

M. AESTHETIC RESOURCES

This section describes existing aesthetic resources in and around the sites affected by the Measure DD Implementation Project and discusses the visual resources policies that are applicable to the proposed project. The section concludes with a discussion of potential impacts of the project on visual resources and the consistency of the project with applicable visual resources policies.

The aesthetics analysis is based on a site reconnaissance, a review of aerial photographs of the Measure DD Implementation Project component sites, and visual simulations completed for a few key project components.

1. Setting

The Measure DD Implementation Project site comprises numerous individual sites around Oakland, ranging from formal parks, parkways, and landscaping, to the waters of Lake Merritt, the shoreline of the Oakland Estuary, and numerous creek sites throughout the City. As such, the project site contains a diversity of visual characteristics. The key aesthetic characteristics, including adverse visual qualities, of each of the four groups are described below. However, the groups are generally united in that they offer places to see and experience the interface where “natural communities” (including ones that have been highly manipulated by human activity) meet the urban environment. While the project component sites offer varying degrees of intact animal and plant communities, they offer users the ability to see basic natural elements in the context of urban places. The quality of this visual experience, even in the built environment, is very much dependent on the ecological integrity of the natural communities themselves.

a. Lake Merritt and Lake Merritt Channel (Group 1). Lake Merritt and its associated channel are visual elements that are central to the identity of Oakland. The Lake and its surrounding parkland offer the visual qualities of open space in close proximity to the dense population and employment center of Downtown Oakland and the apartment buildings and medium-density residential and commercial neighborhoods that ring the Lake. The sunlight and unblocked views that Lake Merritt offers to residents and workers in many parts of central Oakland are important visual benefits of this large area of open space.

Lake Merritt, which is a scenic resource in Oakland, constitutes a semi-formal landscape that harkens back to the English landscape garden movement of the 1700s and 1800s and the City Beautiful movement in the United States of the late 1800s and early 1900s. These movements valued expanses of mowed grass with clumps of carefully-pruned trees, dramatic vistas, boulevards running through parks, and distinct public buildings. Thus Lake Merritt’s visual qualities are characterized



The carefully planned views of public buildings around Lake Merritt evoke City Beautiful planning motifs.

by broad, grassy areas adjacent to streets, walkways adjacent to the water, and distinguished public and semi-public buildings and monuments (e.g., Pergola, Cleveland Cascade, and Boathouse). Lake Merritt Channel is bordered by pedestrian walkways that offer expansive views of surrounding areas.

The ecological workings of the Lake are also key visual elements of the area, especially considering that the site was designated as a wildlife refuge to protect ducks in 1869. The quality of the water, and the use of water bodies by wildlife (especially waterfowl) are important aspects of the Lake and Channel visual qualities.

However, the quality of certain visual aspects of Lake Merritt and Lake Merritt Channel has been reduced by urban change. Some roadways around the Lake, including those of the 12th Street overpass, Interstate 580, and Lakeside Drive, are out-of-proportion to the pedestrian-scale open space areas around the water body. In addition, some of the visual qualities of Lake Merritt's natural communities have suffered from water quality degradation (caused by reduced tidal flow into and out of the Lake and insufficient aeration), the loss of tidal marsh, and landscaping that is in poor condition. These factors all detract from the generally high-quality visual characteristics of Lake Merritt and Lake Merritt Channel.

b. Waterfront Trail (Group 2). The Oakland Waterfront Trail group sites comprise a 6.6-mile strip of Oakland Estuary shoreline between Jack London Square and 66th Avenue and include a varied assortment of land uses ranging from recreational facilities (e.g., existing trails and parks) to residential neighborhoods and industrial uses. These varying land uses exert a direct influence of the visual character of the area. In places, such as at Union Point Park, the shoreline is a completely formalized environment, with a dedicated brick walkway, regularly-spaced trees and benches, and a guardrail adjacent to the water. These areas, where portions of the Bay Trail have already been completed, are characterized by a park-like visual quality. Along the Martin Luther King Junior Regional Shoreline, relatively intact tidal marsh lends the area a high visual quality and provides expansive views to the west and south. In other places, such as at Brooklyn Basin and the Cryer site, the shoreline has a raw, unfinished, and industrial quality characterized by torn up pavement, chain-link fencing, disturbed ground, and ruderal vegetation.

