

There is a sidewalk (also described as a multi-use path) for pedestrian and bicycle use currently proposed by Santa Barbara County Association of Governments. The sidewalk would begin at the existing Cabrillo Boulevard roundabout and connect to similar facilities along the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge. The final design of the Cabrillo Boulevard interchange will be designed to minimize impacts to the sidewalk (joint use path). There is a mutual understanding on the part of Santa Barbara County Association of Governments and Caltrans that slight modifications to curb cuts and other sidewalk elements would be necessary when it comes time to build the interchange. Any features that could be disturbed during the HOV project would be replaced. Necessary path modifications will vary by the interchange configuration selected and will be refined during the design phase with input from the City of Santa Barbara. Access for bikes and pedestrians will remain open during construction of the interchange.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

- Coordinate with local jurisdictions as needed to minimize disruptions to traffic, pedestrians, and bicyclists associated with local and state road construction projects in the corridor.
- Where the project proposes local-street changes, all modified pedestrian facilities would comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

### **2.1.6 Visual/Aesthetics**

#### ***Regulatory Setting***

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 as amended establishes that the federal government use all practicable means to ensure all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings (42 U.S. Code 4331[b][2]). To further emphasize this point, the Federal Highway Administration in its implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act (23 U.S. Code 109[h]) directs that final decisions about projects are to be made in the best overall public interest taking into account adverse environmental impacts, including among others, the destruction or disruption of aesthetic values.

Likewise, the California Environmental Quality Act establishes that it is the policy of the state to take all action necessary to provide the people of the state “with... enjoyment of aesthetic, natural, scenic and historic environmental qualities” (California Public Resources Code Section 21001[b]).

### ***Affected Environment***

This section is based on the Visual Impact Assessment (November 2011).

U.S. 101 through coastal Santa Barbara County has long been recognized for its scenic qualities. Local coastal planning policies emphasize the protection of visual resources along U.S. 101 and note the concern and sensitivity to aesthetic issues along this route.

Public opinion and policy on the established visual character of the regional landscape are important factors in assessing the baseline values of the setting. These policies and community-based goals can be used to predict the likely reaction that changes resulting from the proposed project would evoke from the viewing public.

The project passes through three local jurisdictions—Santa Barbara County, the City of Carpinteria, and the City of Santa Barbara—as well as the unincorporated communities of Summerland and Montecito. The entire project sits within the Coastal Zone. The project is subject to coastal zone policies and the issuance of Coastal Development Permits, so many aspects of the project would be regulated by the applicable local coastal plans and the Coastal Commission policies.

### ***Existing Visual Setting***

The regional topography is characterized by coastal bluffs and plains flowing into the rolling foothills of the Santa Ynez Mountains. The terrain is mostly flat near the coastal edge, with slopes becoming as steep as 30 percent near the hills. The form and ridgeline of the mountains about 1 to 5 miles to the northeast create a dominant element in the landscape, providing a clearly defined visual limit for the region.

Surface water plays an important role in establishing the visual character of the region. The Pacific Ocean is visible from many parts of the study area and, where seen, provides dramatic contrast in terms of color and form to the surrounding landscape. Several seasonal creeks cross the project area as they flow from the foothills to the sea. Water in these creeks is not always visible; the creeks' presence in the landscape is mostly seen as narrow corridors of riparian vegetation.

Wetlands are present in the region. The two largest are the 230-acre Carpinteria Salt Marsh and the 29-acre Andrée Clark Bird Refuge in Santa Barbara.

The vegetation throughout most of the region is varied. Much of the area has been greatly influenced by development of some sort. The typical skyline vegetation along the highway and developed areas consists of mature cypress, pine, eucalyptus and

palms. Native vegetation is seen mainly on hillsides and consists of coast live oak woodland, coastal sage scrub, chaparral and riparian plant communities. Orchards occur in scattered spots, particularly in the foothills near Summerland and Carpinteria.

A wide range of development is found throughout the region. Each community has some commercial development, much of it in the vicinity of U.S. 101, with residential areas mostly on the inland side of the highway. Much of the commercial development is tourism-oriented. The westerly end of the study area in Santa Barbara is the most densely developed part of the region. Some light industry and greenhouses are found around the east end of the study area near Carpinteria. Several recreational facilities sit in the region, including tennis courts, a golf course, a county park and beach access areas. From the highway, the roadsides are generally well landscaped, which effectively screens much of the built-character of the adjacent community.

### Methodology

When analyzing visual resource changes, one must look at how these attributes relate to one another and their setting. This is done by using Federal Highway Administration methodology guidance, which includes three visual rating criteria described as follows:

1. Vividness is the visual power or memorability of the landscape components as they combine in striking and distinctive visual patterns.
2. Intactness is the visual integrity of the landscape and its freedom from non-typical encroaching elements. If all of the various elements of a landscape seem to “belong” together, there will be a high level of intactness.
3. Unity is the visual harmony of the landscape considered as a whole. Unity represents the degree to which potentially diverse visual elements maintain a coherent visual pattern.

To provide a clear description of the existing visual setting and to define anticipated impacts, the project area was divided into six landscape units. Landscape Assessment Units or “Units” divide the project into manageable segments that may share visual attributes, potential project effects, and if necessary, impact reduction strategies.

The project corridor was divided into the following six Landscape Assessment Units. The units are defined along the highway corridor from the western end of the project to the east.

*Carpinteria City Unit (post miles 1.4 to 4.1)—From 0.22 mile east of Bailard Avenue to 0.2 mile west of Santa Monica Road*

This unit is defined by its proximity to the community center of Carpinteria. As part of the eastern section of the project corridor, views to the Santa Ynez Mountains and agriculture are important visual elements. The Carpinteria City Unit is also influenced by views of the central business district, as well as residential and visitor-serving commercial development along the Highway. This unit is generally well landscaped and has limited to no views of the Pacific Ocean.

*Carpinteria Salt Marsh Unit (post miles 4.1 to 5.6)—From 0.2 mile west of Santa Monica Road to the Arroyo Parida (Paredon) Creek Bridge*

This unit is another part of the eastern section of the project corridor, where views to the Santa Ynez Mountains and agriculture are important visual elements. The visual identity of this unit, however, is also greatly influenced by its proximity to the Carpinteria Salt Marsh. This Landscape Assessment Unit includes views of some of the lesser-developed areas along the project corridor.

*Padaro Unit (post miles 5.6 to 7.1)—From Arroyo Parida (Paredon) Creek Bridge to the North Padaro Lane overcrossing*

This unit includes the unincorporated area between the communities of Carpinteria and Summerland. The visual environment through this unit is defined to a great extent by mature trees and landscaping along and next to the highway corridor. A group of trees known as the Memorial Oaks line a portion of U.S. 101 within this unit. These oaks were planted to honor Santa Barbara County soldiers who died in World War I and, although not a historical resource, are considered of local interest. The oaks contribute to the vegetative character of the Padaro Unit, although their commemorative value is likely not apparent to the casual highway traveler. Further discussion of the Memorial Oaks is provided below. A low to moderate amount of development is seen in this area, mostly residences, from medium density north of the highway to large estates along the ocean bluff. Long distance ocean views exist from the eastern and westernmost portions of this assessment unit.

*Summerland Unit (post miles 7.1 to 9.2)—From the North Padaro Lane overcrossing to 0.2 mile west of the Sheffield undercrossing*

This unit is composed of the Summerland community and its vicinity. This visually distinctive unit includes dramatic ocean and coastline vistas as well as views of the Summerland commercial area and residential community extending uphill from U.S.

101. A moderate amount of landscaping is found along and next to the highway corridor throughout this assessment unit.

*Montecito Unit (post miles 9.2 to 11.1)—From 0.2 mile west of the Sheffield undercrossing to Hermosillo Road*

This unit includes the highway corridor and vicinity from just west of Ortega Hill to the Los Patos Way off-ramp. This unit is characterized to a great degree by its abundance of mature highway and neighborhood landscaping, along with a somewhat more curvilinear highway alignment. Several large median trees are found in this assessment unit. Few if any ocean views are available from the highway through the Montecito unit.

*Santa Barbara City Unit (post miles 11.1 to 12.3)—From Hermosillo Road to Sycamore Creek*

This unit represents the westernmost segment of the project corridor study area. This assessment includes the Cabrillo Boulevard Interchanges as well as the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge. Although mature landscaping is an important component in the area, this unit is also partially influenced by the more urban visual character of Santa Barbara City. Ocean views are not available from this assessment unit.

*Memorial Oaks*

Apart from the Landscape Assessment Units described above, the Memorial Oaks area along U.S. 101 in the Serena Park area west of Carpinteria was identified as an area of special community interest. Although the Memorial Oaks are not eligible as a historical resource, they do contribute to the vegetative character of the corridor. As a result, they are being addressed here under Visual/Aesthetics.

In the aftermath of World War I, countless memorials were erected across the United States to honor the nation's war dead. One particular form of memorial, the planting of living trees, was promoted as being an especially fitting way of perpetuating the memory of fallen troops. In addition to memorializing a community's loss, memorial trees were also seen as an effective way of greening the landscape, replanting a stock of trees to replace those that had been harvested for wartime purposes, and beautifying the county's streetscapes and open highways, dovetailing in some respects with civic improvement and the "Good Roads" movement. State highway departments also embraced the idea as part of the general highway beautification trend and as a practical solution to help prolong the life of road pavement surfaces by keeping them shaded.

A decade after the end of World War I, Santa Barbara County planted 71 Memorial Oaks in the Serena Park area between Carpinteria and Summerland alongside what was, at the time, a narrow rural two-lane highway. The trees were planted about 50 feet apart in a quarter-mile-long row on both the north and south shoulders of the highway, and each tree reportedly had a wooden marker inscribed with the name of a local soldier who had died in service. Under the direction of Santa Barbara's American Legion Post 49, whose idea it had been to plant the trees, the Memorial Trees were officially dedicated on Mother's Day, May 13, 1928, in a ceremony attended by more than 150 former soldiers, their families and friends, and the State Highway Arboriculturist. Local Boy Scouts planted flowers and placed small flags around the trees, and the ceremonies concluded with a volley fired by the American Legion drill team, and the playing of taps.

In the mid-1950s, the California Division of Highways (later the California Department of Transportation, or Caltrans) converted the two-lane highway to full freeway status by adding two lanes to the north of the existing lanes and limiting access from side roads. As a result of these changes, the Memorial Oaks that formerly had been located on the north side of the two-lane highway were now in the median of the four-lane freeway. Over the years, some of the original oaks died and acorns sprouted and matured in between the original plantings.

In 2009, Caltrans retained JRP Historical Consulting to do research and evaluate historic-period built-environment resources in the project's Area of Potential Effects, including the Memorial Oaks. JRP revisited the resources and again evaluated the significance and integrity of the trees. JRP documented that, during the nearly 20-year interval since the first evaluation (in 1991), the Memorial Oaks had continued to dwindle in number, with fewer than half of the original 71 still standing, including 15 in the median and 16 along the southbound shoulder of U.S. 101. The JRP studies confirmed Caltrans' earlier evaluation that the original roadway appearance, with 71 oak trees spaced at regular intervals along the rural two-lane highway, was a landscape that no longer existed, and that the oaks were not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with this determination on January 26, 2011 (see Appendix D). However, while the oaks do not meet the criteria for the National Register of Historic Places or as historical resources under the California Environmental Quality Act, they are of local interest and are discussed in Sections 2.3 Biological Environment and 3.3 Mitigation Measures for Unavoidable Impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act.

As part of the process of gathering information about historic-period resources in the project Area of Potential Effects, Caltrans formed a Memorial Oaks Focus Review Group to learn community opinions and hear community concerns about the oak trees. Caltrans recognized that, although the Memorial Oaks are not officially designated as a local historical resource, the trees are mentioned in *the 101 in Motion Final Report (2006)* and *the Toro Canyon Plan (Santa Barbara County, 2004)*, and they continue to be of local interest and will be directly affected by the project. The Focus Review Group met five times between April 7, 2009, and May 5, 2010, with the following participants:

Vera Bensen, Carpinteria Valley Association

Bob Duncan, Santa Barbara County Historic Landmarks Advisory Commission

David Griggs, Carpinteria Valley Historical Society and Museum of History

Gretchen Johnson, Carpinteria Citizen

Roxie Lapidus, Carpinteria Valley Association

Bryan Larson, JRP Historical Consulting

William Stewart, Vietnam Veterans of America

Staff from the Santa Barbara County Planning and Public Works Department, the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments, and Caltrans also participated in the meetings.

During the course of these meetings, JRP staff presented the results of the studies and their conclusion that, given that the trees in their present setting lack sufficient integrity to be able to convey their significance as a World War I memorial, they are not eligible for listing in the National Register and do not constitute historical resources for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act. Caltrans presented information on design scenarios for adding the new HOV lanes and how these might variously affect the Memorial Oaks. Caltrans staff also reported that, today, there are only 31 trees believed to be from the original planting, that these trees are now intermixed with younger volunteer oaks and other vegetation, and that there is a wide variation in the health and appearance of these trees. Ongoing maintenance of the mature oaks, especially in the median, often requires severe pruning that interferes with the oaks' natural wide-spreading habit of growth. Trees damaged by roadway collisions have also been removed.

The Focus Review Group developed and considered a number of recommendations to achieve the goal of minimizing project impacts to the Memorial Oaks, as well as the goal of potentially reviving their commemorative aspects. The group noted that, as highway and freeway speeds have increased and as the opportunity to park alongside the roadway, walk under the trees and read the names is now long gone, it has grown more and more difficult to observe and appreciate the Memorial Oaks for what they are. The Focus Review Group gave considerable attention to a number of factors when developing recommendations, including: specific engineering constraints, impacts to other resources; the health and viability of the trees at their present location; to the options available for signage and other treatments on U.S. 101 to make drivers aware of the Memorial Oaks; potential for moving trees; and to the possibility of developing a nearby off-site location to serve as a fitting focal point for a memorial. These efforts resulted in several formal recommendations being made to the project development team.

### *Observer Viewpoints*

Within the Landscape Assessment Units described above, 27 critical viewing locations were identified to best reveal the project features and any potential visual character change. The total number of potential viewpoints associated with this approximately 11-mile project is infinite, and it would not be possible to attempt to show every possible viewing scenario. Consistent with Federal Highway Administration guidance, representative viewing locations, called Observer Viewpoints (OV), were selected to best disclose the typical visual character of the project, show unique project components or affected resources, and represent affected viewer groups.

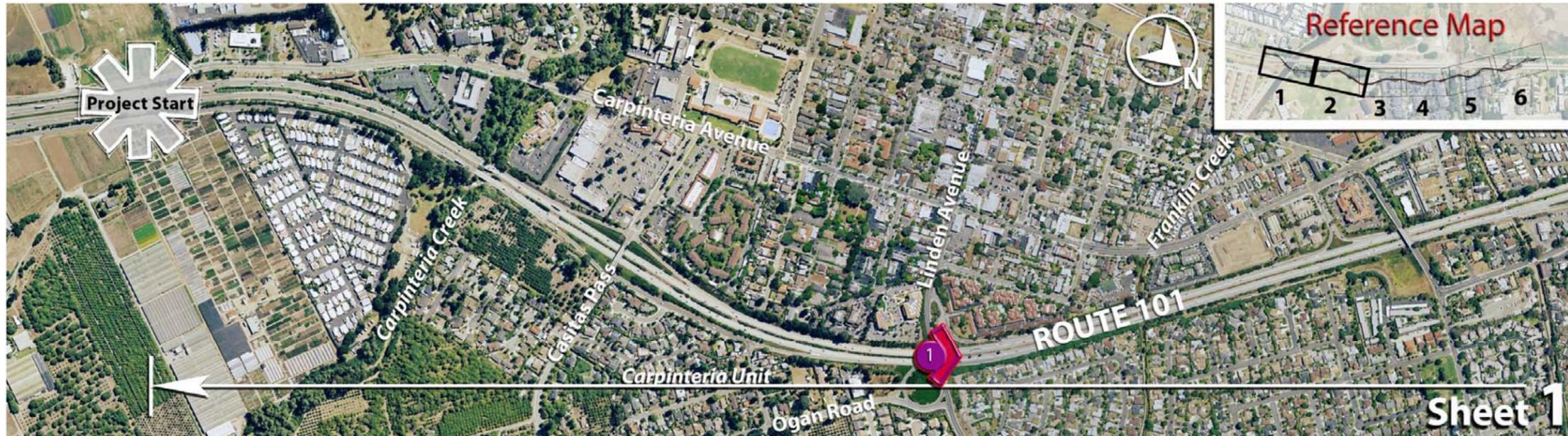
Table 2.20 lists the Observer Viewpoints, which include viewpoints both from the highway as well as from the surrounding community.

