CHAPTER 3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

3.1 Aesthetics

This section of the EIR discusses the proposed Project relative to the visual character or quality of the Project corridor and its surroundings. The existing visual character and proposed modifications that would alter the visual setting are addressed qualitatively. The analysis in this section is largely based upon the City General Plan (including the recently-adopted Housing Element Update) and incorporated Local Coastal Program (LCP), and the Downtown Encinitas/North 101 Corridor Specific Plan (N101SP) and associated Final Supplemental EIR (SEIR).

3.1.1 Existing Conditions

3.1.1.1 Existing Visual Environment

The North County Transit District (NCTD) railroad right-of-way (ROW) runs parallel to the Project corridor on the east side and is primarily unimproved, with an asphalt path along limited sections in the south portion and informal dirt trails in other sections. With the exception of several businesses on the east side of the street near the south end of the corridor, the majority of existing development is located along the west side. This development is varied with a mixture of older structures, restored older structures, and more modern structures typically one to two stories in height and of varying ages. The composition of existing land uses in the south and central portions along the west side of the corridor is mainly businesses, restaurants, and hotels. The north portion includes structures dating back to the late 1800's combined with newer commercial buildings and beach-cottage-style residential neighborhoods, which together offer a mixture of architecture styles that is distinctively "Leucadia."

Pedestrian amenities are limited along the corridor. Sidewalks are generally irregular and vary with regard to maintenance and width. Frequently, the existence and condition of the sidewalk is related to the age of the adjacent (largely commercial) development.

The north portion of the corridor is complemented by a strong presence of mature trees which surround and provide enclosure over the streets and walkways, including an intermittent median consisting primarily of eucalyptus trees extending between Cadmus Street and La Costa Avenue. Many of the street trees date back to the early settlers of the region, are over 100 years old, and help to define the unique community character along the Project corridor. Also part of the existing visual setting are 101 trees planted along the corridor in June 2011 to commemorate the launch of the proposed Project. The median and east side of the corridor south of Leucadia Boulevard are sparsely landscaped with informal plantings of groundcovers and shrubs, but primarily dirt and wood bark mulch. Utility lines (electric and phone) are located aboveground.

On the west side of the Leucadia Boulevard intersection, at approximately the midpoint of the Project corridor, is Leucadia Roadside Park which offers a small lawn and trees. The park supports passive recreational opportunities, a storm water storage area during storms, and local community events.

Views of the Pacific Ocean only occur at the northbound approach of La Costa Avenue intersection.

Light and Glare

Artificial light during evening and nighttime hours emanates from building interiors passing through windows; from street lighting for purposes of vehicular circulation, and bike and pedestrian safety; and from other exterior sources (i.e., building illumination, security lighting, parking lot lighting, landscape lighting, and signage). The degree of illumination may vary widely depending on the amount of light generated, height of the light source, presence of barriers or obstructions, type of light source, and weather conditions. Light spill is typically defined as the presence of unwanted light on properties adjacent to the property being illuminated. Artificial light can be a nuisance to adjacent residential areas and diminish the view of the clear night sky. Residences and hotels are considered light sensitive, since occupants have expectations of privacy during evening hours and may be subject to disturbance by bright light sources.

Glare is caused by the reflection of sunlight or artificial light on highly polished surfaces such as window glass or reflective materials and, to a lesser degree, from broad expanses of light-colored surfaces. Daytime glare is common in urban areas and is typically associated with exterior facades largely or entirely comprised of highly reflective glass. Glare can also occur during evening and nighttime hours by the reflection of artificial light sources such as automobile headlights. Glare-sensitive uses include residences, hotels, transportation corridors, and aircraft landing corridors.

Project Viewshed

The viewshed is generally the area that is visible from an observer's viewpoint and includes the screening effects of intervening vegetation and/or physical structures. Viewsheds may occur from designated scenic viewpoints or from singular vantage points where an unobstructed view of visual components within the landscape exists. The viewshed is composed of such elements as topography and natural land features (i.e., hillsides, mountains) and other physical features within the landscape, such as buildings, vegetation, and water features. Potential visual impacts within the viewshed may be affected by distance of the viewer from a site, the frequency and length of views, the personal perception of the viewer, and physical and/or atmospheric conditions at the time viewing occurs.

Viewer Response

Viewer response is based on both viewer sensitivity and exposure. These elements influence how a viewer may potentially respond to a change in the visual landscape, particularly with regard to development of a site from a generally undeveloped condition. Viewer response varies based upon the type of viewer and the characteristics of the visual environment that would ultimately be affected (i.e., urban versus rural environment, established large-scale commercial area versus low-density residential uses, etc.).

Viewer Sensitivity

Viewer sensitivity to a change in the visual environment can be influenced by a number of factors, including the awareness of the viewer, personal interest in a particular visual resource, and/or viewer activity during the time that views of a resource occur (i.e., vehicle driver versus passenger, active versus passive viewing). In addition, the particular goals or values of a community can influence the sensitivity

of viewers to a particular site, land area, or viewshed. Viewer sensitivity may vary between those with a vested interest in a community (i.e., residents) versus those traveling through an area with little or no knowledge of the community or existing visual landscape. Based on these conditions, viewer sensitivity can be assigned a value of low, moderate, or high.

It is likely that community members would be more sensitive to changes in the Project corridor than those who experience it as a tourist or visitor. The area draws a large number of visitors on a daily basis primarily as a result of the proximity of the Pacific Ocean. Viewer sensitivity may be higher among those who experience views along the corridor more frequently, such as area residents or employees who travel to/from work each day along North Coast Highway 101. Viewer sensitivity is further influenced by distance, travel speed, and the degree to which one chooses to take in the view (i.e., turning of one's head).

