4.2 AESTHETICS

Based on the findings of the IS, the proposed West Gateway project would result in less than significant impacts on aesthetic with the application of mitigation measures, especially with regard to light and glare. The analysis in the following sections focuses on the existing conditions in the study area, the analysis methodology, thresholds of significance, the potential impacts of the West Gateway project related to aesthetic, and mitigation as needed.

4.2.1 EXISTING SETTING RELATED TO AESTHETICS

The West Gateway project site is in the central part of Downtown Long Beach. As shown on Figure 4.2-1, the project site is generally bounded by Broadway the south, Chestnut Street to the east, 4th Street to the north and Maine Street to the west. Local access to parcels 9, 10 and 11 would be provided from Broadway and parcels 2 through 7 would be accessed from 3rd Street. Regional access to the project site would be provided by Interstate 710 (I-710) and Interstate 405 (I-405).

The project site consists of approximately 11.66 acres and has residential, commercial and office uses interspersed with vacant lots. The project site is in an area of the City that has no topography or significant relief. Long range views from West Gateway and north are interrupted by intervening high-rise buildings in the downtown area along Ocean Boulevard, in the Civic Center and other high-rise buildings in the area.

Figure 4.2-1 is an aerial photograph of the West Gateway area. Figure 4.2-2 provides a key for photographs of existing conditions at the site and views of the site from surrounding properties and provides views of the surrounding land uses. Figure 4.2-3 provides views of the project site.

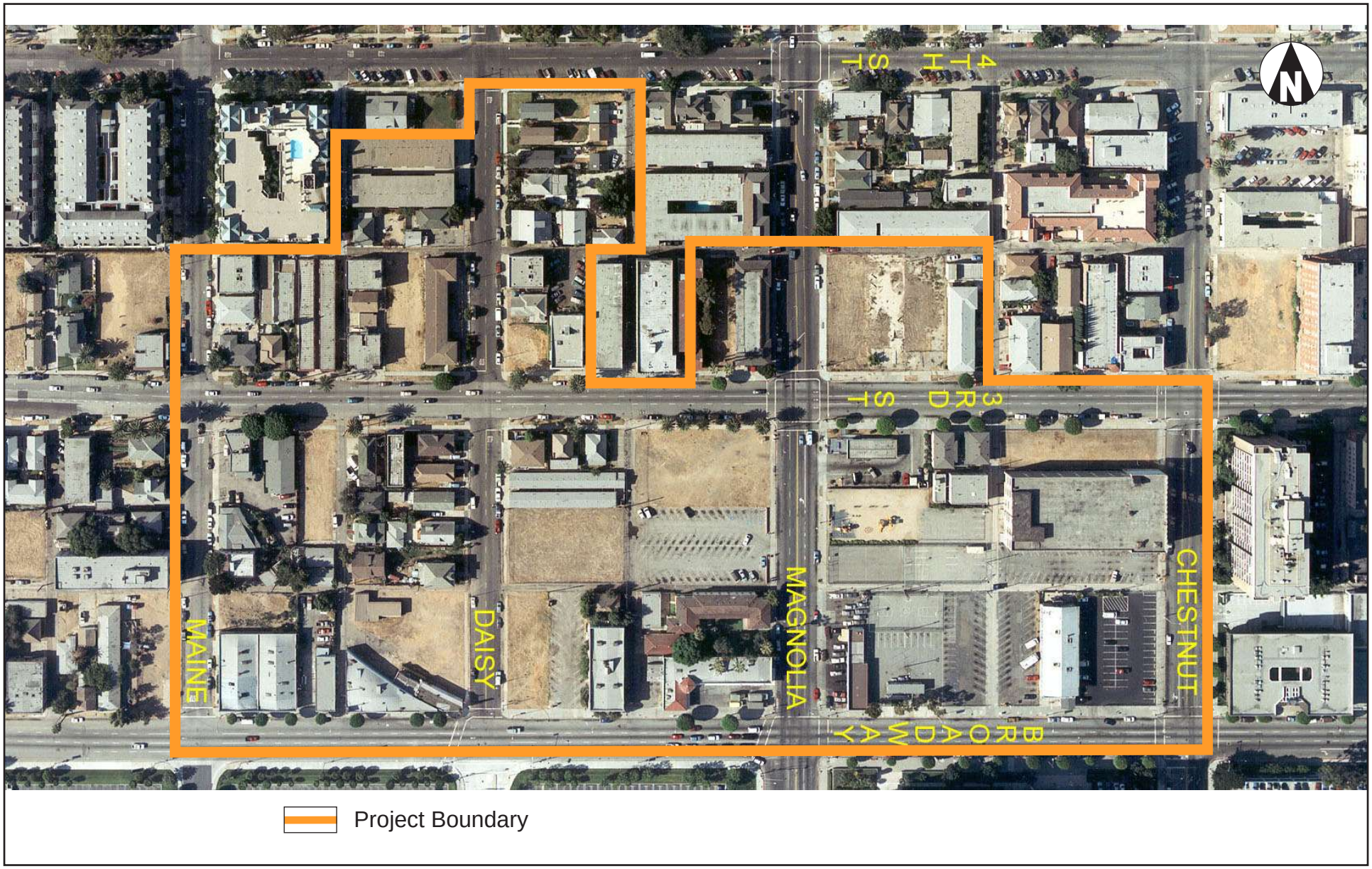
View 1 is taken from the northwest corner of Maine Avenue and 3rd Street looking southeast into Parcel 9. Several small businesses are located in the foreground. View 2 is taken from the corner of 3rd Street and Daisy and looks northeast to an existing vacant lot surrounded by single-family and low rise multi-family residential units in Parcel 5.

