

1 **4.2 VISUAL RESOURCES**

2 Visual resources impacts may be associated with changes in either the built or natural
3 environment and can be short-term or long-term. The presence of heavy machinery during
4 construction of buildings and infrastructure is considered a short-term impact. Large trucks,
5 bulldozers, and other construction equipment would be visible within the
6 construction/demolition zone. Long-term visual changes are associated with demolishing
7 existing buildings and structures and constructing new buildings and structures. The
8 significance of visual effects is very subjective and depends upon the degree of alteration, the
9 scenic quality of the area disturbed, the sensitivity of the viewers, and the viewer perception of
10 features in the viewshed.

11 Visual resources impacts have been qualitatively evaluated by assessing the nature and extent
12 of change in landscape character that would occur under each disposal and reuse alternative.
13 The visual analysis addresses landscape modifications as seen from notable public viewpoints
14 within the viewshed.

15 Factors considered in determining whether an alternative would have a significant impact on
16 visual resources included the extent or degree to which its implementation would:

- 17 1. Degrade scenic quality within the region of influence (defined as Treasure Island, as
18 seen from any public view or viewpoint);
- 19 2. Damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and
20 historic buildings; or
- 21 3. Create a new source of substantial light or glare that might adversely affect day or
22 nighttime views in the area.

