

Appendix B-1

Visual Resources Report

Visual Resources Report

San Diego State University Evolve Student Housing Project

DECEMBER 2024

Prepared for:

**SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY
FACILITIES PLANNING, DESIGN, AND CONSTRUCTION**

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

| Acronym/Abbreviation | Definition |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| amsl | above mean sea level |
| Caltrans | California Department of Transportation |
| CEQA | California Environmental Quality Act |
| City | City of San Diego |
| County | County of San Diego |
| HVAC | heating, ventilation, and air conditioning |
| I | Interstate |
| KOP | key observation point |
| Project | San Diego State University Evolve Student Housing Project |
| SB | Senate Bill |
| SDMC | San Diego Municipal Code |
| SDSU | San Diego State University |
| SR | State Route |

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Executive Summary

The California State University, San Diego State University (SDSU) proposes the construction and development of new student housing, dining, and auxiliary uses on SDSU's campus. The proposed San Diego State University (SDSU) Evolve Student Housing Project (Project or Proposed Project) is comprised of two components—the Peninsula Component, which would be located on the SDSU campus at the northern terminus of 55th Street, and the University Towers East Component, which would be located east of the existing University Towers on Montezuma Road.

This technical report assesses the potential visual changes that would occur with Proposed Project implementation. The report provides information to support the environmental document (Draft EIR) prepared for the Proposed Project. The report contains the following information: the local and regional setting; a description of the Proposed Project; the methodology used to complete a visual assessment of the various Project components; a discussion of existing scenic vistas, scenic resources within a state scenic highways, and visual character and quality; and an analysis of the Project against California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) significance criteria for scenic vistas, scenic resources within a state scenic highway, and visual character and quality. Note that light, glare, and shadow are not considered in this report as these resources are examined in technical lighting and shading reports prepared by others (Francis Krahe & Associates).

The proposed Peninsula Component comprises 10.3 acres currently occupied by 13 existing buildings, which presently provide housing for 702 students. As proposed, the Project would demolish existing onsite structures in a phased approach and construct six student housing buildings, including one 9-story building and five buildings each up to 13 stories in height. The proposed University Towers East Component would be developed on a 0.71-acre site in an existing parking lot. The existing parking lot at the University Towers East Component site would be removed to allow for redevelopment of the site to include one 9-story student-housing building.

As discussed in this report, the Proposed Project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista, would not substantially damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway, and would not conflict with applicable regulations governing scenic quality. Therefore, impacts related to CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, Aesthetics, criterion a) through c) would be **less than significant**. Moreover, because the Proposed Project is a residential project that would be located within a transit priority area, any potential impacts relating to aesthetics are statutorily determined to be less than significant (California Public Resources Code, Section 21099[d][1]).

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1 Introduction

1.1 Project Overview

The proposed San Diego State University (SDSU) Evolve Student Housing Project (Project or Proposed Project) is the construction and development of new student housing, dining, and auxiliary uses on SDSU's main campus. The Proposed Project is comprised of two components—the Peninsula Component, which would be located on SDSU campus at the northern terminus of 55th Street; and the University Towers East Component, which would be located east of the existing University Towers on Montezuma Road (see Figure 1, Project Location).

The proposed Peninsula Component would be located on an approximately 10.3-acre site on the northwest portion of campus, just south of Interstate (I) 8 and west of Canyon Crest Drive. Development of the Peninsula Component would include demolition of all 13 existing buildings, which presently provide housing for 702 students, and the phased development of one 9-story student housing building and five student housing buildings each up to 13 stories in height. The proposed University Towers East Component would be developed on an approximately 1.1-acre site located immediately east of the existing University Towers Building, south of Montezuma Road. The existing parking lot would be demolished to allow for redevelopment of the site to include a new 9-story student housing building that would accommodate approximately 720 students. See Figures 2A, Proposed Peninsula Component Site Plan, and 2B, Proposed University Towers East Component Site Plan.

1.2 Project Location

The SDSU campus is located along the I-8 corridor, approximately 8 miles from downtown San Diego. The campus is located within the College Area Community of the City of San Diego. The College Area Community is characterized by SDSU as a major hub of activity, single-family and multifamily residential uses and neighborhood commercial developments that serve the surrounding community, including SDSU.

The proposed Peninsula Component would be located within the approximately 10.3-acre site at the northern terminus of 55th Street on the northwest portion of campus just south of I-8 and west of Canyon Crest Drive (see Figure 2A). The proposed University Towers East Component would be located on an approximately 1.1-acre site on Montezuma Road that is currently utilized as a parking lot (see Figure 2B).

The SDSU campus can be accessed from the north by College Avenue, which also provides local access to I-8. The campus can be accessed from the east or west by Montezuma Road, an east–west roadway near the southern boundary of the campus, and accessed from the south via College Avenue.

1.3 Project Description

Peninsula Component

The Peninsula Component would involve the development of six student housing buildings, including one 9-story building and five buildings up to 13 stories in height (see Figure 2A).

The 9-story building would be comprised of double rooms with connected bathrooms. The 9-story building would be approximately 144,000 square feet in size, with each of the nine floors encompassing approximately 16,000 square feet.

The five buildings to be built up to 13 stories in height (Apartment Buildings 1 through 5) would each have approximately 174,000 square feet, based on an estimated approximately 13,400 square feet per floor. See Table 1. The proposed Peninsula Component would also include a new two-story amenity building, approximately 25,000 square feet in size, that would be utilized for dining and other student use purposes.

University Towers East Component

The existing parking lot at the University Towers East Component site would be removed to allow for redevelopment of the site to include one 9-story student-housing building (Figure 2B). The proposed University Towers East building would be site-planned as a horseshoe layout, with a courtyard plaza located in the middle of the building. The building would be approximately 133,200 square feet, with each floor encompassing approximately 14,800 square feet. The ground level floor would include a lobby, resident lounge, mail room, and other maintenance rooms (e.g., mechanical, plumbing, trash, etc.). Table 1 provides a summary of the proposed elements of the University Towers East Component.

Table 1. Proposed Evolve Student Housing Summary

| | Number of Individual Buildings | Building Area (Square Feet) | Floors | Student Beds | Parking Stalls |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|--------------|----------------|
| Peninsula Component | | | | | |
| 9-Story Building | | | | | |
| 9-Story Building | 1 | 144,000 | 9 | 650 | 0 |
| Apartment Buildings | | | | | |
| Building 1 | 1 | 174,240 | 13 | 760 | 0 |
| Building 2 | 1 | 174,240 | 13 | 760 | 0 |
| Building 3 | 1 | 174,240 | 13 | 760 | 0 |
| Building 4 | 1 | 174,240 | 13 | 760 | 0 |
| Building 5 | 1 | 174,240 | 13 | 760 | 0 |
| Amenity Building | 1 | 15,000 | 2 | N/A | 15 |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | 7 | 1,030,200 | 67 | 4,450 | 15 |
| University Towers East Component | | | | | |
| University Towers East Building | 1 | 133,200 | 9 | 720 | 0 |
| Combined Total | 8 | 1,163,400 | 702 | 5,170 | 15 |

Construction of the Proposed Project would occur in multiple phases. In general, construction activities would be limited to between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Limited Sunday work may be required. No construction would occur on public holidays.

2 Regulatory Setting

2.1 Federal

There are no federal regulations that are particularly applicable to aesthetics/visual resources and the CEQA review of the Project.

2.2 State

2.2.1 California Scenic Highway Program

State Scenic Highway Program

Established in 1963 by the State Legislature and managed by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the goal of the State Scenic Highway Program is to “preserve and enhance the natural beauty of California” by identifying those portions of the State highway system and nearby scenic corridor that require special conservation treatment (Caltrans 2008). Highways included in the State Scenic Highway Program should “traverse an area of outstanding scenic quality, contain striking views, flora, geology, or other natural attributes” (Caltrans 2008). Eligible state scenic highways consist of state routes nominated for official designation by the local governing body with jurisdiction over the lands adjacent to the proposed scenic highway. In order to be identified as an “eligible” state scenic highway, a visual assessment of the proposed corridor and a Scenic Highway Proposal must be completed by the local jurisdiction and Caltrans must determine that the route meets scenic highway criteria. Official State Scenic Highway designation requires preparation of a Corridor Protection Plan by the local governing body that contains measures, ordinances, zoning, and/or planning policies applicable to the area of land within the scenic corridor and the Plan must be deemed acceptable by Caltrans.

From its western terminus to State Route (SR) 98 near Coyote Wells in western Imperial County, I-8 is an eligible state scenic highway (Caltrans 2024). In addition, SR-52 (eligible and official designated state scenic highway segments) and SR-125 from SR-94 to I-8 near La Mesa, and SR-163 from the south to the north boundary of Balboa Park (officially designated state scenic highways) are located within 6 miles of the Project site (Caltrans 2024).

2.2.2 Senate Bill 743 and Public Resources Code 21099

In September 2013, the Governor signed Senate Bill (SB) 743, which became effective on January 1, 2014. Among other provisions, SB 743 adds California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21099, which provides that "aesthetic and parking impacts of a residential, mixed-use residential, or employment center project on an infill site within a transit priority area shall not be considered significant impacts on the environment." PRC Section 21099 defines a "transit priority area" as an area within 0.5 miles of a major transit stop that is "existing or planned, if the planned stop is scheduled to be completed within the planning horizon included in a Transportation Improvement Program adopted pursuant to Section 450.216 or 450.322 of Title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations." PRC Section 21064.3 defines "major transit stop" as "a site containing an existing rail transit station, a ferry terminal served by either a bus or rail transit service, or the intersection of two or more major bus routes with a frequency of service interval of 15 minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak commute periods." PRC Section

21099 defines an infill site as a lot located within an urban area that has been previously developed, or on a vacant site where at least 75% of the perimeter of the site adjoins, or is separated only by an improved public right-of-way from, parcels that are developed with qualified urban uses.

