Appendix B Aesthetics Technical Memorandum, SDSU Plaza Linda Verde EIR Addendum, DUDEK, March 2014

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TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

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From:	Sarah Lozano, Principal
Cc:	Michael Haberkorn, Michael Haberkorn, Gatzke, Dillon & Ballance
Subject:	San Diego State University Plaza Linda Verde EIR Addendum – Aesthetics and Visual Quality Analysis
Date:	March 25, 2014
Attachments:	Figures 1–6

This memorandum provides the aesthetics and visual quality impact analysis for proposed revisions to the previously approved San Diego State University (SDSU) Plaza Linda Verde project located in San Diego, California, and is prepared as part of an Addendum to the Plaza Linda Verde Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (May 2011).

The memorandum is intended to (1) briefly summarize the aesthetics and visual quality impacts and significance conclusions identified in the May 2011 SDSU Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR and (2) discuss whether the proposed revisions would result in new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of significant effects previously identified in the May 2011 Final EIR.

1 PROJECT LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The proposed project site is located on the SDSU campus, within the College Area of the City of San Diego (City), San Diego County, California (see Figure 1, Regional Map, and Figure 2, Vicinity Map). Specifically, the project site is located generally between Aztec Walk and Montezuma Road in the southeastern portion of campus (see Figure 3, Project Area).

The proposed project consists of a mixed-use project that would straddle both the east and west sides of College Avenue between the SDSU Transit Center/Pedestrian Bridge and Montezuma Road (see Figure 4, Proposed Site Plan). The proposed project would include commercial/retail uses on the first floor of several buildings and residential uses on the upper floors. A stand-alone parking structure would also be constructed west of College Avenue. The project was analyzed in the Plaza Linda Verde EIR, which was finalized and certified in May 2011. Table 1 provides a summary of all buildings proposed and analyzed in the May 2011 Final EIR.

As SDSU has proceeded with preliminary project planning and design, several modifications to the approved project are being proposed. These changes include modifications to Buildings 1, 2, and 3 (all located west of College Avenue) and are summarized in Table 2. No changes to Buildings 4, 5, 6, or 7 would occur; however, details related to these buildings have been provided in Tables 1 and 2 for informational purposes. Additionally, no changes to the building footprints or project area are proposed.

Table 1
Approved – May 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR

Project Components	Total Size (GSF)	Retail Square Feet (GSF)	Rentable Square Feet (SF)	Residential Square Feet (GSF)	Housing Units		Beds	Parking Spaces	Building Stories
					Apartment Style	*Dormitory Style*			
Building 1	118,550	25,000	24,340	93,550	84	0	352	0	5
Building 2	85,640	20,000	17,975	65,640	60	0	264	0	5
Building 3 (Parking Structure)	128,925	2,000	1,815	0	0	0	0	342	5*
Building 4	123,004	23,000	13,445	100,004	63	0	256	69–110	5
Building 5	157,971	20,000	19,634	137,971	87	0	344	91–110	5
Building 6	48,070	0	0	48,070	44	0	192	0	4
Building 7	55,300	0	0	55,300	52	0	224	0	4
Total	**717,460**	**90,000**	**77,209**	**500,535**	**390**	**0**	**1,632**	**502–562**	**n/a**

Notes:
GSF = gross square feet.
*The approved parking structure consisted of one subterranean story and four aboveground stories.

Table 2
Revised – March 2014 Addendum to the May 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR

Project Components	Total Size (GSF)	Retail Square Feet (GSF)	Rentable Square Feet (SF)	Residential Square Feet (GSF)	Housing Units		Beds	Parking Spaces	Building Stories
					Apartment Style	*Dormitory Style*			
Building 1*	139,329	20,553	19,902	119,329	85**	187	359	0	6
Building 2*	117,387	14,868	14,056	102,519	68**	158	300	0	6
Building 3 (Parking Structure)*	143,693	0	0	0	0	0	0	392	7
Building 4	123,004	23,000	13,445	100,004	63	0	256	69–110	5
Building 5	157,971	20,000	19,634	137,971	87	0	344	91–110	5
Building 6	48,070	0	0	48,070	44	0	192	0	4
Building 7	55,300	0	0	55,300	52	0	224	0	4
Total	**784,754**	**78,421**	**67,037**	**563,193**	**399**	**345**	**1,675**	**552–612**	**n/a**

* Buildings that have changed since the May 2011 Final EIR and are the subject of the March 2014 Addendum analysis
** Apartment equivalent has been calculated. The total housing units planned for Buildings 1 and 2 should be conveyed in either "apartment style" or "dormitory style" numbers, not both. For example, Building 1 would include 85 apartment style units ***OR*** 187 dormitory style units, not both.