Viewer Groups

Viewer groups would mainly consist of those individuals traveling along the Project corridor and roadways intersecting with Highway 101, residents and/or occupants viewing the corridor from surrounding residential uses to the west/east/south, and occupants within various locations of the existing commercial uses along the corridor. Roadway users are primarily drivers and passengers in cars, trucks, and motorcycles, as well as bikers. Views experienced by both drivers and passengers in vehicles would be of moderate duration, as they would be traveling directly along the corridor. Bikers and pedestrians within the corridor, particularly those more familiar with the area, would be anticipated to experience views at a higher awareness, largely due to travel speed and limited obstructions to view potential (i.e., vehicular enclosures).

Viewer Exposure

Views into the Project corridor from vehicles (or other modes of transportation) traveling along area roadways would vary due to distance, and are generally restricted by existing development along the corridor, intervening vegetation, area topography, and length of time the corridor is actually visible from a particular location along a roadway. In determining the exposure of each viewer group, several factors are considered including the number of viewers experiencing visual changes, duration of views, anticipated speed at which viewers would be traveling, and the relation of the viewer to the corridor. Table 3.1-1, Viewer Groups and Anticipated Exposure, summarizes the anticipated viewer groups and the potential viewing experience of each.

TABLE 3.1-1 VIEWER GROUPS AND ANTICIPATED EXPOSURE

Anticipated Viewer Group	Number of Viewers	Distance to the Project Corridor	Anticipated Views with Project Implementation	Quality of Existing View	Viewer Sensitivity	Duration of Viewer Exposure
Drivers along Highway 101	Estimated more than 17,000 Average Daily Trips [1]	Close Distance / Adjacent to Project Corridor	Direct views of Portions of the Project Improvements	High	High	Varies / Estimated 10-20 seconds depending on travel speed
Drivers along Streets Intersecting with Highway 101	Varied	Close Distance / Adjacent to Project Corridor	Direct views of Portions of the Project Improvements	High	Moderate	Varies / Estimated 10-20 seconds depending on travel speed
Occupants of Commercial Uses along Corridor	Varied	Close Distance / Adjacent to Project Corridor	Direct views of Portions of the Project Improvements	Moderate	Moderate	Varied / Average of 10 hours per day
Residences in Surrounding Area (Private Views)	Varied / Not Public Views	Varied	Direct and Distanced views of Portions of the Project Improvements	Moderate	Moderate	Varied / Average of 10 hours per day

[1] Refer also to Section 3.4 of this EIR for analyses of the City's recently-adopted General Plan Housing Element Update and associated increases in allowable residential densities along the Project corridor.

3.1.1.2 Principal Viewpoints Considered (Key Views)

The Project corridor would be intermittently visible from a number of principal public viewpoints within the Leucadia community. Figures 3.1-1 to 3.1-5, Onsite Photographs: Existing Conditions, illustrate the existing visual setting within the corridor. Within the viewshed, varied views of the corridor would largely occur from vehicles (or other modes of transit, such as bikes) as they travel along Highway 101 and adjacent intersecting roads. Intermittent views to the corridor may occur from vehicles traveling along other area roads to the west and east of the corridor, particularly those at a higher elevation, and from passengers on the train, as the railway parallels the east side of the corridor. The viewshed is generally limited to those properties within proximity to or adjacent to the corridor, as views from surrounding public vantage points would be largely restricted due to intervening vegetation and existing development. The following key views were identified due to their potential to be highly visible to travelers along the corridor (Figure 3.1-6, Key View Locations; and, Figures 3.1-7 to 3.1-10, Key Views):

- View from North Highway 101 looking north/northwest from A Street;
- View from North Highway 101 looking south from just north of North Highway 101/La Costa Avenue intersection; and,
- View looking west from La Costa Avenue/North Highway 101.

Key View #1 – View from North Highway 101 at A Street (South Project Boundary)

Key View #1 is the view from North Highway 101 and A Street looking north along the road (refer to Figure 3.1-7). Viewers from this location would mainly be passengers in vehicles (or on bikes) traveling northbound. Topography is relatively level at this location, but begins to increase as one moves northward, thereby limiting extensive views further down the corridor. The view experienced would be influenced by travel speed and would largely consist of the existing roadway conditions and small-scale, one- to two-story commercial uses fronting the street. Limited natural vegetation is visible from this vantage point; however, several large palm trees and other mature trees are present in the middle-ground and background. Views from this location by passengers in vehicles and bicyclists traveling northbound are longer in duration when stopped at the Encinitas Boulevard intersection to wait for the streetlight to change. The visual landscape is not highly memorable, and therefore, visual quality and character are considered to be moderate.

Key View #2 – View from North Highway 101 at La Costa Avenue Looking South (North Project Boundary)

Key View #2 is the view from North Highway 101 at La Costa Avenue looking south (refer to Figures 3.1-8 and 3.1-9). To the north of this point, topography slopes downward for a distance and eventually reaches sea level. Topography in this area is relatively flat, thereby allowing for generally unobstructed views to the south along the road. Viewers from this location would mainly be passengers in vehicles (or on bikes) traveling along the road. Existing development in this area of the Project corridor occurs at a lower density, with a portion of lands remaining in an undeveloped state. Views from this vantage point would be of small-scale commercial uses to the southeast, a large slope, and undeveloped lands/right-of-way. A number of mature trees are present along the east side of the road in the background. Competing visual elements (e.g., traffic signals, median, shoulder, bike lane) are also present. Additionally, a large slope is located just to the west, restricting views to the Pacific Ocean. As this vantage point occurs at the intersection, travel speeds vary depending on what stage the traffic signal is in, thereby allowing viewers to experience longer duration views of their surroundings when the signal is red. The existing visual landscape does not generally include memorable landscape components or distinctive or diverse visual patterns. Visual quality and character are considered to be moderate.

Key View #3 – View from La Costa Avenue at North Highway 101 Looking West

Key View #3 is the view from La Costa Avenue at North Highway 101 looking west across the Project corridor (refer to Figure 3.1-10). Viewers from this location would mainly be passengers in vehicles (or on bikes) traveling westbound along La Costa Avenue. From this vantage point, views of existing limited commercial uses are unobstructed as topography is generally flat and not highly varied. Natural vegetation is somewhat limited and consists of low-lying grasses and shrubs with a number of mature trees in the background along the existing slope. The existing visual landscape does not generally offer individual memorable landscape components, and views to the west and northwest of the Pacific Ocean are obstructed. Rather, somewhat distinctive visual patterns are formed by the contrast between the existing utilitarian intersection improvements and the large vegetated slope in the background. Visual quality and character are considered to be moderate.