The Project site is located within 0.5 miles of the MTS SDSU Trolley Station and therefore, the Project site is located within a transit priority area. Also, the Project site is currently developed and is located in an urban area. Therefore, the Project is proposed on an infill site. In accordance with PRC Section 21099, the potential aesthetic impacts of the Proposed Project shall not be considered significant impacts on the environment.

2.3 Local/Regional

Because SDSU is an entity of the California State University, which is a state agency, the Proposed Project is not subject to local government planning and land use plans, policies, or regulations. The Proposed Project would be subject to state and federal agency planning documents described above, but would not be subject to regional or local planning documents such as the City's General Plan, Mission Valley Community Plan, or City municipal zoning code.

SDSU Campus Master Plan

SDSU approved its first campus master plan in 1963, with the purpose of outlining directives for facility placement and providing target square footage for academic, support, or athletic spaces. The original master plan was updated in 1967 and underwent minor revisions throughout the 1970s. In 1997, several major planning efforts were undertaken at the university, one of which was the preparation and adoption of the SDSU Campus Master Plan 2000, a comprehensive, campus-wide build-out strategy.

In 2010, the SDSU Campus Master Plan was updated as part of the Plaza Linda Verde Project, which entailed expansion of the campus boundary to the south and east near the intersection of Montezuma Road and College Avenue. Since that time, there have been several minor amendments to the Campus Master Plan. The site of the Proposed Project is suitable for redevelopment and use as on-campus student residences and would further the campus goal of expanding on-campus student residential opportunities in close proximity to existing student housing and amenities.

SDSU Physical Master Plan

In 1997, several major planning efforts were undertaken at the university, one of which was the preparation and adoption of the SDSU Physical Master Plan Phase 1 Existing Conditions (SDSU Physical Master Plan). The Physical Master Plan provides a comprehensive, campus-wide build-out strategy, including campus background & history, land uses & facilities, planning & design elements, and draft design guidelines.

The draft design guidelines, included as Chapter 5 of the SDSU Physical Master Plan, provide criteria and standards for the continuing development of the campus. The guidelines consist of spatial environmental elements, architectural elements, landscape architectural elements, and circulation elements. Spatial environmental elements (campus entries, campus edges, campus landmarks, campus nodes, and campus views) are most responsible for creating the spatial environment of the SDSU campus. Architectural elements (site form and layout; campus neighborhoods; and building character, function & materials) are responsible for setting the design character of the campus and determining the circulation system. Landscape architecture elements (informal open

space area; formal urban space area; landscape materials, furnishings & lighting; wayfinding systems; and memorial and public art) are responsible for creating a high visual and aesthetic quality to integrate architecture, landscape architecture, and other site components. Circulation elements (vehicular circulation & parking; pedestrian and bicycle circulation; transit facilities; and utility elements) are responsible for establishing access points and traffic patterns to minimize impacts with streets and facilities.

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3 Environmental Setting

The site of the Proposed Project is the College Area, within the city of San Diego in southwestern San Diego County. This predominantly urban area features a diverse array of land uses, including residential, commercial, recreational, and institutional developments. Open spaces are primarily concentrated in local canyons and Mission Trails Regional Park, a vast expanse of undeveloped natural lands characterized by varied terrains and habitats. Additionally, open spaces are interspersed throughout the landscape via an extensive network of canyons.

The natural terrain of the region includes several prominent mountains and hills, as well as a series of mesas and canyons that drain into Mission Valley and the San Diego River. Urban development has largely occurred on the mesa tops and within the San Diego River Valley, which encompasses Mission Valley, while the canyon hillsides and drainage bottoms have remained relatively natural.

As mentioned previously, the Proposed Project consists of two components - the Peninsular Component and the University Towers East Component. Existing conditions at the two sites are described below.

3.1 Project Site and Surrounding Area

Peninsula Component

The Peninsula Component site currently contains eight, two-story apartment-style student housing buildings, a three-story apartment-style student housing building, the SDSU International Center complex, the SDSU Passport Office, the SDSU Global Education Office, and associated amenities (i.e., parking spaces, sidewalks, landscaped areas, etc.). Existing buildings on the Peninsula Component site are arranged in a semi-circle with asphalt parking lots on the outer edge of each parcel. Existing buildings are generally boxy in form, rectangular, U- or L-shaped in plan, feature stucco clad exteriors with limited application of stone veneer sections, and include flat roofs. Landscaping is typically comprised of turf lawns, and mature trees and shrubs.

Photographs of select existing development/buildings on the Peninsula Site are included on Figure 3, Existing Conditions – Peninsula Component Site.

Surrounding uses include open space and residential housing to the west, open space, I-8, and residential housing to the north, university uses including parking, recreational fields, academic buildings, and student housing buildings are located to the east, south, and southwest of the Peninsula Component site. Densely vegetated canyon terrain is located to the west and a series of narrow mesas supporting single-family residential development in the College View Estates neighborhood extend north from Remington Road and are accessed via Hewlett Drive, Redding Road, Bixel Drive, and Dorman Drive. Approximately 18 residences are located off Hewlett Drive (and a narrow mesa landform) and the nearest residence is approximately 450 feet to the west of the Peninsula Site. Hewlett Drive homes are constructed on terrain that abruptly descends from south to north (elevations are approximately 430 feet amsl near Remington Road and approximately 380 feet amsl near the northern terminus/cul-de-sac). Approximately 30 residences are located off Redding Road (and a narrow mesa landform) and the nearest residence is approximately 1,100 feet to the west of the Peninsula Site. Similar to Hewlett Drive, elevations along Redding Road descend from south to north (elevations are approximately 435 feet amsl near Remington Road and approximately 370 feet amsl near the northern terminus/cul-de-sac).

University Towers East Component

The University Towers East Component site is currently utilized as a parking lot for University Towers, which is a nine-story student housing building clad in rough textured stucco CMU blocks and featuring a flat roof. University Towers also includes a single-story, western addition that operates as a student dining option. Two-story, multifamily residential buildings (student housing) are located to the east of the University Towers East Component and stretch to Campanile Drive. The nine-story University Towers building is to the immediate west of the site. The site is bordered on the south by Mary Lane Drive, which separates the site from the nearby single-family residences. Montezuma Road and university uses, including three-to four-story, stucco clad student-housing and recreation fields including the SDSU Sports Deck, are located to the north and northwest of the University Towers East Component site.

Photographs of select existing development/buildings on the Peninsula Site are included on Figure 4, Existing Conditions – University Towers East Component Site.

3.2 Scenic Vistas

Publicly accessible and designated scenic vistas where views of the Project site are available are limited and consist primarily of prominent terrain located in Mission Trails Regional Park, of which the nearest trailhead is located approximately 2.9 miles to the northeast of the Peninsular Component. Cowles Mountain (elevation of 1,594 feet), Pyles Peak (elevation of 1,379 feet) and South Fortuna Summit (elevation of 1,094 feet) (Mission Trails Regional Park 2023) are located approximately 3.5, 3.85 and 4.1 miles northeast of the Project site. The summits of these mountains/peaks are accessible by the Cowles Mountain Trail, Pyles Peak Trail, and the North Fortuna Trail that provide recreationists broad panoramic views of Mission Valley, downtown San Diego, southern San Diego County and Tijuana. Long views to the north, east and west are also available from these elevated vantage points.

While the broad and long views available from the trails identified above are relatively similar, existing use and the visual character of the trails varies. The most popular of the three trails, Cowles Mountain Trail, is accessible via a developed staging area and parking lot located at the intersection of Golf Crest Drive and Navajo Road. From the staging area, hikers and trail runners climb the terrain in a general south to north alignment and a series of switchbacks provide ample viewing opportunities to the landscape to the south. Wood post and rail fencing, and occasional mile markers, mark the trail which experiences heavy traffic on weekends (generally from 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset). Despite its relatively mild elevation profile and proximity to Cowles Mountain, the Pyles Peak Trail experiences light use, is narrow in width and is minimally marked. The trail traverses the western slopes of Cowles Mountain, Pyles Peak and intervening terrain and is continuously bordered by tall chaparral and coastal sage scrub vegetation. Views from the summit of Pyles Peak are similar to the wide, long views available from Cowles Mountain however, due to a slightly lower elevation, the hills of northeastern Del Cerro block the majority of the SDSU campus from view. Lastly, the North Fortuna Trail is located in the northern portion of the regional park and consists of wide fire roads traversing moderate to steep terrain and a narrow, rock strewn path that climbs the ridgeline of North Fortuna Mountain. Views from the summit are panoramic and are limited only by the presence of background mountainous terrain to the north, east, and south.

There are no designated scenic vistas identified in the College Area Community Plan (City of San Diego 1989), the Navajo Community Plan (City of San Diego 2015), or the 2024 City of San Diego General Plan (City of San Diego 2024).

3.3 Scenic Highways

An eligible state scenic highway from Sunset Cliffs Boulevard to the San Diego/Imperial County boundary (Caltrans 2024), I-8 is located approximately 285 feet north of the Peninsula Component and 0.6 miles north of the University Towers East Component. Motorists on I-8 experience inferior angled views (i.e., views from a lower elevation to a particular object/structure located at a higher elevation in the landscape) to the Peninsula Component site. From eastbound I-8, the existing Peninsula Component site may be occasionally visible over an approximate 1,800-foot long continuous segment of the interstate approach towards the site. From westbound I-8, the Peninsula Component site may be visible over an approximately 0.7-mile long continuous segment of the interstate approach towards the site starting from approximately the College Avenue overpass. The posted speed limit on I-8 is 65 miles per hour and, therefore, the duration of any view is brief.

Due to intervening topography, the University Towers East Component site is not visible from I-8.

