature tree-covered hills and grass-filled valleys to the north, west, and south of the Project area, along with coastal lowlands, where natural water features, such as Corte Madera Creek, San Clemente Creek, and San Rafael Creek, meet San Francisco Bay. The region is in a Mediterranean climate (Köppen-Geiger climate classification – Csb [NOAA 2026]) that is characteristic of coastal California, with cool and dry summers and wet and cool winters. Fog can occur in the summer. The winter months are the wettest, while the summer months are the driest.

The regional cultural (built) environment consists of a suburban area with mixed land uses within 1 mile of the Project. Existing land use in and around the Project area, as designated by the *City of Larkspur 2040 General Plan* zoning district map, are residential (low density to moderate density), commercial, light industrial, education, planned unit development, and open space (City of Larkspur 2024). Most buildings are low-rise (that is, one to three stories). The downtown Larkspur central business district is approximately 1.5 miles southwest of the Project site. Another notable built feature is the San Quentin Rehabilitation Center, which is approximately 0.75 mile east/southeast of the Project site. Numerous parks are found in the Project area, including Remillard Park to the east, Greenbrae School Park to the west, Piper Park to the southwest, and the Corte Madera Marsh Ecological Reserve to the south. Numerous hike/bike trails are found in the Project area, including along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, Cal Park Path and Redwood Highway Pathway along United States Highway 101 (US 101), and Corte Madera Creek Path, which connects the cities of Larkspur and Corte Madera. Undeveloped natural areas occur west of the Project area and include the rugged Southern Heights Ridge to the north; rugged Blithedale Ridge, Windy Ridge, and King Mountain to the west; and other ridges, hills, and valleys that separate the San Francisco Bay from the Pacific Ocean.

Local Setting

The Project site primarily consists of two existing surface parking lots for visitors to access the LFT. The Main Lot has 1,808 parking spaces and is bordered by Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Larkspur Landing shopping center to the north. The Larkspur Landing shopping center includes retail, restaurants, offices, administrative and public services, a theater, and a hotel. To the west of the Main Lot is Wood Island, a four-story hillside professional office complex consisting of two primary buildings. Adjacent to the Main Lot on the southwest corner is the employee parking lot; two white, single-story, metal-sided maintenance buildings; and four cylindrical, white, single-story fuel tanks. Adjacent to the Main Lot on the northeast

corner are facilities for pickup/drop-off for bus patrons and transportation network companies, sidewalks and surface pedestrian crossings, and a pedestrian footbridge over Sir Francis Drake Boulevard to the Larkspur Landing shopping center. Also adjacent to the Main Lot on the northeast corner are three ferry boat docks; one white, single-story, metal-sided maintenance building; one white, open-air, "space frame," three-story canopy that covers the ticket office, ticket machines, restrooms, and passenger waiting area; and one white, two-story employee office building. Both the open-air canopy and office building have a triangular-shaped layout. Blue-painted accents are visible on the maintenance building and facilities under the open-air canopy. To the south and east are tidal marsh areas, Corte Madera Creek, and San Francisco Bay.

The existing north parking lot has 215 parking spaces and is bordered by Victoria Way on the south, Larkspur Landing Circle on the east, and the SMART Larkspur Station to the north and west. Several two- and three-story commercial buildings are also near the north parking lot, one of which is the Larkspur Landing Cinema.

Both existing parking lots fit within the suburban context of the larger regional area.

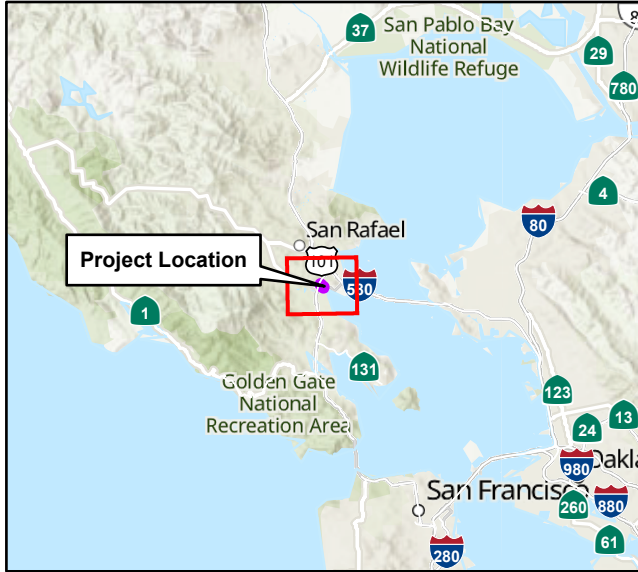
Area of Visual Effect

The Build Alternatives were discussed in detail in Chapter 2. The area of visual effect (AVE) is the area of the Project's visual influence. It is the sum of the viewsheds of neighbors with views of the Project and travelers with views from the Project. The AVE was determined by the physical constraints of the environment (such as surrounding terrain and existing vegetation) and the physiological limits of human sight.

The AVE for the Project was developed based on geographic information systems (GIS) visibility modeling and field observations. Because of the highly developed suburban nature of the area surrounding the Project, a 1/4-mile, 1/2-mile, and 1-mile buffer was used as the geographic basis for the viewshed analysis (also called the zone of visual influence [ZVI] analysis) (refer to Figure 3.1-1). A computer-generated map based on U.S. Geological Survey 10-meter digital-elevation models was created to illustrate locations from which the Project could be visible within a given area based on topography alone. The ZVI analysis likely overstates the level of visibility because this analysis is a line-of-sight model that does not account for attenuating factors, such as distance, buildings, vegetation, curvature of the earth, haze, humidity, background landscape, or weather. These factors can make Project elements invisible or barely detectable from certain locations under some atmospheric or weather conditions. Thus, the results of the ZVI analysis are overly conservative regarding Project visibility.

The ZVI was prepared using the Esri ArcPro program's viewshed analysis tool. The analysis included selecting features of the Project, such as the existing surface parking lots and proposed height of new parking garages. The colored area indicates potential Project visibility, while areas with no color indicate the Project would likely not be visible. The ZVI analysis did not analyze the screening effects of buildings, structures, or vegetation, resulting in a conservative estimate of potential visibility. The ZVI analysis covers both the San Francisco Bay and the City of Larkspur surrounding the Project site.

While most of the Project views would be limited to 0.25 mile, there are locations beyond 0.25 mile where the Project would potentially be visible if looking in the right direction with unobstructed line-of-sight views. For these reasons, the AVE generally extends approximately 0.25 mile for those portions of the Project.



LEGEND

- Viewpoints (VP)/Direction Looking
- Project Footprint (13.68 acres)
- Parking Structure
- 1 Mile from Project
- 1/2 Mile from Project
- 1/4 Mile from Project
- Zone of visual Influence

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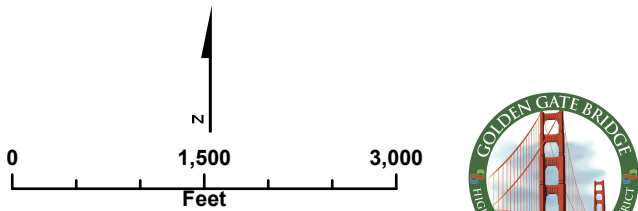


Figure 3.1-1
Zone of Visual Influence
Larkspur Ferry Service and Parking Expansion
Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District
Marin County, California

Scenic and Visual Resources

There are no designated national scenic byways, national scenic trails, national historic trails, national historic landmarks, national wild or scenic rivers, or national wildlife refuges within 2 miles of the Project (FHWA 2026; NPS 2026a; NPS 2026b; NPS 2026c; DOI 2026; USFWS 2026). There are no designated state scenic highways, state wild or scenic rivers, or state parks within 2 miles of the Project (Caltrans 2019; California State Geoportal 2025; California State Parks 2026).

The Corte Madera Marsh Ecological Reserve is approximately 0.15 mile south of the Project on land and in the waters of the San Francisco Bay. This reserve is a 620-acre northern coastal salt marsh with numerous plant and wildlife species. Activities in this reserve include wildlife viewing and hiking, and the reserve has no facilities. The property was designated as an ecological reserve by the California Fish and Game Commission in 1977 (CDFW 2026) (Figure 3.1-2). The Project is not anticipated to include activities that would affect this reserve.