However, even in industrial landscapes such as those at Brooklyn Basin, remnants of estuary vegetation appear to remain, and these vestiges of the native ecosystem add substantially to the visual quality of the area. In still other areas, such as at Livingston Pier, port activities are visible, and the shoreline has a working, active (during certain portions of the day) visual character. In almost all portions of the



Much of the shoreline in the project site has been shaped by past industrial uses and is colonized by non-native plant species.

shoreline, expansive views of surrounding areas are available. These views encompass the shoreline of Alameda, Coast Guard Island, aircraft flying into Oakland International Airport, and, in select places, the skyscrapers of Downtown Oakland.

While much of the shoreline in the project area has high visual quality, aesthetic value in certain areas is reduced by the presence of garbage or deteriorating trail surfaces and landscaping. Even more important from a visual perspective is that many portions of the shoreline have inadequate public access, which restricts visual access into the Estuary and surrounding areas. High chain link fences (e.g., along Alameda Avenue), the lack of public access points, the presence of contamination, and the segmentation of the existing trail by bridges (e.g., High Street) all impede the public's ability to see into the Estuary (and reduce the visual quality of the shoreline).

c. Recreational Facilities (Group 3). The North and East Oakland Recreational Facilities group of projects involves two sites: Studio One Art Center (a studio arts center in North Oakland) and the existing Ira Jinkins Park/Recreational Center (in East Oakland). Studio One and Ira Jinkins Park have significantly different visual characteristics.

Studio One is a 22,000-square foot building that is visually characterized by its historic façade and interior. The building, which would be considered a scenic resource, was originally constructed in 1894 (although it was rebuilt after the 1906 earthquake/fire). The structure's key features (including the brick first story; long, multi-part rectangular windows; sloping roofs; and courtyard layout) provide it with a distinct visual character that distinguishes it from surrounding buildings and adjacent residential neighborhoods. The visual quality of the interior is characterized by sunlit studio rooms and galleries and a non-institutional atmosphere.

Ira Jinkins Park/Recreational Center is located in a neighborhood with a mixture of land uses, including light industrial/service uses (a Federal Express delivery center), a school, and a major transportation corridor (Interstate 880). The visual quality of the site is characterized by this mix of surrounding land uses; I-880 dominates the view to the south and west of the site. The park itself comprises playing fields and a small recreational center, and has an exposed visual character (the flat asphalt parking and playing areas associated with the school adds to this effect).

d. City-Wide Creeks (Group 4). Oakland creeks in the project site range from open air drainages with some intact riparian vegetation to culverted waterways with little or no habitat value. However, all the waterways – even the ones that are still above ground – have been subject to environmental degradation due to the effects of surrounding urbanization, including historic attempts to enable creeks to convey larger volumes of runoff while at the same time reducing flooding hazards. The net effects of creek channelization/straightening and the intensification of watershed urbanization are higher peak flows, increased erosion, removal of riparian vegetation, reduced water quality, and the need for additional bank stabilization and support. Creeks that exhibit these conditions generally have a lower visual quality than those waterways that have retained their natural form and function. The creek sites that would be subject to Measure DD restoration efforts are characterized by the visual qualities that are typical of disturbed/engineered waterways and urban watersheds.

Several of the creeks in the project site have been culverted and placed underground, including Sausal Creek at Hawthorne School, Glen Echo Creek at Mosswood Park, and Palo Seco Creek at Joaquin Miller Park. These creeks, which are not visible, have no current visual value as waterways (although

these areas have current value as open space). San Leandro Creek at Sobrante Park is characterized by a concrete channel and a lack of bank-side vegetation, and has greatly diminished natural visual quality. Arroyo Viejo at Knowland Park is daylighted but the visual character suffers from unstable banks and the presence of non-native vegetation. Changes to creek channels, especially erosion along creek banks, also effects visual quality by reducing creek access (and reducing opportunities to view creeks and surrounding vegetation and wildlife). Such is the case at Arroyo Viejo. The accumulation of trash and poor maintenance also reduces the visual quality of certain creeks, such as Coliseum Slough, where garbage has accumulated at the mouths of Lion Creek and Arroyo Viejo.

