3.1 Aesthetics

The visual or aesthetic environment in the Caltrain corridor is described to establish the baseline against which to compare changes resulting from construction of project facilities and the alteration of existing structures. This discussion focuses on representative locations along the railroad corridor, including existing stations, railroad overpasses, locations of the proposed traction power facilities, and other areas where the Proposed Project would physically change above-ground features, where the visual appearance of the area and views experienced by area residents and users could be affected.

3.1.1 Existing Conditions

3.1.1.1 Regulatory Setting

Federal

There are no federal laws, regulations, or standards related to aesthetics that are applicable to the Proposed Project.

State

While there are no state laws, regulations, or standards related to aesthetics that are applicable to the Proposed Project, there are state requirements for electrical safety that would influence project vegetation maintenance, resulting in aesthetic changes.

California Public Utilities Commission

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has safety and security regulatory authority over all transit agencies in California.

Rules established by the CPUC are called General Orders (GOs). The following GOs are relevant to vegetation clearance along the Caltrain right-of-way (ROW).

- **GO 95:** Overhead Electric Line Construction. This order concerns electrical clearances relative to overhead lines, including vegetation clearances. However, this order does not provide any specific guidance for 25 kVA systems proposed for use by the Proposed Project.
- **GO 118-A:** Construction, Reconstruction and Maintenance of Walkways, and Control of Vegetation adjacent to Railroad Tracks. This order concerns safe access and vegetation control relative to physical safe passage. The JPB presently maintains the ROW to provide clearances, including vegetation, consistent with this GO.

The CPUC initiated new rule-making (13-03-009) in 2013 pursuant to Petition 12-10-011 concerning a new GO governing safety standards for the use of 25 kVA electrical lines to power high speed trains. The new rule is intended to establish uniform safety requirements governing the design, construction, operation and maintenance of 25 kVA OCS, which would be constructed for the operation of high-speed trains in California. CPUC meetings on this GO have resulted in discussions about the GO being specific to a fully grade-separated, dedicated high-speed rail system. The draft GO contains vegetation clearance requirements among other requirements. Because the OCS to be

constructed for the Proposed Project would be used in the future by both Caltrain and high-speed rail, some of the issues addressed in the draft GO may apply to the Proposed Project OCS. It also appears additional CPUC rule-making proceedings will be needed for the Proposed Project because it would not be a fully grade-separated, shared system.

As the draft GO proceeds through rule-making, JPB will coordinate with CPUC concerning the applicability of the GO to the Proposed Project and will apply any requirements in the adopted order (as well as additional requirements) to be determined during the final design of the Proposed Project.

Local

Pursuant to the San Mateo County Transit District's (SamTrans') enabling legislation (Public Utilities Code Section 103200 et seq.) and the 1991 Interstate Commerce Commission's approval of the JPB acquisition of the Caltrain line, JPB activities within the Caltrain ROW are exempt from local building and zoning codes and other land use ordinances. Nonetheless, the JPB will cooperate with local government agencies in performing improvements within its ROW and protecting visual quality. Consequently, the description of local aesthetic regulations is provided for contextual purposes only.

Discussion of heritage tree and other tree ordinances is provided in Appendix F, *Tree Inventory and Canopy Assessment* and is not repeated here. The summary below only describes key local regulations and policies; there are likely additional references concerning visual character and aesthetics not mentioned for each city herein. The purpose of the summary below is not to provide a comprehensive assessment of each jurisdiction's policies concerning aesthetics but rather to note the importance of visual character and aesthetics in each jurisdiction.

City and County of San Francisco

Two policies within the Urban Design Element of the *San Francisco General Plan* reference aesthetic resources are relevant to the Proposed Project.

> **Policy 2.4:** Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value, and promote the preservation of other buildings and features that provide continuity with past development.
>
> **Policy 2.7:** Recognize and protect outstanding and unique areas that contribute in an extraordinary degree to San Francisco's visual form and character.

In addition, San Francisco Municipal Code Article 10: Preservation of Historical, Architectural, and Aesthetic Landmarks protects structures, sites, and areas of special historical, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value; prohibits unnecessary destruction or impairment of these structures and site; and outlines the procedure for application for proposed work on a landmark site.

County of San Mateo

The *San Mateo County General Plan* includes a Visual Quality Element (Chapter 4), which describes several of the planning considerations relative to the project corridor:

> **San Bruno Mountain General Plan Amendment (1976):** The San Bruno Mountain General Plan Amendment contains policies to guide the formation of specific plans for development of the area. Generally, the policies seek to preserve the area's open space character, retain the visual integrity of the main ridgeline of San Bruno Mountain, leave the Northeast Ridge and the Saddle area undisturbed except for planned development areas, protect the view of the northeast ridge from

Brisbane by keeping a significant amount of the area in open space and by blending development with the natural topography of the site, and establish criteria to guide the design of both cultivated landscaping and a system of street furniture.

***North Fair Oaks Community Plan* (1979):** The *North Fair Oaks Community Plan* contains a policy that seeks to improve the appearance of commercial and industrial areas through use of the Design Review Zoning District.

City of Brisbane

Brisbane Municipal Code, Title 17, Chapter 17.16.110, Visual Impact Analysis, requires that all projects in the Southwest Bayshore Commercial District submit a visual impact analysis in accordance with guidelines approved by the planning commission to address the following design issues: relationship to steep slopes; public view corridors; view of San Francisco Bay and San Bruno Mountain; material and lighting, especially as pertains to light and glare; and treatment of roofs and the screening of mechanical equipment.

City of South San Francisco

South San Francisco Municipal Code, Title 2, Chapter 2.56 seeks to preserve structures, sites, and areas of special historical, architectural, or aesthetic interest; outlines the criteria for historic designation; requires a certificate of alteration for the alteration, construction, relocation, or demolition of a designated historic resource; requires design review and a public hearing for the certificate of alteration; and prohibits the demolition of potential historic resources without an proper review of a demolition permit application.

City of San Bruno

The following policy within the Environmental Resources and Conservation Element of the city's General Plan references aesthetic resources that are relevant to the Proposed Project:

Policy ERC-2: Preserve as open space those portions of property which have significant value to the public as scenic resources, aesthetic, or recreation purposes.

The following policy within the Transportation Element of the city's General Plan references aesthetic resources that are relevant to the Proposed Project:

Policy T-C: Preserve and enhance the unique natural features that constitute San Bruno's scenic roadways, as well as the visual quality of major gateways to the City.

City of Millbrae

The following policy within the Land Use Element of the city's General Plan references visual character:

LUIP-5: Commercial and Industrial Development Guidelines and Review Process. Establish and enforce Commercial and Industrial Development Guidelines to protect and enhance the suburban character and high quality of Millbrae's neighborhoods and commercial districts. This would include the following:

a. Address site and building design issues with respect to compatibility with adjacent and nearby uses, including intensity; access and internal circulation; view protection; visual characteristics (architectural style, scale, mass, bulk, color, materials, landscaping and visual screening of equipment); and nuisances and hazards (noise, odors, fire, vibrations, smoke, waste discharge, and nighttime lighting).

City of Burlingame

The following policy within the Conservation Element of the city's General Plan references aesthetic resources that are relevant to the Proposed Project:

> **Policy C(C):** To restore, where found feasible, natural features of vegetative cover, streams, marsh and bay where areas have been unduly disturbed by man.

The following policy within the Open Space Element of the city's General Plan references aesthetic resources that are relevant to the Proposed Project:

> **Policy OS(C)**: Preserve the important vistas, such as the hillside leading to the Skyline Ridge as seen from the Bay plain, and the Bay as seen from the hillside.

City of San Mateo

The Circulation Element of the city's General Plan discusses the electrification of Caltrain and recommends the use of headspans to lighten overhead elements in sensitive areas to reduce the visual clutter caused by the overhead contact system of poles and wires. Further, the Circulation element suggests that the City coordinate with Caltrain to ensure the use of aesthetic treatments of overhead poles and wires throughout San Mateo.

In addition, Title XXVII, Chapter 27.66, Historic Preservation, seeks to designate, preserve, protect, enhance, and perpetuate the city's historic structures and the downtown historic district; seeks to enhance the visual and aesthetic character, diversity, and interest of the city; establishes requirements to insure the preservation and maintenance of the city's historic structures and the downtown historic district; prohibits the issuance of a building permit for exterior building modification or alteration until the site plan and Architectural Review have been approved; and prohibits demolition without approval by the City Council and/or a Historic Building Demolition Permit.

City of Belmont

Belmont Municipal Code, Chapter 7, Article VII, Structures of Historic or Aesthetic Value, seeks to preserve, enhance, and perpetuate for the benefit of the general public those buildings, structures, and areas having historical or aesthetic interest or value which contribute to community aesthetics and identity, and to prescribe the procedure for altering, relocating, and demolishing those structures so classified.

City of San Carlos

The following goal within the Circulation and Scenic Highways Element of the city's General Plan references aesthetic resources that are relevant to the Proposed Project:

> **Goal CSH-2:** To provide a safe, efficient and aesthetically pleasing circulation network for various transportation modes in addition to the automobile.

City of Redwood City

The city's Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 40 of the Municipal Code) provides for the identification, protection, and enhancement of buildings, objects, sites, and areas within the city that reflect special elements of the city's historic, architectural, cultural, aesthetic, and other heritage. The chapter mandates the appointment of a Historic Resources Advisory Committee; outlines the historic designation criteria and procedures; prohibits the removal, demolition, alteration, or

relocation of any designated historic landmark without written approval of the city; and outlines the removal permit procedures and criteria and the procedure for appeals.