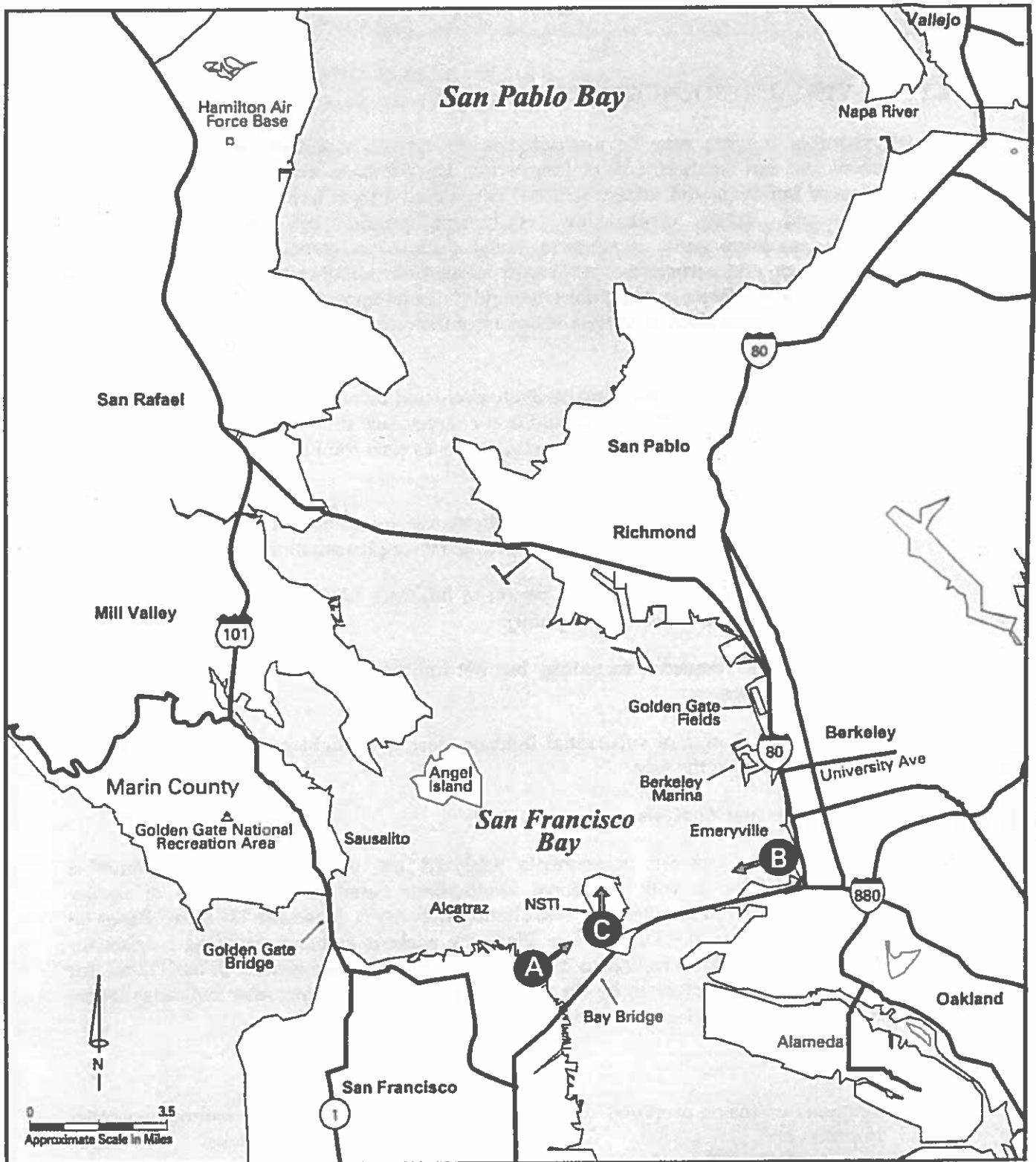
23 **Assumptions for Visual Analysis**

24 The building or development components analyzed are derived from the alternative
25 descriptions in Chapter 2, with additional assumptions based on descriptions of similar
26 components in the Draft Reuse Plan and consultation with city staff and the EIS team. Based on
27 information contained in the Draft Reuse Plan, the analysis assumed building heights for
28 proposed hotels to be 65 to 75 feet (20 to 23 m), for residential buildings to be 40 feet (12 m), for
29 at least one landmark structure to be up to 100 feet (30.5 m), and for other buildings in the
30 Treasure Island core area to be 60 feet (18 m).

31 **Methodology**

32 The descriptions of major proposed development components and their resulting potential
33 visual impacts are generalized. Computer-based photosimulations, taken from three
34 viewpoints identified in Figure 4-1, have been used to supplement the analysis.

35 These three viewpoints were selected because they are representative public viewpoints from
36 the East Bay, West Bay, and NSTI that are used intensively and that could be affected by the
37 reuse alternatives. The simulations are based on three dimensional (3D) computer-aided



A, B, and C show the vantage point for the visual simulations in this

Legend

- A** End of Pier 7, San Francisco (Figure 4-2)
- B** Emeryville Shoreline Park (Figure 4-3)
- C** Public Parking at the Gate to Treasure Island (Figure 4-4)

Map Viewpoint Used in Photosimulations

Bay Area, California

Figure 4-1

1 design (CAD) data provided by Navy from photogrammetry of the site, with limited digitizing
2 and 3D modeling of proposed building heights based on the data sources and assumptions
3 discussed above. The simulations show the maximum volume, or extent, of possible
4 development. Because the alternatives are conceptual at this time, the simulations do not show
5 design detail. However, the simulations do provide a conservative estimate of the extent of
6 development.

7 Major reuse alternative development components considered in this analysis include new
8 buildings (at least two stories high), new larger structures, loss of visually prominent buildings
9 or large areas of buildings by demolition, creation or loss of large areas of open space, and
10 establishment or loss of major tree groups/canopy. The proposed reuse of buildings and
11 facilities without substantial modification would not be identified as having an effect on visual
12 resources or urban design.

13 4.2.1 Alternative 1

14 This alternative would alter visual resources in primary views from the San Francisco
15 waterfront, East Bay shore, SFOBB, and in more background views from other locations around
16 San Francisco Bay. Significant adverse impacts are not anticipated, and some of the potential
17 anticipated effects could be beneficial. Beneficial effects could result from aesthetic
18 enhancements of Treasure Island areas and increased opportunities for public access to
19 panoramic views of the San Francisco Bay Area.

20 *Not Significant Impacts*

21 *Views from Surrounding Viewshed*

22 San Francisco waterfront and open space (Factors 1 and 2). The principal development components
23 of this alternative visible from the San Francisco waterfront area would include the proposed
24 hotels on Treasure Island, a landmark structure, the themed attraction and other mid-rise
25 buildings, and development on the top and west-facing slopes of Yerba Buena Island. Figure
26 4-2 shows the view from Pier 7 on The Embarcadero, which is a conservative-case
27 representation of other Embarcadero and waterfront views; at locations to the south (e.g., the
28 Ferry Building area and its nearby promenade), similar but slightly more distant views would
29 be obtained. These are considered highly sensitive viewing locations, where the most viewers
30 come to sightsee or to enjoy the scenic views during breaks in their workday.