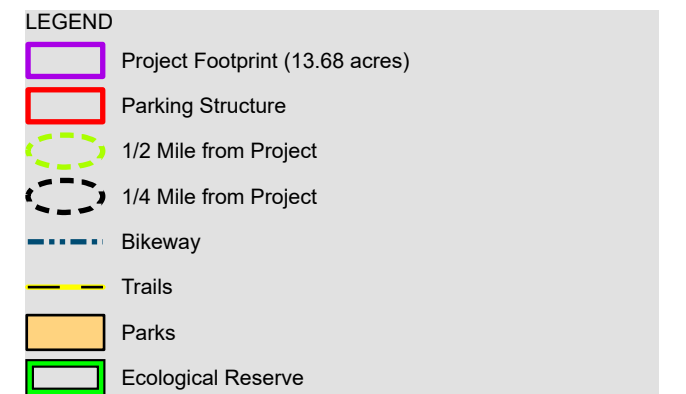
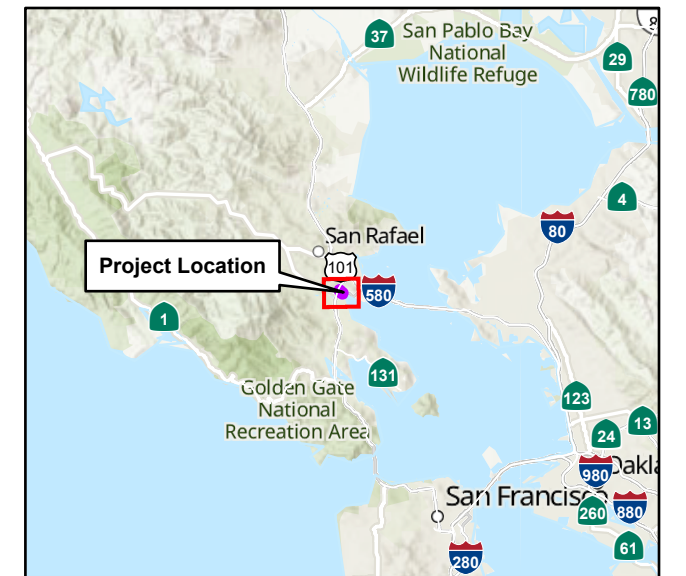
Other non-designated local visual resources within 1/2 mile of the Project are listed as follows and shown on Figure 3.1-2:

- Water Features: San Francisco Bay and Corte Madera Creek
- Local/Regional Parks: Remillard Park, Miwok Park, Neighborhood Park, Cal Park Hill, Greenbrae School Park, Larkspur Lands Park, Niven Park, and Shorebird Marsh
- Local Trails/Bicycle Pathways: East-West Bikeway, Corte Madera Creek Path, Ferry Terminal Path, Cal Park Path, North-South Greenway, Corte Madera Creek Crossing, Redwood Highway Pathway, Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, Eliseo Drive, Doherty Drive Path, Redwood High Path, High Canal Path, Sandra Marker Trail, Tamal Vista Boulevard, Nellen Avenue Wormum Drive, and Nellen Avenue

Visual Character and Quality

This section provides a description of the visual character and visual quality of the Project's visual elements. Visual character is an assessment of the land, water, vegetation, development, land use, and atmospheric conditions. The existing Main Lot surface is relatively flat and approximately 5 feet above sea level, while the existing North Lot is approximately 20 feet above sea level and gently slopes downward toward Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. There are visually noticeable hills and ridgelines that surround the Project site, with the ridgeline to the north varying between approximately 200 feet to approximately 350 feet above sea level. The Wood Island office complex, to the west of the Main Lot, is at an elevation of approximately 40 feet above sea level. The Greenbrae residential subdivision that is adjacent to the southbound side of US 101, and west of the Project, is at an elevation of approximately 100 to 200 feet above sea level (USGS 2026). There are a few higher elevation ridgelines farther to the north and west that are visually noticeable from the Project site. Noticeable landforms outside of the AVE include views of the rugged Southern Heights Ridge to the north; the rugged Blithedale Ridge, Windy Ridge, King Mountain to the west; and Ring Mountain and Tiburon Peninsula to the south. Consistent with Ecoregion 60, the ridgelines within and outside of the AVE are mostly covered with mature trees with isolated areas of natural grasses, and the valleys are grass covered except for human-related development.

Two main water features (San Francisco Bay and Corte Madera Creek) are found south and east of the Project site and are visually dominant. There is a small tidal marsh area adjacent to the south side of the existing Main Lot that is partially submerged during high tide. The Corte Madera Marsh Ecological Reserve is approximately 0.15 mile south of the Project site on land and in the waters of San Francisco Bay.



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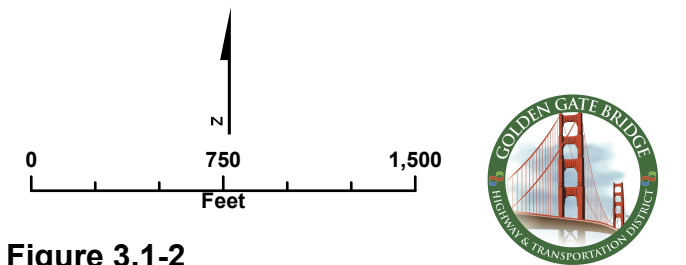


Figure 3.1-2
Scenic and Visual Resources
 Larkspur Ferry Service and Parking Expansion
 Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District
 Marin County, California

Outside of the developed parking lots and roadways, the vegetated areas near the Project site consist of landscaped patches of coast live oak, rock and sparsely vegetated tidal zones, ruderal vegetation, and marshland. Ruderal and developed/landscaped cover types are not considered sensitive natural communities and are not protected by regulatory agencies. The tidal zones, marshland, and estuarine waters of the San Francisco Bay are waters of the United States and State that would be subject to federal regulation under Clean Water Act and to state regulation under the California Coastal Act. No ground disturbance is anticipated to occur to any natural vegetation, wetlands, or waters.

The developed parking lots at the Project site are noticeable, built (cultural) environment features but not visually distinctive. These flat parking lots are gray colored and have a smooth, horizontal texture. White and yellow pavement markings are seen, along with several shapes, sizes, and colors of directional signage. Buildings adjacent to the Main Lot include two white, single-story, metal-sided maintenance buildings and four white, cylindrical, single-story fuel tanks on the southwest corner. Other buildings adjacent to Main Lot include one white, single-story, metal-sided maintenance building; one white, open-air, "space frame," three-story canopy that covers the ticket office, ticket machines, restrooms, and passenger waiting area; and one white, two-story employee office building. Both the open-air canopy and office building have a triangular-shaped layout. Blue-painted accents are visible on the maintenance building and facilities under the open-air canopy. Additionally, there are three ferry boat docks adjacent to the Main Lot on the northeast side. A gray, cement footbridge over Sir Francis Drake Boulevard connects the Main Lot to the Larkspur Landing shopping center. Ornamental landscaped mature green trees and shrubs of various sizes are on the north and south sides of the Main Lot, while mature green ornamental trees and shrubs are on the southeast, south, and east sides of the north parking lot. Developed land uses near the Project site are suburban, with residential (low density), commercial, planned unit development, transportation infrastructure, and open space. Most buildings are low-rise (that is, one to three stories). These buildings are a mix of architectural styles and contribute to the overall suburban character.

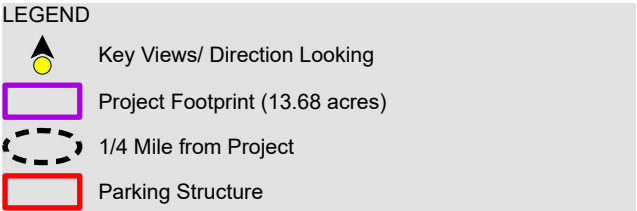
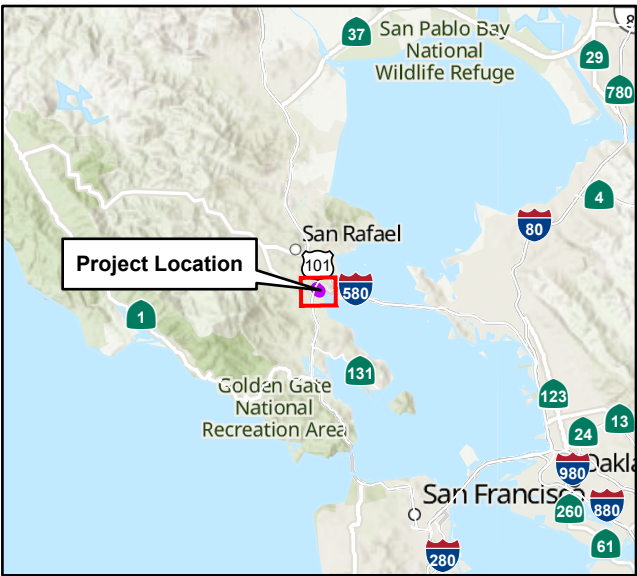
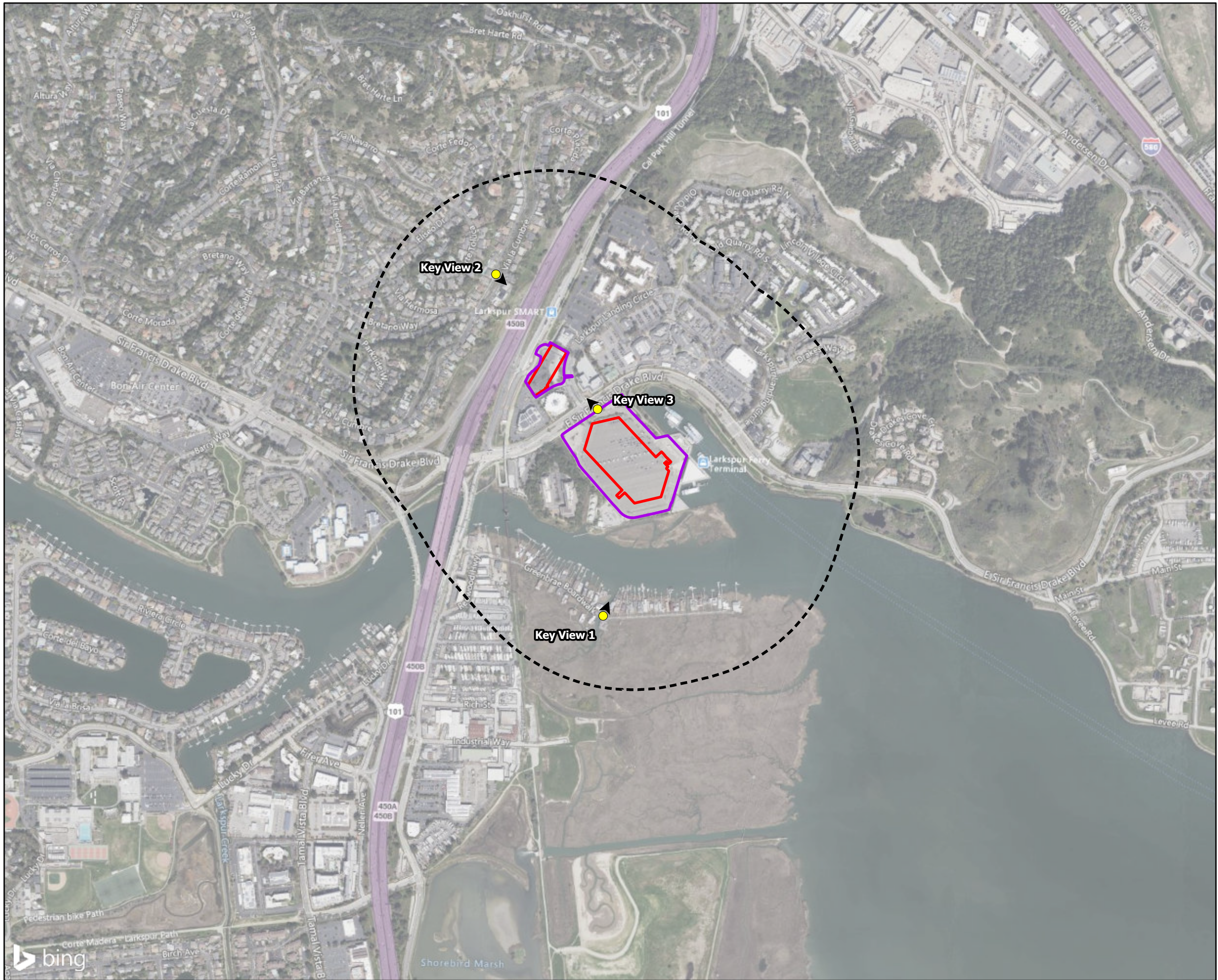
Visual quality is an assessment of the interaction between viewers and their environment in the Project area. Viewers are discussed in detail as follows and are categorized either as neighbors who are viewers adjacent to the Project with "views of the Project" and travelers who are viewers on the Project site with "views from the Project." Three general aspects of visual perception help to determine the visual quality of an area from the viewers' perspectives: (1) natural harmony, (2) cultural order, and (3) Project coherence. (FHWA 2015). These aspects are qualitatively measured as low, moderate, or high. Neighbors in the Project area are expecting to experience moderate to high natural harmony because of the mature tree and grass-covered ridgelines. Neighbors with views of the visually distinctive San Francisco Bay and Corte Madera Creek would expect to experience high natural harmony, while neighbors with views within a typical residential subdivision or commercial development would expect to experience low to moderate natural harmony because the landscape has been noticeably altered with development. Traveler views at the Project site would expect to experience low natural harmony because of the highly disturbed landscape, but moderate cultural order because these parking lots are designed to provide a consistent user experience with typical parking lot elements that a viewer would expect. While these parking lots are visually noticeable, depending on the view, they are not considered to be visually distinctive or memorable. Views from the parking lots to the nearby water features, San Francisco Bay and Corte Madera Creek, would be more memorable. For these reasons, the overall landscape's intactness does not exhibit a sense of place because of the mix of natural and built environment features within the AVE. Unity is considered to be unbalanced because the arrangement of natural and built environment features is not consistent within the AVE. Vividness within the AVE does not exhibit consistent forms, lines, colors, and textures because the natural environment contrasts with the built environment. Together, this results in low to high natural harmony, moderate cultural order, and moderate Project coherence for neighbors and travelers.

