

Village Specific Plan  
Visual Impact Assessment



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## 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to assess the visual impacts of the proposed Del Mar Village Specific Plan, also referred to as the Village Specific Plan. The study also proposes measures to mitigate any adverse visual impacts associated with the implementation of the plan and its effect on the visual environment.

## 2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

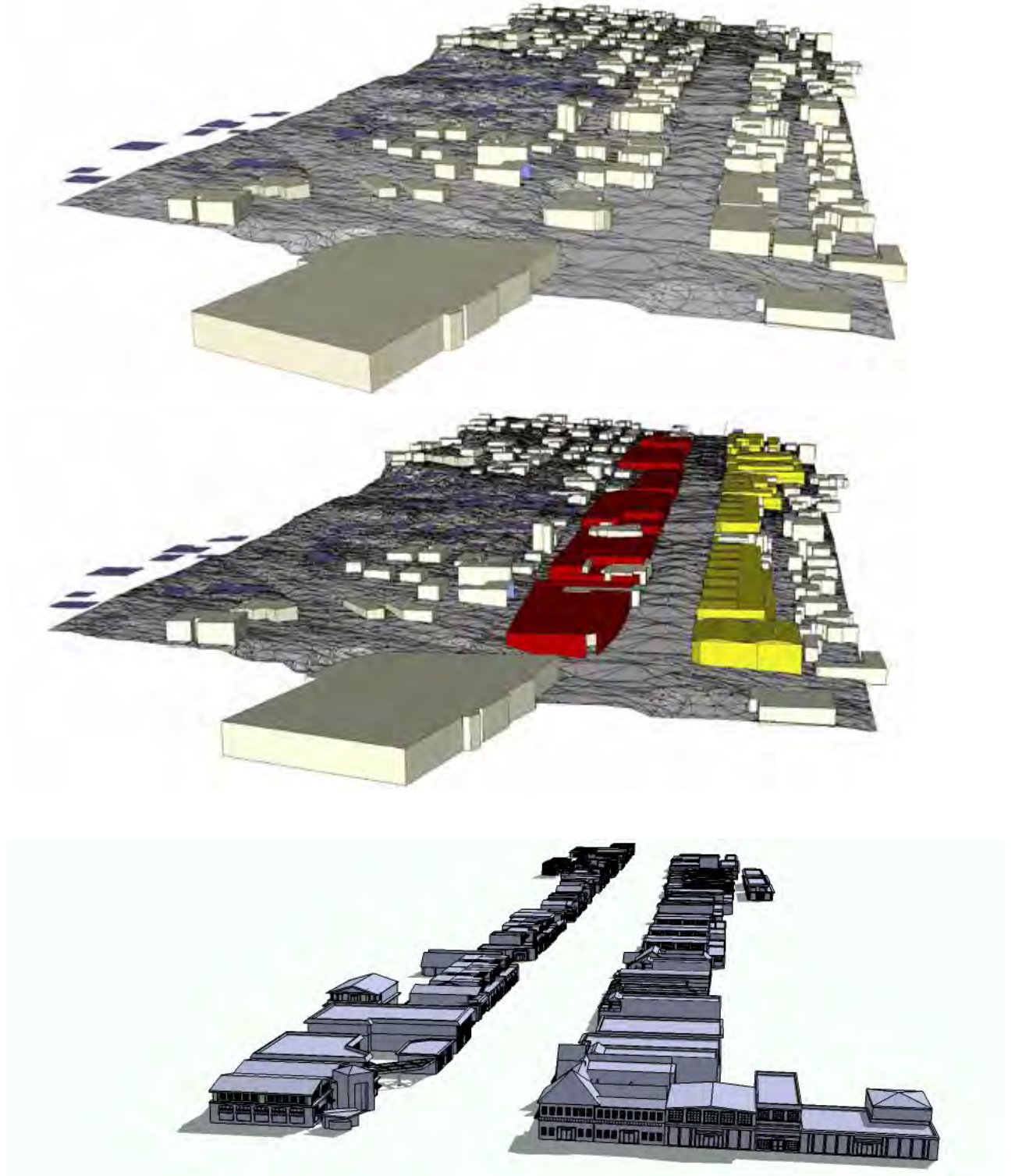
The proposed project consists of a new Specific Plan for the Village that is designed to implement the vision found in the Community Plan. Some of the major policies that may affect the visual environment resulting from implementation of the Specific Plan include:

- increased development potential within the study area;
- requirements for a build-to line requiring a street wall along the walk for storefronts;
- requirements for various setbacks from property lines and stepbacks of upper building elements;
- raised height limit to 26'-0" on the western side of Camino del Mar to match the allowed height limit on the eastern side;
- height limit bonus for an additional 4' 0" on top of the 26'-0" for articulated rooflines;
- creation of a mixed-use zone for commercial properties that also allows residential development at a density of 20 dwelling units per acre;
- permitting parking structures in both the mixed-use and public facilities zones;
- redesigned sidewalks and on-street parking to be continuous and aligned within the public right-of-way; and,
- redesigned Camino del Mar to be a 2-lane roadway with roundabouts at key intersections.

The new Specific Plan would allow building parcels to increase their maximum development potential from the existing .45 Floor Area Ratio (FAR) to a 1.0 FAR. Proposed allowed building heights would be 26 feet above Camino del Mar for properties that face Camino del Mar to allow two stories. Side street parcels within the Specific Plan would be allowed to have a 26'-0" height from their average street front property elevation. Roof articulation features may extend an additional four feet, but would not be allowed to create habitable space.

Three parcel-specific Specific Plans have been previously adopted and fall within the Village Specific Plan boundaries: the Hotel Specific Plan (L'Auberge), the Plaza Specific Plan (Del Mar Plaza and 1435 Camino del Mar), and the Garden Del Mar Specific Plan (941 Camino del Mar and 307 10<sup>th</sup> Street). Both the Hotel and Plaza have been developed according to their adopted Specific Plans. The Garden Del Mar site remains entitled, but undeveloped and vacant. No build-out is anticipated beyond that which is currently constructed at either the L'Auberge Hotel or the Del Mar Plaza, excluding 1435 Camino del Mar.

Computer model outputs showing existing buildings (top), maximum building envelopes (middle) and theoretical infill buildings (bottom). These views are looking from the north, by the Del Mar Plaza at 15<sup>th</sup> Street, southward to 9<sup>th</sup> Street.



### 3.0 ASSESSMENT METHOD

The study follows Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) thresholds for visual impacts identified by the State of California and further defined by the Association of Environmental Planners. In addition, methods used at the federal level have also been included, even though this study is not a NEPA document, they are relevant for visual studies. The processes from the federal level used in this visual impact study generally follow the guidelines outlined in the publication "Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects," Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), March 1981, as well as processes known as "Visual Resource Management" methods from the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service and the National Forest Service.

Local, state, federal guidelines and national standards commonly suggest six steps for conducting visual impacts. They are as follows:

- A. Define the project setting and viewshed.
- B. Identify key views for visual assessment.
- C. Analyze existing visual resources and viewer response.
- D. Depict the visual appearance of project alternatives.
- E. Assess the visual impacts of project alternatives.
- F. Propose methods to mitigate adverse or significant visual impacts.

### 4.0 VISUAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE PROJECT

#### 4.1 Project Setting

The Village Specific Plan boundary is shown in Figure 4-1. The plan occupies approximately 40 acres within the urbanized town center of Del Mar. The Village Specific Plan generally encompasses the central business district corridor that is along Camino del Mar between 9<sup>th</sup> Street and approximately the easterly alignment of 17<sup>th</sup> Street. Additionally, commercial and post office properties along 15<sup>th</sup> Street west to Stratford Court are included.

Figure 4-1: Project Location and Village Specific Plan Boundary



## 4.2 Regulatory Setting

### 4.2.1 State Scenic Highway Program

California's Scenic Highway Program was created by the Legislature in 1963. Its purpose is to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change, which would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. There are no designated or eligible scenic highways in the area listed in the California Scenic Highway Program.

### 4.2.2 California Coastal Act

Under the California Coastal Act of 1976, scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas are considered and protected as a visual resource. Permitted development should be sited and designed to protect public views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas. The act also requires minimizing the alteration of natural landforms, to assure that they are visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas.

The City implements their Local Coastal Plan (LCP) through the Community Plan, various policy reports, the San Dieguito Lagoon Enhancement Program, as well as other goals and policies adopted by the City Council to guide future development within Del Mar. Aesthetic components of the LCP relevant to the Plan area include development of a community center with attractive walkways and landscaped court and open spaces, pedestrian-oriented streetscapes, and architectural style which retains a small-town character and preserves public ocean views and public access to the coastline.

### 4.2.3 Del Mar Community Plan

The Del Mar Community Plan (1976 amended 1985) includes goals and policies that address aesthetics. The overall goal is to "[p]reserve and enhance the special character of Del Mar, the elements of which are a village-like community of substantially single-family residential character, a picturesque and rugged site, and a beautiful beach." Other goals applicable to aesthetics include minimizing the impact of vehicles on the character of the City, and preserving and enhancing the "special residential character and small town atmosphere with its harmonious blending of buildings and landscape in proximity to a beautiful shoreline." As identified in the Community Plan, Camino del Mar is a scenic roadway and views of the Pacific Ocean and other visual resources such as bluffs and trees are to be protected. Jimmy Durante Boulevard (formerly Turf Road), Crest Road, Carmel Valley Road, Coast Boulevard, and Del Mar Heights Road are also considered scenic roadways; however, the Plan area is not located within the scenic views identified for preservation for these roadways.

### 4.2.4 Scenic View Protection Ordinance

DMMC Chapter 23.51 provides for protection of trees, scenic views, and sunlight that contribute to the character of the City and benefit to residents. This chapter is informally known as the Scenic View Protection Ordinance and gives residents the right to preserve scenic views or sunlight that existed at the time they purchased or occupied the residence or in the last 10 years, whichever is shorter. Scenic views are defined as "a view of the ocean, lagoons, canyons, the community and its landscapes and urban forest character, or other scenic vistas, from the Primary Living Area of a residence." Primary Living Areas are defined as the "[single] portion of a residence from which a Scenic View is observed most often by the occupants and guests at the residence."

Under this ordinance, vegetation and trees must be properly maintained within 300 feet of residential properties to preserve scenic views and sunlight. The Municipal Code has established a procedure to resolve conflicts regarding protected trees, scenic views and sunlight rights.

#### 4.2.5 Tree Ordinance

The Tree Ordinance (Chapter 23.50 of the DMMC) provides for the orderly protection of trees, including the following measures:

- B. In the interest of the public health, safety and welfare, as well as general aesthetics of the community and the importance of the ecology of the area, the City of Del Mar finds it necessary to encourage conservation of trees and the application of management techniques to create a healthy, diverse urban forest, including but not limited to pruning, thinning, trimming, shaping, and selective planting and removal of trees and vegetation within the City of Del Mar on private as well as public property. [Ord. 749]
  
- C. The species Torrey Pine, the species Monterey Cypress, and all species of trees located within the Central Commercial zone and the environmentally sensitive Open Space Overlay zone are of particular significance to the City, and should therefore be protected to conserve the environmental qualities of the City.

To further enforce this protection, the City of Del Mar prepared a Public Tree Policy Manual in 2004. This manual directs tree preservation in order to preserve the community's unique, village-like atmosphere, which is distinguished by its community forest. Trees species of particular concern include Torrey pines and Monterey cypress, although the manual indicates all trees within the Plan area are considered significant. A Tree Removal Permit is required to remove a Protected Tree, except in certain situations outlined in the Municipal Code Chapter 23.50.050. In the case of public trees, a separate Encroachment Permit from the City is also required (this statement does not apply to the City or its contractors). Implemented through the Design Review process, trees are also required to be protected during construction to prevent tree loss.

#### 4.2.6 Design Review Ordinance

The Design Review Chapter 23.08 of DMMC Title 23 (also known as Design Review Ordinance) requires all new construction or major remodeling projects within the Plan area to obtain a Design Review Permit (DRP). The purpose of the DRP is to "to achieve and protect a residential, seaside community which is both beautiful and pleasant in character, by fostering and encouraging good design which encompasses the use of harmonious materials and colors, compatible proportional relationships and appropriate use of landscaping, and to protect the citizens of the City of Del Mar."

The DRP process includes several evaluation components, including many related to aesthetics. Overall, the evaluation components provide the following guidance:

- Minimize the disruption of existing natural features such as trees and other vegetation, natural ground forms, and view. This includes blending proposed grading with existing topography.
  
- Include landscaping that matches existing landscaping in the area and compliments and visually softens buildings.

- Unattractive features shall be screened from view.
- Minimize blockage impacts to public and private coastal views, and retains scenic resources.
- Development shall be similar in scale and design (including style, materials, or colors) relative to the surrounding neighborhood; however, similar or identical building façades shall be avoided on adjacent parcels.
- Design lighting to reduce adverse impacts to the local neighborhood and be architecturally integrated.
- Views and designs shall be considered in all elevations.

The Design Review section of the Design Regulations (Section 23.08.070) does not allow projects where “design unreasonably blocks significant public coastal views” or “unreasonably encroaches upon primary scenic views of neighboring property.” As the above information is only a summary of several pages of evaluation components, please refer to the Design Review Ordinance for more information.

As a part of the Design Review aesthetics analysis, story poles may be required to indicate the proposed alignment and massing of a development. Story poles are required for projects that involve a new structure, a second-story addition to an existing structure, or any addition which, in the estimation of staff or the Design Review Board, may cause concerns about inappropriate bulk and mass, or view blockage. The story pole analysis shall be completed per the City’s story poles application guide.

The Design Review Board, or City Council, has the authority to impose conditions on projects to protect and enhance the health, safety, and welfare of the surrounding area, and to ensure that projects fully meet the criteria as set forth in Chapter 23.08 of the Municipal Code. As stated in Chapter 23.08.100, conditions shall be reasonably related to the project.