Town of Atherton

The following policies within the Circulation Element of the town's General Plan references aesthetic resources that are relevant to the Proposed Project:

> **Policy 2.421:** All streets and highways in the Town of Atherton shall be preserved as scenic routes.

Atherton Municipal Code, Title 8, Chapter 8.14, Historical Artifacts, seeks to protect and enhance artifacts that reflect special aspects of the town's historical, architectural, cultural or aesthetic heritage; grants review authority; outlines the procedures for inventory and designation of historical artifacts; prohibits alterations and demolition without a city permit; requires an artifact protection plan prior to the issuance of a grading, demolition, or building permit; and outlines penalties and remedies for violating the chapter by altering or demolishing a historical artifact without a permit.

City of Menlo Park

The following goal in the Land Use Element of the city's General Plan references aesthetic resources that are relevant to the Proposed Project:

> **Goal 1.210:** Preserve the Town's character as a scenic, rural, thickly wooded residential area with abundant open space.

Santa Clara County

The following policies within the Resource Conservation Element of the county's General Plan reference aesthetic resources that are relevant to the Proposed Project:

> **Policy C-RC 27:** Habitat types and biodiversity within Santa Clara County and the region should be maintained and enhanced for their ecological, functional, aesthetic, and recreational importance.
>
> **Policy C-RC 57:** Scenic and aesthetic qualities of both the natural and built environment should be preserved and enhanced for their importance to the overall quality of life for Santa Clara County.
>
> **Policy C-RC 61:** Public and private development and infrastructure located in areas of special scenic significance should not create major, lasting adverse visual impacts.
>
> **Policy C-RC 62:** Urban parks and open spaces, civic places, and public commons areas should be designed, developed and maintained such that the aesthetic qualities of urban settings are preserved and urban livability is enhanced. Natural resource features and functions within the urban environmental should also be enhanced.

In addition, the following policies within the Parks and Recreation Element reference relevant aesthetic resources:

> **Policy C-PR 34:** Local and state roads and highways traversing Santa Clara County's scenic rural and urban areas should be designated and protected as local or state scenic highways.
>
> **Policy C-PR 37:** The natural scenery along many of Santa Clara County's highways should be protected from land uses and other activities which would diminish its aesthetic beauty.
>
> **Policy C-PR 45:** Activities along scenic highways that are of a substantially unsightly nature, such as equipment storage or maintenance, fuel tanks, refuse storage or processing and service yards should be screened from view.

City of Palo Alto

The following policies in the Land Use Element of the city's General Plan reference aesthetic resources that are relevant to the Proposed Project:

> **Policy L-69:** Preserve the scenic qualities of Palo Alto roads and trails for motorists, cyclists, pedestrians, and equestrians.

> **Policy L-79:** Design public infrastructure, including paving, signs, utility structures, parking garages and parking lots to meet high quality urban design standards and look for opportunities to use art and artists in the design of public infrastructure. Remove or mitigate elements of existing infrastructure that are unsightly or visually disruptive.

The following goal within the Natural Environment Element of the City's General Plan references aesthetic resources that are relevant to the Proposed Project:

> **Goal N-3:** A thriving "urban forest" that provides ecological, economic, and aesthetic benefits for Palo Alto.

City of Mountain View

Chapter 25, Article 1, Neighborhood Preservation, in the city's Municipal Code establishes regulations to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the public, to stabilize and protect the aesthetic appearances as well as the quality and character of neighborhoods, residential districts, commercial districts and industrial districts, and to prevent the impairment of property values.

City of Sunnyvale

The following goal within the Land Use and Transportation Element of the city's General Plan references aesthetic resources that are relevant to the Proposed Project:

> **Goal LT-2:** Attractive Community—Preserve and enhance an attractive community, with a positive image and sense of place that consists of distinctive neighborhoods, pockets of interest and human-scale development.

City of Santa Clara

The following policy within Chapter 5 of the city's General Plan references aesthetic resources that are relevant to the Proposed Project:

> **Policy 5.3.1-P27:** Encourage screening of above-ground utility equipment to minimize visual impacts.

City of San Jose

The following policy within the Chapter 3, Environmental Leadership, of the city's General Plan references aesthetic resources that are relevant to the Proposed Project:

> **Policy IN-1.9:** Design new public and private utility facilities to be safe, aesthetically pleasing, compatible with adjacent uses, and consistent with the Envision General Plan goals and policies for fiscal sustainability, environmental leadership, an innovative economy, and quality neighborhoods.

In addition, General Plan Chapter 4, Quality of Life, contains the following references to aesthetic resources:

> **Policy CD-4.11:** Accomplish sound attenuation for development along City streets through the use of setbacks and building design rather that sound attenuation walls. When sound attenuation walls are

located adjacent to expressways or freeways, or railroad lines, landscaping, public art, and/or an aesthetically pleasing and visually interesting design should be used to minimize visual impacts.

Policy CD-4.12: Structures other than buildings, and including structures on top of buildings, such as solar panels, other energy-saving or generating devices, roof landscaping, steeples, bell towers, and wireless communication antennae, where substantial height is intrinsic to the function of the structures, consider heights above those established for structures in the area. Locate such structures to minimize public visibility and avoid significant adverse effects on adjacent properties. Incorporate visual amenities, such as landscaping, to offset potential adverse visual impacts.

Policy CD-6.8: Recognize Downtown as the hub of the County's transportation system and design buildings and public spaces to connect and maximize use of all types of transit. Design Downtown pedestrian and transit facilities to the highest quality standards to enhance the aesthetic environment and to promote walking, bicycling, and transit use. Design buildings to enhance the pedestrian environmental by creating visual interest, fostering active uses, and avoiding prominence of vehicular parking at the street level.

Policy CD-9.1: Ensure that development within the designated Rural Scenic Corridors is designed to preserve and enhance attractive natural and man-mad vistas.

Policy CD-9.2: Preserve the natural character of Rural Scenic Corridors by incorporating mature strands of trees, rock outcroppings, streams, lakes and reservoirs and other such natural features into project designs.

Policy CD-9.3: Ensure that development along designated Rural Scenic Corridors preserves significant views of the Valley and mountains, especially in, or adjacent to, Coyote Valley, the Diablo Range, the Silver Creek Hills, the Santa Teresa Ridge and the Santa Cruz Mountains.

3.1.1.2 Environmental Setting

Existing transportation facilities, including railroad tracks, ancillary structures, area freeways, and roadways, are the dominant visual elements along the existing Caltrain corridor itself, but the adjacent areas can vary from highly urbanized areas in San Francisco to single-family residential areas in Atherton to open space at the Brisbane Lagoon and Communications Hill in San Jose to commercial and industrial areas in South San Francisco and near Mineta San Jose International Airport.

Towards the northern end of the Caltrain route, adjacent uses are primarily industrial and urban in character, and there is little natural landscaping. Moving southward down the Peninsula, there is a greater variety of adjacent land uses, including residential and natural landscaping; however, rail facilities continue to dominate the visual environment of the corridor itself. Several schools (such as Belle Air Elementary School in San Bruno, Burlingame High School, Burlingame Montessori, Redwood High School, and Garfield Elementary School in Menlo Park) and parks (such as Marina Vista and Village Parks in Millbrae, Trinta Park in San Mateo, and Holbrook Palmer Park in Menlo Park) abut or are located across the street from the ROW at various locations along the project corridor. The visual landscape in the vicinity of the proposed traction power substations (TPSs), switching station (SWS), and paralleling stations (PSs), and at train stations and at-grade crossings is described further below.

There are few designated scenic vistas of the Caltrain corridor itself. There are elevated locations in the project area and vicinity that provide long-range views, including along elevated roadways, bridges, outdoor spaces, buildings located on hillsides, and multi-level buildings on flatter lands that are closer to the San Francisco Bay. Views from roadways or bridge crossings tend to be fleeting, unlike views from fixed locations such as buildings. Most vistas immediately available from the

project corridor are from bridge crossings over the corridor, such as at Tunnel Drive in Brisbane, North Mathilda Avenue in Sunnyvale, or Curtner Avenue in San Jose.

Views in the project area are characteristic of the Bay Area and encompass views of the Santa Cruz Mountains, San Bruno Mountain, the bay, and local development. They range from being more scenic to more developed in nature and can have low to moderately high visual quality. Vistas that are low in visual quality tend to be more industrialized and have disjunctive land uses, such as abrupt transitions between residential and industrial areas that contain a great deal of utilities and infrastructure. These vistas offer limited opportunities to see the nearby mountains or bay, such as at some locations between Millbrae and San Francisco where there is a transition between suburbanized to more urban land uses. Vistas that are moderately high in visual quality tend to include areas where development is unified and there are more subtle transitions between residential and commercial land uses. In areas such as Burlingame and San Mateo, natural features like the mountains or bay add to the quality of available views. Views of the project corridor are often blocked by vegetation, buildings, and infrastructure. However, when the project corridor is visible, Caltrain features are often undistinguishable as independent visual elements due to the amount of infrastructure in the highly developed area. Viewers at locations crossing the project corridor (bridges) or immediately adjacent to the corridor (multi-level buildings) are familiar with the existing visual conditions and the presence of infrastructure associated with the rail corridor within those vistas. Views of the project corridor are more prevalent in areas with less urban density, such as in southern San Jose.

Table 3.1-1 identifies officially designated state, county, or local scenic routes within 0.25 mile of project features. One-quarter of a mile falls within the foreground of views available from any given point. Because the area is highly developed, views of the project corridor from these scenic routes would not be present due to intervening vegetation, buildings, and infrastructure except at the Cesar Chavez Street crossing of the Caltrain ROW, which is in an industrial setting. Caltrain features viewed from more than 0.25 mile are undistinguishable as independent visual features due to the amount of infrastructure currently associated with existing visual conditions.