The viewpoints are also shown in Figures 2-7, 2-8, and 2-9.

**Table 2.20 Observer Viewpoint (OV) Locations**

<b>OV No.</b>	<b>Landscape Assessment Unit</b>	<b>Location</b>
1	Carpinteria City Unit	From Linden Ave. overcrossing looking northbound.
2	Carpinteria City Unit	From U.S. 101 near Santa Monica Road looking southbound.
3	Carpinteria Salt Marsh Unit	From U.S. 101 near Cravens Lane looking northbound.
4	Carpinteria Salt Marsh Unit	From Via Real near Sunset Drive looking southbound.
5	Padaro Unit	From U.S. 101 near the Polo Fields looking southbound.
5A	Padaro Unit	From U.S. 101 west of South Padaro Lane looking southbound.
6	Padaro Unit	From U.S. 101 east of the North Padaro overcrossing looking northbound.
7	Summerland Unit	From U.S. 101 west of the North Padaro overcrossing looking northbound.
8	Summerland Unit	From Lillie Ave. near west of Greenwell Ave. looking northbound.
9	Summerland Unit	From U.S. 101 near the Evans Ave. undercrossing looking southbound.
10	Summerland Unit	From Ortega Hill Rd. near the bike path looking south toward U.S. 101.
11	Summerland Unit	From Colville Street looking south toward U.S. 101.
12	Summerland Unit	From Hollister Street looking south toward U.S. 101.
13	Montecito Unit	From U.S. 101 east of Sheffield Dr. undercrossing looking northbound.
14	Montecito Unit	From U.S. 101 west of Sheffield Dr. undercrossing looking southbound.
15	Montecito Unit	From U.S. 101 east of Romero Creek looking northbound.
16	Montecito Unit	From U.S. 101 near Posilipo Lane looking southbound.
17	Montecito Unit	From North Jameson Lane near Santa Isabel Lane looking southwest.
18	Montecito Unit	From San Ysidro Road overcrossing looking northbound.
19	Montecito Unit	From U.S. 101 west of San Ysidro Rd. overcrossing looking northbound.
20	Montecito Unit	From Olive Mill Road overcrossing looking northbound.
21*	Santa Barbara City Unit	From U.S. 101 east of the Cabrillo Boulevard interchange looking northbound.
22*	Santa Barbara City Unit	From the Old Coast Highway north of the Cabrillo Boulevard interchange looking southwest.
23*	Santa Barbara City Unit	From Los Patos Road looking northwest toward U.S. 101.
24	Santa Barbara City Unit	From approximately 1000 ft. west of Cabrillo Blvd. looking southbound.
24A*	Santa Barbara City Unit	From approximately 1500 ft. west of Cabrillo Blvd. looking southbound.
25	Santa Barbara City Unit	From U.S. 101 near Salinas Street looking northbound.

\* Observer Viewpoints 21 through 24A represent the Cabrillo Boulevard interchange.



NOT TO SCALE



 = Observer Viewpoint

### South Coast HOV Project

Observer Viewpoint Location Map  
Sheet 1-2 of 6

Figure 2-7 Observer Viewpoint Location Map

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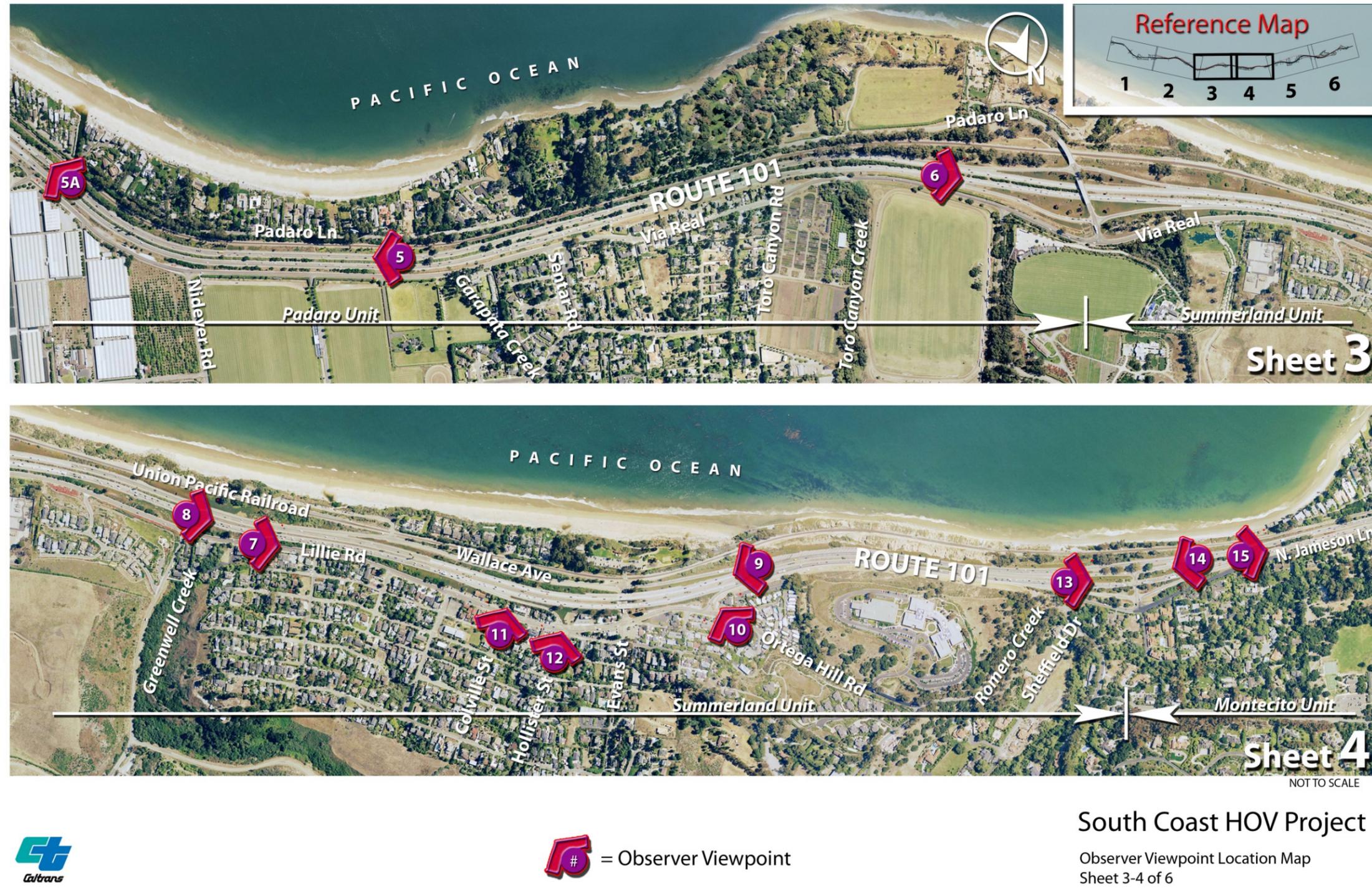


Figure 2-8 Observer Viewpoint Location Map

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NOT TO SCALE



 = Observer Viewpoint

### South Coast HOV Project

Observer Viewpoint Location Map  
Sheet 5-6 of 6

Figure 2-9 Observer Viewpoint Location Map

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### **Environmental Consequences**

Implementation of the project would result in substantial visual changes through much of the highway corridor. Because of the length of the project and the virtually unlimited number of viewpoints from which the project would be seen, potential impacts are equally as varied and location-specific. However, through analysis of the representative views (observer viewpoints), combined with extensive field review, the visual effect of the project can be identified.

The overall visual impact of the project, regardless of build alternative, would be the increased urban character caused by the added highway lanes, reduced landscaping, and proposed soundwalls at several locations. New landscaping proposed by the project, along with aesthetic treatment to walls, would help offset the urban appearance. But, the visual change related to the increase in scale and additional hardscape would be unavoidable and noticeable. For casual observers and people travelling through the area, the proposed scale of the facility would not be unexpected in the visual context of the freeway. Overall, however, viewer sensitivity and response to change is expected to be high, indicated by the many local coastal planning policies on visual character and scenic view protection (see Appendix B).

Proposed soundwalls would not only affect the visual character, but some of the walls would block scenic views. Although at most proposed soundwall locations the existing landscaping or intervening development already blocks scenic views, at some proposed wall locations, mostly within the Summerland area, views of important scenic resources such as the Pacific Ocean would be blocked. Several of the proposed soundwalls would interrupt ocean views from along Lillie Avenue as well as from viewpoints at the lower elevations of the hillside neighborhoods to the north. As seen from U.S. 101, the proposed soundwalls would also limit much of the view to the Summerland community, including the commercial area along Lillie Avenue. Because of the interrupted ocean views, portions of the soundwalls are recommended for elimination or for clear panels through which the ocean views could be seen.

The following section analyzes the project in terms of the difference in physical change (Visual Quality Evaluation rating) combined with the expected sensitivities and responses of potential viewer groups (Viewer Response rating). The Visual Quality Evaluation rating is combined with the Viewer Response rating, with the results providing the basis for understanding and determining the type and extent of potential visual impacts. The Visual Impact Rating and analysis is done for each of

the 27 Observer Viewpoints and organized according to the previously described Landscape Assessment Units.

### **Carpinteria City Assessment Unit**

#### **Observer Viewpoint 1 – From Linden Avenue overcrossing looking northbound**

##### **OV-1 Existing Condition**



The existing view from the Linden Avenue overcrossing is dominated by U.S. 101 in the foreground, with the surrounding residential areas of Carpinteria in the mid-ground and the Santa Ynez Mountains rising up to the north. The mature vegetation seen in adjacent neighborhoods and along the highway roadside helps to visually moderate the urban appearance of the city view. The mountains add to the memorability of the view and provide a scenic backdrop from this viewpoint and along much of the U.S. 101 corridor in this area. The view from this location is generally intact, with most of the visual elements visually appropriate for this type of suburban freeway landscape, and the overall visual composition of the view is somewhat unified. As a result, the existing visual quality rating from this viewpoint is moderately high.

##### ***Viewer Response***

From Observer Viewpoint 1, sensitive visual resources would mainly include distant views of the Santa Ynez Mountains and rural open space, and to a lesser extent views of the beachside community. In addition to motorists, potential viewers from this location would include pedestrians and bicyclists, who may have longer duration

views of the surroundings. The expected viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is identified as moderately high.

### **OV-1 Proposed Condition – Alternatives 1 and 3**



Alternatives 1 and 3 would build most of the project improvements to the inside, toward the highway median. Although Alternatives 1 and 3 would eliminate the existing median planting area, most of the roadside landscaping would be kept. Because the existing median is sparsely planted, its visual value is reduced. Loss of the existing median would be off-set to some degree by the retention of the existing vegetation along the roadsides. Roadside landscaping also provides a visual transition between U.S. 101 and the community. As seen from Observer Viewpoint 1, Alternatives 1 and 3 would reduce the overall visual quality rating, but the rating would still be defined as moderately high.

### **OV-1 Proposed Condition – Alternative 2**



Alternative 2 would build most of the project improvements to the outside of the existing highway lanes. Alternative 2 would keep the existing plantable median but reduce its width. By widening to the outside, Alternative 2 would eliminate a portion of the landscaped areas along the roadside. All three criteria identified by the Visual Quality Rating would be reduced as a result of Alternative 2.

Although the new median would help retain some of the visual quality, the overall loss of vegetated character caused by the removal of roadside planting would have a greater effect on views. The increased exposure of the northbound soundwall would add to the urban character of the highway facility. From this viewpoint, the overall visual quality rating would be lowered from moderately high to moderate with implementation of Alternative 2.

### **Observer Viewpoint 2 – From U.S. 101 near Santa Monica Road looking southbound**

#### **OV-2 Existing Condition**



The existing view from Observer Viewpoint 2 includes a variety of visual elements including residential and commercial development, U.S. 101 with sparsely planted roadsides and median, and the Linden Avenue overcrossing bridge in the distance. The Santa Ynez Mountains provide a scenic backdrop to the south and southeast. The Visual Quality Evaluation ratings for this existing view indicate a slightly lower than average visual quality, due mostly to a disharmonious visual composition and land uses. The distant mountains add some degree of memorability to the view. From Observer Viewpoint 2, the visual quality rating of the existing view is slightly below average.

### **Viewer Response**

The distant view of the Santa Ynez Mountains is the main sensitive visual resource seen from Observer Viewpoint 2. Potential viewers at this location are limited to highway users in vehicles. The overall potential viewer sensitivity along U.S. 101 in the coastal area is considered above average. At this particular viewpoint, the potential sensitivity is somewhat tempered by the few available visual resources, resulting in a viewer response rating identified as slightly above moderate.

### **OV-2 Proposed Condition – Alternatives 1 and 3**



Alternatives 1 and 3 would add lanes to the highway median. As a result, no median planting would occur with this alternative. Roadside planting would be maintained and supplemented in this area, and a new soundwall would be considered for the southbound highway right-of-way line. The Visual Quality Rating for this viewpoint shows only a slight increase in visual quality associated with the construction of Alternative 1 or 3. The additional roadside planting would somewhat unify the view and partially block the visually discordant adjacent land uses. The lack of median planting however would allow visual access to the full six-lane width of the highway, which would add to the urbanized character of the corridor.

## OV-2 Proposed Condition – Alternative 2



Alternative 2, with widening mainly to the outside of the existing lanes would allow for new planting in the highway median. A new soundwall would be considered for the southbound right-of-way line. A guardrail would be placed in front of the proposed soundwall, allowing new landscaping between the highway and the wall. With implementation of Alternative 2, the visual quality from this observer viewpoint would increase in part due to the unifying character of additional median and roadside landscaping. Views of the additional paved highway lanes, as well as views of the somewhat cluttered adjacent commercial areas and backsides of residences would be partially screened due to new planting in the median, the proposed soundwall, and the roadside planting.

### **Summary—Carpinteria City Assessment Unit**

This unit is defined by its proximity to the community center of Carpinteria. As part of the eastern section of the project corridor, views to the Santa Ynez Mountains and agriculture are important visual elements. The Carpinteria City Unit is also influenced by views of the central business district, as well as residential and visitor-serving commercial development along the highway. This unit is generally well landscaped and has limited-to-no views of the Pacific Ocean.

Visual changes caused by the project would be seen from U.S. 101 itself, the bridge overcrossings, and local frontage roads and streets. Because of the amount of existing intervening development and vegetation, views to the project would be mostly limited to the areas immediately next to the highway.

All project alternatives would increase the visual scale of U.S. 101 and add to the urban character of the corridor. The predominant visual effect of the project would be the wider paved highway and reduction in the amount of landscaping. Proposed soundwalls and a concrete median barrier would also contribute to the change in character.

The visual effect would depend on the particular vantage point. As seen from the highway overcrossing bridges, the loss of roadside landscaping associated with Alternative 2 would result in the greatest visual impact because the overall vegetative character of the corridor is more easily seen from those elevated viewing locations. From those elevated viewpoints, the roadside vegetation generally provides greater visual benefit than the existing median vegetation does. As seen from the U.S. 101 roadway perspective, the median planting associated with Alternative 2 would help minimize the urbanizing effect of the project by limiting views across the freeway to the opposing lanes of traffic.

At certain limited spots along the western portion of this assessment unit, the new landscaping proposed by the project would slightly increase visual quality because it would provide visual continuity and screen incompatible off-highway views.

Overall, however, the project would result in a reduction of visual quality. Through the Carpinteria City Assessment Unit, although visual resources such as the Santa Ynez Mountains and coastal views would not be affected, the scale and character of the “small beach town image” would be adversely affected. Alternative 2 would result in the greatest reduction of visual quality because of the higher value of roadside landscaping compared to median landscaping through much of this area.

