3.1 Aesthetics

This Section evaluates the potential impacts to aesthetic resources resulting from construction and operation of the Project against significance thresholds derived from applicable local, state, or federal policies, or from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines.

3.1.1 Study Area

The Project Site is situated in a developed industrial area of the Samoa Peninsula where timber processing and pulp mill operations historically occurred for more than 50 years. The proposed site of the aquaculture facility generally consists of a dilapidated industrial site, including blight from the decommissioned pulp mill infrastructure, remnant concrete and steel structures, and paved areas. The northeastern portion of the Project Site supports ongoing coastal-dependent industry within the Redwood Maine Terminal II (RMT II) that would not be displaced by the Project. Post-project visual simulations are included in Appendix A – Visual Simulations. The Study Area includes the Project Site as well as available views from Western Eureka, along New Navy Base Road, and from residential to the north and commercial uses to the north and south.

3.1.2 Setting

Concepts and Terminology

Visual or aesthetic resources are generally defined as both the natural and built features of the landscape that contribute to the public's experience and appreciation of the environment. Depending on the extent to which a project's presence would alter the visual character and quality of the environment, a visual or aesthetic impact may occur. Visual character, visual quality, and visual sensitivity are terms used throughout the analysis, and are defined below.

Visual Character

Visual character is a general description of the visual attributes of a particular land use setting and the unique set of landscape features. The purpose of defining the visual character of an area is to provide the context within which the visual quality of a particular site or locale is most likely to be perceived by the viewing public. For urban areas, visual character is typically described on the neighborhood level or in terms of areas with common land use, intensity of development, socioeconomic conditions, and/or landscaping and urban design features. For natural and open space settings, visual character is most commonly described in terms of areas with common landscape attributes (e.g., landform, vegetation, water features).

Visual Quality

Visual quality is defined as the overall visual impression or attractiveness of a site or locale as determined by its aesthetic qualities (such as color, variety, vividness, coherence, uniqueness, harmony, and pattern). Natural and built features combine to form perspectives with varying degrees of visual quality, which are rated in this analysis as low, moderate, and high, as follows:

> Low: The location is lacking in natural or cultural visual resource amenities typical of the region. A site with low visual quality will have aesthetic elements that are relatively unappealing and perceptibly uncharacteristic of the surrounding area.
>
> Moderate: The location is typical or characteristic of the region's natural or cultural visual amenities. A site with moderate visual quality maintains the visual character of the surrounding area, with aesthetic elements that do not stand out as either contributing to or detracting from the visual character of an area.

High: The location has visual resources that are unique or exemplary of the region's natural or cultural scenic amenities. A site with high visual quality is likely to stand out as particularly appealing and makes a notable positive contribution to the visual character of an area.

Visual Sensitivity

Visual sensitivity is the overall measure of a site's susceptibility to adverse visual changes. Visual sensitivity is rated as high, moderate, or low and is determined based on the combined factors of visual quality, viewer types and volumes, and visual exposure. For example, significant adverse impacts are typically unlikely in a setting with low visual sensitivity.

Affected Viewers and Exposure Conditions

Affected viewers and exposure conditions address the variables that affect viewers and their visual exposure. The identification of viewer types and volumes describes the type and quantity of potentially affected viewers within the area. Land uses that derive value from the quality of their settings are considered potentially sensitive to changes in visual conditions. Examples of viewers with elevated concern for visual quality include recreationists, pedestrians, and tourists.

Regional Visual Character

As stated within the County's General Plan, Humboldt County's varied and extensive coastline allows for a wide range of scenic vistas from roads and highways, and from beaches, state parks, and coastal access points (Humboldt County 2017). The visual character of the Samoa Peninsula is rural and industrial in nature, with low hills, a mix of herbaceous dunes, vacant land, industrial and commercial facilities, residential development, few tree stands, and overhead utilities.

Local Visual Character and Visual Sensitivity

The dominant visual character near the Project Site consists of open coastal dunes with low coastal vegetation interspersed with residential homes, commercial uses, and industrial buildings. Telephone and high-voltage power lines cross the peninsula and are visible from multiple vantage points. Views from the Project Site include dunes and Pacific Ocean to the west, Humboldt Bay to the east, log stacks and paved industrial areas to the north, and coastal vegetation surrounding the Project Area. Uses within the Study Area primarily consist of a mix of residences, industrial, commercial, and vacant lots. Residential areas on the Samoa Peninsula include the communities of Samoa and Fairhaven, located approximately one mile from the Project Site. The Coast Guard Station is also located south of the Project Site. Industrial areas in the vicinity include a wood chip export facility with a marine terminal, a biomass power plant, log and lumber storage, the Samoa Field Airport, commercial docks, chip elevators, large ash landfills, warehouses, wastewater treatment facility, and vacant industrial properties. Commercial facilities include boat repair, potting soil manufacturing, and a recycling transfer station. Buildings in the immediate vicinity of the Project Site are generally between 30 and 75 feet tall. The Project Site itself supports the tallest building in the vicinity, the 270-foot tall smokestack, that dominates the visual character in the area.