Table 3.1-1. Scenic Routes within 0.25 Mile of Project Features

Designated Scenic Route	Nearest Project Features	Visibility of Project Feature from Scenic Route
I-280 in San Francisco	Caltrain ROW, PS1	Not visible because freeway is elevated over railway.
49-Mile Scenic Drive in San Francisco	Caltrain ROW	Where the Scenic Drive is located on I-280, no visibility due to freeway elevation. Caltrain ROW visible at crossing of Cesar Chavez Street.
SR 82/El Camino Real in San Mateo County (Easton Drive to Crystal Springs Road)	Caltrain ROW, PS3	Not visible from El Camino Real because of intervening development.

Visual setting and sensitive viewers for the traction power facilities (TPSs, SWS, and PSs) are discussed below. Representative photographs of the existing sites where project features would be located accompany the discussion. These locations are included on Figure 3.1-1, and the photographs are presented in Figure 3.1-2. Additionally, other viewer groups along the corridor and at existing at-grade crossings are also discussed.

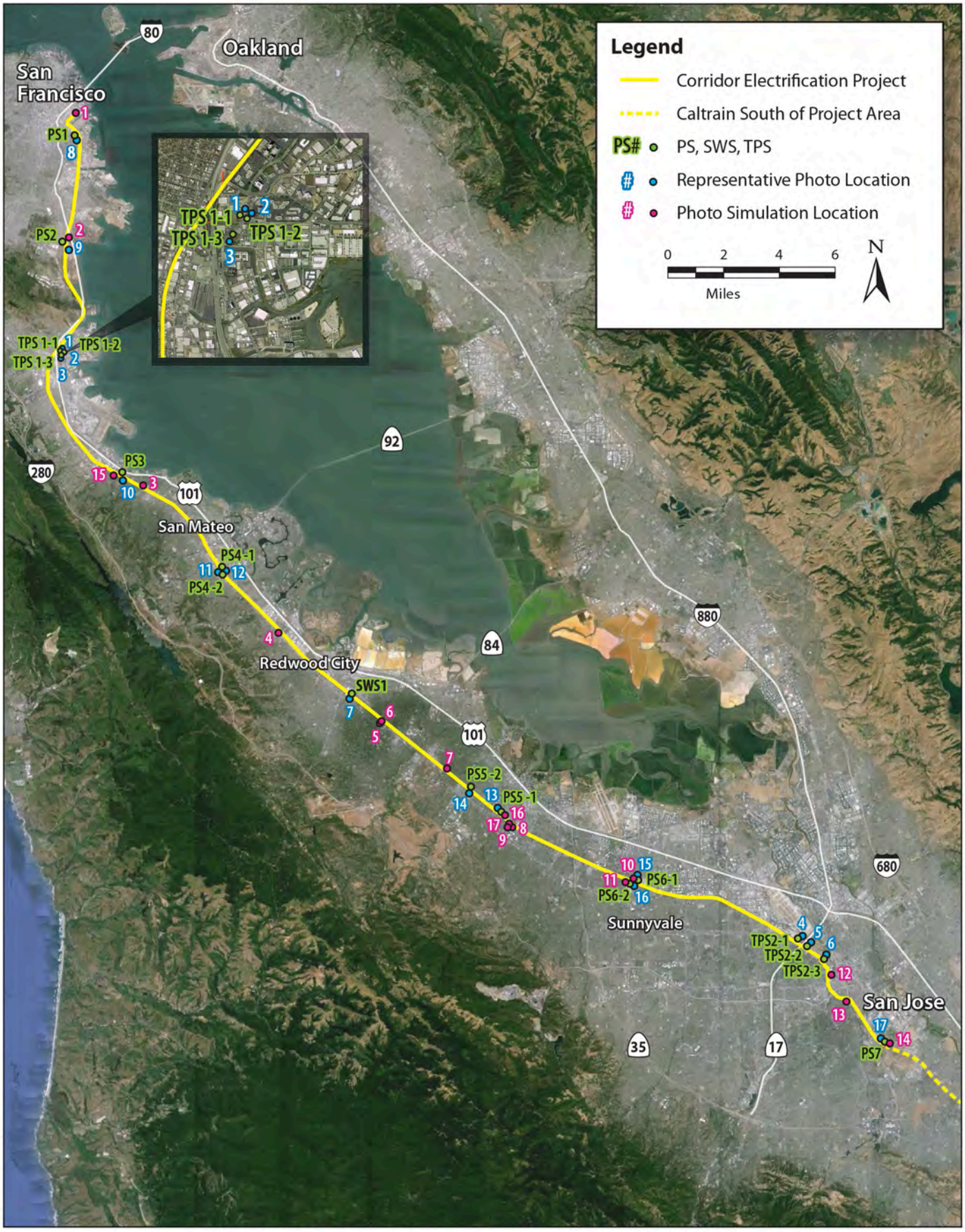


Figure 3.1-1
Representative Photo and Photo Simulation Locations
Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project

Photo 1, TPS1 Option 1. Looking southwest along Gateway Boulevard east of TPS1 Option 1.

Photo 2, TPS1 Option 2. Looking east from the Flyers gas station, Starbucks, and Wendy's convenience complex, off of Gateway Boulevard, toward TPS1 Option 2.

Figure 3.1-2
Representative Photos
Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project

Photo 3, TPS1 Option 3. Looking northeast from the Hotel Focus SFO parking lot, off of Gateway Boulevard and Mitchell Avenue, toward TPS1 Option 3.

Photo 4, TPS2 Option 1. Looking southwest from Newhall Drive toward the Caltrain corridor and TPS2 Option 1.

Figure 3.1-2
Representative Photos
Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project

Photo 5, TPS2 Option 2. Looking southwest from Stockton Avenue, near the warehouse facility that is surrounded by privacy fencing, toward TPS2 Option 2.

Photo 6, TPS2 Option 3. Looking southwest from the access road between the Caltrain Centralized Equipment Maintenance and Operations Facility and Pitco Foods toward TPS2 Option 3.

Figure 3.1-2
Representative Photos
Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project

Photo 7, SWS1. Looking north from Westmoreland Avenue toward the Caltrain corridor and SWS1.

Photo 8, PS1. Looking north along Pennsylvania Street from Mariposa Street west of the I-280 overpass and Caltrain corridor and southwest of PS1.

Figure 3.1-2
Representative Photos
Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project

Photo 9, PS2. Looking north along Tunnel Avenue toward the Caltrain corridor and PS2.

Photo 10, PS3. Looking northwest from the corner of California Drive and Broadway toward the Caltrain corridor and PS3.

Figure 3.1-2
Representative Photos
Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project

Photo 11, PS4 Option 1. Looking southeast from behind the Borders Bookstore and Ana Furniture toward the Caltrain corridor and PS4 Option 1.

Photo 12, PS4 Option 2. Looking northeast from behind the Hillsdale Caltrain parking lot, on the corner of El Camino Real and West Hillsdale Boulevard, toward PS4 Option 2.

Figure 3.1-2
Representative Photos
Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project

Photo 13, PS5 Option 1. Looking southeast from Alma Street toward the Caltrain corridor and PS5 Option 1.

Photo 14, PS5 Option 2. Looking north from Park Boulevard toward the Caltrain corridor and PS5 Option 2.

Figure 3.1-2
Representative Photos
Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project

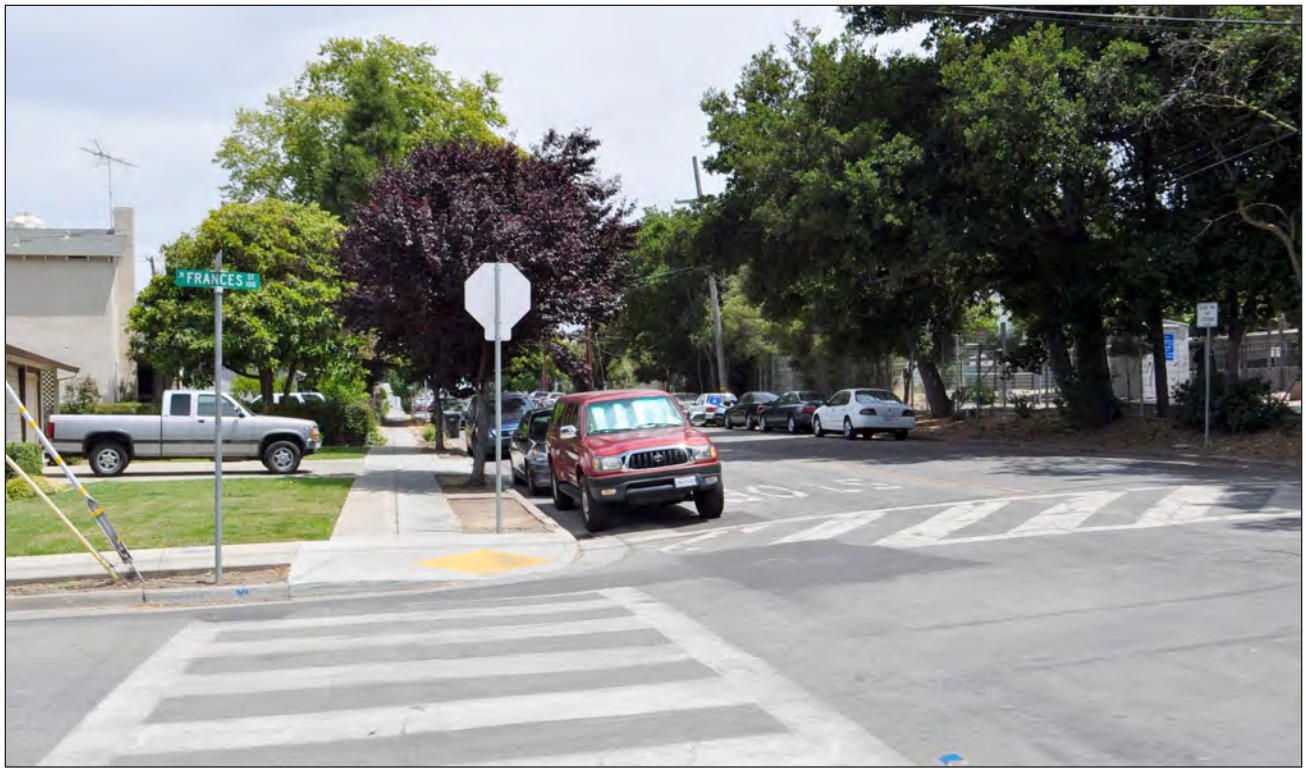


Photo 15, PS6 Option 1. Looking east from North Francis Street and West Hendy Avenue toward the Caltrain corridor and PS6 Option 1.