31 The proposed hotel development and a landmark structure in particular would alter the profile of
32 Treasure Island and Yerba Buena Island from this viewpoint, with the potential for visual contrast
33 to be similar in prominence to other landscape features in the panoramic field of view. The hotels,
34 if extending up to approximately 75 feet (23 m) tall along much of their frontage, would introduce
35 a visual mass nearly 2 times that of the existing 40-foot (12-m) prominent Building 1. The
36 landmark structure, assumed to be up to 100 feet (30.5 m), would also create a higher profile but
37 may not have the visual mass of the hotels. However, the existing landscape is dominated by
38 nearby Buildings 2 and 3, originally constructed as aircraft hangers, because their scale and mass
39 exceed that of any other existing or proposed buildings on the island.

4.2 Visual Resources

1 The hotels and the landmark structure, in combination with these other large buildings, would,
2 therefore, be prominent above existing and newly established landscaping, especially if painted
3 in pale colors. From The Embarcadero between the SFOBB and approximately Pier 39, the
4 proposed hotel buildings and landmark structure would partially block views of the East Bay
5 hills, although the hotels would be low in comparison with Yerba Buena Island. From more
6 elevated viewpoints such as Coit Tower in San Francisco, the taller buildings would partially
7 block views of the water beyond Treasure Island.

8 A small hotel (up to approximately 60 feet [18 m] high) on Yerba Buena Island would be clearly
9 visible if located in a prominent location, but it would be visually subordinate to the rest of the
10 island in most viewing conditions, assuming that it is designed with a tapering profile (setbacks
11 at higher stories), as proposed in the Reuse Plan Urban Design policies for the hillside at Yerba
12 Buena Island. Furthermore, the elevation at the proposed hotel location would be below the
13 summit of Yerba Buena Island.

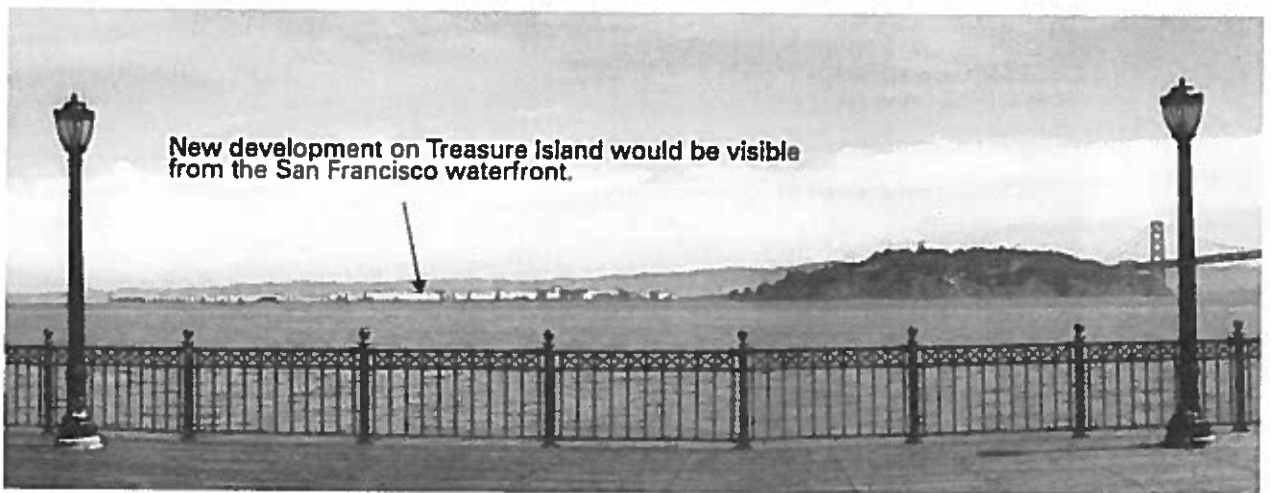
14 These visual effects are identified as not significant because, although there could be new visual
15 contrasts, the scale and urban design of the development, as proposed in the Reuse Plan Urban
16 Design policies, such as protecting natural character and stepping of buildings following the
17 slope, would not be expected to substantially degrade existing scenic quality. In terms of view
18 blockage, similar views of the East Bay hills could still be obtained elsewhere in the same
19 panorama and from other locations along the waterfront. No mitigation is proposed.