Vance Avenue provides access to the Project Site and runs in a predominantly north-south direction connecting to the communities of Samoa to the north and Fairhaven to the south of the Project Site. The Project Site is set back approximately 900 feet from New Navy Base Road and is designated by Humboldt County's scenic mapping project as having coastal zone scenic views. The Project Site is generally screened from view from New Navy Base Road due to the presence of coastal dunes and the significantly taller, approximately 60 foot tall, former Louisiana Pacific Corporation Samoa Solid Waste Disposal Site between New Navy Base Road and the Project Site. Views from Vance Avenue in the vicinity of the Project Site include primarily commercial uses and a timber yard to the north, commercial uses to the south, Louisiana Pacific Samoa Solid Waste Disposal Site to the immediate west, and Humboldt Bay to the east. Residential homes in Samoa are located west of the northern extent of the water intake pipeline alignment..

3.1.3 Regulatory Framework

Federal

There are no federal policies or regulations that apply to aesthetics within the Study Area.

State

There are no state policies or regulations that apply to aesthetics within the Study Area.

Local

Humboldt Bay Area Plan – Local Coastal Program

As established in the Humboldt Bay Area Plan, the Project Site is not located in an area defined as a Coastal Scenic Area or a Coastal View Area. The nearest Coastal Scenic Area is located west of New Navy Base Road and includes undeveloped dunes and beach. The Project Site is also not located within the Samoa Town Master Plan Land Use Plan boundary; thus, visual policies specific to the Samoa Town footprint do not apply.

The Humboldt Bay Area Plan does not include any additional lighting-related policies applicable to the Project. While not specifically applicable, the policies pertinent to Coastal Scenic Areas, Coastal View Areas, or within the boundaries of the Samoa Town Master Plan Land Use Plan include contemporary healthy lighting principles that would be included into the Project, including exterior lighting that:

– Is shielded and not directed beyond the boundaries of the property or parcel
– Combines with exterior design and landscaping to render the overall appearance compatible with the natural setting as seen from the road
– Meets high standards of energy efficiency
– Protects the distant night skyline views from distant vantage points toward the Pacific Ocean, Humboldt Bay, and New Navy Base Road
– Avoids direct illumination of adjacent natural resource areas

Applicable policies from the Humboldt Bay Area Plan are cited below.

> *3.40 Visual Resource Protection*
>
> *The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural landforms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. New development in highly scenic areas such as those designated in the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation and by local government shall be subordinate to the character of its setting.*
>
> *New development shall:*
>
> *(5) Where appropriate, protect special communities and neighborhoods which, because of their unique characteristics, are popular visitor destination points for recreational uses.*
>
> *3.40 Visual Resource Protection, Section B.1.a. (1) and (2) Development Policies*
>
> *1. Physical Scale and Visual Compatibility*
>
> *No development shall be approved that is not compatible with the physical scale of development as designated in the Area Plan and zoning for the subject parcel; and the following criteria shall be determinative in establishing the compatibility of the proposed development:*

a. For proposed development that is not the principle permitted use, or that is outside an urban limit and for other than detached residential, agricultural uses, or forestry activities regulated by CDF, that the proposed development compatible with the principle permitted use, and, in addition is either:

(1) No greater in height or bulk than is permitted for the principle use and is otherwise compatible with the styles and visible material so existing development or landforms in the immediate neighborhood, where such development is visible from the nearest public road.

(2) Where the project cannot feasibly conform to paragraph 1, and no other more feasible location exists, that the exterior design, and landscaping be subject to a public hearing, and shall be approved only when:

(a) There is no less environmentally damaging feasible alternative location.

(b) The proposed exterior design, and landscaping are sufficient to assure compatibility with the physical scale established by surrounding development.

3.1.4 Evaluation Criteria and Thresholds of Significance

Evaluation Criteria	Significance Thresholds	Sources
Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	Major alteration of a view from a scenic vista or major obstruction in viewed area towards a scenic vista	CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, Checklist Item I (a) Humboldt Bay Area Plan Policies 3.40 B.1.a (1) and (2)
Would the Project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	Non-conformance with the five required elements of corridor protection	CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, Checklist Item I (b)
In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public view of the site and its surroundings? (Public Views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the Project is in an urbanized area, would the Project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	High visual contrast or change from a publicly accessible vantage point	CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, Checklist Item I (c) Humboldt Bay Area Plan Policies 3.40 B.1.a (1) and (2)
Would the Project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	New source of light or glare that impedes views	CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, Checklist Item I (d)

3.1.5 Methodology

The approach to evaluating the effect of the proposed project under the CEQA significance criteria is discussed below:

Scenic Vistas

This evaluation is applicable to Project features that would be located on or disrupt access to a scenic vista or result in significant visual changes within its viewshed. Scenic vistas are viewpoints that provide expansive views of a highly valued landscape. Scenic vistas may be officially recognized or designated, or they may be informal in nature (e.g., mountain peaks, expansive views). The Humboldt Bay Area Plan was reviewed to determine scenic vistas in the Project Area.