Light and Glare

Based on a review of the lighting zones from DarkSky International, which is a recognized worldwide authority on combating light pollution, the Larkspur area is considered to be in the LZ2: Moderate Ambient Lighting Zone. This zone has moderate ambient brightness, which is not uniform and continuous. This zone is typically associated with suburban areas across the world (DarkSky International 2026). Minimal disability glare and discomfort glare results as roadway/highway adjacent lighting is directed toward the ground. Residential, commercial, and planned unit development generally have exterior safety and security lighting that can also result in glare. At the Project site, numerous monopole lights are scattered throughout the Main Lot, while minimal monopole lights are at the north parking lot. While most of these lights are not shielded or directed toward the ground, a few are shielded to assist with light trespass. The ferry terminal's open-air canopy contains lights under the roof that help identify the ferry terminal at night and can be seen from nearby roadways and buildings because of its elevation. Those non-shielded lights trespass onto adjacent properties where existing mature vegetation and trees do not block the light source. Because of proximity to other nearby Marin County suburban areas, this location is not considered to be an International Dark Skies place.

Potential Key Views/Viewpoints

The publicly accessible viewpoints evaluated for the aesthetic/visual analysis were chosen to take representative character photographs of the area and represent the range of views and viewers that could be affected by the Project within the AVE. Twenty-three potential viewpoints were evaluated to represent the potentially sensitive viewers (such as residential or park neighbors) and the anticipated degree of visual change (Figure 3.1-1). Viewpoint photographs were taken on May 20, 2026. After the field visit, the 23 viewpoints were reviewed, and three key views were ultimately chosen to provide representative views of the Project and serve as the basis for this aesthetic/visual analysis. Figure 3.1-3 provides the key view location, and Table 3.1-1 summarizes each viewpoint and key view considered.



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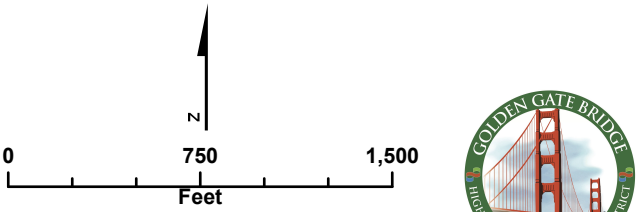


Figure 3.1-3
Key Views
 Larkspur Ferry Service and Parking Expansion
 Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District
 Marin County, California

Table 3.1-1. Viewpoints and Key Views

Viewpoint Number	Name	Location and Distance from Project	View Direction	Selection Rationale
1	Sir Francis Drake Boulevard/Main Street Intersection	0.55 mile east/southeast of Project	Looking west/northwest	Not recommended for further analysis because of limited Project visibility
2	Sir Francis Drake Boulevard Hike/Bike Trail	0.25 mile east of Project	Looking west	Not recommended for further analysis because of limited Project visibility
3	Sir Francis Drake Boulevard Hike/Bike Trail	0.12 mile east of Project	Looking west	Not recommended for further analysis because of limited Project visibility
4	Sir Francis Drake Boulevard/Larkspur Landing Circle Intersection	0.10 mile northeast of Project	Looking southwest	Not recommended for further analysis because the view is duplicative of Viewpoint 11
5	Larkspur Landing Circle/Lincoln Village Circle intersection	0.20 mile northeast of Project	Looking southwest	Not recommended for further analysis because of limited Project visibility
6	Larkspur Landing Circle	0.15 mile north of Project	Looking south	Not recommended for further analysis because of limited Project visibility
7	SMART Larkspur Station Platform	0.03 mile northwest of Project	Looking southeast	Not recommended for further analysis because the view is duplicative of Viewpoint 18
8	Cal Park Hill Pathway Overcrossing of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard	0.12 mile west of Project	Looking east	Not recommended for further analysis because the view is duplicative of Viewpoint 11
9	Sir Francis Drake Boulevard Hike/Bike Trail	0.10 mile west of Project	Looking east	Not recommended for further analysis because of limited Project visibility
10	Redwood Highway Pathway	0.26 mile southwest of Project	Looking northeast	Not recommended for further analysis because of limited Project visibility
11 ^[a]	Greenbrae Boardwalk	0.15 mile south/southwest of Project	Looking north/northeast	Recommended as Key View 1 to show the Project; both daytime and nighttime views are proposed

Viewpoint Number	Name	Location and Distance from Project	View Direction	Selection Rationale
12	Industrial Way/Corte Madera Marsh Ecological Preserve Trailhead	0.33 mile south/southwest of Project	Looking north/northeast	Not recommended for further analysis because of limited Project visibility
13 ^[a]	Via La Cumbre (upper road)	0.13 mile northwest of Project	Looking southeast	Recommended as Key View 2 to show the Project
14	Via La Cumbre (lower road)	0.13 mile northwest of Project	Looking southeast	Not recommended for further analysis because the view is duplicative of Viewpoint 13
15	Southbound US 101	0.08 mile northwest of Project	Looking southeast	Not recommended for further analysis because of limited Project visibility
16	Corte Madera Creek Hike/Bike Trail	0.30 mile south/southwest of Project	Looking north/northeast	Not recommended for further analysis because of limited Project visibility
17	Larkspur Landing Circle (near north parking lot)	Between the two new proposed parking garages	Looking southeast	Not recommended for further analysis because the view is duplicative of Viewpoint 11
18 ^[a]	Sir Francis Drake Boulevard (near Main Lot)	Between the two new proposed parking garages	Looking northwest	Recommended as Key View 3 to show the Project
19	Golden Gate Ferry Leaving Larkspur	0.16 mile southeast of Project	Looking northwest	Not recommended for further analysis because the view is duplicative of Viewpoint 11
20	Corte Madera Marsh Ecological Preserve Trail	0.50-mile south of Project	Looking north	Not recommended for further analysis because of limited Project visibility
21	Sir Francis Drake Boulevard Overcrossing	0.06 mile north of Project	Looking south	Not recommended for further analysis because the view is duplicative of Viewpoint 11
22	Drakes Cove Road	0.28 mile northeast of Project	Looking southwest	Not recommended for further analysis because the view is duplicative of Viewpoint 11

Viewpoint Number	Name	Location and Distance from Project	View Direction	Selection Rationale
23	Larkspur Landing Circle	0.14 mile northeast of Project	Looking southwest	Not recommended for further analysis because the view is duplicative of Viewpoint 17

^[a] Retained as key view.

