

SWCA

# RAGGED POINT INN AND RESORT VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

February 2016

## PREPARED FOR

Ragged Point Inn and Restaurant  
19019 Highway 1, Unit 1  
Ragged Point, CA 93452

## PREPARED BY

SWCA Environmental Consultants  
1422 Monterey Street, Suite C200  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401



**Ragged Point Inn and Resort  
Visual Impact Assessment  
San Luis Obispo County, California**

Prepared for

**Ragged Point Inn and Restaurant**

19019 Highway 1, Unit 1  
Ragged Point, CA 93452  
Attn: Jim Ramey  
(805) 927-4502

Prepared by

Robert G. Carr  
CA. Landscape Architect 3473

Bill Henry, AICP, Project Manager

**SWCA Environmental Consultants**

1422 Monterey Street, Suite C200  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
(805) 543-7095  
[www.swca.com](http://www.swca.com)

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This study assesses visual impacts which may result from the re-development of the Ragged Point Inn and Resort on Highway 1 in San Luis Obispo County, just south of the Monterey County line (refer to Figure 1). The purpose of this analysis is to determine if a change in the visual environment would occur, whether that change would be viewed as a positive or negative one, and the degree of any change relative to the existing setting. If the project has the potential to cause visual impacts, this study specifically defines those impacts.

This analysis focuses on the potential for the proposed project components to result in impacts on coastal visual resources as seen from public locations and roadways. The baseline visual condition is analyzed, visual resources identified, and a baseline scenic character established. The analysis methodology evaluates the aggregate affect that the project may have on the overall visual character of the project site and surrounding landscape. If a change in character is identified, it is compared to viewers' expected sensitivity, and is reviewed for consistency with applicable county and state coastal planning policies. Levels of impact are determined according to CEQA definitions and guidelines.

## 2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project proposes to substantially remodel/ reconstruct the existing Ragged Point Inn and Resort development in four phases over a period of several years, dependent in part on the timing of required permitting. The conceptual project plan is shown in Figure 2. The following project description (dated September 1, 2014) provided by the project applicant was used in the preparation of this report.

### 2.1 PHASE ONE PROJECT ELEMENTS

#### Element 1.1: Demolition And Removal Of Existing Park House

- Demolition permits have been issued by the County of San Luis Obispo.
- Demolition is scheduled to occur during September, 2014.

#### Element 1.2: Demolition And Removal Of Existing Spa Deck And Storage Shed (1400 Sf)

- *1.2a* Demolition of the existing 1,200 sf deck and structure; including the removal of all concrete foundations and support framing, metal connectors, deck floor framing and decking, exterior wall, doors, windows, walls, roof framing sheathing and weatherproofing, plumbing work, electrical work, and the spa tub.
- *1.2b* Removal of the existing storage shed.
- *1.2c* Spa deck framing components that may be salvaged for reuse is encouraged.

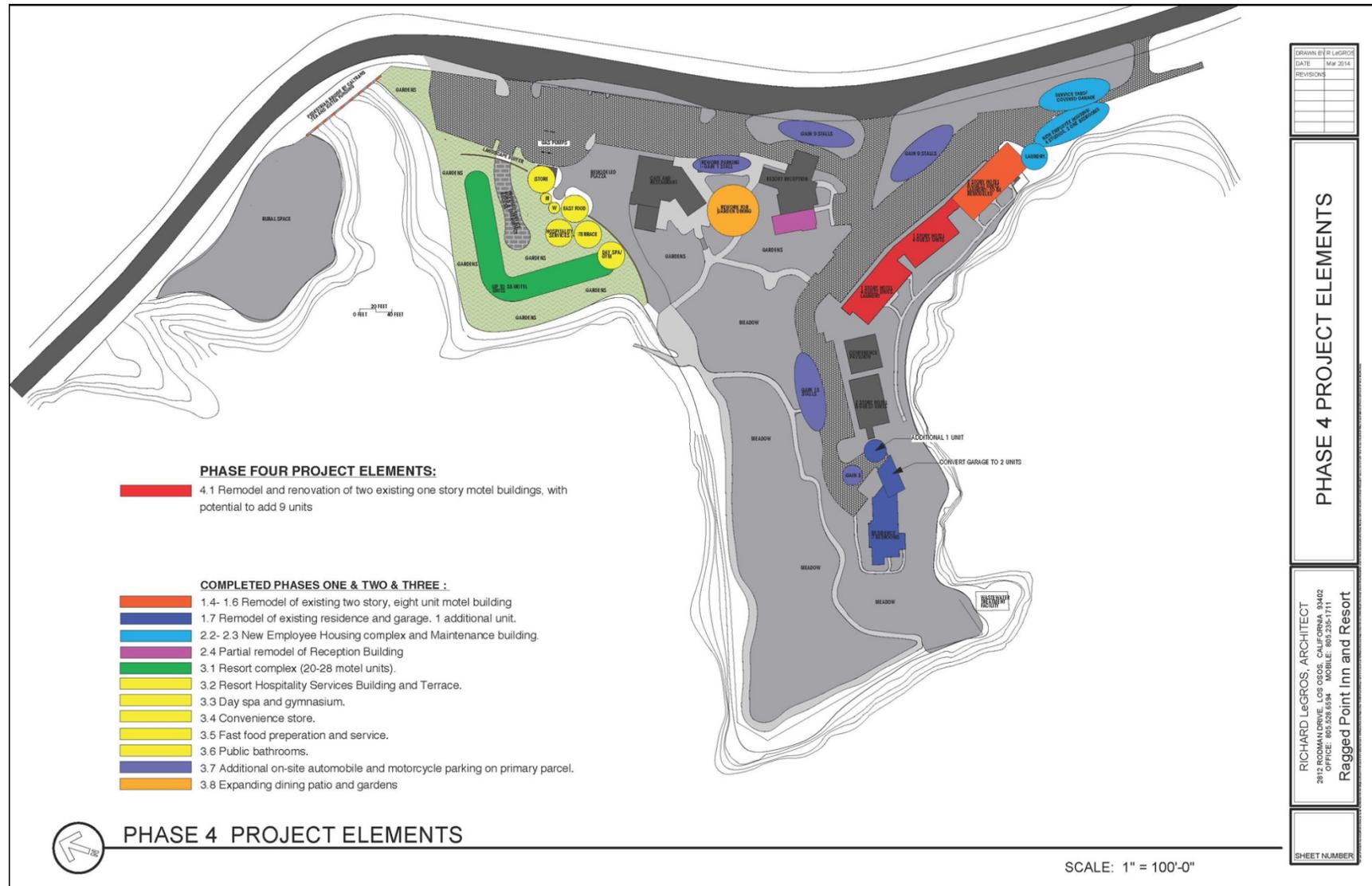
#### Element 1.3: Land / Bluff Top Restoration (2800-Sf Disturbed Area)

- *1.3a* All land areas disturbed by the construction and demolition of the (e) spa deck structure shall be restored and re-vegetated to a natural state as deemed complete by the County of San Luis Obispo and the California Coastal Commission. Work to include cut and fill restorative grading, planting disturbed areas with new regenerative ground covers, bushes and trees, and the metered irrigation of the re-vegetated areas for a time period of not less than 1 year.

Figure 1. Project Location Map



Figure 2. Project Concept Plan



**Element 1.4: Construction Of Six (6) All New Motel Guest Rooms**

Work to include the construction of six (6) motel guest rooms, consisting of four (4) 450 sf guest rooms and two (2) 650 sf one bedroom motel guest suites.