Visual Quality

Visual quality or visual character impacts are assessed by estimating the amount of visual change introduced by a project's components, the degree to which visual changes may be visible to surrounding viewer groups, and the general sensitivity of viewer groups to landscape alterations. As such, visual changes are always considered in the context of a site or locale's visual sensitivity (as described in the setting). Visual changes are assessed from publicly accessible or neighborhood viewpoints and measured by two factors:

Visual Contrast would be significant if it results in regraded landforms, alteration or elimination of ridgelines, and changes introduced by a project that result in landscape colors, textures, and scale of visual components that are inconsistent with the natural surroundings (changes to form, line, color, texture, and scale in the landscape);

Degradation of Visual Quality would be considered significant if a project severely alters or displaces specific scenic resources composed of striking landform features, aesthetic water bodies, mature stands of native/cultural trees (e.g., historic hedgerows), or historic structures.

These factors were used to evaluate the extent and scale of visual quality alterations relative to the project improvements.

3.1.6 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impact AES-a: Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista? (Less than Significant)

Terrestrial Development

The Terrestrial Development component is located on the Samoa Peninsula adjacent to Humboldt Bay. As defined in the Humboldt Bay Area Plan, the Terrestrial Development component is not located in an area defined as a Coastal Scenic Area or a Coastal View Area. The nearest Coastal Scenic Area is located west of New Navy Base Road and includes undeveloped dunes and beach. Vegetated sand dunes are located on either side of New Navy Base Road, near the site of the Terrestrial Development. The former Louisiana Pacific Corporation Samoa Solid Waste Disposal Site is also located between the Project Site and New Navy Base Road; the closed landfill includes buildings that are a maximum of 76 feet tall, significantly higher than adjacent dunes and vegetation, providing a visual barrier.

The Project Site currently has low visual quality, low visual sensitivity, and poor visual character. Existing abandoned and dilapidated industrial infrastructure, including the former pulp mills 270-foot tall smokestack, are the dominant views of the proposed Terrestrial Development and surrounding area. The existing smokestack is visible from as far north as Arcata, as well as the communities of Eureka, and Humboldt Hill. The smokestack and 12-story Reboiler Building are also visible from Samoa Beach and surrounding dunes by the recreating public.

During construction, heavy equipment, materials, and workers would be present on-site. The temporary presence of the construction materials and workers, as well as the construction activities, would be visibly distant and similar to the existing industrial facilities near the Terrestrial Development site. As the Terrestrial Development site is partially screened from view from along New Navy Base Road by the existing dunes and the former Louisiana Pacific Corporation Samoa Solid Waste Disposal Site, and given the industrial nature of the Project Site, the construction phase would not adversely affect views when traveling or stationed along New Navy Base Road. Further, views of the Pacific Ocean are located west of New Navy Base Road, whereas the Terrestrial Development is located east of New Navy Base Road. Therefore, views of the Pacific Ocean would be unaffected by the construction phase of the Project.

The Terrestrial Development component of the Project would remove the smokestack, 12-story Reboiler Building, and multiple piles of mixed debris and partially collapsed dilapidated buildings improving the visual condition of the Project Site and scenic view from the greater Humboldt Bay area during the operational phase (see Appendix A). Existing demolition waste and other industrial blight would also be removed from the Terrestrial Development site.

The maximum height of the new facility would be approximately 60 feet, which is a reduction in comparison to existing conditions. There would be fleeting views of the buildings visible between the dunes via New Navy Base Road.

Façade colors and patterns have been chosen to integrate the buildings into the setting. Distant views would exist from the City of Eureka shoreline. No tree removal would occur.

The Terrestrial Development component would also implement on- and off-site mitigation for rare plants and dune mat habitat (see Section 3.4 – Biological Resources). Any change in visual appearance resulting from removal of non-native plant species, revegetation, mulching, or related activities would be short-term in duration. Native plant composition would improve, as well as the visual appearance of the Project Site would from a distance. The smokestack, which is the tallest structure on-site and in the vicinity would be removed, improving the overall scenic views from the greater Humboldt area. Changes to dune elevation or long-term visual appearance would not occur. Any short-term visual changes related to dune mitigation and restoration would result in a less than significant impact. Dune mitigation areas would appear visually unchanged from a distance and mitigation activities would be similar to general landscaping activities. Additionally, work in dune mitigation areas would occur via hand labor, not heavy equipment, and would not include changes in topography. Once established, mitigation areas would result in a visual improvement by reducing non-native species and removing trash and debris.

Given the Terrestrial Development component would remove highly visible industrial blight, reduce the tallest structure height on the grounds by approximately 210 feet. The Project would construct a new facility designed to visually integrate into surrounding scenic resources absent negative visual effects on the Coastal Scenic Area west of New Navy Base Road, any potential impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is necessary

Level of Significance: Less than Significant

Ocean Discharge

Ocean discharge would have no impact. The Project would merely utilize the existing Ocean Discharge outfall infrastructure currently existing. Changes in visual quality, visual sensitivity, and visual character would not result. No change to the existing Ocean Discharge component is proposed that could affect views on a scenic vista. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is necessary

Level of Significance: No Impact

Humboldt Bay Water Intakes

The Humboldt Bay Water Intakes component would modernize two water intakes (RMT II and Red Tank dock water intakes), including a retrofit of the existing sea chests, upgrading the water pipe that runs on each dock, reinforcing dock mount piping, improving the sea chest intake infrastructure, and installation of sub-surface piping along the shoreline. Trenching for the water pipeline, and fire suppression line, would occur on vacant and underutilized industrial property. The existing docks are industrial in nature (large scale, deteriorated in age, and used for coastal dependent industrial purposes). As such, the water intake footprint has low visual quality, low visual sensitivity, and poor visual character.

