

1 **3.2 VISUAL RESOURCES**

2 Visual resources address the appearance of the landscape and the factors influencing how the
3 landscape is perceived by the viewing public. Landscape includes both natural and engineered
4 features. Treasure Island and Yerba Buena Island are two of the Bay Area's prominent scenic
5 resources, seen by millions of residents, commuters, and visitors every year. Prominent visual
6 features and viewpoints of and from NSTI are shown on Figure 3-2.

7 **3.2.1 Visual Character of Reuse Plan Area**

8 The visual character of NSTI, including features and visual characteristics of Treasure Island
9 and Yerba Buena Island, is discussed below.

10 ***Treasure Island***

11 Treasure Island has a geometric form with straight edges along its shores that produces a seven-
12 sided shape in plan view. Topographic relief is low and flat. Existing Treasure Island
13 development is characterized by various military support facilities, including housing,
14 institutional, commissary, administrative, and industrial facilities of a generally functional
15 appearance without a strong design theme. Buildings are generally two to four stories high
16 (Photos 1 and 3 in Appendix F). Approximately 25 percent of the island is in open space, much of
17 which is dedicated to recreation uses. The extent and distribution of this open space, along with
18 wide streets and generous building setbacks, give the island a feeling of spaciousness.

19 Treasure Island's approximately 3 miles (5 km) of shoreline is protected by a rock-filled seawall.
20 The seawall height limits ground-based views of the surrounding bay from many Treasure
21 Island locations. Pier 23, a public-access fishing and sightseeing pier, is on the west side of the
22 island across from the northern San Francisco waterfront. Public access is restricted at Piers 1,
23 11, and 12 on the island's southeast corner, where mooring and maintenance for former Navy
24 vessels was provided. Pier 2 is a floating structure at the Clipper Cove marina and is used by
25 recreational watercraft.

26 Entering NSTI from the Treasure Island causeway, views include the bay and San Francisco
27 skyline to the left, Building 1 to the right, and Avenue of Palms ahead. Building 1 is a large,
28 striking, Art Deco building with a curved façade that was constructed as the headquarters
29 building for the 1939-1940 Exposition. Painted with light pastel colors, it is visible from points
30 along the San Francisco waterfront.

31 The west side of Treasure Island is distinguished by the regularly spaced row of palm trees with
32 landscape shrubs and ground cover along the bay side of Avenue of Palms, originally
33 developed as part of the Exposition. Spectacular panoramic views of the bay, the San Francisco
34 waterfront and skyline, the west span of the SFOBB, and the Golden Gate Bridge are available
35 here. East of Building 1, the two largest buildings on Treasure Island, originally constructed as
36 aircraft hangars, dominate the landscape (Photo 5, Appendix F). The similar style and color of
37 Building 1 and the hangars ties the three buildings together visually.

38 Clipper Cove is in a protected area of the San Francisco Bay on the east side of the causeway
39 connecting Treasure Island with Yerba Buena Island (Photos 1 and 6, Appendix F). Densely

3.2 Visual Resources

1 wooded Yerba Buena Island slopes rise steeply on the cove's south side, with a steep wooden
2 staircase leading down to a narrow sandy beach. From Treasure Island looking toward Yerba
3 Buena Island, the scene appears mostly natural except for glimpses of buildings on the upper
4 slopes of Yerba Buena Island, Building 262, an historic torpedo assembly building on the
5 eastern tip of this island, and the high span of the SFOBB to the east. On the Treasure Island
6 side of the cove are Pier 2 and the marina, where about 100 pleasure craft are moored.

7 *Yerba Buena Island*

8 In contrast to Treasure Island, Yerba Buena Island is a natural island with high topographic
9 relief. Most of the island is steeply sloped with a few low-lying fill areas along the eastern side.
10 Dense vegetation covers much of the island. Considerable soil erosion and disturbance is
11 visible as strong color contrasts in the vicinity of the ramps and causeway on the steep
12 west-facing slopes of the island.