**Element 1.5: Addition To, And Remodel Of, An Existing Residence And Garage**

An existing 4,600 sf residence with existing 800 sf garage is to be remodeled in conjunction with the addition of 2,700 sf of new floor area. Total area of work is 8,000 sf. Twelve (12) new motel guest rooms are created by the work. The work is to consist of:

- 2.4a Remodel of an existing 4600 sf two story residence, consisting of 5 bedrooms / motel guest rooms.
- 2.4b Conversion of existing floor space into two (2) new bedrooms / motel guest rooms.
- 2.4c Construction of 1000 sf of new floor area to the existing residence, resulting in four (4) new bedrooms / motel guest rooms.
- 2.4d The remodel of the existing 800 sf residence garage, resulting in two (2) new motel guest rooms.
- 2.4e The addition of 1500 sf of new floor space to the existing garage, resulting in four (4) new hotel guest rooms.

**Element 1.6: Resort Operations Maintenance Building (2300 Sf)**

- 2.3a Non hazardous material and equipment storage area.
- 2.3b Paint and hazardous materials storage area.
- 2.3c Wood working and wood storage area.
- 2.3d Welding and metal working area and metal materials storage area.

**Element 1.7: Commercial Laundry (700 Sf)**

Commercial Laundry facility is to consist of:

- 1.5a Work area, including 80 feet of linen storage shelving, one 3'X6' spread tables, three (3) roll hampers, and one (1) laundry sink.
- 1.5b One (1) 60" roll iron.
- 1.5c Three (3) commercial washing machines (50 pound capacity).
- 1.5d Three (3) commercial dryer machines.
- 1.5e Three (3) 100 gallon propane-gas-fired water heaters.

**Element 1.8: Exterior Spa Deck (700 To 12000 Sf)**

- Spa Deck is to consist of:
  - 1.6a One (1) handicap-assessable unisex bathroom with lavatory, toilet, stall shower, and dressing area.
  - 1.6b One (1) handicap-assessable package spa unit (with lift).

**Element 1.9: Additional On-Site Car And Motorcycle Parking (5,000 Sf)**

The resort property currently has one hundred (100) parking stalls (consisting of a variety of compact, full and HC parking stalls), and three (3) RV parking stalls.

The additional on-site parking is to be added to the through the re-configuration of the existing paved parking lots and the construction of new parking areas throughout the resort property.

- 39 new car parking stalls and 6 motorcycle stalls to be added.
- Parking stalls added include:
  - Three (3) handicap-assessable (14'x18') parking stalls.
  - Twenty-four (24) full-sized (9'x18') parking stalls.
  - Twelve (12) compact-sized (8'x16') parking stalls.
  - Six (6) motorcycle stalls (5'x10').

## 2.2 PHASE TWO PROJECT ELEMENTS

Phase two project elements shall commence within one (1) year of the issuance of the CDP / Building Permits.

### **Element 2.1 Demolition And Removal Of Existing On Site Employee Housing And Service Yard**

All existing employee housing located on site (trailers, mobile homes, out buildings and structures) shall be demolished and removed from the property. All existing service yard structures (trailers, storage containers) shall be demolished and removed from the property.

### **Element 2.2: Remodel Of Resort Reception Building / New Employee Housing Complex**

Existing 3,600 sf Resort Reception Building to be remodeled. The work is to consist of:

- 2.2a Remodel of the resort lobby and reception area.
- 2.2b Remodel of the resort gift store.
- 2.2c A 800 sf addition to create a resort business
- 2.2d Conversion of nine (9) existing resort guest rooms to employee housing. Five (5) of the existing guest rooms shall be converted to studio apartments. Four (4) of the existing guest rooms shall be combined into two (2) one bedroom apartments.
- 2.2e A 350 sf addition to serve as an employee common room.

## 2.3 Phase Three Project Elements

Phase three project elements shall commence within five (5) years of the issuance of the CDP / Building Permits. All work is new construction. Prior to the commencement of Phase 3 work, the existing gas station building, public bathroom building, and fast food preparation building shall be demolished.

### **Element 3.1: Resort Complex (+/-20,000 Sf New Construction)**

Resort complex to be built on main property currently occupied by on-site employee housing. The Resort complex is to consist of:

- 3.1a A two story structure incorporating 20 to 24 motel guest rooms and suites (80 guests maximum), with motel units varying in floor area between 500 sf to 900 sf.
  - All motel units to have private access.

- o All motel units to have direct ocean views.
- o All motel units to have private garden space and outdoor patios and decks.
- 3.1b Resort complex to be screened and gate-accessed from the existing resort complex.
- 3.1c Landscaped gardens, plazas, walks, stairs, and roof gardens.
- 3.1d Disturbed area of site bluff top to undergo restoration.
- 3.1e Coastal access trails and tourist service facilities to be added to bluff.

### **Element 3.2: Hospitality Services Complex With Terraces (3000 Sf New Construction)**

The Hospitality Complex is to consist of:

- 3.2a An Assembly Room / Banquet Hall, to seat 60 guests maximum.
- 3.2b Two (2) unisex handicap-assessable bathrooms (toilet, urinal and sink).
- 3.2c Landscaped ground and roof terraces, including fire pits, Bocci Ball court, and lounge areas
- 3.2d Storage room to store tables, chairs, pool table, table tennis table, linens, etc.

### **Element 3.3: Day Spa And Gymnasium Complex (1500 Sf New Construction)**

The Day Spa and Gymnasium Complex is to consist of:

- 3.3a Spa treatment / massage room with private  $\frac{3}{4}$  bathroom and clothes changing area.
- 3.3b Heated custom spa tub with handicap-access lift.
- 3.3c Sauna facility to seat six.
- 3.3d Flex Room with fixed exercise equipment.
- 3.3e Yoga Room.
- 3.3f One (1) female and one (1) male handicap-assessable bathroom with stall showers.

### **Element 3.4: Convenience Store (1000 Sf New Construction To Replace Existing Facility)**

The Convenience Store is to consist of:

- 3.4a Pay station for Gasoline, general merchandise and prepared foods.
- 3.4b Display shelving and cold case storage for clothing, gifts, sundries, chilled food, milk, soft drinks, beer and wine.

### **Element 3.5: Fast Food Preparation: (1000 Sf New Construction To Replace Existing Facility)**

### **Element 3.6: Public Bathrooms (500 Sf New Construction To Replace Existing Facilities)**

The Public Bathrooms are to consist of:

- 3.6a All bathrooms to be 100% handicap-assessable compliant.

- 3.6b Women's public bathroom shall have three (3) toilets (stalled), to be equipped with automatic low volume flush valves; two (2) lavatory sinks, and to be equipped with automatic water conserving faucets; and one (1) diaper changing station.
- 3.6c Men's public bathroom shall have one (1) toilet (stalled), to be equipped with automatic low volume flush valve; two (2) 100% waterless urinals (stalled); two (2) lavatory sinks, and to be equipped with automatic water conserving faucets; and one (1) diaper changing station.

### **Element 3.7: Expanded Dining Patio And Garden (8,000 Sf)**

This element shall develop underutilized open space and ocean view corridors into exterior seating and dining areas for the public's use and enjoyment.

- Element 3.8 will be a part of the existing restaurant, wine bar and café operations.
- Outdoor dining seating for 125 guests.

### **Element 3.8: Business Office (1,000 Sf)**

### **Element 3.9: Permanent Employee Housing Complex (2,900 Sf)**

Complex to consist of four (4) 300 sf studio apartments and two (2) 550 sf one bedroom apartments. All apartment units shall have a full bathroom consisting of a sink, toilet and tub/shower.