#### 4.2.7 Historic Preservation Overlay Zone

The DMMC designates the HP-OZ. The HP-OZ protects the architectural and historic integrity of certain historically significant properties located within the City. The Stratford Square and the City Library are the two sites within the Plan area with HP-OZ designations. In addition, the residence at 110 15<sup>th</sup> Street, the former train station, the Powerhouse Community Center located west of Coast Boulevard, and the “Rock House,” a residence located adjacent to the east side of the Plan area are nearby properties with HP-OZ designations.

#### 4.2.8 Other Municipal Code Regulations

Other DMMC regulations also indirectly regulate aesthetic impacts. Supplemental Municipal Code zoning regulations in Chapter 30.86 pertain to undergrounding utilities; fences; screening of unsightly uses including garbage storage space; rooftop structures (chimneys and vents); yard landscaping; and yard projections. The zoning code provides height and density restrictions. Within the Plan area, height restrictions include 26 feet for properties along east side of Camino del Mar and 14 feet along the west side of Camino del Mar. Currently, 70 percent of the structures on the west side of Camino del Mar are nonconforming in that they already exceed this 14-foot building height restriction.

Assignment of a maximum FAR, the amount of building square footage relative to the size of a development parcel is a primary means by which Del Mar and other communities control the visible bulk and mass of structures. The maximum allowable FAR in the Central Commercial Zone is 0.45 and the Public Facilities Zone does not have a FAR limit. Forty percent of the existing buildings in the Village already exceed the current CC Zone 0.45 FAR limitation. In addition, signs are regulated by Municipal Code Chapter 30.84.

### 4.24.3 Visual Character Units

A visual character unit is a portion of the regional landscape that can be thought of as an outdoor room exhibiting a distinct and definable visual character. A character unit will often correspond to a place or district that is commonly known among local viewers. A total of seven visual character units have been identified either within the specific plan boundary or adjacent to the boundary: Civic, Residential, Commercial, Hotel, Plaza, Vacant, Street and Streetscape. These units are important to establish the context of the visual environment. Impacts to a visual environment resulting from project changes, all depend on the visual character setting in which these changes occur.

#### **Civic Character Unit**

Civic spaces within the Village Specific Plan boundary include the City Hall, the Library, and the Post Office. All three of these buildings are unique in character and are set off the street. The City Hall site is underutilized and consists of a building on the corner of Camino del Mar and 11<sup>th</sup> Street and a large parking lot adjacent to Camino del Mar.



**Residential Character Unit**

The residential neighborhoods are both to the west and east of Camino del Mar. The architecture and landscape ranges in style. The buildings are tucked behind the main streets and are either moderately or highly hidden by mature landscape and trees. The buildings heights are limited to protect views to the oceans and generally follow the topography.



### **Commercial Character Units**

The commercial character unit along Camino del Mar varies in architectural style and character. The buildings are limited and consistent in height because of the current restrictions in the municipal code. The setbacks on the buildings vary and are inconsistent, which creates a variable pedestrian space between the roadway and building façade.



**Hotel and Plaza Character Unit**

The Plaza development at the north end of the study area includes a variety of view-oriented restaurants and retail that take advantage of the topography. The project is generally oriented around a pedestrian experience. The Plaza includes an underground parking garage at the north end of the character unit. Across the street to the west is the L'Auberge Del Mar Hotel. It creates a visual gateway into the commercial core of Del Mar. Both of these developments include manicured landscape with modernized, well-maintained architecture.



**Vacant / Parking Character Unit**

Most of the lots in the Del Mar Village area are developed, though the intensity of development is only moderate compared to many downtown areas of similar size to Del Mar. Much of the land not occupied by buildings is used for surface parking. Large lots are found at the City Hall, and diagonal parking is in front of several businesses along Camino del Mar. There is one parcel that is vacant. This parcel is comprised of an asphalt-paved surface with a wooden fence surrounding the site.



**Street and Streetscape Character Unit**

The existing right-of-way along Camino del Mar is 100 feet wide with parking, bike lanes, two lanes of travel in each direction and a median. The parking along this street is inconsistent and includes parallel, head-in and diagonal parking. There are mature plantings within the median, which include random groupings of large, mature trees. The pedestrian spaces between the face of curb and buildings fronting Camino del Mar vary greatly because of the buildings setbacks and other unique site constraints. The paving, planting, furnishings, lighting, and signage are inconsistent.



### **Recreation Character Unit**

The recreation character unit includes Powerhouse Park and the bluffs and coastline along the Pacific Ocean. Many local residents and visitors use these areas for a variety of recreational opportunities. Powerhouse Park consists of an expansive lawn with tables and benches. Adjacent to this park heading south, there are pathways on top of bluffs that are covered in native and non-native vegetation with direct views to the ocean below that individuals use for walking and running.



## Existing Architectural Form and Street Character

The City of Del Mar has an eclectic and unique character resulting from a mixture of architecture, landscape, parking facilities, and the streetscape elements. Camino del Mar is the main road through the city and development is concentrated on each side of it. It is comprised of two travel lanes in both directions with bike lanes inconsistently located along its length. Parking includes a variety of parallel and angled parking with some of it within the right of way. Other spaces are arranged in a “town and country” style on private property in front of buildings. The north and southbound lanes are divided by landscaped medians with mature trees and a variety of smaller shrubs and groundcover.

**Architectural Character:** One of the major contributors to the eclectic style of Del Mar is the variety of architectural styles present along Camino del Mar. The buildings generally take elements from a specific architectural style or period but do not always follow one style consistently. The mixture of styles from lot to lot creates a distinctive style and character. This occurs throughout the Specific Plan area. A good example of this mixture can be seen on the west side of Camino del Mar south of 15<sup>th</sup> Street. The photograph on the left illustrates three unrelated styles for three different buildings. The building on the far right was built in the Tudor Revival style while the building at the far left has elements of Spanish Revival. The building in the middle has no distinct style but was built during the 1970s. It is this blend of variety of mixed styles that contributes to the eclectic feel and unique character of the Village of Del Mar.



The building on the far right was built in the Tudor Revival style while the building at the far left has elements of Spanish Revival. The building in the middle has no distinct style but was built during the 1970s. It is this blend of variety of mixed styles that contributes to the eclectic feel and unique character of the Village of Del Mar.

Although the architectural styles of the buildings are different along Camino del Mar, there are consistencies with respect to materials, doors, and windows openings. The buildings incorporate a variety of materials. All types of colors, textures and materials from stucco finishes to brick can be found along Camino del Mar. Doors and windows also have a significant impact on the success of the pedestrian environment and overall streetscape. The buildings that contribute most to the streetscape environment are the ones that activate the pedestrian experience. These buildings typically have doors that are easily identifiable and windows that allow for shop displays starting no more than 24” above the exterior grade and extend to at least 6’ in height. The majority of buildings along Camino del Mar have larger display windows with easily accessible doors. Below are two photographs that illustrate the use of these larger windows and door entries.





The architectural style varies, from Tudor and Scandinavian architecture to Polynesian hip roof styles.



Though of different heights and scales, these two buildings are good examples of period and style consistent structures that add to the sense of place of Del Mar.



Other buildings do not portray much of a style and are either dominated by the front lot parking areas or tend to be modern architecture with limited indoor/outdoor spatial connections.

**Street Character:** Just as the buildings are architecturally varied, the sidewalk conditions and building placements along Camino del Mar are varied as well. The sidewalk is sometimes constructed of brick pavers, concrete, or a combination of materials. Buildings are sometimes set back to accommodate larger café areas and planting areas and other times buildings are placed in a zero lot line condition. The photograph below (upper left) shows two buildings with two different setbacks. The building on the left has incorporated the additional setback distance for a covered porch and clothing sales rack while the building on the right is utilizing the space for exterior cafe seating. Larger setbacks can also be used to create courtyards or additional exterior space to be shared amongst buildings. The photograph below (right) shows two buildings with a building between that is setback more than 10'. This large setback allows for some relief from the building edge, but also provides an area of larger outdoor sale opportunities or alternatively a café or restaurant. Variations in setbacks enhance the streetscape experience and add interest to the physical environment while creating opportunities for additional exterior uses. The addition of different sidewalk materials and varied building setbacks contribute to the unique character of this area. The variation between design elements indicates that changes to the area will not dramatically contrast or “stand out” by being different. A unifying design element is missing from this portion of Del Mar. Efforts in the future may attempt to provide uniformity through the walkway materials, street lights, benches and plant material found along the corridor. Recently, some efforts have been made in terms of adding a “Del Mar” branding to its benches and trash receptacles. Also, many of the sidewalk areas recently added are providing a consistent exposed chipped rock aggregate that will help to provide a unifying element along the street.



Many buildings along Camino del Mar address the pedestrian experience successfully. Although the average sidewalk width is approximately 10', the sidewalk contains many streetscape elements including, benches, planter boxes with small shrubs, outdoor cafes, clothing racks, signage and other human scaled elements. The photograph at the left illustrates an example of how street elements set the character of the streetscape.



Plazas associated with some of the larger developments are often activated by outside eating and sitting areas. Shade, water features and defined spaces are often included.



Though both examples have outdoor spaces at the front of the buildings, the image on the left lacks activation of its space based on adjacent land uses and lack of seating facilities.



Some buildings do not have clear windows that encourage window-shopping and others are negatively affected by the angle parking that forces the walkways away from the street.



There is a great deal of variety in rooflines and overall forms, as well as setbacks and parking areas.



Many of the streetscapes are highly detailed with plant material, overheads, seating and fountains.



Very nice examples include those with a great integration of interior or exterior spaces or those that have used plant material and seat walls to define a transitional space from public to private.



Some areas have great spatial definition, some created away from the street while others are spatially flat and linear with limited façade variations that define the street wall.



The street wall varies and is often determined by the sidewalk and angle off-street parking. Pedestrians are not always up against the road edge, which makes for a non-contiguous street edge.

#### 4.34.4 Project Viewshed and Views

**Viewshed Definition:** the natural environment that is visible from one or more viewing points (Merriam-Webster). From a Geographic information systems (GIS) standpoint, viewsheds can be described as the determination of visibility of a surface DEM (digital elevation model) by one or more observer points located on that surface. The visibility of each surface cell center is determined by comparing the altitude angle of the cell center (surface) with the altitude angle to the local horizon of each observer point. The local horizon is computed by considering the intervening terrain between the point of observation and the current cell center. If the point lies above the local horizon, it is considered visible (see Figure 4-2). The landform surface model was obtained from an existing digital elevation model. The resolution of each surface cell analyzed in the model is 10 meters by 10 meters, or approximately 1,076 square feet.

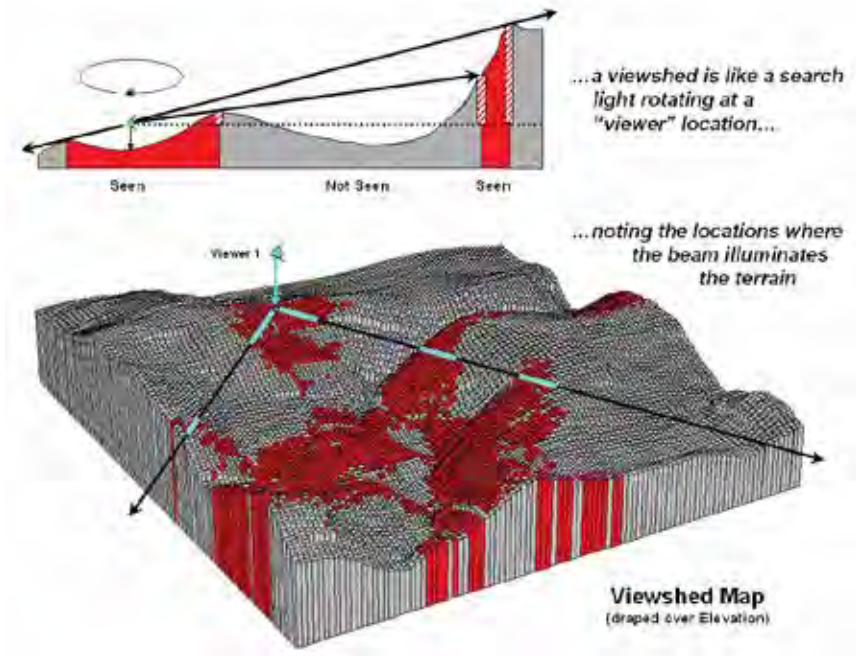
**Viewshed Processes:** A viewshed for a single vantage point may be run across a surface in order to predict what can be seen from that single vantage point. This is valuable in validating whether areas across the surface are visible or not from that specific location. This does not, however, give us quantitative information about the degree of visibility for a given area. To simulate how many project features, or how much project area can be seen, a viewshed can be run from the project features (or area) using this surface. Many visual test points are used in these models and the visible points can be added up to give an idea of the overall extent of the Viewshed.

The dynamics of the Del Mar visual environment requires the development of two distinctively different viewshed types. Views of the Pacific Ocean are an important aspect of living in Del Mar. They affect property values and the quality of life. Though one large body of water, the ocean in visual terms has: a horizon line or background view; an open water view or middle ground view; and a coastal beach / shore view or a foreground view. The proposed buildings on Camino del Mar have the potential of blocking views of the ocean by interceding or piercing the view corridor. A viewshed model was developed first to determine the leading edge of the ocean as seen by all of the residents on the slopes east of Camino del Mar. Then, the leading edge of this view was selected and a viewshed model was developed to show the areas that can see the multiple points along this linear leading edge in the ocean. Interceding buildings along Camino del Mar, as well as other topography in the area, determine what can see this leading edge and what cannot (see Figure 4-4). It should be noted that vegetation and other buildings outside the Specific Plan area are not in the model, so the results should be considered as the worst-case situation. The real viewshed model can be dramatically less than this due to other buildings and vegetation. The computer model was then modified to include increased building heights allowed in the Specific Plan and another viewshed model was calculated (see Figure 4-5). Finally, the difference between the current viewshed and the proposed viewshed based on the building height differences was calculated (see Figure 4-6).