Additional scenic highways in the general area include SR-52 (officially designated scenic highway paralleling the boundary of Mission Trails Regional Park (i.e., east of Santo Road to near Mast Boulevard), SR-125 (officially designated scenic highway from SR-94 to I-8 near La Mesa) and SR-163 (officially designated scenic highway from the south to the north boundary of Balboa Park (Caltrans 2024). SR-52 is also an eligible state scenic highway from Interstate 5 to east of Santo Road and Mast Boulevard to SR-67 near Santee (Caltrans 2024). Neither the Peninsula nor the University East Towers Components sites are visible from the segments of eligible or officially designated state scenic highways listed above.

3.4 Visual Character and Quality

Refer to Section 3.1, Project Site and Surrounding Area, above, for a summary of existing development and conditions on the Project site and in the immediate surrounding area. Existing visual character and quality of the site and views is further described through the discussion of key observation points below.

3.4.1 Key Observation Points

Four locations from which representative views of the Peninsula Component site and two locations from which representative views of the University Towers East Component site are available to viewer groups in the surrounding area were selected to evaluate the anticipated visual change associated with implementation and operation of the Proposed Project. These locations (i.e., KOPs) form the basis of the impact analysis as it relates to visual character and quality of the site and surrounding area. The views at identified locations are also characteristic of the range of viewing angles, distances, and general visibility to the Project site available to local viewer groups in the surrounding area. The quality of the existing view and character of the landscape at the KOPs was captured in photographs taken during the September 2024 photographic inventory. The location of the key observation points (KOPs) and their relationship to the Project site is depicted on Figure 5, Key Observation Points. The existing conditions photographs taken at each KOP are included on Figures 6 and 7.

Table 2 below lists the identified KOPs and provides the location, approximate distance, viewing angle/observer position, and general visibility conditions to the Project site. A brief description of the view and visual character of the landscape also is provided below by key view location.

Table 2. Key Observation Points and General Visibility

| KOPs | View Direction and Location | Distance to Project Site/Boundary (Approximate) | General Viewing Conditions to Project Site |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Peninsula Component | | | |
| 1 | Southeast view from Adobe Falls Road | 0.25 miles | Partially obstructed and obscured. Foreground landscaping/trees block the west portion of the Peninsula Component site from view; site visibility is limited to the north facades of three existing apartment buildings (three-stories each) lining the top of the visible mesa terrain. The existing on-campus Chapultepec Residence Hall is visible from this KOP. |
| 2 | Southwest view from Del Cerro Boulevard | 0.45 miles | Mostly clear. Existing apartment buildings on the site are visible above single-family residences in the foreground. In addition to the Peninsula Component site, portions of the on-campus Chapultepec Residence Hall (11-stories), Huaxyacac East Residence Hall (5-stories), Fowler Athletic Center, and the Arts and Letters Building are visible from this location. |
| 3 | Northeast from Remington Road at Hewlett Drive | 0.2 miles | Partially obstructed by intervening off-campus single-family residential development and Hewlett Drive street trees. Portions of select buildings on the Peninsula Component site are visible. |
| 4 | South from SDSU Lot 10 at Remington Road | 0.20 miles | Mostly obscured due to the higher elevation location of the viewpoint compared to Peninsula Component site (and by canyon vegetation lining the black metallic fence). Portions of two buildings on the Peninsula Component site are visible through gaps in existing vegetation in the foreground. |
| University Towers East Component | | | |
| 5 | Southwest from Montezuma Road | 460 feet | Mostly clear. While some blockage of the site occurs due to nearby apartment development and landscaping (a tall hedge), some vehicles in the existing parking lot on the University Towers East Component site are visible (the 9-story University Towers Residence Hall is to the west). |
| 6 | Northeast from Mary Lane Drive at 55th Street | 390 feet | Obstructed by foreground single-family residences off Mary Lane Drive and by the existing 9-story University Towers Residence Hall. |

3.4.1.1 Key Observation Point 1: Adobe Falls Road

KOP 1 is located on Adobe Falls Road, a relatively narrow, two-lane road with street parking providing access to numerous apartment buildings and limited commercial uses to the north of the SDSU campus and Interstate 8. KOP 1 is located at an elevation of approximately 125 feet above mean sea level (amsl), approximately 250 feet lower in elevation than the northern portion of the Peninsula Component site (approximate elevation of 380 feet

amsl). The immediate foreground of KOP 1 includes Adobe Falls Road, an apartment building parking lot with several vehicles, ornamental trees and shrubs, and several two-story, wood exterior apartment buildings of similar architectural style and scale. Steep and densely vegetated canyon terrain is visible above the rooflines of foreground buildings. Portions of three buildings in the northern portion of the Peninsula Component site, and numerous tall fan palms, sit atop the steep terrain to the southeast. The existing on-campus Chapultepec Residence Hall, which is 11 stories high, is visible from this location.

KOP 1 is representative of views experienced by residents, pedestrians and motorists along Adobe Falls Road. Mobile viewers at this location have very brief exposure to views that include the Peninsula Component site.

3.4.1.2 Key Observation Point 2: Del Cerro Boulevard

KOP 2 is located on Del Cerro Boulevard, near Malvern Court. This location provides an elevated vantage point from which south oriented views extend beyond foreground residences and towards the elevated mesa landforms underlying a large portion of the main SDSU Campus. Specifically, prominent visible development on the SDSU campus includes eleven-story Chapultepec Hall, five-story Huaxyacac Hall (located east of Chapultepec Hall), Aztec Recreation Center, Peterson Gym, Fowler Athletics Center (located southeast of Huaxyacac Hall), and the Arts and Letters Building. Apartment buildings on the Peninsula Component site are visible but are noticeably lower in scale than other vertical development on the SDSU Campus.

From this location, the canyon terrain to the east and north of the site is evident. Canyon vegetation is relatively dense and displays dark green to grey colors. Taller palm trees and other indistinct trees are visible to the east and west of the Peninsula Component site. Off-campus single-family residential development located west of the Peninsula Component site is partially obscured by existing trees yet the comparatively light colors of roofs occasionally, with the exception of Chapultepec Hall that tends to stand out in the view due to its tall vertical scale, visible on-campus development conforms to a transition of scale and landscaping that is relatively successful in creating a coherent visual pattern.

KOP 2 is representative of views available to the single-family residential neighborhood off Del Cerro Boulevard. Since Del Cerro Boulevard ends at a cul-de-sac at its western terminus, it is reasonable to assume that Del Cerro Boulevard motorists reside in the area. While views that include the Peninsula Component site would be experienced over a brief duration (the view is available over an approximate 130 feet long segment of the road and the posted speed limit on Del Cerro Boulevard is 25 miles per hour), views are also available to pedestrians who would have a longer duration of exposure compared to motorists.

3.4.1.3 Key Observation Point 3: Remington Road

KOP 3 is located at the southwest corner of the Hewlett Road and Remington Road intersection. The view is oriented to the northeast and the foreground is comprised mostly of the asphalt surface with Remington Road extending to the north and gradually falling in elevation towards hidden single-family residential homes. Elements common to residential neighborhoods, including street trees/landscaping, homes, and street parking are present in the view. Homes are one- to two-stories in height and regular street trees and shrubs complement the built neighborhood character. While the distance between KOP 3 and Chapultepec Hall (approximately 630 feet) works to reduce the apparent scale of the structure and lower floors are screened by intervening residential development and landscaping in the foreground, the 11-story residence hall is skylined and attracts attention as a prominent existing feature.

From this location, the Peninsula Component site is located approximately 0.2 miles away and the lightly colored exteriors of a few existing two- to three story apartment buildings on the site are visible between gaps in residential development and street trees. The upper floors of the taller Arts and Letters Building is visible beyond the Peninsula Component site and is backscreened by broad, undulating, and hilly terrain featuring lines and clusters of lightly colored residential development intermixed with mostly dark green vegetation. Lastly, the peak of Cowles Mountain rises above the middleground hill and is visible.

Motorists and pedestrians comprise the representative viewer groups at KOP 3. While view exposure is considered brief for both groups, Remington Road traverses a single-family residential neighborhood and is not anticipated to receive substantial through traffic.

3.4.1.4 Key Observation Point 4 SDSU Lot 10 at Remington Road

KOP 4 is located in SDSU Lot 10, a narrow, small capacity parking lot situated between the SDSU Tennis Center and the SDSU Softball Stadium in the western portion of campus. From Lot 10, northeasterly views include the parking lot entrance off Remington Road and a sliver of a nearby parking lot that abuts a black metallic fence and dense canyon vegetation. Chapultepec Hall is also visible in the foreground and its tall (11 stories) vertical scale is visually prominent in the view. Beyond the foreground, the lightly colored exterior of a few apartment buildings on the Peninsula Component site are visible through the black metallic fence; however, the apartment buildings are at a lower elevation than KOP 4 and are partially blocked by intervening terrain and canyon vegetation. In the distance, a series of broad and undulating mountain terrain in Mission Trails Regional Park (i.e., Pyles Peak, Kwaay Paay, South Fortuna, and North Fortuna from northeast to north) draw the attention of viewers.

Representative viewing groups at KOP 4 consist mostly of on-campus motorists and pedestrians.

3.4.1.5 Key Observation Point 5 – Montezuma Road

Situated near the westbound travel lanes of Montezuma Road to the west of Campanile Drive, KOP 5 is oriented to the southwest towards the University Towers East Component site (currently developed as a small surface parking for the existing University Towers Residential Hall). At this location, palm trees dot the Montezuma Road sidewalks and nearby student apartment developments. The dark brown exterior of the College Campanile Apartments (two-story building) are present to the south of Montezuma Road and the tall, tan, and boxy University Towers building (nine-story residential hall) rises from the generally flat terrain to the southwest. Montezuma Road is a four lane, primary thoroughfare providing access to SDSU and through the College Area community, and the posted speed limit is 40 miles per hour.

Representative viewing groups at KOP 5 consist of motorists and pedestrians.