Photo 16, PS6 Option 2. Looking northwest from the Sunnyvale Caltrain station plaza toward the rail corridor and PS6 Option 2.

Figure 3.1-2
Representative Photos
Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project

Photo 17, PS7. Looking southeast from Kurte Park, south of Communications Hill Boulevard, toward PS7.

Figure 3.1-2
Representative Photos
Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project

Traction Power Substations

Construction of two TPSs is proposed under the Proposed Project.

TPS1, South San Francisco

There are three potential locations for TPS1, all within close proximity to one another in a highly industrialized area along Gateway Boulevard in South San Francisco, approximately 1.5 miles northwest of San Francisco International Airport. The industrial area is characterized by warehouse facilities, office buildings, hotels, and a gas station and fast-food restaurant. Views to the TPS1 Option 1 site are partially screened by dense hedges along Gateway Boulevard but views from the roadway and adjacent warehouses are available (see Figure 3.1-2, Photo 1). The Option 2 site is visible from the gas station and fast-food restaurant, adjacent office buildings, and local roadways (see Figure 3.1-2, Photo 2). The Option 3 location is mostly visible from adjacent hotels, warehouses, and local roadways (see Figure 3.1-2, Photo 3).

TPS2, San Jose

There are three potential locations for TPS2, all of which are in commercial/industrial settings. The sites for TPS2 Options 1 and 2 are within close proximity to one another in a commercial and industrialized area southwest of Coleman Avenue in San Jose, less than 0.5 mile southwest of Mineta San Jose International Airport. The railroad corridor is located directly southwest of the sites. The area is characterized by a large retail store, warehouse facilities, residences, and a gas station and fast-food restaurant. Views to the TPS Option 1 site are largely screened by the existing retail building, other commercial buildings, and the barrier surrounding an existing substation bordering Newhall Street (see Figure 3.1-2, Photo 4). The TPS2 Option 2 site is located behind an existing warehouse facility that is surrounded by privacy fencing (see Figure 3.1-2, Photo 5). The site is adjacent to another warehouse, which further limits views of the site. The TPS Option 3 site is located within in the southeast corner of the Caltrain Centralized Equipment Maintenance and Operations Facility (CEMOF), adjacent to the loading dock access road for a food distribution company, which is immediately northwest of the warehouse (see Figure 3.1-2, Photo 6). Employees of Caltrain site and the food distributor have views of the site.

Switching Station

SWS1 would be located southwest of and behind a warehouse/business park in North Fair Oaks and directly north of the railroad corridor. The area contains a mix of warehouse and business park facilities bordered by residential land uses. Views would not be available from the warehouse/business park because SWS1 would be located behind the building. Residents along Pacific Avenue would not have views of the site due to privacy fencing along the roadway, but residents along Westmoreland Avenue, south of the corridor, would have views across the tracks toward the site through metal mesh fencing securing the corridor (see Figure 3.1-2, Photo 7).

Paralleling Stations

Existing views at the proposed paralleling stations are shown in Figure 3.1-2, photos 8 through 17.

PS1: San Francisco

PS1 would be located in San Francisco, on the northeast corner of Mariposa Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. I-280 travels over the railroad corridor, immediately east of the proposed PS1 site. The site

is at a slightly lower elevation than the area surrounding it. The visual character of the site consists of piers and the deck of I-280; the rail corridor; a mix of industrial, commercial, and residential land uses; and infrastructure such as paved roadways and sidewalks, chain link fencing, utility lines, and street lights (see Figure 3.1-2, Photo 8). Nearby residences, businesses and roads provide views toward the PS1 location.

PS2: Bayshore Station

PS2 would be located north of Bayshore Station and south of the railroad tunnel. The existing visual elements of the Bayshore Station area primarily consist of the railroad corridor and the industrial and urban land uses surrounding it. Tunnel Avenue parallels the railroad corridor to the east and is lined with residential and industrial land uses (see Figure 3.1-2, Photo 9). The old office building of the former Schlage Lock Factory (now vacant) and commercial and residential land uses are located northwest of the tunnel, along Blanken Avenue. The area to the west of the tracks is primarily vacant. The station platform is located south of the proposed PS2 location, between Recycle Road and Beatty Avenue. Residents and business along Tunnel and Blanken Avenues, rail users at Bayshore Station, and roadway users and recreationists using local roadways currently have views of the railroad right-of-way. The area surrounding the station is part of a large scale development plan known as the Visitacion Valley Transit Oriented Development Project.

PS3: Burlingame

PS3 would be located in Burlingame, along California Drive near Broadway, west of the railroad corridor and north of a parking lot (see Figure 3.1-2, Photo 10). The existing visual elements of the proposed PS3 area consist of industrial and commercial land uses to the east and suburban residential and commercial land uses to the west of the corridor. Nearby residents, businesses, and roadway users and recreationists using local roadways have views toward the PS3 location.

PS4: Hillsdale Station

PS4 Option 1 would be located northwest of the Hillsdale Station, west of the railroad corridor and within a parking lot behind retail stores (see Figure 3.1-2, Photo 11). PS4 Option 2 would be located south of the Hillsdale Station and railroad corridor and within the station's parking lot (see Figure 3.1-2, Photo 12). The existing visual elements of the PS4 area consist of commercial land uses, with some multi-family residential uses, to the west and south of the corridor. Suburban residential land uses are located east of the corridor. The railroad corridor is raised at this location so that residents to the east cannot see the PS4 option locations. Nearby multi-family residents, businesses, rail passengers, and motorists in the parking lot have views toward the Option 1 site. Nearby businesses, rail passengers, and roadway users on local roadways have views toward the Option 2 site.

PS5: Palo Alto

The PS5 Option 1 site is located in Palo Alto, east of the railroad corridor, across from Green Meadow Way's intersection with Alma Street. The existing visual elements of the Option 1 site consist of suburban land uses and a predominantly tree-lined rail corridor that serves as a vegetative visual buffer to limit views of the corridor. However, there is a gap in vegetation northwest of the Option 1 location (see Figure 3.1-2, Photo 13). Roadway users and residents may have limited views of the Option 1 site due to this gap in vegetation and gaps in the understory of the existing vegetative buffer.

The PS5 Option 2 site is located a little more than 1.5 miles northwest of Option 1 along the railroad corridor in Palo Alto, southwest of the railroad corridor and southeast of the California Avenue Station, in a business park along Park Boulevard. The existing visual elements consist of business park land uses and a construction site (see Figure 3.1-2, Photo 14). The railroad corridor is predominantly tree-lined to the northeast, and the trees limit views toward the corridor from suburban residential land uses along Alma Street. Roadway users and businesses would have limited views of the Option 2 area due to the new construction of four-story buildings at the construction site.

PS6: Sunnyvale Station

The PS6 Option 1 site is located northwest of the Sunnyvale Station, north of the railroad corridor and 200 feet east of the passenger platform (see Figure 3.1-2, Photo 15). The PS6 Option 2 site is located just south of the railroad corridor and within the Sunnyvale Station's parking lot (see Figure 3.1-2, Photo 16). The existing visual elements of PS6 consist of suburban land uses, a predominantly tree-lined rail corridor to the north and the station, and commercial and office land uses to the south. South Mathilda Avenue crosses over the corridor west of the Option 2 site. The architecture of the station and surrounding residential, commercial, and office buildings and the associated landscaping create a pleasing visual setting. Roadway users and residents to the north may have views of the Option 1 site because of gaps in vegetation. People in commercial and office buildings and roadway users would have views of the Option 2 site, though the ramp to South Mathilda Avenue may partially obscure views.

PS7: San Jose

PS7 would be located north of the railroad corridor at the eastern edge of the Communications Hill residential development in San Jose, immediately south of Kurte Park (see Figure 3.1-2, Photo 17). The park is a stormwater detention facility and is at a lower elevation than the surrounding development on the hillside to the north. The park and development are nicely landscaped. Residents and park users have views of and over the PS7 site and toward the surrounding hillsides. Views of the PS7 site from the mobile home community along Mill Pond Drive, south of the corridor, are not available because the community is at a lower elevation than the corridor and an existing sound barrier and landscaping further limit views.