20 Views from Bay Islands and Marin County (Factors 1 and 2). In views from Alcatraz, Angel Island,
21 and background locations, such as the Golden Gate Bridge and Sausalito, the same components
22 as described for the San Francisco waterfront views would be the most prominent. However,
23 greater viewing distances between Treasure Island and these Bay islands and Marin County
24 would reduce the visual effects of proposed development compared to other landscape features
25 in view. At these long viewing distances, the development would not substantially block views
26 of the East Bay hills or SFOBB. Visual impacts also would not be significant from these
27 viewpoints. No mitigation is proposed.

28 Views from East Bay shoreline (Factors 1 and 2). The principal components of Alternative 1 that
29 would be visible from the East Bay shoreline parks and open space include the proposed hotels
30 on Treasure Island, landmark structure, themed attraction, and other mid-rise buildings (Figure
31 4-3). Some screening of new buildings provided by mature trees and lower buildings on the
32 east side of Treasure Island would reduce the degree of change. The higher buildings on
33 Treasure Island would introduce a visual mass approximately seven times that of the existing
34 hangars seen from this location. Because the island is seen against the taller backdrop of the
35 San Francisco skyline from most viewpoints, such as the Emeryville and Watergate shoreline,
36 Berkeley Marina, and Golden Gate Fields on the Berkeley and Albany border, the resulting
37 visual contrast would remain subordinate to other landscape features in the panoramic field of
38 view. The proposed buildings would not block views of the Golden Gate and would only
39 partially block views of lower elevations of San Francisco without interrupting the skyline. A
40 somewhat different situation would occur at the publicly accessible open space near the radio
41 station facilities near the eastern landfall of the SFOBB. From here, partial blockage of views of
42 the Golden Gate Bridge would be increased by the taller buildings and themed attraction, in



Existing View



Simulated View

Pier 7, a public open space pier, is a popular spot for pedestrians along Herb Caen Way, and is closer to Treasure Island than other San Francisco waterfront points.

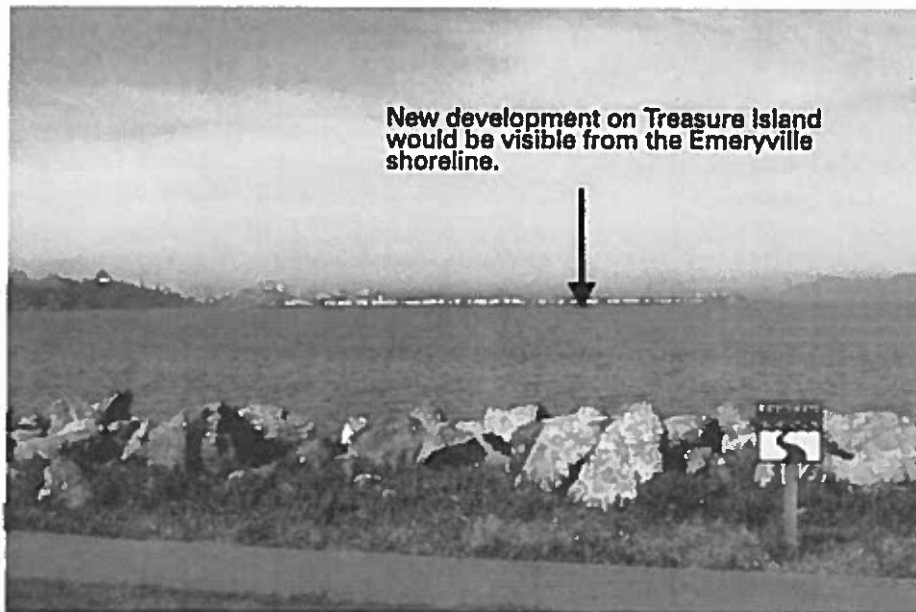
***Existing View/Simulated View of Alternative 1,
Seen from the End of Pier 7, San Francisco***

San Francisco, California

Figure 4-2



Existing View



Simulated View

The point of Emeryville Shoreline Park is closest to Treasure Island of the East Bay vantage points.

***Existing View/Simulated View
of Alternative 1,
Seen from the Emeryville Shoreline Park***

Emeryville, California

Figure 4-3

1 addition to some existing view obstruction of the Golden Gate Bridge deck from this angle by
2 vegetation on Treasure Island. The impact is not significant because of the relatively low levels
3 of use experienced at this location in comparison with the major eastshore parks and the
4 availability of other unobstructed views from similar locations northward along the shoreline.
5 However, should the Bay Trail bring substantially increased levels of use to the area, this partial
6 view blockage from this alternative could be experienced by more people. No mitigation is
7 proposed.