### **Carpinteria Salt Marsh Unit**

#### **Observer Viewpoint 3 – From U.S. 101 near Cravens Lane looking northbound**

### **OV-3 Existing Condition**



The existing view from Observer Viewpoint 3 received a relatively high visual quality evaluation rating. The salt marsh, Pacific Ocean, Channel Islands, and the Santa Ynez Mountains are all visible to some degree along this segment of U.S. 101, increasing the vividness or memorability of the view. The vegetated roadsides and minimal amount of visible development contribute to a fairly high unity and intactness rating. The rural and agricultural character of the area is evident along the foothills to the north. Minor detractions to the quality of the existing view include the utility poles and overhead lines along the northbound lanes and the somewhat weedy appearance of the highway median.

#### ***Viewer Response***

From Observer Viewpoint 3, sensitive visual resources consist of the salt marsh, Pacific Ocean and the Channel Islands with distant views of the Santa Ynez Mountains and the rural and agricultural landscape. Viewers at this location are limited to highway users in vehicles. Due mainly to the availability of sensitive visual resources, the expected viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is moderately high.

**OV-3 Proposed Condition – Alternatives 1 and 3**



Alternatives 1 and 3 would add lanes toward the highway median, which would eliminate the existing median planting but would preserve much of the roadside landscaping. A proposed soundwall would be placed along the northbound lanes and Via Real. Because roadside planting would be preserved, visibility of the soundwall would be reduced at this highway viewpoint. The added paved lanes and the single concrete median barrier proposed with Alternatives 1 and 3 would increase the urban character of the view. However, with no planting in the median, views of the salt marsh, Pacific Ocean and Channel Islands would be retained. The Visual Quality Rating for Alternative 3 at this viewing location would be reduced compared to the existing conditions, but would still be moderately high.

**OV-3 Proposed Condition – Alternative 2**



Alternate 2 would widen the highway to the outside, resulting in the loss of much of the roadside vegetation. A new soundwall is being considered for the area between the highway and Via Real. The limited area in front of the soundwall would allow for

vine planting. Median planting is proposed through this area. The Visual Quality Evaluation for Alternative 2 resulted in a substantial reduction in the vividness, intactness and unity ratings. The change in visual quality is based mostly on the visual dominance of the proposed soundwall, as well as the partial blockage of the salt marsh, ocean and islands caused by the new median barrier planting. As a result, the overall quality rating for Alternative 2 from this viewpoint is moderately low.

### **Observer Viewpoint 4 – From Via Real near Sunset Drive looking southbound**

#### **OV-4 Existing Condition**



The existing view from the Via Real frontage road includes both natural and suburban elements. Residential development, the frontage road and the freeway occupy the foreground and mid-ground, and are seen in a background context of the Carpinteria salt marsh, Pacific Ocean and Rincon Mountain. These diverse visual elements combine for a Visual Quality Evaluation Rating that is slightly above average. The views of the salt marsh, ocean and hillsides, although somewhat filtered by intervening vegetation and traffic, increase the memorability (vividness) from this viewpoint, but the paved highway and frontage road, fencing and overhead utilities adversely affect the unity and intactness ratings.

#### **Viewer Response**

From Observer Viewpoint 4, sensitive visual resources would include the Carpinteria salt marsh, the Pacific Ocean and distant views of the Santa Ynez and Rincon Mountains. In addition to motorists, viewers from this location include pedestrians, and bicyclists, who may have longer duration views of the surroundings. As a result, the expected viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is moderately high.

### **OV-4 Proposed Condition – Alternatives 1, 2 and 3**



Along this section of the project, all proposed alternatives are the same. As a result, the Visual Quality Evaluation and subsequent analysis as seen from Observer Viewpoint 4 would also be the same for each of the three alternatives.

Because of the proposed soundwall along Via Real, Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 would look the same as seen from this viewpoint. All alternatives would include a consideration for building a soundwall next to Via Real that would block views to U.S. 101 and the other aspects of the project. In addition to blocking views to the freeway, the proposed soundwall would also block views to the salt marsh and the ocean beyond, which would reduce the vividness rating. Although the visual intactness and unity would be lowered to a lesser extent—the wall would be somewhat visually imposing—it would also offer some visual continuity to the scene. Proposed vine planting would help moderate some of the urbanizing character of the wall. As seen from this viewpoint, the project would result in a slightly lower than average Visual Quality Evaluation rating.

### **Summary - Carpinteria Salt Marsh Assessment Unit**

The Carpinteria Salt Marsh Unit is another part of the eastern section of the project corridor, where views to the Santa Ynez Mountains and agriculture are important visual elements. The visual identity of this unit is also greatly influenced by its proximity to the Carpinteria salt marsh. This Landscape Assessment Unit includes views of some of the lesser-developed areas along the project corridor.

The native plant communities associated with the Carpinteria salt marsh highway help to identify the marsh as a scenic resource. The highway landscaping does provide moderate value in terms of visual unity and partial screening of non-

compatible visual elements, both to and from the highway. And although the existing highway landscaping is somewhat sparse, it also reduces visibility of scenic resources such as the Carpinteria salt marsh, the Pacific Ocean, and the Santa Ynez Mountains.

With all the project alternatives, as seen from U.S. 101, the wider highway and concrete median barrier would represent the greatest visual change. Where a new soundwall is being considered along the northbound lanes, the wall would also be a dominant visual element. This visual change would result in a reduction of rural character for this area.

As seen from the highway, Alternative 2 would result in the greatest amount of visual change, mainly in the area of the proposed soundwall. Although the existing northbound roadside vegetation already partially blocks the view of the Santa Ynez Mountains, construction of the proposed soundwall would block mountain views to a greater extent.

By widening to the outside, Alternative 2 would cause more roadside vegetation removal and would substantially reduce the opportunity for new landscaping. The Alternative 2 proposed vine planting on the highway side of the proposed soundwall would reduce visibility of the wall, but the additional planting of large shrubs associated with Alternatives 1 and 3 would create a more informal vegetated appearance in front of the wall and result in less visual impact.

A median barrier with planting is proposed with Alternative 2. Although median planting provides some degree of visual benefit, throughout much of this area, the median planting may also limit views to the salt marsh as seen from the northbound lanes of the highway.

All project alternatives would include a consideration for placing a soundwall along Via Real near Sunset Drive. From this section of Via Real, the soundwall would dominate views to the south. The wall would block views of the Carpinteria salt marsh. This visual impact would be somewhat offset since the wall would also block views of the freeway. Vines would be planted on the highway side of the wall and allowed to grow through small holes in the wall to the Via Real side. Over time, the vines would provide coverage of the wall and reduce its urbanizing effect.

All project alternatives would adversely affect the rural character of the Carpinteria salt marsh assessment unit. Alternative 2 would result in the greatest visual impact due to the increased visibility of the proposed soundwall as seen from the highway.

## **Padaro Assessment Unit**

### **Observer Viewpoint 5 – From U.S. 101 near the polo fields looking southbound**

#### **OV-5 Existing Condition**



The existing view from the southbound lanes of U.S. 101 in this area received a moderately high Visual Quality Evaluation rating mainly because of the well-vegetated median and roadsides and the scarcity of visible development. The Memorial Oaks are near this observer viewpoint, contributing to the vegetative character of the corridor and increasing the memorability of the view. The Santa Ynez Mountains rise up to the south, adding to the scene's vividness. The visual intactness received a higher rating because of the minimal encroachment of uncharacteristic elements. Visual unity also was considered somewhat high because of the visual continuity created by the existing vegetation along the corridor. No ocean views are available from this location.

#### ***Viewer Response***

The distant view of the Santa Ynez Mountains and the well-vegetated highway corridor, including the Memorial Oaks, are the main sensitive visual resources seen from Observer Viewpoint 5. The Memorial Oaks, as discussed earlier, are considered of local interest, which increases the potential viewer sensitivity and response for those viewers who are aware of the importance of the oaks. But, their commemorative value would not necessarily be apparent to the casual highway traveler. Potential viewers at this location are limited to highway users in vehicles. Although no ocean views are available in this area, the overall potential viewer

sensitivity along U.S. 101 in the coastal area is considered above average. The resulting viewer response rating is somewhat above moderate.

**OV-5 Proposed Condition – Alternatives 1 and 2**



Alternatives 1 and 2 would add lanes to the outside of the highway and provide concrete barriers with planting in the median. From this viewpoint, distant vistas of the Santa Ynez Mountains would not be affected by the project. Loss of the existing Memorial Oaks along the roadside would adversely affect all three rating criteria. The planted median would partially limit views of opposing freeway traffic and, combined with the existing roadside vegetation, would help retain some of the landscaped character of the corridor. The overall Visual Quality Evaluation rating, however, would be reduced because of the added lanes and more urban-scale highway.

### OV-5 Proposed Condition – Alternative 3



Alternative 3 would add lanes toward the highway median, which would result in no planting in the median. With no median planting, views across the highway would be opened up, increasing the perceived visual scale of the freeway. Loss of the existing Memorial Oaks in the median would adversely affect all three rating criteria. Continued visibility of roadside vegetation would help retain much of the vegetated character of this segment of the corridor. However, the overall Visual Quality Evaluation ratings would be lowered somewhat due to the increased scale of the highway and added paved surfaces.

## Observer Viewpoint 5A – From U.S. 101 west of South Padaro lane looking southbound

### OV-5A Existing Condition



Similar to Observer Viewpoint 5, the existing view from the southbound lanes of U.S. 101 in this area received a moderately high Visual Quality Evaluation rating mainly because of the well-vegetated median and roadsides and the scarcity of visible development. Roadside vegetation precludes ocean views along this particular section of highway, although the ocean does become visible from the highway about 0.3 mile east of this Observer Viewpoint. As seen from much of this section of highway, the Santa Ynez Mountains rise up to the northeast, adding to the scene's vividness. The visual intactness received a higher rating because of the minimal encroachment of uncharacteristic elements. Visual unity also was considered somewhat high because of the visual continuity created by the existing vegetation along the corridor.

### **Viewer Response**

The distant view of the Santa Ynez Mountains and the well-vegetated highway corridor are the main sensitive visual resources seen from Observer Viewpoint 5A. Potential viewers at this location are limited to highway users in vehicles. Although no ocean views are available in this area, the overall potential viewer sensitivity along U.S. 101 in the coastal area is considered above average. The resulting viewer response rating is somewhat above moderate.

**OV-5A Proposed Condition – Alternatives 1 and 3**



Alternatives 1 and 3 would add lanes toward the highway median. With this alternative, the soundwall would be placed along the southbound edge of pavement and would be continuous for about 1,700 feet, the same as Alternative 2. Because of the widening to the inside, however, no planting would be provided in the median with this alternative. With no median planting, views across the highway would be opened up, increasing the perceived visual scale of the freeway facility. The predominant vegetated character of this segment of the corridor would be diminished, and the overall Visual Quality Evaluation ratings would be substantially lowered.

**OV-5A Proposed Condition – Alternative 2**



Alternative 2 would add lanes to the outside of the highway, build a new soundwall at the pavement edge, and provide concrete barriers with planting in the median. Along this section of the project, no planting area would be available on the highway side of the soundwall, so vines would be planted on the far side of the wall and small holes would be provided in the wall to allow vines to creep through and grow on the highway side. The soundwall proposed in this area would be about 1,700 feet long. The length of the wall and its close proximity to the highway lanes would be visually imposing and would adversely affect the vegetated character of the corridor through this area. From along this section of the highway, distant vistas of the Santa Ynez Mountains would not be affected by the project. Although the planted median would help retain some of the landscaped character of the corridor, the overall Visual Quality Evaluation rating would be substantially reduced.

### **Observer Viewpoint 6 – From U.S. 101 east of the North Padaro overcrossing looking northbound**

#### **OV-6 Existing Condition**



The existing view from this location received moderately high Visual Quality Evaluation ratings based on the overall vegetated character and the absence of visible development other than the highway. Although no ocean views exist from this vantage point, the memorability remained above average due in part to the existing skyline trees. The visual intactness and unity ratings benefited from the densely vegetated highway median.

#### **Viewer Response**

The well-vegetated highway corridor is the most important visual resource seen from Observer Viewpoint 6. Potential viewers at this location are limited to highway users. Although no ocean views are available in this area, the overall potential viewer

sensitivity along U.S. 101 in the coastal area is considered above average. The resulting viewer response rating is identified as somewhat above moderate.

**OV-6 Proposed Condition – Alternatives 1 and 2**



The most noticeable changes associated with Alternatives 1 and 2 would include the addition of the new lane in the highway median and the alteration of the median planting. With this alternative, the existing larger-scale planting in the median would be replaced with a concrete barrier and less landscaping. The Visual Quality Evaluation ratings indicate that although visual quality would be reduced by increasing the visual scale of the freeway, the view would keep much of its existing character in terms of vividness, intactness and unity.

**OV-6 Proposed Condition – Alternative 3**



By widening to the median, Alternative 3 would remove the existing median landscaping. A single concrete barrier would be placed between the northbound and southbound lanes. A minor decrease in roadside planting would occur, but the

reduction in vegetated character would be due mostly to the loss of median planting. The visual scale of the highway would be increased in this area because the loss of median planting would open up views and allow views across the full width of the freeway. The visual quality would be reduced to some extent in all three rating categories.

### **Summary—Padaro Landscape Assessment Unit**

This Landscape Assessment Unit includes the unincorporated area between the communities of Carpinteria and Summerland. The visual environment through this unit is defined to a great extent by mature trees and landscaping along and next to the highway corridor, including the Memorial Oaks. A low to moderate amount of development is seen in this area, mostly residences, from medium density north of the highway to large estates along the ocean bluff. Long distance ocean views exist from the eastern and westernmost portions of this assessment unit.

Although not an historical resource, the Memorial Oaks are considered of local community interest, which increases the potential viewer sensitivity and response for those viewers who are aware of the importance of the oaks. But, their commemorative value would not necessarily be apparent to the casual highway traveler. Because of the high degree of local interest in the Memorial Oaks, combined with their somewhat unique configuration along the roadside and their contribution to the vegetative character, removal of the oaks would result in an adverse visual change.

The most noticeable visual characteristics of the project through the Padaro Assessment Unit would be the added highway lanes, the removal of existing median vegetation and the proposed soundwall along the southbound lanes of the highway. The proposed soundwall would not block views of the ocean, salt marsh or Santa Ynez Mountains. The wall would, however, have an effect on the rural character of this section of U.S. 101, in part because of its proximity to the highway lanes. Vine planting is proposed on the back side of the wall, with holes to allow the vines to grow through to the highway side. This planting would reduce the urbanizing effect of the wall but because of the wall's highly noticeable location and scale, adverse impacts would result. A second proposed soundwall along the northbound lanes near Serena Park would be set back to allow planting, similar to the existing wall in that area.

Throughout the Padaro Assessment Unit, Alternative 2 would widen to the outside of the highway and build a new median barrier with median planting. Throughout this area, the median planting would limit views across the freeway to the opposing lanes, thereby reducing the perceived visual scale of the highway for highway users. As a result, Alternative 2 would cause fewer visual impacts than the other project alternatives.

### **Summerland Assessment Unit**

#### **Observer Viewpoint 7 from Lillie Avenue near Greenwell Avenue looking northbound**

##### **OV-7 Existing Condition**



The existing view as seen from Observer Viewpoint 7 and other locations along this section of Lillie Avenue includes a diverse mix of visual elements including direct views of the ocean and Fernald Point and the coastline in the distance, with highway and frontage roads lanes, utility poles and lines, and chain-link fencing and signage in the foreground and mid-ground. Filtered views of the Summerland Community can be seen to the north. On balance, the Visual Quality Evaluation rating for this existing view is moderately high. The ocean views enhance the memorability in spite of the partially cluttered foreground and mid-ground; the existing landscaping along Lillie Avenue and to some extent along the highway provides some degree of visual unity.

##### ***Viewer Response***

As seen from Observer Viewpoint 7, the most sensitive visual resources are the direct views of the Pacific Ocean, Fernald Point and the coastline. Community views, although limited, are also important. Potential viewers from this local roadway

include pedestrians and bicyclists as well as motorists. As a result, the expected viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is high.