The existing conditions at each key view selected for detailed analysis are summarized in Section 3.1.2.4 to aid the reader in understanding the Project impact analysis.

Viewers

Viewers are people who would be able to experience visual changes caused by the Project. The type of viewer and their activities influence their visual preferences, and therefore, their sensitivity to changes in the viewed environment. Two distinct groups of viewers are discussed in this aesthetic/visual analysis: neighbors and travelers. Neighbors are static viewers and refer to people who are not traveling on the ferry terminal parking lots but have views of the Project from their location within the AVE. Additionally, viewers who are traveling (but not on the Project site under study) are also considered as neighbors, even though they may be local motorists, transit users, or bicyclist/pedestrian on other routes (such as Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, Larkspur Landing Circle, or US 101). Travelers are dynamic viewers at the ferry terminal or parking lots (Project site) who have views from the Project (FHWA 2015).

For the purposes of this analysis, neighbors are subdivided into the following four categories (residential, commercial, recreational, and local motorist/transit users/bicyclist/pedestrian) who have “views of the Project”:

- Residential neighbors live within the AVE, primarily in the Larkspur Landing development, Greenbrae Boardwalk area, Drakes Cove Neighborhood, and Greenbrae Neighborhood in the City of Larkspur. Their visual preferences tend toward a “desire to maintain the existing landscape as is,” meaning they prefer high natural harmony and cultural order (FHWA 2015).
- Commercial neighbors “occupy property within the AVE (office buildings, warehouses, and other commercial structures)” and workers and customers are part-time visitors, such as the Larkspur Landing development in the City of Larkspur. Their visual preferences tend toward good cultural order and Project coherence (FHWA 2015).
- Recreational neighbors include those visitors to local/regional parks water sport users (boaters, kayakers) within the AVE. Their “visual preferences tend to be focused on and associated with the recreational activity.” “Depending on the type of recreation, recreational neighbors are interested in high natural harmony and cultural order, with some degree of Project coherence” (FHWA 2015).
- Local motorist/transit/bicyclist/pedestrian neighbors include those users on local roads, nearby parks, and train/bus/ferry users within the AVE that are not directly affected by the Project.

For the purposes of this analysis, travelers are subdivided into the following three categories (local motorist, transit, and bicyclist/pedestrian) who have “views from the Project”:

- Local motorist travelers include those users on the parking lots that would be directly affected by the Project. Vehicle speeds would be low. For the local motorist, drivers would be primarily focused on navigating the parking lot, while their passengers would be somewhat freer to examine their

surroundings. The driver's "primary interest is in Project coherence," while "passengers prefer evidence of good natural harmony and cultural order" (FHWA 2015).

- Transit travelers include those users on the District ferries/buses, Marin Transit buses, Muir Woods Shuttle buses, or transportation network companies that pick up/drop off users at the Project site. These users are commuters who regularly travel the same route. The frequency of the travel may vary, but there tend to be peaks—such as morning and evening rush hours and holidays. Transit user, like all travelers, are "particularly interested in project coherence. They are also interested in cultural order and natural harmony to the extent that it contributes to wayfinding" (FHWA 2015).
- Bicyclist/pedestrian travelers include those users on the pathways within the Project area. Similar to the local motorist, bicyclist/pedestrian users would be primarily focused on navigating the parking lot area to access the ferry terminal or otherwise navigating their travel route. The bicyclist/pedestrian "have a slight preference for cultural order over natural harmony and Project coherence" (FHWA 2015).

3.1.2 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

3.1.2.1 Methodology

Impacts for the Build Alternatives are presented together unless they differ substantially among alternatives. The method for evaluating impacts is intended to satisfy the federal and state requirements, including CEQA. In accordance with CEQA requirements, an environmental impact report must include a description of the existing physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the Project. Those conditions, in turn, "will normally constitute the baseline physical conditions by which a lead agency determines whether an impact is significant" (14 California Code of Regulations 15125[a]).

The methodology for assessing visual impacts is based on the FHWA's *Guidelines for the Visual Impact Assessment of Highway Projects* (FHWA 2015). This guidance is designed to provide a systematic and objective approach to evaluating visual impacts from the Project. This aesthetic/visual analysis incorporates the four main phases defined in the FHWA 2015 guidance to qualitatively evaluate impacts. The resultant approach implements the four main phases in a stepwise process that is described in the following sections.

Establishment Phase

The Establishment Phase consisted of a desk assessment of available data about the Project and establishment of basic visual attributes of the Project and its surroundings. The Project's regulatory setting through a review of relevant federal, state, and local laws and local government plans and directives was completed. The regional location and setting, along with the local setting, were described. The Project's visual character identified the most common visual characteristics based on scale, form, and materials of elements and features. The AVE was established. Scenic and visual resources within the AVE were listed and described.

Inventory Phase

The Inventory Phase completes the existing conditions assessment and provides the baseline against which impacts can be evaluated. A site reconnaissance to photo-document the Project footprint and surrounding area was completed. The Project location's visual character and quality were described, along with light and glare. Potential viewpoints and key views were identified within the AVE. Potentially affected viewers were identified (neighbors and travelers).

Analysis Phase

The purpose of the Analysis Phase is to determine whether the visual change, combined with visual sensitivity, will result in beneficial, adverse, or neutral visual impacts and to what degree. Visual simulations at the key views were completed to illustrate the view if the Project were constructed. The aesthetic/visual analysis determined the Project's visual impact by evaluating visual change (as determined by visual compatibility and visual contrast) and combining it with visual sensitivity (as determined by the viewer and viewpoint sensitivity) as represented by key views. The anticipated degree of change to the visual character and quality at each key view was determined.

Mitigation Phase

This aesthetic/visual analysis considers potential mitigation measures that could be implemented to lessen the overall impact of the Project. While the three visual simulations do not show potential mitigation or aesthetic treatments, the District can use the mitigation considered in Section 3.1.2.4 to inform a range of mitigation strategies, including applicable avoidance, minimization, or compensation measures for specific visual features to offset any expected adverse impacts. An example of a compensation measure would be to replace vegetation that could not be avoided and, thus, was removed or damaged.

3.1.2.2 Photo Simulations

Photo simulations are spatially accurate and realistic visualizations of views of the Project from the key views. They depict existing visual conditions and illustrate how existing views from the key views would change with the Project in place. Photo simulations were developed with the following software: Bentley MicroStation for three-dimensional (3D) modeling and rendering, Bentley InRoads or OpenRoads Designer for terrain modeling, ArcPro for integrating GIS data with the 3D environment, and Adobe Photoshop for final graphics editing. While photo simulations present a reasonably accurate and realistic depiction of changes to the existing view at each key view, the Project design is currently considered preliminary and subject to change. Final design and possible refinements, including the development of landscaping and aesthetics treatments, would occur later.

The existing visual conditions at each selected key view were photographically documented using a digital single lens reflex camera set to take high-resolution photos with a focal length equivalent to a 35-millimeter digital camera using a 50-millimeter lens. This type of equipment and setting best approximates what the human eye perceives.

The viewer location was identified in the 3D model with the same geographical coordinates to approximate the assumed viewer eye level, adjusted 5 feet from the existing ground surface of the site model. The visible terrain and existing digital site model then were used to align the 3D model with the photograph as viewed from the viewer location. When the elements of the existing site model were aligned, the 3D model of the Project was displayed at the correct scale and orientation. With the Project correctly aligned, a computerized rendering was generated of what the major Project elements could look like. Colors and patterns were applied as needed to the rendering to give the Project elements a realistic final appearance. Finally, graphics editing techniques were used to blend the rendering of the Project elements into the photograph to create the completed visual simulation.

3.1.2.3 Thresholds of Significance

The following CEQA Guidelines Appendix G thresholds identify significance criteria to be considered for determining whether a Project could have significant impacts related to aesthetic resources and visual quality. Would the Project do the following (CAEP 2026):

- 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?
- In nonurbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the Project is in an urbanized area, would the Project 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?

For purposes of this analysis and based on FHWA guidelines and the terrain around the Project, the following distance zones apply:

- Foreground consists of features that are between 0 and 0.25 mile from the key view.
- Middleground consists of features that are between 0.25 and 3 miles from the key view.
- Background consists of features that are beyond 3 miles from the key view.

Each of the following impact analyses first presents the existing conditions photograph and a photorealistic visual simulation, followed by a summary of the existing and proposed visual conditions to identify visual changes that could result from the Project. Visual changes are then analyzed to determine (1) their compatibility with the existing visual character, (2) viewer sensitivity to those visual changes, and (3) the analysis of changes to visual quality and viewers' experience of those changes by evaluating the compatibility of impacts of the Project to existing visual resources, evaluating viewer sensitivity to those impacts, and combining the results. When measured together, visual character compatibility and viewer sensitivity of the Project yield the overall visual quality change as adverse (highly adverse, moderately adverse, slightly adverse), neutral/no, or beneficial (slightly beneficial, moderately beneficial, highly beneficial).

Based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, the degree of impact is either a potentially significant impact, less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated, less-than-significant impact, or no impact (CAEP 2026).

3.1.2.4 Impacts

Project aesthetics impacts are substantively the same for both Alternative 1 and Alternative 2. Within this section, impacts for Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 are discussed together as the Build Alternatives.

Would the Project have a Substantial Adverse Effect on a Scenic Vista?