3.4.1.6 Key Observation Point 6 – Mary Lane Drive at 55th Street

Located to the southwest of the University Towers East Component site, Mary Lane Drive is a two-lane roadway primarily connecting Campanile Drive and 55th Street and providing access to off-campus (student and non-student) housing south of Montezuma Road. From this location, northeasterly views include single-story residences lining Mark Lane Drive, numerous vehicles parking in the street and in private driveways, street trees and minima private yard landscaping. An electrical distribution line supported by thin, wood poles parallel Mary Lane Drive and are located in an alley to the north (the alley is blocked from view by foreground residences). Lastly, the tall, boxy

form, cream colored stucco exterior, and dark window line façade of the nine-story University Towers building is visually prominent in the foreground above the rooflines of single-story residences lining Mary Lane Drive.

Representative viewing groups at KOP 6 consist of motorists, pedestrians, and residents.

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4 Impact Analysis

4.1 Methodology

4.1.1 Background Research and Field Survey

The Project setting was developed by reviewing available information on visual resources in the Project vicinity. The College Area Community Plan (City of San Diego 1989) was reviewed regarding the spatial distribution of land uses in the Project area and to gather information regarding the prevalent urban design concepts that may be present in the community. In addition, a field survey of the Project site and surrounding areas was conducted by Dudek in September 2024. Viewing conditions were clear and atmospheric conditions were fair with temperatures in the high 70s, low winds and prevalent clouds. Observations were recorded in a series of field notes as well as via photographs captured using an Apple iPhone 12.

4.1.2 Viewshed Analyses

To determine the area in which proposed development on the Project site may be visible, viewshed analyses of the proposed developments were prepared. A viewshed is composed of all the surface areas visible from an observer's view and within a defined study area. Viewsheds for this Project were prepared using geographic information system software and depict potential/theoretical areas of Project visibility within a 3-mile radius centered on the Project. The raster of theoretical visibility is shown on Figure 8 for proposed development on the Peninsula Component site and Figure 9 for proposed development on the University Towers East Component site. The viewshed analyses approximate the percentage of proposed buildings visible from locations in the defined study areas for the two sites and are based on existing terrain and modeled Project building heights (the viewshed analyses do not account for or consider potential screening associated with vegetation or existing structures, including development, that may occur between a given location or a representative vantage point including selected KOPs) and exaggerated in terms of overall Project visibility due to lack of data availability for above ground features and modeling processing time constraints.

4.1.3 Key Observation Points

A photographic inventory was conducted to document the visual setting and to help illustrate the existing visual character of the Project area. Natural and man-made visual resources were documented to inform the visual setting and the overall visual character of the area. Existing views from select public vantage points (i.e., Key Observation Points or KOPs) were documented and photographed. Six public views of the Project (four for the Peninsula Component site and two for the University Towers East Component site) were selected as representative views of the Project site available to viewers in the surrounding area. KOPs included both on- and off-campus locations and represent the various distance zones, viewing angles and landscape context of locations in the surrounding area from which views of the Project site are available.

As private views are not expressly protected by CEQA, no KOPs were established on private property.

4.1.4 Visual Simulations

Visual simulations are included and used in this analysis to represent the relative scale and extent of change to the existing visual environment anticipated to occur because of Project implementation. Visual simulations were prepared from representative KOPs in the surrounding area and depict the Project at build-out. Photo simulations include existing site photographs as background images and true-scale 3D models of the Project provided by the Project design team rendered onto the existing photographs. Background photographs were taken during the September 2024 site visit conducted by Dudek from selected KOPs. Using available topography, a 3D surface was created for the existing terrain then imported into 3ds Max. This 3D surface was used to camera-match the background photos to the terrain model. 3D models were then created for all proposed facilities that would be visible from the selected KOPs. The visual simulations present an estimated real future view to the Project that would be experienced by the public from a publicly accessible location. Visual simulations are presented on Figures 10 through 15.

4.1.5 CEQA Thresholds

The above data were referenced to determine the potential visual impacts in relation to significance thresholds. Visual changes and level of significance were evaluated based on the duration of the anticipated view, line-of-sight in relation to whether interrupted or direct views would change, distance of the view (foreground, mid-view or distant view), and number of viewers. The visual changes were then assessed to determine whether a significant impact would result in relation to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) significance thresholds. Where a potentially significant impact was identified, mitigation measures were recommended to reduce the identified impact.

4.1.6 Scenic Vistas

Under CEQA, scenic vistas are considered formally designated public vantage points offering views of primarily natural settings containing recognized scenic features or landscapes of special importance. As stated in Section 3.2 above, there are no designated scenic vistas identified in the College Area Community Plan (City of San Diego 1989) or the Navajo Community Plan (City of San Diego 2015).

The concepts of view blockage, interruption, and degradation are used to determine the severity of potential impacts to a scenic vista. If views from public vantage points across a project site include recognized scenic features, project components are examined to determine the likelihood for view obstruction (i.e., view blockage), view interruption (i.e., intrusion on available view due to contrasting features), or degradation (i.e., decline in scenic quality). As noted below, if such obstruction, interruption, or degradation rises to a “substantial adverse effect” on a scenic vista, the impact is considered significant under CEQA.

4.1.7 Scenic Highways

Scenic highways include those state facilities that have been officially designated or nominated for official designation through eligible status by the California Department of Transportation. If a project site is located within the viewshed of a scenic highway, then the potential for impacts to scenic highways is informed by the presence of existing scenic resources on the project site, project plans to avoid/protect or disturb existing scenic resources, and the visibility of scenic resource disturbance from an officially designated or eligible state scenic highway. Pursuant to CEQA Appendix G Guidelines, scenic resources include trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings.

Located approximately 285 feet north of the Peninsula component and 0.6 miles north of the University Towers East Component sites, I-8 is an eligible state scenic highway.

4.1.8 Visual Character and Quality

Impacts to existing visual character and quality in an urbanized area as this are determined through consideration of potential conflicts with applicable regulations governing scenic quality. SDSU is an entity of the California State University system and thus, the Proposed Project is not subject to local government planning and land use plans, policies, or regulations. As such, the Project would be subject to state/campus planning documents and regulations described above, but would not be subject to regional or local planning documents such as the City's General Plan, College Area Community Plan, or City municipal zoning code.

4.2 Thresholds of Significance

The following significance criteria included in Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (14 CCR 15000 et seq.) assist in determining the significance of a visual resources impact. Significant impacts would result if the Project would:

1. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
2. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.
3. In nonurbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality? Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Regarding Significance Threshold 3 and pursuant to Public Resources Code 21071, an "urbanized area" is understood to mean either of the following:

1. An incorporated city that meets either of the following criteria:
 - Has a population of at least 100,000 persons.
 - Has a population of less than 100,000 persons if the population of that city and not more than two contiguous incorporated cities combined equals at least 100,000 persons.
2. An unincorporated area that satisfies the criteria in both paragraph (1) and (2) of the following criteria:
 - Is either of the following:
 - (A) Completely surrounded by one or more incorporated cities, and both of the following criteria are met:

- (i) The population of the unincorporated area and the population of the surrounding incorporated city or cities equals not less than 100,000 persons.
- (ii) The population density of the unincorporated area at least equals the population density of the surrounding city or cities.

SDSU is located within with city limits of San Diego that, according to the California Department of Finance, had a population of 1,383,623 persons as of January 1, 2024 (California Department of Finance 2024). The SDSU campus is completely surrounded by urbanized City of San Diego communities and as such, the site of the Proposed Project is located within an urbanized area for purposes of this report analysis.

4.2.1 Scenic Vistas

Would the Proposed Project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

PRC Section 21099(d)(1) states that “[a]esthetic and parking impacts of a residential, mixed-use residential, or employment center project within a transit priority area shall not be considered [to have a] significant impact on the environment.” Because the Project consists of new student housing/residential buildings on currently developed sites within a mapped Transit Priority Area as identified by the City of San Diego (City of San Diego 2024), any impacts of the Proposed Project related to aesthetics, including effects to existing scenic views or scenic vistas as measured under the Appendix G threshold outlined above, would not be considered a significant impact on the environment.

As discussed in Section 3.2, there are no designated scenic vistas or viewpoints identified in the College Area or Navajo Community Plans. The Peninsula Component site is intermittently visible from I-8 and views from the segment of the interstate near the site are limited to canyon/mesa terrain along the I-8 corridor. Due to the lack of particular long and broad views from I-8 near the Peninsula Component site, the nearby segment is not considered a scenic vista for purposes of this report.

The Project site and, more generally, the SDSU campus are also visible from publicly access peaks/mountainous terrain in Mission trails Regional Park. Publicly accessible scenic vistas in the park include Cowles Mountain and Pyles Peak. However, the summits of both Cowles Mountain and Pyles Peak are located over 3.5 miles from the Project site, and while the site is visible from the peaks, the SDSU campus is viewed from this location within the broader visual context of the development within the Allied Gardens and San Carlos neighborhoods, development along I-8 corridor, and more broadly, development within various City of San Diego neighborhoods including Downtown. Due to the broad southwesterly view available from prominent terrain in Mission Trails Regional Park, neither existing development on the Project site nor nearby vertical development on the SDSU campus are dominant features as viewed from Cowles Mountain and Pyles Peak.

Construction/Temporary Impacts

As detailed in Section 1.3, Project Description, construction of the Proposed Project would occur over six phases. During this timeframe, views from recreational trails and mountain summits in Mission Trails Regional Park to the Project site would be dynamic as mobilization, demolition, and site preparation activities would transition to establishment of building foundations that would eventually shift to erection of steel framing and construction of exterior shells. Temporary visual impacts associated with construction activities are primarily associated with the

influx of construction workers, equipment and vehicles to the Project site and the noticeable changes to the existing form, line, color and texture of the site resulting from demolition of existing structures, and grading activities.