As indicated in Table 2, the proposed changes to the previously approved project would include a change in residential units from apartment-style units to dormitory-style rooms. Table 2 shows the number of dormitory-style rooms (345) that now would be built in Buildings 1 and 2 and their associated apartment-style equivalent (153). Other changes include an increase in total gross square footage from 717,460 to 784,754; a decrease in retail gross square footage from 90,000 to 78,421; an increase in residential gross square footage from to 500,535 to 563,193; an increase in overall bed count from 1,632 to 1,675; and the addition of 50 parking spaces to Building 3. The increased square footage is associated with an increase in one additional floor to Buildings 1 and 2, and two additional floors to Building 3. The additional floor planned for Buildings 1 and 2 would add approximately 11 feet in height to each building, while the additional two floors planned for Building 3 would add approximately 40 feet in height to the proposed structure.

2 METHODS

The viewshed of the proposed project was determined through a review of proposed modifications to the originally approved building heights and gross square footage of Buildings 1, 2, and 3, as well as topographic maps, aerial photographs, and the viewshed map included in the May 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR. A field visit was conducted to verify the extent of the proposed project viewshed. Proposed modifications to Buildings 1, 2, and 3 were also incorporated into visual simulations that were used as a tool in determining the change in the visual environment through field photography, modeled digital topography, architectural floor plans, and elevations. This data was also used to create true-scale three-dimensional computer models of modified Buildings 1, 2, and 3 and to create accurate simulations of post-development conditions as viewed from key observation points used in the May 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR. New visual simulations were then compared to visual simulations prepared in support of the 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR to determine the potential visual impacts in relation to the proposed modifications to Buildings 1, 2, and 3 and to significance thresholds.

3 SUMMARY OF PLAZA LINDA VERDE FINAL EIR IMPACTS AND CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Scenic Vistas

The 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR determined that there were no scenic vistas within the defined project viewshed and that the developed and built-up nature of the surrounding community limited the availability of long-distance views. As such, the 2011 Plaza Linda

Verde Final EIR concluded that the originally approved Plaza Linda Verde project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

3.2 Scenic Resources

The 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR determined that the project site is not located within the viewshed of a state scenic highway and that no significant mature trees, rock outcropping, community identification symbols, or landmarks would be impacted by project implementation. Therefore, the 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR concluded that the originally approved Plaza Linda Verde project would not substantially damage scenic resources in the area.

3.3 Existing Visual Character or Quality of the Site and Surroundings

Because changes to the visual environment resulting from demolition of existing structures, grading, and other construction-related activities would be short-term and would not be present following the completion of construction, the 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR concluded that construction would result in less-than-significant impacts to visual character and/or quality of the project site and surroundings.

The 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR determined that while the proposed land uses of the Plaza Linda Verde project would be higher density than existing on-site uses, the proposed design, bulk, and scale of project buildings would be consistent with that of existing development in the area, including six- to eight-story SDSU dormitories, the four-story KPBS building, and four-story apartment buildings. In addition, the introduction of the pedestrian-oriented/mixed-use Plaza Linda Verde project that would display architectural themes present in on- and off-campus development would enhance the blighted character of the existing condition and would produce positive visual change in the community. As such, the 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR concluded that the project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings relative to building height and architectural style. Regarding changes to existing views, the 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR disclosed that the project would alter existing views but would also contribute to the redevelopment of the existing blighted condition to a coordinated, mixed-use neighborhood that would result in a beneficial change to the aesthetic and visual qualities of the project site and surrounding area. As such, the 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR concluded that impacts to the existing visual character or quality of the site and surroundings would be less than significant.

3.4 Light and Glare

The 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR determined that short-term light and glare impacts associated with nighttime security would potentially affect residences and motorists in close proximity to the development sites. Mitigation Measure AVQ-1 (the arrangement of construction-related security lighting in a manner that would not shine on or produce glare that would be received by nearby residential uses and street traffic) was proposed, and with implementation of Mitigation Measure AVQ-1, the 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR concluded that construction-related nighttime lighting impacts would be less than significant.