8 Views from vessels on San Francisco Bay (Factors 1 and 2). In views from ferries and recreational
9 vessels on the Bay, the main components that would be visible include the taller buildings
10 (primarily hotels), development on Yerba Buena Island, and shoreline open space. Visual
11 contrasts of proposed development would be similar in prominence to other existing features
12 (notably Yerba Buena Island, the SFOBB, and hangar buildings) in most views. Some beneficial
13 effects could occur with improved landscaping and new nonindustrial development. View
14 blockage is not a major concern because of the mobility of the viewing position and the free
15 access to views over open water. No mitigation is proposed.

16 Views from eastshore highway and SFOBB (Factors 1 and 2). In views from the eastshore highway
17 and SFOBB, the buildings at the heights proposed in the Draft Reuse Plan would not project
18 substantially above the San Francisco skyline and therefore would not block the skyline from
19 view. Further, because the viewer would be in vehicles moving in traffic and because the views
20 are either partially blocked by SFOBB railings, other highway structures, or trees on Yerba
21 Buena Island, or are at almost a 90 degree angle from the direction of travel (on the eastshore
22 highway), the views are considered less sensitive and the impacts less significant than the
23 pedestrian views from open space. It is estimated that the proposed hotel buildings would be
24 visible and would at least partially block the views of the Golden Gate Bridge for up to two
25 minutes for passengers of vehicles traveling westward on the SFOBB, but this would occur only
26 from more distant portions of the bridge nearer sea level. Some views of Alcatraz Island from
27 the SFOBB also could be blocked. No mitigation is proposed.

28 Views from urban and residential areas (Factors 1 and 2). Off-site urban and residential areas with
29 views to Treasure Island are principally at background viewing distances from both the East
30 Bay hills (8 miles) and from higher elevations in San Francisco (under 2 miles). View blockage
31 is not considered a major issue at this viewing distance, and scenic qualities would not be
32 reduced by the proposed hotel and mid-rise buildings. Depending on the design of the themed
33 attraction and the landmark structure, there is the potential for either beneficial or adverse
34 visual impacts because of the introduction of a new visual structure in the center of the Bay.
35 Design of any themed attraction or landmark structure would undergo further public review.
36 No mitigation is proposed.

37 *Views from Within the Reuse Plan Area*

38 On-site views and visual access (Factors 1 and 2). Development on Treasure Island would replace
39 aging industrial and military facilities with urban design elements intended to be more
40 attractive and in closer character with the rest of the San Francisco waterfront. Scenic quality
41 could be enhanced through additional landscaping and attention to aesthetic design in
42 developing new buildings, the themed attraction, and other visitor-serving facilities, according
43 to design guidelines in the Reuse Plan and Urban Design policies of the General Plan.

4.2 Visual Resources

1 It is assumed that existing view corridors to the Bay would be kept open, with additional open
2 space perimeter opportunities and public access opportunities provided along the waterfront
3 open space. The hotel complex would block some existing view corridors. In scenic views at
4 public locations, such as the gateway area, and in views around Clipper Cove, most existing
5 scenic features would be retained. The expanded marina with approximately 300 slips and 100
6 tie-up buoys, compared to the existing 100 slips, would add new visual elements to what is now
7 a relatively undisturbed cove with primarily open water, although the expanded marina would
8 be to some extent visually consistent with the existing marina and pier features along Clipper
9 Cove. The proposed hotels and themed attraction buildings would alter the setting for the
10 older buildings (Figure 4-4), but are intended to be compatible with the existing features.
11 Assuming compatibility in design with the older structures in on-site views, this reuse
12 alternative would not result in significant visual impacts. No mitigation is proposed.

13 *Light and Glare*

14 Night lighting and glare (Factor 3). The proposed development under Alternative 1 would
15 include placement of light sources for safety, identification, and security. Proposed
16 development, including the hotels, lighting along the Treasure Island waterfront, themed
17 attraction lighting, and lighting of other buildings or features would be prominent at night from
18 closer views, such as the San Francisco waterfront and SFOBB. Themed attraction lighting also
19 may be visible from more distant viewpoints, such as from the East Bay. However, assuming
20 lighting levels are similar to urban lighting at the San Francisco waterfront, with shielding to
21 prevent upward glare visible to SFOBB drivers, this alternative is not expected to introduce
22 light and glare at nuisance levels. Lighting could visually enhance the island at night.