e. Scenic Views and Features. The City of Oakland General Plan, which is discussed below in more detail, does not contain a graphic depicting designated scenic viewsheds or views. In addition, no “vista points” along the portion of the project site comprising the Estuary shoreline are designated in the San Francisco Bay Plan. However, for the purposes of the visual resources analysis in this Draft EIR, numerous views from and of the Measure DD Implementation Project sites are considered significant scenic views. These include views of: Lake Merritt and Lake Merritt Channel; Downtown Oakland; the East Bay Hills; the Oakland Estuary; and adjacent landscape features, including Alameda and Coast Guard Island. In addition, Interstate 580 between the northern City of San Leandro border and State Route 24 is an officially designated State Scenic Highway.¹ Scenic resources include the above-listed landscape elements themselves (e.g., Lake Merritt) in addition to significant historic structures (e.g., Cleveland Cascade and Studio One).

f. Applicable Policies. Visual resources in the project site are primarily governed by policies from the following documents, which are discussed below: 1) San Francisco Bay Plan; 2) Estuary Policy Plan; 3) Land Use and Transportation Element (LUTE); and 4) City of Oakland Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element (OSCAR).

San Francisco Bay Plan. The San Francisco Bay Plan (Bay Plan) particularly pertains to the Lake Merritt and Lake Merritt Channel and Waterfront Trail groups of the proposed project. The Bay Plan provides numerous visual resources policies; the ones below are applicable to the proposed project.



Unobstructed views of Downtown Oakland are available across Lake Merritt.

- **Appearance, Design, and Scenic Views Policy 1.** To enhance the visual quality of development around the Bay and to take maximum advantage of the attractive setting it provides, the shores of the Bay should be developed in accordance with the Public Access Design Guidelines.
- **Appearance, Design, and Scenic Views Policy 2.** All bayfront development should be designed to enhance the pleasure of the user or viewer of the Bay. Maximum efforts should be made to provide, enhance, or preserve views of the Bay and shoreline, especially from public areas, from the Bay itself, and from the opposite shore. To this end, planning of

¹ California Department of Transportation, 2007. State Scenic Highway Mapping System. Website: www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic_highways/index.htm. February 25.

waterfront development should include participation by professionals who are knowledgeable of the Commission's concerns, such as landscape architects, urban designers, or architects working in conjunction with engineers and professionals in other fields.

- Appearance, Design, and Scenic Views Policy 4. Structures and facilities that do not take advantage of and visually complement the Bay should be located and designed so as not to impact visually on the Bay and shoreline. In particular, parking areas should be located away from the shoreline. However, some small parking areas for fishing access and Bay viewing may be allowed in exposed locations.
- Appearance, Design, and Scenic Views Policy 9. "Unnatural" debris should be removed from sloughs, marshes, and mudflats that are retained as part of the ecological system. Sloughs, marshes, and mudflats should be restored to their formal natural state if they have been despoiled by human activities.
- Appearance, Design, and Scenic Views Policy 13. Local governments should be encouraged to eliminate inappropriate shoreline uses and poor quality shoreline conditions by regulation and by public actions (including development financed wholly or partly by public funds). The Commission should assist in this regard to the maximum extent feasible by providing advice on Bay-related appearance and design issues, and by coordinating the activities of the various agencies that may be involved with projects affecting the Bay and its appearance.
- Appearance, Design, and Scenic Views Policy 14. Views of the Bay from vista points and from roads should be maintained by appropriate arrangements and heights of all developments and landscaping between the view areas and the water. In this regard, particular attention should be given to all waterfront locations, areas below vista points, and areas along roads that provide good views of the Bay for travelers, particularly areas below roads coming over ridges and providing a "first view" of the Bay (shown in Bay Plan Map No. 8, Natural Resources of the Bay).