Due to the proposed increase in the density of commercial and residential uses on the development sites and the associated increase in the amount of lighting sources in the project area, the 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR determined that the project could result in potentially significant impacts on nighttime views in the area. With implementation of Mitigation Measure AVQ-2 (shielding of lighting fixtures, use of motion sensor/detector lights, and lighting fixtures appropriate for the intended level of activity), the 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR concluded that operation-related nighttime lighting impacts would be less than significant. Regarding glare, due to the proximity of the project site to several roadways including Montezuma Road and College Avenue, the 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR determined that the use of reflective materials on the project buildings may generate glare that could create annoyances to residences and/or hazards to passing motorists on nearby roads. However, with implementation of Mitigation Measure AVQ-3 (minimize the use of large expanses of reflective glass or metallic surfaces that could cause undue glare), the 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR concluded that operation-related glare impacts would be less than significant.

3.5 Cumulative Impacts

The 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR determined that when combined with the Plaza Linda Verde project, other redevelopment occurring on and off campus would contribute to the changing visual character of the area and would positively alter the visual experience of a currently blighted neighborhood. As such, the 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR concluded that the identified cumulative projects would not substantially degrade the existing visual quality or quality of the site and surroundings, and the Plaza Linda Verde project would not contribute to significant cumulative impacts. While the Plaza Linda Verde project was determined to result in potentially significant project-specific impacts to light and glare, implementation of project-specific mitigation would reduce the anticipated impacts to a less-than-significant level. Other planned redevelopment in the area could result in the introduction of additional lighting sources

and potentially reflective building materials to the community visual landscape; however, with implementation of project-specific mitigation in combination with similar mitigation adopted relative to cumulative projects, the 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR concluded that potential cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

4 ANALYSIS OF PROJECT CHANGES

4.1 Scenic Vistas

Project modifications to Buildings 1, 2, and 3 (see Table 1) would not change the impact analysis and conclusions relative to scenic vistas included in the 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR. While the increased height of Buildings 1, 2, and 3 would slightly expand the extent of the project viewshed, no designated scenic vistas would be included in the viewshed and long-distance views are generally not available in the project area due to the built-up nature of the surrounding College Area Community. Therefore, similar to the originally approved Plaza Linda Verde project, proposed modifications to Buildings 1, 2, and 3 would have no impact on a scenic vista.

4.2 Scenic Resources

Project modifications to Buildings 1, 2, and 3 would not change the impact analysis and conclusions relative to scenic resources included in the 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR. The addition of one story (approximately 11 feet) to Buildings 1, 2, and 3 of the originally approved Plaza Linda Verde project would not increase the project viewshed such that views of the buildings would be available from a state scenic highway. In addition, the proposed modifications would not entail the development of lands not previously considered in the 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR. Raising the height of the proposed buildings from five to six stories would not affect scenic resources including significant mature trees, rock outcroppings, community identification symbols, or landmarks. Therefore, similar to the originally approved Plaza Linda Verde project, proposed modifications to Buildings 1, 2, and 3 would have no impact on scenic resources within the project area.

4.3 Existing Visual Character or Quality of the Site and Surroundings

Project modifications to Buildings 1, 2, and 3 would not change the impact analysis and conclusions relative to existing visual character or quality of the site and surroundings included in the 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR. The construction of six- to seven-story buildings would necessitate a slightly longer construction schedule than that associated with five-story buildings and as a result, construction equipment, materials, signs, and staging areas would be

present in the landscape and visible to the public for a slightly greater period. However, similar to the originally approved Plaza Linda Verde project, changes to the visual environment resulting from construction-related activities would be short term and would not be present following the completion of construction. Therefore, similar to the originally approved Plaza Linda Verde project, proposed modifications to Buildings 1, 2, and 3 would have a less-than-significant impact on the visual character of the project site and surrounding area.

Despite the addition of a single story to Buildings 1 and 2, and two–three stories to Building 3 of the originally approved Plaza Linda Verde project, the architectural style identified in the 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR would not be modified and the scale of the buildings would remain consistent with that of existing development in the area. As stated in the 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR, multistory structures including six- to eight-story SDSU dormitories, the four-story KPBS building, and four-story apartment buildings are located near the project site and contribute to the existing visual character of the area. Therefore, even with the addition of approximately 11 feet to Buildings 1 and 2, and approximately 40 feet to Building 3, the six- to seven-story buildings would display an altogether similar height and scale as existing multistory structures in the area. In addition, the use of architectural themes and styles present in on- and off-campus development would help the buildings visually blend with the existing landscape setting. Further, Buildings 1, 2, and 3 (and the Plaza Linda Verde project as a whole) would enhance the blighted character of the existing community. Therefore, similar to the originally approved project, proposed modifications to Buildings 1, 2, and 3 would have a less-than-significant impact as they would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings relative to architectural and building height.