## **2.4 Phase Four Project Elements**

Phase four project elements shall commence within five (5) years of the issuance of the CDP / Building

### **Element 4.1: Remodel And Renovation Of Two Existing One Story Motel Buildings**

The work shall consist of the complete remodel and/or demolition of the existing buildings. If existing building are demolished, the buildings shall be replaced with 4000 sf of new construction. The remodel/new construction will have eleven (11) motel units (a net increase of two (2) guest rooms).

- Building 1 consists of four (4) motel units and exterior corridor (1200 sf). One story.
- Building 2 consists of five (5) motel units, stage areas and laundry (1600 sf). One story.

## **2.5 Statistics**

### **Parking Spaces:**

#### ***Existing:***

The property currently has one hundred (100) parking stalls (a variety of compact, full and HC parking stalls), and three (3) RV parking stalls. Phase one work will remove three (3) parking stalls.

#### ***Proposed:***

- An additional 39 new parking stalls to be constructed per Element 3.7.

Parking stalls added include:

- Three (3) HC accessible (14'x18') parking stalls.
- Twenty (20) full-sized (9'x18') parking stalls.
- Ten (10) compact-sized (8'x16') parking stalls.

- Six (6) motorcycle stalls (5'x10').

### **Motel Guest Rooms:**

#### **Existing:**

The property currently has thirty-nine (39) motel units located in six buildings.

#### **Proposed:**

Conversion of nine (9) existing motel guest rooms into an employee housing complex. (a temporary reduction of 9 motel units). After completion of the new employee housing complex (element 3.9), these 9 rooms will be converted back into guest rooms.

New construction of forty-four (44) to Fifty-two (52) new guest rooms, and six (6) employee housing apartments, comprised of:

- Six (6) new guest rooms per element 1.4
- Twelve (12) new guest rooms per element 1.5
- Twenty-six to thirty-two (24 to 32) new guest rooms per element 3.1.
- Two (2) new guest rooms per element 4.1.
- Six (6) new employee housing apartments per element 3.9.

### **Tourist Services:**

#### **Existing:**

- Gas Station with four pumps (300 sf, station building to be demolished).
- Resort Reception Building (3600 sf, to be remodeled).
- Public Bathrooms (200 sf, to be demolished).
- Snack Bar / fast food (860 sf, to be demolished).
- Ice Cream Shoppe (200 sf, to be demolished).
- Coffee shop / wine bar (1500 sf).
- Restaurant (3000 sf).
- Exterior dining patios (2000 sf, to be remodeled).

#### **Proposed:**

- Gas Station with four pumps (1000 new construction per Element 3.4).
- Resort Reception Building (4200 sf with addition per Element 2.5).
- Public Bathrooms (500 sf new construction per Element 3.6).
- Snack Bar / fast food (1000 sf new construction per Element 3.5).
- Coffee shop / wine bar (1500 sf, no change).
- Restaurant (3000 sf, no change).
- Exterior dining patios (5000 sf remodel and new construction per Element 3.7).
- Hospitality Services Complex with Terraces (3600 sf new construction per Element 3.2).
- Day Spa and Gymnasium Complex (2000 sf new construction per Element 3.3).

- Spa Deck (700 sf new construction per Element 1.6).

### **Resort Operations:**

#### **Existing:**

- Resort Business Office (850 sf, to be demolished as part of Element 2.1).
- Operations Service Buildings and yard (1000 sf, to be demolished per Element 2.1).
- Employee Housing Area (10 travel trailers and mobile homes, to be demolished per Element 2.1).

#### **Proposed:**

- Resort Business Office (1000 sf new and remodel construction per Element 3.8).
- Operations Service Buildings (2300 sf new construction per Element 1.6).
- Employee Housing Complex (2,900 sf new construction per Element 3.9).
- Commercial Laundry (700 sf new construction per Element 1.7).

## **3 PROJECT SETTING – REGION**

The project is located within the southern section of the Big Sur Coast region. The landform of this region is generally characterized by steep slopes and ravines forming a series of ridgelines and valleys as the mountains rise from the Pacific Ocean. The topography of the Big Sur Coast is typically steeper throughout its southern section and allows more opportunity for long-range vistas toward the west. The topography supports a mostly curvilinear roadway, which produces views for the highway traveler ranging from close-in views of the inland slopes to mid-range coastline views and wide-open panoramas.

Surface water is an important visual element throughout the area. The Pacific Ocean is visible along much of Highway 1. Numerous seasonal streams exist throughout the area although many are blocked from view and not noticeable from a moving vehicle.

Throughout the region, vegetation is also a primary component of visual character. The Highway 1 corridor supports a variety of plant communities and vegetative types. In general, creeks and drainages hold stands of sycamore, redwood, cottonwood, and willows. Oak, cypress, and other native trees are found mostly at the upper elevations along with coastal chaparral. Although native plant communities are the most visually prevalent, exotic plants such as pampas grass have established themselves at certain areas throughout the region. Landscape planting is generally associated with the scattered residential and commercial development along the highway and is most visible through the Big Sur Village area.

As seen from Highway 1, the primary developments are the roadway itself and related features, occasional home sites, ranches, and tourist-oriented businesses. Along the southern end of the Big Sur region, built-developments have a low to moderate visual presence in the landscape. In general, the scale and frequency of structures and other built amenities throughout this area is such that although visible, they do not dominate the views when seen in the context of the overall landscape.

## **4 THE PROJECT SITE**

The Ragged Point Inn and Resort sits on a bluff-top site overlooking the Pacific Ocean immediately west of Highway 1. The site is bordered on the northern side by Young Creek, which incises a steep-sided canyon from the inland hillsides to the coastal outfall. Steep rocky cliffs fall from the site's western and southern perimeter. The eastern side of the site is bounded by Highway 1 and the adjacent hills as they rise up inland from the road's edge. The site is generally flat and slopes down gently from Highway 1 to the bluff's western edge toward the.

The existing development on the site includes a hotel, restaurant and snack bar, gift shop, gas pumps, outdoor eating plaza, restrooms, parking lots, employee housing and trailers, and numerous support buildings and sheds. The resort grounds include expansive lawn areas separated and bounded by planting beds, decomposed granite paths, and paved walkways. The property is signed as Coastal Access, and a looped trail through the site provides bluff-top views of the coast and Pacific Ocean. An edible garden area supporting the restaurant operation is found just north of the resort along the ocean side of the highway. The garden area is bounded by vinyl-clad chain link fencing.

The visual character of the site is defined both by built and natural elements. The existing buildings on site are both one and two story, with stained wood-siding exteriors and stone-clad accents. The primarily gabled roof forms are covered with wood-shake shingles. Semi-craftsman style eaves, overhangs, and balconies are constructed of stained wood. Skylights, large windows, and a glass sunroom are associated with the restaurant and hotel lobby buildings. A combination of low stone and wooden walls are seen throughout the property. The existing front dining plaza is red brick and other restaurant decks are made of wood. The parking lots throughout the site are asphalt. The perimeter fence along the north, west, and south sides of the resort is vinyl-clad chain link.

Four freestanding signs are located along the highway announcing the Ragged Point Inn and Resort and its access driveways.

Overhead lighting and poles are associated with the parking lot adjacent to the highway. Lighting for the hotel and restaurant areas is mostly provided by luminaires attached to the building structures, including sconce-type fixtures as well as roof and eave-mounted floodlights. Two wooden utility poles are visible within the development, and no overhead utility wires are seen crossing the development.