The two water intakes are located on existing docks, the RMT II and the Red Tank docks. The water intakes would update the existing water intakes, install new water supply pipe on the docks, and install connecting water lines. Buried seawater supply lines and industrial freshwater fire suppression pipelines would extend from the Red Tank to the north, south to the intake structure at Red Tank dock, continuing south to the second intake structure at the RMT II dock, terminating at the proposed Terrestrial Development. The fire suppression pipeline would generally parallel and be within the same trench as the water line pipeline from the Red Tank dock to the RMT II manifold (See Figure 2-5).

As mentioned above, the Project Site is not located in an area defined as a Coastal Scenic Area or a Coastal View Area. The nearest Coastal Scenic Area is located west of New Navy Base Road and includes undeveloped dunes and beach. The majority of the water intake and fire pipeline Project Area is not visible from this scenic area and would be located subsurface.

During construction, the presence of heavy equipment, materials, and workers would be required to install and construct the Humboldt Bay Water Intakes, seawater supply pipe, and the industrial freshwater fire suppression piping along the alignment. The connecting Humboldt Bay Water Line and the fire piping would be installed via open trench. In total approximately 4,650 linear feet of piping would be installed. Approximately 200 linear feet of pipeline would be installed daily, resulting in approximately 23 days of construction. Due to the temporary nature of the construction phase, the distance from the improvements to New Navy Base Road, and the existing dunes and built environment screening the alignment from view, construction of the water intakes, water supply pipeline, and fire pipeline would not have a significant impact on existing scenic vistas in the area.

Once constructed, the associated piping for the water intakes and the fire suppression water line would be underground and out-of-sight. The intake structures would be located east of New Navy Base Road, while the scenic coastal vista is west of New Navy Base Road. Therefore, the water intakes would not have the potential to block or interfere with the coastal view from New Navy Base Road. In addition, most of the water intakes infrastructure would be located underground, underwater, or would be physically small and low lying. Views from the greater Humboldt Bay area and Humboldt Bay itself would not differ from existing conditions (See Image 3.1-4). Therefore, potential visual impact from the operational aspect of the Humboldt Bay Water Intakes component would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is necessary

Level of Significance: Less than Significant

Compensatory Off-Site Restoration

The Compensatory Off-Site Restoration component would require the presence of construction equipment in order to remove piles from Kramer Dock and mechanical equipment to remove invasive Spartina. The presence of workers would also be required to implement this component. Due to the temporary nature of both the pile removal and Spartina removal, it is unlikely to have a significant effect on scenic views. Furthermore, once implemented the Off-Site Restoration component would enhance existing coastal views. The impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is necessary

Level of Significance: Less than Significant

Impact AES-b: Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway? (No Impact)

Terrestrial Development

The Terrestrial Development component is not located on, near, or within view of a state scenic highway (Caltrans 2018). Although no highways in Humboldt County are “officially designated” as California State Scenic highways, several State Highways are eligible for official designation: Route 36 from Route 101 near Fortuna to the Trinity County line; Route 96 from Route 299 at Willow Creek north to Siskiyou County; Route 101 for its entire length in Humboldt County; and Route 299 from Arcata to Willow Creek. This Terrestrial Development Component is not readily visible from any of these locations. No impact would result.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is necessary

Level of Significance: No Impact

Ocean Discharge

The Ocean Discharge component is located 1.55 miles from shore and is not located on, near, or within view of a state scenic highway (Caltrans 2018). As stated above, although no highways in Humboldt County are “officially designated” as California State Scenic highways, several State Highways are eligible for official designation: Route 36 from Route 101 near Fortuna to the Trinity County line; Route 96 from Route 299 at Willow Creek north to Siskiyou County; Route

101 for its entire length in Humboldt County; and Route 299 from Arcata to Willow Creek. This component is not readily visible from any of these locations. No impact would result.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is necessary

Level of Significance: No Impact

Humboldt Bay Water Intakes

The Humboldt Bay Water Intakes component is not located on, near, or within view of a state scenic highway (Caltrans 2018). Although no highways in Humboldt County are "officially designated" as California State Scenic highways, several State Highways are eligible for official designation: Route 36 from Route 101 near Fortuna to the Trinity County line; Route 96 from Route 299 at Willow Creek north to Siskiyou County; Route 101 for its entire length in Humboldt County; and Route 299 from Arcata to Willow Creek. This Project is not readily visible from any of these locations. No impact would result.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is necessary

Level of Significance: No Impact

Compensatory Off-Site Restoration

The Compensatory Off-Site Restoration component is not located on, near or within view of a state scenic highway (Caltrans 2018). Although no highways in Humboldt County are "officially designated" as California State Scenic highways, several State Highways are eligible for official designation: Route 36 from Route 101 near Fortuna to the Trinity County line; Route 96 from Route 299 at Willow Creek north to Siskiyou County; Route 101 for its entire length in Humboldt County; and Route 299 from Arcata to Willow Creek. This component is not readily visible from any of these locations. No impact would result.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is necessary