Estuary Policy Plan. The Estuary Plan provides development policies for the Oakland Estuary shoreline, and covers an area extending from Adeline Street to 66th Avenue, including all the lands on the water side of I-880 within Port and City jurisdiction. One of the key goals of the Estuary Plan is to "Preserve and enhance the existing natural areas along the waterfront." The following visual resources objectives and policies are applicable to the proposed project:

- Objective SA-3: Emphasize visual corridors and open space links to surrounding inland areas.
- Objective SA-5: Enhance natural areas along the shoreline.
- Policy JL-9.1 (Jack London District): Improve existing shoreline access, open spaces, and connection between inland areas and the water.
- Policy JL-9.2 (Jack London District): Create new open spaces that expand the opportunities to view, appreciate, and enjoy the water's edge.
- Policy JL-9.3 (Jack London District): Maintain and enhance view corridors to the Estuary. Maintain the full width of existing view corridors, and establish additional view corridors.
- Policy OAK-10 (Oak to 9th District): Create a network of pedestrian-friendly streets that opens up views and access to the water.

Land Use and Transportation Element. The LUTE of the General Plan affects visual resources primarily by shaping broad-based land use patterns in the City. Applicable policies and objectives are listed below.

- Policy W2.6: Providing Maritime and Aviation Viewing Access. Safe access to areas for viewing maritime and aviation activities without interfering with seaport and airport activities should be encouraged.
- Policy W3.2: Enhancing the Quality of the Natural and Built Environment. The function, design and appearance, and supplementary characteristics of all uses, activities, and facilities should enhance, and should not detract from or damage the quality of, the overall natural and built environment along the waterfront.

- Policy W3.4: Preserving Views and Vistas. Buildings and facilities should respect scenic viewsheds and enhance opportunities for visual access of the waterfront and its activities.
- Policy W12.7: Defining Design Criteria (Fruitvale Waterfront Area of the Mixed-Use waterfront). Development in this area should be designed to enhance direct public access to and along the water's edge, maximize waterfront views and vistas, and make public pedestrian access and spaces inviting. Development and amenities must be sensitive to immediate surroundings.

Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element. This element promotes the preservation and good design of open space, and the protection of natural resources to improve aesthetic quality in Oakland. The following objectives and policies are relevant to visual resources concerns associated with the proposed project:

- Policy OS-2.5: Urban Park Acquisition Criteria. Increase the amount of urban parkland in the seven planning areas, placing a priority on land with the following characteristics (not in priority order): . . . (c) Land with visual or historic significance. . . (g) Land that is highly visible from major streets, or that is adjacent to existing public buildings, particularly police and fire stations.
- Objective OS-7: Shoreline Access. To increase physical and visual access to the Oakland shoreline and create new opportunities for shoreline recreation.
- Policy OS-7.3: Waterfront Preservation. Promote a greater appreciation of the Oakland waterfront by preserving and enhancing waterfront views, promoting its educational value, and exploring new and creative ways to provide public access to the shoreline without interfering with transportation and shipping operations or endangering public safety.
- Policy OS-9.2: Use of Natural Features to Define Communities. Use open space and natural features to define city and neighborhood edges and give communities within Oakland a stronger sense of identity. Maintain and enhance city edges, including the greenbelt on the eastern edge of the city, the shoreline, and San Leandro Creek. Use creeks, parks, and topographical features to help define neighborhood edges and create neighborhood focal points.
- Policy OS-9.3: Gateway Improvements. Enhance neighborhood and city identity by maintaining or creating gateways. Maintain view corridors and enhance the sense of arrival at the major entrances to the city, including freeways, BART lines, and the airport entry. Use public art, landscaping, and signage to create stronger City and neighborhood gateways.
- Objective OS-10: Scenic Resources. To protect scenic views and improve visual quality.
- Policy OS-10.1: View Protection. Protect the character of existing scenic views in Oakland, paying particular attention to: (a) views of the Oakland hills from the flatlands; (b) views of downtown and Lake Merritt; (c) views of the shoreline; and (d) panoramic views from Skyline Boulevard, Grizzly Peak Road, and other hillside locations.
- Policy OS-10.2: Minimizing Adverse Visual Impacts. Encourage site planning for new development which minimizes adverse visual impacts and takes advantage of opportunities for new vistas and scenic enhancement.
- Policy OS-10.3: Underutilized Visual Resources. Enhance Oakland's underutilized visual resources, including the waterfront, creeks, San Leandro Bay, architecturally significant buildings or landmarks, and major thoroughfares.
- Policy OS-6.4: Lake Management. Manage Oakland's lakes to take advantage of their recreational and aesthetic potential while conserving their ecological functions and resource value. Discourage new recreational uses which impair the ability of lakes to support fish and wildlife. Support improvements which enhance water circulation, water quality, and habitat value, provided they are cost effective and are compatible with established recreational activities.