View 3 is taken from the mid-block Daisy Avenue between Broadway and 3rd Street looking northwest toward the Parcel 9. This view includes the exiting housing and the vacant lot on the east side of Parcel 9.

View 4 is taken from mid-block at Magnolia Avenue between 3rd Street and 4th Street looking east at the north side of parcel 7. A vacant lot and low rise apartment building are in the foreground. View 5 is taken from the same location but looks southeast over the vacant lot on Parcel 7 at the structures on the northwest corner of Parcel 11.

View 6 is taken from the corner of 3rd Street and Magnolia Avenue looking southwest at the temporary fire station on parcel 10. View 7 is taken from the corner of 3rd Street and Chestnut looking west on 3rd Street. A vacant lot on Parcel 11 is in the foreground with low rise apartments in the background on the western side of Parcel 11.

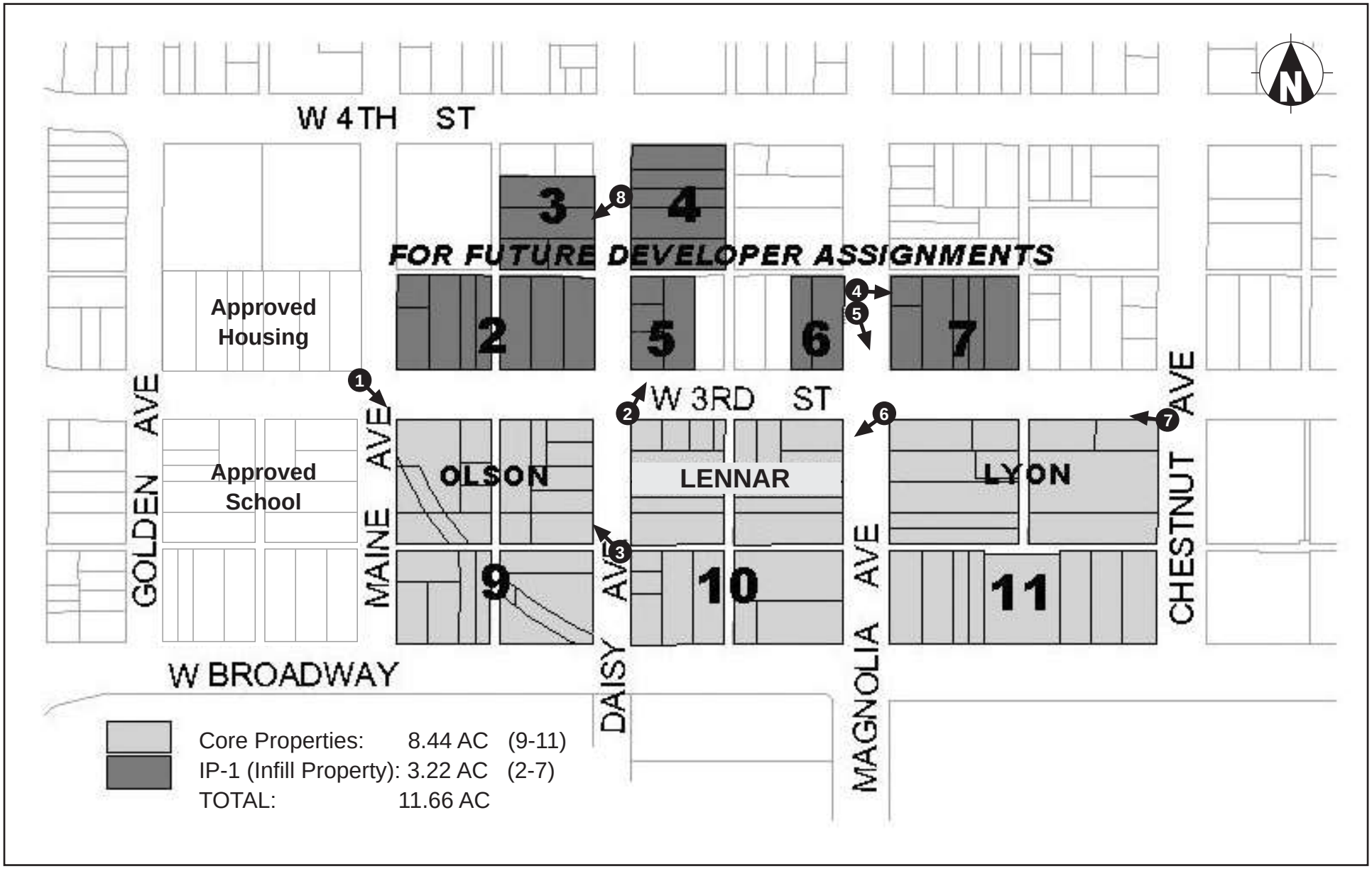
View 8 is taken from mid-block between 3rd and 4th Streets on Daisy Avenue looking southwest at existing apartments on Parcel 3.