**OV-7 Proposed Condition – Alternatives 1 and 3**



Alternatives 1 and 3 would include a consideration for building a 14-foot-high soundwall at the highway right-of-way adjacent to Lillie Avenue. No planting area would be available at the base of the wall along the frontage road; however, holes would be built into the wall so that vines planted on the highway side of the wall would grow through to the Lillie Avenue side. Construction of the proposed soundwall at this location would completely block views of the Pacific Ocean and the coastline. In addition, the proximity and scale of the wall would be visually imposing as seen from Lillie Avenue. Although there would be an element of continuity associated with the wall, the overall visual quality rating from this viewpoint would be substantially diminished. Visual intactness or memorability would be the most adversely affected.

At this location, eliminating the proposed soundwall would substantially maintain ocean views and minimize potential visual impacts as seen from Lillie Avenue. A recommendation to eliminate the proposed soundwall at this location is noted in the Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Measures section, and the view is shown in the Observer Viewpoint below.

**OV-7 Proposed Condition - View of Alternatives 1 and 3 with the proposed  
soundwall eliminated to preserve high-quality ocean views**



**OV-7 Proposed Condition – Alternative 2**



All project alternatives would include a soundwall along Lillie Avenue to mitigate for noise impacts; however, this wall would block views of Highway 101. As a result, the only noticeable difference as seen from this viewpoint and others along this section of Lillie Avenue would be the height of the wall itself. Alternative 2 would build a 16-foot-tall soundwall compared to 14-foot-tall soundwall for Alternatives 1 and 3.

The overall visual effect of the project would be the same with all alternatives. The Visual Quality Evaluation ratings for Alternative 3 show a substantial reduction in vividness, intactness and unity. The shorter wall would have a negligible effect on

reducing the visual quality ratings. Regardless of the height, the wall would completely block ocean views and would be out-of-scale with the character of the local frontage road.

At this location, eliminating the proposed soundwall would maintain ocean views and minimize potential visual impacts as seen from Lillie Avenue. A recommendation to eliminate the soundwall at this location is noted in the Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Measures section, and the view is shown in the Observer Viewpoint below.

**OV-7 View of Alternative 2 with the proposed soundwall eliminated to preserve high-quality ocean views**



**Observer Viewpoint 8 – From U.S. 101 west of the North Padaro overcrossing looking northbound**

**OV-8 Existing Condition**



Existing views from U.S. 101 at this location include sweeping vistas of the Pacific Ocean, Fernald Point, and the coastline beyond. Portions of the Summerland community can also be seen in the distance. Because of the visibility of these scenic coastal resources, the memorability of the view is high. The somewhat curvilinear alignment of the highway, combined with the moderately vegetated corridor result in above-average visual intactness and unity ratings.

### **Viewer Response**

From Observer Viewpoint 8, sensitive visual resources would include the views of the Pacific Ocean, Fernald Point and the coastline beyond, plus portions of the Summerland community. Motorists would be the only viewer group seeing the view from Viewpoint 8. Because of the visual access to the ocean and other high-quality coastal scenic resources, the expected viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is high.

### **OV-8 Proposed Condition – Alternatives 1 and 3**



By adding new highway lanes toward the median, Alternatives 1 and 3 would not require a retaining wall along the northbound lanes. The existing sparsely planted median would be replaced with a concrete barrier. High-quality views of the ocean would remain. As with Alternative 2, a new soundwall would be required between the highway and the frontage road.

Due mostly to the larger expanse of paving and the loss of median planting (although sparse), the overall visual quality rating from this viewpoint would be moderately reduced. Some of the unity and intactness rating would be maintained because of the proposed northbound roadside planting in front of the new soundwall.

At this location, eliminating the proposed soundwall would substantially maintain ocean views and minimize potential visual impacts as seen from parts of the Summerland community. A recommendation to eliminate the soundwall at this location is noted in the Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Measures section, and the view is shown in OV-8 below.

**OV-8 View of Alternatives 1 and 3 with the soundwall eliminated to preserve high-quality ocean views as seen from parts of the Summerland community**



**OV-8 Proposed Condition – Alternative 2**



Alternative 2 would add highway lanes to the outside, allowing sufficient room for median planting. Because of the sloped topography, a new retaining wall with a maximum height of about 14 feet would be required along the northbound lanes. Both project alternatives would include a consideration for the placement of a soundwall between the freeway and Lillie Avenue. Planting would not be possible in front of the

retaining wall, but landscaping would occur between the retaining wall and the proposed soundwall.

The Visual Quality Evaluation ratings for Alternatives 1 and 2 indicate that the vividness of the view would remain high, due mainly to the preservation of ocean views. The intactness and unity ratings would be reduced, but would remain above average. Although the median planting and roadside planting proposed with Alternative 2 would provide some visual continuity, the retaining wall would add to the visual scale of the highway and would increase the urban character of the area.

At this location, eliminating the proposed soundwall would substantially maintain ocean views and minimize potential visual impacts as seen from parts of the Summerland community. A recommendation to eliminate the soundwall at this location is noted in the Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Measures section, and the view is shown in OV-9 below.

**OV-9 View of Alternative 2 with the proposed soundwall eliminated to preserve high-quality ocean views as seen from parts of the Summerland community**



## **Observer Viewpoint 9 – From U.S. 101 near the Evans Avenue undercrossing looking southbound**

### **OV-9 Existing Condition**



The elevated viewing position of Observer Viewpoint 9 allows for panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean and the coastline. Summerland is readily visible on the hillside rising up from the highway to the north. The combination of the ocean vistas along with the small beach community result in high-quality view ratings, evidenced by the Visual Quality Evaluation. The memorability of the view is high because of the vista, and the unity and intactness are benefited by the topography and the generally well-vegetated corridor and surrounding community. Minor visual distractions are the existing utility poles and overhead lines and highway fencing.

### ***Viewer Response***

Sensitive visual resources would include the views of the Pacific Ocean and the coastline as well as the Summerland community and the hillside backdrop. Motorists would be the main viewer group at Observer Viewpoint 9. Because of the direct visual access to the ocean and other high-quality coastal scenic resources, the expected viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is high.

### OV-9 Proposed Condition – Alternatives 1 and 3



Alternatives 1 and 3 would make highway improvements to the inside, precluding the ability to plant in the median through this area. As with Alternative 2, soundwalls would be considered along the northbound lanes. Vine planting would be included with the soundwalls. Alternatives 1 and 3 would preserve most of the roadside vegetation.

The Visual Quality Evaluation for Alternatives 1 and 3 shows a reduction in vividness, intactness and unity due mostly to the increased urban character of the larger highway and loss of views to the Summerland community. Views of the ocean and coastline would not be affected.

At this location, eliminating portions of the proposed soundwalls would substantially maintain ocean views and minimize potential visual impacts as seen from parts of the Summerland community. A recommendation to eliminate portions of the soundwalls at this location is noted in the Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Measures section, and the view is shown below.

**OV-9 View of Alternatives 1 and 3 with some of the proposed soundwalls eliminated to preserve high-quality ocean views as seen from parts of the Summerland community**



**OV-9 Proposed Condition – Alternative 2**



Alternative 2 would add lanes to the outside of the highway, allowing for planting in the median for portions of this location. New soundwalls would be considered along the northbound lanes to mitigate for noise impacts. Vines would be planted along the community side of the proposed soundwalls and allowed to grow through holes to the freeway side. As seen from Highway 101, the soundwalls would block much of the views of the Summerland community along Lillie Avenue and the lower portions of the hillside. From Observer Viewpoint 9, the walls would not block the upper portions of the background hills or ridgeline. Minor amounts of roadside vegetation would be affected.

All three visual rating criteria would be reduced. Although views of the ocean and coastline would not be affected, the overall visual composition would be changed due to the loss of views to the community. The increase in the number of paved lanes and the new soundwalls would add an urbanizing character to the view.

At this location, eliminating portions of the proposed soundwalls would substantially maintain ocean views and minimize potential visual impacts as seen from parts of the Summerland community. A recommendation to eliminate portions of the soundwalls at this location is noted in the Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Measures section, and the view is shown below.

**OV-9 – View of Alternative 2 with some of the proposed soundwalls eliminated to preserve high-quality ocean views as seen from parts of the Summerland community**



**Observer Viewpoint 10 – From Ortega Hill Road near the bike path looking south toward U.S. 101**

**OV-10 Existing Condition**



Observer Viewpoint 10 shows the view from Ortega Hill Road across U.S. 101 toward the ocean to the south. This somewhat elevated viewpoint allows for increased views of the ocean and the Channel Islands. The Visual Quality Evaluation done from this viewpoint found that the existing view quality is high. The memorability rating is elevated because of the ocean view. The unity and intactness ratings are high largely because of the visual continuity of the well-vegetated beachside community. Visually detracting elements include signs, fencing, and traffic on the highway and the local roads.

### **Viewer Response**

As seen from Observer Viewpoint 10, the most sensitive visual resources are the direct views of the Pacific Ocean and the Channel Islands. Community views, although limited, are also important. Viewers from these local roadways include pedestrians and bicyclists as well as motorists. As a result, the expected viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is high.

### **OV-10 Proposed Condition – Alternatives 1, 2 and 3**



All project alternatives propose soundwalls as noise mitigation; however, the soundwalls would block most views of Highway 101 and beyond. As a result, the overall visual affect of the project would be the same with all alternatives.

The Visual Quality Evaluation ratings for Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 show a substantial reduction in vividness, intactness and unity. The walls would completely block ocean views and would be out-of-scale with the character of the local roadway and community.

The most noticeable elements of the project would be the new soundwalls proposed along the northbound lanes. As seen from Viewpoint 10, the soundwalls would block views of the ocean and the Channel Islands. The soundwalls visible from this location would range in height from 14 to 16 feet. At locations adjacent to Lillie Avenue where the highway is elevated, the perceived scale of the walls would be increased. Vines and other landscaping would be included, which would help reduce the visual

dominance of the wall to some degree, but the view blockage would result in substantial visual impacts.

The Visual Quality Evaluation from Viewpoint 10 shows that all three project alternatives would substantially reduce vividness, intactness and unity. This reduction would be due mostly to the out-of-character scale of the walls and the elimination of ocean views.

At this location, eliminating portions of the proposed soundwalls would substantially maintain ocean views and minimize potential visual impacts. A recommendation to eliminate portions of the soundwalls at this location is noted in the Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Measures section, and the view is shown below.

### **OV-10 Proposed Condition – Alternative 2**



### **Observer Viewpoint 11 – from Colville Street looking south toward U.S. 101**

#### **OV-11 Existing Condition**



Observer Viewpoint 11 from Colville Street represents the views from this and other similar streets in Summerland that intersect Lillie Avenue and extend up the hillside to the residential areas. Viewpoints from the upper elevations of Colville Street include greater panoramic views of the ocean. This existing view from Colville Street includes residential and commercial community views, along with glimpses of U.S. 101 in the mid-ground and the ocean and Channel Islands in the background. The view has an above-average degree of visual intactness and unity, mostly because of the vegetated character and the lack of non-typical visual elements. Views to the ocean are limited but, where available, they increase the memorability of the view. Because of these characteristics, the Visual Quality Evaluation rating as seen from this viewpoint is moderately high.

### ***Viewer Response***

Sensitive visual resources visible from Observer Viewpoint 11 include glimpses of the Pacific Ocean and the Channel Islands and to a lesser extent the community itself. Viewers from this local roadway would be pedestrians and bicyclists as well as motorists. The generally high viewer sensitivity from this viewpoint is somewhat moderated by the relatively few number of potential viewers at this location. As a result, the expected viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is moderately high.

### **Alternatives 1, 2 and 3**

#### **OV-11 Proposed Condition – Alternatives 1, 2 and 3**



All project alternatives propose a soundwall at this location as mitigation for noise impacts. As a result, as seen from Observer Viewpoint 11 and similar viewpoints in the area, the overall visual effect of the project would be the same with all alternatives.

The Visual Quality Evaluation ratings for Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 show a reduction in vividness, intactness and unity. The project would build a 16-foot-tall soundwall with landscaping along the northbound lanes of the highway in this area.

Although existing ocean views are very limited, the few places they do exist would be blocked by the proposed wall as seen, roughly, from the southernmost 150 feet of Colville Street. This extent of partial ocean view blockage would be similar for Evans Avenue, Hollister Street, Valencia Road and Temple Street that extend up the hillside to the north. The wall would also block visibility of the highway from this location. The proposed landscaping would help reduce the visual dominance of the wall, but the height and length of the wall would still appear somewhat out-of-scale with the local roadway and community context.

At this location, installing clear panels along the upper portion of the soundwall would substantially maintain ocean views and minimize potential visual impacts. A recommendation to include clear panels in the wall design at this location is noted in the Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Measures section.

### **Observer Viewpoint 12 – from Hollister Street looking south toward U.S. 101**

#### **OV-12 Existing Condition**



Observer Viewpoint 12 at Hollister Street represents a viewing condition similar to that in Observer Viewpoint 11 (Colville Street) in that Hollister Street intersects with Lillie Avenue and continues uphill to the north. The view from this location shows community commercial and residential uses in the foreground, with the Pacific Ocean and Channel Islands in the distance. U.S. 101 occupies the mid-ground view.

The Visual Quality Evaluation rating indicates that visual quality from Observer Viewpoint 12 is moderately high. Visibility of the Pacific Ocean increases the visual memorability. The unity and intactness of the view, although above average, are moderated somewhat by the high noticeability of the freeway here.

### **Viewer Response**

Sensitive visual resources visible from Observer Viewpoint 12 include the Pacific Ocean and the Channel Islands as well as the community itself in the foreground. Viewers from this location would be pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. The generally high viewer sensitivity from this viewpoint is somewhat moderated by the relatively few number of potential viewers at this location. As a result, the expected viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is moderately high.

### **OV-12 Proposed Condition – Alternatives 1, 2 and 3**



All project alternatives propose a soundwall at this location. As a result, as seen from Observer Viewpoint 12 and similar viewpoints in the area, the overall visual effect of the project would be the same with all alternatives. The Visual Quality Evaluation ratings for Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 show a reduction in vividness, intactness and unity.

The project proposes a 16-foot-tall soundwall with landscaping along the northbound lanes of the highway in this area. Although existing ocean views are very limited, the few places they do exist would be blocked by the proposed wall as seen, roughly, from the southernmost 150 feet of Hollister Street. This extent of partial ocean view blockage would be similar for Evans Avenue, Colville Avenue, Valencia Road and Temple Street that extend up the hillside to the north. The soundwall would also block visibility of the highway from this spot.

As seen from this viewpoint, there is little existing landscaping or development to block visibility of the proposed soundwall. The proposed landscaping would help reduce the visual dominance of the wall, but the height and length of the wall would still appear somewhat out-of-scale within the local roadway and community context. As a result, the Visual Quality Rating for the project at this viewing location is below average.

At this location, installing clear panels along the upper portion of the proposed soundwall would substantially maintain ocean views and minimize potential visual impacts. A recommendation to include clear panels in the wall design at this location is noted in the Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Measures section.

### **Observer Viewpoint 13 – From U.S. 101 east of Sheffield Drive undercrossing looking westbound**

#### **OV-13 Existing Condition**



The existing view from Observer Viewpoint 13 received a high visual quality evaluation rating. The Pacific Ocean, Channel Islands, Fernald Point and the beach are all visible to some extent along this segment of U.S. 101 northbound, increasing the vividness or memorability of the view. The greatly vegetated roadsides contribute to high unity and intactness ratings. The somewhat elevated viewing position and the curvilinear highway alignment create a panoramic viewing opportunity. Light poles and roadside barriers are minor detractors to the quality of the existing view.

### **Viewer Response**

From Observer Viewpoint 13, sensitive visual resources include the views of the Pacific Ocean, Fernald Point and the beach, as well as the mature vegetation along the highway and in the community. Motorists would be the main viewer group experiencing the view from the highway, but bicyclists and pedestrians using the Ortega Hill bike path may have similar views. Because of the visual access to the ocean and other high-quality coastal scenic resources, the expected viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is high.

### **OV-13 Proposed Condition – Alternatives 1, 2 and 3**



Along this section of the project, all proposed alternatives are the same. As a result, the Visual Quality Evaluation and subsequent analysis as seen from Observer Viewpoint 13 would also be the same for each of the three alternatives.