A grove of visually dominant Monterey cypress trees occupies the northern side of the site, beginning from the westernmost bluff edge, continuing through the development, and up the hillside east of the highway. Other mature cypress trees and pines are also seen to a lesser extent along the southern perimeter and adjacent to the highway frontage. Other landscaping throughout the site includes turf areas, native and non-native shrubs, vines on fences, and various ground covers.

## **5 VISUAL ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

The findings of this study are based on multiple field visits conducted over several months, including review of the entire site as well as the surrounding area. Resource inventories were conducted both on foot and from moving vehicles, during the day and nighttime. Existing visual resources and site conditions were photographed and recorded. Assessment of project elements and programs was based on plans and descriptions provided by the project applicant. County planning documents and previous studies relevant to the surrounding area were referred to for gaining an understanding of community aesthetic values.

Locations of critical structure and architectural elements contributing to the appearance of the buildings for inclusion in the photo-simulations were identified based on information provided by the project applicant. The known dimensions of existing buildings and site features were used as a visual scale reference for confirming structure height and massing, ensuring accuracy of photo-simulations, and for determining overall project visibility.

The project site was viewed from all potential public viewer group locations on Highway 1. Resulting from this initial review, representative viewpoints were determined for further analysis, based on dominance of the site within the view, duration of views, and expected sensitivity of the viewer group. Of those representative viewpoints, Key Viewing Areas (KVAs) were selected which best illustrate the visual changes proposed by the project (refer to Figure 3). Photo-simulations were then prepared by the

project applicant. Once verified for accuracy and appropriateness of location, the simulations were used to quantify potential project visibility and to assess related impacts. The project site was then field-reviewed to assist in determining possible mitigation measures. Images of the existing views from the KVAs are shown in Figures 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, and 15. Photo-simulations of the proposed project as seen from the KVAs can be seen in Figures 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, and 16.

## **5.1 Photo-Simulations**

Photographic images and simulations included in this report are important tools for understanding the estimated appearance of the proposed project. It is important to note, however, that photographs do not represent the same level of visual acuity and sensitivity to detail as the human eye. As a result, photo-simulations tend to understate the anticipated perception of impacts.

## **6 VIEWER SENSITIVITY**

Sensitivity to change in the visual environment varies with the viewer's activities and expectations. In determining the viewer sensitivity level for purposes of assessing visual impacts associated with this project, the number of viewers as well as exposure, duration and dominance of views were also considered. In addition, sensitivity regarding aesthetic issues is reflected in the following planning and regulatory excerpts:

### **6.1 State and National Scenic Designations**

In 1999, Highway 1 was designated by the State of California as an Officially Designated Scenic Highway. The County of San Luis Obispo (County) promoted the designation based on the high level of existing visual quality along the corridor as well as the desire to protect its visual resources in the future. In 2003, Highway 1 was also bestowed the title of "All-American Road" in the National Scenic Byway program. This designation recognizes the visual characteristics of the Highway 1 corridor as being among the highest quality in the nation. These designations illustrate the highest level of concern and sensitivity for the aesthetics within the project area and beyond.

## **7 REGULATORY SETTING**

The project is located within the jurisdiction of the County. The regulatory setting is defined in applicable planning policies and in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. The regulatory setting pertaining to visual resources includes review of the proposed project's consistency with respect to the County's implementation of CEQA; the San Luis Obispo County General Plan Local Coastal Program; and the General Plan Conservation and Open Space, Land Use, and Circulation Elements. Relevant documents also include the North Coast Area Plan, Title 23 County Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance, San Luis Obispo County Design Guidelines, and other supporting documentation.

Figure 3. Key Viewing Area Location Map



 Location and direction of Key Viewing Area (KVA) and associated photo-simulation.

## 7.1 California Coastal Act, Section 30251

The coastal policies adopted in the California Coastal Act of 1976 establish the standard of review regarding protection of visual resources in the coastal zone. The intent of the Coastal Act visual policy and the basis for establishment of significance thresholds is defined in Section 30251, which states:

*The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas.*

Implementation of the Coastal Act is delegated to the County through adoption of the County General Plan Local Coastal Program.

Policy clarification regarding consideration of public views versus private views is provided by the California Coastal Commission concerning Section 30251 of the Coastal Act:

*The primary concern under this section of the Act is the protection of ocean and coastal views from public areas such as highways, roads, beaches, parks, coastal trails and accessways, vista points, coastal streams and waters used for recreational purposes, and other public preserves rather than coastal views from private residences where no public vistas are involved.*

## 7.2 County Of San Luis Obispo

### 7.2.1 Local Coastal Program, Coastal Plan Policies, Chapter 10, Visual and Scenic Resources

The Local Coastal Program, Coastal Plan Policies, Chapter 10, Visual and Scenic Resources cites the California Coastal Act as follows:

*30251 – Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of the surrounding areas, and where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas.*

The Coastal Plan Policies for rural areas describes the north coast of San Luis Obispo County as follows:

*“This portion of rugged coastline along Highway 1 is known internationally for its awesome beauty as the headlands to the Big Sur area. A diversity of picturesque coastal characteristics are visible from the winding drive. This area contains a variety of environmentally sensitive habitats such as the California Sea Otter Preserve, San Simeon Creek Lagoon, Piedras Blancas Dunes and the Arroyo de la Cruz wetlands. The vegetation includes low grasses and shrubs and occasional stands of Monterey Cypress, oaks and pines. Non-agricultural development in this area is limited to the Hearst Castle State Historical Monument, Piedras Blancas Lighthouse, San Simeon Village and the visitor facilities at San Simeon Acres and Ragged Point. The visual integrity of this area is related to the distance and range of views. The directional changes of Highway 1 allows the viewer to see the curve of the coastline for miles, with the Santa Lucia Mountains providing a backdrop to the coastal views. New, highly visible development on*

*the ocean side of Highway 1 would detract from the spectacular ocean views and the pristine rural ambience that characterizes the area.”*

The Coastal Plan Policies Chapter 10, Policy 1, Protection of Visual and Scenic Resources states that:

*“Unique and attractive features of the landscape. including but not limited to unusual landforms, scenic vistas and sensitive habitats are to be preserved, protected, and in visually degraded area restored where feasible.”*

Policy 2 of the Coastal Plan Policies includes the following:

*“Permitted development shall be sited so as to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas. Wherever possible, site selection for new development is to emphasize locations not visible from major public view corridors. In particular, new development should utilize slope created “pockets” to shield development and minimize visual intrusion.”*

## **7.2.2 General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element, Chapter 9 – Visual Resources**

This section defines the following as major visual issues:

### **7.2.2.1 SCENIC LANDSCAPES**

Development will inevitably occur within some of the county’s scenic areas. The location and design of development in these areas can have a profound effect on urban and rural landscapes. Buildings that are appropriately placed and designed can complement and even blend with the natural landscape. However, inappropriately located and designed development including telecommunication facilities, roads, and billboards can detract from and conflict with an area’s overall character. Land management practices may also cause unnecessary harm to visual resources.

### **7.2.2.2 SCENIC CORRIDORS**

Scenic corridors are view areas, or “viewsheds” from popular public roads and highways that have unique or outstanding scenic qualities. Inappropriate development or billboards can intrude upon these viewsheds. Some examples are highly visible graded roads and pads, buildings that are too close to a highway, and building designs that silhouette against the skyline, telecommunications facilities, utilities, signage, and other structures that dominate rather than blend with a natural landscape. Scenic highways and roads are scenic corridors that are designated to conserve and enhance their scenic beauty. Highway 1 is a designated State Scenic Highway and National Scenic Byway from San Luis Obispo to the Monterey County line.