Source: Long Beach Redevelopment Agency and Cotton Bridges/Associates (7/04).

Figure 4.2-1

Aerial Photo of West Gateway Project Area



Source: Long Beach Redevelopment Agency and Cotton Bridges/Associates (7/04).

Figure 4.2-2

Existing Conditions Photograph Key

View 1
Property at 3rd Street and Maine Street Looking Southeast

View 2
Looking Northeast from 3rd Street and Daisy

Figure 4.2-3
Existing Conditions Photographs

View 3
Looking Northwest from Midblock Daisy between Broadway and 3rd Street

View 4
Looking East from Midblock at Magnolia between 3rd Street and 4th Street

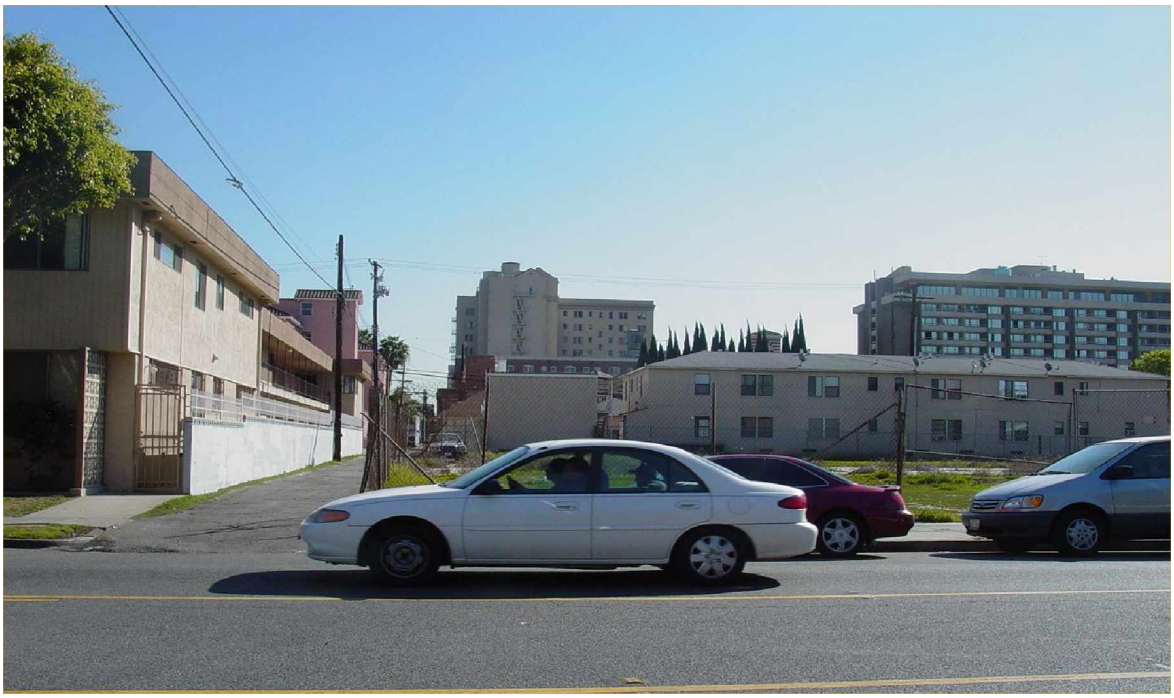
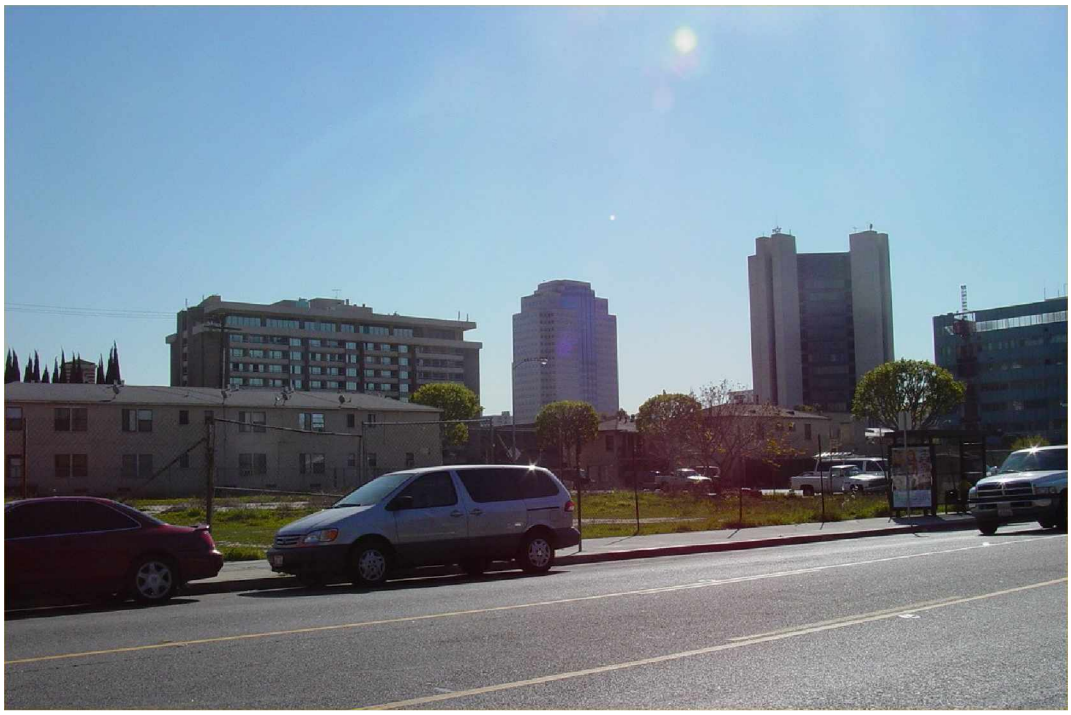


Figure 4.2-3
Existing Conditions Photographs

View 5
Looking Southeast from Midblock at Magnolia between 3rd Street and 4th Street



View 6
Looking Southwest from 3rd Street and Magnolia

Figure 4.2-3
Existing Conditions Photographs

View 7
Looking West from 3rd Street and Chestnut

Figure 4.2-3
Existing Conditions Photographs

View 8
Looking Southwest from Mid-block at Daisy Avenue between 3rd and 4th Streets

Figure 4.2-3
Existing Conditions Photographs

4.2.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE RELATED TO AESTHETICS

Per the CEQA Environmental Analysis Checklist, Implementation of the West Gateway project would result in a significant adverse impact on the environment related to aesthetics if it would:

- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

4.2.3 METHODOLOGY RELATED TO AESTHETICS

To determine the potential visual impacts related to the proposed project, sensitive viewers who would have views of the proposed project were identified. These sensitive viewers include residential and Park uses. Existing views of the project site from these sensitive land uses were compared with the views of the site anticipated with the proposed project. In addition, photographs of existing views were compared with elevation drawings of proposed project structures to compare the mass, scale and architectural style of proposed buildings.