While the visual effects of demolition, grading, and building construction may be noticeable to users of the Cowles Mountain, Pyles Peak and North Fortuna Trails and associated summits, these effects would occur over 3.5 miles away and at a considerably lower elevation compared to the elevation of regional park trails and summits. As such, Project construction would not entail the introduction of elements that could block, screen or impede existing views from regional park trails or summits. Also, due to distance between scenic vistas and the Project site, visual contrasts resulting from demolition, grading, and building construction (and associated infrastructure installation) would not be prominent in the visible landscape and would not attract substantial attention in available long and expansive views. As construction progresses and building frames and envelopes become more distinct, the distance between trails, summits and features on the Project site including buildings, landscaping, roads, and interim park uses (on the Peninsula Component site only) would reduce the prominence of these features in the visible landscape. Further, the verticality and massing of building frames and envelopes would not be strong attractants from scenic vistas as these elements would be backscreened (i.e., viewed in front of) by terrain, vegetation and existing development (including multi-story residence halls on the SDSU campus). The backscreening effect would reduce the visual prominence of new building frames and envelopes on the Project site by altering perceptions of scale and mass through juxtaposition of Project components and existing built features. Backscreening would also help new building frames and envelopes to recede into the surrounding landscape/urban environment.

Because demolition, grading, and building construction (and associated infrastructure installation) would not entail the introduction of elements capable of blocking or screening available broad, panoramic views from scenic vistas and because new building frames and envelopes on the Project site would be backscreened by terrain, vegetation and existing development that would reduce the visual prominence of new building frames and envelopes forms and lines, the Project would result in a **less-than-significant** impact to scenic vistas during construction.

Operational/Permanent Impacts

Once constructed, new development on the Peninsula Component site (one 9-story and five up-to-13-story residence halls on the 10.3-acre site at the northwestern corner of the main SDSU campus) and University Towers East Component site (one 9-story residence hall) would have an altogether minor impact on the quality of existing views available from trails and peaks within Mission Trails Regional Park. Due to the distance between trails/peaks and the Project site, and the elevated vantage points offered along trails (and at peaks), new multi-story development on the Project site would not result in significant view blockage. The verticality of nine- and thirteen story buildings may result in limited interruption of views by screening land uses of smaller scale in the immediate area; however, screening of existing nearby development in views from elevated vantage points located more than 3.5 miles away would not result in a significant scenic vista impact. New development on the Project site would not result in significant degradation of existing views as new multi-story residence halls on the SDSU would be experienced/viewed alongside existing on- and off-campus multistory development and the broad, expansive nature of views from elevated vantage points in Mission Trails Regional Park would not be adversely affected. In the morning and evening hours, side lighting may enhance the visibility of proposed residence halls by highlighting the lightly colored off-white color exteriors of structures against the backdrop of a collection of slightly darker and hazy colors in the landscape. However, these effects would not compromise the expansive, panoramic nature of views available from scenic vistas.

Because proposed buildings and amenities/infrastructure on the Project site would not block, screen or impede the availability of expansive, panoramic views from popular trails and summits in Mission Trails Regional Park and because views to public resources including the Pacific Ocean, San Diego Bay, and undeveloped canyon terrain would be unaffected by new development on the Project site, Project operations would result in **less-than-significant** impacts to scenic vistas.

As to the residentially developed mesa to the west of the proposed Peninsula Component site, including Remington Road, development of the Proposed Project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. As shown on Figure 12, Key Observation Point 3: Remington Road (Existing and Proposed Conditions), the scale of proposed development on the Peninsula Component site would have limited effects on the quality of existing views across the site. Under existing conditions, views to the east are available but limited to relatively non-descript developed hillsides with the existing 11-story Chapultepec Hall prominently located within the viewshed. While Project operations would entail the presence of tall, multistory development on the Peninsula Component site (and would result in some blockage of the background in available views), no visible alterations to the existing canyon terrain would occur and development would not result in a loss of a scenic vista. While the Project comprises buildings of greater scale compared to existing on-site conditions, the Peninsula Component site is currently developed with residential uses and landscaping and lacks particularly scenic resources. Further, the development of denser and taller development on the Project site would generally be consistent with nearby residence development on the SDSU campus, including Chapultepec Hall (11 stories) and Huaxyacac Hall (5 stories). For these reasons, while views from publicly accessible vantage points in the residential areas to the west of the Peninsula Component site would be altered, development of the Proposed Project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista and impacts would be **less than significant**.

4.2.2 Scenic Highways

Would the Project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

Occasionally clear yet brief views to development on the Peninsular Component site (mostly apartments in the northern portion of the site) are available from the nearby segment of westbound I-8. The University Towers East Component site is not visible from I-8 and therefore, development on the University Towers East Component site would not impact views from the interstate. From the eastbound I-8 travel lanes (particularly the “fast” lane and nearest lanes), partial views to some development on the Peninsula Component site (and nearby development including 11-story Chapultepec Hall, 5-story Huaxyacac Hall, and College View Apartments) are occasionally available along an approximate 1,800-foot long continuous segment of the interstate approach towards the site. From westbound I-8, the Peninsula Component site may be visible over an approximately 0.7-mile long continuous segment of the interstate approach towards the site starting from approximately the College Avenue overpass. Due to intervening terrain, vegetation and existing development, views to the Project site are not available to motorists on additional scenic highways in the region including SR-52, SR-125 and SR-163.

Construction/Temporary Impacts

While the Peninsula Component site would be obscured by intervening canyon terrain and the elevated, horizontal concrete deck of the San Diego Trolley Green Line, construction activities along the edge of the mesa underlying the site would be briefly visible (albeit partially screened) to passing eastbound interstate motorists. Views from I-8 travel lanes to on-campus construction activities at the Peninsula Component site would be made in passing and

would be experienced at relatively high travel speeds. Assuming a travel speed of 65 miles per hour and an available viewing window of 1,800 feet, partially screened views to construction activities along the edge of the Peninsula Component site would be available to eastbound motorists for less than 20 seconds. Existing views to the south along eastbound I-8 near the Project site are limited in extent by abruptly ascending canyon terrain that is retained and obscured by the continuous, relatively tall form of a sparsely vegetated concrete and rock accent retaining wall. The presence of this wall is concurrent with the segment of the San Diego Trolley Green Line that parallels but is vertically separated from the eastbound I-8 travel lanes between the Grantville and SDSU stations. Views to construction on the Peninsula Component site from westbound I-8 travel lanes would be available starting at/near the College Avenue overpass and would remain in the field of vision until motorists pass the site (a distance of approximately 0.7 miles or roughly 3,700 feet). Assuming a travel speed of 65 miles per hour and an available viewing window of 3,700 feet, partially screened views to construction activities along the edge of the Peninsula Component site would be available to eastbound motorists for less than 40 seconds. The duration of available views to activities on the Peninsula Component site would gradually increase as multi-story buildings increase in height and the associated building viewshed expands.

Noticeable changes to existing views and visual quality would result from demolition of existing structures, removal of landscaping, grading activities, and the progressive re-introduction of rectangular building frames and forms to the Peninsula Component site. As viewed from I-8, view effects would primarily be associated with the presence of taller construction equipment (i.e., cranes) and the construction of a series of tall residence halls. As the earlier stages of construction progress, building envelopes would begin to materialize and the proposed verticality of development would begin to become apparent. These construction activities and changes in site scale would be visible from a relatively short segment of I-8 that cuts through a landscape comprised of developed hillsides and mesas including multi-story development on the SDSU campus.

Construction associated with the Proposed Project would not substantially damage scenic resources within the I-8 view corridor as no particularly unique trees or rock outcroppings are located on the Peninsula Component site. In addition, no historic buildings on the site are located within the I-8 view corridor. Because views of construction activities on the Peninsula Component site from the nearby segment of I-8 would be temporary and dynamic, and because the site does not support particularly scenic resources, gradual visual alteration of the Peninsula Component site resulting from existing structure and development demolition, site preparation and grading, and building construction (and infrastructure and landscaping installation) would not result in substantial damage to trees, rock outcroppings, or other scenic resources (that are not currently supported on site). As such, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Operational/Permanent Impacts

Views to new residence halls on the Peninsular Component site would be available from east- and westbound I-8 near the SDSU Campus. Due to the scale of proposed residence halls (i.e., up to 13 stories), views that include the upper floors of new buildings alongside nearby multistory campus development could be available from the westbound lanes of I-8 from beyond the 3 miles study area depicted on Figure 8; however, views would not be continuous/available along a continuous stretch of the interstate over this distance and Project buildings would not be prominent in available views. Following construction, views to proposed residence halls from eastbound travel lanes would be partially blocked by intervening terrain and nearby development including the MTS Trolley (Project visibility during operations would be slightly greater than during construction and available for a distance of approximately 0.5 miles starting near Waring Road).

The scale of proposed development on the Peninsula Component site would have limited effects on the quality of existing views across the site. Under existing conditions, views to the Peninsula Component site are available but limited to existing apartment buildings along the site perimeter. As westbound motorists pass the existing Arts and Letter Building, more of the Peninsula Component site is revealed but due to the low viewing angle available from the interstate, visible components are limited to the apartments lining the edge of the canyon. While Project operations would entail the presence of tall, multistory development on the Peninsula Component site (and would result in some blockage of the background sky), no visible alterations to the existing canyon terrain would occur and development would not result in a loss of visible scenic resources. While the Project comprises buildings of greater scale compared to existing on-site conditions, the Peninsula Component site is currently developed with residential uses and landscaping and lacks particularly scenic resources. Further, the development of denser and taller development on the Project site would generally be consistent with nearby residence development on the SDSU campus including Chapultepec Hall and Huaxyacac Hall that, in addition to the Arts and Letters Building, have previously altered the I-8 viewshed near the Peninsula Component site. Lastly, and due to the mobile nature of interstate views to the Peninsula Component site, the increased scale and density of residential development on the Peninsula Component site would not substantially damage scenic resources within the I-8 viewshed. Due to the fact that the Proposed Project would not substantially damage scenic resources within the I-8 corridor, the lack of scenic resources present on the currently developed site, and the brief, intermittent, and mobile nature of interstate views to proposed multistory development on the Peninsula Component site, impacts to scenic resources within a state scenic highway would be **less than significant**.