All three of the alternatives at this location would reconfigure the southbound highway lanes and ramps and would widen the existing Sheffield Drive Bridge. The project would add lanes toward the median, eliminating the existing median planting. Two new retaining walls would be built along the southbound lanes between the highway and the railroad. The walls would be downhill from the on- and off-ramps and would not be visible from the highway. They would be visible from the train and from certain locations on the beach.

The Visual Quality Evaluation for the project shows a moderately low reduction in visual quality from Observer Viewpoint 13. The change would be due mostly to the wider expanse of paving and the loss of vegetation in the median and along the

southbound roadside. The visual dominance and high-quality views of the ocean and coast would remain, but the increased scale of the highway and loss of vegetation would add a somewhat urbanizing character, which would negatively affect all three visual rating criteria to some degree.

### **Observer Viewpoint 14 – From U.S. 101 west of Sheffield Drive undercrossing looking eastbound**

#### **OV-14 Existing Condition**



The elevated viewing position of Observer Viewpoint 14 allows for panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean and the coastline. Southbound on U.S. 101, this viewpoint represents the first direct ocean views since the Gaviota Coast. The Visual Quality Evaluation rating for this viewpoint is high. The memorability of the view is increased because of the sweeping coastal view. The unity and intactness are benefited by the topography, skyline trees and the well-vegetated surroundings, both within the highway corridor and throughout surrounding community.

#### ***Viewer Response***

Sensitive visual resources would include sweeping views of the Pacific Ocean and the coastline, skyline trees and mature vegetation. Motorists would be the main viewer group associated with Viewpoint 14. Because of the direct visual access and exposure to the ocean and other high-quality coastal scenic resources, the expected viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is high.

### OV-14 Proposed Condition – Alternatives 1, 2 and 3



Along this section of the project, all proposed alternatives are the same. As a result, the Visual Quality Evaluation and subsequent analysis as seen from Observer Viewpoint 14 would also be the same for each of the three alternatives.

Each of the proposed alternatives would reconfigure the southbound highway lanes and ramps. Alternative 2 at this location would widen the existing Sheffield Drive Bridge and add lanes toward the median. Median planting would be replaced with concrete median barrier. The project would affect some of the roadside vegetation. High-quality views of the ocean and coast would remain, but the vegetated visual character would be adversely affected. The increased visual scale of the additional lanes, and the standardized on- and off-ramp configuration would create a more urbanized highway aesthetic. The Visual Quality Evaluation rating of the proposed project would be moderately reduced.

#### **Summary – Summerland Assessment Unit**

This Landscape Assessment Unit is composed of the Summerland community and its vicinity. This visually distinctive unit includes dramatic ocean and coastline vistas as well as views of the Summerland commercial area and residential community extending uphill from U.S. 101. A moderate amount of landscaping is found along and next to the highway corridor throughout this assessment unit.

Each of the project alternatives would adversely affect the small-town community character of Summerland. The proposed highway lanes, loss of highway planting, and addition of proposed soundwalls would all be new urbanizing elements. Of these project elements, the proposed soundwalls would have the greatest overall negative effect on visual quality. As seen from U.S. 101, the soundwalls would have no effect on views to the ocean or coast, but they would block some of the views to the community and adjacent hillside. Recommended measures to eliminate certain

soundwalls and place clear panels along the tops of other soundwalls through Summerland would maintain critical ocean views for much of the affected community.

The existing median planting is generally sparse through the Summerland community area due in part to the concern for maintaining views of the ocean. Alternative 3 proposes new median planting, which would have a greater potential for affecting coastal views from the northbound lanes of U.S. 101 and portions of the community.

Alternative 2 would widen to the outside and build a retaining wall along the northbound lanes. The new retaining wall would allow median planting to be kept, but would also add another urbanizing element to the corridor. As a result, the positive visual benefits of median planting would be mostly offset by the negative effect of the new retaining wall.

From parts of Lillie Avenue and from portions of the community along the lower elevations of the hillside, the proposed soundwalls would be generally hidden because of the existing buildings and mature landscaping.

The Sheffield Drive undercrossing, which is included in this assessment unit, would undergo substantial visual change with implementation of the project. All three of the alternatives at this location would reconfigure the southbound highway lanes and ramps and would widen the existing Sheffield Drive Bridge. The project would eliminate the existing median planting. The project would also consider a soundwall along the northbound lanes. Visual changes at the Sheffield Drive undercrossing would be due mostly to the wider expanse of paving and the loss of vegetation in the median and along the southbound roadside. Although high-quality views of the ocean and coast would remain, the increased scale of the highway and loss of vegetation would add an urbanizing character, which would negatively affect visual quality.

Retaining walls would be included at the reconstructed Sheffield undercrossing, between the southbound on- and off-ramps and the railroad tracks. The retaining walls would not be visible from the highway, but would be visible from the train and from certain locations on the beach. Where visible, the retaining walls would create a more urban effect and reduce visual quality.

Throughout all of the Summerland Assessment Unit, each of the project alternatives would result in adverse visual changes. Of the three project alternatives, Alternative 2 would result in impacts over and above the other two alternatives due mostly to the

retaining wall proposed along the northbound lanes near post mile 7.8, as seen from U.S. 101 only.

### **Montecito Assessment Unit**

#### **Observer Viewpoint 15 – From U.S. 101 east of Romero (Picay) Creek looking northbound**

##### **OV-15 Existing Condition**



The visual quality rating of the existing view at Observer Viewpoint 15 shows consistently high ratings for vividness, intactness and unity. The visual impression of this section of the highway is mostly defined by the abundant mature vegetation along the highway and in the surrounding community. This vegetated character increases both the visual unity and intactness ratings. The memorability is increased largely because of the large skyline trees in the highway median and along the roadside.

##### ***Viewer Response***

The sensitive visual resource visible from Observer Viewpoint 15 is the mature landscaping along the highway corridor and in the adjacent community. The dominant skyline trees and the close proximity of the landscaped areas to the highway traveler are the main visual characteristics of the visual resource. Viewers at this location are exclusively motorists using the highway. No ocean views are available from Observer Viewpoint 15, and views to the hills are mostly screened by intervening vegetation. As a result, the expected viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is moderately high.

### OV-15 Proposed Condition – Alternatives 1, 2 and 3



Along this stretch of the project, all proposed alternatives are the same. As a result, the Visual Quality Evaluation and subsequent analysis as seen from Observer Viewpoint 15 would also be the same for each of the three alternatives.

All of the alternatives would add lanes toward the median, which would result in the removal of the existing median trees and shrubs. A new concrete barrier would be placed in the median, and a new soundwall would be considered along the northbound fence line. Through this area, a metal-beam barrier would be placed in front of the proposed soundwall, providing an area for landscaping in front of the wall.

The Visual Quality Evaluation for the project shows a substantial rating reduction for all three rating criteria. The most noticeable visual change at this viewpoint would be the loss of large trees and shrubs in the median and the addition of the proposed soundwall. Skyline trees and other vegetation in the adjacent community would be preserved, and the new roadside planting would screen much of the visibility of the proposed soundwall. Overall, the perceived scale and urban visual character of the highway would be increased at this viewing spot.

## **Observer Viewpoint 16 – From U.S. 101 near Posilipo Lane looking southbound**

### **OV-16 Existing Condition**



Observer Viewpoint 16 shows high Visual Quality Evaluation ratings for vividness, intactness and unity. The visual impression of this stretch of the highway is defined by the scale and proximity of mature vegetation along the highway and in the surrounding community. This vegetated character increases both the visual unity and intactness ratings. The memorability is increased due to the large skyline trees in the highway median and along the roadside. At this viewing location, although the existing soundwall can be seen along the southbound lanes, vine planting reduces the wall's noticeability. No ocean views are available from this location, and the views to the hillsides are greatly limited by intervening vegetation and other development.

### ***Viewer Response***

The sensitive visual resource visible from Observer Viewpoint 16 is the mature landscaping along the highway corridor and in the adjacent community. The dominant skyline trees and the close proximity of the landscaped areas to the highway traveler are the main visual characteristics of the visual resource. Viewers at this location are exclusively motorists using the highway. No ocean views are available from Observer Viewpoint 16, and views to the hills are mostly screened by intervening vegetation. As a result, the expected viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is moderately high.

### OV-16 Proposed Condition – Alternatives 1, 2 and 3



Along this section of the project, all proposed alternatives are the same. As a result, the Visual Quality Evaluation and subsequent analysis as seen from Observer Viewpoint 16 would also be the same for each of the three alternatives.

At this location, the project would add lanes to the inside of the highway and remove the existing median vegetation and replace it with a concrete barrier. The Visual Quality Evaluation for the project shows a substantial rating reduction for all three rating criteria. Existing skyline trees and other vegetation in the adjacent community would be preserved, which would help maintain much of the vegetated character of the corridor. But, the most noticeable visual change at this viewpoint would be the loss of large trees and shrubs in the median. Overall, the perceived scale and urban visual character of the highway would be increased at this viewing location.

Though not visible from this particular viewpoint, new soundwalls would be considered by each of the project alternatives along portions of the northbound lanes: one about 0.1 mile east of this location and one about 0.1 mile west of this location. These proposed soundwalls would somewhat increase the urban character of the corridor and are discussed more in the Project Impact by Assessment Unit summary section.

## **Observer Viewpoint 17 – From North Jameson Lane near Santa Isabel Lane looking southwest**

### **OV-17 Existing Condition**



Observer Viewpoint 17 shows the existing view along North Jameson Lane next to the freeway. The Visual Quality Evaluation rating shows an above-average rating at this location. The visual character can be defined as a well-vegetated suburban landscape. The urbanizing elements of the freeway, frontage road and residences are balanced by the substantial amount of mature landscaping throughout the highway and the community.

At this location, the existing trees and shrubs visually screen much of the view of the freeway and associated traffic. The scale of the adjacent landscaping contributes to its visual presence and character-defining quality. Existing chain-link fencing and overhead utilities detract somewhat from the overall view quality.

### ***Viewer Response***

From Observer Viewpoint 17, sensitive visual resources would include the mature landscaping in the community and along the highway corridor. The close proximity of the landscaped areas to the viewers is the main visual characteristic of the visual resource. In addition to motorists, potential viewers from this spot include pedestrians and bicyclists, who may have a longer duration views of the surroundings. From this location, ocean and hillside views are effectively blocked by existing vegetation and development. The expected viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is moderately high.

**OV-17 Proposed Condition – Alternatives 1, 2 and 3**



The most noticeable visual change seen from this viewpoint would be the possible addition of a new 10-foot-tall soundwall between a portion of North Jameson Lane and U.S. 101. The proposed soundwall would require floodgates along its base, and vine planting would be included. As seen from North Jameson Lane, the soundwall would block views to U.S. 101 and the other aspects of the project on the highway. All three Visual Quality Evaluation rating criteria would be reduced because the wall would be visually imposing along this local roadway. The wall would offer some degree of continuity to the scene, but the loss of vegetation would adversely affect the visual character. Over time, the proposed vine planting would help moderate some of the urbanizing character of the wall. As seen from this viewpoint, the project would result in a lower than average Visual Quality Evaluation rating.

**Observer Viewpoint 18 – From San Ysidro Road overcrossing looking northbound**

**OV-18 Existing Condition**



As seen from Observer Viewpoint 18, the visual quality ratings indicate a generally well-balanced view that includes both urban and vegetative elements. From this vantage point, the existing median planting helps reduce the visual scale of the highway. Although the landscaping is sparse next to the on-ramp at the right, the overall corridor has a well-vegetated appearance. The existing palms are distinguishing visual elements for this location and provide skyline character benefits for the community. The Santa Ynez Mountains can be seen to the north. This suburban setting received an above-average Visual Quality Evaluation rating.

### **Viewer Response**

From Observer Viewpoint 18, sensitive visual resources are the well-landscaped highway corridor and community, and the distant views of the Santa Ynez Mountains. In addition to motorists, viewers from this location are pedestrians and bicyclists, who may have a longer duration of views of the surroundings. The expected viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is moderately high.

### **OV-18 Proposed Condition – Alternatives 1, 2 and 3**



Along this section of the project, all proposed alternatives are the same. As a result, the Visual Quality Evaluation and subsequent analysis as seen from Observer Viewpoint 18 would also be the same for each of the three alternatives.

The project through this area would build new lanes toward the inside, resulting in the loss of median planting. By adding lanes to the median, the roadside landscaping would be preserved. In addition, the project proposes to enhance existing roadside planting in deficient areas such as the northbound on-ramp seen from this viewpoint. The Visual Quality Evaluation rating from Observer Viewpoint 18 shows that, although visual changes would occur, the loss of median planting would be mostly

offset by the additional landscaping along the roadside. As a result, only a minor net change in visual quality would occur as seen from this location.

**Observer Viewpoint 19 – From U.S. 101 west of San Ysidro Road  
overcrossing looking northbound**

**OV-19 Existing Condition**



The existing visual quality evaluation done from U.S. 101 west of the San Ysidro Road overcrossing shows a view with relatively high marks for all three rating criteria. From this vantage point, the mature median and landscaping planting help reduce the visual scale of the highway. The highway corridor and community are well vegetated, which contributes to increased visual intactness and unity ratings. No ocean views exist from this location, and the mountains to the north are mostly blocked from view. Although still above average, the vividness component received the lowest rating because few specifically memorable features are part of the view.

***Viewer Response***

The main sensitive visual resources as seen from Observer Viewpoint 19 are the well-landscaped highway corridor and community, which are expressly valued in community planning policy. Viewers from this location are limited to those in vehicles. Viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is moderately high.

### **OV-19 Proposed Condition – Alternatives 1, 2 and 3**



Along this section of the project, all proposed alternatives are the same. As a result, the Visual Quality Evaluation and subsequent analysis as seen from Observer Viewpoint 19 would also be the same for each of the three alternatives.

The project along this section of U.S. 101 would build new lanes toward the inside, resulting in the loss of median planting. By adding lanes to the median, much of the roadside landscaping would be preserved. At this location, new soundwalls would be considered along both sides of the highway. Visibility of the proposed soundwalls would be minimized by keeping the existing landscaping and adding new planting. The Visual Quality Evaluation from Observer Viewpoint 19 shows that all three ratings would be moderately reduced. The effect of more lanes, loss of median planting, and the visibility of the proposed soundwalls would be an increase in the visual scale of the highway.

### **Observer Viewpoint 20 – From Olive Mill Road overcrossing looking northbound**

#### **OV-20 Existing Condition**



The visual quality ratings done from the Olive Mill Road overcrossing describe a mostly well-balanced view that includes both urban and vegetative elements. From this vantage point, the somewhat curvilinear alignment of the roadway and the existing median planting help reduce the visual scale of the highway. The highway corridor and community are well-vegetated, which contributes to increased visual intactness and unity ratings. No ocean views are available from this location, and the mountains to the north are mostly blocked from view. This suburban freeway setting received an above-average Visual Quality Evaluation rating.

### **Viewer Response**

The sensitive visual resource as seen from Observer Viewpoint 20 is the well-landscaped highway corridor and community. In addition to motorists, viewers from this location are pedestrians and bicyclists, who may have a longer duration views of the surroundings. As a result, the expected viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is moderately high.

### **OV-20 Proposed Condition – Alternatives 1, 2 and 3**



Along this section of the project, all proposed alternatives are the same. As a result, the Visual Quality Evaluation and subsequent analysis as seen from Observer Viewpoint 20 would also be the same for each of the three alternatives.

The project along this stretch of U.S. 101 would build new lanes toward the inside, resulting in the loss of median planting. By adding lanes to the median, the roadside landscaping would be kept. In addition, the project proposes to enhance existing roadside planting where deficient. A new soundwall would be considered for the top of the existing slope along the southbound side of the highway. Visibility of the proposed soundwall would be minimized by keeping the existing landscaping and adding new planting. The Visual Quality Evaluation from Observer Viewpoint 20

shows that all three ratings would be reduced slightly. This reduction would be mostly due to the loss of median planting and, to a lesser extent, the visibility of the proposed southbound soundwall. Some of this visual effect would be offset by the additional landscaping along the roadside. As a result, only a minor net change in visual quality would occur as seen from this location.