Construction and Operation

Build Alternatives

As described in Section 3.1.1.2, there are no designated national scenic trails, national historic trails, national historic landmarks, national wild or scenic rivers, or national wildlife refuges within 2 miles of the Project (NPS 2026a; NPS 2026b; NPS 2026c; DOI 2026; USFWS 2026). There are no designated state wild or scenic rivers or state parks within 2 miles of the Project (California State Geoportal 2025; California State Parks 2026). The Corte Madera Marsh Ecological Reserve is approximately 0.15 mile south of the Project on land and in the waters of the San Francisco Bay. The Project is not anticipated to include activities that would directly affect this scenic resource. Because the preserve is not a designated scenic vista, **no impacts** would occur from the Project.

Other non-designated local visual resources within 1/2 mile of the Project include water features (San Francisco Bay and Corte Madera Creek), local/regional parks (Remillard Park, Miwok Park, Neighborhood Park, Cal Park Hill, Greenbrae School Park, Larkspur Lands Park, Niven Park, and Shorebird Marsh), and local trails/bicycle pathways (East-West Bikeway, Corte Madera Creek Path, Ferry Terminal Path, Cal Park Path, North-South Greenway, Corte Madera Creek Crossing, Redwood Highway Pathway, Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, Eliseo Drive, Doherty Drive Path, Redwood High Path, High Canal Path, Sandra Marker Trail, Tamal Vista Boulevard, Nellen Avenue Wormum Drive, and Nellen Avenue). Of these non-designated local visual resources, only the Ferry Terminal Path could be directly affected by the Project. The Ferry Terminal Path would remain open during construction. Because these visual resources are not a designated scenic vista, **no impacts** would occur from the Project.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation required.

Would the Project Substantially Damage Scenic Resources, Including, but not Limited to, Trees, Rock Outcroppings, and Historic Buildings within a State Scenic Highway?

Construction and Operation

Build Alternatives

As described in Section 3.1.1.2, there are no federal or state designated scenic highways within or near the Project area. The closest state designated scenic highway is State Route 1 (Pacific Coast Highway), which is approximately 4.5 miles south of the Project (FHWA 2026; Caltrans 2019). Therefore, **no impacts** would occur.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation required.

Would the Project in Nonurbanized Areas Substantially Degrade the Existing Visual Character or Quality of Public Views of the Site and its Surroundings? (Public Views are those that are Experienced from Publicly Accessible Vantage Point). If the Project is in an Urbanized Area, would the Project Conflict with Applicable Zoning and Other Regulations Governing Scenic Quality?

The cities of Larkspur, Mill Valley, and San Rafael are collectively under 100,000 persons, which does not meet the threshold of an urbanized area under CEQA regulations (Public Resources Code Section 21071[a][1] – [2]). Even though the Project is in a nonurbanized area, the new parking garages have been designed to be compatible with applicable Marin County regulations governing scenic quality (Policy BIO-4.7, Goal DES-4, Policy DES-4.1, Implementing Program DES-4a, Implementing Program DES-4b, Implementing Program DEC 4c, Goal DES-5, and Policy DES-5.1) and City of Larkspur regulations governing scenic quality (Policy CHAR-1.3, Action Program CHAR-1.3.a, Goal LU-10, Policy LU-10.1, Goal CIR-6, Policy CIR-6.7, Action Program CIR-6.7.a, Goal ENV-2, Policy ENV-2.3, and Goal ENV-5). Because the Project is in a nonurbanized area, changes to existing visual character and quality of public views of the site and its surroundings are analyzed as follows.

Construction

Build Alternatives

Construction activities would introduce heavy equipment and associated vehicles, including cranes, backhoes, bulldozers, and trucks into the viewshed over the course of the anticipated 18 month construction schedule at the North Lot (Phase 1) and the anticipated 36 month construction schedule (Phase II) for the Main Lot. Residential neighbors to the south, east, and west have direct line-of-sight views to the Project and are generally considered to be most sensitive to construction activities. Recreational neighbors on San Francisco Bay and Corte Madera Creek to the south and east have direct line-of-sight views to the Project and are also sensitive construction viewers. Given the anticipated 54-month total construction schedule, construction activities would not be considered temporary and could alter the visible landscape at the sites with heavy equipment, bright colors, material staging, and other construction elements over an extended period. Construction activities could also result in an invaded sense of privacy and disruptive views. Therefore, construction activities would result in a ***potentially significant impact*** for neighbors and recreationalists. Implementation of **MM-AES-CNST-1** would reduce visual impacts from construction by requiring visual screening of disruptive construction activities near sensitive viewers, which would also help maintain privacy but not reduce to a less-than-significant level. Thus, construction activity impacts from changes to existing visual character and quality of public views of the site and its surroundings, remains ***potentially significant***.

Operation Key View 1 Daytime

Figure 3.1-4a and Figure 3.1-4b illustrate potential daytime visual changes resulting from the Project.



Figure 3.1-4a. Key View 1 Greenbrae Boardwalk Daytime Looking North/Northeast—Existing Condition



Figure 3.1-4b. Key View 1 Greenbrae Boardwalk Daytime Looking North/Northeast—Simulation

Existing Condition—Figure 3.1-4a presents existing Key View 1 (Viewpoint 11) during day hours on the Greenbrae Boardwalk, approximately 0.15 mile south/southwest of the Project. This viewpoint represents what residential neighbors would see when facing north/northeast.

The smooth, blue-gray, tan, and green tidal tributary of Corte Madera Creek that flows from the Corte Madera Marsh Ecological Reserve is seen in the bottom middle portion of the view and extends away from view (north) in the immediate foreground. This tributary is flanked by short green and tan grass and exposed dark brown soil. One story, white rectangular, single-family homes flank the tributary. Short, brown wood channel stabilization posts are visible near each residential building, as are brown wood support columns underneath each building in shadow. Brown wood dock facilities are visible for each building and extend into the blue-gray, tan, and green Corte Madera Creek that appears as a horizontal band that runs left to right across the middle of the view. On the north side of Corte Madera Creek is a flat marsh area with short green and tan grass and exposed brown soil, along with a row of varying heights of rounded, green mature trees along the perimeter of the Main Lot. The middle of the foreground contains the existing flat, horizontal Main Lot with parked vehicles; light gray monopole safety lights; and directional signage of various shapes, sizes, and colors. A white, two-story office building and white, three-story, open-air canopy terminal building are seen on the middle right portion of the of the view. One ferry boat, which is white, light blue, and dark blue, is parked at the ferry terminal and is mostly obscured by the mature green trees. Also, in the middle of the foreground and beyond the Main Lot are the buildings associated with the Larkspur Landing shopping center, with angular gray roof lines most visible among the mature trees. At the back of the foreground are additional mature green trees and residential homes in the Larkspur Landing area at the base of the Southern Heights Ridge on the middle left portion of the view and exposed dark gray rock on the middle right portion of the view. Southern Heights Ridge is mostly covered with green and tan grasses and has an intermittent row of rounded, dark green, mature trees of varying heights along the top of the ridge at the rear of the foreground. Single-family homes in the Greenbrae subdivision are seen on the far left side of the view over the white single-family home among a dense cluster of rounded, dark green, mature trees on the hillside. A narrow glimpse of a dark green ridgeline or peak is seen on the left side of the view in the middleground. Views to the background are not visible.

The landscape is defined by a noticeable water feature and broad, flat terrain in the immediate and middle portions of the foreground with a visually distinctive natural ridgeline in the rear of the foreground. A bright blue sky extends across the entire top of the view. Overall, this view consists of natural and built environment features that have moderate natural harmony and moderate cultural order. For these reasons, the landscape composition and vividness of Key View 1 is moderate.

Proposed Condition—Figure 3.1-4b presents a photo simulation of Key View 1 and shows the Project replacing the existing Main Lot with a five-story parking garage with angled gray solar-shade panels on the roof at the left and middle portions of the view. While the tan garage mimics the green and tan grass in the immediate foreground and rear of the foreground, it is a new, highly noticeable, built environment feature because of its size and massing that fully obscures views to the Larkspur Landing area and a portion of the Southern Heights Ridge on the left and middle portions of the view. A new thin, horizontal line that is associated with covered vehicle parking is also noticeable behind the row of rounded, mature, green trees of varying heights along the perimeter of the existing Main Lot. The residential homes along the Greenbrae Boardwalk would have a direct line-of-site to the Project and would notice the Project's visual character change from the existing landscape. The narrow view to the ridgeline in the middleground is now substantially obscured by the height of the new garage and angled gray solar-shade panels on the roof, but views of the Greenbrae subdivision on the far left side of the view are generally unaffected.

For Key View 1, the Project exhibits low to moderate Project coherence because the parking garage is visible on the left and middle portions of the view but not in the right portion of the view, and there are reduced views of the Southern Heights Ridge on the left and middle portions of the view. Although some visual clutter from the Main Lot features, ferry, buildings associated with the Larkspur Landing shopping center, and residential homes in the Larkspur Landing area are eliminated, the flat terrain is replaced with a highly noticeable, newly built feature that obscures the view to Southern Heights Ridge. Views of Corte Madera Creek are unaffected. In this view, the Project becomes a major focal point because the eye is drawn to the newly built feature in the landscape.

Visual Character Compatibility—The scale, form, and materials of the Project would not be consistent with other parking facilities within the AVE because no such comparable facility exists. Thus, the Project would have low character compatibility with the existing natural and cultural environments at Key View 1. However, there are similar parking garage facilities found throughout the North San Francisco Bay Area, resulting in a comparable visual character found in the larger region.

Viewer Sensitivity—There are approximately 45 residential homes along the Greenbrae Boardwalk that would have a direct line-of-sight view to the Project, which is a moderate number of viewers. The view duration for residential neighbors to the Project would be high. Thus, viewer exposure for residential neighbors is also assumed to be high. The residential neighbors are assumed to have high viewer awareness of the Project because of the short distance to the new parking garage and their familiarity with the landscape. The nearby waters of San Francisco Bay and Corte Madera Creek are unaffected and may help to somewhat offset the view changes resulting from the Project. Neighbors at Key View 1 are anticipated to have high sensitivity to visual changes.