Level of Significance: No Impact

Impact AES-c: **In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public view of the site and its surroundings? (Public Views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the Project is in an urbanized area, would the Project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality? (Less than Significant)**

Terrestrial Development

The Terrestrial Development component would be consistent with applicable policies in Section 3.40 – Visual Resource Protection of the Humboldt Bay Area Plan. Any construction-related visual changes would be temporary and would not affect the visual character in the vicinity of the proposed Terrestrial Development, which is an active industrial area. The Terrestrial Development would be principally permitted and consistent with the visual character of the surrounding area. The Phase 1 Grow-Out Module and Phase 1 CUP/Phase 2 Grow-Out Module buildings (see Section 2.0-Project Description, Image 2-3) would be larger in width and length than the existing industrial buildings on the parcel. The combined footprints of the five proposed buildings would be larger than the existing footprint of the combined industrial structures within the Project boundary.

The existing Reboiler Building is twelve stories high. The height of the smokestack is approximately 270 feet. The approximate 60 foot maximum height of the proposed Terrestrial Development would be approximately 210 feet less than the existing Reboiler Building and smokestack and consistent with the 75 foot building heights allowable by the Humboldt County Code and presently in use on nearby commercial and industrial properties in Samoa and Fairhaven, California. Exterior facility design would be compatible with the visual character of the surrounding dune environment

and would not impact public views (e.g., views of the facility from Humboldt Bay or Samoa Beach). Removal of the smokestack and Reboiler Building, which are highly visible remnants of industrial blight, would improve public views of the Terrestrial Development area.

While not a visual simulation, for the purposes of CEQA (general public views of the Project Site do not occur from above), existing conditions and post-construction drone views have been prepared for the Project to provide a proximal layout and general pre- and post-Project appearance of the overall Project Site (Image 3.1-1 and Image 3.1-2).

Image 3.1-1 Existing Conditions Drone view of the Project Site, Looking North

Image 3.1 2 Post-Project Conditions Simulated Drone View of the Project Site, Looking North (not a simulation for the purposes of CEQA)

Visual simulations were prepared from various public viewpoints, including the Eureka Waterfront at the foot of F Street and the Wharfinger Building and Public Marina, the Samoa Dunes along New Navy Base Road, and the

Humboldt Bay shoreline along the Waterfront Trail between the foot of Truesdale Street and Del Norte Street in Eureka (see Images 3.1-3 through 3.1-6). Please see Appendix A – Visual Simulations for the complete set of visual simulations prepared for the Project.

The Wharfinger Building and Public Marina are located approximately 0.6 miles east of the Project Site on the opposite bank of the Samoa Channel in Eureka. Existing public views from the Wharfinger Building and Public Marina looking west include the smokestack, boiler building, water tank, and other tall structures that would be demolished as part of the proposed Project. See Image 3.1-3 for existing public views of the Project Site from the Wharfinger Building and Public Marina. Following construction, new buildings would be of similar height to other industrial facilities on and near the Project Site, reducing the visual impact on the overall western skyline as visible from the Eureka Waterfront. See Image 3.1-4 for a post-Project visual simulation of public views from the Wharfinger Building and Public Marina. Views from other locations along the waterfront (see Appendix A) showed similar results. Based on the results of the visual simulation, public views from the Eureka Waterfront would not be detrimentally altered.

New Navy Base Road is located approximately 0.15 miles west of the Project Site along the Samoa Dunes corridor. Fleeting views of the Project Site between the dunes and ash piles are possible from vehicles traveling along New Navy Base Road looking east. Existing public views from New Navy Base Road looking east include the smokestack, boiler building, elevated water tank, and other tall structures that would be demolished as part of the proposed Terrestrial Development. See Image 3.1-5 for existing public views of the Project Site from the New Navy Base Road. Following construction, new buildings would be of similar height to other industrial facilities on and near the Project Site, reducing the visual impact on the overall visual character or public views as visible from New Navy Base Road. See Image 3.1-6 for a post-Project visual simulation of public views from New Navy Base Road. Existing public views from New Navy Base Road looking west include views of Samoa Dunes, and the beach. All development would be confined to the east side of New Navy Base Road, therefore views looking west would remain the same.

The new buildings proposed as part of the Terrestrial Development would be visible from various vantage points in the immediate vicinity, as shown in Image 3.1-4 and Image 3.1-6. However, the parcel is an industrially zoned area and views from nearby scenic areas would not be significantly affected. The parcel is an industrial area where larger buildings are anticipated. The proposed facility is not inconsistent with anticipated uses or style of development. As such, and based on the results of the visual simulation, public views from this location would not be detrimentally altered, and any potential impact would be less than significant. For additional drone simulations and ground-borne visual simulations, see Appendix A.