g. City of Oakland's Standard and Uniformly Applied Conditions of Approval. The City of Oakland's Standard and Uniformly Applied Conditions of Approval that would apply to the proposed project are listed below. Implementation of these Conditions of Approval would ensure that a project's potential aesthetic impacts would be reduced.

Condition 28: Lighting Plan. *Prior to the issuance of an electrical or building permit.* The proposed lighting fixtures shall be adequately shielded to a point below the light bulb and reflector and that prevent unnecessary glare onto adjacent properties. All lighting shall be architecturally integrated into the site.

2. Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This subsection analyzes the environmental impacts related to aesthetics and visual resources that could result from implementation of the proposed project. The section begins with the criteria of significance, which establish the thresholds for determining whether an impact is significant. The latter part of this subsection presents the impacts associated with the proposed project, in addition to policy considerations related to visual issues.

a. Criteria of Significance. Implementation of the proposed project components would have a significant impact on aesthetics if they would:

- 1) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- 2) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State or locally designated scenic highway;
- 3) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings;
or
- 4) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would substantially and adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

The level of land use impact is discussed in the following section and summarized in Table IV.M-1.

b. Impacts and Mitigation Measures Applicable to all Project Components. The following section includes a discussion of the impacts to aesthetic resources that would result from implementation of the proposed project components. The project components, which would generally benefit environmental quality and the appearance of open space in Oakland, would result in one significant impact aesthetic resources. Many of the individual projects would have beneficial effects on visual quality.

Figures IV.M-1 through IV.M-4 provide visual simulations of proposed changes to Lakeshore Avenue, El Embarcadero, and the Municipal Boathouse to illustrate some of the aesthetic changes that would result from implementation of the proposed project.

Table IV.M-1: Summary of Potential Impacts – Aesthetic Resources

Would the Project:	Project Group ^a			
	Group 1 Lake Merritt	Group 2 Waterfront Trail	Group 3 Recreational Facilities	Group 4 City-wide Creeks
1) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	○	○	○	○
2) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state or locally designated scenic highway?	○	○	○	○
3) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	○	○	○	○
4) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would substantially and adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	○	○	○	==

^a The Lake Merritt and Waterfront Trail groups are analyzed at the project level. The Recreational Facilities and City-wide Creeks groups are analyzed at the program level. The level of impact is identified as follows:

== No impact

○ Less-than-Significant or Less-than-Significant with standard Conditions of Approval

● Reduced to Less-than-Significant after recommended mitigation

● Significant

NA Not Applicable

AES-1, etc. identifies the mitigation measure, if any, that addresses the impact and reduces it to a level that is less than significant.

Source: LSA Associates, Inc., 2007.

This discussion is organized according to the four criteria of significance listed above. Impacts that would result from each of the project groups are summarized below under each criterion.

(1) Have a Substantial Adverse Effect on a Scenic Vista. As noted in the setting section, neither the Oakland General Plan nor the San Francisco Bay Plan designates points or viewsheds in the project site as scenic vistas. However, for the purposes of this analysis, numerous views from and of the Measure DD Implementation Project sites are considered scenic views, including Lake Merritt, Lake Merritt Channel, Downtown Oakland, the East Bay Hills, and the Oakland Estuary and adjacent landscape features. The following discussion describes the impacts of each of the four project groups on scenic vistas.

