

SECTION 3.1

AESTHETICS AND VISUAL QUALITY

3.1 AESTHETICS AND VISUAL QUALITY

3.1.1 INTRODUCTION

This section analyzes the potential impacts of the Proposed Project on aesthetics and visual quality, and is based on the *Visual Quality/Community Character Technical Report* (May 2009), prepared by DUDEK. The technical report is included in **Appendix 3.1** of this EIR.

3.1.2 METHODOLOGY

The following is an overview of the methodology used to determine the potential change in the visual environment that would result from the Proposed Project.

The visual assessment included a viewshed analysis, which identified those areas from which the Proposed Project would be visible. In order to identify the viewshed, aerial photographs and topographic maps were reviewed and a field visit was undertaken.

After the viewshed was established, a photographic inventory of the surrounding area was completed within the Proposed Project's viewshed to determine the visual character of the area. Representative views (i.e., key viewpoints) of the Project area were selected based on a review of the viewshed, viewer sensitivity, aerial photography, field assessments, number of viewers, and sensitivity of viewers.

An additional photographic inventory/field survey was completed to determine the visual resources and visual setting of the Project area. Visual resources were identified through the potential presence of scenic features (both natural and man-made) and viewer sensitivity. Sensitive views were determined based on public vantage points, such as roadways, public lookouts, trails, or recreational uses. The field survey also identified the presence or absence of sensitive receptors in relation to lighting conditions in the Project area.

Visual simulations also were used as a tool to determine the change in the visual environment; specifically, Global Positioning System ("GPS")-referenced field photography, modeled digital topography, architectural floor plans and elevations were used to create true scale, three-dimensional models. These models provided an accurate simulation of post-development conditions and visibility. Before and after views from vantage points along College Avenue were analyzed and depicted.

Visual changes and their significance were evaluated based on the duration of the view (typically applicable to passing mobile viewers), line-of-sight in relation to whether interrupted or direct views would change, distance of the view (foreground, mid-view or distant view), and number of viewers. In those instances in which potentially significant impacts were identified, appropriate mitigation is recommended.

3.1.3 EXISTING CONDITIONS

3.1.3.1 Regional Setting

The Project site is located in the southwestern portion of San Diego County. The general vicinity is developed with a variety of land uses, including residential, commercial, open space, recreational, and institutional uses. Interstate 8 ("I-8") provides regional access to mobile viewers in the area, and is located less than one mile to the north of the Project site.

The landscape in the Project area includes a network of canyon drainages and rolling hills that feed into the coastal river system located adjacent to I-8. Canyons include Alvarado Canyon, Mission Gorge, Murray Canyon, Murphy Canyon, Talmadge Canyon, and several unnamed canyons. The tributaries of this canyon system are part of the San Diego River system, which is oriented along I-8. With a few exceptions, the majority of the urban development has occurred on the mesa tops, while canyon hillsides and drainage bottoms have remained somewhat natural.

I-8 provides regional transportation connections to urban development for the established communities in the College Area. Communities surrounding the College Area include Talmadge, La Mesa, and Rolondo south of I-8, and Del Cerro, Grantville, Navajo, and Allied Gardens north of I-8. Development also has occurred within the San Diego River Valley (primarily adjacent to I-8), and includes the Mission Valley and Mission Gorge communities.

3.1.3.2 Local Setting

The Proposed Project is located to the south of the existing main SDSU campus and is within the City of San Diego College Area community. The southern perimeter of the SDSU campus is located immediately adjacent to the northern portion of the Project site.

College Avenue and Montezuma Road provide primary access to the Project site. College Avenue is a four-lane roadway with a north/south orientation, and includes a raised center median and pedestrian facilities along both sides of the roadway within the immediate Project

area. Montezuma Road also is a four-lane roadway, with an east/west orientation and a striped center median. Both College Avenue and Montezuma Road are connected to the two-lane roadway network within the Project vicinity; those roadways include Montezuma Place, Campanile Drive, Lindo Paseo, and Hardy Avenue. These roadways provide access for mobile viewers to the SDSU campus located to the north and the commercial uses within the College Area community.

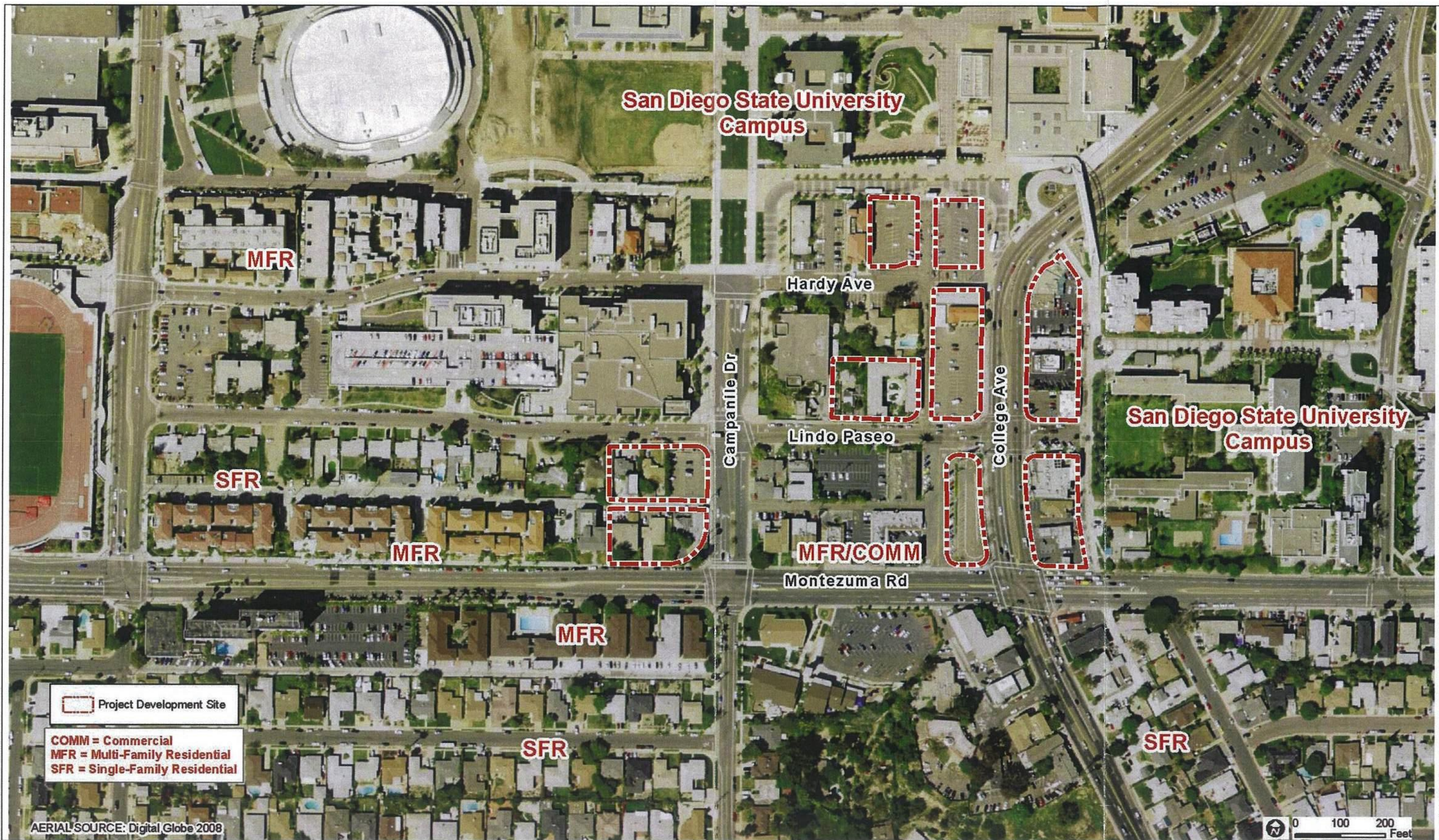
Development in the Project area is located on the flatter, mesa top area adjacent to I-8, College Avenue, and Montezuma Road. The land uses immediately surrounding the Project site include a mixture of residential, commercial, and institutional uses. (See **Figure 3.1-1, Existing Land Uses**, for an aerial photograph depicting the Project area.)