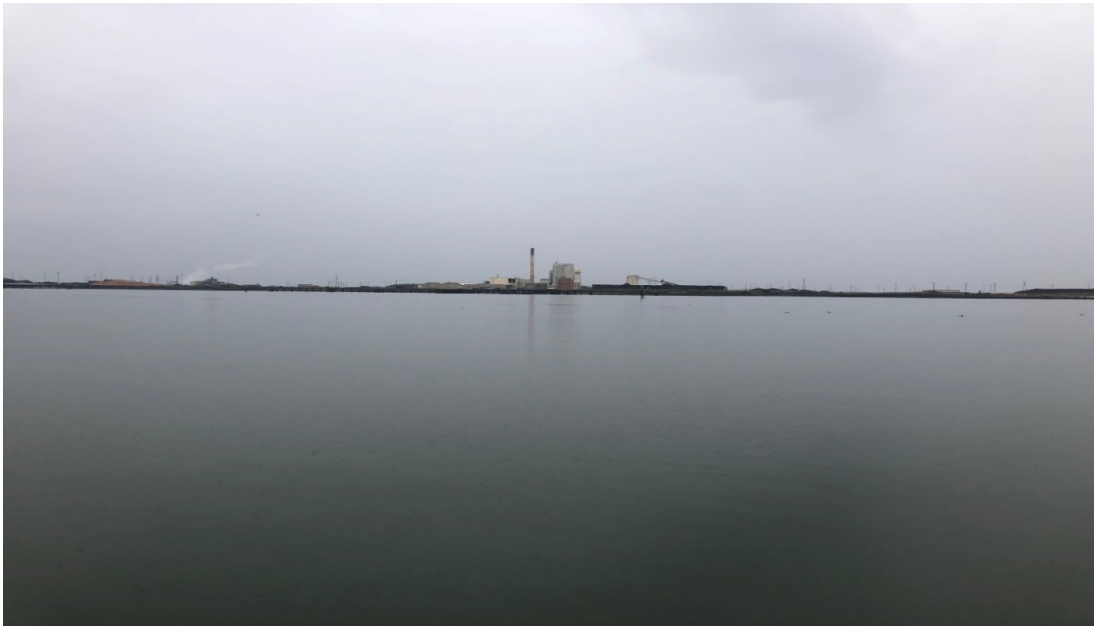

Image 3.1 3 Existing Public Views of the Project Site, Looking West from the City of Eureka, Wharfinger Building, and Public Marina

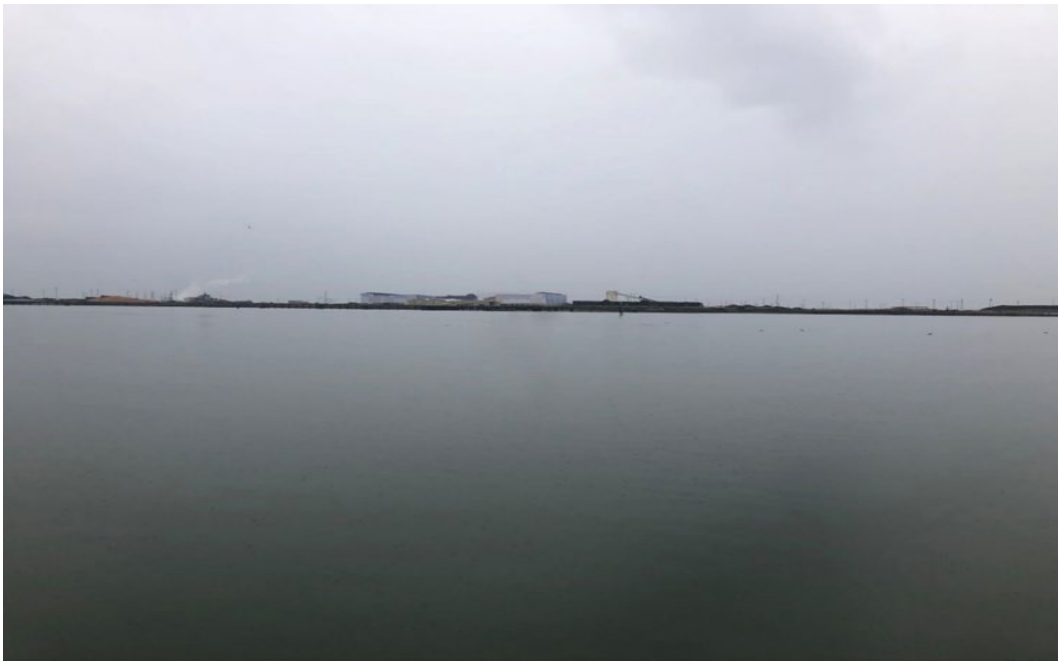

Image 3.1 4 Post-Project Simulation of the Project Site, Looking West from the City of Eureka, Wharfinger Building, and Public Marina