Lake Merritt and Lake Merritt Channel (Group 1). Lake Merritt and the Lake Merritt Channel are resources that are part of scenic vistas seen from numerous locations in Oakland, including the City’s Downtown and hillside areas. The proposed project would result in beneficial impacts to the visual quality of the Lake through water quality control measures, the restoration of historic buildings and monuments around the perimeter of the Lake, and enhanced landscaping. These changes to the Lake and the Channel would result in small but beneficial improvements to scenic vistas encompassing these waterways. The project would result in the removal of certain diseased trees from the vicinity of the Lake; however, the removal of these trees would not substantially change scenic vistas. New trees would be planted to replace the trees that are removed. No structures would be built that would block



Existing View



Proposed View (approx. 5 years)

LSA

FIGURE IV.M-1

Oakland Measure DD
Visual Simulation: Lakeshore Avenue
Variant A



Existing View



Proposed View (approx. 5 years)

LSA

FIGURE IV.M-2

Oakland Measure DD
Visual Simulation: Lakeshore Avenue
Variant B



Existing View



Proposed View (approx. 5 years)

LSA

FIGURE IV.M-3

Oakland Measure DD
Visual Simulation: El Embarcadero

SOURCE: WALLACE ROBERTS AND TODD, 2007.

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Existing View



Proposed View

LSA

FIGURE IV.M-4

Oakland Measure DD
Visual Simulation: Boathouse from South Side

surroundings and would not block scenic views of the Estuary. Therefore, this group of project components would have a less-than-significant impact on scenic vistas.

Recreational Facilities (Group 3). This project group involves the rehabilitation of Studio One and the construction of 150,000 square feet of additional recreational facilities at the existing Ira Jinkins Park/Recreation Center. The Studio One renovation involves the rehabilitation of the building's historic façade and changes to the structure's interior to enhance accessibility and functionality. These alterations would not adversely affect scenic vistas of the Oakland Hills that encompass the Studio One building. New construction at Ira Jinkins Park/Recreation Center would include buildings similar in scale to those that currently exist on the site (although the architectural design feature more modern elements). These structures would be generally low-slung and would not affect views of the East Bay Hills from Interstate 880. In addition, they would not block hill views of the Oakland Estuary and other portions of San Francisco Bay. Therefore, this group of project components would have a less-than-significant effect on scenic vistas.

City-Wide Creeks (Group 4). The creeks that are designated for restoration and ecological enhancements comprise portions of scenic vistas in Oakland, generally views of hillside areas (although some, including Coliseum Slough, would be visible from shoreline outlooks). The proposed project would enhance the ecological function of these creeks through native plant restoration, removal of artificial channels, and bank stabilization, and would not substantially affect scenic vistas that include these waterways. Therefore, this group of project components would have a less-than-significant effect on scenic vistas.

(2) Substantially Damage Scenic Resources, Including but not Limited to, Trees, Rock Outcroppings, and Historic Buildings Within a State or Locally Designated Scenic Highway. Interstate 580 from the northern boundary of San Leandro to State Route 24 is a State-designated Scenic Highway. Lake Merritt, in particular, is visible from I-580. Besides the Lake, other scenic resources in and adjacent to the project site include the Oakland Estuary and historic structures, such as the Pergola, Cleveland Cascade, Boathouse, and Studio One. The following discussion describes the impacts of each of the four project groups on scenic resources.

Lake Merritt and Lake Merritt Channel (Group 1). A key component of this group is the various proposed water quality control measures, including the installation of devices and features to clean and circulate water, and the creation of an open channel to allow for increased tidal flow into and out of the Lake. These measures, by improving water quality in the Lake, would enhance the scenic qualities of the waterway (including portions of the Lake visible from I-580), which suffers from algal blooms and stagnation associated with a surplus of nutrient-rich pollution. In addition, this group would involve the renovation of existing landscaping, which would improve the landscape context of the Lake. As part of the project, certain trees would be removed (and replaced with healthy individuals). Many of the trees that would be removed are diseased, short-lived, or are not stable. Although some of the trees that would be removed contribute to the scenic quality of the Lake, this contribution is not significant. Therefore, the removal of select trees and the replacement with new individuals would not be considered a significant impact to scenic resources. The project also includes the rehabilitation of three historic structures around Lake Merritt: the Pergola, Cleveland Cascade, and the Boathouse. This rehabilitation would be undertaken in a way that is sensitive to the historic qualities of the building facades and would enhance these scenic resources. Therefore, this group of project components would have a less-than-significant effect on scenic resources.