Residential uses are located adjacent to Montezuma Road, Campanile Drive, and Lindo Paseo. The residential housing in this area predominantly is occupied by SDSU college students and includes single-family homes, multi-story apartments, and fraternity/sorority houses. The apartment buildings in the vicinity range from two-story structures to five-story structures. The tallest structures are located adjacent to the campus along Hardy Avenue, east of College Avenue, and at the southeast corner of the 55th Street/Montezuma Road intersection.

Commercial and institutional uses are located adjacent to College Avenue, Montezuma Place, Lindo Paseo, and Campanile Drive. These uses include a gas station, coffee shops, fast food stores, and institutional uses associated with the SDSU campus (the Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences Building and KPBS building). These structures range in height from single-story businesses to four-story institutional uses.

3.1.3.3 Viewshed

The viewshed is defined as the surrounding geographic area from which the Proposed Project is likely to be seen. The viewshed is influenced by topographic and land use patterns. The viewshed for the Proposed Project was determined in the field and through analysis of aerial and topographic maps. The viewshed of the Project site includes a limited area due to the existing, developed nature of the community and level topography.



As illustrated in **Figure 3.1-2, Viewshed Map**, the viewshed boundary consists of the following area surrounding the Project site: approximately 300 feet to the north; 375 feet to the east; 200 feet to the south; and 450 feet to the west. Views of the Project site from a distance greater than 0.25 mile generally are blocked or limited by existing development, terrain, elevations, or viewing angles and landforms.

3.1.3.4 Visual Character

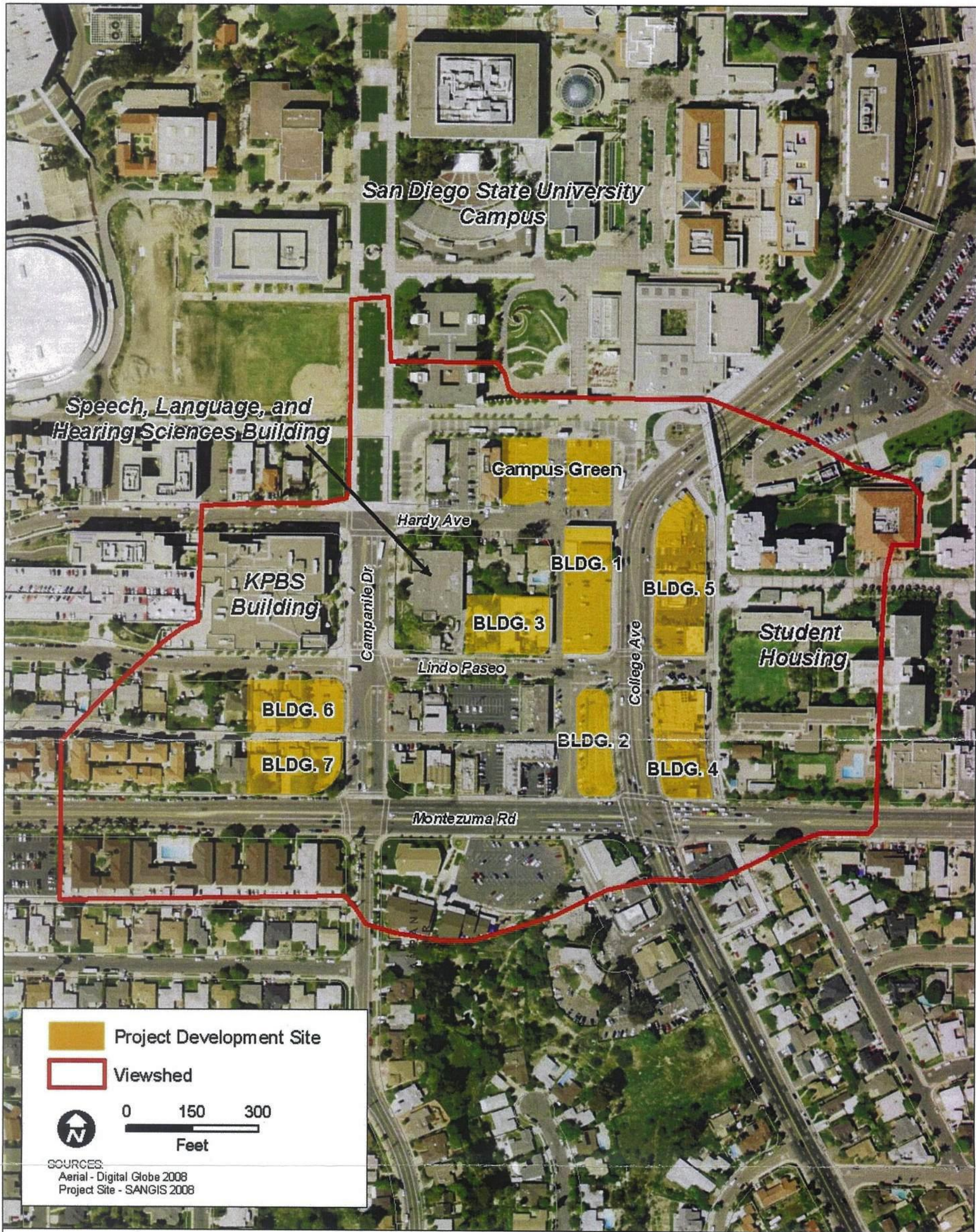
The Proposed Project is within an urbanized area located to the south of the SDSU campus. The area generally is blighted, with a variety of non-unified land uses. The visual character can be described as a developed area with a wide variety of land uses (commercial, residential, and institutional). This wide variety of land uses includes multi- and single-family residential units intermixed with fraternities and sororities and commercial establishments, restaurants, gas stations, and student-service oriented businesses.