13 *Light and Glare*

14 Light sources in the reuse plan area include street lights, building lighting for safety and
15 security, and parking lot lighting. Glare is reflective light that can be visually unpleasant or
16 possibly unsafe due to the potential for temporary "blindness." Glare is created by light
17 (usually from the sun) reflecting off smooth surfaces such as glass, metal, or polished stone. As
18 a military facility, the buildings and structures at NSTI were primarily designed and
19 constructed for utility rather than aesthetics. There is generally a lack of decorative surfaces,
20 including those that could cause glare. The majority of buildings have nonreflective surfaces.

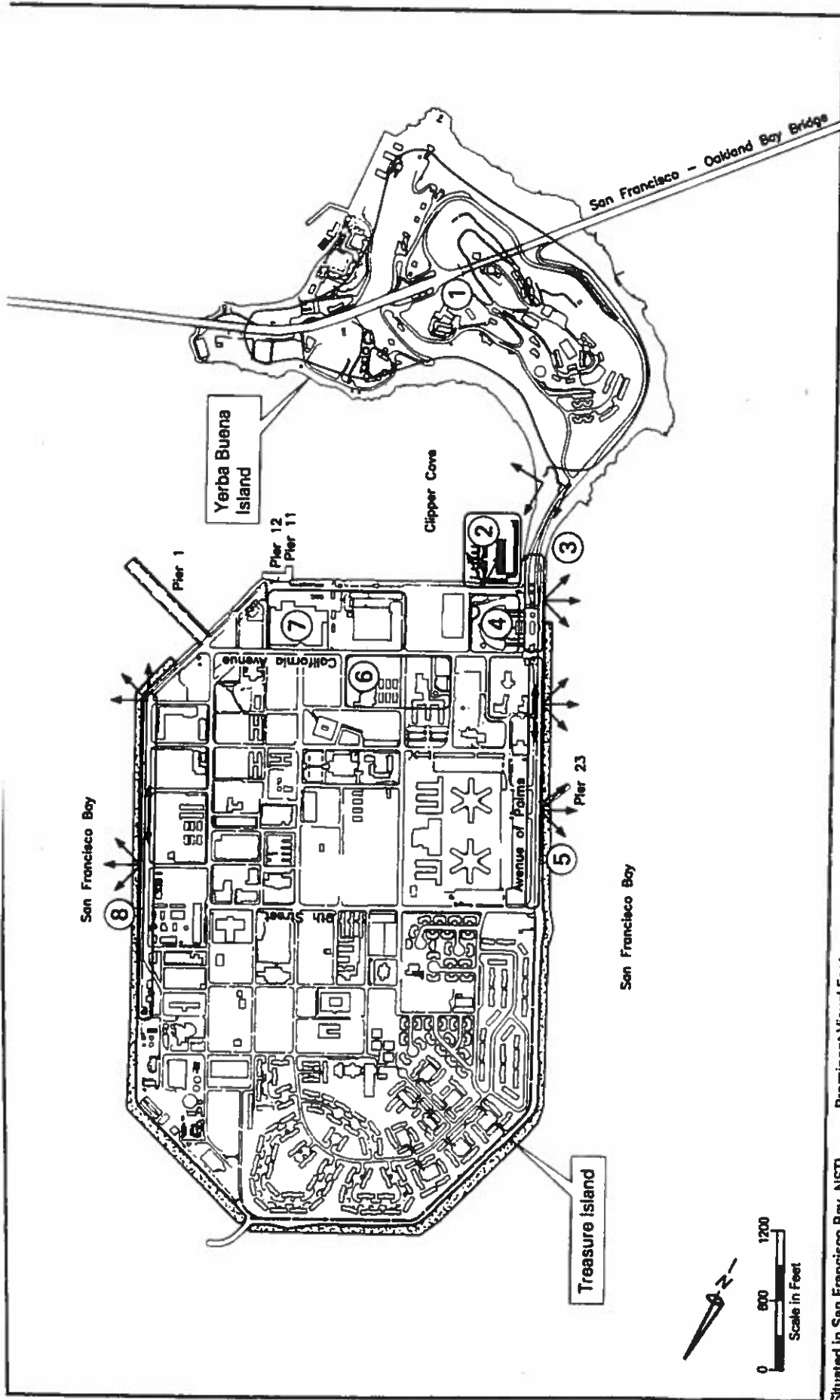
21 **3.2.2 Visual Characteristics of Surrounding Area**