4.2.4 IMPACTS RELATED TO AESTHETICS

4.2.4.1 Impacts on Views and Aesthetic Character

The proposed project is primarily a residential project with a moderately sized 15,000 square-foot commercial component. The design of structures for Parcels 9, 10 and 11 fit within the overall Downtown Long Beach design schemes. The commercial uses are integrated on the ground level on Parcel 11. Special design themes have been created for the streetscape plan in order to enhance the urban environment and to encourage pedestrian access and use. Parcels 2 through 7 are not expected to be developed at the same intensity of Parcels 9, 10 and 11 due to their size and therefore, are expected to be similar to the newer residential structures in the surrounding neighborhood.

For the West Gateway Project, clearly there is an aesthetic benefit to replacing vacant lots and deteriorated properties with new structures that have a cohesive design plan. On the other hand, there is also a matter of scale. Structures planned for parcels 9, 10 and 11 are larger in area and taller than anything currently in the West Gateway neighborhood. While the trend in the Downtown Long Beach area is toward high-rise multi-story buildings, which are predominately found along Ocean Boulevard, the West Gateway neighborhood comprises a mixture of single-family and two-story low-rise multi-family housing, small businesses, older multi-story office buildings and vacant lots. The trade-off is taller new multi-story buildings replacing a smaller scale mix of structures in various conditions of decline. Figures 2-6 through 2-9 show elevations of the buildings proposed for parcels 9, 10 and 11. Design treatments and landscaping have been incorporated into the project to reduce the visual impact of the project.

The scale and massing of the proposed project were designed to compliment the surrounding developments of the project area and to reinforce the existing urbanized setting. However, the

lower density, smaller scale character of the neighborhood would be permanently changed by the project. In addition, a draft streetscaping program has been designed for the development of parcels 9, 10 and 11 which is included as Appendix D of this EIR.

4.2.4.2 Impact on Views During Construction

During the period of construction, viewers of the construction sites would have views of construction equipment, demolition of existing buildings, grading operations of the site following demolition, stockpiles of building materials, construction of the buildings and parking lots and installation of the fencing. The impacts of these views are considered to be less than significant because the temporary time span of construction limited to approximately 24 months and the views will be typical of construction sites for multi-family residential projects.

4.2.4.3 Light and Glare Impacts

Light impacts usually occur from artificial lighting during nighttime hours from both stationary sources such as street lights and mobile sources such as automobile headlights. Residential land uses are considered to be light sensitive at nighttime because lighting spillover can interfere with sleep and privacy expectations.

Glare is typically associated with the reflection of sunlight or artificial lighting on reflective building surfaces. Daytime glare is common in urban areas, characterized by building surfaces that include highly reflective glass or metallic materials. Nighttime glare can result from the reflection of artificial light sources such as automobile headlights onto reflective building materials. As with light impacts, residences are considered a glare sensitive land use.

Project generated light and glare could have the potential to adversely impact day or nighttime lighting environment through the creation of new light or glare sources. Whether new project light and glare impacts exceed the threshold of significance is dependent upon the type of exterior building materials and the extent of exterior lighting spillover to streets and surrounding structures. These potential impacts can be reduced to a less that significant level through the incorporation of mitigation measures.

4.2.5 MITIGATION RELATED TO AESTHETIC RESOURCES

Implementation of the proposed project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. Therefore, the potential visual impacts of the proposed project would be less than significant. The proposed project will provide new sources of light and glare in the community. Mitigation Measures AE-1 and AE-2 address the light and glare impact of the proposed project.

AE-1 Prior to approval of any building permits, the developer shall submit plans and specifications for all exterior materials to both the Department of Planning and Building and the Department of Public Works for review and approval to ensure that no exterior building materials or window glass treatments would create uncomfortable light or glare impacts to any public or private roadways or surrounding property improvements. No glass shall be permitted to have a reflectivity greater than 15% without submittal of a

reflective glare study for the review and approval by the Director of Planning and Building and the Director of Public Works. No exterior building surface shall consist of any reflective metallic surfaces.

AE-2 Prior to the approval of any building permits, the applicant shall submit plans and specifications for all exterior lighting fixtures and light standards to both the Department of Planning and Building and the Department of Public Works for review and approval to ensure incorporation of glare control visors and shields. The submitted plans and specifications shall include a photometric design study verifying no significant lighting spillover to any public or private roadways or surrounding properties will occur. All public street lighting will be directed toward the street and in conformance with the streetscaping plans for the West Gateway area.

4.2.6 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION RELATED TO AESTHETICS

The potential impacts of the proposed West Gateway project on aesthetics would be below a level of significance and potential light and glare impacts will be below a level of significance with the incorporation of Mitigation Measures AE-1 and AE-2.