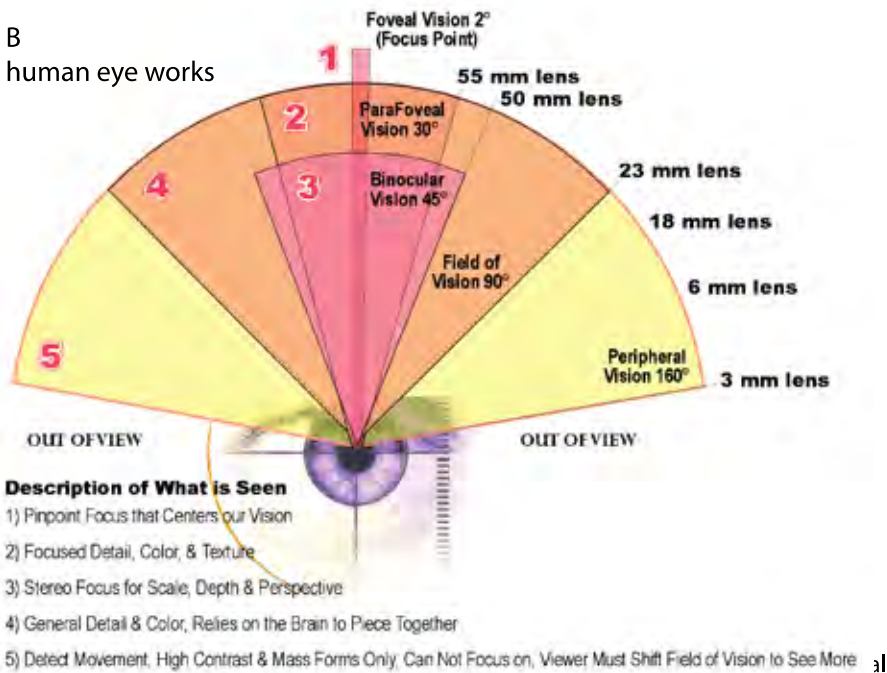
Using the processes above, the viewsheds to the project and from the project were analyzed. As shown in Figure 4-7, the majority of the buildings along Camino del Mar are visible from residences located uphill between Camino del Mar and Luneta Drive and again at the residences to the north and south of Crest Drive. Locations along Camino del Mar also have high visibility of other buildings along Camino Del Mar. The remaining areas within the City have a low to moderate visibility of the buildings along Camino del Mar.

**Figure 4-2: Viewshed and Human Eyesight Dynamics**

How a viewshed works



**Figure B**  
How a human eye works



A second series of viewshed models were developed that show the visibility of the buildings themselves, without regard to the background ocean views. This second viewshed model was run showing the areas that can see the current buildings along Camino del Mar. Then the computer model was adjusted by increasing building heights to 30' with variable roof heights from 26' to 30' (see Figure 4-8). The difference between the building heights and their affect on the viewshed extent is shown on Figure 4-9.

The view corridor summary map shown on Figure 4-10, illustrates where view corridors exist through the Specific Plan area to the Pacific Ocean. This analysis indicates locations of primary, secondary, intermittent and partial ocean view corridors. Generally, primary view corridors consist of the east-west streets that extend through the Plan area to the bluffs. The secondary views corridors originate from roadways located to the east of the Plan area along streets that either do not go all the way through Camino del Mar, or where the angle of the streets a few blocks to the east of the Specific Plan area, allow for additional views to the west. The analysis also locates where intermittent views of the ocean are visible from Camino del Mar, generally where buildings are currently missing, or large gaps between buildings are available. In some cases, the elevation along Camino del Mar, affords some minor views towards the northwest, over existing single story buildings. Finally, this analysis determines where private parcels along Camino del Mar, have portals, gaps or plazas on the street that allow users of Camino del Mar to see small portions of ocean views. However, most of these views are very confined or are currently blocked by other buildings and trees.

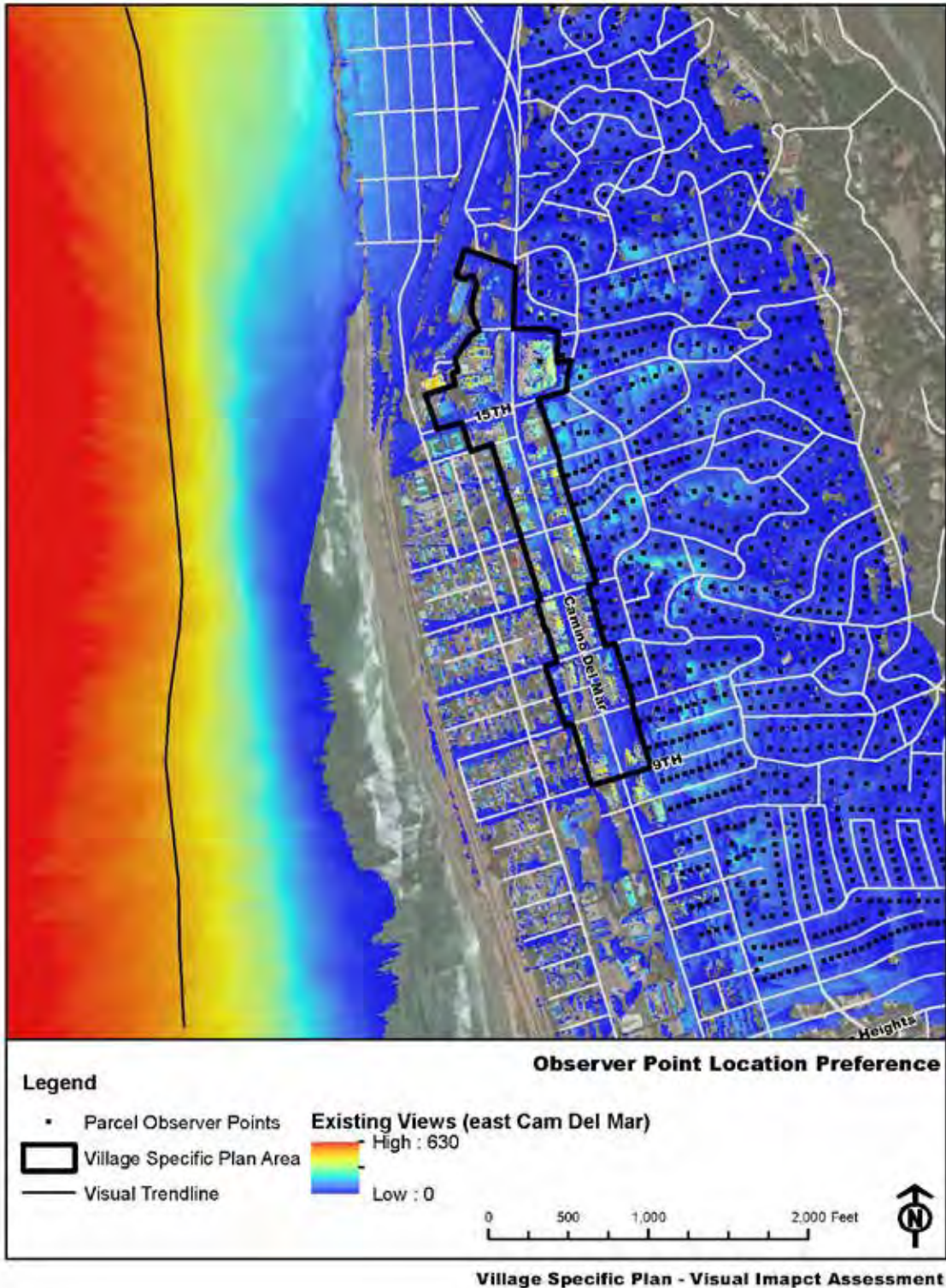
The Viewshed summary map also indicates areas to the east of Camino del Mar that have been grouped into view categories. Upper slopes east of Camino del Mar above a certain elevation (shown in light yellow), see entirely over the buildings along Camino del Mar. In some cases, they may see the views of buildings in the specific plan area, but they are not blocking middle-ground views of the ocean beyond the beach, nor do they interrupt the horizon line. Whether buildings are 14' or 30' from this area, their presence would not be considered a blocking of a view corridor to the ocean. This zone is overlaid on the Viewshed maps indicating visibility of the trend line in the ocean. Those area that are a very pale yellow, do not have visibility of the ocean, due to interceding topography and canyon landforms. Those that have an orange to red color showing through the pale yellow, have increasing degrees of visibility of the ocean.

The lower slopes show in bright yellow on Figure 4-10, are those from approximately one to two blocks east of Camino del Mar. Depending on topography, these roadway segments and private parcels, potentially have a small portion of their views blocked by buildings that are 26' or taller. Several existing buildings currently block views of the lower portions of the ocean, and dozens of mature trees also interrupt these views. In general, a building between 26' and 30' would be part of the viewing scene of the middle-ground from this area, and the near shoreline out past the trend line (shown on Figures 4-3 to 4-6). The horizon line is not likely to be interrupted by buildings up to 30'.

The next zone shown on Figure 4-10 (in red) includes parcels that are generally from ½ block to 1 block from Camino del Mar. These properties do have views blocked off by buildings on the east side that are greater than 14' in height and buildings on the west side of about 20'-24' in height. Some views do exist from this location, but most of these properties are either commercial properties on the back side of the eastern lots on Camino del Mar, or front the alley. Finally, the green zone shows areas along Camino del Mar that have there views of the ocean completely blocked by any building that is 6' to 14' in height.

**Figure 4-3: Determining Ocean Views from Slopes**

This figure shows the ocean views as seen from the slopes east of Camino del Mar. The deeper the red, the more houses (indicated with black dots) that can see this part of the ocean.



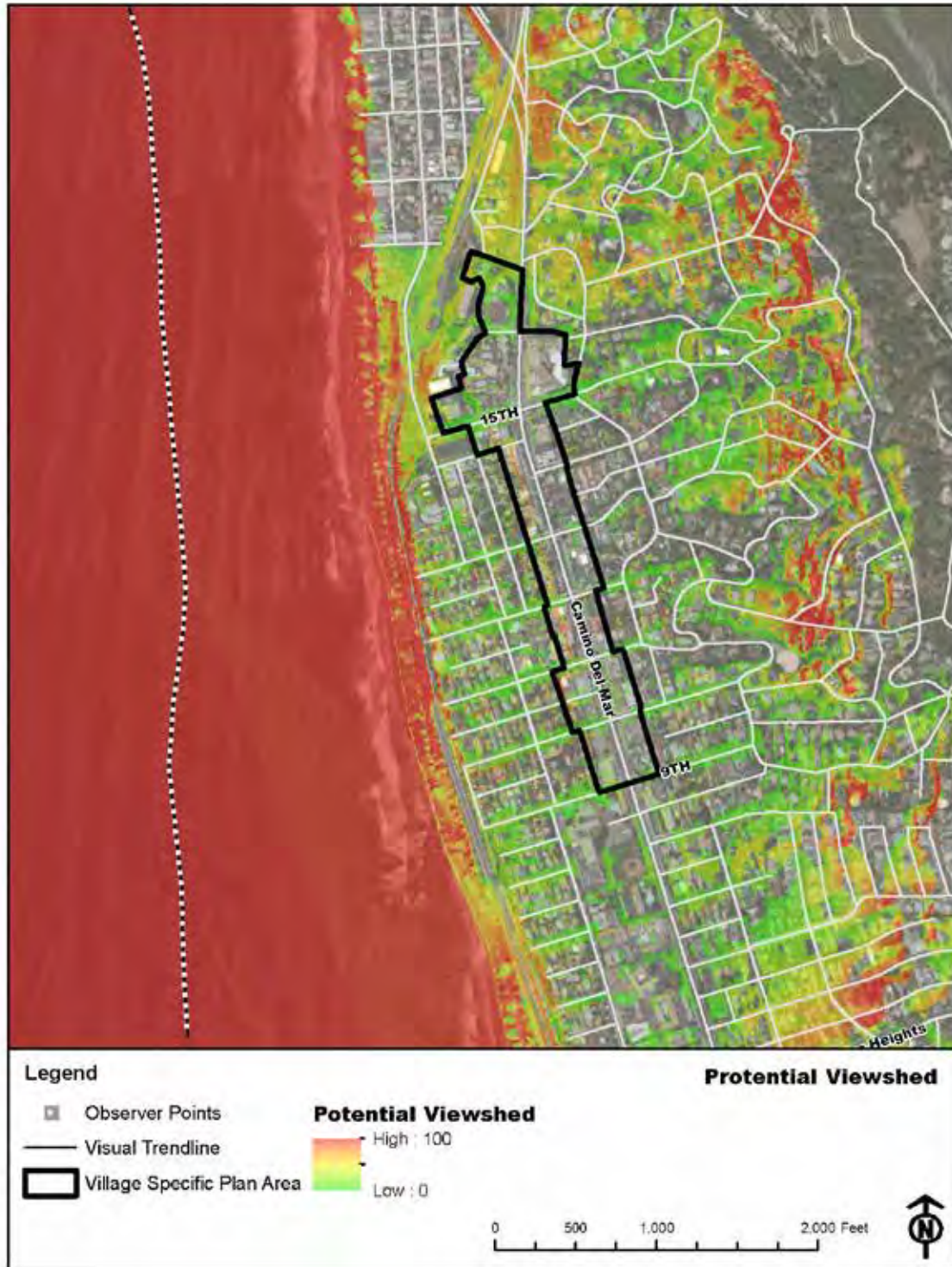
**Figure 4-4: Viewshed Trendline with Existing Buildings along CDM**

Viewshed of the trendline (dashed line) on the ocean determined to be the most visible part of the near ocean that most structures on the slopes east of Camino del Mar can see (given current buildings and landforms that block views).



**Figure 4-5: Viewshed Trendline with Proposed Buildings along CDM**

Viewshed of the ocean (trendline) given increased building heights (from 26' to 30' variable roofline) along Camino del Mar.