22 Treasure Island and Yerba Buena Island lie near the center of San Francisco Bay between
23 downtown San Francisco and Oakland. The bay is about 50 miles (80 km) long and from 3 to 12
24 miles (5 to 19 km) wide. The topography around the bay features prominent hills, such as those
25 to the northwest in Marin County and to the east in Alameda County. These ridges and other
26 hills in the area afford distinctive panoramic views that often include Treasure Island and Yerba
27 Buena Island. The surrounding region features a mixture of dense urban development and
28 relatively extensive natural open space area, dominated by San Francisco Bay. Bay waterfront
29 uses include industrial, commercial, and recreation and open space.

30 **3.2.3 Key Views and Visibility of NSTI**

31 Available views onto a site are affected by distance, viewing angle, and the number or type of
32 visual obstacles, both natural and manmade. Views can be from stationary sources, such as
33 homes and businesses, or from mobile sources, predominantly from motor vehicles. The
34 visibility of an object depends, to a great extent, on the distance from the observer—the further
35 the building is from the viewer, the less distinct the building becomes, and there is a greater
36 possibility of intervening objects blocking some or all of the view of that building. With
37 distance, more objects enter into the viewing panorama and specific features become visually
38 "lost."

39



Situated in San Francisco Bay, NIST provides panoramic views.

Prominent Visual Features:

- ① Wooded Slopes of Yerba Buena Island
- ② Clipper Cove Marina
- ③ Entry to Treasure Island
- ④ Museum
- ⑤ Avenue of Palms
- ⑥ Conference Center Complex
- ⑦ Hanger Buildings
- ⑧ East Side Frontage Road and Shores

← Major Views

Prominent Visual Features and Major Views

Naval Station Treasure Island, California

Figure 3-2

1 For this analysis, viewing distances have been characterized as foreground views (0 to 0.5 miles [0
2 to 0.8 km]), middleground views (0.5 to 3 miles [0.8 to 5 km]), and background views (greater than
3 3 miles [5 km]). Foreground viewing distances permit perception of detail on individual
4 small-scale landscape features. Middleground viewing distances permit relationships between
5 large and moderately sized objects to be perceived, with some perception of colors, textures,
6 individual forms, and details visible. Background viewing distances generally permit only the
7 broad perception of large features, such as land masses and large-scale landscape patterns, with
8 little distinction of color, texture, and detail.

9 *Foreground Views*

10 The only available close range views of NSTI are from the SFOBB (I-80) and from the
11 immediately surrounding waters. Yerba Buena Island is clearly visible from both the eastbound
12 and westbound directions, but Treasure Island is much less so. The bridge guardrails block
13 views of Treasure Island from most passenger cars. From taller vehicles, such as buses, vans, or
14 trucks, Treasure Island is visible, especially to westbound traffic in the right-hand lane (Photo
15 11, Appendix F). Several passenger ferry routes provide views of NSTI, and some pass within a
16 mile (1.5 km). Boaters also experience close up foreground views of NSTI.

17 *Middleground Views*

18 Public middleground views of NSTI are available from many San Francisco locations, most
19 notably from The Embarcadero and from the Northern and Central Waterfront areas of the city
20 (from the SFOBB to the Pier 39 area). Other viewing locations include waterfront restaurants,
21 recreational piers (Photo 7, Appendix F), ferry terminals, the San Francisco Ferry Plaza, and the
22 future Rincon Point Park at The Embarcadero near Folsom Street. Coit Tower is a well-known
23 landmark, which provides a panoramic view of NSTI and Yerba Buena Island at a distance of
24 over 2 miles (3 km) (Photo 8, Appendix F).

25 Public scenic views of Treasure Island from Alcatraz Island, at a distance of just over 2 miles (3
26 km), are some of the closest ground-based views available. Angel Island, a state park, provides
27 middleground views of NSTI from the north. The distinctive buildings on Treasure Island,
28 which are found on its south side, are not clearly seen from this viewing point.