3.1.1.3 Regulatory Framework

Visual resources may be subject to plans and policies developed to ensure that adequate consideration is given to preserving and/or enhancing the visual qualities of an area. The Project is subject to the following plans, regulations, goals, and policies.

State

California Scenic Highway Program

California adopted a Scenic Highway Program (Streets and Highways Code, Section 260 et seq.) to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change that would diminish the visual quality of areas that are adjacent to highways. The scenic designation is based on the amount of natural landscape visible by motorists, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the motorist's enjoyment of the view.

The North Highway 101 corridor is not a designated State Scenic Highway; however, the entire 935-mile route of Highway 101, which is part of an international highway extending from Mexico to Canada, was designated as a State Historic Highway in 1998.

California Coastal Act

The California Coastal Act protects coastal resources; assists local governments in implementing coastal planning and regulatory powers; and controls construction along the State's 1,100 miles of shoreline through the issuance of Coastal Development Permits (CDPs). Under the Act, local governments are encouraged to adopt Local Coastal Program (LCPs) within their jurisdictions. The LCP consists of a Land Use Plan (LUP) with goals and regulatory policies as well as a set of Implementing Ordinances. Even with an approved LCP, the California Coastal Commission (CCC) occasionally retains jurisdiction over some lands and continues to issue permits in those "retained jurisdictional" areas.

Local

City of Encinitas General Plan

The General Plan provides background information, goals, and policies aimed at the protection and maintenance of community character and aesthetic resources (which incorporate goals and policies of the City's LCP). The relevant goals and policies are listed in Section 3.3 of this EIR, and include: Land Use Element (Goal 6, 7 and 9); Circulation Element (Goal 2 and Policies 2.1, 2.4, 4.1, and 4.2); and Resource Management Element (Goal 3 and Policies 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 4.6, 4.7, 4.9, 4.10, and 4.11). The General Plan (Policy 4.7) designates Highway 101 as a Scenic Highway.

Local Coastal Program (LCP)

The Coastal Act calls for the identification and preservation of significant viewsheds within the Coastal Zone. Section 30251 of the Coastal Act states that "the scenic and visual qualities of the coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be

sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas…" According to the past actions and precedents set by the CCC, the primary concern of this section of the Coastal Act is the protection of ocean and coastal views from public areas (highways, parks, beach access ways, viewpoints, etc.).

Approximately two-thirds of the City is located within the Coastal Zone and falls under CCC jurisdiction. As stated above, in accordance with the Coastal Act, the City has adopted and implements an LCP which is incorporated into its General Plan, as well as into other provisions of the Municipal Code and various specific plans. Those policies of the General Plan relevant to the LCP are identified with shaded text throughout document. The goals and policies of the LCP are aimed at protecting, maintaining, and enhancing the Coastal Zone environment; ensuring balanced utilization and conservation; maximizing public access to and along the coast; prioritizing coastal-dependent and related development; and encouraging coordinated State and local initiatives to implement beneficial programs and other educational uses. Any project occurring within the Coastal Zone is subject to review by the City and/or the CCC.

North 101 Corridor Specific Plan (N101SP)

The N101SP was adopted by the City in May 1997 (amended March 2005). This document is called for in the City's General Plan in recognition of the Project corridor's unique character, needs, and opportunities. All components and requirements as specified in the General Plan are addressed in the N101SP. Components relating to aesthetic resources include Land Use and Development Regulations; Design Recommendations; Circulation Plan; Historic Preservation Plan; and various other chapters. The primary purpose of the N101SP is to "address the unique aspects, problems, and opportunities of the Project corridor, and to maintain its identity, community character, and scale, while fostering the revitalization of the North Highway 101 commercial corridor." The relevant goals and policies are listed in Section 3.3 of this EIR.

The Specific Plan area has been divided into separate zones. Within each zone, development standards unique to its needs and circumstances have been devised that differ from "City-wide" zoning standards as required. Zones are identified for residential, commercial, mobile home park, public/semi-public, historic park, and transportation corridor uses. Additionally, the N101SP Chapter 4.0 (Design Recommendations) provides specific design measures for all future development within the Specific Plan area (e.g., architectural style, bulk, height, mass, scale, signage, compatibility). All development within the boundaries of the Specific Plan area, with few exceptions, is subject to the City's Design Review process.

Special Purpose Overlay Zones

As applicable, the Special Purpose Overlay Zones of Chapter 30.34 of Title 30 of the City Municipal Code, including the Coastal Bluff Overlay Zone, the Hillside/Inland Bluff Overlay Zone, the Floodplain Overlay Zone, the Cultural/Natural Resources Overlay Zone, the Agricultural Overlay Zone, the Public Facilities Overlay Zone, and the Scenic/Visual Corridor Overlay Zone, shall apply to all properties within the Specific Plan area.

City of Encinitas Municipal Code

As part of the Municipal Code, the City's Zoning Ordinance is used as an implementation mechanism for achieving the goals, objectives, and policies identified in the General Plan. While the General Plan land use designations provide basic criteria and guidelines for future development in the City, specific development standards are provided in the Zoning Ordinance to better define such guidelines. The land use designations identified in the General Plan Land Use Element correspond to the boundaries of one or more zoning districts identified on the City's Zoning Map (i.e., specific plan areas). The zones established under the City's zoning regulations are recognized by the General Plan to be inadequate to address the unique local circumstances of a specific plan area. Therefore, the General Plan requires preparation of a specific plan (i.e., N101SP) to guide future development of such areas.

3.1.2 Analysis of Project Effects and Determination as to Significance

This section lists the thresholds used to conclude whether an aesthetics impact would be significant; describes the impact analysis for the Project relative to such thresholds; and identifies mitigation measures, as appropriate, to avoid or to reduce significant impacts.

Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

A project would be considered to have a significant impact if it would:

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

Analysis

Issue 1: Have a Substantial Adverse Effect on a Scenic Vista

The Resources Management Element of the City's General Plan identifies a number of scenic vista points to the west of the Project corridor, generally along the coastline. Additionally, five scenic viewsheds are identified, three along the coastline, one across Batiquitos Lagoon at the north end of the City, and one across San Elijo Lagoon to the south of the Project corridor. The Project corridor is not visible from any of these designated vista points and viewsheds due to the generally level topography and elevation relative to surrounding lands, as well as intervening development and established vegetation. Therefore, views from these designated vista points and viewsheds would not be affected by the proposed Project.

The Project corridor located along North Highway 101 is part of a designated State Historic Highway. Project implementation would result in a number of improvements to visual/aesthetic features along the length of the corridor (refer also to Sections 2.4.3 and 2.4.4). The Project proposes removal of 31 existing,

mature trees along the corridor, thereby improving public safety and reducing the potential for damage to occur from falling tree limbs. Additionally, the Project would preserve and enhance the overall tree canopy through the planting of a net increase of street trees over existing conditions and augmenting other existing landscaping, while providing a drought-tolerant landscape palette; refer to Appendix D, Conceptual Landscape Plans. The Project would also provide other street beautification measures such as enhanced pavement treatments, street furniture, and opportunities for public art installations, while respecting the existing community character along the corridor. Further, as proposed, the Project would not substantially disturb, alter, or change the appearance of existing development on properties fronting onto the Project site, and rather, is intended to visually improve the overall appearance of the corridor.

Proposed landscaping and a Torrey pine tree would be planted in the center of the proposed roundabout at North Highway 101/La Costa Avenue to reinforce the visual character/heritage and to provide a locally recognizable natural feature within the visual landscape; refer to Figure 3.1-10. When planted, the tree would be of a limited height, with branches lower to the ground and more readily visible within the line of sight of those traveling along the corridor. At full maturity, this tree canopy would be of a greater height, and generally above the line of sight of those walking, biking, or traveling in vehicles along the corridor, such that northbound ocean views would not be substantially blocked or obscured. Therefore, as designed, the Project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. Impacts in this regard would be less than significant.

Issue 2: Substantially Degrade the Existing Visual Quality or Character of the Site or its Surroundings

In general, views of the overall visual character along the Project corridor would be enhanced by the proposed streetscape improvements. Because these improvements would not alter any existing structures, the proposed Project would not detract from or contrast with existing visual character along the corridor with regard to building density, size, massing, coverage, scale, architecture, or materials. Rather, motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians would experience a variety of views as they travel through various segments of the improved corridor. Viewer response to these visual changes would depend upon the portion of the corridor being viewed. The following is a discussion of views that would occur from the identified key vantage points in the surrounding area (refer to Figures 3.1-7 to 3.1-10).

Key View #1: View from N. Highway 101 at A Street (South Project Boundary)

Views at this location (Figure 3.1-7) would be of the proposed pedestrian improvements (crosswalks) in the foreground and landscaping enhancements in the background (please refer to Figure 2-3 and Appendix D) which would enhance and not substantially degrade the existing visual quality/ character of views from this vantage point. Therefore, potential Project impacts to the existing visual quality/character from this vantage point would be less than significant.

Key View #2 – View from N. Highway 101 at La Costa Avenue (North Project Boundary)

Views of the proposed roundabout and slope (background) landscaping would be the predominant features at this intersection, with median, sidewalk and crosswalk improvements secondary (Figure 3.1-9). These proposed improvements would alter the existing visual character at this location from one of a

sparsely-vegetated hillside, asphalt roadway, traffic signals and overhead utility lines to an enhanced view focused more on landscaping and less on infrastructure. Proposed landscaping visible from this vantage point would blend the roadway improvements into the existing visual character, as well as create a visual sense of "arrival" into the City. These changes in visual quality would be most noticeable to those familiar with the area and/or local area residents. Some of these viewers may consider this change in visual character to be substantial; however, such views would generally be brief to motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians passing by or waiting at the intersection during red lights. Therefore, potential Project impacts to the existing visual quality/character from this vantage point would be less than significant.

Alternatively, signalization of the North Highway 101/La Costa Avenue intersection may ultimately occur with Project implementation. Such conditions would not substantially alter the existing visual condition (currently signalized), or substantially degrade the existing visual quality or character of the site or its surroundings. Views experienced from this vantage point under such conditions would continue to be brief, and would not be significantly different from that which presently exist.

This vantage point would also provide direct views of proposed slope treatments on the west side of North Highway 101 at the La Costa Avenue intersection, which has been graded and modified a number of times over the last 50 years. To accommodate the proposed roundabout at this intersection and other circulation improvements, the existing slope would be re-graded to create an approximate 30-foot-high cut at a maximum ratio of 2:1, with slope undulation and contour grading utilized to blend it into the adjacent topography and surrounding landscape. To further reduce its visibility and ensure soil stability, the re-graded slope would be landscaped with varying plant types, heights and densities, consistent with City landscaping requirements (please refer to Figure 2-3 and Appendix D). Figure 3.1-9 is a landscape simulation at initial planting and at 5-year maturity. Therefore, the Project's landform alteration impacts at this location, and associated impacts to the existing visual quality/character from this vantage point would be less than significant.

Key View #3 – View from La Costa Avenue at N. Highway 101

Please refer to the visual analysis for Key View #2 above for similar conclusions. Figure 3.1-10 shows predominant views of the proposed roundabout and slope (background) landscaping looking southbound at this intersection, along with median, sidewalk and crosswalk improvements; Figure 2-3 shows the conceptual landscape plan for the re-graded slope; and Figure 3.1-10 provides a landscape simulation at initial planting and at 5-year maturity. Therefore, potential Project impacts to the existing visual quality/character from this vantage point would be less than significant.