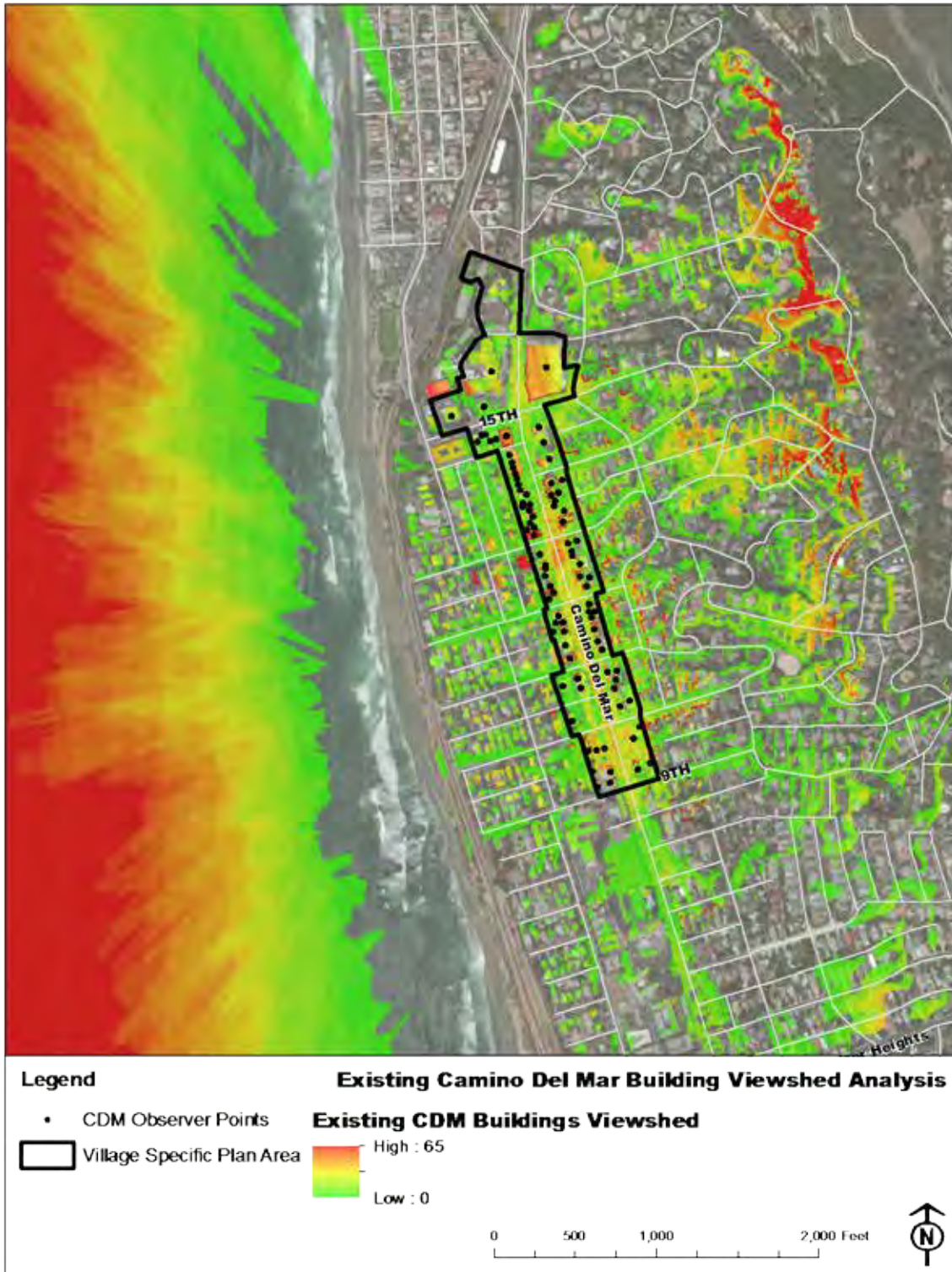
**Figure 4-6: Viewshed Trendline Net Difference**

Net difference of areas where portions of the view of the ocean (trendline) would be partially blocked by building heights along Camino del Mar versus existing building heights.



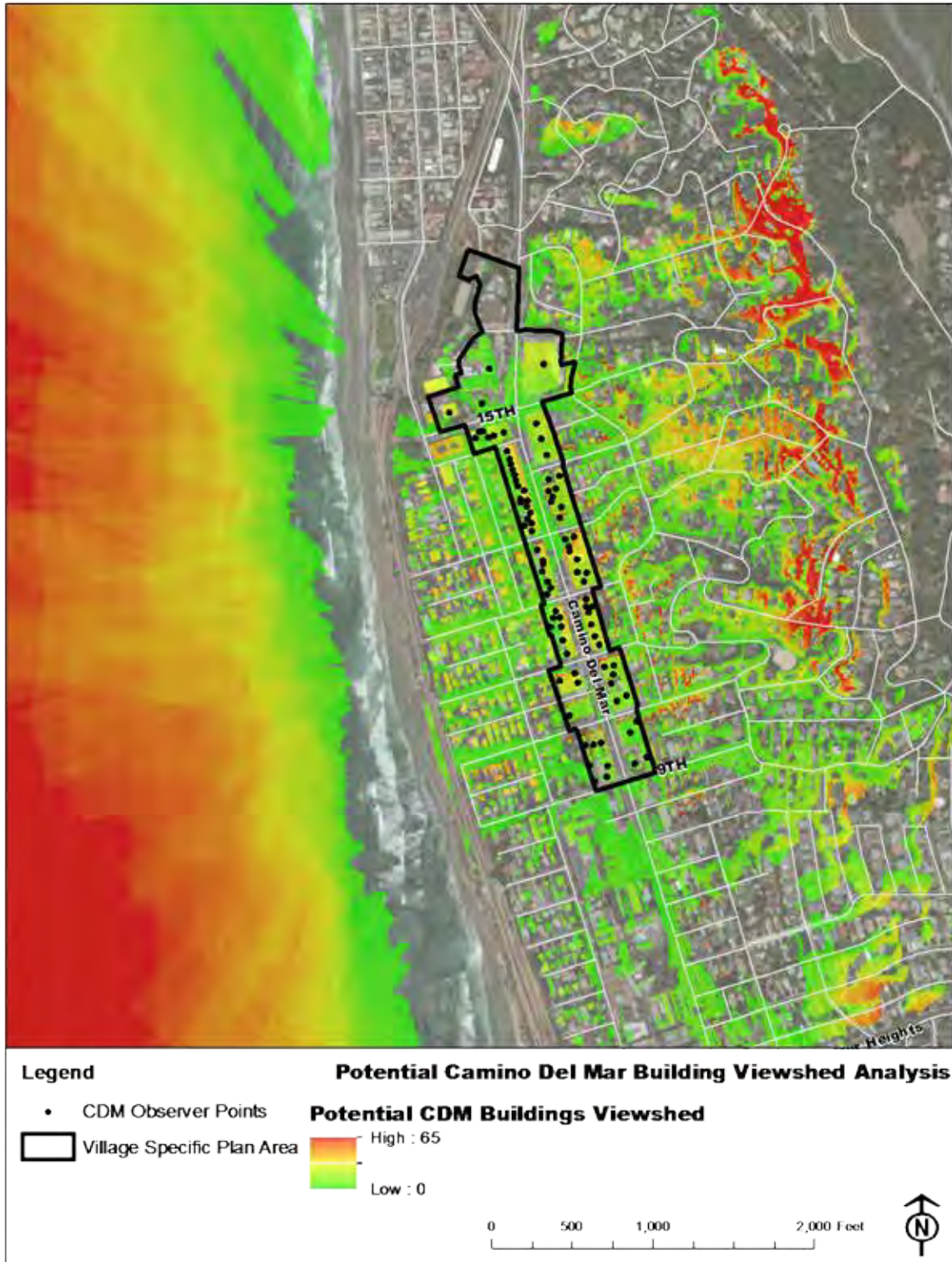
**Figure 4-7: Viewshed of Existing Buildings along CDM**

Areas in color indicate those areas of Del Mar that can see existing buildings along Camino del Mar. Red areas can see most all buildings, whereas areas with no color see no buildings.



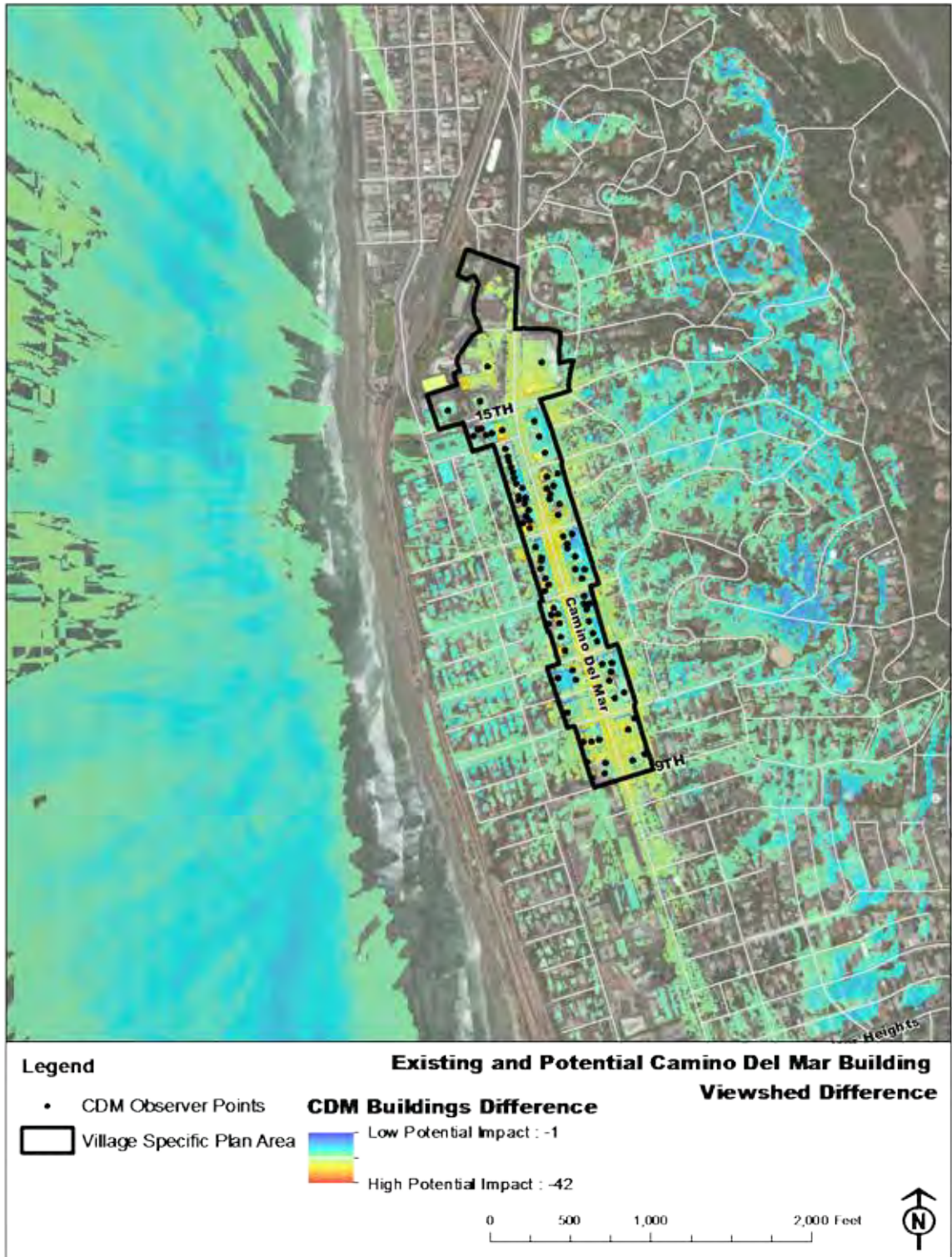
**Figure 4-8: Viewshed of the Proposed Buildings along Camino del Mar**

The viewshed shown indicates areas that can see the existing and proposed buildings. New buildings have replaced existing buildings where it has been assumed the site would redevelop.

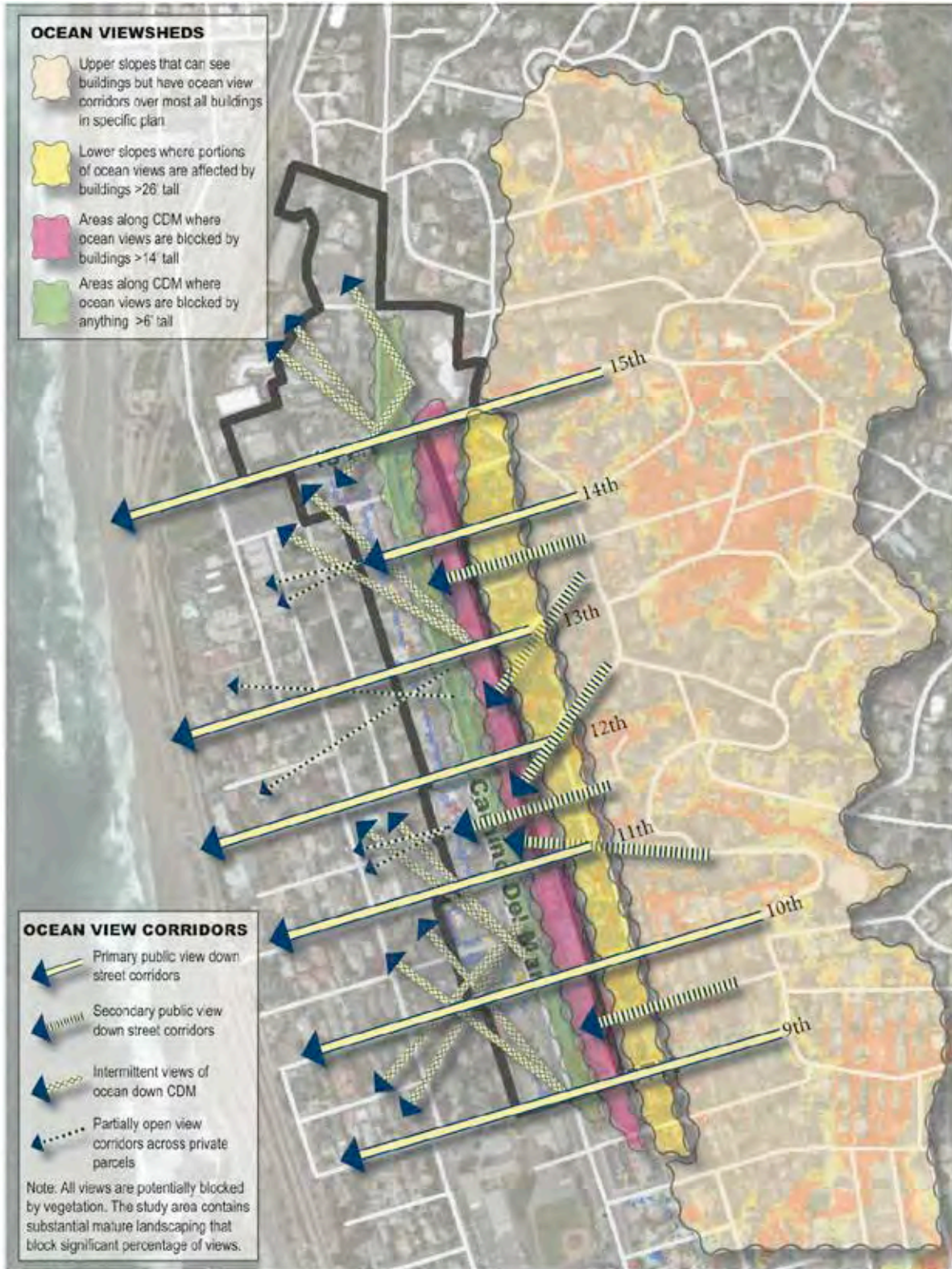


**Figure 4-9: Viewshed Net Difference of Building Heights**

Net difference of properties affected by changes in building heights (note that blue colors indicate minor change in visibility while orange indicates a more dramatic change).