### **Summary – Montecito Assessment Unit**

The Montecito Assessment Unit includes the highway corridor and vicinity from just west of Ortega Hill to the Hermosillo off-ramp. This unit is characterized to a great degree by its abundance of mature highway and neighborhood landscaping, along with a somewhat more curvilinear highway alignment. Several large median skyline trees are found in this assessment unit. Within the Montecito Assessment Unit, only filtered ocean views are available briefly from the easternmost portion of U.S. 101 and North Jameson Lane.

The most noticeable aspects of the project through the Montecito Assessment Unit would be the reconfiguration of the Cabrillo Boulevard interchange, the additional lanes of the highway, removal of mature vegetation and skyline median trees, and the proposed soundwalls. Throughout most of the Montecito unit, Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 would appear the same. Because of the limited highway right-of-way through this area, each of the alternatives would require removing the existing median planting and building a single median barrier. Soundwalls would be considered for most of the Montecito unit along the northbound lanes and along the southbound lanes between the San Ysidro Road and Olive Mill Road overcrossings. Proposed soundwalls would include either solely vines or both vines and shrubs on both the highway and community sides. Some of the existing roadside vegetation would stay, and most of the landscaping near the San Ysidro Road and Olive Mill Road overcrossings would not be disturbed. New landscaping would be planted in the existing bare areas at the overcrossings.

The visual character of the Montecito Assessment Unit would be greatly affected by construction of the project. Although the proposed walls' aesthetic treatment and associated planting are expected to result in a generally attractive highway, the additional lanes, loss of median planting and extent of proposed soundwalls would be more typical of a suburban-type highway than what currently exists here. Much of the existing somewhat enclosed spatial quality caused by the narrower highway and fairly overgrown vegetation would be replaced with a more visually open character. The

curved highway alignment however, which helps define the Montecito assessment unit and increases the visual quality, would be kept.

Much of the substantial vegetation and mature trees within the community along the highway corridor would still be seen from the highway, which would help keep some of the existing visual quality for highway viewers. In addition, over time the proposed vine-covered soundwalls would be visually consistent with the many manicured perimeter hedges and vine-covered walls seen in the adjacent Montecito community. A vine-covered soundwall would replace much of the existing vine-covered chain-link fence between U.S. 101 and North Jameson Lane. Although the vines would create certain visual similarities, the increased scale of the proposed soundwall would be noticeable, especially as seen from local frontage roads such as North Jameson Lane. Floodgates would be required along a portion of the proposed soundwall, which would negatively affect the fundamental aesthetics of the wall and would make successful vine planting coverage more difficult.

### **Santa Barbara City Assessment Unit**

#### **The U.S. 101/Cabrillo Boulevard Interchange**

The proposed configuration changes at the U.S. 101/Cabrillo-Hot Springs interchange are each independent of Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 and could be built with any of the three project alternatives. Because of this independence and extent of proposed changes, the Cabrillo Boulevard interchange improvements are referred to separately as interchange configurations F, F Modified, J, M, and M Modified.

The Visual Quality Evaluations from Observer Viewpoints 21 through 24 represent and assess potential visual impacts associated with the U.S. 101/Cabrillo-Hot Springs interchange and interchange configurations F, F Modified, J, M, and M Modified (see Figures 2–10 through 2–15).



**Figure 2-10 Existing Configuration of U.S. 101-Cabrillo Boulevard Interchange**



Figure 2-11 Conceptual Image of Interchange Configuration F



Figure 2-12 Conceptual Image of Interchange Configuration F Modified



Figure 2-13 Conceptual Image of Interchange Configuration J



**Figure 2-14 Conceptual Image of Interchange Configuration M**



**Figure 2-15 Conceptual Image of Interchange Configuration M Modified**

## **Observer Viewpoint 21 – From U.S. 101 east of the Cabrillo Boulevard interchange looking northbound**

### **OV-21 Existing Condition**



The Visual Quality Evaluation rating indicated a relatively high-quality view based mostly on the mature vegetation visible along the corridor and throughout the community. Skyline eucalyptus trees dominate the view to the southwest, and portions of the golf course are visible ahead. The left-side ramp and off-ramp contribute to the memorability of the view. Median planting partially obscures views of southbound traffic. Although this section of the highway is passing through a somewhat commercial area, the road curvature and mature vegetation limit noticeability of the developed character.

### ***Viewer Response***

The main sensitive visual resources as seen from Observer Viewpoint 21 are large-scale skyline trees, the well-landscaped highway corridor and community, the curvilinear highway, and the unique configuration of the interchange. Viewers from this location are limited to those in vehicles travelling the highway. The viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is moderately high.

**OV-21 Proposed Condition – Cabrillo Boulevard Interchange Configuration F**



As seen from this viewpoint, the most noticeable visual change would be the additional highway lane and closure of the left-side off-ramp. The visual quality would be affected by the loss of many of the large skyline trees along the southbound lanes and the construction of the concrete median barrier. Roadside vegetation along the northbound roadside would stay. The Visual Quality Evaluation showed a moderately high reduction in visual quality. Even with this reduction, configuration F would keep an above-average view quality as seen from this vantage point, due mostly to the well-vegetated roadsides.

**OV-21 Proposed Condition – Cabrillo Boulevard Interchange Configuration F Modified**



From this perspective, configuration F Modified would be noticeable by the shift of the highway lanes to the south, the additional highway lane, the new right-side off-ramp, and closure of the left-side off-ramp. The visual quality would be affected by

the loss of many of the large skyline trees along the southbound lanes and the construction of the concrete median barrier. Configuration F Modified would provide for limited planting in the median.

The Visual Quality Evaluation showed a moderately high reduction in visual quality at this location. Even with this reduction, configuration F Modified would maintain an above-average view quality as seen from this viewpoint.

### **OV-21 Proposed Condition – Cabrillo Boulevard Interchange Configuration J**



As seen from this viewpoint, configuration J would appear much like configuration F, as previously described. Most of the changes unique to configuration J would occur along the southbound lanes and would not be easily seen from this viewing location. As with configuration F, the visual quality of configuration J would be adversely affected by the loss of skyline trees along the southbound lanes and the construction of concrete median barrier. Roadside vegetation along the northbound roadside would stay. The Visual Quality Evaluation indicates a moderately high reduction in visual quality. Configuration F, however, would retain an above-average view quality as seen from this vantage point, due mostly to the well-vegetated roadsides.

### **OV-21 Proposed Condition – Cabrillo Boulevard Interchange Configuration M and M Modified**



Configurations M and M Modified would remove some of the existing skyline trees and install concrete median barrier. But, as seen from this viewpoint, the greatest visual change with configuration M would be due to construction of a northbound off-ramp. The new off-ramp would result in the loss of most of the existing planting between the highway and Coast Village Road. Vines would be planted on the proposed highway fencing, but much of the vegetated character and screening would be lost, resulting in a reduction in visual quality.

### **Observer Viewpoint 22 – From the Old Coast Highway north of the Cabrillo Boulevard interchange looking southwest**

#### **OV-22 Existing Condition**



The existing visual quality rating for this viewpoint shows high marks for all three evaluation criteria. The curved roadways, open bridge rail, landscaping, and architectural and site details all contribute to a well-balanced human-scale view. As seen from this viewing location, the elements create a very intact suburban-type

landscape, with a high degree of visual unity and continuity, due in large part to the plentiful landscaping. Because the high intactness and unity are noticeable, the memorability of the view is also increased.

### **Viewer Response**

Sensitive visual resources visible from Observer Viewpoint 22 are the U.S. 101 bridge structures and the plentiful landscaping and skyline trees at and near the interchange. The curved roadways also contribute to a visual character expressly valued in local planning policy. Viewers from this local roadway are pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. As a result, the expected viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is high.

### **OV-22 Proposed Condition – Cabrillo Boulevard Interchange Configurations F and J**



Interchange configurations F and J would appear the same from Observer Viewpoint 22 because the changes unique to each of these configurations would occur along the southbound lanes and would not be seen from this viewpoint. The most noticeable visual changes seen from this viewpoint would be construction of an additional lane along southbound Hot Springs Boulevard. The change would reduce the amount of landscaping area and slightly increase the visual scale of the interchange. The Visual Quality Evaluation indicates that in spite of this visual change, the view would still maintain high ratings for vividness, intactness and unity.

**OV-22 Proposed Condition – Cabrillo Boulevard Interchange Configuration F Modified, M, and M Modified**



Interchange configuration F Modified, M, and M Modified propose a new northbound off-ramp connecting to Hot Springs Boulevard. As seen from Observer Viewpoint 22, construction of the ramp would require a retaining wall along the northbound lanes of the highway and the removal of the existing vegetation in that area. New vine planting would be included along the retaining wall. The intersection of Hot Springs Boulevard and the highway ramps would likely require traffic signals and additional signage. The Visual Quality Evaluation shows that vividness, intactness and unity would all be reduced with configurations F Modified, M, and M Modified. As a result, the visual scale and urban character of the interchange would be substantially increased.

**Observer Viewpoint 23 – From Los Patos Way looking northwest toward U.S. 101**

**OV-23 Existing Condition**



The existing view from Los Patos Way toward U.S. 101 includes a variety of elements including the railroad bridge structure, skyline trees, the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge, and commercial buildings. Utility poles, roadway signage, and highway traffic in the distance contribute to the somewhat mixed visual character of this view. The Visual Quality Evaluation done from Observer Viewpoint 23 resulted in moderately above-average ratings for vividness, intactness and unity. The stone abutments of the railroad structure, the large trees and the bird refuge raised the memorability of the view, and the vegetation seen throughout the area added a degree of visual continuity. Overall, however, the view had a somewhat visually discordant character and was fairly cluttered.

### **Viewer Response**

Sensitive visual resources visible from Observer Viewpoint 23 include the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge, the sandstone abutments of the railroad bridge structure, and the skyline trees. Viewers from this local roadway are pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. The generally high viewer sensitivity from this viewpoint is somewhat moderated by the relatively few number of potential viewers at this location. As a result, the expected viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is moderately high.

### **OV-23 Proposed Condition – Cabrillo Boulevard Interchange Configuration F and F Modified**



As seen from this Observer Viewpoint, the main visual change with configuration F would be the closure and removal of the southbound off-ramp under the railroad bridge. New landscaping would be planted on portions of the removed roadway, and traffic signage associated with the abandoned off-ramp would be eliminated. As a result, the Visual Quality Evaluation found that the quality of the view would slightly improve at this location with configurations F and F Modified.

**OV-23 Proposed Condition – Cabrillo Boulevard Interchange Configurations J,  
M, and M Modified**



Configurations J, M, and M Modified would add a new southbound on-ramp at Los Patos Way. The existing railroad bridge structure would be lengthened and raised about 4 feet. Access-control fencing would be required along a portion of the on- and off-ramps, and new roadway signage would be required. Aesthetic treatment would be included as part of the new bridge, and landscaping would be included between the on- and off-ramps. The visual ratings for configurations J, M and M Modified show a slight decrease in visual quality at this location. The increased visual scale and urbanization of the setting would represent a change in character here.

**Observer Viewpoint 24 – from U.S. 101 about 1,000 feet west of Cabrillo  
Boulevard looking southbound**

**OV-24 Existing Condition**



The existing visual conditions as seen from Observer Viewpoint 24 received moderately high quality ratings. The left-hand off-ramp is somewhat unique, adding to the memorability of the scene. Mature vegetation and skyline trees also contribute to the vividness. The amount of vegetation plays a major factor in the high unity and intactness ratings and the somewhat rural appearance of the view. The open-style guardrail and bridge rail reinforce that rustic character. The existing median planting obscures most views of the northbound lanes. Although this section of the highway is passing through an area of commercial development, the road curvature and mature vegetation limit noticeability of the surrounding built character.

### **Viewer Response**

The main sensitive visual resources seen from Observer Viewpoint 24 are large-scale skyline trees, the well-landscaped highway corridor and community, the curvilinear highway, and the unique configuration of the interchange. Viewers from this location are limited to those in vehicles travelling the highway. The viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is moderately high.

### **OV-24 Proposed Condition – Cabrillo Boulevard Interchange Configuration F**



Configuration F would essentially switch locations of the existing southbound highway mainline and the off-ramp, creating a more “standard” type of configuration. The most noticeable aspects of this change would be the wider expanse of pavement, the loss of the left-hand off-ramp, and the reduction of mature landscaping and skyline trees. New landscaping would be provided in the highway median and along the roadsides, although to a lesser degree than what currently exists. Because of the loss of the left-hand off-ramp and the skyline trees, the memorability rating would be reduced the most. Configuration F would create a more typical-looking highway facility, and views to the northbound lanes would increase, resulting in a more urban visual character. The Visual Quality Evaluation rating indicates a moderately

substantial reduction in visual quality here. The remaining existing vegetation and the new planting, however, would help the view maintain an above-average degree of intactness and unity.

### **OV-24 Proposed Condition – Cabrillo Boulevard Interchange Configuration F Modified**



Similar to configuration F, interchange configuration F Modified would create a more standard type of configuration with a right-hand southbound off-ramp. Configuration F Modified would, however, also shift the northbound and southbound highway lanes closer together and farther to the south. This more compact configuration would result in a somewhat narrower median as well as the need to build retaining walls between the southbound mainline and the southbound on- and off-ramps. The new retaining walls would be about 12 feet tall and 460 feet and 500 feet long, respectively. The two new walls would be below the highway and not easily seen from the mainline, as shown in Observer Viewpoint 24.

The most noticeable aspects of this change would be the wider expanse of pavement, the loss of the left-hand off-ramp, the construction of the new right-hand ramp, and the reduction of mature landscaping and skyline trees. Because of the tighter ramp configuration, no planting area would be available between the southbound paved shoulder and the top of the new retaining wall. New landscaping would be provided in the highway median and along the roadsides, although to a lesser degree than what currently exists.

Losing the left-hand off-ramp and the skyline trees would reduce the memorability rating the most. Configuration F Modified would create a more urban-looking highway facility. Views across to the northbound lanes of traffic would increase, and

much of the current view of vegetation along the southbound roadside would be replaced with new off- and on-ramps.

The Visual Quality Evaluation rating indicates a moderately substantial reduction in visual quality here. The remaining existing vegetation and the new planting, however, would help the view maintain a slightly above-average degree of intactness and unity.

#### **OV-24 Proposed Condition – Cabrillo Boulevard Interchange Configuration J**



As seen from this viewpoint, configuration J would remove the existing left-hand off-ramp and build a new highway lane. The existing left-hand off-ramp would be removed and a new on-ramp built at Los Patos Way. The southbound lanes of the highway would generally follow their existing alignment. Similar to the other interchange configurations, the most noticeable characteristics of configuration J would be the loss of the left-hand off-ramp, the wider expanse of pavement, and the reduction of mature landscaping and skyline trees. New landscaping would be provided in the highway median and along the roadsides.

Because of the loss of the left-hand off-ramp and the skyline trees, the memorability rating would be reduced. Due to the wider median and associated planting opportunities with this configuration, views to the northbound lanes would only slightly increase. The remaining existing vegetation and the new planting would help the view maintain an above-average degree of intactness and unity. The Visual Quality Evaluation rating indicates a moderately substantial reduction in visual quality here.

### **OV-24 Proposed Condition – Cabrillo Boulevard Interchange Configurations M and M Modified**



As seen from Observer Viewpoint 24, configurations M and M Modified would appear generally similar to configuration J. The existing left-hand off-ramp would be removed, and a new on-ramp would be built at Los Patos Road. Because of a different alignment of the northbound highway lanes, the median would be somewhat narrower than that proposed with configuration J. New landscaping would be provided in the highway median and along the roadsides, although to a lesser degree than what now exists.

Similar to the other interchange configurations, the most identifiable visual characteristic of configuration M would be the loss of the left-hand off-ramp, the wider expanse of pavement, and the reduction of mature landscaping and skyline trees. Views to the northbound lanes would increase with configuration M, resulting in a more urban visual character as seen from this viewpoint. The Visual Quality Evaluation rating indicates a moderately substantial reduction in visual quality, although the remaining existing vegetation and the new planting would help the view retain an above-average degree of intactness and unity.

## Observer Viewpoint 24A – from U.S. 101 about 1,500 feet west of Cabrillo Boulevard looking southbound

### OV-24A Existing Condition



The existing visual conditions as seen from Observer Viewpoint 24A received moderately high quality ratings. The left-hand off-ramp seen ahead in the mid-ground is fairly unique, somewhat increasing the memorability of the view. Skyline trees, including large stands of eucalyptus, also contribute to the vividness.