Visual Quality Change—Implementation of the Project is anticipated to change the existing moderate natural harmony of the view because views to the Southern Heights Ridge and mature trees are partially obscured. The natural harmony does change because the Project is partially obscuring views to nearby hills and mature vegetation, but the natural harmony remains low to moderate. The existing moderate cultural order of the view is also changed because of the new highly noticeable parking garage, but the cultural order remains moderate. The Project would have low to moderate compatibility with the existing visual character of the natural and cultural environments, and the memorability or vividness of the landscape would be reduced at Key View 1. Because the Project has low to moderate compatibility with the existing visual character and high sensitivity to visual changes at Key View 1, the resulting visual quality change is considered to be moderately adverse for the residential neighbors.

Degree of Visual Impact—Based on the findings of a low to moderate visual character compatibility, high viewer sensitivity, and moderately adverse visual quality change, the Project is anticipated to result in a ***potentially significant impact*** for neighbors at Key View 1. There is no feasible mitigation to reduce the mass of the new parking garages; however, during final design, when determining the exact building-related surface texture treatments that would make the garage more visually appealing the District/Design Team will solicit public input via workshop or a similar method. Examples could include surface texture treatments such as a fin-fractured finish or using colored concrete to help mimic the visual attributes of the surrounding hillsides on the exterior of the new parking garages. Architectural treatments (for example, color, surface texture, and other treatments) would be consistent with the character and architectural treatments in the Project vicinity and make the parking garage more visually appealing. However, the visual impacts of the Project would not be reduced to a less-than-significant level. Thus, the impact from changes to existing visual character and quality of public views of the site and its surroundings, as viewed from Key View 1 during daytime, remains ***potentially significant***.

Operation Key View 1 Nighttime

Figure 3.1-5a and Figure 3.1-5b illustrate potential nighttime visual changes resulting from the Project.



Figure 3.1-5a. Key View 1 Greenbrae Boardwalk Nighttime Looking North/Northeast—Existing Condition



Figure 3.1-5b. Key View 1 Greenbrae Boardwalk Nighttime Looking North/Northeast—Simulation

Existing Condition—Figure 3.1-5a presents existing Key View 1 (Viewpoint 11) during dusk on the Greenbrae Boardwalk approximately 0.15 mile south/southwest of the Project. This viewpoint represents what residential neighbors would see when facing north/northeast.

The tidal tributary of Corte Madera Creek that flows from the Corte Madera Marsh Ecological Reserve seen in the bottom middle portion of the view and extending north in the immediate foreground appears to be dark gray and reflects the lights from the exiting Main Lot and open-air canopy terminal building. The grass and exposed soil areas that flank the tributary appear to be black. The two single-family homes that flank the tributary appear to be gray, with amber-colored interior lighting visible on the home on the left side of the view. The wood channel stabilization posts near each residential building and brown wood support columns underneath each building are fully in shadow. The dock facilities are silhouetted against the dark waters of Corte Madera Creek that run left to right across the middle of the view. On the north side of Corte Madera Creek, the grass and exposed soil areas also appear to be black, and the row of rounded, mature trees of varying heights along the Main Lot perimeter are silhouetted against the Main Lot and open-air canopy terminal building lights in the middle of the foreground. The lights on the existing Main Lot, two-story office building, and three-story open-air canopy terminal building are not shielded or directed toward the ground and are highly noticeable in the dusk landscape in the middle of the foreground. Lights associated with the Larkspur Landing shopping center are also visible beyond the Main Lot, but the vegetation and roof lines appear to be black. The residential homes in the Larkspur Landing area at the base of the Southern Heights Ridge on the middle left portion of the view are faintly seen, while the exposed rock on the middle right portion of the view are not visible. The silhouette of the Southern Heights Ridge is seen across the view against the pale blue sky and dark gray clouds. The single-family homes in the Greenbrae subdivision are no longer discernible on the far left side of the view over the gray single-family home. The narrow glimpse of the ridgeline in the middleground is hard to distinguish from the Southern Heights Ridge on the left side of the view. Views to the background are not visible.

The landscape is defined by a noticeable water feature and broad, flat terrain in the immediate and middle portions of the foreground with a visually distinctive natural ridgeline in the rear of the foreground. There is a pale blue sky with dark and light gray clouds extending across the entire top portion of the view. Overall, this view consists of natural and built environment features that have moderate natural harmony and moderate cultural order. For these reasons, the landscape composition and vividness of Key View 1 is moderate.

Proposed Condition—Figure 3.1-5b presents a photo simulation of Key View 1 and shows the Project replacing the existing Main Lot with a five-story parking garage with angled gray solar-shade panels on the roof toward the left and middle portions of the view. The parking garage appears dark gray, with visible vehicle navigation lights on each floor. The second garage floor appears brighter to simulate pedestrian or vehicular activity, while the other garage floors appear less bright to simulate no pedestrian or vehicular activity. Even during dusk, the parking garage is a new, highly noticeable, built environment feature because of its size and massing, which fully obscures views to the Larkspur Landing area and the portion of the Southern Heights Ridge on the left and middle portions of the view. The residential homes along the Greenbrae Boardwalk would have a direct line-of-sight to the Project and would notice the Project's visual character change to the existing landscape. A beneficial impact of the Project is that the existing non-shielded Main Lot lights are replaced with modern shielded lights that are directed toward only those areas requiring illumination, which reduces light trespass and glare on adjacent properties.

For Key View 1, the Project exhibits low to moderate Project coherence because the parking garage is visible on the left and middle portions of the view but not the right portion of the view, and there are reduced views of the Southern Heights Ridge on the left and middle portions of the view. The flat terrain is replaced with a highly noticeable, newly built feature that obscures the view to Southern Heights Ridge,

but views of Corte Madera Creek are unaffected. In this view, the Project becomes a major focal point because the eye is drawn to the newly built feature in the landscape.

Visual Character Compatibility—The scale, form, and materials of the Project would not be consistent with other parking facilities within the AVE because no such comparable facility exists. Thus, the Project would have low character compatibility with the existing natural and cultural environments at Key View 1. However, there are similar parking garage facilities found throughout the North San Francisco Bay Area, resulting in a comparable visual character found in the larger region.

Viewer Sensitivity—There are approximately 45 residential homes along the Greenbrae Boardwalk that would have a direct line-of-sight view to the Project, which is a moderate number of viewers. The view duration for residential neighbors to the Project would be high. Thus, viewer exposure for residential neighbors is also assumed to be high. The residential neighbors are assumed to have high viewer awareness of the Project because of the short distance to the new parking garage and their familiarity with the landscape. The nearby waters of San Francisco Bay and Corte Madera Creek are unaffected and may help to somewhat offset the view changes resulting from the Project. Neighbors at Key View 1 are anticipated to have high sensitivity to visual changes.

Visual Quality Change—Implementation of the Project is anticipated to change the existing moderate natural harmony of the view because views to the Southern Heights Ridge are partially obscured. The existing moderate cultural order of the view is also changed because of the new highly noticeable parking garage, but the cultural order remains moderate. The Project would have low to moderate compatibility with the existing visual character of the natural and cultural environments, and the memorability or vividness of the landscape would be reduced at Key View 1. Because the Project has low to moderate compatibility with the existing visual character and high sensitivity to visual changes at Key View 1, the resulting visual quality change is considered to be moderately adverse for the residential neighbors.

Degree of Visual Impact—Based on the findings of a low to moderate visual character compatibility, high viewer sensitivity, and moderately adverse visual quality change, the Project is anticipated to result in a ***potentially significant impact*** for neighbors at Key View 1. There is no feasible mitigation to reduce the mass of the new parking garages; however, during final design, when determining the exact building-related surface texture treatments that would make the garage more visually appealing the District/Design Team will solicit public input via workshop or a similar method. Examples could include surface texture treatments such as a fin-fractured finish or using colored concrete to help mimic the visual attributes of the surrounding hillsides on the exterior of the new parking garages. Architectural treatments (for example, color, surface texture, and other treatments) would be consistent with the character and architectural treatments in the Project vicinity and make the parking garage more visually appealing. However, the visual impacts of the Project would not be reduced to a less-than-significant level. Thus, the impact from changes to existing visual character and quality of public views of the site and its surroundings, as viewed from Key View 1 at dusk, remains ***potentially significant***.

Operation Key View 2

Figure 3.1-6a and Figure 3.1-6b illustrate potential visual changes resulting from the Project.



Figure 3.1-6a. Via La Cumbre Looking Southeast—Existing Condition



Figure 3.1-6b. Via La Cumbre Looking Southeast—Simulation

Existing Condition—Figure 3.1-6a presents existing Key View 2 (Viewpoint 13) on Via la Cumbre in the Greenbrae residential subdivision approximately 0.13 mile northwest of the Project. This viewpoint represents what residential neighbors would see when facing southeast.