The Project area is located within a specific redevelopment zone, as outlined in the College Community Redevelopment Plan. The Project area's inclusion in this plan is evidence of the existing, run-down nature of the land uses proposed for redevelopment as part of the Proposed Project.

The existing visual character present at each Project component location, presented by building number as depicted in **Figure 3.1-2**, is provided below:

Building 1. This Project component would be bound by College Avenue to the east and residential uses and a ministry to the west. Hardy Avenue is located to the north, and Lindo Paseo is located to the south; both are two-lane roadways. The site currently supports two buildings that are used for campus administrative functions. The southernmost parcels (5164 College Avenue and 5140 College Avenue) serve as "O Lot," which is part of the campus parking system and provides 88 parking spaces. Sidewalks are located along the perimeter of College Avenue and Lindo Paseo.

Building 2. This Project component would be located at the northwest corner of the Montezuma Road and College Avenue intersection. The area proposed for development currently supports approximately 39 parking spaces adjacent to College Avenue and parking adjacent to Montezuma Place. The parking lot contains landscaping along the perimeter of the lot and lighting fixtures.



Building 3. This Project component would be located to the north of Lindo Paseo between College Avenue and Campanile Drive. The area consists of a two-story apartment complex along the eastern portion of the parcel, which is oriented around a pool in the middle of the structure. A single-family residence with a rear detached unit is located to the west of the apartment building. Both buildings are fronted by the Lindo Paseo sidewalk.

Building 4. This Project component would be located on three different parcels at the northeast corner of Montezuma Road and College Avenue. A gas station, coupled with a food mart and service repair area, is located on the southernmost parcel. A fast food restaurant is located to the north of the gas station. A two-story commercial structure, which includes a variety of student-serving commercial uses, is located at the northeast intersection of College Avenue and Lindo Paseo. An alley is located along the eastern portion of the parcels, which separates the commercial uses from student housing. Sidewalks along College Avenue line these commercial buildings.

Building 5. This Project component would be located on four different parcels along the eastern portion of College Avenue between a pedestrian bridge that provides access over College Avenue and Lindo Paseo. The parcels currently provide food services, retail, and a convenience store. College Avenue sidewalks line the western portion of the parcels. An alley is located along the eastern portion of the parcels, which separates the commercial uses from campus student housing.

Building 6. This Project component would be located on three parcels at the southwest corner of the Campanile Drive and Lindo Paseo intersection. A parking lot is located adjacent to Campanile Drive that provides approximately 38 parking spaces for students and faculty. Two single-family residences currently occupied by fraternities are located to the east of the parking lot.

Building 7. This Project component would be located on three parcels at the northwest corner of the Campanile Drive and Montezuma Road intersection. The parcels include two-story residences, which currently house fraternities and/or sororities. Montezuma Road and Campanile Drive sidewalks line the southern and eastern edges of this site, respectively.

Campus Green. The Campus Green would be located on three different parcels to the north of Hardy Avenue and west of College Avenue. The area includes approximately 123 parking spaces and a vacant lot located adjacent to a transportation center for buses that provide service to SDSU students and faculty.

In summary, the Proposed Project would be located in an urbanized area characterized by a variety of land uses. The community includes student-serving commercial and residential uses that are predominantly occupied by college students. Views of the Project area are available primarily to passing mobile viewers, which consist of motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists on adjacent streets. Scattered residences located within the viewshed of the Project area also are afforded Project area views.

3.1.3.5 Views

Figure 3.1-3, Viewpoint Location Map, provides the location of 15 representative viewpoints of existing views from vantage points surrounding the Project site, as described further below. The following figures illustrate the representative viewpoints in greater detail: **Figure 3.1-4, Existing Site Views for Views 1 Through 4**; **Figure 3.1-5, Existing Site Views for Views 5 Through 8**; **Figure 3.1-6, Existing Site Views for Views 9 Through 12**; **Figure 3.1-7, Existing Site Views for Views 13 Through 15**.

Sensitive viewpoints generally include surrounding residences, recreational areas, and designated scenic roads. The following descriptions identify viewer groups within the Project area. Viewer responses to visual changes were inferred from a variety of factors, including viewer exposures (distance and angle), type of viewer, number of viewers, duration of view, and viewer activities.

3.1.3.5.1 Public Views for Mobile Viewers

Mobile viewers consist of observers on an official road/highway or recreational/hiking trail with views of the Project area.¹ The Project site generally is visible from adjacent roadways. No recreational/hiking trails were identified within the viewshed of the Project area; however, sidewalks are located throughout the Project area.