Caltrain Corridor, Stations, and At-Grade Crossings

The Caltrain corridor from San Francisco to San Jose crosses through a number of cities and many stations and at-grade crossings. Representative locations have been chosen to aid in the description of the affected environment. The locations described below were selected because they are representative of the railroad corridor and at-grade crossings and are locations that possess sensitive visual receptors or offer scenic views. Table 2-3 in Chapter 2, *Project Description*, provides a list of all bridges and overbridge protection barriers.

San Francisco 4th and King Station

The aesthetic setting of the San Francisco 4th and King Station is characterized by the highly urbanized environment of the surrounding Mission Bay neighborhood. The station is bordered to the northwest by warehouses of one to four stories, and commercial, retail, and multi-family residential buildings that vary in age, material, and architectural styles common to urban development. The northeastern and southeastern sides of the station include modern high-rise

buildings that are up to 17 stories tall and warehouse, commercial, retail, and multi-family residential uses. Existing vegetation is limited to mature street trees along Townsend Street near 5th Street and some semi-mature street trees along 4th and King Streets. Shrubs are also present in some locations. The vegetation does not act to obscure views of the station or corridor, which is a terminus station with 12 tracks that lead to the six passenger platforms at the station. All of the buildings and roadways surrounding the station have direct views over and toward the station and its associated infrastructure and facilities. The station has a small outdoor plaza with seating and an indoor waiting area and eateries.

22nd Street Station

The 22nd Street Station is located under I-280 and is somewhat visually enclosed because it is at a lower elevation than the surrounding street level. The aesthetic setting of this station is characterized by the freeway pier structures, station platforms, sloped earthen embankment to the west, 22nd Street bridge and rail line to the north, retaining wall to the east, and rail line and tunnel to the south. At street level, urban commercial buildings border the station to the west, and a bus storage yard borders it to the east. I-280 travels north-south near the station. Viewers of the station are limited to pedestrians and bicyclists on 22nd and Iowa Streets and workers in the commercial businesses along Pennsylvania Avenue.

Bayshore Station

The aesthetic setting of the Bayshore Station is described above under *Paralleling Stations*, *PS2: Bayshore Station*.

South San Francisco Station

The aesthetic setting of the South San Francisco Station is highly industrialized along Gateway Boulevard in South San Francisco, slightly less than 2 miles northwest of San Francisco International Airport. The station consists of a parking area and passenger platform that is partially located under the East Grand Avenue bridge over the tracks, which run northeast-southwest. The industrial area is characterized by warehouses, an office park, and a hotel to the east that has a landscape buffer that mostly limits views of the rail corridor. U.S. 101, the station parking area, a vacant lot, and a large retail store are located west of the corridor. Double and multi-lane roadways and associated infrastructure are other visual elements of this industrialized setting.

San Bruno Station

The aesthetic setting of the San Bruno Station is characterized by an open space area, Lions Park, Belle Air Elementary School, and California National Guard Armory to the east, and single-family homes and mature landscaping in the neighborhood to the west. The station consists of a parking area and passenger platform. Existing residences to the west abut and face the railroad right-of-way and have direct views of the corridor. Views also exist from the armory and the western edge of Lions Park and along local roadways running adjacent to the rail corridor.

Separately from the Proposed Project, the San Bruno grade separation project will elevate the Caltrain tracks above the three existing at-grade street crossings at San Bruno, San Mateo and Angus Avenues and will construct a new elevated station between San Bruno and San Mateo Avenues replacing the Syvlan Avenue station. The grade separation project will be completed by 2015, so the setting of the existing station will change substantially from the current conditions.

Downtown San Bruno

Businesses in downtown San Bruno have northerly views toward the railroad corridor and San Bruno Avenue at-grade crossing. Visual elements in the immediate vicinity of the at-grade crossing include the railroad and ancillary structures and street lighting electroliers. Distant views of the hills from downtown are currently available. A grade separation with an elevated structure over San Bruno and San Mateo Avenues is currently under construction.

Millbrae Transit Center

The Millbrae Transit Center is a large Caltrain and BART station that is located north of Millbrae Avenue. The station has a parking garage and an expansive parking area that extends northeast from the station. It also has a formal entry that accommodates bus and vehicular passenger drop-offs. The station building features several aesthetic design treatments including a vaulted roofline with painted steel lattice supports attached to piers. The aesthetic setting surrounding the Millbrae Transit Center is characterized by single- and multi-family residential uses north of Millbrae Avenue, with a restaurant and convalescent hospital to the west of the station, and primarily commercial and warehouse uses south of Millbrae Avenue. Immature to mature landscaping is present in residential areas and within the station complex but does not limit views of the station and corridor.

Broadway Station

The aesthetic setting of the Broadway Station is characterized by apartment complexes and commercial uses to the north and retail and commercial uses to the south. The station consists of a parking area and passenger platform. Immature to mature landscaping is present along portions of adjacent roadways and does not limit views of the station or corridor. Adjacent residential, commercial and retail buildings abut and face the Caltrain ROW and offer direct views of the corridor.

Burlingame Station

The aesthetic setting of the Burlingame Station is characterized by Burlingame High School and commercial uses to the north, and commercial, retail, and restaurant uses to the south. The station consists of a Spanish style building with parking area, landscaping, and passenger platform. Immature to mature landscaping is present along portions of adjacent roadways and does not limit views of the station or corridor. Adjacent uses abut and face the Caltrain ROW and offer direct views of the corridor. As discussed in Section 3.4, *Cultural Resources*, the Burlingame Station is a historic train station.

San Mateo Station

The aesthetic setting of the San Mateo Station is characterized by warehouse, commercial, and limited residential uses to the northeast, and commercial, retail, and restaurant uses of downtown San Mateo to the southwest. The station consists of a modern, traditionally constructed building with parking area, palm trees, and passenger platform. A multi-story parking garaged is located east, across the street, from the station. Street trees are present along adjacent roadways and do not limit views of the station or corridor. Adjacent uses northeast of the corridor abut and face the Caltrain ROW and offer direct views of the corridor. Adjacent uses southwest of the corridor back up to the Caltrain ROW and do not offer direct views of the corridor. There are limited views of the corridor from parking lots and sidewalks.

Hayward Park Station

The Hayward Park Station is located north of the SR 92 bridge over the rail corridor. The bridge visually separates the station from uses to the south. The aesthetic setting of the area surrounding the station is characterized by a department store and small office complex to the east, and commercial and light industrial uses of to the south. The station consists of a parking area and passenger platform that are separated by a small landscape buffer. A multi-story parking garaged is located east, across the street, from the station. Immature to mature trees are present along the bridge embankments, adjacent roadways, and in the station parking lot but do not limit views of the station or corridor. Views of the station are available from the department store parking lot, SR 92, storage yards of light industrial uses, and from adjacent roadways.

Hillsdale Station

The aesthetic setting of the Hillsdale Station is described above under *Paralleling Stations*, *PS4: Hillsdale Station*.

Belmont Station

The Belmont Station, passenger platform, and rail corridor is raised above the surrounding area. The aesthetic setting of the station is characterized by commercial and single- and multi-family residential uses to the northeast and commercial and retail uses of to the southwest. The station consists of a parking area and drop-off area with landscaping and a raised passenger platform. Commercial uses between the Caltrain ROW and Old County Road face the roadway and act to limit most residential views toward the corridor. However, multi-family residences along Masonic Way may have limited views toward the station, but these residences are surrounding my hedges and trees that partially screen views. Commercial uses along Old County Road face the street, and views toward the station are somewhat limited to views from parking areas, sidewalks, and adjacent streets. Commercial and retail uses to the southwest face the station and El Camino Real and have views over the busy roadway toward the station. However, there is a landscaped median that limits some views of the station. The station is also partially visible from the decline and down the corridor of Hill Street, but buildings, infrastructure, and mature landscaping act to screen much of the station and corridor.

San Carlos Station

The San Carlos Station has historically been visually important because of the quality of its architecture. In 1999, the existing at-grade railroad tracks were raised approximately 15 feet, resulting in the rail alignment no longer being at-grade with the station. The elevated rail alignment with its embankment, fencing, lighting, and passenger shelters, now dominates the view of the station from proximate San Carlos streets and businesses. The primary view of the station for passengers leaving the train at San Carlos is of the historic station's roof. As discussed in Section 3.4, *Cultural Resources*, the San Carlos Station is a historic train station.

Redwood City Station and Redwood "Wye" Junction

The aesthetic setting of the Redwood City Station is characterized by surrounding commercial, retail, and restaurant uses. The station consists of the depot, a parking area with mature trees, and passenger platform. Views of the station are available primarily from parking areas, adjacent roadways, and the nearby commercial, retail, and restaurant businesses.

The Redwood "Wye" Junction is located north of the City of Atherton. An adjacent residential area is currently separated from the railroad ROW by a cyclone fence. Views of the railroad corridor are primarily from the street and sidewalk areas of the neighborhood. Existing utility wires and poles are located along the street next to the railroad.

Atherton Corridor and Station

The aesthetic setting of the railroad corridor in Atherton and Atherton Station is characterized by the spacious homes and mature landscaping in the neighborhood to the north and south of the station. The station consists of the depot, a parking area with mature trees, and passenger platform. The historic Atherton depot reflects the high visual quality of the surrounding residential area. Existing residences abut the Caltrain ROW, although backyard fences and mature vegetation currently obscure most views of the corridor. As discussed in Section 3.4, *Cultural Resources*, the Atherton Station is a historic train station.

Menlo Park Station

The aesthetic setting of the Menlo Park Station is characterized by well-manicured commercial, office, and retail uses and mature landscaping in the neighborhood to the north and south. The station consists of the depot and attached Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce, a parking area, and a passenger platform with ornamental fencing and lights. Commercial, office, and retail uses face the Caltrain ROW, with direct views toward the corridor that are limited in some locations by mature street trees and landscaping. As discussed in Section 3.4, *Cultural Resources*, the Menlo Park Station is a historic train station.