Figure 5, Mobile Viewer Travelling South along College Avenue – Visual Simulation 1, and Figure 6, Mobile Viewer Travelling South along College Avenue –Visual Simulation 2, provide before and after simulations of project components for mobile viewers utilizing north- and south-bound College Avenue. Visual simulations from the 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR and visual simulations prepared for this technical memorandum depicting the project modifications to Building 1 and 2 are included and provide a comparison of the originally approved Plaza Linda Verde project to the proposed project modifications. As shown in Figure 5 and 6, six-story Buildings 1 and 2 would be constructed at a slightly greater vertical scale than the originally approved project; however, the increased building height would not be overly apparent to passing motorists and pedestrians. Similar to the originally approved five-story buildings, six-story buildings would entail the introduction of tall, rectangular forms, straight horizontal and vertical lines, and warm tan colors to the project site; therefore, the characteristics of five- and six-story buildings would appear

similar to passing viewers. Additionally, Building 3 would not be visible from either vantage point depicted in Figures 5 and 6. Further, Buildings 4 and 5 would not be modified to incorporate an additional level, and maintaining the original approved height of these buildings would help the entire project visually integrate with existing development in the area that includes four- to eight-story on- and off-campus buildings and smaller commercial and institutional structures. Because project modifications to Buildings 1, 2, and 3 would result in the construction of buildings displaying a similar architectural style and scale as the originally approved Plaza Linda Verde project, and because the increased building height would not be overly apparent to viewers in the area, project modifications would not adversely alter the visual character of the project site and surroundings. As such and similar to the originally approved Plaza Linda Verde project, impacts to visual character or quality resulting from the project modifications would be less than significant.

4.4 Light and Glare

Project modifications to Buildings 1, 2, and 3 would not change the impact analysis and conclusions relative to light and glare included in the 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR. While project modifications to Buildings 1, 2, and 3 would entail a slightly longer construction schedule that would necessitate a slightly longer period during which construction-related security lighting would be in use on the building sites, the implementation of Mitigation Measure AVQ-1 would ensure that nighttime lighting and glare affects to residences and motorists in close proximity would be less than significant. As shown in Table 2, the addition of a single-story (approximately 11 feet in height) to Buildings 1 and 2 of the originally approved Plaza Linda Verde project would result in a net decrease (-7,315 square feet) in commercial/retail square footage and a net increase (+48,885 square feet) in residential square footage. For purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that project modifications to Buildings 1 and 2 would result in an increased amount of interior and exterior lighting added to the project area as compared to the originally approved Plaza Linda Verde project. Also, the addition of two stories to Building 3 would result in a net increase in parking spaces that would require an increased amount of security and safety lighting within and surrounding Building 3. While project modifications to Buildings 1, 2, and 3 would result in an increased amount of lighting added to the project area as compared to the originally approved Plaza Linda Verde project, implementation of Mitigation Measure AVQ-2 would ensure that operation-related nighttime lighting impacts would be less than significant.

Lastly, the increased height and vertical scale of Buildings 1, 2, and 3 would entail a slightly greater exterior building surface area that could be occupied by potentially reflective building materials including glass and/or metallic accents. As stated in the 2011 Plaza Linda

Verde Final EIR, the project would utilize several architectural themes that could include modern designs accented by elements of the Mission Revival architectural style present in the central SDSU campus core. While the Mission Revival style is noted for its use of broad, unadorned stucco walls and clay roof tiles, modern designs could entail the use of reflective building materials (e.g., glass, metal), and therefore Mitigation Measure AVQ-3 was provided in the 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR and remains applicable to the project modifications. Therefore, similar to the originally approved Plaza Linda Verde project, implementation of Mitigation Measure AVQ-3 would ensure that impacts associated with operation-related glare generated by Buildings 1, 2, and 3 would be less than significant.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Based on a review of the Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR and the revisions now proposed to the approved project, the proposed revisions would not result in any new significant effects, nor would the revisions result in a substantial increase in the severity of significant effects previously identified in the Final EIR. Because no new significant impacts would occur, nor would there be a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects, no additional mitigation measures beyond those identified in the May 2011 Plaza Linda Verde Final EIR would be required.