Throughout this area, mature vegetation plays a major factor in the high unity and intactness ratings. Scattered native vegetation contributes to a somewhat informal looking landscaping and a quasi-rural appearance of the view. The existing median planting partially obscures views of the northbound lanes, and the vegetation and topography along the southbound roadside limits views of the adjacent railroad tracks.

### **Viewer Response**

Sensitive visual resources as seen from Observer Viewpoint 24A include large-scale skyline trees, the well-landscaped highway corridor and community, and the curvilinear highway. Although from this particular location views of the Santa Ynez Mountains are limited and the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge is not visible, the viewer sensitivity rating is identified as moderately high through this part of the corridor. This viewpoint would be limited to those in vehicles travelling the highway.

### **OV-24A Proposed Condition–Cabrillo Boulevard Interchange Configuration F**



Configuration F would remove the left-hand off-ramp and build a new off-ramp on the right side. This more typical-style interchange configuration would cause the removal of mature roadside and median landscaping and skyline trees. A new 450-foot-long retaining wall with a maximum height of 8 feet would be built between the off-ramp and the railroad tracks. Views across to the northbound lanes of traffic as well as the railroad tracks to the south would be increased. New landscaping would be provided in the highway median, although to a lesser degree than what currently exists. Configuration F would create a more typical, urban-looking highway facility with a somewhat open visual character and a less vegetated appearance. The Visual Quality Evaluation rating indicates a moderately substantial reduction in visual quality as seen from this location. The remaining vegetation along with the new median planting and modest roadside planting, however, would help the view maintain a somewhat above-average degree of intactness and unity.

## **OV-24A Proposed Condition – Cabrillo Boulevard Interchange Configuration F Modified**



As seen from this viewpoint, configuration F Modified would shift the highway lanes slightly to the south, in a more compact layout than configuration F. As a result, less planting area would be available in the median, between the mainline and southbound ramps, and along the southbound roadside. The removal of the left-hand off-ramp and construction of a new off-ramp on the right side would create a more typical “diamond”-style interchange. A new 450-foot-long retaining wall with a maximum height of 8 feet would be built between the off-ramp and the railroad tracks. Configuration F Modified would cause the removal of mature roadside and median landscaping and skyline trees. Views across to the northbound lanes of traffic as well as the railroad tracks to the south would be increased. New landscaping would be provided in the highway median and along the roadsides, although to a lesser degree than what currently exists.

This more compact configuration would result in the need to build two additional retaining walls between the southbound mainline and the southbound on- and off-ramps. The new retaining walls would reach approximately 12 feet tall and 460 feet and 500 feet long, respectively. These two new walls would be below the highway and not easily seen from the mainline; however, they would easily be seen from the on- and off-ramps.

No room to plant would exist between the southbound lanes and the top of the retaining walls; however, shrubs and possibly vines would be provided at the base of the retaining walls to help reduce their visual scale and urbanizing character as seen from the ramps. In spite of proposed landscaping, at a maximum height of 12 feet, the walls would remain dominant visual features along the southbound ramps.

Configuration F Modified would result in a more typical, urban-looking highway with a somewhat open visual character and a less vegetated appearance. The Visual Quality Evaluation rating indicates a substantial reduction in visual quality as seen from this location. The remaining existing vegetation within the highway right-of-way and the adjacent community, along with the new planting in the median and roadside, would help the view retain a moderate degree of intactness and unity.

#### **OV-24A Proposed Condition–Cabrillo Boulevard Interchange Configuration J**



As seen from this Observer Viewpoint 24A, configuration J would remove the existing left-hand off-ramp and add a new highway lane. In addition to the new HOV lane, the existing left-hand off-ramp would be removed and a new on-ramp built at Los Patos Way. A retaining wall would be required along the southbound lanes to fit the new southbound Los Patos on-ramp between the highway and the adjacent railroad track. The southbound lanes of the highway would generally follow their existing alignment.

The most noticeable characteristics of configuration J at this location would be the retaining wall, the loss of the left-hand off-ramp, the wider expanse of pavement, and the reduction of mature landscaping and skyline trees. New landscaping would be

provided in the highway median and along the roadsides. Because of the loss of the left-hand off-ramp and the skyline trees, the memorability rating would be reduced. Due to the wider median and associated planting opportunities with this configuration, views to the northbound lanes would only slightly increase. The remaining existing vegetation and the new planting would help the view maintain an above-average degree of intactness and unity. The Visual Quality Evaluation rating indicates a moderately substantial reduction in visual quality as seen from this location.

### **OV-24 Proposed Condition–Cabrillo Boulevard Interchange Configurations M and M Modified**



As seen from Observer Viewpoint 24A, configurations M and M Modified would appear generally similar to configuration J. The existing left-hand off-ramp would be removed and a new on-ramp and retaining wall would be built at Los Patos Way. Because of the different alignment of the northbound highway lanes, the median would be somewhat narrower than that proposed with configuration J.

New landscaping would be provided in the highway median and along the roadsides, although to a lesser degree than what currently exists. The most identifiable visual characteristic of configurations M and M Modified would be the loss of the left-hand off-ramp, the wider expanse of pavement, the new retaining wall, and the reduction of mature landscaping and skyline trees. Views to the northbound lanes would increase with configurations M and M Modified, resulting in a more urban visual character as

seen from this viewpoint. The Visual Quality Evaluation rating indicates a moderately substantial reduction in visual quality. The remaining vegetation and the new planting, however, would help the view retain an above-average degree of intactness and unity.

### **Summary—Cabrillo Boulevard Interchange**

Due to replacement or widening, changes proposed for the Cabrillo Boulevard interchange would be substantial and would affect the mainline, on- and off-ramps, local roadway alignments, and bridge structures. Earthwork required to accommodate the new configurations would be extensive, and existing landscaping in the vicinity would be greatly affected. The proposed configuration changes at the U.S. 101 Cabrillo Boulevard interchange are each independent of Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 and could be built with any of the three project alternatives.

Because of the interchange's size and proximity to local roads and other public land uses, views of the interchange are innumerable and widely varied. U.S. 101 is elevated in this area, which increases viewing opportunities from the highway, but at the same time limits views from local roads to the surrounding area. The mature, dense landscaping throughout the interchange restricts many of the views from potential viewpoints. As a result, many views from local roads and sidewalks are isolated to one side of the highway or the other.

Views from the highway while passing through the interchange are high quality, based mostly on the mature vegetation seen along the corridor. Skyline eucalyptus trees dominate the view to the south, along the highway and the adjacent railroad tracks. The left-hand off-ramps are somewhat unique and contribute to the memorability of the interchange. In addition, the open-style guardrail and bridge rail reinforce a non-urban character visual character. Road curvature and mature vegetation obscure views of highway traffic between the northbound and southbound lanes and limit noticeability of the surrounding development.

As seen from the local roadways and pedestrian areas surrounding the interchange, the curved roadways, open bridge rail, landscaping, architectural and site details all contribute to a well-balanced, human-scale view. From local roads south of the interchange, the stone abutments of the railroad structures, the large trees and the bird refuge add to the view quality, and the vegetation visible throughout the area adds visual continuity. Near the Los Patos off-ramp, however, the view was found to be somewhat visually cluttered.

### **Summary—Interchange Configuration F**

From viewpoints on northbound U.S. 101, the most noticeable visual change would be the additional highway lane and the closure of the left-side off-ramp. The visual quality would be reduced by the loss of many of the large skyline trees along the southbound lanes and by the construction of concrete median barrier. Roadside vegetation along the northbound roadside would remain in place.

Along southbound U.S. 101, configuration F would switch locations of the existing southbound mainline and the off-ramp, resulting in a more “standard” type of configuration. This would result in a wider expanse of pavement, the loss of the left-side off-ramp, and the reduction of mature landscaping and skyline trees. A new 450-foot-long retaining wall with a maximum height of 8 feet would be built between the southbound off-ramp and the railroad tracks. New landscaping would be provided in the highway median and along the roadsides, though to a lesser degree than what now exists. Because of the loss of the left-hand off-ramp and the skyline trees, the memorability of the view would be reduced. Views between the northbound and southbound lanes would increase somewhat, resulting in a more urban visual character. From U.S. 101, the visual quality of the interchange would be substantially reduced. In spite of the adverse visual impacts, the amount of remaining existing vegetation along with the new median planting and modest roadside planting would help maintain a somewhat above-average degree of scenic quality.

Seen from local roads to the north such as the Old Coast Highway and Coast Village Road, configurations F and J would appear the same because the changes unique to each of these configurations would occur along the southbound lanes and would not be seen. From these viewpoints, the most noticeable visual changes would be the additional lane along southbound Hot Springs Boulevard. The change would reduce the amount of landscaping area and slightly increase the visual scale of the interchange. A reduction in visual quality would occur, but the view would still maintain above-average ratings for vividness, intactness and unity.

From the Los Patos Way side of the interchange, the main visual change with configuration F would be the closure and removal of the southbound off-ramp. New landscaping would be planted on portions of the removed roadway, and traffic signage for the abandoned off-ramp would be taken away. In the immediate area of the existing Los Patos off-ramp, the quality of the view would slightly improve with configuration F.

**Summary—Interchange Configuration F Modified**

As seen from the northbound lanes of U.S. 101, the greatest visual change associated with configuration F Modified would be the closure of the existing left-side off-ramp and the construction of a new right-hand off-ramp. The northbound lanes would shift closer to the southbound lanes to accommodate the new northbound off-ramp, resulting in less planting area in the median. The new northbound off-ramp would result in the loss of much of the existing planting between the highway and Coast Village Road. Vines would be planted on the proposed highway fencing in that area, but much of the vegetated character and screening would be lost. The removal of several existing skyline trees from the southbound roadside would be seen, and additional lanes would combine for a more urban appearance and a reduction in visual quality.

As seen from the southbound lanes of U.S. 101, configuration F Modified would remove the existing left-side off-ramp and build new southbound on- and off-ramps between the highway main lines and the railroad tracks to the south. A new 450-foot-long retaining wall with a maximum height of 8 feet would be built between the southbound off-ramp and the railroad tracks. Because of the different alignment of the northbound highway lanes, the median would be narrower. New landscaping would be provided in portions of the highway median and roadsides, though to a lesser degree than what now exists. Views between the northbound and southbound lanes would increase with configuration F Modified, resulting in a more urban visual character.

With configuration F Modified, a substantial reduction in visual quality would occur compared to the existing condition. The remaining vegetation and the new planting, however, would help the view keep a slightly above-average degree of intactness and unity.

As seen from the Coast Village Road and Old Coast Highway areas, construction of a new northbound off-ramp connecting to Hot Springs Boulevard would require a retaining wall along the northbound lanes of the highway and removal of the existing vegetation in that area. New vine planting would be included along the retaining wall. The intersection of Hot Springs Boulevard and the highway ramps would likely require traffic signals and additional signage. As a result, the visual scale and urban character of the interchange would be substantially increased, and the visual quality would be reduced with configuration M.

Configuration F Modified would add new southbound on- and off-ramps at Cabrillo Boulevard. Three retaining walls would be required to fit the new ramps between the highway mainline and the existing railroad tracks. The retaining walls would be visible from the on- and off-ramps and would increase visual scale and urbanization of the setting. Overall, configuration F Modified would represent a change in character and, as a result, the visual quality would decrease.

### **Summary—Interchange Configuration J**

Most of the changes unique to configuration J would occur along the southbound lanes. The visual quality of configuration J would be adversely affected by the loss of skyline trees along the southbound lanes, the additional highway lanes and the closure of the left side off-ramps. Roadside vegetation along most of the northbound roadside would remain in place. The southbound lanes of the highway would generally follow their existing alignment, and a new on-ramp would be built at Los Patos Way. New landscaping would be provided in the highway median and along the roadsides.

Due to the wider median and associated planting opportunities with configuration J, views between the northbound and southbound lanes would be limited. The Visual Quality Evaluation rating indicates a moderately substantial reduction in visual quality as seen from the highway. The remaining amount of existing vegetation and the new planting, however, would help configuration J maintain an above-average degree of intactness and unity.

Configurations F and J would appear mostly the same from viewpoints north of the interchange because the changes unique to each of these configurations would occur along the southbound lanes. The most noticeable visual changes seen from the Coast Village Road and Old Coast Highway areas would be the construction of an additional lane along southbound Hot Springs Boulevard. The change would reduce the amount of landscaping area and slightly increase the visual scale of the interchange. From these vantage points north of the interchange, configurations J and F would result in a loss of visual quality, but the reduced-quality view would still be considered above average.

Alternative J adds a new southbound on-ramp at Los Patos Way. The existing railroad bridge would be lengthened, and new roadway signage required. Aesthetic treatment would be included as part of the new bridge, and landscaping would be included between the on- and off-ramps. The increased visual scale and urbanization of the

setting would represent a change in character at this location and result in a slight decrease in visual quality.

**Summary—Interchange Configuration M**

As seen from the northbound lanes of U.S. 101, the greatest visual change associated with configuration M would be the closure of the existing left-side off-ramp and construction of a new right-hand off-ramp. The new off-ramp would result in the loss of most of the existing planting between the highway and Coast Village Road. Vines would be planted on the proposed highway fencing in that area, but much of the vegetated character and screening would be lost. The removal of several existing skyline trees from the southbound roadside would be seen, and additional lanes would combine for a more urban appearance and a reduction in visual quality. Configuration M would also close the existing northbound Hermosillo Road off-ramp, which would provide additional landscaping opportunity in that area.

As seen from the southbound lanes of U.S. 101, configuration M would remove the existing left-side off-ramp, and a new on-ramp would be built at Los Patos Way. Because of a different alignment of the northbound highway lanes, the median would be somewhat narrower. New landscaping would be provided in the highway median and along the roadsides, though to a lesser degree than what now exists. Views between the northbound and southbound lanes would increase with configuration M, resulting in a more urban visual character. With configuration M, a moderately substantial reduction in visual quality would occur, though the remaining existing vegetation and the new planting would help the view keep an above-average degree of intactness and unity.

As seen from the Coast Village Road and Old Coast Highway areas, construction of a new northbound off-ramp connecting to Hot Springs Boulevard would require a retaining wall along the northbound lanes of the highway and the removal of the existing vegetation in that area. New vine planting would be included along the retaining wall. The intersection of Hot Springs Boulevard and the highway ramps would likely require traffic signals and additional signage. As a result, the visual scale and urban character of the interchange would be substantially increased, and the visual quality would be reduced with configuration M.

Alternative M would add a new southbound on-ramp at Los Patos Way. The existing railroad bridge would be lengthened, and new roadway signage required. Aesthetic treatment would be included as part of the new bridge, and landscaping would be

included between the on- and off-ramps. The increased visual scale and urbanization of the setting would represent a change in character here, and as a result the visual quality would decrease.

### **Summary—Interchange Configuration M Modified**

Configuration M Modified would result in the same visual changes and affects as configuration M described above, except that the existing northbound Hermosillo Road off-ramp would remain in place. As a result of leaving the Hermosillo ramp in place and building an additional northbound off-ramp immediately to the west at Cabrillo Boulevard, that area would appear more urban and less landscaped than the existing condition.

### **Observer Viewpoint 25 – From U.S. 101 near Salinas Street looking northbound**

#### **OV-25 Existing Condition**



Note: The “existing” view represented here shows improvements that are part of the Milpas Street/Hot Springs Road project, which is currently under construction. These improvements will be fully implemented before this HOV project gets underway. Therefore, for the purposes of this analysis, the soon to be completed condition of the Milpas Street/Hot Springs Road project is used as the baseline “existing” conditions for the South Coast 101 HOV Lane project.

The existing view from Observer Viewpoint 25 includes a variety of visual elements, including residential and recreational uses, U.S. 101 with sparse to moderate planted roadsides and median, and a soundwall along the northbound lanes. Mature vegetation can be seen in the surrounding community. Limited views of the Andrée

Clark Bird Refuge and the Santa Barbara Zoo are toward the southwest, as are a chain-link highway fence and the railroad tracks. The Visual Quality Evaluation ratings for this existing view indicate a generally average visual quality, due mostly to the minimal highway landscaping and the soundwall. The median planting adds some degree of unity to the view. The existing view is somewhat intact as a typical suburban freeway context, and glimpses of the Bird Refuge slightly increase the memorability rating.