### **7.2.2.3 VISUAL RESOURCES, GOAL 2, THE NATURAL AND HISTORIC CHARACTER AND IDENTITY OF RURAL AREAS WILL BE PROTECTED.**

#### **Policy VR 2.1 Develop in a manner compatible with Historical and Visual Resources.**

*Through the review of proposed development, encourage designs that are compatible with the natural landscape and with recognized historical character, and discourage designs that are clearly out of place within rural areas.*

## Policy VR 2.2 Site Development and Landscaping

*Through the review of proposed development, encourage designs that emphasize native vegetation and conform grading to existing natural forms. Encourage abundant native and/or drought-tolerant landscaping that screens buildings and parking lots and blends development with the natural landscape.*

### 7.2.2.4 VISUAL RESOURCES, GOAL 7 - VIEWS OF THE NIGHT SKY AND ITS CONSTELLATIONS OF STARS WILL BE MAINTAINED.

#### Policy VR 7.1 Nighttime light pollution

*Protect the clarity and visibility of the night sky within communities and rural areas, by ensuring that exterior lighting, including streetlight projects, is designed to minimize nighttime light pollution.*

## 8 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

In addition to comparing the project to relevant policies and standards, this assessment identifies which specific criteria contribute most to the existing quality of each view, and if change would occur to that criteria as a result of the project. If a change in visual criteria is identified, the change is analyzed for its potential effect on the existing scenic character. This analysis is combined with the potential number of viewers, their sensitivities and viewing duration in order to determine the overall level of impacts.

### 8.1 California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines

The State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G(b) states that affirmative answers to the following questions indicate potentially significant impacts to visual resources:

- 1a. Does the project site have significant visual resources by virtue of surface waters, vegetation, elevation, slope, or other natural or man-made features which are publicly visible?
- 1b. If so, does the project have the potential to degrade or significantly interfere with the public's enjoyment of the site's existing visual resources?
- 2a. Does the project have the potential to impact visual resources of the Coastal Zone or other visually important area (i.e., mountainous area, public park, urban fringe, or scenic travel corridor)?
- 2b. If so, does the project have the potential to conflict with the policies set forth in the Local Coastal Plan, the Comprehensive Plan or any applicable community plan to protect the identified views?
3. Does the project have the potential to create a significantly adverse aesthetic impact through obstruction of public views, incompatibility with surrounding uses, structures, or intensity of development, removal of significant amounts of vegetation, loss of important open space, substantial alteration of natural character, lack of adequate landscaping, or extensive grading visible from public areas?

In consideration of the guidance listed above, the project would be determined to have a significant effect on the visual environment if the effects exceed the significance criteria related to the following State CEQA Guidelines Checklist, and described further in Section 10, *Visual Impact Analysis*.

Will the project:

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

## **9 PROJECT VISIBILITY**

### **9.1 Visibility of the Project Site from Highway 1 Northbound**

Traveling along Highway 1, approaching the project site in the northbound direction, the overall viewshed is defined by the hillsides rising up to the north and east, sweeping views of the Pacific Ocean to the west, and patterns of native vegetation scattered along the roadside, hillsides, and natural drainages. Moving along the highway, availability of vistas can be alternately restricted or revealed due to the narrow, curvilinear roadway and steep topography.

Heading northbound, the project site can first be seen from a distance of approximately 600 feet. From this distance, the roadside signage and portions of the motel lobby building can be seen among the mature cypress trees and other vegetation. Approaching the Ragged Point Inn and Resort from the south, direct ocean views are available to the west and the hills rise up inland from the highway. The vegetated landform of the property can be seen jutting-out from the coastline. Continuing in the northbound direction, intervening vegetation keeps the site somewhat obscured from view until a point approximately 100 feet south of the southernmost entrance. From that point north, substantial gaps in the roadside vegetation allow direct views of the resort. The project site occupies approximately 1,200 feet of highway frontage. From this project frontage on Highway 1 heading north, views of the Pacific Ocean are available across the existing resort up to the point where the existing two-story hotel unit stands. North of the two-story hotel unit, the adjacent one-story hotel units allow ocean views over their roofs, although these views are partially affected by existing trees near the hotel. The hotel reception area and restaurant buildings block views, although the open space between these two structures does provide views of the ocean in the distance. From Highway 1, ocean views are minimal along the northern portion of the site, where existing development and vegetative cover is more dense. The existing employee housing area is mostly hidden from highway view because of fencing and vegetation.

The most noticeable components of the existing development are the parking lots adjacent to the highway, the gas pumps, fast food court, restaurant building, hotel reception building, and the hotel rooms along the southern portion of the site. Continuing past the project site to the north, roadside vegetation becomes somewhat scarce, and open vistas of the coastline and ocean are more readily available.

The most recent California Department of Transportation traffic data (2014) shows an average of 2,200 vehicles pass the project site each day on Highway 1. The average viewing duration of the site for those traveling in motor vehicles at the posted speed limit is approximately 15 seconds. Bicyclists and pedestrians have substantially more time to view the project site. Highway 1 is a designated bicycle route, and it serves as the existing route of the California Coastal Trail.

### **9.2 Visibility of the Project Site from Highway 1 Southbound**

Field review shows that while traveling southbound on Highway 1, the Ragged Point Inn and Resort can first be seen while rounding a point approximately 0.7 mile north of the site. The view from this location to the project is very brief. However, the site, if noticed, is most discernable by its grove of large

Monterey cypress, and to a lesser extent its built components. From this viewing distance, the project site occupies a very small portion of the viewshed and is visually subordinate to the overall landscape.

Continuing south, the project site can be seen again from an informal roadside pullout approximately 0.3 mile north of the development. From this location, more of the developed character of the site can be noticed, although, due to their scale, the existing Monterey cypress trees on-site remain dominant visual elements. This location allows a view of the northern side of the Ragged Point Inn Resort bluff top in its visual context of ocean panorama, rugged coastline, and hills.

Approaching the Ragged Point Inn and Resort from the north, intervening vegetation and roadway curvature substantially precludes direct views of the most developed portions of the resort until a point almost directly in front of the site. When the development appears, the parking lots, gas pumps, restaurants, and dining plaza become visible at nearly the same time. Along this northern portion of the site, these existing developments mostly limit ocean views. The mature cypress trees provide a visual silhouette to the west and continue to the inland side of the highway.

While continuing southbound on Highway 1 adjacent to the site, the visibility of existing resort elements and ocean view opportunities is similar to that described for traveling northbound in the previous section.

## 10 VISUAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

The project is proposed on a sensitive site in terms of coastal and highway corridor aesthetic character. The parcel is adjacent to and highly visible from Highway 1, an Officially Designated State Scenic Highway and National Scenic Byway, and is within the Coastal Zone. The project site may also be considered as the southern gateway to the Big Sur Coast, an international tourist destination based on its exceptional scenic quality.

The high visual quality of the region is due to a combination of several elements, primarily the sweeping views of the Pacific Ocean, the rugged shoreline and beaches, bluffs and terraces, the dramatic topography, inland hills, and the patterns of native vegetation.

In addition to the natural features, the visual quality and character of the project setting is also influenced somewhat by the built and cultural environment. Scattered ranches and ranchland, occasional private residences, and visitor-serving development are also part of the Highway 1 Big Sur experience. Accordingly, this analysis considers both the natural setting and the existing development as part of the visual baseline.