Waterfront Trail (Group 2). The Waterfront Trail group would involve environmental cleanup, trail, and park construction, and would generally have an effect on one scenic resource: the Oakland Estuary. These projects would generally benefit the visual setting of the Estuary through the planting of new native vegetation, the removal of trash and other pollution, and the creation of landscaped trails and public access points where these facilities do not currently exist. New public access points would increase the visibility of the scenic portions of the Oakland Estuary, which would benefit scenic resources in Oakland. Therefore, this group of project components would have a less-than-significant effect on scenic resources.

Recreational Facilities (Group 3). Studio One, which is a historic building constructed as a children's relief home in 1894, is itself a scenic resource. Implementation of the proposed project would result in rehabilitation of the structure and preservation of the historic qualities of the building's façade; minor landscape changes would also occur. Therefore, the project would enhance Studio One as a scenic resource. Ira Jinkins Park/Recreational Center is not a scenic resource and is not located in close proximity to a scenic resource, including distinguished trees. Therefore, this group of project components would not affect scenic resources at their respective sites.

City-Wide Creeks (Group 4). Creeks are important scenic resources in Oakland. Implementation of the proposed project would restore various targeted creek sites, where the ecological function of the waterways has been reduced by urbanization, channelization, encroachment by non-native vegetation, and bank failures. The proposed project would improve the environmental quality of the targeted creeks and would benefit the scenic qualities of these resources. Therefore, this group of project components would not affect scenic resources.

(3) Substantially Degrade the Existing Visual Character or Quality of the Site and Its Surroundings. As noted in the setting section, the visual quality of the various Measure DD Implementation Project sites ranges from degraded industrialized shorelines, to formal urban parks, and more naturalistic park sites throughout the City. The following discussion describes the impacts of each of the four project groups on visual character.

Lake Merritt and Lake Merritt Channel (Group 1). Lake Merritt and its surroundings are characterized by a semi-formal landscape of rolling lawns and walkways, all oriented around the water body itself. While the area has high visual quality, the aesthetics of the area are diminished primarily by low water quality in the Lake, landscaping and trees that are in poor condition, and roadways surrounding the Lake that are disproportionately wide and emphasize automobile traffic at the expense of the pedestrian environment. The proposed project would substantially improve these adverse conditions. First, the removal of the 12th Street culvert and the implementation of the various water quality control measures would improve the water quality of the Lake, and enhance the potential for the growth of native vegetation and use of the water body by native wildlife (besides Canada geese). Second, landscaping and trees in poor condition would be removed and replaced with new plants that would enhance the visual environment. Third, several roadways (including 12th Street, Lakeshore Avenue, and Lakeside Drive) would be reconfigured and/or narrowed to include bike lanes and pedestrian paths. These changes would reduce the visual intrusion of motor vehicles and would improve the visual environment for the bikers and walkers that comprise the key users of Lake Merritt. Lastly, historic buildings around the Lake, some of which are in poor condition, would be rehabilitated. At the Municipal Boathouse, two parking lots next to the Lake and Boathouse would be removed and replaced with landscaping, terraces, and pathways. A smaller parking lot would be

constructed closer to the road and the remaining parking would be relocated along Lakeside Drive itself. The improvement and preservation of historic structures, and the modification of parking areas would benefit the visual quality of the area, including the lakeshore itself. Therefore, the project group would have a less-than-significant impact on the existing visual character of the area surrounding the Lake and Lake Merritt Channel.