Palo Alto Station

The Palo Alto Station is a fairly large transit center that has a unique ingress and egress system from University Avenue, which crosses under the rail corridor to Alma Street and Palm Drive. The aesthetic setting of the station is characterized by well-manicured commercial, office, restaurant, and retail uses and mature landscaping in the neighborhood to the north and south. Multi-family residential is also lightly intermixed amongst the other surrounding uses. The station has long linear parking areas to the north and south. It also accommodates a bus transit center and vehicular passenger drop-off area. The Embarcadero Bike Path connects to the station southeast of the passenger platform. Stanford University, the university arboretum, and Stanford Medical Center are located south of the station and have a large influence on the surrounding community identity. Immature to mature landscaping is present to the north and south and within the station complex, and the landscaping partially limits views of the station and corridor.

As discussed in Section 3.4, *Cultural Resources*, the Palo Alto Station is a historic train station.

Stanford Station

The Stanford Stadium consists only of the rail corridor and passenger platform. The aesthetic setting of the station is characterized by single- and multi-family residential uses to the north, and Palo Alto High School and a retail center to the south. Mature trees and landscaping line the rail corridor and limits most views toward the Caltrain ROW except where the corridor crosses over Embarcadero Road, where there is no landscape buffer and nearby residents do have views of the corridor. The Embarcadero Bike Path parallels the passenger platform and rail corridor to the south.

California Avenue Station

The California Avenue Station is located just west of Oregon Expressway, which crosses under the rail corridor and serves as a visual separator from uses to the east. The aesthetic setting of the station consists of Alma Street and Jerry Bowden Park to the north and a mixed-use commercial, office, and residential complex to the south. The station consists of the depot, a parking area, and passenger platform. The railroad corridor is predominantly tree-lined to the north, and the trees limit views toward the corridor from suburban residential land uses along Alma Street. Views from the mixed-use complex are limited by mature trees and a wall surrounding the complex; however, the corridor may be seen from second- and third-story windows in some locations.

San Antonio Station

Residents in multi-story apartments located across the street from the San Antonio Station currently have views of the at-grade station platform. The station, as viewed from these residences, is characterized by railroad and ancillary structures, street utilities, and minimal landscaping. Beyond the station platform, mature trees and landscaping are visible. Passengers on the San Antonio Station platform have views of the railroad corridor and roadway overcrossing at this location.

Mountain View Station

The aesthetic setting of the Mountain View Station is characterized by suburban residential uses with mature landscaping to the north, and commercial, retail, office, and single- and multi-family suburban uses to the south. The station accommodates a bus transit center and vehicular passenger drop-off area and has a linear parking area to the southeast of the passenger platform. The station depot is located next to a paved plaza with seating and trees, called Centennial Plaza, and a wine bar is attached to the depot. Chain link fencing covered with ivy and street trees partially limits views from the north of the station and corridor, but views from the south are not limited by mature trees present within the station complex and along adjacent streets.

Sunnyvale Station

The aesthetic setting of the Sunnyvale Station is described above under *Paralleling Stations*, *PS6: Sunnyvale Station*.

Lawrence Station

The Lawrence Station rail corridor and passenger platform is partially located under the Lawrence Expressway bridge over the tracks, which run east-west in this area. The aesthetic setting of the station is characterized by the expressway overpass, an office park to the northwest, a large retail store to the northeast, multi-family residential buildings to the southeast, and a materials retail center and storage yard and single-family residential uses to the southwest. A linear parking area is located north of the passenger platform. Immature and mature trees line adjacent streets and property boundaries, and are located in parking areas. Views of the station are available primarily from parking areas, adjacent roadways, the expressway overpass, and second story windows of multi-family residential uses to the southwest.

Santa Clara Station

The rail corridor serves as a defining boundary between uses north and south of the corridor. The aesthetic setting north of the railroad corridor in Santa Clara is characterized by commercial and

warehouse uses. The aesthetic setting south of the railroad corridor is made up of educational (Santa Clara University and Western Seminary), civic (police station) and residential and commercial land uses that support the university and local residents. Mature landscaping is present in the areas surrounding the station. The station is characterized by the railroad and ancillary structures, street utilities, the historical depot and associated buildings, and a landscaped plaza.

As discussed in Section 3.4, *Cultural Resources*, the Santa Clara Station is a historic train station.

College Park Station

The aesthetic setting of the College Park Station is characterized by industrial and warehouse uses to the northeast. To the southwest of the station are Bellarmine College Preparatory and associated uses, suburban residential uses, and limited industrial and commercial uses. Residential uses are mostly separated from the corridor by adjacent commercial and industrial uses. There is little landscaping to the northeast, but there is mature landscaping to the southwest. Most views of the station are available from the Bellarmine ball field, nearby parking areas, and along adjacent streets and sidewalks.

San Jose and the San Jose Diridon Station

Segments of the Caltrain ROW in southern San Jose are constructed on an elevated embankment. Existing views of the corridor from residential areas in the vicinity are dominated by the elevated railroad ROW. San Jose Diridon Station is a historical station located in this area. The aesthetic setting surrounding the station consists of the rail corridor, parking areas with mature landscaping to the north, and multi-family residential units to the south. The station is characterized by the railroad and ancillary structures, street utilities, the historical depot and associated buildings, and historic butterfly passenger shelters.

Tamien Station

The aesthetic setting of the Tamien Station is characterized by a childcare center, vacant land, transit parking, a residential high-rise structure, and the Guadalupe Expressway (SR 87). There is some landscaping associated with the access road to the station and parking lot. Guadalupe Expressway and the rail corridor are raised in this location and Alma Avenue crosses under the corridor. The Santa Clara Valley Transit Authority light rail is located between the north- and southbound lanes of Guadalupe Expressway. Most views of the station are available from upper stories of the residential high-rise, nearby parking areas, light rail, and along adjacent streets and sidewalks.

3.1.2 Impact Analysis

Physical changes attributable to the Proposed Project that would cause changes to views currently experienced by residents and other users of the area are described in this section. Mitigation measures to address significant visual impacts are also identified.

3.1.2.1 Methods for Analysis

For purposes of this analysis, sensitive visual receptors are defined as corridor residents and business occupants, recreational users of parks and preserved natural areas, and students of schools in the vicinity of the proposed project. Members of each of these groups could have views of the

Proposed Project over extended periods of time. Scenic views are defined as long-range views towards preserved natural areas or recognized visual and historic landmarks. A visual change would be considered a significant impact if the change introduced obtrusive elements substantially out of character with existing land uses or substantially obscured a scenic view available to sensitive receptors.

Caltrain passengers at a station platform would see the Proposed Project wires, tracks, and of the train station; however, passengers are at the station for a limited amount of time so they would not be a sensitive visual receptor. Train riders would not be able to see directly out in front of the train or above the train (where the tracks, wires, poles, etc. would be located), would be traveling at a high rate of speed and would not be able to see most project features from the train. Therefore, passengers are not considered to be sensitive visual receptors.

3.1.2.2 Thresholds of Significance

In accordance with Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, the Proposed Project would be considered to have a significant effect if it would result in any of the conditions listed below.

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings along a designated scenic roadway.
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area.

3.1.2.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Under the Proposed Project, physical changes would occur where electrification facilities, including the OCS poles and wires, traction power facilities (TPFs), and overbridge protection structures would be located. Trees and mature vegetation within the 10-foot electrical safety zone (ESZ) around the OCS alignment and TPFs would be removed or pruned to enable placement, operation, and maintenance of the facilities and to provide for electrical safety.

Most Proposed Project construction would take place within the Caltrain ROW. TPS1 (all options) and TPS2 (Options 1 and 2) would be outside the Caltrain ROW. The electrical connections to PG&E to the TPSs would be outside of the Caltrain ROW as would the connections from TPS1 (all options) and TPS2 (Options 1 and 2). In some locations, the OCS poles would be placed outside the current ROW and the ESZ would extend outside the ROW, requiring vegetation clearance on adjacent properties.

These physical changes would alter views from residential, commercial, and park areas, as well as from crossing roadways in various locations along the corridor. New facilities and vegetation maintenance would also alter the visual character of areas.

Impact AES-1a	Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista during Proposed Project Construction
Level of Impact	Less than significant

Project construction would be multi-phased and would occur in different locations at different times. All construction activities would involve the use of a variety of construction equipment, and stockpiling of soils and materials.

As discussed above, the Caltrain ROW and project facilities would be visible from only one scenic roadway. The 49-Mile Scenic Drive in San Francisco is located along Cesar Chavez Street, which crosses the Caltrain ROW. However, the crossing is located in an industrial area between U.S. 101 and I-280. The crossing is of low visual quality and there are no scenic vistas at this location. Thus, construction would have a less-than-significant impact on views from scenic roadways.

Construction may be visible from some locations with long range views such as bridges crossing the Caltrain corridor or adjacent multi-level buildings. The view from bridges would be fleeting for crossing motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians, and construction would not affect their long-range views because viewers would be elevated above the Caltrain ROW and construction activities. The view from adjacent multi-level buildings of the Santa Cruz Mountains, San Francisco Bay, or San Bruno Mountain would not be blocked by construction activities. Construction activities would not likely be seen from distant hillsides because of intervening features and activities.

Ground level views from adjacent residential, commercial, and park areas would be affected by construction where the Caltrain ROW is visible from these adjacent areas, but these views are short-range in character, not long-range scenic vistas.