23 Glare, a condition where light is uncomfortably harsh, could impact effective vision or even
24 temporarily blind an individual and is therefore a safety concern. Glare could be generated
25 from new buildings that are composed of reflective materials, such as glass or polished metal.
26 Glare can be controlled through design controls and building material restrictions as part of the
27 standard design review and approval processes of the City and County of San Francisco. For
28 example, City Planning Commission Resolution 9212 generally prohibits use of mirrored or
29 reflective glass in new buildings. Compliance with this resolution would avoid related glare
30 impacts. No mitigation is proposed.

31 4.2.2 Alternative 2

32 Under this alternative a mix of land uses would be established, with emphasis on publicly
33 oriented development and open space and recreation. It mainly differs from Alternative 1 by
34 including more open space, especially by replacing residential uses on the northern half of
35 Treasure Island with a golf course and wildlife observation or potential wetlands area. It also
36 would provide for a wider open space strip along the southern and eastern waterfront of
37 Treasure Island, more marina development in Clipper Cove, and an expanded hotel and bed
38 and breakfast area on the western end of Yerba Buena Island.

39 This alternative would in many respects be visually similar to Alternative 1. The most
40 prominent development components (hotels and themed attraction structures) would alter
41 visual resources in views from the San Francisco waterfront, East Bay shoreline, SFOBB, and in



Existing View



Simulated View

This view would greet the motorist approaching Treasure Island from the causeway and arriving ferryboat passengers.

***Existing View/Simulated View of
Alternative 1 Seen from Public Parking
at the Gate to Treasure Island***

Treasure Island, California

Figure 4-4

1 more background views from other locations around San Francisco Bay. These impacts would
2 not be significant. Beneficial effects could include those that result from aesthetic enhancement
3 of existing areas with strong industrial or utilitarian character on Treasure Island and increased
4 opportunities for the public to experience panoramic views of the San Francisco Bay Area.

5 *Not Significant Impacts*

6 Not significant impacts would be similar to those described for Alternative 1 because of the
7 similarity in major visual development components. Specific visual effects that would be
8 similar to or less than those described for Alternative 1 include views from Bay islands and
9 Marin County, views from the East Bay shoreline, views from vessels on San Francisco Bay,
10 views from urban and residential areas, and night lighting and glare. The greater open space
11 and wildlife habitat on Treasure Island in this alternative would not alter its current appearance
12 from most viewpoints in the surrounding Bay Area since the existing housing is of low profile
13 and not conspicuous at greater viewing distances; this impact would, therefore, be less than
14 with Alternative 1. Those visual effects that would be different from Alternative 1 are described
15 below.

16 Views from San Francisco waterfront and open space (Factors 1 and 2). The proposed hotel complex
17 on Yerba Buena Island would be of lower height than in Alternative 1 and therefore would be
18 less visible and more similar to existing conditions. In other respects, this alternative would
19 have similar not significant impacts to those described for Alternative 1. No mitigation is
20 proposed.

21 Views from eastshore highway and SFOBB (Factors 1 and 2). The expanse of open space at the
22 north end of Treasure Island would be apparent to passengers of buses and other vehicles with
23 seating raised above the level of the bridge railing. The extent of green space would be
24 conspicuous from this elevated vantage point and would represent a change in comparison
25 with the existing military and industrial character of NSTI. In other respects, this alternative
26 would have similar not significant impacts to those described for Alternative 1. No mitigation
27 is proposed.

28 On-site views and visual access (Factors 1 and 2). Development on Treasure Island under this
29 alternative would replace aging industrial and military facilities with elements and open space
30 intended to be in character with the rest of the Bay Area shoreline. Effects compared to
31 Alternative 1 would include greater extent and visibility of open space on Treasure Island. The
32 wider open space corridor along the waterfront around the themed attraction also would
33 enhance views to and from the shoreline. Compared to the existing 100-slip marina, the
34 expanded marina would accommodate between 500 to 675 slips and tie-up buoys and would
35 add new visual elements to what is now a relatively undisturbed cove with primarily open
36 water. However, these additional boat slips would not result in a significant visual impact
37 because they would not substantially degrade or obstruct views to and from NSTI and would
38 be to some extent visually consistent with the existing marina and pier features along Clipper
39 Cove.