29 *Background Views*

30 The Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA), including the Presidio of San Francisco,
31 and Golden Gate Bridge represent intensively used viewing points. However, NSTI is in the
32 background of these views (over 5 miles [8 km] from Fort Point), which are dominated by more
33 noticeable landscape features, such as the bridge, Alcatraz Island, the Presidio, and the
34 Transamerica Pyramid.

35 The East Bay shore, extending from the City of Richmond on the north to the City of Oakland
36 on the south, contains a series of parks and open space areas with views to NSTI from distances
37 of approximately 3 to 6 miles (5 to 9.5 km). Under certain lighting conditions, such as morning
38 sunshine, the larger NSTI buildings become quite conspicuous, most notably the former hangar
39 buildings (similar to conditions shown in Photo 9, Appendix F). NSTI is also a prominent
40 landmark in background views from the East Bay hills.

3.2 Visual Resources

1 The Emeryville waterfront, about 3 miles (5 km) from NSTI, represents one of the closer East
2 Bay views (Photo 10, Appendix F). The northern half of Treasure Island is seen against the
3 horizon of the Golden Gate.

4 Background views of NSTI also are available from several major Bay Area highways, including
5 I-80, I-580, I-280, and US 101. In most cases, Yerba Buena Island is readily visible, while
6 Treasure Island, with its low flat profile, is less visible.

7 A variety of viewers obtain background views of NSTI from urban areas around the bay. The
8 most notable views are obtained from high-rise buildings in San Francisco and Emeryville and
9 from streets within San Francisco that provide view corridors towards the bay (Photo 12,
10 Appendix F). These view corridors, some of which focus viewer attention toward Yerba Buena
11 Island or Treasure Island, are recognized and addressed in the San Francisco General Plan's
12 goals, objectives, and policies.

13 3.2.4 Views from NSTI

14 *Treasure Island*

15 Public scenic views within NSTI are found at the entrance to Treasure Island (from the
16 northbound direction on Treasure Island Road when leaving Yerba Buena Island), along
17 Avenue of Palms, in the vicinity of the Convention Center and the former hangar buildings, and
18 in the Clipper Cove area. The most scenic views from the site are of the surrounding waters
19 and Bay Area. From Treasure Island these occur from perimeter areas, although at the north
20 end of the island the height of the seawall blocks views of the water. The most distinctive views
21 occur from Avenue of Palms towards the Golden Gate and San Francisco waterfront and
22 skyline. These viewing points are unique within the Bay Area for their panoramic aspect (Photo
23 13, Appendix F) and proximity to San Francisco. Distinctive views toward the east occur from
24 Avenue N.

25 *Yerba Buena Island*

26 On Yerba Buena Island, public scenic views include views of the steep hillsides and beach at
27 Clipper Cove, and the view of Treasure Island from Macalla Road. From several locations at
28 the higher elevations on Yerba Buena Island, there are sweeping panoramas of the Bay Area.

29 3.2.5 Viewer Group/Sensitivity

30 Visual sensitivity is dependent upon viewer attitudes, the types of activities in which people are
31 engaged when viewing the site, and the distance from which the site will be seen. Overall,
32 higher degrees of visual sensitivity are correlated with areas where people live, are engaged in
33 recreational outdoor pursuits, or participate in scenic or pleasure driving. Conversely, visual
34 sensitivity is considered low to moderate in industrial or commercial areas where the scenic
35 quality of the environment does not affect the value of the activity.

36 There are a number of viewing opportunities onto the site from the surrounding area. These
37 opportunities are available from the SFOBB, from bay waterfront uses, including industrial,
38 commercial, and recreation and open space, from intensively used regional public areas,
39 including Alcatraz Island, the GGNRA, and Angel Island, and from boats on the bay. The

1 waterfront views toward NSTI are important both to tourists and to area residents. Given the
2 unique and distinct character of NSTI and its central location in San Francisco Bay, viewer
3 sensitivity from all of these areas is considered high.

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