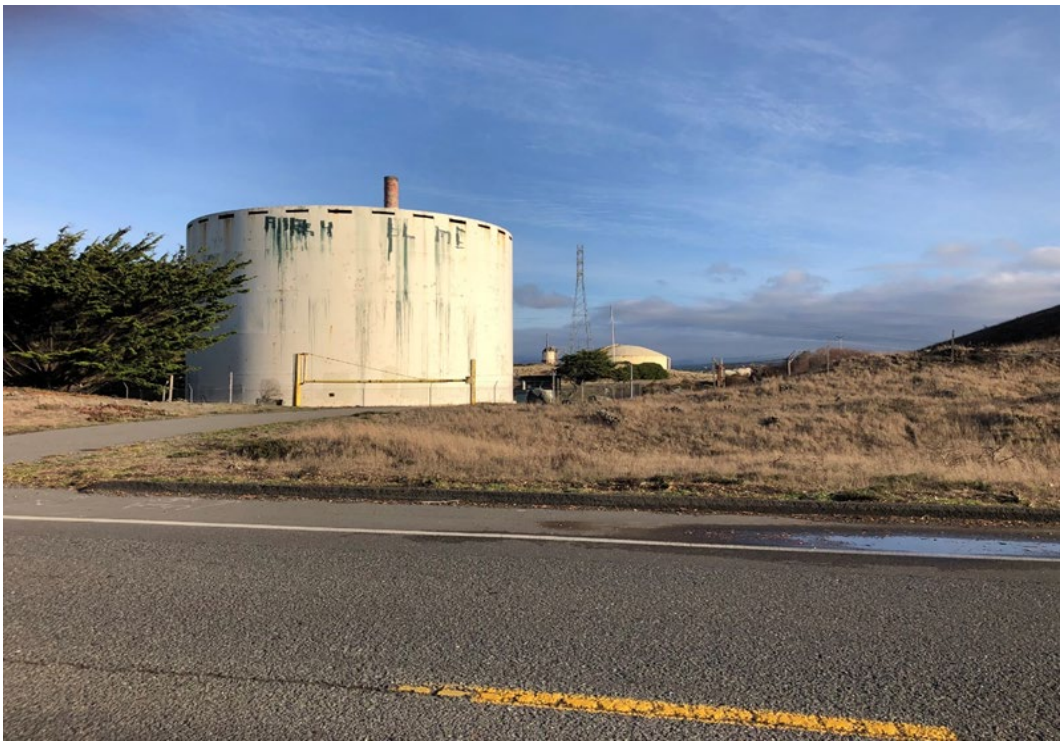

Image 3.1 5 Existing Public Views of the Project Site, Looking East from New Navy Base Road

Image 3.1 6 Post-Project Simulation of the Project Site, Looking East from New Navy Base Road

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is necessary

Level of Significance: Less than Significant

Ocean Discharge

The Ocean Discharge component would utilize existing infrastructure during the operational phase. A visual change would not result. Therefore, no aspects of this component would have the potential to conflict with existing zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is necessary

Level of Significance: No Impact

Humboldt Bay Water Intakes

The only above-ground aspects of this component of the Project would be the water intake structures and a few above-ground pipes to connect into the larger sea chest infrastructure. The intake structures already exist and would be enhanced as part of the overall Project. New screens would be installed at the intake portion, which would result in a slight increase in the overall width of the intake structures. The Project Site is generally dominated by existing commercial and industrial properties in Samoa and Fairhaven, California. The intake structures and associated piping would be small compared to their associated industrial dock (RMT II and Red Tank) and would be consistent with the existing uses on the docks. Views from the surrounding area would be minimal, generally screened from view from the west by the existing coastal dunes and the proposed Terrestrial Development. Views from the east are located approximately 0.6 miles away on the opposite bank of the Samoa Channel in Eureka. Due to the long-range views, as seen in Image 3.1-5 and 3.1-6, the water intakes not be visible at this distance. The water supply and fire suppression pipelines would be located subsurface. Additionally, given the industrial nature of the Project Site, enhancement of these intake structures would be consistent with the existing industrial nature of the Project Site and immediate vicinity. Therefore, the water intakes would be consistent with the visual character of the existing environment and

would not impact public views (e.g. views of the Project Site from New Navy Base Road or the opposite bank of the Samoa Channel). A less than significant impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is necessary

Level of Significance: Less than Significant

Compensatory Off-Site Restoration

The Compensatory Off-Site Restoration component would ultimately improve the visual character of the immediate area by removing deteriorating creosote piles and invasive Spartina within the Humboldt Bay Area. Coastal views would be improved, as the removal of piles would allow for unobstructed views of Humboldt Bay and the removal of invasive Spartina would allow for native enhancement along the coastline. Therefore, the visual character at each of the off-site restoration locations would be improved. There would be no impact related to the visual character of the off-site restoration component.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is necessary

Level of Significance: No Impact

Impact AES-d: Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area? (Less than Significant)

Terrestrial Development

Exterior lighting would be consistent with current County lighting guidelines and permit conditions. Exterior lighting is present on buildings and in parking areas under existing conditions. There are also presently lights on top of the tallest building and smokestack for airplane safety. The adjacent industrial property operated by Green Diamond includes substantial exterior lighting that is on all night to accommodate night-shift operations.