**Figure 4-10: Ocean Viewsheds and View Corridors Along and Through Camino del Mar**





Most of the east to west streets have views of the ocean, but the amount of ocean seen can vary dramatically as you head to the east, where just one block will allow you to see over most buildings.



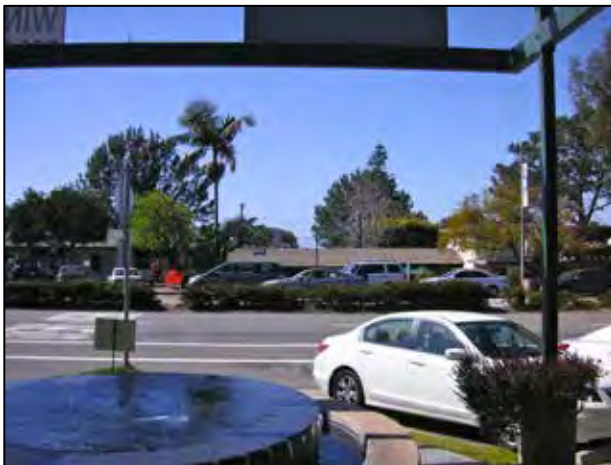
Views heading north or southbound on Camino del Mar are much more limited. Where they do appear, it is the result of a break in building masses and where mature plant material does not exist.



A few midblock views can be seen between buildings. A portion of the ocean can be seen from across from the east side of the street, though more dramatic views can be seen from the west side.



Other openings exist, but contain a large amount of walls or landscaping that blocks most of the view.



Current buildings block most of the views as seen from the road or sidewalk. Even a depressed 14' building cannot be seen over the top from this side. Where buildings are missing, views do exist.



Views over buildings occur once you head east up the streets and gain altitude. Views over the west side buildings from the first half block eastward only occur over the top of 14' buildings. It is likely that buildings at 26' to 30' will not be seen over unless you travel east of the alleyway.

## 5.0 EXISTING VISUAL RESOURCES AND VIEWER RESPONSE

### 5.1 Methods used for Visual Resource Analysis

Individual visual resources, when combined, make up the uniqueness of visual character. The visible individual components of a landscape include landform, landcover, water bodies, vegetation and man-made development.

**Step 1: Identify Visual Character** – Visual character is descriptive and non-evaluative, which means it is based on defined attributes that are neither good nor bad in themselves. A change in visual character cannot be described as having good or bad attributes until it is compared with the viewer response to that change. If there is public preference for the established visual character of a regional landscape and resistance to a project that would contrast that character, then changes in the visual character can be evaluated.

**Step 2: Assess Visual Quality** – Visual quality is evaluated by identifying the vividness, intactness and unity present in the viewshed. This method should correlate with public judgments of visual quality well enough to predict those judgments. This approach to evaluating visual quality can also help identify specific methods for mitigating each adverse impact that may occur as a result of a project.

The three criteria for evaluating visual quality can be defined as follows:

**Vividness** is the visual power or memorability of landscape components as they combine in distinctive visual patterns.

**Intactness** is the visual integrity of the natural and man-built landscape and its freedom from encroaching elements. It can be present in well-kept urban and rural landscapes, as well as in natural settings.

**Unity** is the visual coherence and compositional harmony of the landscape considered as a whole. It frequently attests to the careful design of individual manmade components in the landscape.

## 5.2 Existing Visual Resources

### 5.2.1 Scenic Resources

The City of Del Mar begins at the edge of the Pacific Ocean and follows the topography up toward the east. Many residences and businesses in Del Mar have views of the ocean. Under the California Coastal Act of 1976, scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas are considered and protected as a visual resource. Permitted development should be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas. The act also requires minimizing the alteration of natural landforms to assure that they are visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas.

#### **View of Pacific Ocean from residential neighborhood along 10<sup>th</sup> Street**



There are a diverse collection of street trees in the Village Plan area, including Eucalyptus species, and Monterey Pines and Torrey Pines along Camino del Mar in the medians and throughout the residential neighborhoods. The Tree Ordinance (Section 23.50) of the Del Mar Municipal Code provides for the orderly protection of trees, including the following measures:

B. In the interest of the public health, safety and welfare, as well as general aesthetics of the community and the importance of the ecology of the area, the City of Del Mar finds it necessary to encourage conservation of trees and the application of management techniques to create a healthy, diverse urban forest, including but not limited to pruning, thinning, trimming, shaping, and selective planting and removal of trees and vegetation within the City of Del Mar on private as well as public property. [Ord. 749]

C. The species Torrey Pine, the species Monterey Cypress, and all species of trees located within the Central Commercial zone and the environmentally sensitive Open Space Overlay zone are of particular significance to the City, and should therefore be protected to conserve the environmental qualities of the City.

#### **Specimen Torrey Pines are found throughout the City of Del Mar**



The Del Mar Municipal Code designates the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HP-OZ). The HP-OZ protects the architectural and historic integrity of certain historically significant properties located within the City, but also provides the means to designate additional properties as historically significant. Within the HP-OZ, no building, improvement, structure, or portion thereof shall be erected, constructed, demolished, relocated, converted, altered, or enlarged, nor shall any lot or premises be excavated or graded unless approved by the Design Review Board.

The City of Del Mar has two designated Historical Sites. Both Stratford Square (1438–1454 Camino del Mar; 225 West 15<sup>th</sup> Street) and the City Library (1309 Camino del Mar) have HP-OZ designations and have been designated by the City as historic landmark properties.

**The Del Mar Library and Eucalyptus trees along Camino del Mar**



**Stratford Square**



Adjacent to the Plan area are other parcels with the HP-OZ designation, including a linear parcel west of the Post Office along the east side of the railroad tracks, the Powerhouse park located west of Coast Boulevard, and the Ivan Gayler Trust located adjacent to the east side of the Plan area, north of 15<sup>th</sup> Street.

### Powerhouse Park



The State Scenic Highway Program lists highways that are either eligible for designation as a scenic highway or are already designated as a scenic highway. Designation as a scenic highway depends on how much of the natural landscape travelers can see the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes on the traveler's enjoyment of the view (Caltrans, 2010). While there are no state designated or eligible scenic highways in the area listed in the California Scenic Highway Program, the Community Plan does designate scenic roadways. Camino del Mar is a scenic roadway and views of the Pacific Ocean and visual resources such as bluffs and trees are to be protected. Jimmy Durante Boulevard (formerly Turf Road), Crest Road, Carmel Valley Road, Coast Boulevard, and Del Mar Heights Road are also considered scenic roadways.

## 5.2.2 Existing Visual Character

The City of Del Mar is made up of an eclectic style of architecture, landscape, parking areas, and streetscapes. Camino del Mar is the visually prominent road through the city. It is made up of two travel lanes in both directions with bike lanes and either parallel or angled parking along much of its edges. In most locations, the north and southbound lanes are divided by landscaped medians with mature trees and a variety of smaller shrubs and groundcover. The pedestrian walkways adjacent to the road have variable widths due to a variety of building setbacks. The walks are sometimes difficult to navigate because they are discontinuous and the widths are inadequate for the number of people along the walk during peak times. The walkway surfaces and landscape along the road is also made up of a variety of materials and includes a few large trees. There is a consistent change in elevation and landform from the ocean moving toward the east. The majority of the buildings in Del Mar are limited to two stories in order to protect ocean views. The architecture is a mixture of historical and modern styles but also contain a few obsolete or poorly detailed buildings that detract from the visual intactness of this corridor. The common design form found along the eclectic collection of architectural treatments, is the dominance of human scale and visual interest provided by the variety of shops and outdoor spaces. The changes in building materials, display of public art or shop items for sale, all carry with it, a very human scale.

The primary concentration of businesses includes office, retail, restaurants, and hotels located along Camino del Mar. The residential areas take advantage of the ocean views and are located to both the east and west of Camino Del Mar. The beach and adjacent bluffs along with Powerhouse Park provide recreational opportunities.

## 5.2.3 Existing Visual Quality

The visual quality of each character unit is shown in Table 5-1: Visual Quality Assessment of Character Units. This qualitative evaluation takes into account the vividness, intactness, and unity of the study area.

**Table 5-1: Visual Quality Assessment of Character Units**

<b>Character Unit</b>	<b>Vividness</b>	<b>Intactness</b>	<b>Unity</b>	<b>Overall Visual Quality</b>
<b><i>Civic</i></b>	Low to Moderate	Low	Low	Low
<b><i>Residential</i></b>	Moderate	Moderate	High	Moderate
<b><i>Commercial</i></b>	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Moderate
<b><i>Hotel and Plaza</i></b>	High	High	High	High
<b><i>Vacant / Parking</i></b>	Low	Low	Low	Low
<b><i>Street and Streetscape</i></b>	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Moderate
<b><i>Recreation</i></b>	High	High	High	High

### 5.3 Methods of Predicting Viewer Response

Viewer response is composed of two elements: viewer sensitivity and viewer exposure. These elements combine to form a method of predicting how the public might react to visual changes brought about by a project.

**Viewer sensitivity** is defined both as the viewers' concern for scenic quality and the viewers' response to change in the visual resources that make up the view. Local values and goals may confer visual significance on landscape components and areas that would otherwise appear unexceptional in a visual resource analysis. Even when the existing appearance of a project site is uninspiring, a community may still object to projects that fall short of its visual goals.

**Viewer exposure** is typically assessed by measuring the number of viewers exposed to the resource change, type of viewer activity, duration of their view, speed at which the viewer moves, and position of the viewer. High viewer exposure heightens the importance of early consideration of design, art, and architecture and their roles in managing the visual resource effects of a project.

#### 5.3.1 Existing Viewer Groups, Viewer Sensitivity, and Viewer Exposure

A summary of the viewer sensitivity and exposure can be found in Table 5-2 and are described below. A total of 7 viewer groups include pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, retail workers or customers, and hotel and restaurant workers or customers, office workers, and residents were considered.

**Pedestrians** are individuals utilizing adjacent walks within the project area. The view of the project would be in the foreground for this group and as a pedestrian moving along the corridor of Camino del Mar, the viewing duration would be short to moderate, depending on their walking speed and dwell time in front of shops and restaurants. Pedestrians using this area have a moderate sensitivity to visual change. Many of the pedestrians are visitors to Del Mar and don't frequently visit the area to notice changes.

**Bicyclists** are individuals biking along Camino del Mar. Del Mar sits along a popular route that runs along the coast and bicyclists throughout the region use the bike lanes along Camino del Mar. The number of bicyclists is moderate when comparing them to the quantity of other viewer groups such as vehicular drivers, but still significant enough to note. Similar to the pedestrians, the project is in the foreground as bicyclists are traveling through the project area, but the viewing duration is short resulting in low viewer exposure and low viewer sensitivity.

**Motorists** are drivers and passengers utilizing surface streets in the project area. The viewer sensitivity to change is moderate to low. There are existing views to the ocean along Camino del Mar and through street corridors running in the east/west direction also exist to see views of the ocean. Camino del Mar is sometimes unfavorably used as an alternative route to Interstate 5 which runs in the north / south direction, parallel to Del Mar Village. This roadway is often congested during night and morning commute times. It is also congested during weekends and when special events such as the San Diego County Fair and Del Mar Racetrack are running resulting in a high quantity of viewers. The viewing duration is short and the project is in the foreground of the view resulting in a moderate viewer exposure.

**Retail Workers or Customers** are individuals working or purchasing goods or service in the project area. This viewer group has a moderate viewer exposure. The quantity of viewers and the viewing duration is moderate, and the view of the project is in the foreground. Retail workers and customers have a moderate sensitivity to the view and changes. They are often concerned with the aesthetic and visibility of storefronts or blockage of business façades and the visual relationship of the immediate visual environment.

**Hotel/ Restaurant Workers or Customers** are individuals working or procuring services at a hotel or restaurant within the project area. This group has a high sensitivity to changes in the visual environment. They rely on the visual resource of the ocean to create a unique experience for patrons or customers. They are also concerned with the façade of the buildings and visibility of immediate surroundings and aesthetics. The proposed project is in the foreground of this viewer group's view. The viewing duration is moderate and the quantity of viewers is moderate resulting in a moderate viewer exposure.

**Office Workers** are individuals working in a business within the project study area. There is a low quantity of viewers within this group, but the viewing duration is moderate to high. The view of the proposed project is in the foreground. The viewer exposure and viewer sensitivity to changes are low to moderate. This viewer group does not rely on the visual resources to enhance their business, but it is an added benefit.