Issue 3: Substantially Damage Scenic Resources, Including, but Not Limited to Trees, Rock Outcroppings, and Historic Buildings within a State Scenic Highway

Although physical changes would occur to the roadway itself, which is part of a designated State Historic Highway, Project implementation would not result in the removal of, or substantial adverse changes to, any historic buildings that contribute to the visual character along the Project corridor. In addition, no rock outcroppings are present along the corridor; therefore, no such potential scenic resources would be removed or disturbed with Project implementation.

The proposed Project would involve removal of approximately 31 mature trees considered scenic resources by the community due to their contribution to the unique visual character within the Project

corridor. However, as discussed in Issue 1 above, the Project would preserve and enhance the overall tree canopy through the planting of a net increase of 792 street trees over existing conditions (823 trees to be planted) many of which would be native, drought-tolerant species (to the extent feasible) to reduce overall irrigation demand. As such, the total canopy in the corridor would total 1,113 trees resulting in an overall tree replacement ratio of 25:1 and greatly increasing the number and visibility of trees within the corridor. Other landscaping enhancements would include a more native coastal plant palette with emphasis on "Heritage" trees of the species planted by early settlers of the community (e.g., cypress, pine, oak). As the newly-planted landscaping matures over time, the visual appearance of the corridor would continue to be improved, as it blends with the visual setting of mature trees in adjacent established neighborhoods. In addition, non-vegetative street beautification measures (i.e., landscaped roundabouts, community-gathering opportunities through enhancement of public open spaces, and passive recreational opportunities through multi-modal trails) along the length of the corridor would ensure that its overall visual character is not adversely affected. Therefore, potential impacts to scenic resources due to the loss of approximately 31 mature trees in the Project corridor would be less than significant.

Issue 4: Create a New Source of Substantial Light or Glare which would Adversely Affect Day or Nighttime Views in the Area

The proposed Project would improve and add street lights along the Project corridor to provide an adequate level of nighttime lighting for safe motorized and non-motorized circulation and to increase public safety for nighttime pedestrian use within the corridor. All lighting would be consistent with the N101SP design guidelines and the City's lighting standards, which require low-level lighting directed downward via 90-degree cutoffs to reduce light overspill. Therefore, potential impacts associated with the provision of new sources of substantial night-lighting that could otherwise adversely affect nighttime views in the area would be less than significant.

In addition, the Project would not include the construction or installation of structures using highly reflective materials/surfaces that could otherwise create a new source of substantial glare adversely affecting daytime views in the area.

3.1.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis

3.1.3.1 Cumulative Setting

The geographic scope for cumulative impacts to visual quality includes the projects identified on Figure 2-2, Local Vicinity Map, and listed in Table 2-9, Cumulative Projects List, of this EIR. Such projects would be subject to views of the Project corridor from public roadways or public lands in the surrounding area. The community of Leucadia, and in particular the Project corridor, is highly urbanized. The City's General Plan (and recently-adopted Housing Element Update) and Municipal Code provide guidance for the types of allowable development adjacent to the Project corridor, thereby influencing future land uses and community character at buildout. Refer also to Section 3.4 of this EIR for analyses of the Housing Element Update and associated increases in allowable residential densities along the Project corridor that may influence the future visual character of the corridor.

Issue 5: Have aesthetic impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable?

As evaluated in Section 3.1.2 above, the proposed Project would not adversely affect any scenic vistas; would have a positive change in the overall visual character; would not result in substantial damages to or losses of scenic resources as part of a designated State Historic Highway; and would not create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. All cumulative projects identified in Figure 2-2 and Table 2-9 of this EIR, and development of other future land uses adjacent to the corridor and in the surrounding area consistent with the Housing Element Update, would be subject to the City's discretionary review process on a site-specific basis to avoid, reduce and mitigate significant visual impacts, when viewed with the proposed Project improvements. Therefore, in combination with the cumulative projects identified in Figure 2-2 and Table 2-9 of this EIR, and with development of other future land uses adjacent to the corridor and in the surrounding area consistent with the Housing Element Update, the Project would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts to scenic vistas, visual quality/character, and scenic resources along the Project corridor, nor would it create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