### 10.1 The Project's Effect on Scenic Vistas

Scenic vistas are generally defined as high-quality views displaying good aesthetic and compositional value that can be seen from public viewpoints. If the project substantially degrades the scenic landscape as viewed from public roads, or in particular designated scenic routes, or from other public or recreation areas, this would be considered a potentially significant impact on the scenic vista. Scenic vistas related to the viewing experience associated with this project include views of the Pacific Ocean, the beach and shoreline, bluffs and cliffs, mature trees and other native vegetation, and the hillsides and ridges inland from Highway 1.

The project would be seen along an approximately 0.4-mile section of Highway 1. From the previously described northern viewpoints at turnouts along southbound Highway 1, the proposed project improvements would not affect ocean views or any other components of the existing scenic vista. Closer to the project site, however, certain proposed project elements would have a direct adverse effect on existing views of the Pacific Ocean. The greatest extent of ocean view blockage would be caused by the

proposed construction of new employee housing (four studio and two one-bedroom apartments), a covered garage, a service yard, and a laundry building. These new structures would be built in the area immediately south of the existing southernmost hotel units. This currently undeveloped area provides direct ocean views from Highway 1 in both the north and southbound directions. Construction of new buildings and a service yard in this area would substantially if not completely eliminate the most open ocean views through the property as seen from the highway.

The project proposes to remodel, renovate, and/or demolish and rebuild the majority of the existing hotel room buildings within the resort. As part of these alterations, some of the structure heights and massing would increase. If the heights of the hotel room buildings in the southern portion of the property were to increase, ocean views from Highway 1 would be adversely affected.

The area between the existing restaurant and the hotel reception building is proposed to be “reworked” to create a garden dining area. This area currently provides an open view corridor through the property from Highway 1 to the ocean. The potential construction or placement of support buildings, equipment, shade structures, or other upright elements taller than 8 feet in this area would interfere with ocean views from the highway.

**Impact 1**      **The proposed development would reduce high quality views of the Pacific Ocean as seen from Highway 1. This ocean view blockage from a public roadway would result in potentially significant direct long and short-term impacts to the existing scenic vista.**

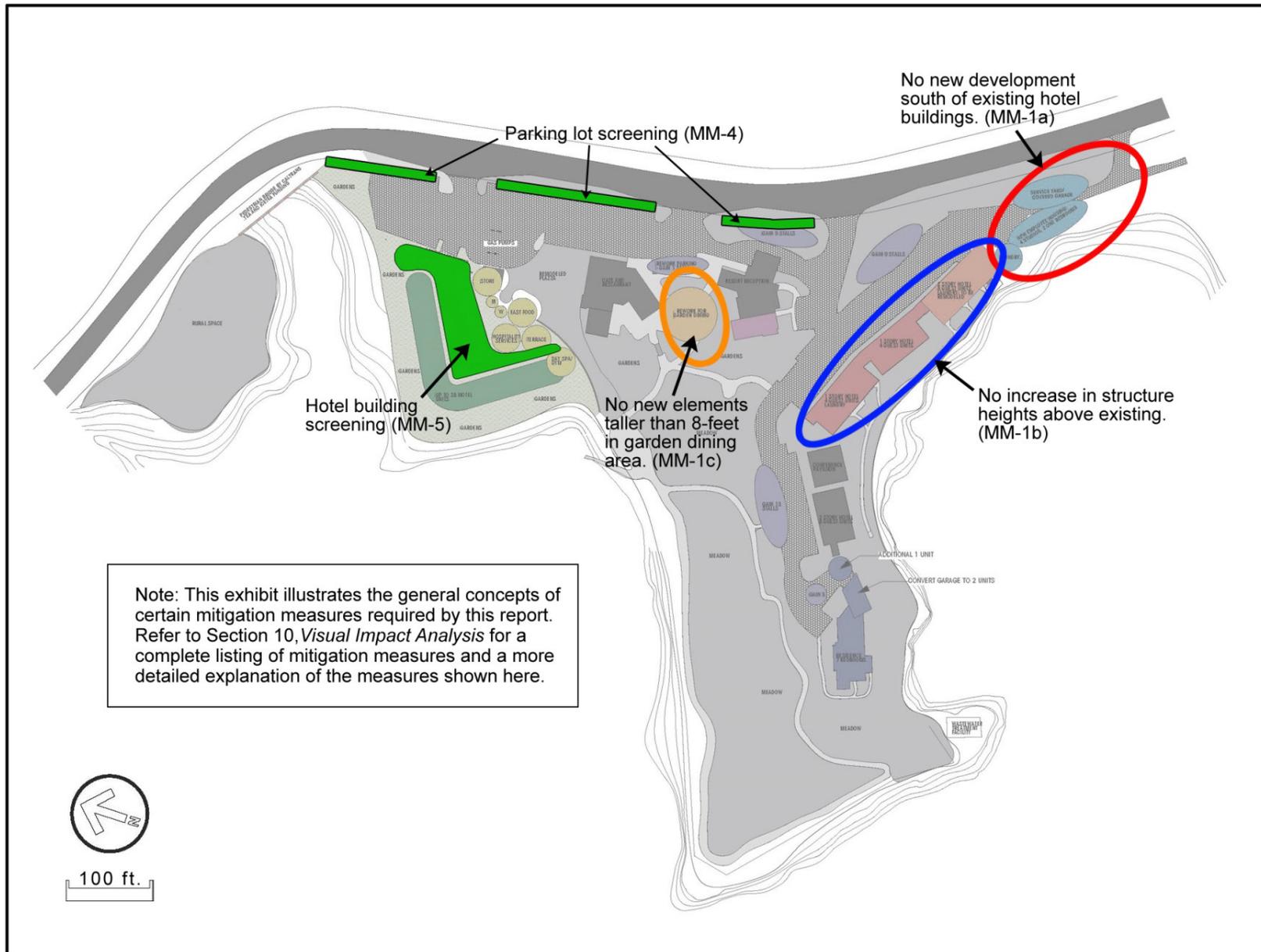
*MM-1*      ***Prior to issuance of a conditional use permit for the project, the applicant shall submit plans and elevations to the County Department of Planning and Building for review and approval. The plans and elevations shall show the following and shall conform to concepts shown in Figure 4, Mitigation Concept Plan:***

- a. No new development shall occur south of the southernmost existing hotel room buildings.*
- b. The remodeling, renovation and/or demolition and rebuilding of the southern existing hotel room buildings shall not result in any increase of height for those existing structures.*
- c. The proposed renovation and/or development for a garden dining area between the existing restaurant and hotel reception building shall not result in the construction or seasonal placement of any elements taller than eight feet above existing ground level.*

### **Residual Impacts**

These measures prohibit new development south of the southernmost existing hotel room buildings, keep the structure heights of those existing hotel room buildings at current elevations, and restrict the heights of new elements in the proposed Garden Dining Area. Implementation of these measures would substantially preserve ocean views through the project site, and would result in visual impacts to the scenic vista considered to be significant but mitigable (CEQA, Class II).

Figure 4. Mitigation Concept Plan



## 10.2 The Project's Effect on Specific Scenic Resources as seen from the State Scenic Highway

A scenic resource is a specific feature or element with a high degree of memorability or landmark characteristics that contributes to the high visual quality of the corridor. From along Highway 1 in the project vicinity, the Pacific Ocean, the rugged cliffs and shoreline, inland hills, vegetated creekways, and mature Monterey cypress trees are considered scenic resources. The project would result in a significant impact if it were to damage or have a substantial negative effect on views of any of those specific resources as seen from Highway 1, an Officially Designated State Scenic Highway.