**Homeowners/Residents** are individuals owning homes adjacent to the project. There are no residents within the project boundary; however, due to the topography of Del Mar, the gradual slope up from the ocean in the eastern direction results in residents with views to the project. Residents have a high viewer exposure because of their long viewing duration, and close proximity to the project. The quantity of viewers is high, and under the existing Del Mar Municipal Code, individual residents' private views are protected as seen by an owner's designated primary viewing room. In addition, many of the residents in Del Mar have a partial or full view of the ocean from their residence and so the viewer sensitivity is high to visual changes.

Table 5-2: Summary of Viewer Groups

<b>Viewer Group</b>	<b>Quantity of Viewers</b>	<b>Viewing Duration</b>	<b>Distance from Viewer to Project Corridor</b>	<b>Viewer Exposure</b>	<b>Viewer Sensitivity</b>
<b>Pedestrian</b>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Short to Moderate</i>	<i>Foreground</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Moderate</i>
<b>Bicyclist</b>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Short</i>	<i>Foreground</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Low</i>
<b>Motorist</b>	<i>High</i>	<i>Short</i>	<i>Foreground</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Low to Moderate</i>
<b>Retail Worker or Customer</b>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Foreground</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Moderate</i>
<b>Hotel / Restaurant Worker or Customer</b>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Foreground</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>High</i>
<b>Office Workers</b>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Foreground</i>	<i>Low to Moderate</i>	<i>Low to Moderate</i>
<b>Home Owners</b>	<i>High</i>	<i>Long</i>	<i>Foreground to Middleground</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>

## 6.0 VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### 6.1 Method of Assessing Impacts

The visual impacts of a project under CEQA are determined by assessing the visual resource change due to the project and predicting viewer response to that change. Visual resource change is the sum of the change in visual character and change in visual quality. The first step in determining visual resource change is to assess the compatibility of the proposed project with the visual character of the existing landscape. The second step is to compare the visual quality of the existing resources with projected visual quality after the project is constructed. The viewer response to project changes is the sum of viewer exposure and viewer sensitivity to the project. The resulting level of visual impact is determined by combining the severity of resource change with the degree to which people are likely to oppose the change. This project is particularly interested in impacts to view corridors. The process for view quality impacts is to first determine the extent of view corridors, model a viewshed and then determine if the project is likely to block a view corridor of distant viewing scenes of the ocean.

### 6.2 Definition of Visual Impact Levels

This document will use the following levels of impact to determine significance:

**Low** - Minor adverse change to the existing visual resource, with low viewer response to change in the visual environment. May or may not require mitigation.

**Moderate** - Moderate adverse change to the visual resource with moderate viewer response. Impact can be mitigated within five years using conventional practices.

**Moderately High** - Moderate adverse visual resource change with high viewer response or high adverse visual resource change with moderate viewer response. Extraordinary mitigation practices may be required. Landscape treatment required will generally take longer than five years to mitigate.

**High** – A high level of negative change to the resource or a high level of viewer response to visual change such that architectural design and landscape treatment cannot mitigate the impacts. Viewer response level is high.

Based on CEQA thresholds, a High or Moderately High Adverse impact would be considered as a significant impact.

### 6.3 Analysis of Candidate Key Views

It is necessary to select a number of possible key viewpoints that most clearly display the visual effects of the project. These candidate key views represent the primary viewer groups that would potentially be affected by the project. Based on fieldwork, viewer groups, probable changes, viewing duration, and viewer sensitivity, candidate key views were selected and building massings were draped over the existing conditions to help understand the impacts of the Specific Plan. Descriptions of the candidate key views can be found in Appendix A.

## 6.4 Analysis of Key View Simulations

Because the study area is visible from a very large area, key views that most clearly display the visual effects of the project have been selected for simulation. These key views represent areas where visually prominent project features would affect existing views. The existing visual quality of each of these key views and the initial contrasts have been evaluated and discussed below.

### 6.4.1.1 Key View Simulation "A"

This key view looks northbound on the west side of Camino del Mar, south of the 12<sup>th</sup> Street intersection and is depicted in Figure 6-1.

#### *Existing Visual Quality / Character*

The existing visual character of the buildings in the key view are uniform in scale. The mature trees and planting along the street also create a uniform view and are considered to be visual resources contributing to the character of the area. However, large gaps in storefronts along Camino del Mar create a visual environment that is not intact for a pedestrian or motorist.

#### *Proposed Project Features*

This series of simulations depicts a transition of the proposed allowable building heights. The first image shows the infill of buildings, which would include the allowable increase 14 feet for the first floor. The second image shows a second story on the west side of Camino del Mar for a total of 26 feet. The third image shows the building with a four-foot maximum articulated roof for a total of 30 feet. Note that a partial parking reconfiguration is shown on this image, representing a probable phasing whereby portions of blocks adjacent to new development will be reconfigured while other portions may remain with "town and country" (storefront parking on private property) parking until redeveloped.

#### *Change to Visual Quality / Character*

The proposed changes have a low visual contrast and may actually increase the visual quality of the streetscape as seen by a pedestrian or motorist along Camino del Mar. There is an opportunity to improve the vividness and unity of the space through the design of the pedestrian environment. The building heights are not excessive in terms of scale and massing compared with other buildings along Camino del Mar. The articulated roofline (30') does not increase the appearance of height above the flat roof (26') version. No existing views along this segment of Camino del Mar will be affected by these changes.

#### *Viewer Response*

The reaction to the proposed changes will not likely be negative from this view point. The majority of the viewers include motorist bicyclists and pedestrians. Their sensitivity and exposure to the view is low to moderate mostly because of the short viewing duration and with the exception of the motorists, the low quantity of viewers.

#### *Resulting Visual Impact*

Overall, the resulting visual impact of this view has a low adverse change and might actually improve the uniformity, intactness, and vividness of the view. The changes to the view would not require mitigation and would be considered less than significant.

Figure 6-1: Key View Simulation "A"



6.4.1.2 Key View Simulation "B"

This view looks north on the east side of Camino del Mar south of the 12<sup>th</sup> Street intersection and is depicted in Figure 6-2.

*Existing Visual Quality / Character*

Same as Simulation "A".

*Proposed Project Features*

Same as Simulation "A".

*Change to Visual Quality / Character*

Same as Simulation "A".

*Viewer Response*

Same as Simulation "A".

*Resulting Visual Impact*

Overall, the resulting visual change of this key view would only have a low adverse change and might actually improve the uniformity, intactness, and vividness of the view. The changes to the visual environment would not require mitigation and would be considered less than significant.

Figure 6-2: Key View Simulation "B"



### 6.4.1.3 Key View Simulation "C"

This key view looks north on Camino del Mar just south of the intersection at 11<sup>th</sup> Street and is depicted in Figure 6-3.

#### *Existing Visual Quality / Character*

The majority of the buildings on the west side of Camino del Mar are blocked by mature trees and planting in the median. Along the east side of the street, the buildings, landscape and setbacks are not vivid, nor are they uniform. The pedestrian environment is disrupted by the parallel parking along the street and in front of store fronts. For a pedestrian or a motorist, the visual experience is not intact nor would it be considered a high visual quality area.

#### *Proposed Project Features*

The proposed project features include the reconfiguration of the street to include angled parking, improved streetscape, infill of buildings, and the roundabout at the intersection. Additional parkway planting is proposed to improve the pedestrian environment, while assuring that the visibility through the traffic circle is open and clear for safety purposes as well as to make sure that trees do not block view corridors from the east to the west on 11<sup>th</sup>.

#### *Change to Visual Quality / Character*

The proposed changes have a low visual impact and may actually increase the intactness of the view as seen by a pedestrian or motorist. The proposed features would eliminate a large mature tree in the existing median reducing the vividness of the median, but it would be replaced by other trees on the parkway side of the street. Overall, the walkway environment and the roundabout itself, will increase the visual quality of the area due to increased landscaping, improved paving materials and the decrease in the scale of the street resulting from the proposed improvements in the street.

#### *Viewer Response*

The reaction to the proposed changes will not likely be negative from this view point. The majority of the viewers include motorist bicyclists and pedestrians. Their sensitivity and exposure to the view is low to moderate mostly because of the short viewing duration and with the exception of the motorists, the low quantity of viewers. Overall, the scale to these viewers is positive and the pedestrian and vehicular environments have been clarified and improved in visual quality.

#### *Resulting Visual Impact*

Overall, the resulting visual impact of this view has a low adverse change and might actually improve the uniformity, intactness, and vividness of the view and improve the visual environment. Because the large mature tree would be eliminated, the replacement of this tree in the immediate visual area is assumed to be part of the project as proposed.

Figure 6-3: Key View Simulation “C”



#### 6.4.1.4 Key View Simulation "D1"

This view looks west from the library patio adjacent to Camino del Mar and is depicted in Figure 6-4.

##### *Existing Visual Quality / Character*

This view is high in intactness and visual quality. This is an important view of the ocean. In addition, the architectural character represented in the view along Camino del Mar is vivid and characteristic of Del Mar in its pedestrian scaled buildings, Spanish style architecture, large storefront windows, and diverse pedestrian environments.

##### *Proposed Project Features*

Proposed project features include an extension of the height toward the back of the parcel with an upper level building, while the pedestrian scaled architecture is maintained along Camino del Mar. The preservation of the front portion of these very human-scaled and high visual quality buildings is important and it is assumed that the Design Review Board process would require something similar to what is shown in the simulationssuch design features. Note that the proposed roadway and parking is not simulated in this view, since the primary concern here is of view corridor blockage and building massing and scale and its affect on the existing character.

##### *Change to Visual Quality / Character*

The proposed project will have a highly adverse affect on the view corridor from this location due to blockage of the view of the ocean from this public viewing location. However, the number of viewers is considered to be low. But, because of the view quality the impact should still be considered significant. The height difference between a 26' flat roof and the 30' articulated roof would be not different since they both would block the views in this location.

The impact to the existing scale and character of the storefronts and adjacent buildings is considered to be a moderately adverse impact. Much of the character and scale is left intact as seen in the simulation. The overall height increase, though it impacts the view corridor, it does not impact the scale and massing or the visual character of the storefronts.

##### *Viewer Response*

This view represents what a person sitting on the library patio would see. The number of viewers and viewer duration is low resulting in a low viewer exposure. The viewer sensitivity would be high. This is an important view of the ocean and the viewers would be concerned and notice this change. Viewer response to the changes in the building massing and scale compared to the adjacent building and streetscape environment would not be considered high.

##### *Resulting Visual Impact*

Overall, the resulting impact on the view corridor from a public viewing place would be moderate to highly adverse and considered potentially significant. Though a limited number of viewers are likely to see this, it would still be considered potentially significant. Ultimately, the Design Review Ordinance would not allow future development to substantially block scenic views and the potentially significant view impact would be avoided. The changes to the visual quality and character of the area would also not be considered significant, given the assumptions that the DRB review process requirements would result in a similar design as shown in the simulation.

Figure 6-4: Key View Simulation "D1"



#### 6.4.1.5 Key View Simulation "D2"

This view looks northwest from the east side of Camino del Mar in front of the library and is depicted in Figure 6-5.

##### *Existing Visual Quality / Character*

This view is highly intact. Different from Key View D1, there is not a view of the ocean in this view given the height and position of the existing buildings. Again, the architectural character represented in the view along Camino del Mar is vivid and characteristic of Del Mar in its pedestrian scaled buildings, Spanish style architecture, large storefront windows, and a diverse pedestrian environment. In addition, the streetscape provides uniformity for the character of the area.

##### *Proposed Project Features*

Proposed project features include the existing architecture and extended building height on the back side of the parcel. Setback and stepbacks are indicated in the rendering to create visual interest and protect the first floor scaled buildings that do establish some of the character of the village. The pedestrian realm is enhanced with outdoor dining, shopping, seating, and plantings where setbacks occur along Camino del Mar.

##### *Change to Visual Quality / Character*

By maintaining some of the existing architectural character, on the front of the parcel facing Camino del Mar, the change to the view scene and visual character is moderate. The pedestrian scale of the buildings are maintained and the visual character remains intact. But the overall change to the visual environment is not considered to be that dramatic.

##### *Viewer Response*

Depending on a viewer's outlook and opinion, some viewers may consider this change objectionable while others may not. The reaction to the proposed changes will not likely be overly negative from this viewpoint, but they may be adverse. The majority of the viewers including cyclists and pedestrians, will see this view from a transitory or moving perspective. Their sensitivity and exposure to the view is low to moderate mostly because of the short viewing duration, movement and low quantity of viewers.

##### *Resulting Visual Impact*

The resulting impact on the view corridor from this public viewing place would be low and would not be considered significant. The changes to the visual quality and character of the area would not be considered significant, given the assumptions that the DRB review process would result in a similar design as shown in the simulation.

Figure 6-5: Key View Simulation "D2"



#### 6.4.1.6 Key View Simulation "E"

This view looks west to the ocean across Camino del Mar from the north side of 12th Street at Maiden Lane and is depicted in Figure 6-6.

##### *Existing Visual Quality / Character*

This view represents a typical view corridor to the ocean found on most of the numbered streets running in an east/west direction. The view is considered to be highly intact, though it is partially blocked by mature vegetation. This is also typical of most of the view corridors in the study area. These views are important to the City of Del Mar and create a vivid view and uniform rhythm of views when driving, riding or walking down the street. This is an important view of the ocean though it is somewhat interrupted by large mature trees in the middle ground and background. However, enough of a view still exists to be of concern. Based on the simple simulations, it can be seen that most of the view to the ocean is maintained with the proposed building heights of 14', 26' or 30'. The side stepback on the second floor is considered to be important to protecting this view corridor.

##### *Proposed Project Features*

Proposed features in this view include the new building heights. The chamfer at the corner lots will help to keep some of the view corridor when approaching from the north or south as a pedestrian. In addition, the ten-foot stepback on the upper floor helps to maintain the views to the ocean and the view corridor so it is not excessively blocked.

##### *Change to Visual Quality / Character*

The change to the visual quality and character would be moderate to low. The massings of the buildings are similar to the existing forms, though higher. The visual quality of the existing buildings on the west side are not high. Replacement buildings are likely to have a higher visual and design quality. The existing vegetation is already partially blocking the scenic vista to the ocean and would not be affected by the project.