6 REFERENCES

SDSU (San Diego State University). 2011. *Final Environmental Impact Report. Plaza Linda Verde. State Clearinghouse No. 2009011040*. Prepared for Board of Trustees of the California State University. Prepared by San Diego State University. May 2011.

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Sincerely,

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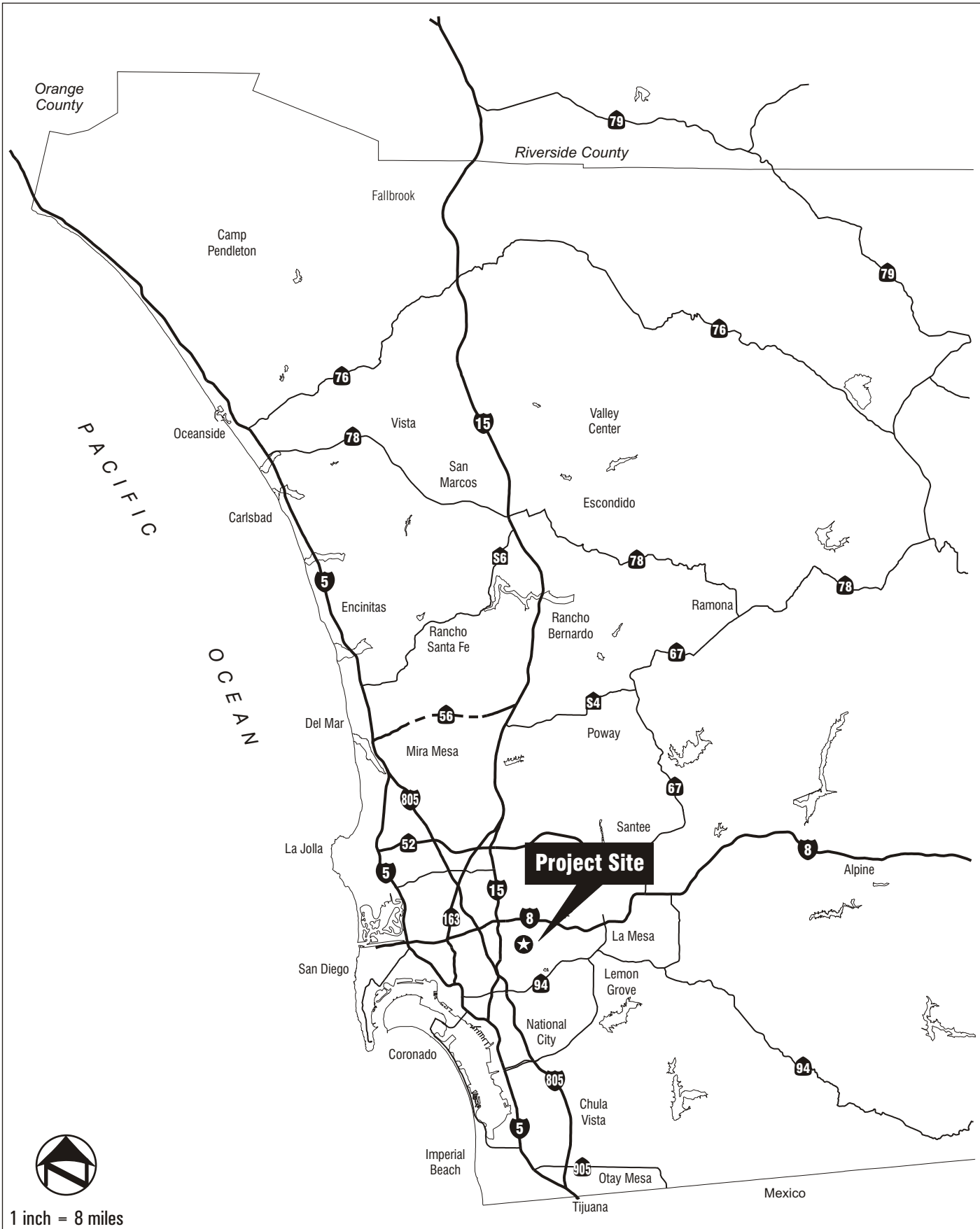