As mentioned in the previous section, because of its location immediately west of Highway 1, the construction of certain proposed new or remodeled project elements would have a direct adverse effect on existing views of the Pacific Ocean. Ocean view blockage would be caused by the proposed construction of new employee housing south of the southernmost existing hotel room buildings, the reconstruction of those existing southernmost hotel buildings themselves, and the development of the garden dining area between the existing restaurant and hotel reception buildings.

**Impact 2      The proposed development would reduce high quality views of the Pacific Ocean as seen from Highway 1. This ocean view blockage would result in potentially significant direct long and short-term impacts to a scenic resource as viewed from an Officially Designated State Scenic Highway.**

*Implementation of mitigation measure MM-1 would reduce potential impacts to scenic resources as seen from the State Scenic Highway.*

### **Residual Impacts**

Measures are identified under Impact 1 prohibiting new development south of the southernmost existing hotel room buildings, keeping the structure heights of those existing hotel room buildings at current elevations, and restricting the heights of new elements in the proposed Garden Dining Area. Implementation of those measures for Impact 1 would also reduce impacts for Impact 2 by substantially preserving ocean views through the project site. As a result, visual impacts to scenic resources would be considered significant but mitigable (CEQA, Class II).

## 10.3 The Project's Effect on the Existing Visual Character and Quality of the Site and its Surroundings

The visual character of the project site and its surroundings is defined by the balance of built and natural elements. The larger landscape surrounding the Ragged Point Inn and Resort is dominated by a rugged, natural beauty. The dramatic meeting of land and sea creates memorable panoramas of the highest quality. The Ragged Point Inn and Resort serves as an unofficial southern gateway to the Big Sur Coast. This gateway effect is strengthened by the fact that the basic type of landscape changes at Ragged Point, from the more rolling hills, plateaus and grazing land typical of San Luis Obispo County, to the steeper, more rugged terrain seen in Monterey County to the north. The great number of tourists and visitors traveling Highway 1 are likely to view the Ragged Point Inn and Resort as a sort of commercial landmark on the southern Big Sur Coast. These factors underscore the sensitivity of the Ragged Point Inn and Resort as an influence on the visual character of not only the project site but on the overall Coast Highway traveling experience as well.

Currently the primary character-defining features of the project site as seen from Highway 1 include:

- The generally low profile, semi-rustic buildings and open layout of the existing development.
- The parking lots fronting the highway, including associated vehicles and people.
- Pedestrians and visitors utilizing the existing dining plaza and the property in general.
- The landform of the property as it extends out toward the west beyond the adjacent coastline.
- The grove of large-scale Monterey cypress trees along the northern portion of the resort.
- Other mature trees and landscape vegetation throughout the property.
- Views of the Pacific Ocean from Highway 1.

As seen from Highway 1, the existing visual elements of the site usually combine in a harmonious view of both developed and natural features. The built character of the existing project site is evident and mostly unavoidable due to the close proximity of development to the highway. The architectural style of the existing development however is generally low profile, with wooden siding, stone accents, modified gable and hipped-roof forms and wood shingles, making the development generally compatible with the rural character of the setting. This, combined with the visual dominance of the large cypress trees and the availability of ocean views through the site, allows the existing development to be generally visually subordinate to the larger natural viewshed. During the busy tourist seasons, however, this visual balance is disrupted by the increased clutter of vehicles filling the parking lot, and by the visibility of crowds of visitors.

The project proposes an extensive alteration of the existing Ragged Point Inn and Resort property including numerous new structures, the reconstruction of several other existing buildings, new and expanded uses and activities, new outdoor gathering plazas, and a number of reconfigured infrastructure elements. A fundamental result of these alterations would be an inherent increase in the built character of the site. In general, the proposed development would appear larger in scale, larger in overall footprint, and denser than the existing resort. The architectural style of the proposed structures is utilitarian in appearance, with emphasis on large unadorned planes and angular geometries. Most of the new buildings feature second floors achieved by one or more cubic modules with slant roofs extending above the main form of the structures. Although no specific proposed materials or color schedules were available at the time of this report, the photo-simulations show exteriors that appear to be tan concrete or stucco, with orange-red or stained wood trim, doors, and entry overhangs. The proposed architectural style and materials of the buildings would be unsympathetic with the natural and rural context of the coast, and would serve to draw attention to the built characteristics of the site, by making the structures more noticeable. In addition, the vertically protruding sections of the new and reconstructed hotel room buildings along the southernmost portion of the property would reduce views to the Pacific Ocean as seen from Highway 1.

Some extent of mature trees and other vegetation would be removed to accommodate the new construction and extensive remodeling. Although revegetation areas are identified in the project description, it would take decades for the visual benefits of the larger trees to be replaced. In the meantime, a substantial reduction in the vegetated character of the site would occur. This effect would further emphasize the visual perception of the site as one of more intense development.

As a result of the proposed expanded and new uses, it is expected that the resort would have an increase in the number of vehicles and people on-site. The project proposes additional parking areas and spaces, which would expand the percentage of the view occupied by asphalt and vehicles, and would result in a commensurate increase in visual clutter.

**Impact 3**      **The project would cause a noticeable change to the visual environment of the site and its surroundings due to an increased built, commercial appearance, a reduction of vegetated character, and loss of ocean views. The developed aspect of the project site would become substantially more noticeable and visually dominant as seen from Highway 1 and would distract from the views of the larger natural landscape. As a result the project would cause potentially significant direct long and short-term impacts to the visual character of the site and its surroundings.**

*Implementation of mitigation measure MM-1 would partially reduce potential impacts to the visual character of the site and its surroundings, in addition to the following measures.*

**MM-2**      ***Prior to issuance of a conditional use permit for the project, the applicant shall submit building exterior materials and color schedule samples to the County Department of Planning and Building for review and approval. The schedule samples shall show the following:***

- a. Exteriors of all new and remodeled buildings, walls and other structures shall be predominantly natural or natural appearing materials such as wood or stone. Metal may be used if it has an aged patina.*
- b. Exterior colors of all new and remodeled buildings, walls and other structures shall be muted earth-tones. Trim and minor accents are excluded from this requirement.*

**MM-3**      ***Prior to issuance of a conditional use permit for the project, the applicant shall submit a Tree Preservation Plan to the County Department of Planning and Building for review and approval. The Tree Preservation Plan shall be prepared by a certified arborist and shall show the following:***

- a. All mature Monterey cypress and other native trees on site shall be saved and protected.*
- b. Delineation of all existing trees on site, differentiated by species and size.*
- c. Areas where the construction of the proposed structures and other project elements would potentially conflict with the health or cause the potential removal of trees.*
- d. Identification of specific measures and recommendations, including potentially modifying structures and/or construction techniques to protect existing mature trees.*
- e. Delineation of all areas where protective measures such as exclusionary fencing and other strategies must occur.*
- f. An implementation and monitoring program to achieve the tree protection goals of this measure.*

**MM-4**      ***Prior to issuance of a conditional use permit for the project, the applicant shall submit site plans and landscape plans to the County Department of Planning and Building for review and approval. The site plans and landscape plans shall show parking lot***

screening as follows, and shall conform to concepts shown in Figure 4, Mitigation Concept Plan:

- a. The landscape plans shall be developed and signed by a licensed landscape architect and shall show visual screening of the parking lots fronting Highway 1.
- b. The parking lots shall be visually screened by either horticulturally-appropriate shrubs or a combination of shrubs and a fence, or shrubs and an earthen berm. If fencing is used it shall be made of natural materials such as wood or stone.
- c. The screening shall be a minimum of three feet tall and a maximum of four feet tall at maturity and shall not be placed within the highway right-of-way nor impede safe ingress/egress from the site.
- d. Vegetation within the screen planting area shall be maintained in perpetuity. Vegetation within the screen planting area which die shall be replaced.