##### *Viewer Response*

Currently residents, retail workers and customers have a partial view of the ocean that is interrupted by mature plant material. The viewer exposure and sensitivity to these changes would be low. The extended heights on the buildings do not completely remove the view of the ocean and the scenic vista is maintained. The proposed scale is not out of character with other buildings in the area.

##### *Resulting Visual Impact*

The resulting visual impact of this view would be considered low to moderately adverse. The scenic vista to the ocean is mostly preserved, though a small notch would be affected. This blockage would not be considered significant. The change to the visual character and quality is also considered to be low to moderate. Depending on the final design of replacement buildings, the visual character could be improved along with the overall visual quality.

Figure 6-6: Key View Simulation "E"



#### 6.4.1.7 Key View Simulations "F1, F2, F3, and F4"

Key view F1 looks west to Camino del Mar from the south side of 14th Street near the intersection and is depicted in Figure 6-7.

Key view F2 looks west to Camino del Mar from the south side of 14th Street, mid-block and is depicted in Figure 6-8.

Key view F3 looks west to Camino del Mar from the south side of 14th Street at Maiden Lane and is depicted in Figure 6-9.

Key View F4 looks west to Camino del Mar from the intersection of 14th Street and Luneta Drive is depicted in Figure 6-10.

##### *Existing Visual Quality / Character*

This series of views is typical of the view corridors to the ocean from the numbered streets running in an east/west direction. This view is consistent along Camino del Mar and is highly intact. These views are important to the City of Del Mar and are typical of residential views on the lower slopes east of Camino del Mar. The view of the ocean is blocked by existing buildings when a viewer is standing at Camino del Mar. Where there are no buildings, the view is partially blocked by mature trees in the background. Moving up the hillside to the east, the views to the ocean open up and more of the vista is revealed.

##### *Change to Visual Quality / Character*

The proposed building heights from a massing and scale perspective are not in contrast with other buildings in this area. The changes to the visual quality are also not likely to negatively contrast with the current setting, assuming a Design Review Board process that will assure that elements of the Del Mar Village are repeated and existing high quality architecture and storefronts are preserved.

##### *Viewer Response*

Currently residents, retail workers and customers have a partial view of the ocean that is interrupted by mature plant material and overhead powerlines. The viewer exposure and sensitivity to these changes would be moderate. The extended heights on the buildings do not completely remove the view of the ocean and the scenic vista is maintained by the preservation of the view corridor on one of the lots. The view could actually be improved if the background utilities were removed. Also, increased public views would be possible with the development of a Paseo plaza open to the public, between these buildings. The removal of surface parking would also be an improvement.

##### *Resulting Visual Impact*

The resulting visual impact of this view would be considered low to moderately adverse. The scenic vista to the ocean is mostly preserved, though a portion would be affected from the lower slope within the first half block from Camino del Mar. A moderately adverse impact that would be considered less than significant would result to the views in this corridor. A low to moderately adverse impact that is also less than significant, would result to the character of the area, assuming that the Design Review Board process would result in a similar form and character of as show in previous simulations.

Figure 6-7: Key View Simulation "F1"



Figure 6-8: Key View Simulation "F2"



Figure 6-9: Key View Simulation "F3"



Figure 6-10: Key View Simulation "F4"



#### 6.4.1.8 Key View Simulation "G"

This view looks north to the intersection of Camino del Mar and is depicted in Figure 6-11.

##### *Existing Visual Quality / Character*

The majority of the buildings on the east side of Camino del Mar are blocked by mature trees and plantings in the median. Along the west side of the street, the buildings, landscape and setbacks are neither vivid nor uniform. The pedestrian environment is disrupted by the parallel parking along the street and in front of storefronts. For a pedestrian, the visual experience is not intact. In addition, there are gaps in the building storefronts along Camino del Mar. Within the view, the trees in front of the library are an important visual element and enhance the visual character of the area.

##### *Proposed Project Features*

The simulation shows a series of images to depict a sequence of potential build out and roadway environment changes. The second image shows the realignment of the street to include angled parking, a bike lane, the realignment of the sidewalk, and one lane of traffic. The last image includes building infill and other enhancements to the pedestrian environment.

##### *Change to Visual Quality / Character*

The proposed changes have a low visual impact and may actually increase the intactness of the view as seen by a pedestrian or motorist experiencing the space along Camino del Mar. The overall scale and dominance of the roadway does improve and is not as expansive and vehicular dominant.

##### *Viewer Response*

The reaction to the proposed changes will not likely be negative from this view point. The majority of the viewers include motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians. Their sensitivity and exposure to the view is low to moderate mostly because of the short viewing duration and with the exception of the motorists, a low quantity of viewers.

##### *Resulting Visual Impact*

Overall, the resulting visual impact to this key view would be a low adverse change since some of the visual environment would be improved through new design features and new spatial organization and visual interest improvements. The proposed project changes would not be considered to be significant.

Figure 6-11: Key View Simulation "G"



VILLAGE SPECIFIC PLAN

## 6.5 Impact Assessment Summary

The City of Del Mar does not currently have guidelines for determining significant thresholds. Therefore, CEQA, Appendix G was used to determine the level of impacts the project is likely to cause. The following criteria apply:

### ***Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?***

Many of the vistas in Del Mar are currently blocked by mature shrubs and trees or other existing buildings and landforms. There are scattered scenic vistas throughout Del Mar of the ocean depending on the topographic setting of the viewer. The most substantial scenic vistas of the ocean occur at the streets running west and east. The Village Specific Plan takes these vistas into account by requiring setbacks from the side streets on the upper levels and a chamfer corner at the first level of proposed corner lots buildings. This design detail helps to reduce the adverse visual impacts associated with view corridor blockage, but does not completely eliminate adverse effects on views not located along the east-west street corridors. The proposed changes would potentially result in a moderate impact on some scenic vistas not located along east-west street corridors, such as View D1 and mitigation may be required. Ultimately, the Design Review Ordinance requires projects to be designed so that they do not unreasonably block significant public coastal views or scenic views from the primary living area of residences. With the implementation of the Design Review Ordinance through the Design Review Board review process, potentially significant scenic vista impacts would be mitigated. ~~Therefore, the proposed project is considered to have a significant impact on scenic vistas. This impact would be considered unmitigable.~~

### ***Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within the Village area defined by the Specific Plan Boundary?***

The traffic circles and the realignment of the street have the potential to reduce the number of mature trees found along Camino del Mar. Other trees will be removed, but many more will be added as a result of the proposed new developments and streetscape improvements. These tree removals and additions would have the potential for either an adverse or positive change to the visual environment depending on the viewer and the viewer location. The removal of mature trees could potentially open views to the ocean. However, the trees along Camino del Mar are also considered to be characteristic of the Del Mar setting and are a scenic resource and help to strengthen the vividness of the City. The proposed specific plan does not make recommendations to remove or modify any existing historic buildings; therefore, there are no adverse changes to the historic buildings. The view of the ocean must be considered as a scenic resource. The increase in building heights proposed in the Village Specific Plan may result in a full or partial blocked view of the ocean for a variety of viewer groups. As a viewer moves up the hillside to the east, the resulting visual impact becomes less adverse because of the changing perspective resulting from rising topography. The combination of these changes would result in a moderate to high visual impact and would need to be mitigated. Therefore, a significant impact to scenic resources and visual resources would be expected, some of which can be mitigated through replacement of visual resources and the Design Review Board review process.

***Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?***

The existing character of Del Mar is moderate in vividness, intactness, and unity. Most of the existing inconsistencies are the varying building setbacks and the lack of a visually identifiable pedestrian environment. The proposed changes in the Village Specific Plan would create a uniform visual environment. The proposed changes would result in a low visual impact and in some situations, would actually improve the visual character and quality of the site. There may be some circumstances where visual character may be removed and not replaced with the same level of pedestrian scale, building material quality and overall character. However, it is assumed that through the application of design guidelines and the Design Review Board process, that projects will be of a higher quality and will address the visual character of the area and any removal of character elements will be replaced by new improvements. Therefore, the proposed project is not expected to have a significant impact on the visual character or visual quality of the specific plan area.

***Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?***

Shade calculations on adjacent residential units were completed for the longest day of the year, December 22. Using computer modeling, it has been determined that the proposed increase in the height of the building will not result in a low adverse change to the shadow pattern on adjacent buildings. Existing conditions currently result in a partial shade pattern on the façade of residential buildings at 8am; however, the shade pattern disappears from the façade by 9am. The same is true when the building heights are increased.

Computer modeling was also used to evaluate the shade patterns on Camino del Mar during the equinox and solstice. The models showed an increase in shadow patterns as the building heights increased. During the longest day of the year, shadow patterns from the buildings on the west side of the street stretched to the median by mid afternoon, but did not shade the entire corridor of Camino del Mar. The proposed setbacks and articulation in the buildings will result in more light coming through the buildings to Camino del Mar, and therefore results in a low adverse change.

The proposed building height increase would result in a low adverse change to the glare and ambient light into the nighttime sky. This impact would not be considered to be significant.

## 7.0 VISUAL MITIGATION

### 7.1 Visual Mitigation Options

Visual mitigation for moderate to highly adverse project impacts addressed in the key view simulation assessments of the previous chapter, are discussed below.

Implementation of the following mitigation measures will reduce impacts of the project.

- Because it is impossible to determine the impact on individual residents within this study, the proposed project is subject to design review to guard against unreasonable view blockage from public areas or from neighboring properties. Story poles will be erected to fully determine visual impact of individual residence as part of the Design Review process. The Design Review Board will review the proposed development's affect on individual residence on a project-by project basis. The views will be evaluated from each residence, based on the property owner's primary viewing location within the residence.
- The proposed Village Specific Plan required setbacks and the articulation of roofs on buildings. This variety in architecture will result in more light into the project and adjacent residential units as well as increased visual interest.
- Mature trees are considered to be a scenic resource and add to the vividness and intactness of the City. A few of these trees may be disturbed with the realignment of median and the addition of roundabouts per the improvements in the Village Specific Plan. A tree replacement or relocation plan should be created and implemented to reduce the visual impacts because of the tree removal. Any tree requiring removal should be replaced with a tree of similar size or relocated in close proximity to the existing tree without blocking scenic views to the ocean.
- Where setbacks of the proposed building occur on Camino del Mar, the space between the building and curb shall be utilized for the pedestrian. Amenities such as awnings, outdoor dining, seating, shopping, and plant material must be used to enhance the pedestrian scale.
- Cohesive site amenities should be utilized throughout the Del Mar Village to create visual intactness in the urban setting. This will improve the unity and intactness of the Village and enhance the visual pedestrian setting. Consistent site amenities are shown on the following pages.

## 7.2 Visual Impacts After Mitigations

- ***Substantial impacts on scenic vistas***

With the implementation of Design Review Board review, the use of story poles, setbacks, stepbacks and corner lot 45 degree chamfers on corner lots, the significant impact on scenic vistas would be avoided. The Design Review Ordinance would ultimately not allow redevelopment that would substantially impact scenic vistas~~can be lessened but they would remain significant after mitigations. Since the view blockage cannot be eliminated, its impacts would be, but not to a level below significance.~~

- ***Substantial impacts on visual resources***

With the protection of significant tree resources found in the corridor and the replacement of trees that are to be removed in accordance with the Tree Ordinance, this significant impact on visual resources in the specific plan area, would be reduced to below a level of significance. The mitigation assumes that approximately 50% of the biomass removed, would be replaced and that this biomass would grown to approximately 75% of the removed tree resources within a 3-5 year period.

**Benches with City Branding**



**Sidewalks with a consistent finish and a minimum width throughout the Village**



**Tree Grates**



<p><b>Planting</b></p>	
<p><b>Signage with City Branding</b></p>	
<p><b>Trash and Recycling Receptacle with City Branding</b></p>	

## 8.0 REFERENCES

Camino del Mar Streetscape Plan, Andrew Spurlock Martin Poirier Landscape Architects, December 1996.

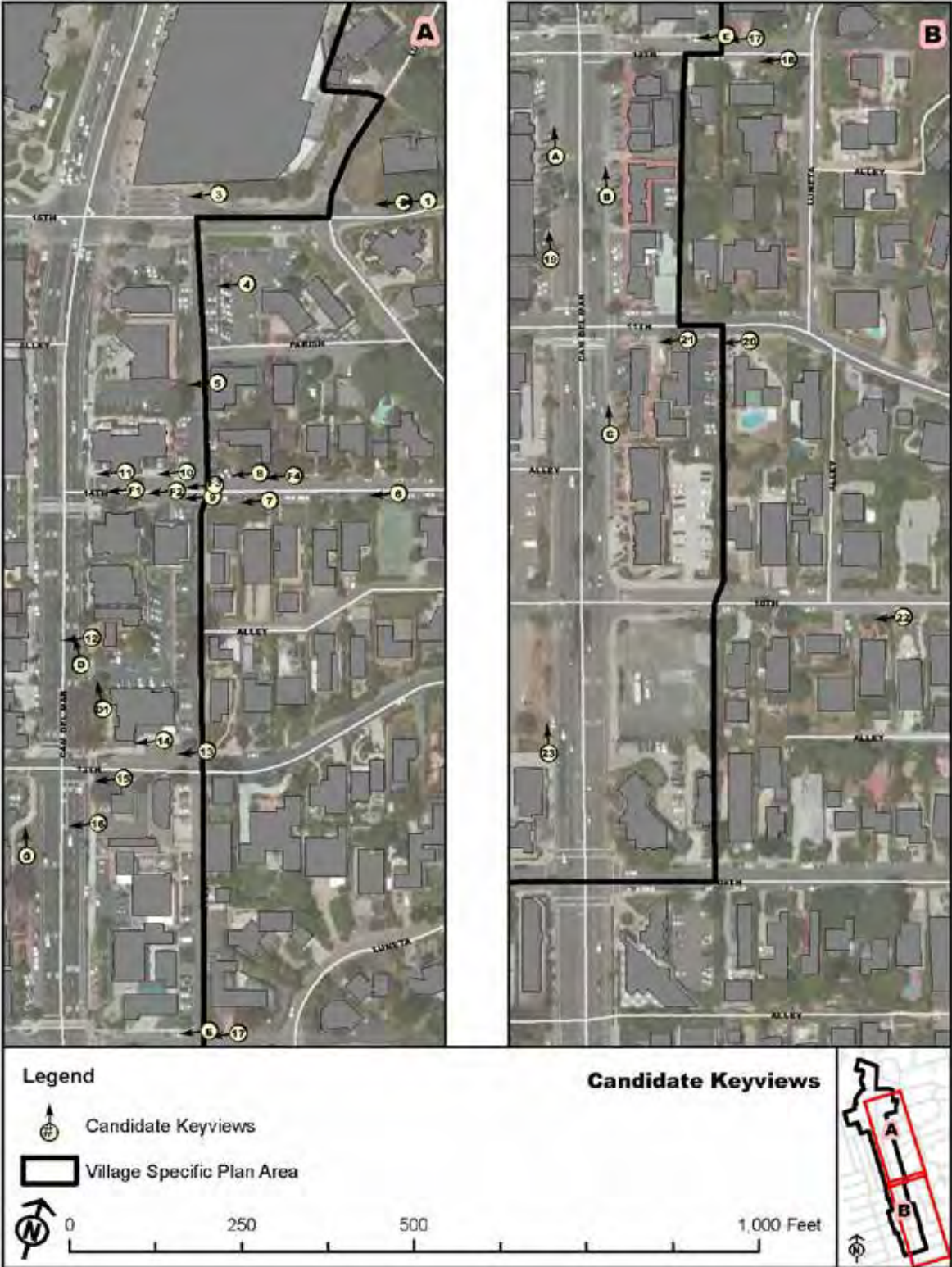
The Community Plan for the City of Del Mar, California, March 1976 with 1985 amendments.