¹ The California Department of Transportation ("Caltrans") designates highways as scenic in order to protect and enhance California's natural beauty and to protect the social and economic values provided by the state's scenic resources. According to the Caltrans Scenic Highway Mapping System, there are no officially designated state highway resources within the Project area.





View 1: View of Building 7 for motorists traveling westbound along Montezuma Road.



View 2: View of Building 7 for motorists traveling eastbound along Montezuma Road.



View 3: View of Building 6 for motorists traveling westbound along Lindo Paseo.



View 4: View of Building 6 for motorists traveling eastbound along Lindo Paseo.



View 5: View of Building 7 for motorists traveling southbound along Campanile Drive.



View 6: View of Campus Green and Building 1 for motorists traveling eastbound on Hardy Avenue.



View 7: View of Buildings 1 and 5 for motorists traveling southbound on College Avenue.



View 8: View of Buildings 1 and 5 for pedestrians looking south along the pedestrian bridge on College Avenue.



View 9: View of Buildings 1, 2, 4, and 5 from student housing looking west.



View 10: View of Building 4 from alleyway located to the west of student housing.



View 11: View of Buildings 2 and 4 for motorists traveling westbound on Montezuma Road.



View 12: View of Buildings 2 and 4 for motorists traveling eastbound on Montezuma Road.



View 13: View of Buildings 1 and 3 for motorists traveling northbound along Montezuma Place.



View 14: View of Buildings 4 and 5 for motorists traveling southbound along College Avenue.



View 15: View of Buildings 1, 2, and 3 for motorists traveling eastbound on Lindero Paseo.

As further discussed below, mobile viewers passing along roadways near the Project site are provided views of an urbanized area consisting of a variety of land uses ranging from single-family residential to multi-story apartment complexes and commercial uses. Distant views of vistas or ridgelines are not available for mobile viewers due to the built-up nature of this urban environment.

Montezuma Road. Starting at the intersection of Montezuma Road/College Avenue, traveling west, mobile viewers are afforded direct views into the immediate southern portion of the Project site, which would consist of Buildings 2 and 4. (See **Figure 3.1-6** for depictions of Views 11 and 12.) A gas station is visible along the eastern portion of College Avenue, and a parking lot is visible along the western portion of College Avenue.

As mobile viewers continue west, past College Avenue, views are available of commercial uses consisting of a small commercial center and fast food restaurants. Continuing west further, views change to those of single-family residential and multi-story apartment buildings. (See **Figure 3.1-4** for depictions of Views 1 and 2.) Four-story apartment buildings can be seen along the northern portion of Montezuma Road near 55th Street, and two-story apartment buildings are located along the southern portion of the roadway. Views for mobile viewers also include a church located at the southeast intersection of Campanile Drive/Montezuma Road.

Once Montezuma Road travelers proceed east of College Avenue, foreground views consist of apartments, and distant views consist of institutional uses of varying heights.

College Avenue. At the intersection of Montezuma Road, northbound College Avenue viewers are afforded direct views of commercial uses and parking lots located adjacent to College Avenue. Views also are available of the SDSU campus and pedestrian bridge. For southbound College Avenue viewers, views of the Project area become available after passing beneath the pedestrian bridge. Views along this southbound roadway consist of the SDSU transit center, parking lots, residential uses, and commercial uses. (See **Figure 3.1-5** for a depiction of View 7.) The overall visual experience along College Avenue includes an urbanized four-lane roadway with low-rise buildings located immediately adjacent to the roadway, consisting of commercial, residential, and institutional uses.

Lindo Paseo. The overall visual experience along Lindo Paseo is characterized by an urbanized area with a variety of land uses, and the blighted nature of the community is noticeable along this roadway. At the intersection of College Avenue, westbound Lindo Paseo travelers are afforded foreground views of a parking lot and fraternity and sorority houses. (See **Figure 3.1-6**

for a depiction of View 9.) Direct views of SDSU institutional uses, parking structures, and the KPBS building also are afforded for the viewer. (See **Figure 3.1-4** for a depiction of View 3.) Structures vary in height from single-story residences to the four-story KPBS building. At the intersection of Campanile Drive/Lindo Paseo, eastbound Lindo Paseo travelers are afforded foreground views of a two-story apartment building, two-story office building, and parking lots located near College Avenue. (See **Figure 3.1-4** for a depiction of View 4 and **Figure 3.1-7** for a depiction of View 15.) Views along this roadway also consist of neighborhood commercial uses located along the eastern portion of College Avenue. (See **Figure 3.1-7** for a depiction of View 14.)

Campanile Drive. At the intersection of Hardy Avenue/Campanile Drive, southbound Campanile Drive travelers are afforded views of a variety of land uses, including the SDSU Gateway Center and KPBS building, which have four stories. (See **Figure 3.1-5** for a depiction of View 5.) Institutional uses, including the Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences Building, also are located along the eastern portion of the roadway between Lindo Paseo and Hardy Avenue. Mobile viewers traveling south from the Lindo Paseo/Campanile Drive intersection are afforded direct views of residential uses and a parking lot.

Hardy Avenue. At the intersection of College Avenue/Hardy Avenue, eastbound Hardy Avenue travelers are afforded views of residential uses ranging from single-family residential to five-story apartment buildings. (See **Figure 3.1-5** for a depiction of View 6.) Views of campus open spaces to the north are available from the intersection of Hardy Drive/Campanile Drive. Views also are available of neighborhood commercial uses located along the eastern portion of College Avenue.

Montezuma Place. Montezuma Place is a two-lane street that provides access to commercial uses located adjacent to College Avenue and Montezuma Road. Views available for mobile viewers passing along Montezuma Place include a paved parking lot and strip mall to the west. (See **Figure 3.1-7** for a depiction of View 13.)

3.1.3.5.2 Private Views

Private views of the Project Proposed would be available from scattered residences located immediately adjacent to the Project site along the eastern portion of College Avenue, and from scattered residences along Lindo Paseo, Hardy Avenue, Montezuma Road, and Campanile Drive. In general, views are available to a limited number of private viewers located at the same

elevation as the Proposed Project. Existing views available to these residences consist of blighted, low-rise, housing structures intermixed with commercial and institutional buildings.