1 inch = 8 miles

SDSU Plaza Linda Verde

Aesthetics and Visual Quality Analysis

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

Figure 1

Regional Map

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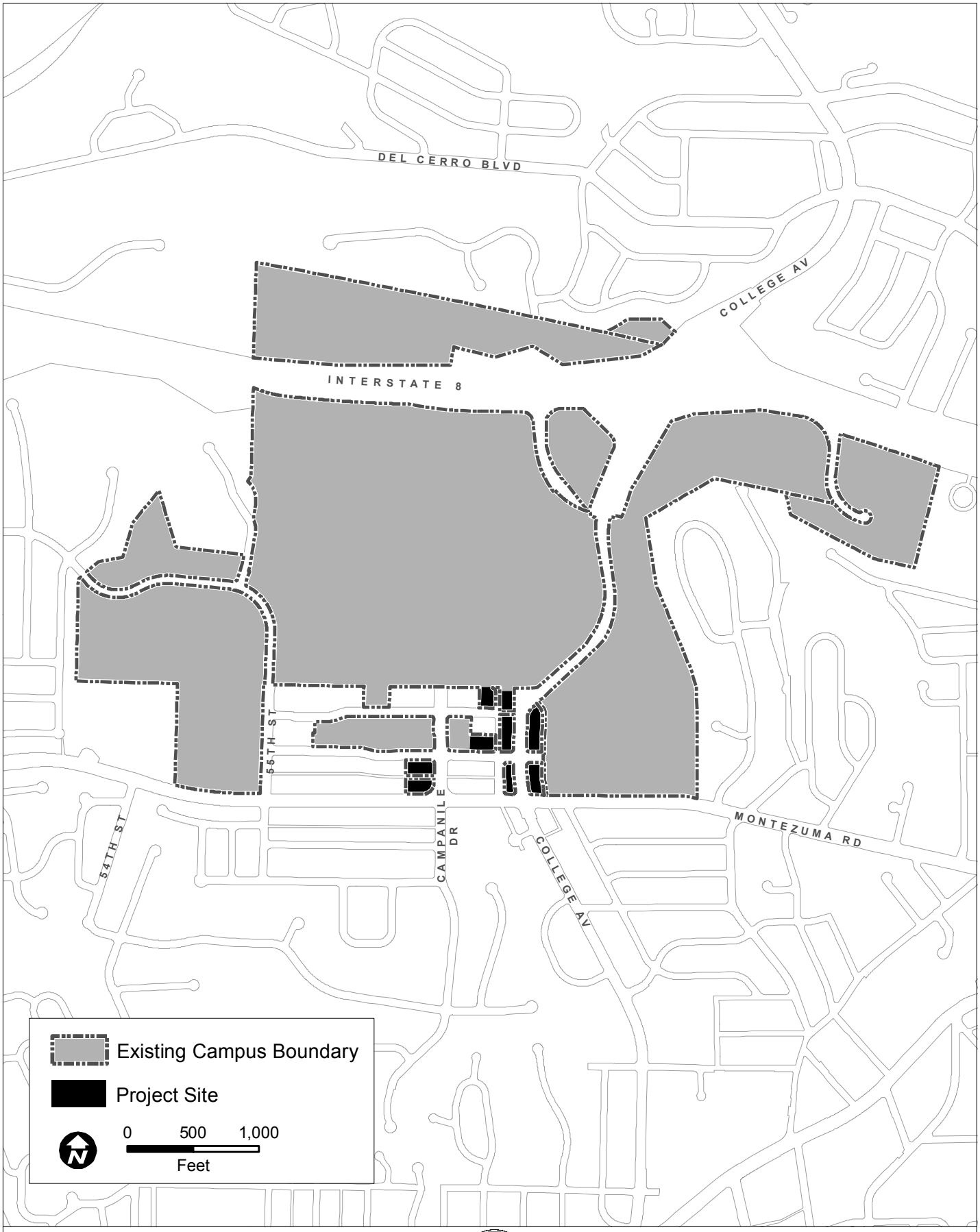

SDSU Plaza Linda Verde

Aesthetics and Visual Quality Analysis

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Figure 2

Vicinity Map

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SDSU Plaza Linda Verde
Aesthetics and Visual Quality Analysis

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Figure 3
Project Area

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SDSU Plaza Linda Verde

Aesthetics and Visual Quality Analysis

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Figure 4

Proposed Site Plan

KEY MAP

Existing View

Visual Simulation (2011 Plaza Linda Verde Project)

Visual Simulation (2014 Plaza Linda Verde Project)

KEY MAP

Existing View

Visual Simulation (2011 Plaza Linda Verde Project)

Visual Simulation (2014 Plaza Linda Verde Project)