Waterfront Trail (Group 2). The visual character of the project shoreline area is diverse, and ranges from park-like to industrial. The Waterfront Trail group project components would be directed at extending the Bay Trail through a 6.6-mile portion of the shoreline, where select trail segments are already completed. In areas where there are gaps in the trail, a new pathway would be developed. The standard trail would comprise an 18-foot-wide asphalt path with an approximately 3-foot decomposed granite edge. Where appropriate, the trail would be landscaped. Path construction would involve minimal grading or other ground disturbance. The creation of a formal trail along portions of the shoreline that are currently trail-less would allow for enhanced public access to the shoreline, and would improve the visual quality of the area. The proposed project would also include the development of pocket parks at Derby Avenue and Lancaster Street, and decorative columns, a boardwalk, and native landscaping at the 66th Avenue Gateway. These changes to urban design in the area would also improve the visual quality of the shoreline. Therefore, the project group would have a less-than-significant impact on the existing visual character of the area along the Waterfront Trail.

Recreational Facilities (Group 3). The visual character of the Studio One site is currently dominated by the historic Studio One building itself. Implementation of the proposed project would result in the rehabilitation of this historic building and surrounding landscaping, which would improve the visual quality of the area. The Ira Jenkins Park/Recreation Center is currently characterized by expansive athletic fields and the mixture of land uses around the park, including a school, package shipping center, and housing. The proposed project would result in the expansion of recreational facilities on the site. These recreational facilities are expected to be compatible with existing facilities and the surrounding neighborhood, and would not adversely affect the visual quality of the area. Therefore, the project components would have a less-than-significant impact on the existing visual character of their respective sites.

City-Wide Creeks (Group 4). The aesthetic quality of the creek sites that would be targeted by the Measure DD Implementation Project generally has been diminished by the effects of urbanization and past engineering strategies that sought to increase stormwater capacity and velocity. In addition, non-native vegetation has encroached on native vegetation in many sites. Implementation of the proposed project would restore some of the ecological integrity that has been lost at the creek sites. This would be accomplished through the daylighting of culverted waterways, the removal of concrete channels and banks, the restoration of natural channels, and revegetation with native plant species. These activities would enhance the visual quality of numerous open space sites throughout Oakland by offering increased opportunity to study natural features and understand hydrologic processes. The proposed creek restoration activities could also attract native wildlife, which would in itself improve visual quality. Therefore, this group of project components would have a less-than-significant effect on the existing visual character of the various creek component sites.

(4) Create a New Source of Substantial Light and Glare Which Would Substantially and Adversely Affect Day or Nighttime Views in the Area. None of the Measure DD Implementation Project components would result in substantial light and glare, as discussed below for each of the four project groups, and all groups would incorporate Condition of Approval 28 into the project components if lighting is proposed to be installed.

Lake Merritt and Lake Merritt Channel (Group 1). The Lake Merritt project components could involve the installation of new lighting in certain areas, where needed for public safety. These lights, which are not expected to be widespread around the Lake, would not substantially adversely affect nighttime views. Historic buildings, including the Pergola and Boathouse, would be restored as part of the project. However, anticipated restoration activities would not involve the installation of large quantities of reflective windows. Therefore, the project would not substantially increase glare.

Waterfront Trail (Group 2). New lighting could be installed in select locations along the shoreline, where necessary for public safety. This type of lighting would not substantially reduce nighttime views.

Recreational Facilities (Group 3). The rehabilitation of Studio One is not expected to result in the installation of substantial quantities of new outdoor lighting and it would not include large expanses of highly reflective glass. New windows would be similar to existing ones, and would not create significant glare.

The proposed recreational facilities at Ira Jinkins Park would be built with new outdoor lighting. However, this lighting would be down-shielded, and would be installed only where needed to protect public safety. The plans for the recreational facilities at Ira Jinkins Park include some glass facades, primarily on the east side of the buildings that would face the recreation facility's landscaped parking area and an industrial facility located across the street. The glass is not expected to create glare that would substantially and adversely affect views. However because all glass has some potential to reflect light, the building materials and design would be assessed by the City during Design Review to ensure that light reflected off these glass facades would not create substantial glare.

City-wide Creeks (Group 4). The City-wide Creeks group does not involve the installation of new lighting and would not build structures that would produce glare.