Green, yellow, and red ornamental landscaping is seen on the lower right corner of the view, while two single-family residential homes are visible across the entire portion of the bottom of the view in the immediate foreground. One home is light gray with white accents on the doors and windows, while the other home is dark gray with white accents. Both homes have gray, angular roof lines, and the home on the right side of the view has visible, dark gray solar panels. A partial view of the existing Main Lot and full view of the two-story office building and three-story, open-air canopy terminal building are visible in the middle of the view at the edge of the foreground. Three white ferry boats with black and blue features are seen docked at the ferry terminal on the left side of the view. Green and tan grass and intermittent, rounded, dark green mature trees are visible around the perimeter of the Main Lot at the edge of the foreground. The blue-green waters of Corte Madera Creek are seen on the far (south) side of the existing Main Lot in the middleground, while the blue-green waters of San Francisco Bay are seen on the left and middle portions of the view and extend from the foreground to the background. A row of single-family residential homes is visible on the far (south) side of Corte Madera Creek in the middleground. One triangular-shaped lattice cellular tower is visible to the left of the homes and protrudes into the sky, while another triangular-shaped lattice cellular tower is visible in the Corte Madera Marsh Ecological Reserve near the beach and water line. Behind the homes on the south side of Corte Madera Creek is a flat expanse of green and tan grasses and exposed brown soil in the Corte Madera Marsh Ecological Reserve in the middle and right portions of the view (middleground). Ring Mountain is a scenic feature covered in green and tan grass and green trees in the middle and right portions of the view at the beginning of the background, while the green-tree-covered Tiburon Peninsula is visible behind Ring Mountain farther into the background. Non-discernible built features are seen on the hillsides in the background.

The landscape is defined by single-family homes perched on a hillside, flat terrain with built features, and noticeable water features in the foreground, with additional flat terrain and water features in the middleground. One visually distinctive mountain, natural peninsula ridgeline, and water features are seen in the background. A bright blue sky extends across the entire top of the view, with a layer of white and gray clouds in the background. Overall, this view consists of natural and built environment features that have moderate to high natural harmony and moderate cultural order. For these reasons, the landscape composition and vividness of Key View 2 is moderate to high.

Proposed Condition—Figure 3.1-6b presents a photo simulation of Key View 2 and shows the Project replacing the existing Main Lot with a five-story parking garage with angled gray solar-shade panels on the top floor in the middle of the view. The gray solar-shade panels are visually distinctive from the flat garage top floor. While the tan garage mimics the green and tan grasses in the surrounding area in the foreground, it is a new, highly noticeable, built environment feature because of its size and massing that partially obscures views of Corte Madera Creek and the single-family homes on the south side of Corte Madera Creek. The two-story office building is fully obscured by the Project. The homes on Via la Cumbre in the Greenbrae residential subdivision would have a direct line-of-sight view to the Project and would notice the Project's visual character change to the existing landscape.

For Key View 2, the Project exhibits moderate Project coherence because the parking garage is visible in the middle of the view, but there are reduced views of Corte Madera Creek in this view. The flat terrain is replaced with a highly noticeable, newly built feature that partially obscures views to Corte Madera Creek. In this view, the Project does not become a focal point because the views to San Francisco Bay, Ring Mountain, and the Tiburon Peninsula are unaffected.

Visual Character Compatibility—The scale, form, and materials of the Project would not be consistent with other parking facilities within the AVE because no such comparable facility exists. Thus, the Project would have low character compatibility with the existing natural and cultural environments at Key View 2. However, there are similar parking garage facilities found throughout the North San Francisco Bay Area, resulting in a comparable visual character found in the larger region.

Viewer Sensitivity—There are approximately 40 residential homes along Via la Cumbre in the Greenbrae residential subdivision on the hillside overlooking the area that would have a direct line-of-sight view to the Project, which is a moderate number of viewers. The view duration for residential neighbors to the Project would be high. However, viewer exposure for residential neighbors is assumed to be moderate to high because many of the natural features are unaffected by the Project. The residential neighbors are assumed to have high viewer awareness of the Project because of the short distance to the new parking garage and their familiarity with the landscape. The nearby waters of San Francisco Bay, Ring Mountain, and the Tiburon Peninsula are unaffected and may help to somewhat offset the Project view changes. Neighbors at Key View 2 are anticipated to have moderate to high sensitivity to visual changes.

Visual Quality Change—Implementation of the Project is not anticipated to change the existing moderate to high natural harmony of the view because most views to these resources are unaffected. The natural harmony does change because the Project is partially obscuring views to Corte Madera Creek and Corte Madera Marsh Ecological Reserve, but the natural harmony remains low to moderate. The existing moderate cultural order of the view is changed because of the new highly noticeable parking garage, but the cultural order remains moderate. The Project would have low to moderate compatibility with the existing visual character of the natural and cultural environments, and the memorability or vividness of the landscape would be reduced at Key View 2. Because the Project has low to moderate compatibility with the existing visual character and moderate to high sensitivity to visual changes at Key View 2, the resulting visual quality change is considered to be slightly adverse for the residential neighbors.

Degree of Visual Impact—Based on the findings of a low to moderate visual character compatibility, moderate to high viewer sensitivity, and slightly adverse visual quality change, the Project is anticipated to result in a ***potentially significant impact*** for neighbors at Key View 2. There is no feasible mitigation to reduce the mass of the new parking garages; however, during final design, when determining the exact building-related surface texture treatments that would make the garage more visually appealing the District/Design Team will solicit public input via workshop or a similar method. Examples could include surface texture treatments such as a fin-fractured finish or using colored concrete to help mimic the visual attributes of the surrounding hillsides on the exterior of the new parking garages. Architectural treatments (for example, color, surface texture, and other treatments) would be consistent with the character and architectural treatments in the Project vicinity and make the parking garage more visually appealing. However, the visual impacts of the Project would not be reduced to a less-than-significant level. Thus, the impact from changes to existing visual character and quality of public views of the site and its surroundings, as viewed from Key View 2, remains ***potentially significant***.

Operation Key View 3

Figure 3.1-7a and Figure 3.1-7b illustrate potential visual changes resulting from the Project.



Figure 3.1-7a. Sir Francis Drake Boulevard Looking Northwest—Existing Condition



Figure 3.1-7b. Sir Francis Drake Boulevard Looking Northwest—Simulation

Existing Condition—Figure 3.1-7a presents existing Key View 3 (Viewpoint 18) on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard between the two new proposed parking garages. This viewpoint represents what local motorist, transit, and bicyclist/pedestrian travelers would see when facing northwest.

In the foreground, Sir Francis Drake Boulevard is a smooth, gray multilane roadway that extends across the bottom portion of the view. Larkspur Landing Circle is also a smooth, gray multilane roadway that extends away from view (north) before curving out of view behind a three-story gray and white commercial building on the right side of the view. White pavement markings and raised medians are visible on both roadways, with the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard median consisting of tan rock and the Larkspur Landing Circle median consisting of both tan rock and green bushes. Directional signage of various shapes, sizes,

and colors are visible at the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard/Larkspur Landing Circle intersection, as well as on Larkspur Landing Circle to the north. Vertical traffic signals are mounted on cylindrical metal poles and visible at the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard/Larkspur Landing Circle intersection. Taller overhead cobra head style street lights that also extend north on Larkspur Landing Circle are also visible. One pair of cobra head style street lights protrude into the skyline. Smooth, gray concrete sidewalks are visible along both Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Larkspur Landing Circle. Ornamental landscaping of grass, shrubs, and trees are visible next to the sidewalks and flank each side of Larkspur Landing Circle. One three-story gray and white commercial building is partially visible on the right side of the view, and one three-story gray commercial building that is partially obscured by mature green trees is visible on the left side of the view. The existing north parking lot is visible in the middle of the view and has smooth, gray asphalt that gently rises from left to right in the middle of the foreground. Behind the parking lot is an obscured view of a small, green and tan grass hill and a vertical, brown, stone retaining wall associated with the SMART Larkspur Station. Above the train station is a short, gray vertical retaining wall next to US 101 in the middle of the view. Above US 101 is a raised hillside below the Greenbrae residential subdivision that is a mix of green and tan grass, exposed gray rock, and rounded, mature green trees and shrubs. On top of the hill is a row of two-story, single-family homes that are white, tan, and gray at the back of the foreground. Views to the middleground and background are not visible.

The landscape is defined mostly by built features that rise from the bottom of the view to the upper portion of the view. Both Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Larkspur Landing Circle are visually dominant. A bright blue sky extends across the entire top of the view. Overall, this view consists of natural and built environment features that have low to moderate natural harmony and moderate cultural order. For these reasons, the landscape composition and vividness of Key View 3 is moderate.

Proposed Condition—Figure 3.1-7b presents a photo simulation of Key View 3 and shows the Project replacing the existing north parking lot with a tan, six-story parking garage with angled gray solar-shade panels on the top floor in the middle of the view. The new north parking garage is a highly noticeable built environment feature because of its size and massing that fully obscures views to the SMART Larkspur Station, hillside with mature trees and shrubs above US 101, and the row of single-family homes in the Greenbrae residential subdivision. Local motorists, transit users, and bicyclist/pedestrian travelers would have a direct line-of-sight to the Project and would notice the Project's visual character change to the existing landscape. Views to the middleground and background are unaffected.

For Key View 3, the Project exhibits moderate Project coherence because the parking garage is visible in the middle of the view, but there are reduced views of the transit station, hillside with mature trees and shrubs above US 101, and the single-family homes in the Greenbrae residential subdivision in this view. The gently rising terrain of the existing north parking lot is replaced with a highly noticeable newly built feature that obscures the back of the foreground. In this view, the Project becomes a focal point because the eye is drawn to the newly built feature in the landscape.

Visual Character Compatibility—The scale, form, and materials of the Project would not be consistent with other parking facilities within the AVE because no such comparable facility exists. Thus, the Project would have low character compatibility with the existing natural and cultural environments at Key View 3. However, there are similar parking garage facilities found throughout the North San Francisco Bay Area, resulting in a comparable visual character found in the larger region.