Construction activities would, thus, have less-than-significant impacts on scenic vistas. Impacts on visual character and light and glare from construction are discussed separately below.

Impact AES-1b	Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista during Proposed Project operation
Level of Impact	Less than significant

As discussed above, the Caltrain ROW and project facilities would be visible from only one scenic roadway. The 49-Mile Scenic Drive in San Francisco is located along Cesar Chavez Street, which crosses the Caltrain ROW. However, the crossing is located in an industrial area between U.S. 101 and I-280. The crossing is of low visual quality and there are no scenic vistas at this location. Thus, permanent project facilities would have no impact on views from scenic roadways.

There are many vistas in the Proposed Project area provided from distant hillside locations, bridges that cross the project corridor, and multi-level buildings that are adjacent to the project corridor. However, direct views of the Caltrain corridor from hillsides are limited because of intervening vegetation, buildings, and infrastructure. Where the project corridor is visible from a distance, project features would be undistinguishable as independent visual elements because of the amount of infrastructure currently associated with existing visual conditions in the highly developed area. The OCS poles and wires would also not likely be readily obvious in views from distant hillsides because of intervening features and activities and because they would be lost in the view at distance. Therefore, it is anticipated that views from these locations would not be affected by the Proposed Project.

Vistas available from bridge crossings and raised rail corridor segments are brief because the viewer is in motion in a motorized vehicle, a rail car, on a bike, or on foot. Permanent facilities would not affect long-range views because viewers would be elevated above the Caltrain ROW and the OCS facilities would not block or obstruct long-range views.

The view from adjacent multi-level buildings of the Santa Cruz Mountains, San Francisco Bay, or San Bruno Mountain would not be blocked by the OCS poles or wires. Views from multi-level buildings immediately adjacent to the Caltrain corridor are longer term, but viewers at these locations are familiar with the presence of infrastructure associated with the rail corridor as a sub-element within existing vistas.

The TPF facilities, for the most part, would not block any scenic long-range views. TPS1 and TPS2 would be in commercial/industrial areas without scenic vistas. PS1 through PS6 and the switching station would not be situated so as to block long-range vistas. As shown in Figure 3.1-15, PS7 would affect the views from Kurte Park of undeveloped hills adjacent to the Caltrain corridor. While this view is not a long-range view, the medium-range view from the park has moderate visual integrity dominated by grassland vegetation that would be disrupted by the addition of an industrial element in the form of PS7.

Ground level views from adjacent residential, commercial and park areas would be affected by project permanent features (such as the OCS and the TPFs) and where vegetation is removed for the ESZ, but these views are short-range in character, not long-range scenic vistas.

The Proposed Project's permanent features would, thus, have less-than-significant impacts on scenic vistas. Impacts on visual character and light and glare from construction are discussed separately below.

Impact AES-2a	Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings during Proposed Project construction
Level of Impact	Significant
Mitigation Measure	AES-2a: Minimize OCS construction activity on residential and park areas outside the Caltrain ROW
Level of Impact after Mitigation	Less than significant

This impact concerns temporary visual changes during construction. Permanent visual changes to character, including vegetation removal, are discussed separately under Impact AES-2b.

Most of the construction would occur within an existing rail ROW in an urban area. The existing visual character or quality of the corridor itself is dominated by the presence of existing rail infrastructure. Proposed Project construction would be multi-phased and would occur in different locations at different times. All construction activities, whether for OCS poles and wires or traction power facilities, would involve the use of a variety of construction equipment, stockpiling of soils and materials, and other visual signs of construction. Vegetation clearance within the Caltrain ROW is a current and ongoing activity conducted for physical safety of passing trains. While evidence of construction activity would be noticeable to area residents and others in the vicinity, such visual disruptions would be short-term and are a common and accepted feature of the urban environment, including the Caltrain ROW.

While most of the construction would occur within the Caltrain ROW (including construction of OCS within the ROW, the switching station, all of paralleling stations, and TPS2 (Option 3)), some of the OCS installation, vegetation clearance, and construction of TPS1 (all options) and TPS2 (Options 1 and 2) would occur outside the ROW. For the TPSs, all of the proposed options outside the Caltrain ROW are within active industrial/commercial areas; construction would not be out of character for these sites.

Installation of OCS poles and wires and vegetation clearance outside the ROW on industrial or commercial land would be consistent with the existing visual character. Installation of OCS poles and wires and vegetation clearance outside the ROW also would occur in residential areas and parks where visual quality can be moderate to high, depending on their individual setting. Construction activity in residential and park areas would be anomalous, and the visual character of such areas would be partially degraded during construction. The duration of OCS construction at any one location would be limited to the time necessary to install pole foundations and then later to install poles and string wires. The change in visual character would only occur for a limited period and the perception of the visual quality of such areas would not be altered once construction is complete. To ensure that the duration of construction disruption and activities are limited in areas of greater visual sensitivity, Mitigation Measure AES-2a would be implemented to avoid using such areas for access or staging areas and to remove all construction equipment and materials immediately following completion of construction on such sites.

With mitigation, this impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure AES-2a: Minimize OCS construction activity on residential and park areas outside the Caltrain ROW

OCS construction activities outside the Caltrain ROW in residential and park areas along the Caltrain ROW shall be minimized in extent and duration to the maximum extent feasible. JPB shall include the following requirements for construction contractors:

- Staging areas shall not be located in parks or on residential land.
- Access routes shall not be located in parks and shall avoid use of residential land wherever feasible
- OCS construction on residential lands shall only be during daylight hours, wherever feasible.
- OCS construction on park lands shall be during hours when parks are closed, wherever feasible.
- The duration of OCS construction on residential and park lands shall be minimized. Material and equipment shall be brought to such sites as close to the start time of construction as possible and shall be removed from such sites as soon after construction completion as possible.
- If multiple day construction is required on a residential or park parcel, construction materials and equipment shall be kept in good order and all trash and debris contained.
- Construction contractors shall coordinate with park facility operators and residential landowners and residents to inform them of planned construction activities well in advance of construction.

Impact AES-2b	Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings during Proposed Project operation
Level of Impact	Significant
Mitigation Measure	AES-2b: Apply aesthetic surface treatments to new infrastructure to and provide screening vegetation at TPFs in sensitive visual locations BIO-5: Implement Tree Avoidance, Minimization, and Replacement Plan CUL-1d: Implement design commitments at historic railroad stations
Level of Impact after Mitigation	Significant and unavoidable (tree removal/pruning); less than significant (TPFs, OCS, and overbridge protection structures)

Permanent impacts of the Proposed Project on visual character would result from 1) introduction of the new TPFs inside and outside the Caltrain ROW, 2) OCS poles and wires, 3) vegetation removal and maintenance for electrical safety along the OCS alignment, and 4) overbridge protection structures.

Traction Power Facilities

The auto-transformer power feed system proposed for the Proposed Project would require 10 TPFs along the Caltrain corridor (see Figures 2-9 to 2-18 for locations of these facilities). Two TPSs approximately 150 feet by 200 feet would be required (see Figure 2-19). Seven paralleling stations approximately 40 feet by 80 feet (see Figures 2-20 and 2-21), and one switching station approximately 80 feet by 160 feet also would be required (see Figure 2-22).

The existing settings for the TPFs are shown in Figure 3.1-2. Visual simulations of TPFs are shown in Figures 3.1-4 (PS2), 3.1-12 (PS6 Option 1), 3.1-13 (PS6 Option 2), Figure 3.1-15 (PS7), Figure 3.1-16 (PS3), and Figure 3.1-17 (PS5 Option 1). With the exception of TPS1 (all options) and TPS2 (Options 1 and 2), the proposed TPF locations are all within existing Caltrain ROW. A number of the proposed TPFs would be located in areas where the Caltrain corridor is surrounded by industrial and/or commercial uses (PS1, PS2, PS4, PS5 Option 2, PS6 Option 2, TPS1, and TPS2). Some of the proposed TPF sites are located in areas with residential uses or adjacent residential uses (SWS1, PS3, PS5 Option 1, PS6 Option 1). One TPF site (PS7) is adjacent to a local park.

TPFs proposed in areas entirely surrounding by railroad, industrial and commercial uses would be consistent in character with surrounding uses and would not degrade the visual character of these sites. Thus, no significant impacts on visual character are identified for TPS1 (all options), TPS2 (all options), PS1, PS2, PS4, PS5 Option 2, or PS6 Option 2.

TPFs proposed in areas adjacent to residential or park areas could change the visual character of these areas.

- SWS1 would be located in the Redwood Junction commercial and industrial area that is surrounded by railway tracks on all sides. SWS1 would be separated from a residential area along Westmoreland Avenue in Redwood City by Westmoreland Avenue and four railroad tracks. The existing view from that neighborhood is of railroad tracks and commercial and industrial buildings. The addition of a switching station would not substantially degrade the existing visual character. The switching station will not change the visual character of the residential neighborhood at all given its location on the opposite side the Caltrain ROW. Thus, no significant impacts on visual character are identified for SWS1.