3.1.3.5.3 On-Site SDSU Campus Views

The SDSU campus is located north of the Project site. Campus land uses along the southern campus border consist of student gathering spaces, walkways (including the pedestrian sky bridge over College Avenue), and the SDSU transit center. On-site campus views of the northern portion of the Project area include a variety of commercial/retail uses. (See **Figure 3.1-5** for a depiction of View 8.) Views of the eastern portion of the Project site are available from student housing located to the east of College Avenue. (See **Figure 3.1-6** for a depiction of View 10.)

3.1.3.6 Lighting Characteristics

3.1.3.6.1 Regional and Local Setting

Due to the Project's location within an urbanized area of the City of San Diego, urban lights are characteristic of the Project area. Primary light sources during the evening hours within the vicinity of the Project include Tony Gwynn Stadium and Aztec Recreation Center. Due to the urbanized nature of the Project area, street lights, lights from motorists, commercial signage, and various residential structure lights are visible. These sources contribute to the existing, evening light environment of the area.

3.1.3.6.2 SDSU Lighting Policy

SDSU has adopted a lighting policy that is incorporated into the exterior campus design. (SDSU Physical Master Plan, Phase I, pp. 157-160.) The primary goal of SDSU's lighting policy is to achieve safety and security on all walkways and parking areas. At the same time, the lighting systems should strengthen the public's impression of the SDSU campus by accentuating unique architectural qualities and enhancing pedestrian activities. The impetus for establishing this directive lies in the university's interest in reducing lighting impacts that affect astronomical research, particularly at the Palomar and Mount Laguna observatories.

SDSU's exterior lighting design for walkways, parking lots, and streets requires compliance with standards published by the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America ("IES"). For example, IES publishes specific values for recommended light levels expressed in foot candles ("FC") and average to minimum uniformity ratios. These standards are applied to four distinct

classes of walkways/sidewalks to meet IES requisites for pedestrian identification at a distance or special pedestrian security. SDSU also applies IES standards for parking lots due to the large number of vehicles present at night.

SDSU's lighting policy voluntarily follows the adopted ordinances of the City of San Diego for any outdoor lighting upgrades. (The full text of the lighting policy is included in Appendix A of the DUDEK technical report; see **Appendix 3.1** of this EIR.)

3.1.3.6.3 Existing Lighting Conditions

The Project area is located in an existing urban area that is exposed to night lighting. Roadways and parking lot street lights provide additional light sources to the urban setting. Lighting generally consists of high-pressure sodium fixtures in parking lots, florescent fixtures in buildings, and porch/window lights for residences.

3.1.4 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

According to CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, a proposed project would result in a significant impact to aesthetics and visual quality if it would

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

3.1.5 IMPACTS ANALYSIS

Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

There are no scenic vistas in the Project area; therefore, the Project Proposed would not have a substantial adverse effect on a designated scenic vista. In addition, the Project site is within an existing developed community that is not known for scenic vistas. Distant views also are not available due to the built-up nature of the community. Therefore, due to the lack of a designated scenic vista on the Project site or within the defined Project viewshed, the Proposed Project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

The Project site is not within the viewshed of a state scenic highway. Furthermore, scenic resources were not identified within applicable planning documents or observed during the field survey within the surrounding area. There are no significant mature trees, rock outcroppings, community identification symbols, or landmarks that would be impacted by Project implementation. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not substantially damage scenic resources within the area.

Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

Construction-Related Activities. Construction-related activities would be visible by the public from adjacent roadways (e.g., Montezuma Road, College Avenue). These activities would result in a temporary visual change by removing or altering existing visual elements that contribute to the visual environment. Examples of visual changes include grading and demolished structures, and the presence of construction equipment, materials (including piles of soil), signs, and staging areas. However, since these activities and changes are short term and would not be present following completion of construction, they are considered to have a less-than-significant impact on the visual character of the Project site and surrounding area.

Operational-Related Activities. The Proposed Project would change the visual appearance of the Project site through redevelopment of an existing, blighted area. **Figure 3.1-8, Architectural Renderings**, illustrates the proposed design, which would include a mixture of community-serving retail uses, residential uses, and gathering locations along pedestrian malls, as described further below.

- **Mixed-Use Retail/Student Housing:** Four buildings (Buildings 1, 2, 4, and 5) are proposed along College Avenue between Montezuma Road to the south and the pedestrian bridge to the north. **Figure 3.1-9, Visual Simulation 1** and **Figure 3.1-10, Visual Simulation 2**, illustrate these mixed-use buildings, which would be five stories in height. The first story would include retail uses, and the upper four stories would include student apartments.
- **Pedestrian Malls:** Pedestrian malls would be located to the west and east of the proposed mixed-use retail/student housing buildings to provide access to and from the main SDSU campus. A pedestrian mall also would be provided along the eastern



View 1: View looking south through the Campus Green to Plaza Linda Verde
A wide pedestrian mall and green space connect Plaza Linda Verde to the transit station at Aztec Walk, creating a lively park with outside dining and informal recreation.



View 4: View looking north from Lindo Paseo
Montezuma Place, currently an alley, is transformed to a bustling pedestrian corridor leading north to the transit center. Flanked on both sides by ground level retail/commercial, Montezuma Promenade brings the community directly to the large open space, buses, and trolley station.



View 2: View looking south on College Avenue from bridge to the new Plaza Linda Verde
College Avenue is transformed into a lively mixed-use, transit-oriented neighborhood by Plaza Linda Verde.



View 3: View looking north from Lindo Paseo, East of College Avenue
A former service alley is now a retail pedestrian corridor, flanked by active, ground floor retail and open spaces that lead pedestrians to the bridge over College Avenue.

Source: Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC 2009



Existing View
Mobile viewer traveling south along College Avenue



Visual Simulation
Mobile viewer traveling south along College Avenue



Source: DUDEK 2009



Existing View
Mobile viewer traveling north along College Avenue



Visual Simulation
Mobile viewer traveling north along College Avenue



Source: DUDEK 2009

portion of Building 3 (parking facility; see below) to provide access to retail uses, the surrounding community, and SDSU.