Following construction, exterior lighting would remain on each night, as the facility would be staffed on a 24-hour basis. Exterior night-lighting would generally be located on the interior of the campus to illuminate doorway and internal pathways. Exterior lighting would be downcast, shielded, and directed to avoid light trespass and scatter. Exterior lighting would be compatible with the existing setting. As a result of the facility's exterior lighting design, any new exterior lighting will not result in a new source of light or glare that would adversely affect views. The County, as a standard condition of approval, requires that all light be shielded and directed down at the ground so as to preclude illumination of the night sky or light spillover onto adjacent properties. Any potential impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is necessary

Level of Significance: Less than Significant

Ocean Discharge

The Ocean Discharge component of the Project would utilize the existing Ocean Discharge infrastructure during operation of the Project. No lighting would be installed or used in order to operate the Ocean Discharge component. Therefore, no impact related to exterior lighting would result.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is necessary

Level of Significance: No Impact

Humboldt Bay Water Intakes

The Humboldt Bay Water Intakes component of the Project would not require any nighttime construction that would necessitate the use of temporary lighting. During operation, no lighting would be installed on either intake structure,

and no night-time work is anticipated to be required. Therefore, the Humboldt Bay Water Intakes component would not have the potential to create a new source of substantial light or glare. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is necessary

Level of Significance: No Impact

Compensatory Off-Site Restoration

The off-site restoration component would not require nighttime construction that would necessitate the use of temporary lighting. Once the restoration is complete, no lighting or material that could cause glare would be installed. Therefore, the restoration component would not have the potential to create a new source of substantial light or glare. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is necessary

Level of Significance: No Impact

3.1.7 Cumulative Impacts

Impact AES-C-1: Would the Project contribute to a cumulatively significant impact to visual resources? (Less than Significant)

To evaluate potential visual cumulative impacts, projects identified in Table 3-1 were considered. None of the Project components would result in an impact to any scenic resources within a scenic highway, due to none being located within the immediate vicinity of the Project Site. Therefore, no cumulative impact related to impacts to scenic resources along an officially designated scenic highways would occur.

Additionally, the Ocean Discharge component of the Project would have no impact to aesthetic resources, as no construction would need to occur, and operation would utilize existing infrastructure. Therefore, it is not discussed further. Likewise, neither of the anticipated cumulative permitted NPDES discharges through the RMT II ocean outfall would result in an impact to aesthetic resources. These cumulative projects are therefore not discussed further.

Project construction and operation of the Terrestrial Development and Humboldt Bay Intakes components would result in less than significant impacts to scenic vistas and the existing visual character of the Project Site and vicinity. Both components would be visually consistent with the existing industrial and commercial uses on the Samoa Peninsula.

The proposed Harbor District Mariculture Development Program would result in mariculture operations resulting from mariculture leases would be visible in Humboldt Bay from boat traffic only. Mariculture operations are present throughout Humboldt Bay and are integral to the existing visual character of the fishing community. Additional mariculture operations, combined with the proposed Project's less than significant impact to visual resources, would not result in a cumulative aesthetic impact.

Construction of the Peninsula Community Services District Samoa Peninsula Wastewater Treatment facility would have a low elevation profile and would not be visible from the Project Site, or vice versa. Construction of the wastewater treatment facility and associated collection system would result in short-term visual impacts resulting from ground disturbance and the presence of heavy equipment. Given construction of Phase 2 of the Terrestrial Development component is dependent on an operation wastewater treatment facility in Samoa, construction of the Phase 2 facility would not occur simultaneously with the wastewater treatment facility. There are also improvements planned for Samoa Town Improvements; however, construction would not overlap with the proposed Project. There is also potential for a Renewable Energy Port. Construction of this project would be consistent with the existing industrial nature of the Samoa Peninsula coastal industrial zoned properties. Given the construction and operational timeline for the Renewable Energy Port is unknown and remains speculative, most likely construction would occur after the proposed Project has been constructed. Therefore, no cumulative aesthetic impacts are anticipated to occur.

Specifications surrounding the speculative fiber optic cable landing and off-shore wind project(s) remain unknown, including details regarding any potential land-based infrastructure that could result in a cumulative visual impact. Given the speculative nature of both projects, it is assumed construction would be most likely to occur after the proposed Project was fully constructed and operational. Both speculative projects would need to comply with land use and zoning on the Samoa Peninsula and would thus most likely be sited on property zoned for Industrial or Coastal Dependent Industrial uses where infrastructure associated with utilities and wind power would be considered an anticipated allowable use.

The Terrestrial Development component would also result in a less than significant impact related to light and glare, whereas the Ocean Discharge and Humboldt Bay Water Intakes components would have no impact related to light and glare. Exterior lighting would be incorporated on the sides of the buildings, consistent with adjacent industrial properties. These lights would be downcast, shielded, and directed to avoid light trespass and scatted. These lights would not illuminate the night sky or result in spillover onto adjacent properties. Therefore, the minimal lights to be installed are not anticipated to be cumulatively considerable. A less than significant cumulative impact would result.

Any cumulative impact to aesthetics, both resulting from construction and operations, would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is necessary

Level of Significance: Less than Significant

3.1.8 References

Caltrans. 2018. California State Scenic Highway Mapping System. https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=2e921695c43643b1aaf7000dfcc19983

Humboldt County. 2017. Humboldt County General Plan for the Areas Outside the Coastal Zone. October.

Humboldt County. 2018. Humboldt County General Plan Volume II, Humboldt Bay Area Plan of the Humboldt County Local Coastal Program. December.