Viewer Sensitivity—According to Marin County, Sir Francis Drake Boulevard had a 2016 weekday daily average of approximately 45,900 vehicles near Key View 3, which is a high number of local motorist travelers (Marin County 2016). No publicly available traffic count data were available from Marin County on Larkspur Landing Circle, but traffic count is expected to be less than the number of vehicles on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, and there is assumed to be a moderate number of local motorist travelers. No

publicly available transit data was available for users on the District buses, Marin Transit buses, Muir Woods Shuttle buses, and transportation network companies that pick up/drop off users at the Project site, but there is assumed to be a moderate number of transit travelers. The same is also assumed for bicyclist/pedestrian travelers at the Project site. These local motorist, transit user, and bicyclist/pedestrian travelers would have a direct line-of-sight to the Project, but their view duration would be fleeting as they move through the Project area. Thus, viewer exposure for these travelers is assumed to be low to moderate. In general, travelers are assumed to have low to moderate awareness of the Project because of their fleeting and narrow view to the new parking garage and their general focus on traveling. Travelers at Key View 3 are anticipated to have low to moderate sensitivity to visual changes.

Visual Quality Change—Implementation of the Project is not anticipated to change the existing low to moderate natural harmony of the view. The natural harmony does change because the Project is partially obscuring views to nearby hills and mature vegetation, but the natural harmony remains low to moderate. The existing moderate cultural order of the view is also changed because of the new highly noticeable parking garage, but the cultural order remains moderate. The Project would have low to moderate compatibility with the existing visual character of the natural and cultural environments, and the memorability or vividness of the landscape would be reduced at Key View 3. Because the Project has low to moderate compatibility with the existing visual character and low to moderate sensitivity to visual changes at Key View 3, the resulting visual quality change is considered to be slightly adverse for the travelers.

Degree of Visual Impact—Based on the findings of a low to moderate visual character compatibility, low to moderate viewer sensitivity, and slightly adverse visual quality change, the Project is anticipated to result in a ***potentially significant impact*** for neighbors at Key View 3. There is no feasible mitigation to reduce the mass of the new parking garages; however, during final design, when determining the exact building-related surface texture treatments that would make the garage more visually appealing the District/Design Team will solicit public input via workshop or a similar method. Examples could include surface texture treatments such as a fine-fractured finish or using colored concrete to help mimic the visual attributes of the surrounding hillsides on the exterior of the new parking garages. Architectural treatments (for example, color, surface texture, and other treatments) would be consistent with the character and architectural treatments in the Project vicinity and make the parking garage more visually appealing. However, the visual impacts of the Project would not be reduced to a less-than-significant level. Thus, the impact from changes to existing visual character and quality of public views of the site and its surroundings, as viewed from Key View 3, remains ***potentially significant***.

Operation Summary of Impacts for Key Views

Table 3.1-2 summarizes the Project's visual character compatibility, change, viewers sensitivity, visual quality change, and degree of visual impact by key view. Based on the overall findings regarding visual character compatibility, viewer sensitivity, and visual quality change, the Project would have a potentially significant impact for neighbors and travelers regarding the key views.

Table 3.1-2. Operation Summary of Impacts for Key Views

Key View Location	Visual Character Compatibility	Viewer Sensitivity	Visual Quality Change	Degree of Visual Impact
Key View 1, Daytime Greenbrae Boardwalk	Low	High	Moderately adverse	Potentially significant
Key View 1, Nighttime Greenbrae Boardwalk	Low	High	Moderately adverse	Potentially significant
Key View 2, Via La Cumbre (upper road)	Low	Moderate to high	Slightly adverse	Potentially significant
Key View 3, Sir Francis Drake Boulevard (near Main Lot)	Low	Low to moderate	Slightly adverse	Potentially significant
Total	Low	High	Moderately adverse	Potentially significant

Mitigation Measures

MM-AES-CNST-1: Install Visual Barriers Between Construction Work Areas and Sensitive Receptors—The Project proponent or its contractor(s) will install visual barriers between stationary construction work areas and sensitive viewers adjacent to the Project site to reduce the impact on these viewers from invasions of privacy and the change in existing visual quality. Barriers will be placed to obscure views of stationary work areas (for example, staging areas or areas of fixed construction) where construction activity and equipment would be disruptive and lower the existing visual quality. These efforts will include the following actions and performance standards:

- The Project proponent or its contractors(s) will install visual barriers to minimize sensitive views of construction work areas.
- The visual barriers will be placed around the south, east, and west sides of the Project site to protect sensitive viewers that are within one block of the construction site because these viewers would have an unobstructed view of the construction area.
- The visual barrier may be chain link fencing with privacy slats, fencing with windscreen material, wood barrier, or other similar barrier.
- The visual barrier will be a minimum of 6 feet high to help to maintain the privacy of sensitive viewers and block ground-level views toward stationary construction activities.

While the visual barriers would introduce a visual intrusion, they are anticipated to reduce the visual effects associated with visible construction activities and would protect privacy. These visual barriers are an effective means of reducing the visibility of active construction work areas, thereby minimizing the impact on existing localized visual quality.

Would the Project: Create a New Source of Substantial Light or Glare which would Adversely Affect Day or Nighttime Views in the Area?

Construction

Build Alternatives

Residential, commercial, local motorist/transit/bicyclist/pedestrian neighbors within the AVE to the north are largely obscured from the Project by existing mature vegetation and buildings. However, residential neighbors to the south, east, and west have direct line-of sight views to the Project. The same is also true for commercial neighbors to the northeast and west of the Project. Recreational neighbors on San Francisco Bay and Corte Madera Creek to the south and east have direct line-of sight views to the Project. Local motorists/bicyclists/pedestrians on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, Larkspur Landing Circle, and US 101 would have fleeting views of the Project as they move through the Project area. Transit users at the SMART Larkspur Station would have a narrow but direct line of sight to the Project.

The construction duration is anticipated to be 18 months for the North Lot (Phase I) and 36 months for the Main Lot (Phase II). Construction hours are anticipated to be consistent with the construction noise hours for the City of Larkspur, which are Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM and Saturday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Temporary daytime glare could occur from construction equipment but is not anticipated to adversely affect daytime views in the Project area as glare impacts would be primarily confined to the Project site, resulting in ***no impacts***. Nighttime construction is not anticipated at this time, resulting in ***no impacts***.

Operation

Build Alternatives

Nighttime safety lighting has been in place for over 20 years at the two existing surface parking lots, with both lots having some type of safety lighting for nearly 50 years when the LFT first opened. Currently, most of this lighting is not shielded and directed toward the ground, which results in light trespass on adjacent properties and glare issues observed by nearby residential, commercial, recreational, and local motorist/transit/bicyclist/pedestrian neighbors. Nighttime safety lighting is also located adjacent to the pedestrian routes between the parking lots and the LFT building, vehicle access areas to the parking lots, and pickup/drop-off spaces near the LFT building for buses and transportation network companies. Some of this lighting is shielded and directed toward the ground but is not consistent, which also results in light trespass and glare issues. Existing mature vegetation near the Project helps diffuse some of the light trespass and glare issues.

The Project would replace two existing surface parking lots with one five-story parking garage at the Main Lot and one six-story parking garage at the North Lot, reconfigure pedestrian routes, reconfigure vehicle access areas, reconfigure pickup/drop-off spaces, and develop additional onsite facilities to encourage mode shift from drive and park to transit and active transportation modes (expanded bicycle parking facilities and Transportation Demand Management measures). New operational lighting associated with the Build Alternatives is discussed in detail in Section 2.3.3.4. Lighting for new parking garages would include the daylight adaption zone, which is the interior path of travel for vehicles adjacent to the entrance or exit, and the parking zone and ramps, which are used for parking and maneuvering vehicles. Lighting interior to the parking garages and exterior to the parking garages (near pedestrian routes, vehicle access areas, and pickup/drop-off spaces) is anticipated to be less than what is there today because most of the existing lighting is not shielded or directed to the ground. Therefore, a ***less-than-significant impact*** is anticipated regarding a new source of light and glare. No mitigation required. Implementation of

Avoidance and Minimization Measure AMM-AES-1 would further reduce light and glare impacts by employing measures to prevent light pollution and by preventing the use of blue-rich white light lamps. Landscaping, including trees, would also be installed as part of the Project, which would replace sources of shade as trees mature and help to filter nighttime lighting and reduce glare.

AMM-AES-1: Apply Minimum Lighting Standards—The artificial lighting interior to the parking garages and exterior to the parking garages will be designed in accordance with the City of Larkspur's current lighting standard, which follows the statewide *2025 Building Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential Buildings* (City of Larkspur 2026). Subchapter 4 provides guidance on mandatory requirements for lighting systems and equipment and electrical power distribution systems, while Subchapter 5 provides guidance for performance and prescriptive compliance approaches for achieving energy efficiency (CEC 2025). Compliance with City of Larkspur's current lighting standard would be enforced through design review to reduce the potential for increases in light and glare resulting from the Project.

All lighting will use downcast, cut-off type fixtures that are shielded and direct the light only toward objects requiring illumination, where feasible. Lights will be installed at the lowest allowable height and cast low-angle illumination while minimizing incidental light spill onto adjacent properties or open spaces, or backscatter into the nighttime sky. The lowest allowable wattage will be used for all lighted areas, and the number of nighttime lights needed to light an area will be minimized to the highest degree possible. Lighting will be designed for energy efficiency, with daylight sensors or timers with an on/off program. Lights will provide good color rendering with natural light qualities, with the minimum intensity feasible for security, safety, and personnel access. Lighting, including light color rendering and fixture types, will be designed to be aesthetically pleasing.

LED lighting will avoid the use of blue-rich white light lamps and use a correlated color temperature that is no higher than 3,000 Kelvin, consistent with the International DarkSky Association's Fixture Seal of Approval Program (DarkSky International 2025). In addition, LED lights will use shielding to ensure that nuisance glare and light spill do not affect nearby sensitive residential viewers.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation required.