- **Parking Facilities:** A parking structure (Building 3) is proposed at the northwest corner of Montezuma Place/Lindo Paseo. The parking structure would be five stories above grade. A portion of the first level along the eastern portion of the site would include retail uses.
- **Student Apartments:** Student apartment uses (Buildings 6 and 7) also are proposed along Campanile Drive between Lindo Paseo and Montezuma Road along the western portion of the roadway. Four-story apartment buildings are proposed for this location.
- **Campus Green:** An open space area is proposed adjacent to the SDSU transit center, which would consist of an active and passive recreation area to allow for informal activities and a gathering location. View 4 in **Figure 3.1-8** provides an architectural rendering of the proposed Campus Green.

Building Height. The Project area is surrounded by an assortment of land uses. Although, the proposed land uses generally would be of higher density than those existing, the proposed design complements other redevelopment in the Project area.

The Project proposes a maximum building height of five stories, which is generally consistent with the College Area Community Plan. The heights of the proposed structures also are consistent with nearby buildings, including SDSU dormitories (six- to eight-story structures). The tallest structures proposed (five stories) are sited for placement along College Avenue near the main gateway to the SDSU campus and college community. The Proposed Project, therefore, would be consistent with visual land use patterns in the area by providing structures that do not exceed planned development for the area and are comparable to existing structures in the viewshed of the Project area. In summary, the Proposed Project would not exceed the existing patterns of development within the area.

The four-story structures proposed along Campanile Drive are consistent with surrounding uses (four-story KPBS building located adjacent to the northern limits of Buildings 6 and 7 [see View 3 in **Figure 3.1-4**]), and larger four-story apartment buildings west along Montezuma Road [see View 1 in **Figure 3.1-4**]). Therefore, the mass, bulk, and scale of Buildings 6 and 7 would be consistent with the existing community character.

In summary, the Proposed Project includes structures of a similar height to those in the surrounding community. Furthermore, the Proposed Project would include a pedestrian-oriented/mixed-use community designed to enhance the blighted character of the existing neighborhood. Although the Proposed Project would represent a significant change compared to the existing condition, this change would be positive and not adverse. Accordingly, the Proposed Project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings relative to building height.

Architectural Style. The Proposed Project would utilize several architectural themes. These include the modern designs present in many redeveloping areas in the City of San Diego, accented by elements of the Mission Revival architectural style present in the central SDSU campus core. First-floor indoor spaces would be accented by exterior gathering/dining spaces. Although the Proposed Project would represent a significant architectural change compared to the existing condition, this change would be positive and not adverse. Accordingly, the Proposed Project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings relative to architectural style.

Public Views. Figure 3.1-2 provides a viewshed map of the Proposed Project, and Figures 3.1-3 through 3.1-7 provide existing representative views available to mobile viewers along roadways adjacent to the Project site. Figure 3.1-8 provides architectural renderings of the project design to demonstrate the visual appearance of the Proposed Project upon completion. Figures 3.1-9 and 3.1-10 provide before-and-after visual simulations of the Proposed Project for mobile viewers passing north and south along College Avenue. Visual simulations were prepared for views of the project components. Project impacts to visual character available from public views are summarized below.

Mobile Viewers – Roadways. Views of the Proposed Project components are available from the following public roadways within the viewshed: College Avenue, Montezuma Road, Lindo Paseo, Campanile Drive, Hardy Avenue, and Montezuma Place. The following discussion identifies the visual change that would occur for mobile viewers along these roadways.

College Avenue: Starting south of the Project site at the Montezuma Road/College Avenue intersection, Buildings 2 and 4 would be visible to northbound travelers (see Existing View in Figure 3.1-9). Views would change from those of a parking lot, apartment building, and neighborhood commercial uses, which are in a blighted condition, to a five-story, mixed-use development with landscaping

located along the roadway (see Visual Simulation in **Figure 3.1-9**). As illustrated in **Figure 3.1-9**, community-serving uses would be located along the first story, and apartment uses would be on the upper four stories. The landscaping along the perimeter of the proposed buildings would shield a large percentage of the structure from mobile viewers, resulting in mostly interrupted views of the proposed buildings.

Starting north of the Project site at the pedestrian bridge that passes over College Avenue, Buildings 1 and 5 would be visible to southbound mobile viewers along College Avenue (see Existing View in **Figure 3.1-10**). The views would change from those of neighborhood commercial uses located along the eastern portion of the roadway and an apartment building to a five-story, mixed-use development with landscape treatments located along the roadway (see Visual Simulation in **Figure 3.1-10**). Views of the Campus Green also would be available, which would alter the visual experience from that of a parking lot to various trees planted in an area that would be used for passive recreation. Development of these components would consist of approximately 600 feet of frontage along College Avenue.

The Proposed Project also would introduce vertical elements of a greater height than those structures currently located along College Avenue. The introduction of these structures would include redevelopment of structures that are in a blighted condition and would be similar in height to existing land uses. The Project would represent a significant change compared to the existing condition; however, this change would be positive and not adverse.

Montezuma Road: Views of the Proposed Project available for a passing traveler include the southern portion of Buildings 2 and 4 and the southern perimeter of Building 7.

With respect to Buildings 2 and 4, the visual experience along this roadway would change from that of commercial uses and a parking lot to a five-story, mixed-use development. The introduction of proposed uses near the intersection of Montezuma Road/College Avenue would include replacement of existing structures in a blighted condition with taller, mixed-use structures (see **Figure 3.1-10**). The mixed-use structures would have five stories and would replace existing one-story commercial uses and a parking lot. Because the introduction of

new structures at this location would change short-range views for mobile viewers, impacts are considered adverse but not significant as the change in views from a blighted condition to a coordinated, mixed-use development would not adversely alter the visual character for mobile viewers.

With respect to Building 7, views would be available for a passing motorist near the intersection of Montezuma Road/Campanile Drive. Views would change from that of two-story apartment buildings and single-family homes to a four-story apartment building. The proposed four-story apartment building would be consistent with the visual experience for mobile viewers along Montezuma Road, given the presence of other similar structures (see View 1 in **Figure 3.1-4**). Proposed Building 7 also would include landscaping along Montezuma Road that would result in partial shielding of the proposed building. Although the Proposed Project would change the visual experience for Montezuma Road mobile viewers, it would not result in an adverse change given the existing blighted condition. The project design utilizes similar massing and modern architectural design themes, accented by elements of the Mission Revival architectural style present in the central campus core. Therefore, the development would result in a positive visual change.