MM-5

**Prior to issuance of a conditional use permit for the project**, the applicant shall submit site plans and landscape plans to the County Department of Planning and Building for review and approval. The site plans and landscape plans shall show screening of the new northern hotel building as follows, and shall conform to concepts shown in Figure 4, Mitigation Concept Plan:

- a. The landscape plans shall be developed and signed by a licensed landscape architect and shall show a dense screen planting along the eastern side of the proposed new hotel building at the northern end of the site.
- b. The screen plants shall include evergreen trees and shrubs for the purpose of screening the hotel structure as seen from Highway 1. Screen planting shall achieve a minimum 70 percent screening of the structure within ten years of completion of the hotel building.
- c. Trees and shrubs within the screen planting area shall be maintained in perpetuity. Trees and shrubs within the screen planting area which die shall be replaced.

MM-6

**Prior to issuance of a conditional use permit for the project**, the applicant shall submit utility plans to the County Department of Planning and Building for review and approval. The utility plans shall show the undergrounding of all utility poles and overhead lines on site. The utility undergrounding must be implemented by completion of phase four of the project.

### **Residual Impacts**

These measures would result in a project more visually compatible with the rural coastal environment by preserving existing trees, making the new and re-constructed buildings less visually dominant, partially screening the parking lots and the largest new motel building, and undergrounding existing overhead utility poles. Implementation of these measures would substantially maintain the vegetative character of the site, and would minimize the proposed increase of built characteristics of the project. The cumulative effect of these measures would result in visual impacts to the existing character of the site and surroundings to be considered significant but mitigable (CEQA, Class II).

## 10.4 Project Light or Glare Affecting Day or Nighttime Views in the Area

The project would result in a significant impact if it subjects public viewing locations to a substantial amount of point-source lighting visibility at night, or if project illumination results in a noticeable spillover effect into the nighttime sky, increasing the ambient light over the region. The placement of lighting, source of illumination, and fixture types combined with viewer locations, adjacent reflective elements, and atmospheric conditions can affect the degree of change to nighttime views. If the project results in direct visibility of a substantial number of lighting sources, or allows a substantial amount of light to project toward the sky, significant impacts on nighttime views and aesthetic character would result.

Although no lighting plans were available at the time of this report, it is anticipated that because of the project's expanded size, new multi-story configurations, public safety requirements, and its proximity to Highway 1, an increase of night lighting would be seen from the surrounding area. Unshielded light sources or bright-lights reflected on exterior walls would result in potential impacts. The larger buildings, bright interior and exterior lights, large windows and wall openings, outdoor dining areas, parking and pedestrian areas may result in highly visible illumination as seen from Highway 1 and the surroundings. Fog is a common atmospheric condition of the area and increases the "glow-effect" as potentially seen from great distances. Daytime reflection and seasonal glare from south facing surfaces would be highly noticeable.

**Impact 4**      **The project would cause an increase in night lighting glare and light trespass into the surrounding area resulting in potentially significant direct long and short-term impacts to nighttime views.**

*MM-7*      **Prior to issuance of a conditional use permit for the project, the applicant shall submit a lighting plan to the County Department of Planning and Building for review and approval. The lighting plan shall be prepared using guidance and best practices endorsed by the International Dark Sky Association. The lighting plan shall address all aspects of the lighting, including but not limited to all buildings, infrastructure, parking lots and driveways, paths, outdoor dining area, recreation areas, safety, and signage. The lighting plan shall also consider effects on wildlife in the surrounding area. At a minimum the lighting plan shall include the following:**

- a. *The point source of all exterior lighting shall be shielded from off-site views.*
- b. *Light trespass from exterior lights shall be minimized by directing light downward and utilizing cut-off fixtures or shields.*
- c. *Lumination from exterior lights shall be the lowest level allowed by public safety standards.*
- d. *Exterior lighting shall be designed to not focus illumination onto exterior walls.*
- e. *Bollard style and ground-level lighting shall be used where feasible.*
- f. *"Bright white" colored light shall not be used for exterior lighting.*
- g. *Any signage visible from off-site shall not be internally luminated.*

**Residual Impacts**

Implementation of these measures would minimize potential lighting glare and trespass impacts as seen from the surrounding area. As a result, visual impacts based on new source of light or glare would be considered significant but mitigable (CEQA, Class II).

**10.5 Cumulative Impacts**

The discussion of cumulative impacts relates to the potential for the project to contribute to an aggregate change in visual quality from the surrounding public viewing areas, taking into consideration existing as well as proposed development.

The north coast of San Luis Obispo County has undergone a certain amount of visual change within the last several years mostly in the San Simeon and Piedras Blancas areas. New development is proposed by California State Parks surrounding the old Piedras Blancas Motel, and continuing improvements and access points for the California Coastal Trail will also be seen from Highway 1. In Monterey County to the north, little visual change is evident from Highway 1, other than an expansion of commercial use in the Gorda/Willow Springs area and occasional minor driveway and fencing improvements along the route.

As mentioned previously, the project's proximity to Highway 1 and its memorability as the southern gateway to Big Sur increase its potential to influence the aesthetic quality and character of the area. This change in visual character, when experienced along with other recent and proposed projects, could contribute to a potential emerging perception that the north coast of San Luis Obispo County is undergoing a visual change toward increasing development.

As a result, the noticeable alteration of the project, caused by its increased built characteristics, combined with the tree removal and reduction of ocean views, when experienced in conjunction with other projects along Highway 1 would result in cumulative adverse visual impacts.

**Impact 5      The noticeable alteration of the project site, caused by its increased built character, combined with tree removal and reduction of ocean views, when experienced in conjunction with other projects along Highway 1 would result in potentially significant cumulative adverse visual impacts.**

*Implementation of mitigation measures MM-1 through MM-7 would reduce potential cumulative impacts.*

**Residual Impacts**

Implementation of the measures identified in this study would result in cumulative visual impacts to be considered significant but mitigable (CEQA, Class II).

**Figure 5. Key Viewing Area 1 – Existing View**



Source: Richard LeGros, Architect

**Figure 6. Key Viewing Area 1 – Photo-Simulation of the Proposed Project**



Source: Richard LeGros, Architect

**Figure 7. Key Viewing Area 2 – Existing View**



*Source: Richard LeGros, Architect*

**Figure 8. Key Viewing Area 2 – Photo-Simulation of the Proposed Project**



*Source: Richard LeGros, Architect*

**Figure 9. Key Viewing Area 3 – Existing View**



*Source: Richard LeGros, Architect*

**Figure 10. Key Viewing Area 3 – Photo-Simulation of the Proposed Project**



*Source: Richard LeGros, Architect*

**Figure 11. Key Viewing Area 4 – Existing View**



*Source: Richard LeGros, Architect*

**Figure 12. Key Viewing Area 4 – Photo-Simulation of the Proposed Project**



Source: Richard LeGros, Architect

**Figure 13. Key Viewing Area 5 – Existing View**



*Source: Richard LeGros, Architect*

**Figure 14. Key Viewing Area 5 – Photo-Simulation of the Proposed Project**



*Source: Richard LeGros, Architect*

**Figure 15. Key Viewing Area 6 – Existing View**



*Source: Richard LeGros, Architect*

**Figure 16. Key Viewing Area 6 – Photo-Simulation of the Proposed Project**



*Source: Richard LeGros, Architect*

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