4.2.3 Conflicts with Scenic Quality Regulations

Would the Project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

Development of the Proposed Project would result in a change in the existing visual appearance/character of the Project site. As proposed, existing two- to three-story apartment building and parking lot development on the Project site would be demolished and redeveloped with multi-story (i.e., 9- to 13-story) residence halls, landscaping, parking, and various other site amenities. An illustrative site plan showing buildout of the Peninsula Component site is presented on Figure 2A. Anticipated visual change at each of the six identified key observation points associated with Project operations is presented on Figures 10 through 15.

As a state entity, the applicable regulations relative to scenic quality are those adopted by the California State University/SDSU. In this regard and as discussed below, the Proposed Project would be consistent with all applicable guidelines. As detailed below in Table 3, the Project would be consistent with applicable design guidelines of the SDSU Master Plan and as such, potential conflicts with regulations governing scenic quality would be **less than significant**.

Table 3. SDSU Master Plan Design Guidelines Consistency Analysis

| Guideline | Consistency Analysis |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5.1 Campus Entries. Campus entries should be examined at two levels-entries for vehicles into the campus area and its associated parking areas, and the pedestrian entries into the central core of the campus. Entries are | Consistent. The Peninsula Component would be located at the northern terminus of 55th Street, adjacent to the northwest portion of campus just south of I-8 and west of Canyon Crest Drive. I-8 is a major entry gateway into the campus as the northern entry to SDSU. The SDSU campus can be accessed from the north by College Avenue and can be accessed from the east or west by Montezuma Road, and east-west roadway near the southern boundary of the campus and |

Table 3. SDSU Master Plan Design Guidelines Consistency Analysis

| Guideline | Consistency Analysis |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| an integral part of the campus wayfinding system. | <p>accessed from the south via College Avenue. A perimeter road would circle the proposed development and this road would be designated for pedestrians, student micro-mobility devices, and utility/service and emergency vehicle access. In addition to providing site circulation, the perimeter road would double as a wellness and fitness path, accommodating a two-way bicycle/micro-mobility path, and a separate pedestrian path.</p> <p>The University Towers East Component entry would be accessed by Montezuma Road to the immediate north and Mary Lane Alley to the immediate south.</p> |
| <p>5.2 Campus Edges.</p> <p>The campus edge is the first visual element that all visitors, staff, faculty and students experience. A vast majority of the general public may never enter the campus and therefore their perception of the campus will be limited to these edges. Edges are also very important in identifying a sense of arrival and they form the first visual clues to warn the traveler that turning and entry decisions will need to be made.</p> | <p>Consistent. As described above, the northern terminus of 55th Street, adjacent to the northwest portion of campus just south of I-8 and west of Canyon Crest Drive includes a campus edge. Additionally, the campus edge along Montezuma Road serves as another crucial visual element for visitors, staff, faculty, and students. The Project would be designed consistent with the existing SDSU residential buildings to ensure harmony with the campus edges/boundaries.</p> |
| <p>5.4 Campus Nodes.</p> <p>Nodes are important centers of activity that should encourage social interaction and provide places of rest and observation. Although a variety of nodes exist that include minor pedestrian activities, seating areas and plazas, these guidelines primarily address the larger nodes identified in Chapter 4.¹</p> | <p>Consistent. The Peninsula Component would include a courtyard with outdoor amenities such as study areas, outdoor gaming, student gathering, lounge seating areas, a large plaza area, outdoor dining, and event space. The University Towers East Component would include open space and exterior amenity areas.</p> |
| <p>5.5 Campus Views.</p> <p>Both internal and external views exist on campus. Internal views are covered under the guidelines for site layout and form. This section will discuss off-campus views that originate from on-campus viewpoints.</p> | <p>Consistent. The Peninsula Component would have major views of distant landmarks including Lower Mission Valley and Mount Soledad. The Project would not obstruct these views because the proposed structures would not display spatial or scale dominance in the broad, horizontal landscape visible from these views, specifically those from the proposed residence halls on the Peninsula Component site. In contrast, the University Towers component, located along Montezuma Road, does not encompass major views or viewpoints, thus maintaining consistency with the Campus Views guidelines.</p> |
| <p>5.6 Site Form and Layout.</p> <p>Implementation of basic site planning principles and spatial design guidelines will help to provide an understandable layout of the campus.</p> | <p>Consistent: Site layout would be designed in accordance with SDSU's basic site planning principles and spatial design guidelines. The Peninsula Component would entail development of residence halls where lower scale, two- to three-story apartment building are currently located. The University Towers East Component consists of the development of a nine-story residence hall on an existing parking</p> |

Table 3. SDSU Master Plan Design Guidelines Consistency Analysis

| Guideline | Consistency Analysis |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Buildings should be arranged in a manner that promotes a coherent physical appearance, image and Identity for SDSU. A consistent and unified architectural approach to site planning fosters a 'sense of order' and a 'sense of place.' Buildings which are properly sited provide a positive sense of order that will enhance the campus image. | lot for the existing nine-story University Towers residence hall. The construction of residence halls on the proposed University Towers East Component site would aid in achieving an understandable layout of the campus. The layout of buildings on the two sites is deliberate and is intended to achieve the desired density and also create unique neighborhoods, amenities, and spaces for future on-campus residents. For both sites, multi-story development is proposed near existing multi-story development/residence halls to help promote a coherent appearance with the existing built environment. |
| 5.8 Building Character, Function & Materials. These architectural guidelines focus primarily on those elements that relate to the context and character of the campus and upon appropriate architectural design. | Consistent: The proposed buildings at both the Peninsula Component and the University Towers Component would be designed to reflect the architectural character and context of the SDSU campus. Compliance with the California Building Code Chapter 7A, which governs materials and construction methods for exterior wildfire exposure, ensures that the buildings would utilize appropriate, durable materials. Furthermore, the architectural design would incorporate features that harmonize with the existing campus aesthetic, enhancing the overall visual coherence of the area while meeting functional requirements. |
| 5.11 Landscape Materials, Furnishings & Lighting. A major component of landscape architectural guidelines is that of plant materials. Although this is just one of many components under landscape architecture, it is often thought by many as the definition of landscape. Site furnishings provide for functional use of exterior spaces and help to set the character of the space and relate it to adjacent architectural elements. Site furnishings are those items which make the outdoor environment safer, easier and more pleasant to use and enjoy. Site furnishings include amenities such as benches and other objects used for sitting, tables, drinking fountains, trash containers, flag poles, bicycle racks and other man-made items located within the landscape. Arbors, overheads, pergolas and trellises are other elements that can extend architectural treatments into the open landscape. Exterior lighting performs a number of functional uses, primarily related to night-time safety, security and wayfinding. The lighting system should | Consistent: Project landscaping would be designed to complement the architecture and accentuate the assets of the site by extending a natural aesthetic into the open space character (see Guideline 5.9 and 5.10). Additionally, the proposed landscape and hardscape plan would facilitate a pedestrian-oriented environment and would include avenues for multimodal circulation. Similar to the Peninsula Component, the proposed landscaping and overall site character of the University Towers East Component would be pedestrian oriented. |

Table 3. SDSU Master Plan Design Guidelines Consistency Analysis

| Guideline | Consistency Analysis |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| define and reinforce the vehicular and pedestrian circulation systems. Even during daylight hours, lighting standards can help to define primary and secondary streets. Lighting is also necessary to highlight design treatments and spaces. Lights can be used artistically while still providing functional requirements of illumination and wayfinding | |

Note: ¹ Chapter 4 identifies locations of high volume pedestrian nodes that encourage social interaction, high level activity nodes, and potential node projects. The Project site is not included as a node location; nevertheless, the Project’s consistency with this standard is described in the corresponding analysis column.

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5 References

California Department of Finance. 2024. Estimates -E1: Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State – January 1, 2023 and 2024. Released May 1, 2024.

Caltrans (California Department of Transportation). 2008. Scenic Highway Guidelines.

Caltrans. 2024. “California State Scenic Highways.” Accessed October 23, 2024. <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways>.