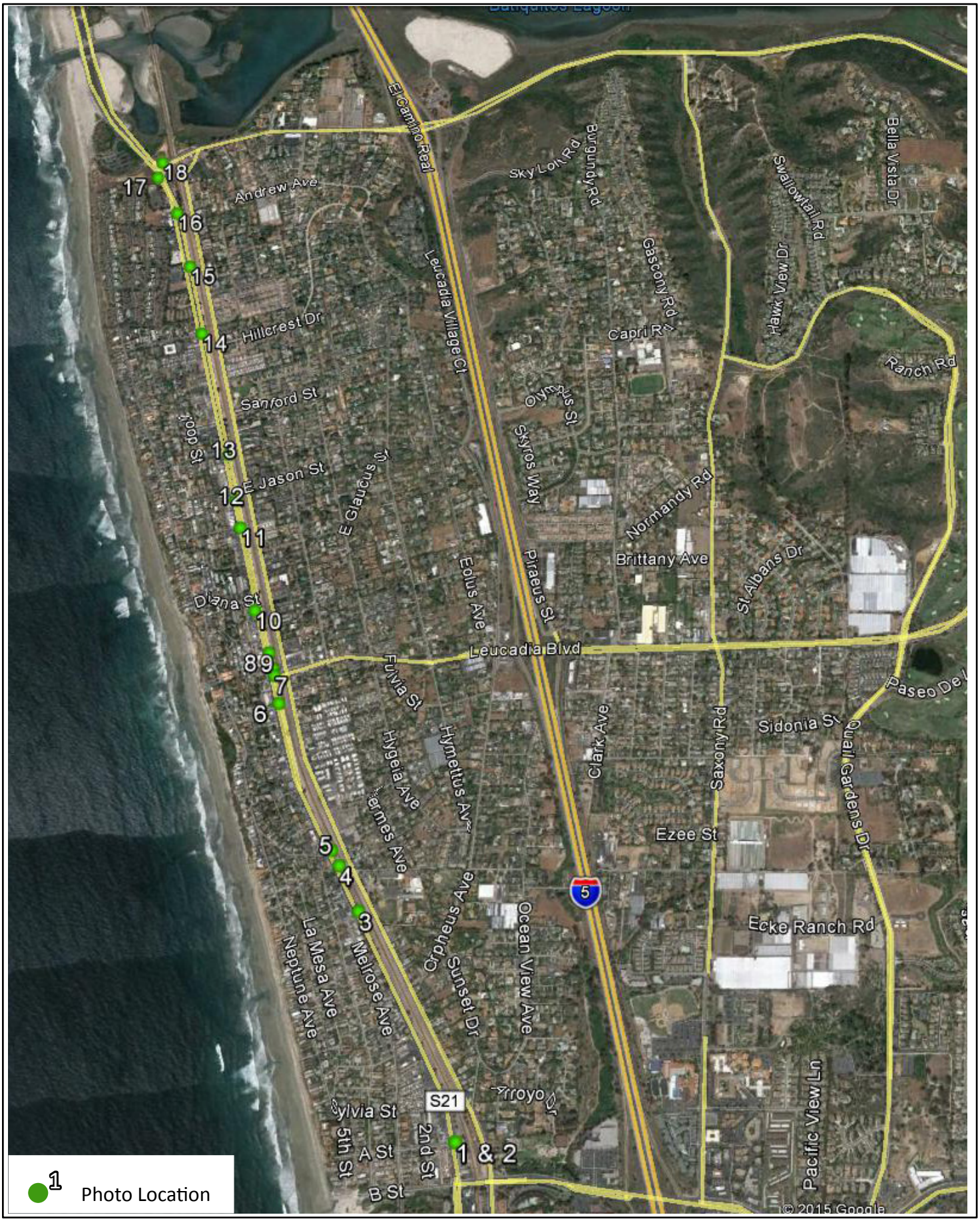
3.1.4 Mitigation Measures

The proposed Project would not result in significant impacts to aesthetic resources; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

3.1.5 Conclusions

The proposed Project would provide circulation/safety improvements and landscape enhancements within the North Highway 101 corridor that would also serve as positive visual quality/character features, as evaluated in Section 3.1.2 above. In addition, proposed contouring and landscaping of the re-graded manufactured slope west of the La Costa Avenue roundabout would reduce its visual impact to less than significant. Further, Project objectives include providing community-gathering and passive recreational opportunities through enhancement of public open spaces, landscaping, and multi-modal trails. Finally, no structures are proposed with Project implementation.

Based on these design features and objectives, the proposed Project would not result in a substantial adverse effect (i.e., obstruct/alter/damage) on scenic vistas or scenic resources; would not substantially degrade the visual quality/character of the corridor and adjacent surroundings; and would not create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. For these reasons, Project implementation would not result in significant impacts to aesthetic resources, and no mitigation measures are required.



Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

Source: Google Earth, 2015.
137350Exhibits.indd

N
Not to Scale

North Coast Highway 101 Streetscape Improvement Project

KEY MAP FOR ONSITE PHOTOGRAPHS: EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 3.1-1

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Photo 1: Existing mixed-use establishment at SW corner of Hwy 101/A Street.

Photo 2: Existing retail establishment near NE corner of Hwy 101/A Street.

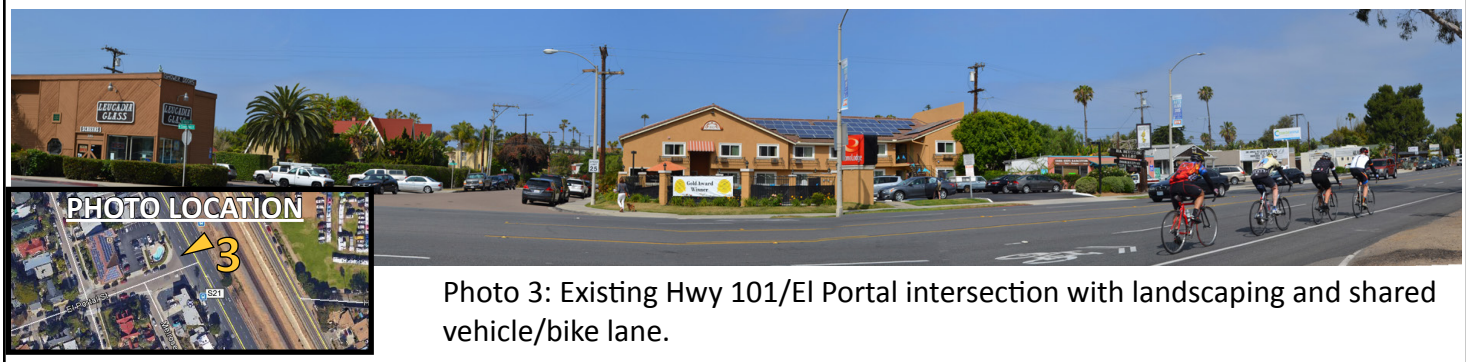


Photo 3: Existing Hwy 101/El Portal intersection with landscaping and shared vehicle/bike lane.

Photo 4: Existing retail establishment along Hwy 101, just south of Athena Street.

Photo 5: Existing retail establishment along Hwy 101, just north of Athena Street.

Photo 6: Existing retail establishments and median landscaping along Hwy 101 between Europa Street and Leucadia Boulevard.

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

North Coast Highway 101 Streetscape Improvement Project

ONSITE PHOTOGRAPHS: EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 3.1-2

137350Exhibits.indd

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Photo 7: Existing Leucadia Blvd/N. Vulcan Avenue intersection (east side of Hwy 101).

Photo 8: Existing retail establishment long Hwy 101, just south of Jasper Street.

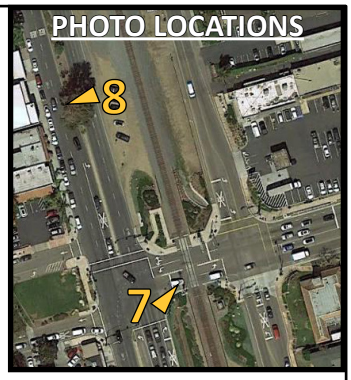


Photo 9: Existing Hwy 101/Leucadia Blvd intersection and Leucadia Roadside Park.