40 Light and glare (Factor 3). Urban Design policies in the Reuse Plan and General Plan, and City
41 Planning Commission Resolution 9212 regarding use of mirrored or reflective glass, also would

4.2 Visual Resources

1 apply to this alternative. Less development under this alternative would result in even less
2 glare than under Alternative 1. No mitigation is proposed.

3 4.2.3 Alternative 3

4 Under Alternative 3, a mix of land uses would be established, but with many of the structures
5 remaining. Compared to Alternative 1, Alternative 3 would have slightly more designated open
6 space (approximately 157 acres [64 ha] versus approximately 135 acres [55 ha]) and would be
7 more similar to existing conditions. Other differences from Alternative 1 include no new hotel
8 buildings, no marina expansion in Clipper Cove, and a greatly reduced area for the themed
9 attraction (approximately 39 acres [16 ha] compared with approximately 59 acres [24 ha] for
10 Alternative 1).

11 This alternative generally would have less visual impact than Alternatives 1 and 2. This
12 alternative would not include the taller and most prominent project components of the other
13 two reuse alternatives. Views of Treasure Island under this alternative would not appear very
14 different from the island's existing appearance, except for the prominent themed attraction
15 structure and some visible development on Yerba Buena Island. The latter features would
16 appear as described in Alternative 1.

17 Although the proposed themed attraction structures may still be visible in closer-range and
18 background views, this alternative would have more limited effects on visual resources in views
19 from the San Francisco waterfront, East Bay shoreline, SFOBB, and in more background views
20 from other locations around San Francisco Bay because of its reduced development scale. Other
21 effects could be beneficial, such as those that would result from limited aesthetic enhancement
22 of existing areas on Treasure Island and increased opportunities for the public to experience
23 panoramic views of the San Francisco Bay Area.

24 *Not Significant Impacts*

25 Specific visual effects that would be less than those described for Alternative 1 include views
26 from Bay islands and Marin County, views from vessels on San Francisco Bay, views from the
27 eastshore highway and the SFOBB, views from urban and residential areas, and night lighting
28 and glare. Those visual effects that would be different than Alternatives 1 and 2 are described
29 below.

30 Views from San Francisco waterfront and open space (Factors 1 and 2). The profile of development
31 on Treasure Island would not appear very different from its existing appearance, with the
32 exception of the prominent themed attraction structure and the hotel on Yerba Buena Island.
33 The latter features would appear as described in Alternative 1. No mitigation is proposed.

34 Views from East Bay shoreline (Factors 1 and 2). Treasure Island would not appear very different
35 from its existing appearance, except for the prominent themed attraction structure and some
36 visible development at the east end of Yerba Buena Island. The latter features would appear as
37 described in Alternative 1. No mitigation is proposed.

38 On-site views and visual access (Factors 1 and 2). New development in the themed attraction area
39 would replace aging industrial and military facilities with elements and open space intended to

1 be in character with the rest of the public Bay Area shoreline. Clipper Cove would remain in its
2 existing condition and therefore would retain the scenic features of this undisturbed open water
3 area compared to the other reuse alternatives that propose expansion of this facility. It is
4 assumed that public access would be provided around the entire perimeter of Treasure Island,
5 offering some of the same beneficial effects of increased visual access as the other alternatives.

6 Light and glare (Factor 3). Urban Design policies in the Reuse Plan and General Plan, and City
7 Planning Commission Resolution 9212 regarding use of mirrored or reflective glass, also would
8 apply to this alternative. No mitigation is proposed.

9 4.2.4 No Action Alternative

10 The No Action Alternative would be a continuation of the caretaker status of NSTI surplus
11 property. Existing interim leases would be allowed to expire. No existing buildings would be
12 rehabilitated or demolished, and no new buildings would be constructed. The only activity on
13 the site would be from maintenance personnel and security staff. Although modification of
14 appearance due to boarding up of some windows and doors may occur, the general physical
15 character of the property would remain the same. This change in appearance would not be
16 visible from off-site views in San Francisco and the East Bay and therefore would be no impact.
17 In addition, access to NSTI under caretaker status would be limited; therefore, no on-site visual
18 impacts would occur. Reduced staffing and the lower level of activity could affect the character
19 of the site; however, the visual contrast would be weak, and impacts would be less than
20 significant. Existing views would not be disrupted or blocked. There would be no substantial
21 visual changes to the site as a result of the No Action Alternative; therefore, no visual impacts
22 would occur.

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