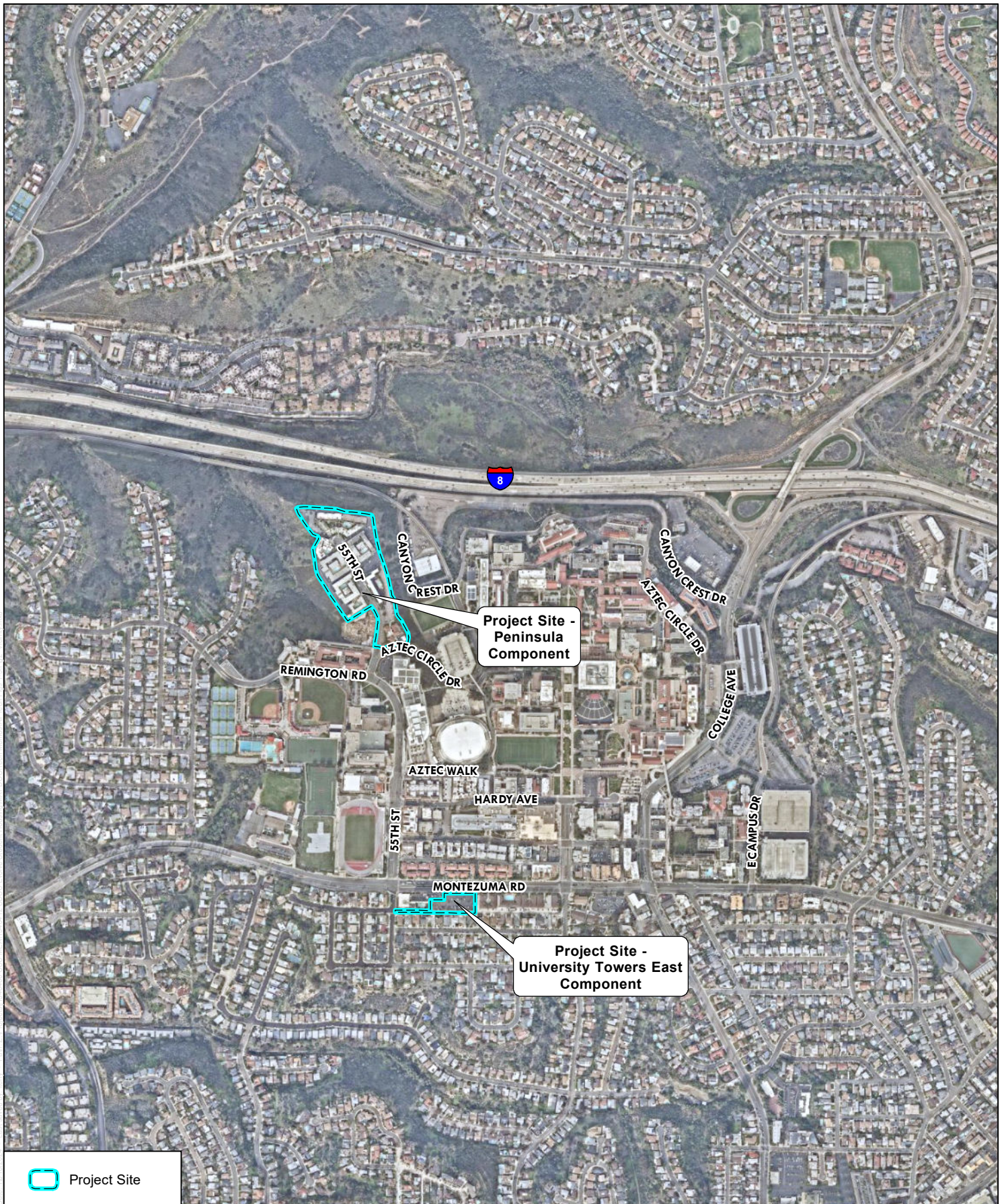
City of San Diego. 1989. College Area Community Plan.

City of San Diego. 2015. Navajo Community Plan.

City of San Diego. 2024. General Plan. July.

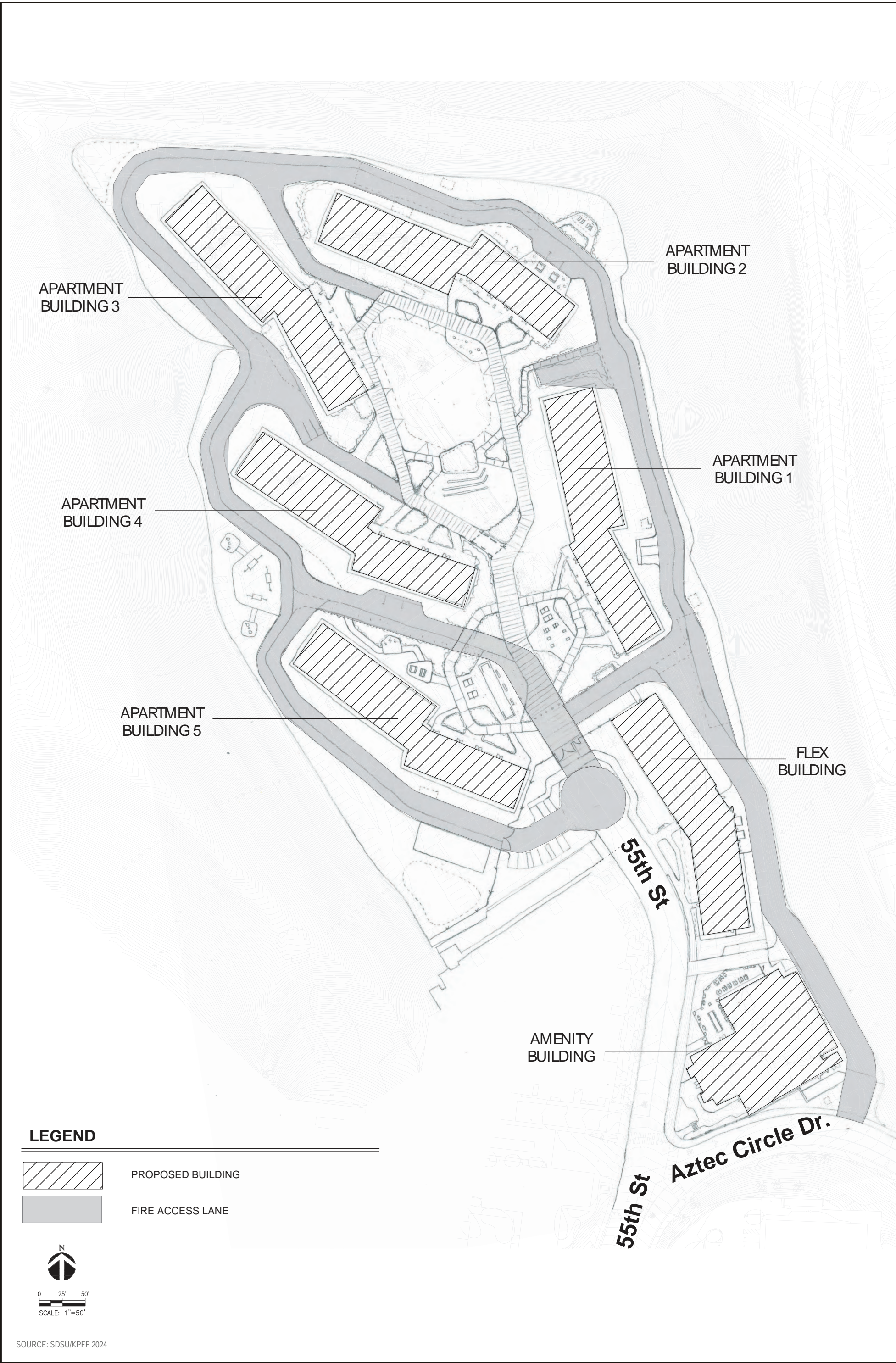
Mission Trails Regional Park. 2023. Mission Trails Regional Park Trail Map. Updated May 2023.

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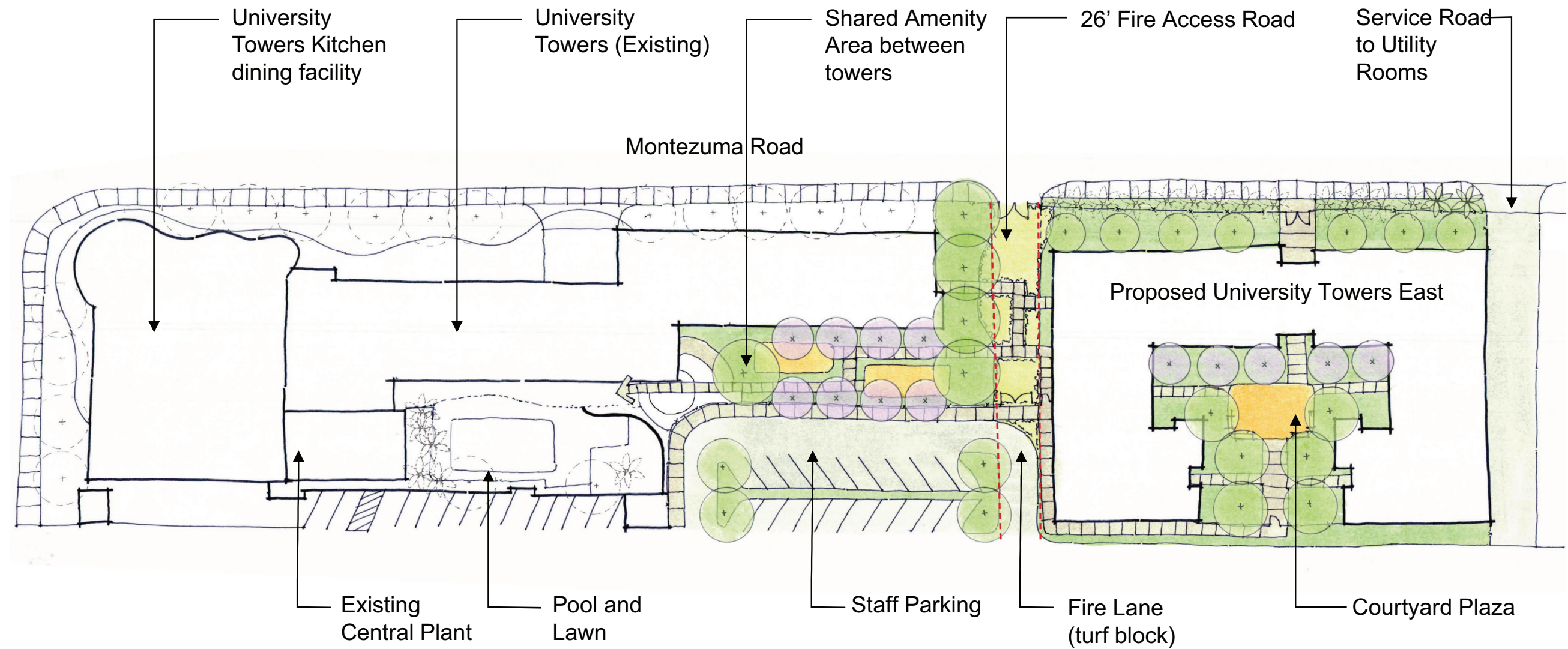


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SOURCE: DUDEK 2024

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FIGURE 3
 Existing Conditions – Peninsula Component Site
 Visual Resources Report for the SDSU Evolve Student Housing Project

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SOURCE: DUDEK 2024

FIGURE 4

Existing Conditions – University Towers East Component Site
Visual Resources Report for the SDSU Evolve Student Housing Project