Lindo Paseo: Views of Buildings 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7 would be available for passing mobile viewers along Lindo Paseo. The view of each building is described below.

With respect to Buildings 1 and 2, at the intersection of College Avenue/Lindo Paseo, westbound mobile viewers would have direct views of the southern portion of Building 1 and the northern portion of Building 2. Views of these buildings at this location would change from those of a parking lot with institutional uses associated with SDSU located to the north and commercial uses located to the south, to those of community-serving retail uses on the first floor and apartments on the upper four stories. Landscaping consisting of mature trees would be located near the intersection of College Avenue/Lindo Paseo (see **Figure 3.1-8**). Views also would be available of the loading docks that would be used to service the retail uses at Buildings 1 and 2. Although the Proposed Project would represent a significant change compared to the existing condition, this change would be positive, as it would reduce blighted conditions, and not adverse.

With respect to Building 3, views of this four-story parking structure with a limited retail component would be available along Lindo Paseo. The building height and mass would be consistent with other structures in the area, which include the SDSU Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences Building (approximately three stories) and the KPBS building (four stories). Building 3 would be located on a parcel that consists of a single-family home and two-story apartment building. The visual experience would change from that of a two-story apartment building to a four-story parking structure with community-serving retail uses along the eastern perimeter. The visual experience would not be substantially altered for mobile viewers at this location as the height of the structure would be consistent with nearby uses, and landscaping would be provided along the southern limits of the structure, which would provide interrupted views of the building at this location. Although the Proposed Project would include the redevelopment of existing structures that would alter the existing condition, this change would be positive, as it would reduce blighted conditions, and not adverse.

With respect to Buildings 6 and 7, views of these four-story apartment buildings would be available for mobile viewers passing along Lindo Paseo. The existing visual experience consists of the KPBS building located at the northwest intersection of Campanile Drive/Lindo Paseo and views of distant, multi-family buildings located along Montezuma Road. Views near Building 6 would change to those of a four-story apartment building located adjacent to the four-story KPBS building. The proposed Building 6 would be taller than adjacent structures located immediately adjacent to the west, which consist of single-family homes; however, it would be consistent with the existing visual character for the viewer's experience along this roadway. The proposed building also would provide landscaping along the perimeter of the site that would enhance the visual experience for mobile viewers. Although the Proposed Project would include the redevelopment of existing structures that would alter the existing condition, this change would be positive, as it would reduce blighted conditions, and not adverse.

Campanile Drive: Two buildings (Buildings 6 and 7) are proposed for development along Campanile Drive between Lindo Paseo and Montezuma Road. Views along the roadway include institutional uses (i.e., the four-story

KPBS building and the approximately three-story SDSU Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences Building) north of Lindo Paseo. Views also are available of the SDSU main campus, single-family residential, and multi-family structures. The visual experience for mobile viewers traveling along this roadway would change from that of a parking lot and two-story, multi-family buildings to four-story apartment buildings. Although the Proposed Project would change the visual experience for mobile viewers passing along Campanile Drive near Buildings 6 and 7, it would not result in substantial degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. The project design utilizes a modern architectural design, accented by elements of the Mission Revival architectural style present in the central SDSU campus core, to ensure a development that is aesthetically pleasing. Although the Proposed Project would include the redevelopment of existing structures that would alter the existing condition, this change would be positive, as it would reduce blighted conditions, and not adverse.

Hardy Avenue: The existing visual experience along this roadway includes a two-story and five-story apartment building, parking lot, and distant views of neighborhood commercial uses located along the eastern portion of College Avenue to the east and the SDSU campus to the north. Under the Proposed Project, views would change to those of the Campus Green, consisting of trees that would provide a passive area for meeting and recreational purposes, located adjacent to the existing five-story apartment complex (see **Figure 3.1-8**). Views also would be available of the western portion of Building 1 located along College Avenue. The driving experience would not be altered substantially for mobile viewers along this roadway, and views would not be degraded substantially as the Proposed Project consists of a redevelopment project that would reduce blighted conditions in the area. Landscaping would be provided along the perimeter of the Campus Green, in addition to the walkway that would be provided to the west of Building 1 to provide pedestrian access to the mixed uses proposed along College Avenue and the SDSU campus to the north (see **Figure 3.1-8**). Although the Proposed Project would include the redevelopment of existing structures that would alter the existing condition, this change would be positive, as it would reduce blighted conditions, and not adverse.

Montezuma Place: Existing views for motorists along this roadway consist of commercial uses and parking lots. Distant views of vistas or scenic resources are not available due to the developed nature of the area. Introduction of the proposed uses along the eastern portion of Montezuma Place would include redevelopment of an existing parking lot with new structures providing community-serving retail and student housing uses. Although the Proposed Project would include the development of new structures that would alter the existing condition, this change would reduce blighted conditions in the area and, therefore, be a positive rather than adverse change.

In summary, the Proposed Project would contribute to redevelopment of the existing blighted condition to a coordinated, mixed-use neighborhood that proposes increased economic activity, additional residences, and enhanced outdoor spaces, thereby resulting in a beneficial change to aesthetic and visual qualities of the Project site and surrounding areas. In addition, the development would utilize a modern architectural theme accented by elements of the Mission Revival architecture style present in the central campus core to help tie into the visual character envisioned in the college area. As such, the Proposed Project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings relative to the viewing public; therefore, the Project would not result in potentially significant impacts in this regard.

Parks and Trails. No parks or recreation trails with views of the Proposed Project are located within the viewshed. Therefore, no visual impacts would result to recreational resources.

Private Views. Short-range views of the Proposed Project are available from several surrounding properties. Views of distant vistas are not currently available from these residences due to the developed nature of the surrounding neighborhood. The introduction of the Proposed Project would positively alter the existing visual experience because it would replace a currently blighted area with a uniformly designed, mixed-use community. As such, the Proposed Project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings relative to private views, and no potentially significant impacts would result.