### **Viewer Response**

The main sensitive visual resources seen from Observer Viewpoint 25 are the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge and the well-vegetated community beyond the highway corridor. No quality ocean views are available from Observer Viewpoint 25, and viewers at this location are exclusively motorists using the highway. As a result, the expected viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is moderately above-average.

### **OV-25 Proposed Condition – Alternatives 1, 2, and 3**



As seen from Observer Viewpoint 25, the project proposes no alterations to the highway beyond those that would be built as part of the Milpas/Hot Springs project. As a result, the proposed condition from this viewpoint would not change from the existing condition. It is important to note that configurations J, M and M Modified would result in raising the railroad track profile south of the highway about 1 to 4 feet for a distance of 0.67 mile as part of ramp improvements at the Los Patos Way railroad overhead structure. The elevated railroad embankment would transition back to the existing grade through this area, but would have some effect on existing views of the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge as seen from the eastbound lanes.

### **Summary—Santa Barbara City Assessment Unit**

The Santa Barbara City Assessment Unit represents the westernmost segment of the project corridor study area. Although landscaping and views of the Santa Ynez Mountains are important scenic components of this unit, the visual character is also influenced by the more urban visual character of the City of Santa Barbara.

The Santa Barbara Unit includes a variety of visual elements that include residential and recreational uses, U.S. 101 with sparse to moderate planted roadsides and median, and a soundwall along the northbound lanes. Mature vegetation can be seen in the surrounding community. Limited views of the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge and the Santa Barbara Zoo are to the southwest, as are the chain-link highway fence and the railroad tracks. Views of the hills and Santa Ynez Mountains are important scenic resources for viewers travelling eastbound on U.S. 101. The Cabrillo Boulevard interchange is considered part of the Santa Barbara City Assessment Unit, but is discussed separately in the previous section.

Through this area, the existing median planting provides benefit in terms of visual continuity and reducing the perceived scale by somewhat limiting views across the full width of the highway. Roadside planting does not dominate the views through this unit, and the existing soundwalls are noticeable along the northbound lanes.

Alternatives 1 and 2 through this area would keep some of the existing median planting, and most of the existing roadside shrubs would be removed. Vine planting, however, would be installed along the existing soundwall east of Salinas Street. The widened highway, combined with the smaller median planting and the loss of roadside landscaping around the Salinas Street on- and off-ramps would result in a reduction of visual quality. The Visual Quality Evaluation shows that Alternatives 1 and 2 would result in a slightly below-average visual quality rating.

Alternative 3 would mainly widen to the inside, causing loss of median planting. Most of the existing roadside landscaping would remain in place, but Alternative 3 would not accommodate the planting of vines on the existing soundwall. Visual quality would be reduced, mostly because of the loss of median planting. In addition to the wider highway, the loss of median planting would increase the perceived visual scale of the highway and have an urbanizing effect on this section of the highway corridor. Views to the bird refuge would be opened up for the northbound lanes, but views of the chain-link fencing and the railroad track would also increase.

Throughout this area, since Alternatives 1 and 2 keep much of the median landscaping and provide vine planting on the existing soundwall, the visual scale of the highway would be less than if Alternative 3 were built. As a result, Alternatives 1 and 2 would cause fewer visual impacts than Alternative 3 would.

### **Summary of Project Impacts**

Implementation of the project would result in substantial visual changes throughout much of the highway corridor. Because of the length of the project and the virtually unlimited number of viewpoints from which the project would be seen, potential impacts are equally as varied and location-specific. However, through analysis of the representative views (Observer Viewpoints) and extensive field review, information on the visual effects of the project was identified. Several potential impact “themes” became apparent, and common patterns of visual change were seen.

The main overall visual effect of the project, regardless of alternative, would be the increased urban character caused by the additional highway lanes, reduction of highway landscaping, and at several locations the construction of proposed soundwalls. New landscaping proposed by the project, along with aesthetic treatments to walls, would reduce the urban appearance to some extent. In several areas, particularly through Montecito, the proposed vine-covered walls would not look dissimilar to the vine-covered fencing currently seen along the highway and throughout the community. But the inherent visual change associated with an increase in visual scale and additional hardscape would be unavoidable and noticeable. For some casual observers and people travelling through the area, the proposed scale of the highway would not be unexpected in the visual context of this freeway environment. Overall, viewer sensitivity and response to change are expected to be high, as indicated by the many local coastal planning policies on visual character and scenic view protection.

Proposed soundwalls would not only affect the visual character, but some of the walls would also affect scenic views, although at most proposed soundwall locations the existing landscaping and/or intervening development already block scenic views. In the Summerland area, views of the ocean would be blocked. The upper portions of the soundwalls proposed for that area would interrupt partial ocean views from viewpoints at the lower elevations of the hillside neighborhoods to the north. As seen from U.S. 101, the proposed soundwalls would also limit much of the view to the community, including the commercial area along Lillie Avenue and the hillsides to the north.

Some degree of existing highway median planting is found throughout much of the project's length. At certain locations, particularly through the Padaro and the Montecito Assessment Units, the median planting includes mature and skyline trees and dense shrubs. Along other sections of the highway corridor, the median planting is somewhat sparse and at times has a weedy appearance. In most instances, the median planting, even if sparse, adds to the vegetative character of the corridor and reduces views of the opposing lanes of the highway.

With all alternatives, the project would change the appearance of the median. Each of the alternatives would replace most of the existing metal barrier with concrete barrier. Depending on the specific location and alternative, new median planting may be included. Except in a few very wide median areas, new median planting would be limited to small and medium-sized shrubs. In the wider median areas, medium-sized trees would be planted. Even with Alternatives 1 and 3, which retain some of the median planting, the combination of new concrete barrier and reduced planting would result in a more urban appearance. At some of the weedy locations, the proposed barrier and planting would create a more unified look. In areas where the existing median planting is larger and well-established, the new barrier and planting would affect the vegetated character and increase the visual scale of the highway.

### ***Comparison of Project Alternatives***

All of the project alternatives would reduce visual quality to some degree. The specific types of impacts depend on the visual value of the existing median planting and roadside landscaping and the effects the project would have on those elements relative to identified scenic resources seen in the area. At some locations, median planting provides more value; at other locations, roadside landscaping provides a greater visual benefit.

As seen from 15 of the 22 selected viewpoints, each of the three build alternatives would result in an equal amount of visual impact, though the impacts may be caused by different factors. Of the eight viewpoints not having equal impact ratings, Alternative 3 resulted in the greatest amount of visual impact for four viewpoints, and Alternative 2 resulted in the most visual impact for two viewpoints. Alternative 1 received the greatest amount of visual impact for one viewpoint. As seen from two viewpoints, Alternative 1 tied Alternate 3 as receiving the greatest amount of visual impact (see Table 2.21).

**Table 2.21 Visual Impact Ratings for Each Project Alternative**

Landscape Assessment Unit	Observer Viewpoint	Alternative 1 Impact Rating	Alternative 2 Impact Rating	Alternative 3 Impact Rating
Carpinteria City	1	-2.4	-2.7	-2.4
	2	+1.9	+2.1	+1.9
Carpinteria Salt Marsh	3	-2.6	-3.2	-2.6
	4	-2.5	-2.5	-2.5
Padaro	5	-2.5	-2.5	-2.6
	5A	-2.3	-2.2	-2.3
	6	-2.1	-2.1	-2.2
Summerland	7	-3.1	-3.1	-3.1
	8	-2.8	-2.8	-2.8
	9	-3.0	-3.0	-3.0
	10	-3.3	-3.3	-3.3
	11	-2.9	-2.9	-2.9
	12	-3.0	-3.0	-3.0
	13	-2.8	-2.8	-2.8
	14	-3.3	-3.3	-3.3
Montecito	15	-2.7	-2.7	-2.7
	16	-2.6	-2.6	-2.6
	17	-2.7	-2.7	-2.7
	18	-2.2	-2.2	-2.2
	19	-2.5	-2.5	-2.5
	20	-2.2	-2.2	-2.2
Santa Barbara	25	-2.0	-2.0	-2.1

**Comparison of Interchange Configurations**

Each of the five Cabrillo Boulevard interchange configurations proposed by the project would reduce visual quality (see Table 2.22). Based on the views from the five selected viewpoints surrounding the interchange, the visual analysis ratings showed that:

- Configuration F Modified causes the greatest visual impact at four of the five viewing locations.
- Configurations M and M Modified cause the greatest visual impact at three of the five viewing locations.
- Configuration J causes the greatest visual impact at two of the five viewing locations.
- Configuration F causes the greatest visual impact at one of the five viewing locations.

**Table 2.22 Visual Impact Ratings for Each Cabrillo Boulevard Interchange Configuration**

Observer Viewpoint	Configuration F Impact Rating	Configuration F modified Impact Rating	Configuration J Impact Rating	Configuration M Impact Rating	Configuration M Modified Impact Rating
21	-2.4	-2.6	-2.4	-2.5	-2.5
22	-2.6	-3.0	-2.6	-3.0	-3.0
23	+2.4	+2.4	-2.5	-2.5	-2.5
24	-2.5	-2.5	-2.5	-2.5	-2.5
24A	-2.5	-2.6	-2.4	-2.5	-2.5

*Observer Viewpoints 21 through 24A are within the Santa Barbara City Landscape Assessment Unit.*

### ***Visual Impacts during Project Construction***

Given the magnitude and length of the project, the funding strategy for Measure “A” dollars will require that the project be built in phases. The timing of the phased construction would depend on many factors, including available funding, where other nearby highway construction projects might be occurring, railroad involvement, utility relocation needs, and the coastal development permit process. Construction work on the project would be divided and carried out in separate contracts, along separate segments over a period of many years. Because construction of the entire project would not occur along the total length of the corridor all at one time, there is potential for work along the corridor to take up to 10 years.

Travelers going through the area on U.S. 101 would see construction occurring at some point along the way. But, at any given location within a community, visual impacts due to construction would be limited to a period of a few years.

Visual impacts would be related to construction vehicles and equipment and other elements at and near the project site. Temporary storage of construction materials would also be seen in the area. In addition, required safety devices such as orange cones, fencing and signage would affect views. Workers would be present and visible throughout the construction phases. Views of stopped and slowed vehicles on the highway would also increase due to construction-related traffic delays. On certain local roadways, visibility of vehicular traffic may increase.

Additional vehicles, equipment, materials, safety devices and workers would not be unexpected visual elements seen at a construction site. But because of the overall duration of work and the great number of affected viewers, substantial visual impacts would result from the proposed construction activities.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

The following measures would reduce the project's visual impact as seen from U.S. 101 and the surrounding communities. The intent of the following measures are to mitigate the urbanizing effect of the project caused mainly by the additional highway lanes, reduction of highway landscaping, and construction of soundwalls.

Even with implementation of the measures listed below, extensive visual impacts would remain, regardless of the project alternative. The following minimization and mitigation measures, combined with proposed project features such as replacement landscaping and aesthetic treatments to walls, would lessen the adverse visual change to the corridor. However, because of the alteration of scale, increase of hard surface, and loss of vegetative character, substantial adverse visual impacts would remain.

- All soundwalls would include aesthetic treatment such as texture and/or color to blend with the community character.
- To avoid blocking prime ocean views, it is recommended the following soundwalls not be built in Summerland:
  - Along northbound U.S. 101 from about 200 feet west of Greenwell Road to the Summerland Fire Station
  - Along northbound U.S. 101 from the Evans Avenue undercrossing to the Evans Avenue northbound on-ramp
  - Along northbound U.S. 101 from the beginning of the Evans Avenue northbound on-ramp to about 50 feet west of the beginning of the Evans Avenue northbound on-ramp

However, if these walls are approved as part of the public involvement process, the following measures would be implemented:

- To balance the need for noise attenuation and maintaining partial ocean views, clear panels should be included along the top portions (starting at 10 feet or less above the ground) of proposed soundwalls in Summerland at the following two locations:
  - Along northbound U.S. 101, from the beginning of the northbound Evans Avenue off-ramp to the Evans Avenue undercrossing
  - Along northbound U.S. 101, from about 50 feet west of the beginning of the Evans Avenue northbound on-ramp to about 500 feet west of the beginning of the Evans Avenue northbound on-ramp
- All proposed concrete barriers would include aesthetic treatment such as texture and/or color appropriate for the setting.
- Drainage structures visible from public areas would be designed to visually blend in with the setting as much as possible.
- Changes to existing bridge structures would reflect the visual character of the existing structures in terms of materials, color, style, and the existing human scale of the area.
- Open-style bridge railing would be used on all new or modified bridge structures.
- If new traffic management system elements such as radar, cameras, and other equipment are added to the project, all visible components would be located in the least obtrusive locations possible and colored to reduce visibility.
- Aesthetic treatments and design such as textured surfaces, architectural relief, and color application would be incorporated into all new bridge structures.
- Any new signage would be located so that it minimizes view blockage of the Pacific Ocean to the greatest extent feasible, considering the necessary function of the sign.
- All new lighting would minimize excess light and glare by careful placement of the poles, height and position of luminaires, and the use of shielded lenses where feasible.

- All areas where existing ramps and other paved surfaces are removed and where new landscaping is proposed would be made suitable for planting.
- Existing trees and shrubs would be preserved to the greatest extent possible.
- Existing healthy palm trees that would be affected by the project would be transplanted to other areas within the project where feasible.
- Planting would be included with all soundwalls to the greatest extent possible.
- Planting would be included with all retaining walls to the greatest extent possible.
- New landscaping would minimize view blockage of the Pacific Ocean.
- Plants with the potential of becoming skyline trees would be used as much as possible without blocking views of the Pacific Ocean.
- Existing Memorial Oaks would be preserved to the greatest extent feasible, respective of the selected project alternative.
- All new oak trees planted as part of the Memorial Oak tree mitigation measure would be propagated from the existing Memorial Oak trees.
- All new non-oak planting near the Memorial Oaks would be species that are easily differentiated from the Memorial Oaks, in terms of their visual character (form, size, color, and or texture).
- Concrete median barrier and new soundwalls in the immediate vicinity of the Memorial Oaks would include aesthetic treatment unique to the Memorial Oaks area.
- The landscaping plan would include historically successful plant species throughout the corridor.
- All aesthetic planting would use larger-container-size plant material. Trees would be planted, at minimum, from 15-gallon containers.
- All permanent stormwater treatment measures would be designed to visually fit with the ornamental or natural landscaped roadsides to the greatest extent feasible considering their intended function. Swales, ditches and basins should appear as natural as possible. Built structures would be architecturally treated, colored or hidden from view with planting.

- If required, new access denial fencing along the southbound on- and off-ramp at Los Patos Way and Hermosillo Drive would be ornamentally treated.

## 2.1.7 Cultural Resources

### ***Regulatory Setting***

“Cultural resources” as used in this document refers to all historical and archaeological resources, regardless of significance. Laws and regulations dealing with cultural resources include the following:

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, sets forth national policy and procedures regarding historic properties, defined as districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects included in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Section 106 of the act requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on such properties and to allow the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation the opportunity to comment on those undertakings, following regulations issued by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36 Code of Federal Regulations 800). On January 1, 2004, a Section 106 Programmatic Agreement between the Advisory Council, Federal Highway Administration, State Historic Preservation Officer, and Caltrans went into effect for Caltrans projects, both state and local, with Federal Highway Administration involvement. The Programmatic Agreement implements the Advisory Council’s regulations, 36 Code of Federal Regulations 800, streamlining the Section 106 process and delegating certain responsibilities to Caltrans. The Federal Highway Administration’s responsibilities under the Programmatic Agreement have been assigned to Caltrans as part of the Surface Transportation Project Delivery Pilot Program (23 Code of Federal Regulations 327) (July 1, 2007).

Historic properties may also be covered under Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act, which regulates the “use” of land from historic properties. (See Appendix B for specific information regarding Section 4(f))

Historical resources are considered under the California Environmental Quality Act, as well as California Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, which established the California Register of Historical Resources. Public Resources Code Section 5024 requires state agencies to identify and protect state-owned resources that meet National Register of Historic Places listing criteria. It further specifically requires Caltrans to inventory state-owned structures in its rights-of-way. Public Resources