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FIGURE 5

Key Observation Points

Visual Resources Report for the SDSU Evolve Student Housing Project

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KOP 1



KOP 2



KOP 3



KOP 4

SOURCE: DUDEK 2024

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FIGURE 6

Existing Conditions – KOP 1, KOP 2, KOP 3, and KOP- 4 (Peninsula Component Site)

Visual Resources Report for the SDSU Evolve Student Housing Project

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KOP 5



KOP 6

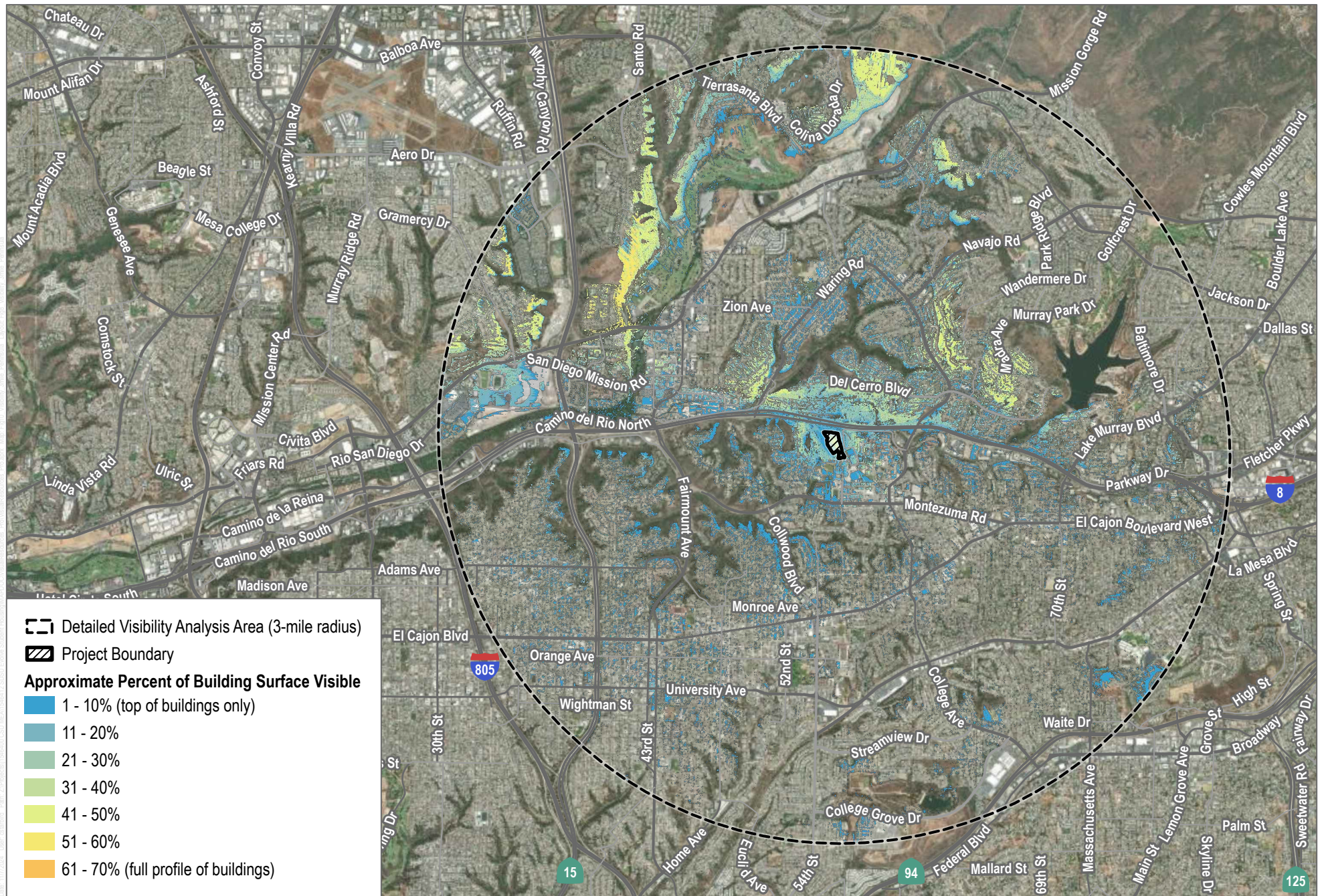
SOURCE: DUDEK 2024

FIGURE 7

Existing Conditions – KOP 5 and KOP 6 (University Towers East Component Site)

Visual Resources Report for the SDSU Evolve Student Housing Project

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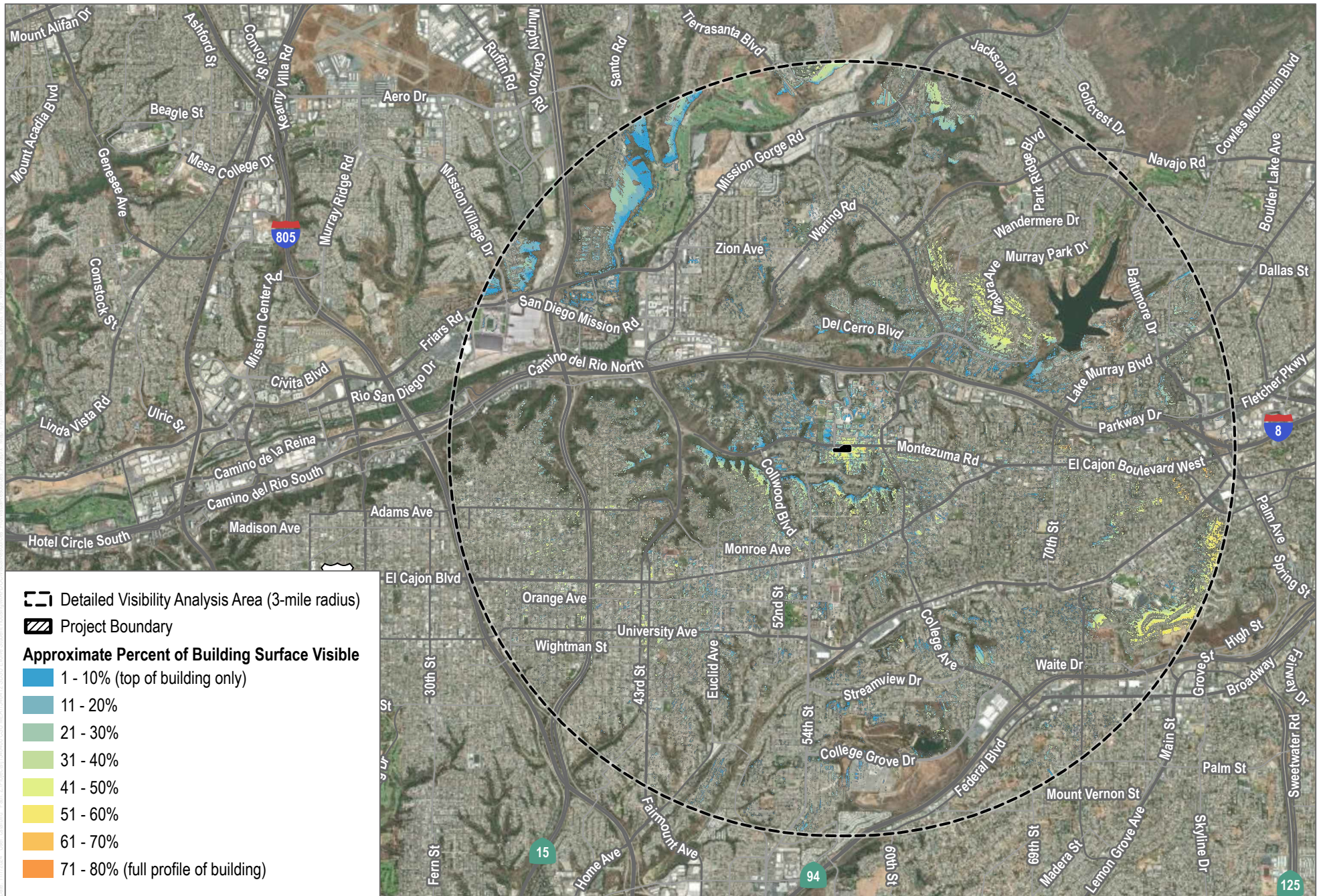
SOURCE: Esri and Digital Globe, Open Street Map

FIGURE 8

Viewshed (3 mile) - Peninsula Component Site

Visual Resources Report for the SDSU Evolve Student Housing Project

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SOURCE: Esri and Digital Globe, Open Street Map

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EXISTING



PROPOSED

SOURCE: DUDEK 2024

FIGURE 10

Key Observation Point 1: Adobe Falls Road (Existing and Proposed Conditions)

Visual Resources Report for the SDSU Evolve Student Housing Project

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EXISTING



PROPOSED

SOURCE: DUDEK 2024

FIGURE 11

Key Observation Point 2: Del Cerro Boulevard (Existing and Proposed Conditions)

Visual Resources Report for the SDSU Evolve Student Housing Project

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EXISTING



PROPOSED

SOURCE: DUDEK 2024

FIGURE 12

Key Observation Point 3: Remington Road (Existing and Proposed Conditions)

Visual Resources Report for the SDSU Evolve Student Housing Project

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PROPOSED

SOURCE: DUDEK 2024

FIGURE 13

Key Observation Point 4: SDSU Lot 10 (Existing and Proposed Conditions)

Visual Resources Report for the SDSU Evolve Student Housing Project

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EXISTING



PROPOSED

SOURCE: DUDEK 2024

FIGURE 14

Key Observation Point 5: Montezuma Road (Existing and Proposed Conditions)

Visual Resources Report for the SDSU Evolve Student Housing Project

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EXISTING



PROPOSED

SOURCE: DUDEK 2024

FIGURE 15

Key Observation Point 6: Mary Lane Drive (Existing and Proposed Conditions)

Visual Resources Report for the SDSU Evolve Student Housing Project

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