Photo 10: Existing retail establishments along Hwy 101, just south of Diana Street.

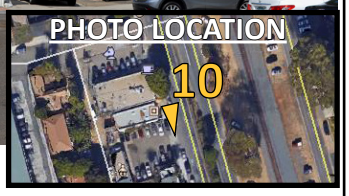
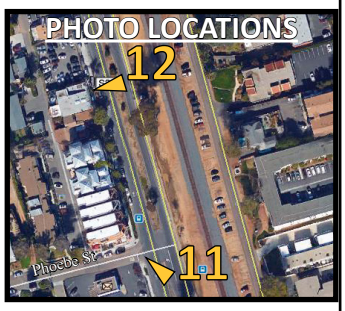


Photo 11: Existing mixed-use/residential uses at northwest corner of Hwy 101/ Phoebe Street.

Photo 12: Existing retail establishments along Hwy 101, just south of W. Jason Street.



Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

137350Exhibits.indd

North Coast Highway 101 Streetscape Improvement Project

ONSITE PHOTOGRAPHS: EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 3.1-3

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

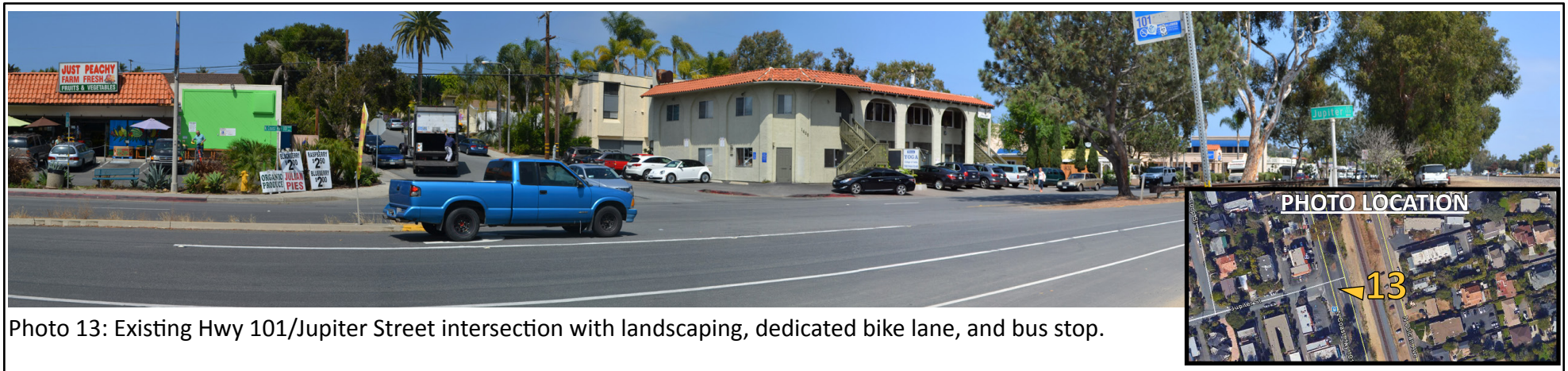


Photo 13: Existing Hwy 101/Jupiter Street intersection with landscaping, dedicated bike lane, and bus stop.

Photo 14: Existing Highway 101/Grandview Street intersection with median and landscaping.

Photo 15: Existing Hwy 101 just north of Bishops Gate Road with median, dedicated bike lane, and bus stop.

Michael Baker
INTERNATIONAL

137350Exhibits.indd

North Coast Highway 101 Streetscape Improvement Project

ONSITE PHOTOGRAPHS: EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 3.1-4

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

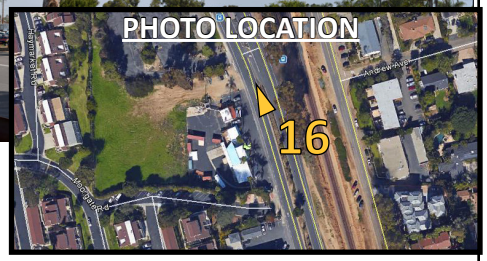


Photo 16: Existing restaurant and adjacent private access drive just south of Hwy 101/La Costa Avenue intersection; Existing median, landscaping, and dedicated bike lane.

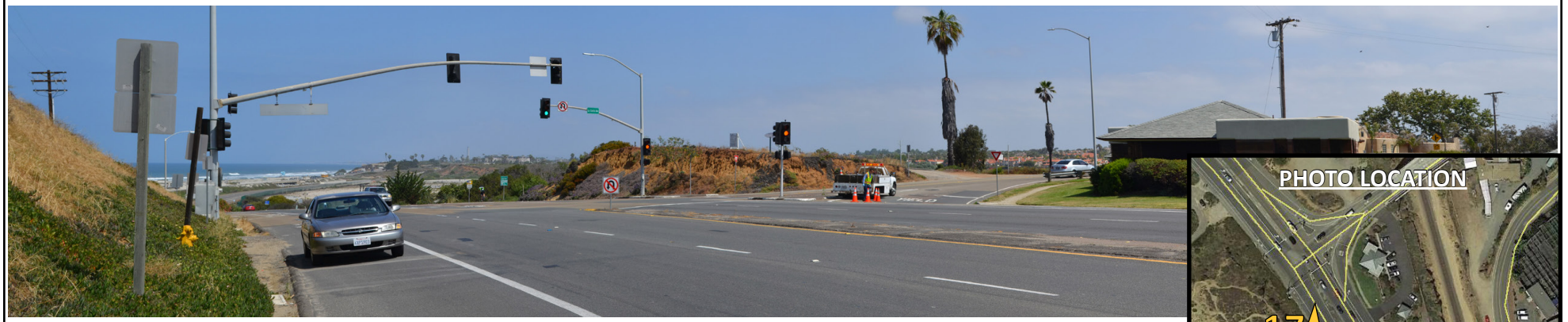


Photo 17: View looking north from Hwy 101 to La Costa Avenue intersection.