U.S.D.O.T., Federal Highway Administration, Office of Environmental Policy, Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects, U. S. Department of Transportation.

## APPENDIX A      CANDIDATE KEY VIEWS

The locations of these keyviews are shown on the photo location map on the following page. Based on fieldwork, viewer groups, probable changes, viewing duration, and viewer sensitivity, candidate key views were selected and building massings were draped over the existing conditions to help understand the impacts of the Specific Plan. The yellow masses indicate a maximum building envelope for the west side of Camino del Mar, and the red buildings represent the maximum building envelopes on the east side of the street. Please note the massing overlays are not intended to look realistic in any manner, and foreground elements have not been removed, so some perspective distortions do exist in these graphics.

### Candidate Key View Photo Location



*Candidate Key View #1*

This view looks west from the north side of 15<sup>th</sup> Street at 412 15<sup>th</sup>. This view is not recommended for simulation. This view shows the affect of the 30' maximum height on the ocean view; it does not interrupt the horizon line.

**Candidate Key View #1**



*Candidate Key View #2*

This view looks southwest from the north side of 15<sup>th</sup> Street at 412 15<sup>th</sup>. This view is not recommended for simulation since the proposed changes will not interrupt the horizon line.

**Candidate Key View #2**



*Candidate Key View #3*

This view looks west from the north side of 15<sup>th</sup> Street at 383 15<sup>th</sup>. This view is not recommended for simulation since potential changes do not fully block the horizon.

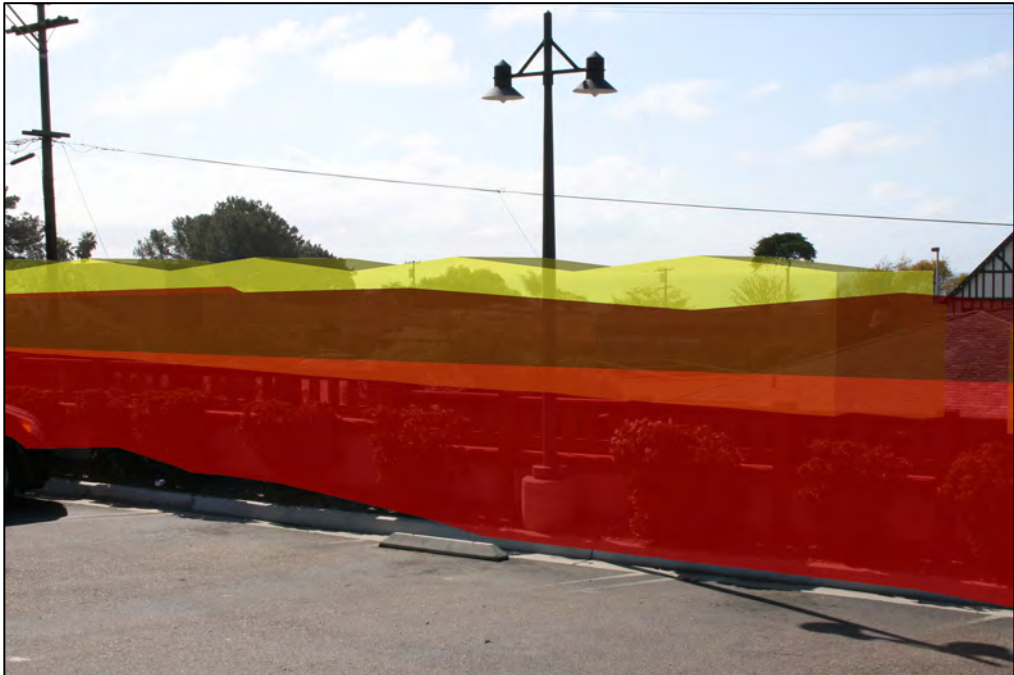
**Candidate Key View #3**



*Candidate Key View #4*

This view looks west from the parking lot east of Maiden between 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Parish. This view is not recommended for simulation since current regulations would block view.

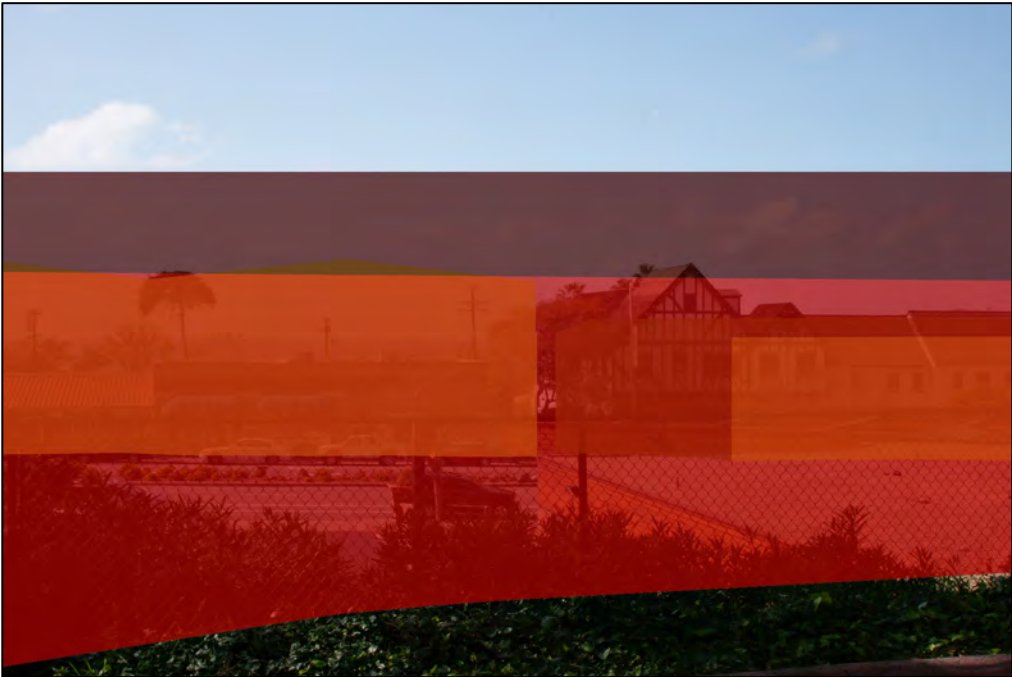
**Candidate Key View #4**



*Candidate Key View #5*

This view looks west from the east side of Maiden between 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Street. This view is not recommended for simulation since it would be blocked by current regulations.

**Candidate Key View #5**



*Candidate Key View #6*

This view looks west from the south side of 14<sup>th</sup> street at 349 14<sup>th</sup>. This view is not recommended for simulation because the existing foreground vegetation blocks the proposed changes.

**Candidate Key View #6**



*Candidate Key View #7*

This view looks west from the south side of 14<sup>th</sup> street at 323 14<sup>th</sup>. This view is not recommended for simulation as a sequence as the building in the foreground will most likely not change.

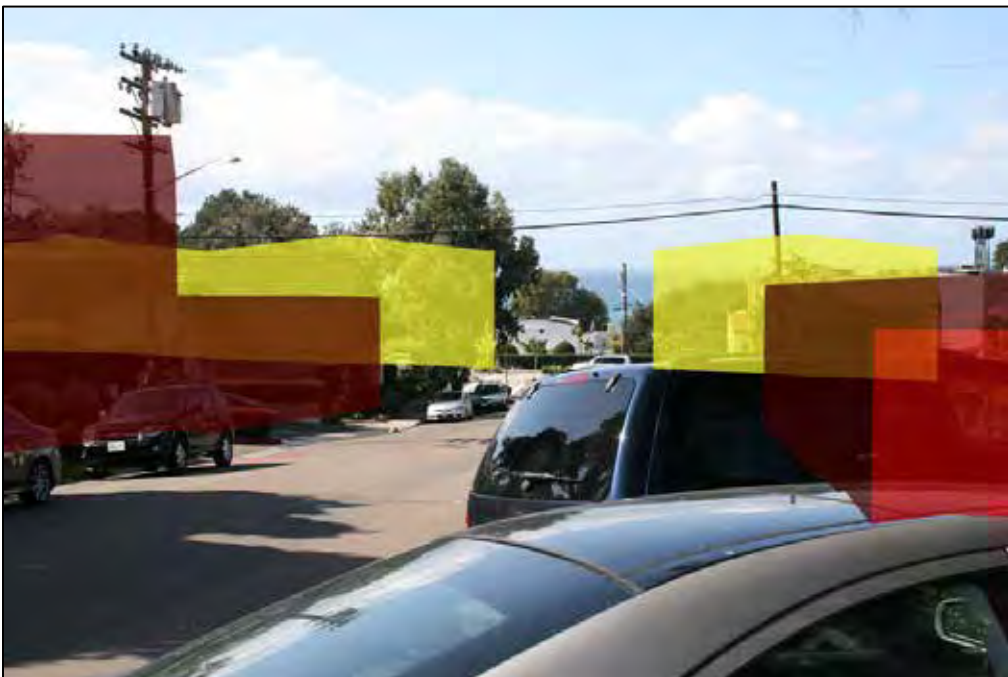
**Candidate Key View #7**



*Candidate Key View #8*

This view looks west from the north side of 14<sup>th</sup> Street at 327 14<sup>th</sup>. This view is not recommended for simulation it be used in a sequence with **Error! Reference source not found.**and **Error! Reference source not found.**

**Candidate Key View #8**



*Candidate Key View #9*

This view looks west from the southeast side of the intersection of 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Maiden. This view is not recommended for simulation as the building in the foreground will most likely not change.

**Candidate Key View #9**



*Candidate Key View #10*

This view looks west from the northwest side of the intersection of 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Maiden. This view is not recommended for simulation, but shows a sequence of views to the horizon line the with **Error! Reference source not found..**

**Candidate Key View #10**



*Candidate Key View #11*

This view looks west from the north side of 14<sup>th</sup> Street at 309 14<sup>th</sup>. This view is not recommended but shows how the view corridor could be kept open if development was not allowed in the street extension.

**Candidate Key View #11**



*Candidate Key View #12*

This view looks west from the east side of Camino del Mar between 13<sup>th</sup> Street and 14<sup>th</sup> Street. This view is not recommended for simulation since no ocean view exists.

**Candidate Key View #12**



*Candidate Key View #13*

This view looks west from the north side of 13<sup>th</sup> Street at the Del Mar. This view is not recommended for simulation since only a minor view opening exists.

**Candidate Key View #13**



*Candidate Key View #14*

This view looks west from the north side of 13<sup>th</sup> Street at the Del Mar. This view is not recommended for simulation since only a minor view opening exists.

**Candidate Key View #14**



*Candidate Key View #15*

This view looks west from the south side of 13<sup>th</sup> Street at 305. This view is not recommended for simulation since a 14' building would block the view.

**Candidate Key View #15**



*Candidate Key View #16*

This view looks west from the east side of Camino del Mar at 1247 Camino Del Mar. This view is not recommended for simulation since a 14' building would block the view.

**Candidate Key View #16**



*Candidate Key View #17*

This view looks west from the north side of 12<sup>th</sup> Street at 38112<sup>th</sup>. This view is not recommend for simulation but shows the stepbacks on the side street and the heavy vegetation blocks some views.

**Candidate Key View #17**



*Candidate Key View #18*

This view looks west from the south side of 12<sup>th</sup> Street at 389 12<sup>th</sup>. This view is not recommended for simulation due to the background vegetation.

**Candidate Key View #18**



*Candidate Key View #19*

This view looks south at the intersection of 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Camino del Mar. This view is not recommended for simulation since the existing buildings most likely will not change with the proposed heights and FAR's.

**Candidate Key View #19**



*Candidate Key View #20*

This view looks west from the south side of 11<sup>th</sup> Street at 331 11<sup>th</sup>. This view is not recommended for simulation since too much vegetation blocks the view.

**Candidate Key View #20**



*Candidate Key View #21*

This view looks west from the south side of 11<sup>th</sup> Street at 317 11<sup>th</sup>. This view is not recommended for simulation but shows a corner lot setback and could show a roundabout in the simulation as well.

**Candidate Key View #21**



*Candidate Key View #22*

This view looks northwest from the south side of 10<sup>th</sup> Street at 411 10<sup>th</sup>. This view is not recommended for simulation, but shows the proposed building are less of an impact moving up the hill.

**Candidate Key View #22**



*Candidate Key View #23*

This view looks south at the intersection of 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Camino del. This view is not recommended for simulation of the roundabout.

**Candidate Key View #23**