- PS3 would be located across the street from residential areas along California Drive near Lincoln Avenue in Burlingame. Figure 3.1-16 depicts the existing view from the neighborhood west of the corridor to the proposed PS3 site, a simulation with PS3 in place, and a simulation of PS3 with potential screening vegetation. The presence of existing railway facilities and commercial and industrial uses east of the Caltrain ROW already establish the visual character of the ROW and the areas to the east. The introduction of PS3 would not substantially alter views from the neighborhood toward these areas or the visual character of these areas except that PS3 would introduce an elevated element higher than current features on the site. In addition, PS3 would be more apparent than existing railway facilities to drivers along California Avenue and could be perceived as a visually anomalous feature adjacent to a residential area. To reduce the change in visual character, Mitigation Measure AES-2b would require screening vegetation to be placed along California Avenue between the roadway and PS3, and use of aesthetic treatments on the TPF facilities to reduce the visual effect on views from the neighborhood.
- PS5 Option 1 would be located within the Caltrain ROW across Alma Street from the Greenmeadow residential neighborhood in Palo Alto. Figure 3.1-17 depicts a view from the neighborhood of the PS5 Option 1 site, a simulation of the view after PS5 Option 1 is constructed, and a simulation with screening vegetation in place. Because current views do not include rail facilities and PS5 Option 1 construction would require tree removal, the effect on views in the area is considered significant. Mitigation Measure AES-2b would require screening vegetation to be placed along Alma Street between the roadway and PS5 Option 1 and the use of aesthetic treatments on the TPF facilities to reduce the visual effect on views from the neighborhood.
- PS7 would be located adjacent to Kurte Park in San Jose, within the JPB ROW, and below a residential neighborhood on Communications Hill. The topography of the surrounding land and the distance to the proposed facility and existing railway facilities are expected to reduce the obtrusion of PS7 on views from the adjacent residential neighborhood. However, PS7 would be directly adjacent to Kurte Park and would introduce an industrial element into views from the park that are currently dominated by adjacent grassland hills in combination with the railroad ROW. PS7 would have a significant impact on visual character. Mitigation Measure AES-2b would require screening vegetation to be placed between the park and PS7 and the use of aesthetic treatments on the TPF facilities to reduce the visual effect on views from the park.

As described above, Mitigation Measure AES-2b would ensure that landscaping and aesthetic design treatments would be provided for TPF-related structures and equipment in areas where they would otherwise have a significant impact on existing visual character. Implementing this measure would reduce potentially significant impacts on visual character at these locations to a less-than-significant level.

Overhead Contact System

Project Corridor as a Whole

OCS poles and wires would be introduced throughout the existing rail corridor from San Francisco to San Jose. In general, the introduction of OCS poles and wires within an existing railroad corridor would not constitute a substantial visual change; these types of facilities would be consistent with the existing visual quality of the active commuter and freight rail corridor. Some residents or business occupants accustomed to the existing Caltrain corridor, however, may consider these visual changes to constitute a new visual intrusion that detracts from the existing visual character of the

rail corridor itself. The new OCS infrastructure would be more or less visible from residences and businesses, depending on whether there would be other structural or vegetative visual screening between the rail corridor and adjacent land uses after construction.

Figures 3.1-3 through 3.1-17 illustrate OCS infrastructure as it would be visible from various locations and across a variety of visual conditions throughout the project area. Potential impacts on visual character due to the OCS overhead infrastructure and vegetation removal is further described for select location examples below. The location examples were selected because they are representative of the railroad corridor and at-grade crossings and are locations that possess sensitive visual receptors.

- **Downtown San Bruno**: Existing views toward the railroad corridor in downtown San Bruno would be changed due to construction of the proposed San Bruno grade separation project (not a part of the Proposed Project), and the OCS. The OCS poles and overhead wires would be visible in comparison with street-level lighting electroliers, and they would be at or above the level of the elevated parking structure at this location.
- **Redwood "Wye" Junction**: Existing views are dominated by the railroad corridor, which is on an embankment and can be seen clearly through the cyclone fencing. Utility poles and wires are also clearly evident from the surrounding neighborhood. The OCS poles and wires would add to the visual clutter, but these types of facilities are consistent with the existing aesthetic quality of this location.
- **South San Jose**: An elevated segment of the railroad corridor with the proposed side-pole cantilever OCS configuration, as viewed from a south San Jose residential area, is simulated on Figure 3.1-14. The poles would both be placed within the embankment of the railroad overhead and attached to the railroad structure crossing Prevost Street. Large trees help to screen the view of the railroad corridor, which presents a variety of ancillary facilities, including both a concrete and a landscaped crib retaining wall alongside the railroad embankment, a drainage pipe emerging from the embankment, chain-link fencing along the railroad ROW, telephone poles, and street signs.

From a distance, OCS infrastructure would either be fully or partially screened by vegetation or other development, such as seen in Figure 3.1-8, or would not stand out amongst the visual environment, which already includes rail infrastructure and urban development.

However, where sensitive receptors such as residents and park users are located directly adjacent to the ROW, the new OCS would be readily apparent and visible as a new railway feature. In addition, the OCS would be visible from some adjacent areas where unobstructed by intervening structures or vegetation. Once one proceeds farther away from the Caltrain ROW, the OCS would be less and less apparent. The poles and structural elements other than the wires would be the most visually apparent parts of the system because the wires would be of a small diameter and would more readily blend into the background view. The addition of the OCS is considered to have a potentially significant impact at and adjacent to visually sensitive areas, including adjacent residential areas, parks and Caltrain stations (see separate discussion below). Implementation of Mitigation Measure AES-2b would ensure that OCS poles recede into the visual landscape as much as feasible. Implementing this measure would reduce potentially significant impacts of the OCS to a less-than-significant level.

Looking southwest down the rail corridor with the OCS system, as seen from the San Francisco Caltrain Station at 4th Street

Source: Environmental Vision 2013

Figure 3.1-3
Simulation 1: 4th and King Station, San Francisco
Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project

Looking northwest toward the rail corridor with the OCS system and PS2, as seen from Tunnel Avenue near Lathrop Avenue.

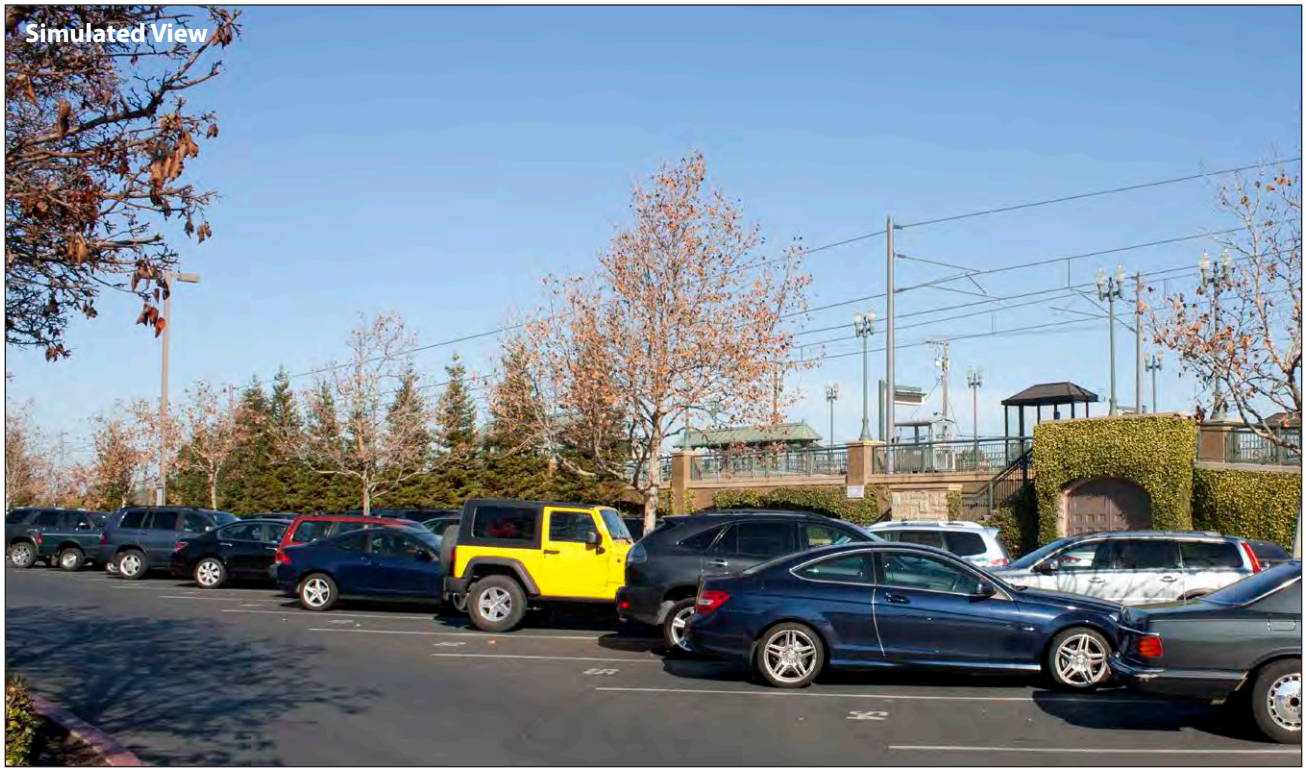
Source: Environmental Vision 2013

Figure 3.1-4
Simulation 2: PS2, San Francisco (near Bayshore)
Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project

Looking northwest down the rail corridor with the OCS system and tree trimming, as seen from Oak Grove Avenue.

Source: Environmental Vision 2013

Figure 3.1-5
Simulation 3: Oak Grove Avenue, Burlingame
Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project



Looking northeast toward the OCS system with the headspan and portal arrangement at the San Carlos Caltrain Station, as seen from the station parking lot.

Source: Environmental Vision 2014

Figure 3.1-6
Simulation 4: San Carlos Caltrain Station, San Carlos
Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project

Looking northwest down the rail corridor with the OCS system and tree trimming, as seen from the Atherton Caltrain Station platform near Fair Oaks Lane.

Source: Environmental Vision 2013

Figure 3.1-7
Simulation 5: Atherton Caltrain Station, Atherton
Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project