Campus Views. Views of the Project site are available for campus viewers located along the southern portion of campus near the Campus Conference Center and Student Union buildings. Views also are available from the College Avenue pedestrian bridge. Student

housing located to the east of Buildings 4 and 5 also would have views of the Project components. Views of the Project components from the southern portion of campus and the pedestrian bridge would be of the Campus Green, which includes passive recreational uses, and the northern façade of Buildings 1 and 5.

Existing views would change from those of a parking lot, two-story apartment building, and neighborhood commercial uses to a Campus Green and five-story, mixed-use development. Views from the student housing located to the east of Buildings 4 and 5 would change to those of a mixed-use commercial/residential neighborhood. Development of the Proposed Project would positively alter the existing visual experience because it would replace a currently blighted area with a uniformly designed mixed-use community. As such, the Proposed Project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings relative to campus views, and no potentially significant impacts would result.

Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Construction-Related Activities. Light and glare associated with the existing Project site presently are generated by the existing land uses (commercial and residential uses). Short-term light and glare impacts associated with construction activity likely would be limited to nighttime lighting necessary for security purposes. There are residential uses in close proximity to the Project site that potentially could be affected by the lighting. In the absence of shielding of lighting, impacts to mobile viewers or adjacent residences could result in a potentially significant, short-term light and glare impact.

To avoid impacts to motorists and residences located adjacent to construction activities on the Project site, mitigation is proposed that would require that lighting be arranged so that direct rays would not shine on or produce glare for adjacent street traffic and residential uses. This would ensure that construction-related, nighttime lighting would not impact mobile viewers or residences.

Operational-Related Activities. The Project site is located in an urbanized area that includes a multitude of lighting sources. The Proposed Project would result in the removal of existing light sources (apartments, parking lot lights, commercial uses) and introduce new street and interior building light sources. Given the proposed increase in the density of both commercial and residential uses, the amount of lighting would increase compared to the existing condition. In

addition, the introduction of some amount of nighttime light is inevitable, due to safety requirements (e.g., street and parking lot lighting). However, with the exception of necessary security lighting, illumination of the Project site would be limited to areas and hours of activity associated with retail uses. Nonetheless, the additional nighttime lighting would result in a potentially significant impact.

With respect to glare, the Project site is located adjacent to several roadways (Montezuma Road, College Avenue, Campanile Drive, Lindo Paseo, and Hardy Avenue); therefore, glare resulting from the Proposed Project could create annoyances to residences and/or hazards to passing mobile viewers along adjacent roadways. Further, the Proposed Project may result in significant reflective surfaces, resulting in a new source of glare. This impact is potentially significant.

Potential impacts would be reduced to a level below significant with implementation of mitigation measures that shield and orient the lighting downward, and limit its use only to times when needed (through the use of motion sensors/detectors). Further, potential impacts related to reflectivity or glare would be reduced to a level below significant with implementation of measures that ensure Project design does not include large expanses of reflective glass or reflective metal surfaces.

3.1.6 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

From a cumulative perspective, the vicinity generally is classified as a blighted, urbanized area. The visual environment consists of multi- and single-family residential units intermixed with fraternities and sororities and commercial establishments, including restaurants, gas stations, and student-service-oriented businesses. Views of the Project area primarily are available from College Avenue, Montezuma Road, Lindo Paseo, Campanile Drive, Hardy Avenue, and Montezuma Way.

When combined with the Proposed Project, other redevelopment projects occurring both on and off campus also would contribute to the changing visual character of the Project area. Other known redevelopment projects in the area consist of institutional, fraternity/sorority, condominium, and various residential uses. With implementation of the Proposed Project and other cumulative projects, the visual environment would continue to be dominated by infill development.

The Proposed Project is designed to allow the proposed structures to be integrated into the existing community and SDSU campus, blend with the visual setting, and reduce the blighted areas in the community. Therefore, the Proposed Project would result in a visual extension of

the surrounding visual pattern of student housing and the assortment of student-serving commercial development. Because the Proposed Project and future projects would positively alter the visual experience of a currently blighted area, the cumulative projects would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. Accordingly, the Proposed Project would not contribute to significant cumulative impacts.

With respect to light and glare, as noted above, the Proposed Project would result in potentially significant, project-specific impacts. In the absence of mitigation, these impacts could be cumulatively considerable. However, mitigation is proposed that would reduce the identified impacts to a level below significant. It is reasonable to conclude that similar mitigation would be proposed and adopted to mitigate any potentially significant impacts that would result from cumulative development. For example, CSU/SDSU-sponsored projects would need to comply with SDSU's Physical Master Plan (which requires that lighting be shielded and focused away from surrounding uses), and private developer-sponsored projects would need to comply with the City of San Diego's lighting ordinances. Therefore, with adoption of the proposed mitigation measures to reduce the identified project impacts to a level below significant, in combination with similar mitigation adopted relative to cumulative projects, potential cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

3.1.7 MITIGATION MEASURES

- AVQ-1** During construction activities, CSU/SDSU, or its designee, shall take those steps necessary to ensure that temporary construction-related security lighting is arranged in such a manner so that direct rays will not shine on or produce glare for adjacent street traffic and residential uses.
- AVQ-2** During the preparation of final site design plans, CSU/SDSU, or its designee, shall design each of the project components such that: (i) All light fixtures are shielded away from sensitive viewers; (ii) Motion sensor/detector lights are utilized whenever feasible to reduce the amount of constant light, especially during the late evening/early morning hours; (iii) Lighting fixtures provide illumination appropriate for the level of activity; and (iv) The overall lighting design is consistent with the lighting policies contained in SDSU's Physical Master Plan (SDSU Physical Master Plan, Phase I, pp. 157-160).
- AVQ-3** During the preparation of final site design plans, CSU/SDSU, or its designee shall comply with SDSU's Physical Master Plan to ensure all building

structures will not contain large expanses of reflective glass or reflective metal surfaces that would cause undue glare to passing mobile viewers and/or present a visual hazard to adjacent land uses.

3.1.8 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

With implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, the identified project and cumulative potentially significant impacts relating to light and glare would be reduced to a level below significant.