Photo 18: View looking west from La Costa Avenue to Hwy 101: Existing Graded Slope.

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

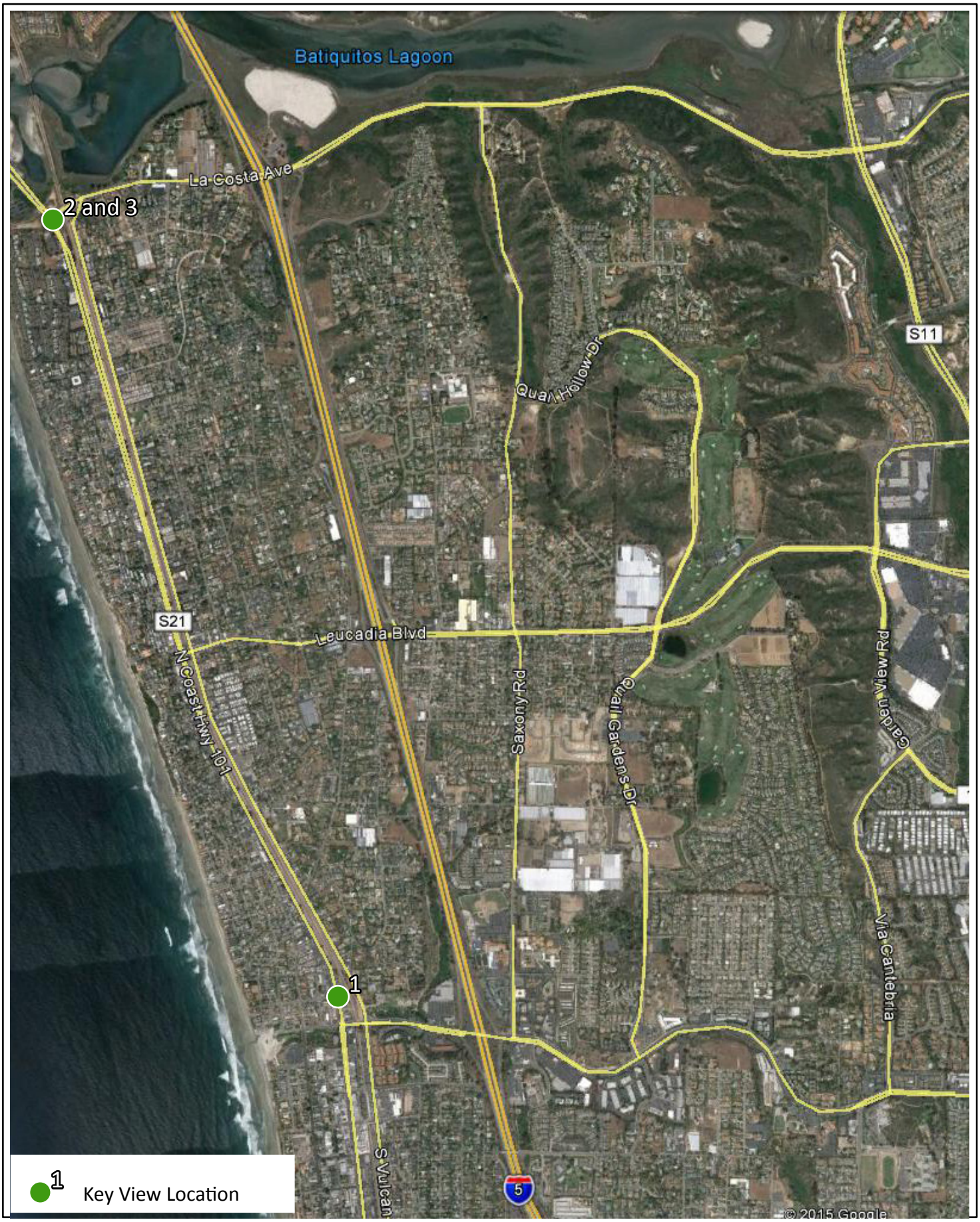
137350Exhibits.indd

North Coast Highway 101 Streetscape Improvement Project

ONSITE PHOTOGRAPHS: EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 3.1-5

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

Source: SanGIS, Eagle Aerial - 2013
137350Exhibits.indd

N

Not to Scale

North Coast Highway 101 Streetscape Improvement Project

KEY VIEW LOCATIONS

Figure 3.1-6

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Existing view looking north from intersection of N. Highway 101 and A Street.

Proposed view looking north from intersection of N. Highway 101 and A Street.

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

137350Exhibits.indd

North Coast Highway 101 Streetscape Improvement Project

KEY VIEW 1: VIEW FROM N. HIGHWAY 101 AT A STREET (SOUTHERN PROJECT BOUNDARY)

Figure 3.1-7

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Existing view looking west from La Costa Avenue at N. Highway 101.

Michael Baker
INTERNATIONAL

137350Exhibits.indd

North Coast Highway 101 Streetscape Improvement Project

KEY VIEW 2: VIEW FROM LA COSTA AVENUE AT N. HIGHWAY 101

Figure 3.1-8

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Proposed view looking west from La Costa Avenue at N. Highway 101 (at Initial Planting of Landscaping).

Proposed view looking west from La Costa Avenue at N. Highway 101 (at 5-Year Maturity of Landscaping).

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

137350Exhibits.indd

North Coast Highway 101 Streetscape Improvement Project

KEY VIEW 2: VIEW FROM LA COSTA AVENUE AT N. HIGHWAY 101

Figure 3.1-9

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Existing view looking south from intersection of N. Highway 101 and La Costa Avenue.

Proposed view looking south from intersection of N. Highway 101 and La Costa Avenue.

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

137350Exhibits.indd

North Coast Highway 101 Streetscape Improvement Project

KEY VIEW 3: VIEW FROM N. HIGHWAY 101 AT LA COSTA AVENUE (NORTHERN PROJECT BOUNDARY)

Figure 3.1-10

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK