

### 3.10 AESTHETICS/LIGHT AND GLARE

The following section compares the probable significant impacts from the Preferred Alternative and Straight Street Grid Option on aesthetics/light and glare conditions with those associated with the Draft EIS Alternatives (Alternatives 1 - 3 and the No Action Alternative) in the *2008 New Whatcom Redevelopment Project Draft EIS* (DEIS) and identifies any new or increased impacts and mitigation associated with redevelopment under the Preferred Alternative and Straight Street Grid Option.

#### 3.10.1 Affected Environment

The DEIS summarizes the existing aesthetic character of the New Whatcom site and site vicinity, as well as the general visual character of views to and from the site. Light and glare conditions for the site and surrounding area are also discussed. The existing aesthetic character and light and glare conditions have generally remained the same since the issuance of the DEIS; therefore, no change to the discussion of existing conditions is warranted in the SDEIS (see DEIS Section 3.10.1 for a description of the existing aesthetic character and light and glare conditions on the site and in the site vicinity).

#### 3.10.2 Impacts

##### Draft EIS (Alternatives 1 – 4)

As described in the DEIS, redevelopment under Alternatives 1 - 3 would transform the aesthetic character of the New Whatcom site from a vacant and underutilized industrial site, to a new urban neighborhood with a mix of land uses and open space. Redevelopment is assumed to occur over an approximately 20-year buildout period and changes in the visual character of the site would occur over the long-term.

Redevelopment on the New Whatcom site would express a visual character reflecting increased building density and building height when compared to the existing industrial conditions. Between 7.5 million and 4 million square feet of mixed use building space would be constructed under DEIS Alternatives 1 - 3. Maximum building heights would range from 75 feet to 200 feet (buildings within the 200-foot wide shoreline zone are assumed to be 50 feet in height<sup>1</sup>). In general, onsite buildings over 100 feet would be greater in height than the majority of the existing buildings in the site vicinity, but would be compatible to some buildings in the downtown (Central Business District) area. The aesthetic character of the majority of the shoreline areas of the site would also change from industrial wharf and bulkhead areas to public open space containing parks, trails and habitat areas.

Under DEIS Alternatives 1 - 3, redevelopment on the site could result in the alteration of views of the New Whatcom site and areas beyond the site from surrounding area viewpoints. As part of the visual analysis conducted for the DEIS, 14 viewpoint locations in the surrounding site

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<sup>1</sup> All buildings within the shoreline zone would be allowed an outright maximum height of 35 feet, and could be granted a maximum height of 50 feet depending on the results of a view analysis.

vicinity were selected as representative views of the site<sup>2</sup>. Based on these viewpoints, visual simulations of redevelopment under each of the EIS Alternatives were prepared to illustrate the potential visual impacts on the surrounding area. No formal view corridors were identified or reflected in the visual simulations. Refer to DEIS Section 3.10.2 for further details on the visual impact analysis methodology, the specifics of each viewpoint and illustrations of the visual simulations.

The DEIS indicates that the effect of the change in site character to the viewer is generally a function of the locational relationship between the viewer and the site. Close proximity viewpoints would have the greatest potential for view obstruction, while areas at a higher elevation or greater distance from the site would experience moderate to limited change in the visual character of the view. Visual character impacts would depend on the subjective reaction of the individual viewer (i.e. whether the visual changes are positive or negative) and would likely be defined by the overall quality of building design, the public spaces that are created, and the pedestrian-friendliness of the site over the long-term.

Redevelopment under DEIS Alternatives 1 - 3 would also result in new light and glare sources on the site, indicative of an urban mixed use development. New light and glare sources would be generally similar to those found in the surrounding areas; onsite lighting levels would be similar to the levels found in downtown and adjacent commercial areas, and higher than surrounding residential areas.

The No Action Alternative would change the visual character of the site from its current underutilized industrial state, to a more densely developed industrial area over the long-term. Building heights would reflect typical light/marine industrial development and would be approximately 50 feet in height. The shoreline areas would remain in their existing industrial condition and views of the shoreline would reflect the industrial character. Views across the site would be similar to existing conditions, although some additional view obstructions would likely occur. No formal view corridors would likely be created. New light and glare sources would be indicative of industrial development. Lighting levels would generally be lower than under DEIS Alternatives 1 - 3; however specific uses requiring outdoor security lighting or nighttime uses could be higher.

## Preferred Alternative and Straight Street Grid Option

The following provides an overview of the Preferred Alternative and Straight Street Grid Option as they relate to aesthetic character, a summary of the visual analysis methodology employed for this SDEIS, and analysis of visual conditions under both the Preferred Alternative and the Straight Street Grid Option. In order to allow for ease in comparing anticipated visual and aesthetics conditions under the Preferred Alternative and the Straight Street Grid Option, these discussions are provided together below.

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<sup>2</sup> For the DEIS, approximately 150 photographs were taken from public areas surrounding the site, representing 37 separate diverse viewpoints to the site. From this inventory, 14 of the viewpoints were selected as being most representative of area viewpoints and were determined to have the greatest potential for change in character of the view due to site redevelopment. Simulations of site redevelopment were formulated for these viewpoints for the DEIS.



## Overview

### *Preferred Alternative*

As described in Chapter 2 of this SDEIS (**Section 2.3**), levels of redevelopment under the Preferred Alternative would be within the range of redevelopment assumed for DEIS Alternatives 1 through 3. Redevelopment under the Preferred Alternative would mix and match elements of DEIS Alternatives 1 and 2. Redevelopment of the site under the Preferred Alternative would include a level of building redevelopment consistent with DEIS Alternative 2 (6 million square feet) and an amount of parks, trails and open space consistent with Alternative 1 (33 acres). The on-site roadway system in the site area to the south of the Whatcom Waterway (Downtown Waterfront, Log Pond and Shipping Terminal areas) is modified in comparison to the DEIS Alternatives to provide more efficient and cost-effective connections to downtown. The on-site roadway system in the site area to the north of the Whatcom Waterway (Marine Trades Area) under the Preferred Alternative would also be somewhat modified compared to DEIS Alternatives 1 - 3 (see **Section 2.3** of Chapter 2 for more details).

### Building Heights

Building height maximums under the Preferred Alternative, would vary and would be similar to or less than those considered under the DEIS Alternatives, depending on the redevelopment area. Height limits would be as follows: 35 feet within the shoreline zone (i.e. the area within 200 feet of the shoreline) with the potential to be up to 50 feet, up to 100 feet in the Marine Trades, Log Pond Park, Shipping Terminal and Cornwall Beach areas; and, a maximum of 200 feet in the Downtown Waterfront Area. Provisions for upper level setbacks and building modulation are addressed in the Preliminary Development Regulations (See **Appendix D**).

The variability in height limits, upper level setbacks and building modulation and articulation would likely result in a range of building forms and design on the site and opportunities for buildings to be separated by open spaces. The Preliminary Development Regulations also call for minimum spacing of 80 feet between buildings over 100 feet in height, which could result in a more open character of building development and potentially allow for additional open space and internal view opportunities. Variability in height could result in substantial view opportunities from onsite structures to surrounding areas, including to the waterfront, the Bay and beyond, given a tiered development pattern to achieve the assumed buildout density.

### View Corridors

As indicated earlier in this section, none of the alternatives analyzed in the DEIS include specifically defined formal view corridors<sup>3</sup> through the site, although certain informal view corridors would result along street rights-of-ways and other site features, including along waterways, shorelines and park/open space areas.

Subsequent to the issuance of the DEIS, the Port has continued the master planning process, including the identification of formal view corridors through the site. The identification of the view corridors as an element of the Preferred Alternative is intended to preserve and enhance visual connections from established neighborhoods (downtown, Old Town and Lettered Streets)

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<sup>3</sup> A view corridor is defined as a field of vision, shaped by the surrounding environment, intended to preserve a specific view of a object of scenery.

through the site to Bellingham Bay, Whatcom Waterway and the site's waterfront (refer to **Figure 3.10-1** for an illustration of the identified view corridors).

Two primary types of view corridors have been included as elements of the Preferred Alternative, including:

- 1) View Corridors defined by rights-of-way and open space. These view corridors would provide uninterrupted views to the water from the CBD (downtown), Old Town and Lettered Streets neighborhoods along roadway rights-of-way and designated open space areas (see **Figure 3.10-1**). These view corridors would occur along roadway rights-of-ways (i.e. along Bay St., Oak St., Log Pond Dr., C St., F St., and Hilton St.) and along open space corridors (i.e. Commercial St. Green and Ivy St. Green). Preliminary development regulations also call for facade setbacks at upper stories of buildings adjacent to these corridors to further enhance the view potential (see **Appendix D**).
- 2) View corridors defined by a combination of rights-of-way and building height limitations. These corridors would consist of a combination of rights-of-way and building height limitations to provide views extending from the existing street grid in downtown to the water. For example, the Commercial St. and Cornwall Ave. view corridors would consist of both onsite roadway rights-of-way (Paper Ave. for the Commercial St. corridor and Cornwall Ave. for the Cornwall Ave. corridor) and limitations on the height of buildings in the portions of the corridors not in rights-of way (refer to **Figure 3.10-1**). (The Commercial St. and Cornwall Ave. road rights-of-way would not run through the site.) Building heights would be limited to a maximum of 35 feet in those portions of the corridor area which are not in rights-of-way. The intent of these corridors is to provide view opportunities similar to that provided by a theoretical uninterrupted extension of these roadways through the site to the water. Preliminary development regulations also call for facade setbacks at upper stories of buildings adjacent to the corridors to further enhance the view potential (see **Appendix D**).

View corridors under the Preferred Alternative would generally be provided as a result of the angled street grid and uninterrupted roadway rights-of-ways through the site to the water, variable limitations on building heights and/or building setbacks in certain areas, and/or proposed greens and open space features. For example, the Commercial St. and Cornwall Ave. view corridors, which would be approximately 65 feet wide, would consist of both roadway rights-of-ways and building height limitations in the portions of the corridor not in rights-of-ways. Additionally, the Commercial St. Green (220 feet wide) and the Ivy St. Green (200 feet wide) would provide view corridors through the site to the water. Uninterrupted view corridors through the site to the water would also be provided along the rights-of-ways associated with Bay St., Log Pond Dr., Oak St., C St., F St. and Hilton Ave. See **Figure 3.10-1** for an illustration of the view corridors.

In general, the aesthetic character of the site under the Preferred Alternative would reflect an urban mixed-use development with a range of building types at varying heights surrounded by parks, trails, a marina, habitat restoration areas, pedestrian-oriented spaces and the vehicular circulation network. The overall quality of building design would likely be higher compared to existing site conditions, and would be compatible with the overall character of surrounding areas, including downtown. Building height limits, upper level setbacks, minimum spacing between taller buildings, and other provisions to create diversity in form (massing) and design



Figure 3.10-1  
View Corridors  
Preferred Alternative

would likely be adopted through the Development Regulations for the Waterfront District. Further, building design, building spacing, construction and materials would likely be coordinated through adoption and implementation of consistent design standards over the long-term buildout period.

### *Straight Street Grid Option*

Under the Straight Street Grid Option, it is assumed that the mix of land uses, density and parks, trails and habitat areas on the New Whatcom site would be similar to those described under the Preferred Alternative (6 million square feet of building space and 33 acres of parks, trails and habitat areas). The roadway network and configuration under the Straight Street Grid Option would represent a primary difference; it would follow the existing alignment of the surrounding City street grid.

The Straight Street Grid Option would feature lower maximum building heights (uniform 75 foot height limit) than under the Preferred Alternative, except within the shoreline area (heights within the shoreline area are assumed to be the same as under the Preferred Alternative). In order to achieve the overall density contemplated under this Option, the building density within each of the five major areas onsite would likely vary as compared to the Preferred Alternative. While it is assumed that the 6 million square feet of overall density could be achievable, a 75-foot height limit could result in a pattern of building development that is more uniform in character, with less variety in height and building design, and less opportunity for additional open space areas between buildings (beyond the 33 acres) as part of future development. Because the 75-foot height limit could result in a more uniform development pattern with more limited variety in height, the opportunity for views to the water, the Bay, and beyond from certain new onsite buildings could be less than under the Preferred Alternative. For example, there would be a more limited ability to achieve a tiered development pattern with shorter buildings in the foreground and taller buildings behind, thus limiting the opportunity for future views of the water from taller buildings over shorter buildings.

The rights-of-ways associated with the Straight Street Grid Option would be anticipated to provide opportunities for views from downtown through the site to the water. This includes views along the rights-of-ways of Bay St., Commercial St., Cornwall Ave., Laurel St., and Maple St. As under the Preferred Alternative, views would also be accommodated by the rights-of-ways associated with C St., F St. and Hilton Ave. in the Marine Trades Area north of the Whatcom Waterway.

As under the Preferred Alternative, the general aesthetic character of the site would reflect an urban mixed-use development with buildings surrounded by parks, trails, a marina, habitat restoration areas, pedestrian-oriented spaces and the vehicular circulation network. Building design (potentially including upper level setbacks, modulation and minimum spacing) and materials would also likely be coordinated through adoption and implementation of consistent design standards over the long-term buildout, although substantial use of techniques related to upper level setbacks, building modulation and minimum building spacing would be limited in order to achieve the assumed building density.

## Visual Analysis Methodology

As indicated earlier in this section, the aesthetics analysis conducted for the DEIS includes visual simulations representing views of site redevelopment from 14 representative viewpoints (refer to **Appendix L** of this SDEIS which contains the simulations prepared for the DEIS). The DEIS includes simulations reflecting up to 7.5 million square feet of building area (Alternative 1) for all 14 viewpoints. For DEIS Alternative 2 (6 million square feet) and Alternative 3 (4.5 million square feet) representative views from six of the 14 viewpoints were simulated. The DEIS provides simulations for a portion of the viewpoints for Alternatives 2 and 3 because visual impacts associated with Alternatives 2 and 3 would be similar to or less than those associated with Alternative 1.

To represent visual conditions under the Preferred Alternative and the Straight Street Grid Option, visual simulations of site redevelopment as viewed from certain viewpoints previously analyzed in the DEIS<sup>4</sup> along with several new viewpoints were prepared. Viewpoints from the DEIS carried forward for analysis in this SDEIS include:

- **Viewpoint 5** – ASB/Marina (divided into 5.1 and 5.2)<sup>5</sup>
- **Viewpoint 6** – Bay St.
- **Viewpoint 7** – Parkade Parking Structure (Holly/Commercial)
- **Viewpoint 9** – E. Maple St. and Cornwall Ave.
- **Viewpoint 10** – E Laurel St. and N State St.

In addition to the viewpoints carried forward from the DEIS, five additional viewpoints reflecting view conditions associated with the modified roadway network and defined view corridors of the Preferred Alternative in the portion of the site south of the Whatcom Waterway are analyzed in this SDEIS. The additional viewpoints include:

- **Viewpoint A** – Commercial St Green
- **Viewpoint B** – Commercial St View Corridor
- **Viewpoint C** – Ivy St Green
- **Viewpoint D** – Cornwall Beach
- **Viewpoint E** - Cornwall Ave View Corridor

Because the roadway network and building height assumptions associated with the Marine Trades Area under the Preferred Alternative and Straight Street Grid Option would be similar to that analyzed in the DEIS, and visual conditions would be generally as analyzed in the DEIS, simulations depicting views to this portion of the site are not provided for this SDEIS.

Simulations of conceptual building massing representing the extent of potential building massing visible from the respective viewpoints (consistent with the assumed roadway network, open space configuration, density of redevelopment, maximum building heights and view corridors)

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<sup>4</sup> The viewpoints carried forward from the DEIS are those most representative of viewpoints to the portion of the site south of the Whatcom Waterway, where the modifications to the roadway network under the Preferred Alternative and Straight Street Grid Option could potentially affect the visual character of the site compared to conditions analyzed in the DEIS.

<sup>5</sup> The DEIS analyzes one viewpoint from the Whatcom Waterway wharf located immediately east of the existing ASB. To provide viewpoints more reflective of the proposed public park area along the marina breakwater, Viewpoint 5 was shifted to the west for this SDEIS (Viewpoint 5.1). In addition, an additional viewpoint at the west end of the existing ASB and at a different angle (i.e. viewing a different portion of the site) was also added (Viewpoint 5.2).

were prepared for both the Preferred Alternative and the Straight Street Grid Option. For example, the massing concept for the Preferred Alternative was developed through a five-step process that included: 1) defining maximum building heights within each area; 2) identifying view corridor opportunities; 3) sculpting view corridors by modifying the potential bulk and mass of redevelopment via building setbacks; 4) identifying additional viewpoint opportunities that represent connections between downtown and the water; and, 5) incorporating building modulation including upper level setbacks (refer to **Appendix L** for detail). These simulations, which do not include anticipated sidewalks, street trees or landscaping, are not intended to reflect exact building locations, design, heights or character; they are used as a tool to address potential visual conditions only.

Conceptual representations of the possible redevelopment density and massing under the Preferred Alternative are presented in **Figures 3.10-1A, 3.10-1B, 3.10-1C and 3.10-1D**. These representations show possible building massing, heights and building spacing as well as resultant view corridors. These representations relate to step 5 noted above; they are not intended to represent actual building footprints, design, character, etc.

For the Preferred Alternative, the simulations assume that the majority of the existing buildings south of the Whatcom Waterway are removed, with the exception of the Ceramic Tanks in the Downtown Waterfront Area and two buildings in the Shipping Terminal Area. For the Straight Street Grid Option, the simulations assume that several existing buildings in the Downtown Waterfront Area (including the Digester Building, Barking/Chipping Building, Alcohol Plant and Ceramic Tanks) and two buildings in the Shipping Terminal Area would be retained.

### Visual Conditions

The primary viewer groups surrounding the site include the following: motorists using area roadways; residents and visitors in downtown; residents in other surrounding neighborhoods (including the Lettered Streets and Old Town neighborhoods); users of park/open space features; and, boaters in Bellingham Bay. **Figure 3.10-2** provides a location map of all selected viewpoints. As indicated earlier in this section, five viewpoint locations analyzed in the DEIS (Viewpoints 5<sup>6</sup>, 6, 7, 9 and 10) are carried forward for analysis and five new viewpoint locations (Viewpoints A, B, C, D and E) are also analyzed in this SDEIS.

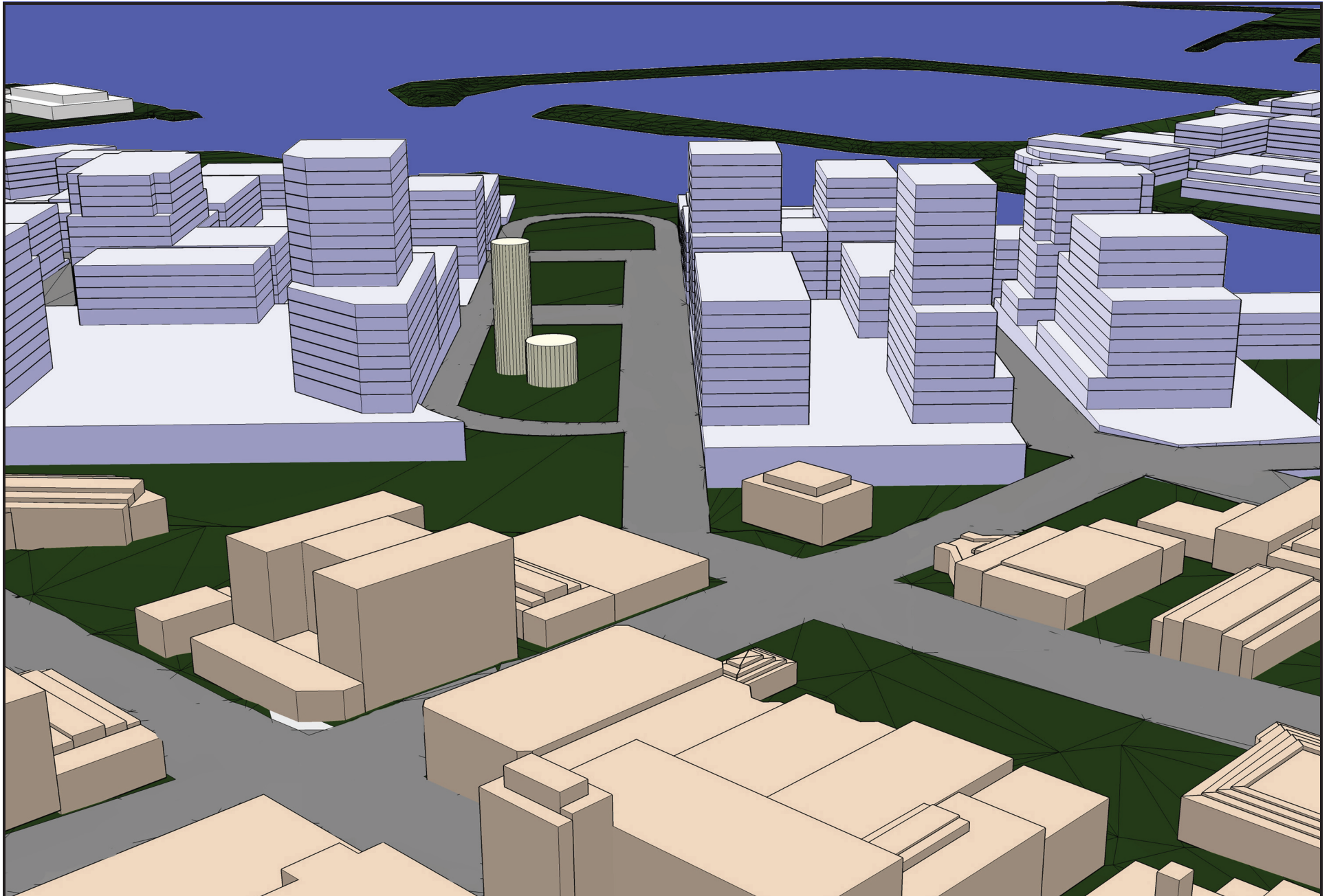
Depending on the viewpoint, different portions of the site would be visible. Representative views of the site, illustrating existing visual conditions, visual conditions under the Preferred Alternative and visual conditions under the Straight Street Grid Option are shown in **Figures 3.10-3 through 3.10-24**. Views depicting the site were chosen to illustrate a variety of representative views affecting primary viewer groups in the site vicinity.

Viewpoint 5.1 (ASB/Marina East) is located at the eastern edge of the existing ASB breakwater. The existing view from this location looking to the southeast (**Figure 3.10-3**) includes foreground views of the Whatcom Waterway, bulkhead and wharf area on the south side of the waterway and buildings currently located within the Downtown Waterfront Area of the site. Views to downtown, including the Whatcom Museum of History and Art, hillside and Mt. Baker are available in the background.

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<sup>6</sup> Viewpoint 5 is comprised of viewpoints 5.1 and 5.2.





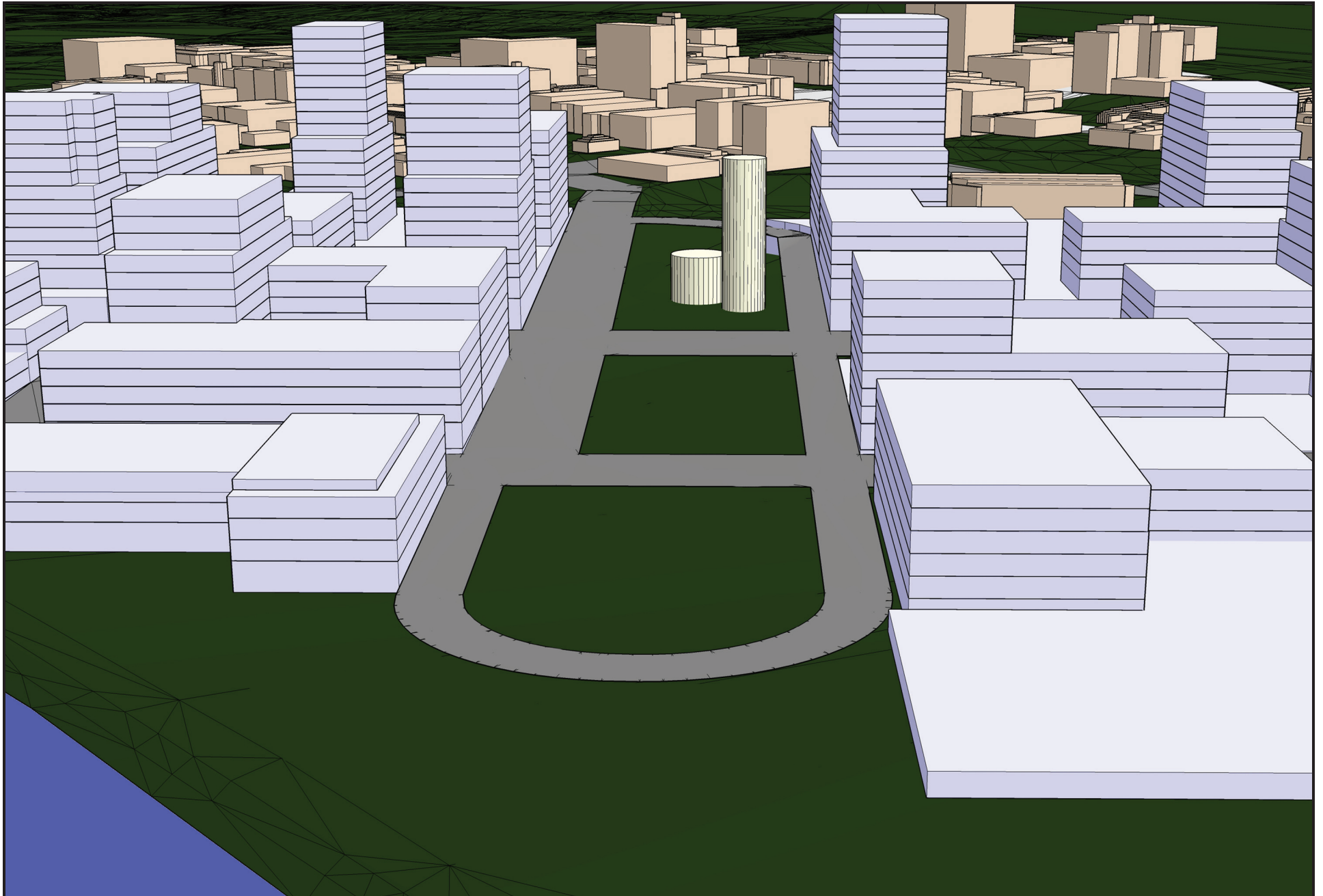
Conceptual: For Illustrative Purposes Only

Source: CollinsWoerman



Figure 3.10-1A  
Density & Massing Representation: Downtown Towards the Bay  
Preferred Alternative: 2026

New Whatcom  
Redevelopment EIS



Conceptual: For Illustrative Purposes Only

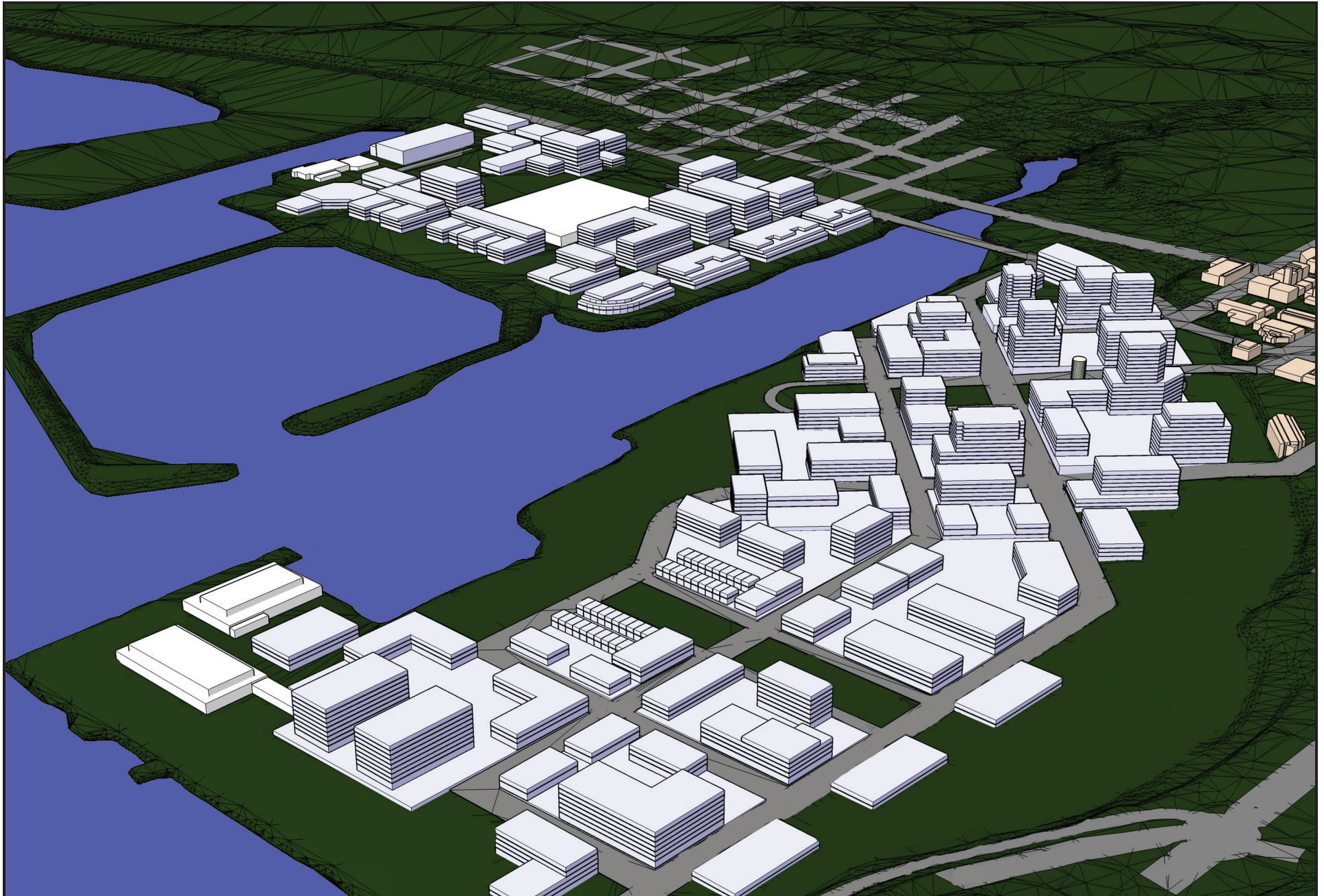
Source: CollinsWoerman



Figure 3.10-1B  
Density & Massing Representation: Whatcom Waterway Through Commercial Street Green  
Preferred Alternative: 2026

New Whatcom  
Redevelopment EIS





Conceptual: For Illustrative Purposes Only

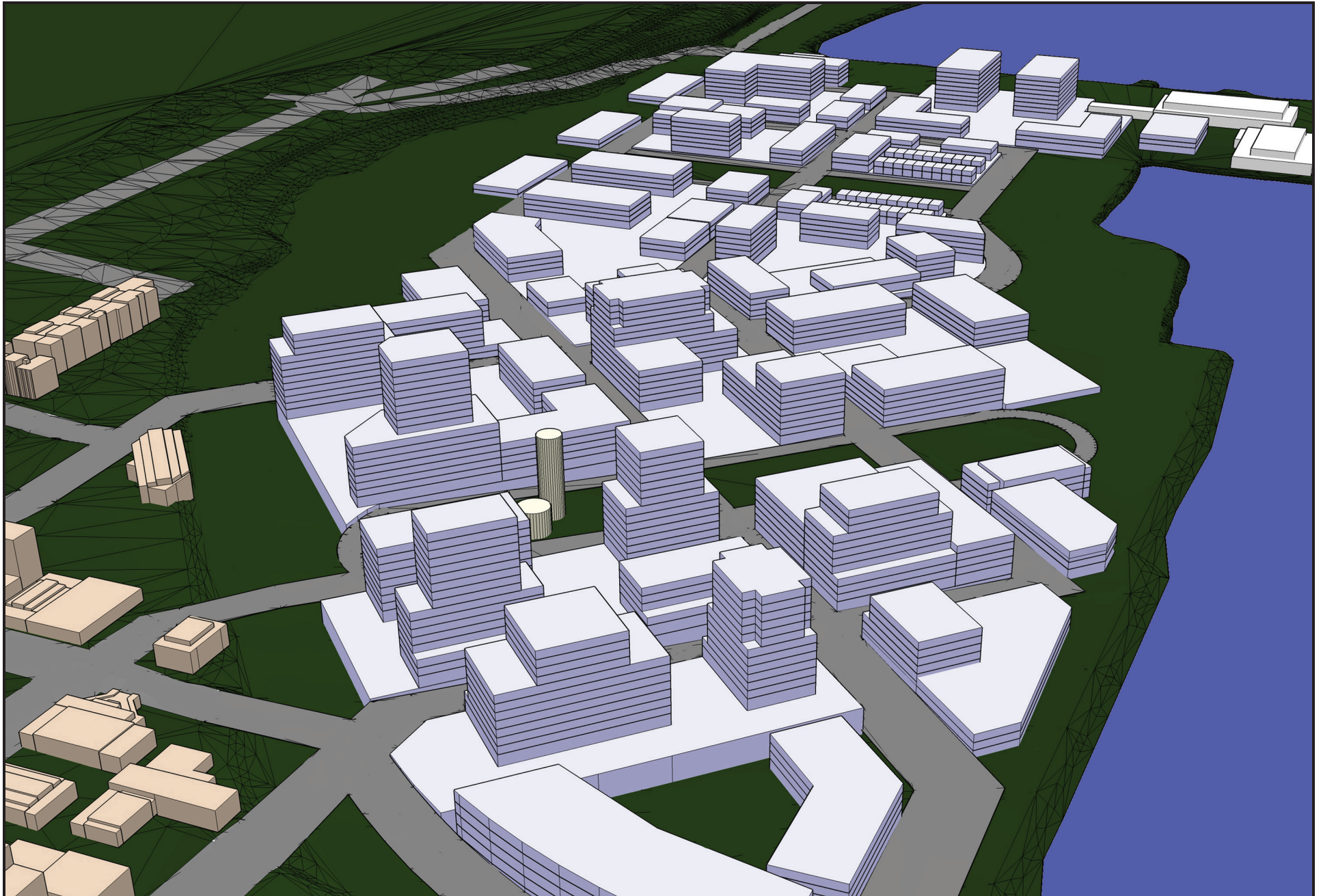
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Figure 3.10-1C  
Density & Massing Representation: Looking North Over The Waterfront District  
Preferred Alternative: 2026

New Whatcom  
Redevelopment EIS





Conceptual: For Illustrative Purposes Only

Source: CollinsWoerman



Figure 3.10-1D  
Density & Massing Representation: Looking South Towards the Bluff  
Preferred Alternative: 2026

New Whatcom  
Redevelopment EIS





#### Viewpoint Locations Legend

- 5.1 - ASB/Marina
- 5.2 - ASB/Marina
- 6 - Bay St. Corridor
- 7 - Parkage Parking Structure (Holly/Comm.)
- 9 - E. Maple St. & Cornwall Ave.
- 10 - N. State St. & E. Laurel St.
- A - Commercial St. Green
- B - Commercial St. View Corridor
- C - Ivy St. Green
- D - Cornwall Beach
- E - Cornwall Ave. & Holly St.

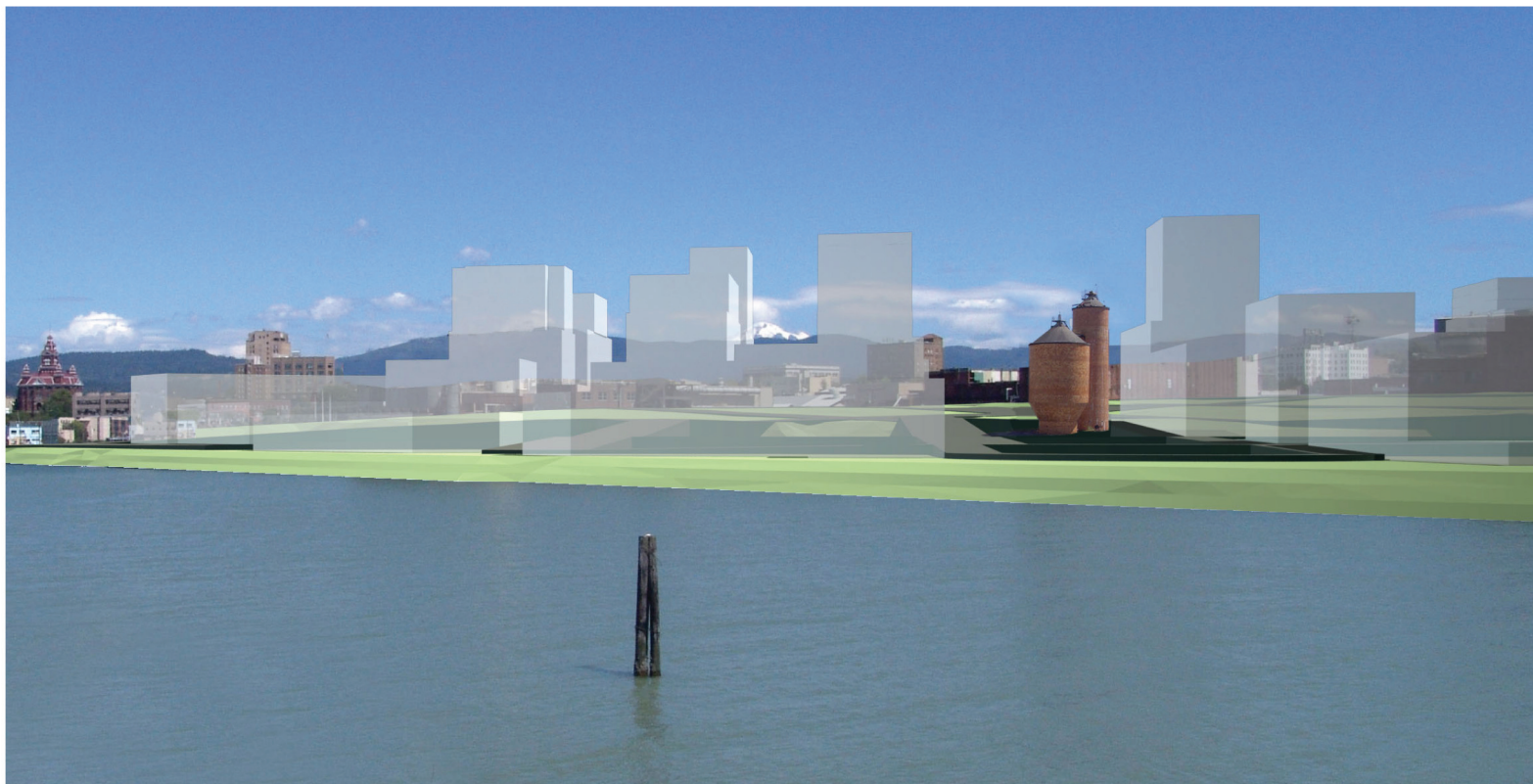
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Existing

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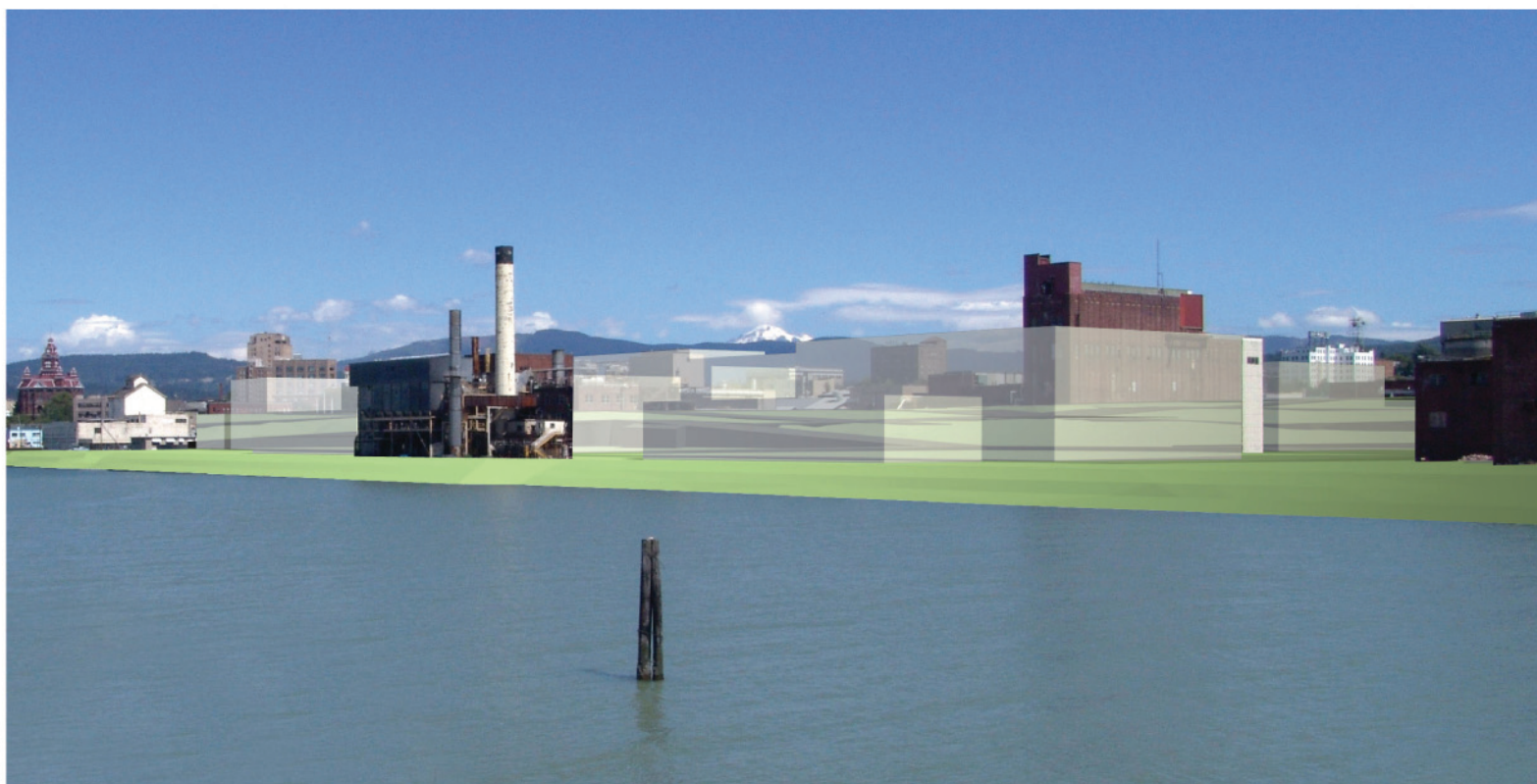
Preferred Alternative

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Straight Street  
Grid Option

Source: PRIMEDIA GROUP





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Preferred Alternative

Source: PRIMEDIA GROUP



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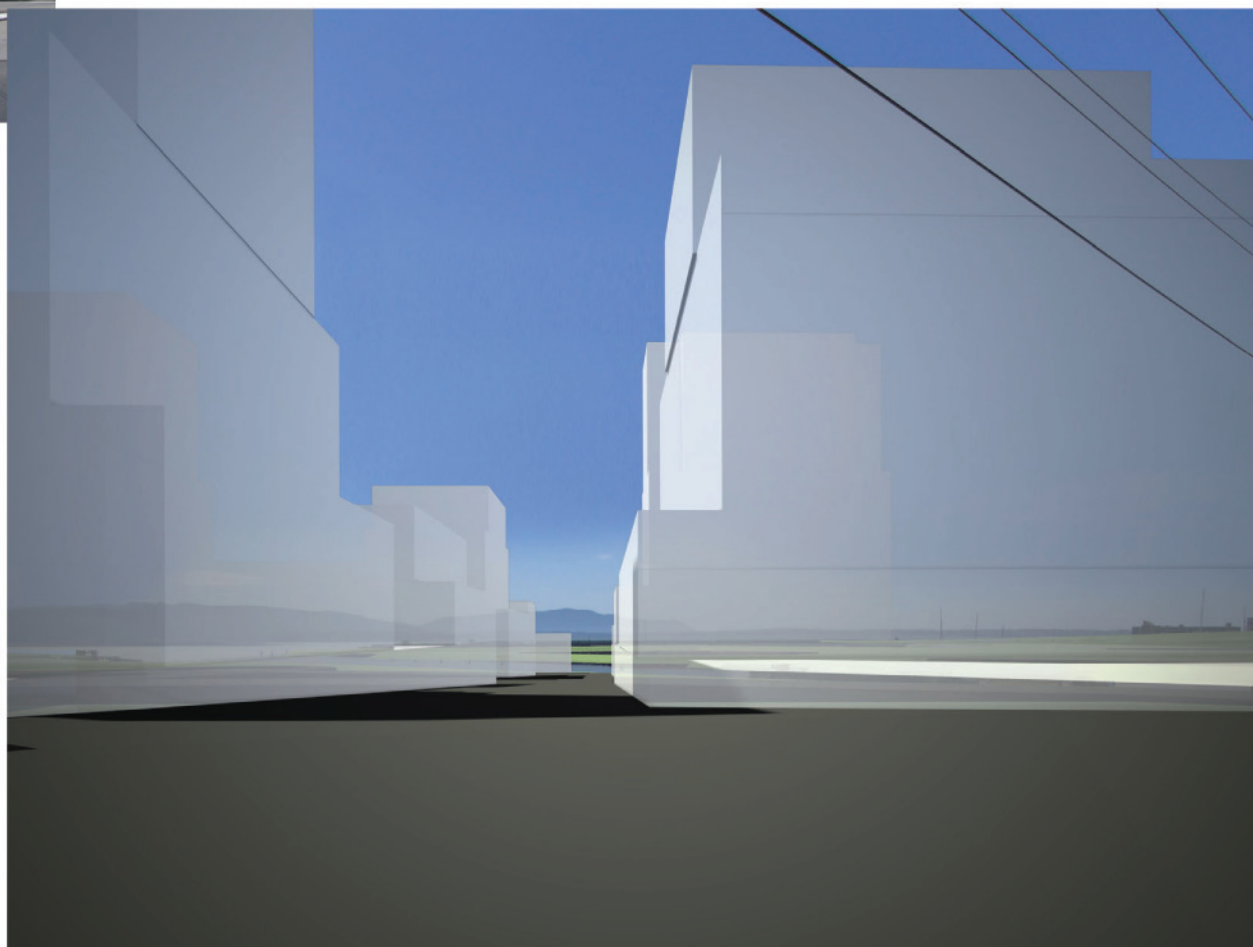
Straight Street  
Grid Option

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Preferred Alternative

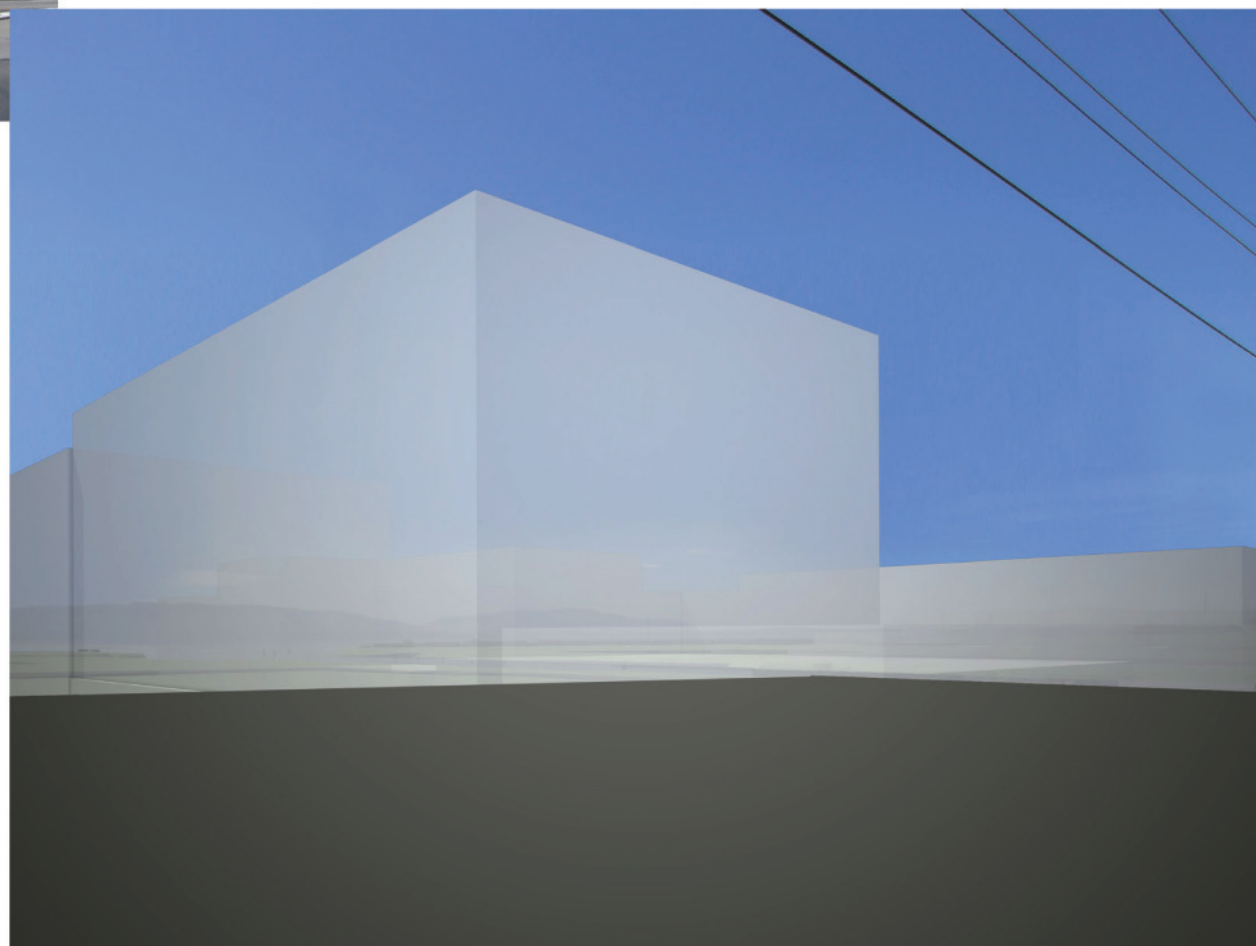
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Straight Street Grid Option

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Preferred Alternative

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Straight Street  
Grid Option

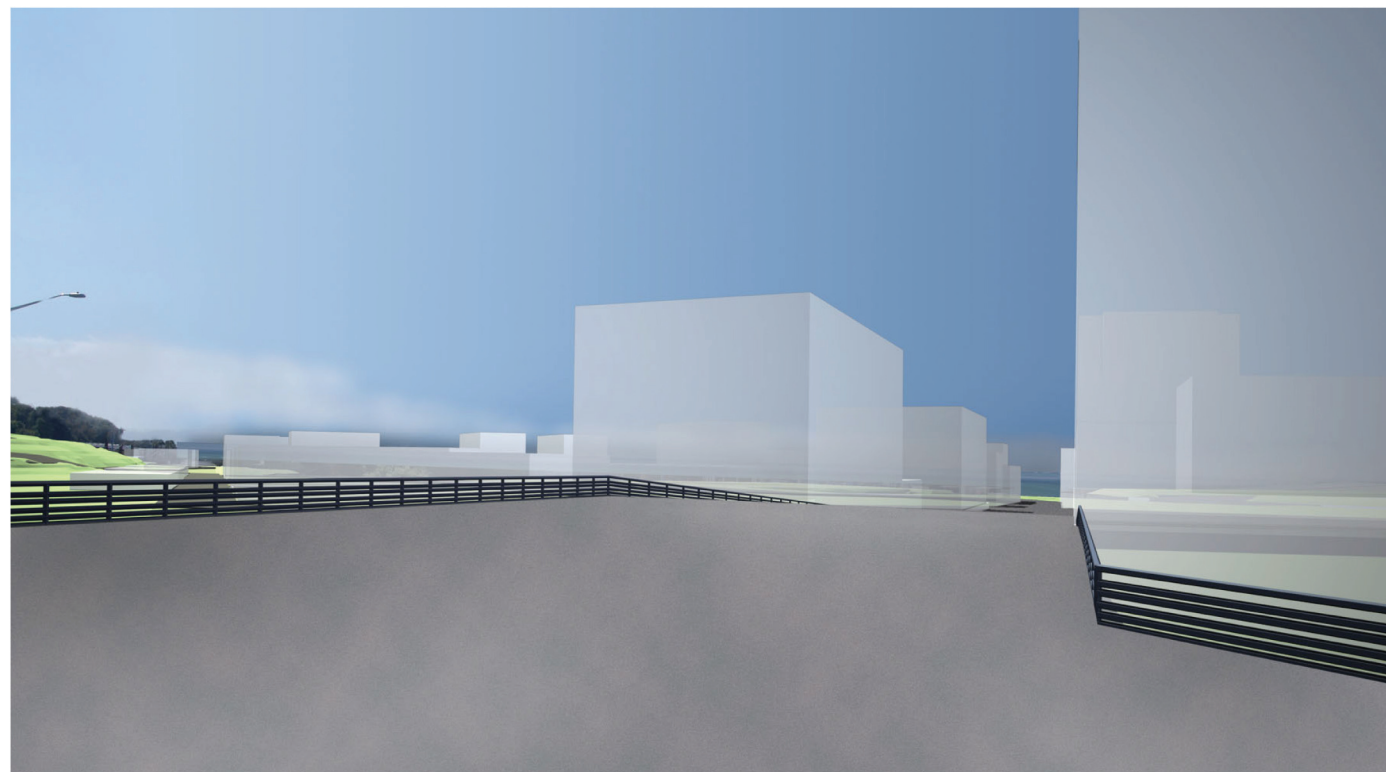
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Preferred Alternative



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Straight Street Grid Option

Source: PRIMEDIA GROUP



Viewpoint 10 (N. State St. & E. Laurel St.)



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Preferred Alternative

SOURCE: PRIMEDIA GROUP



Viewpoint 10 (N. State St. & E. Laurel St.)



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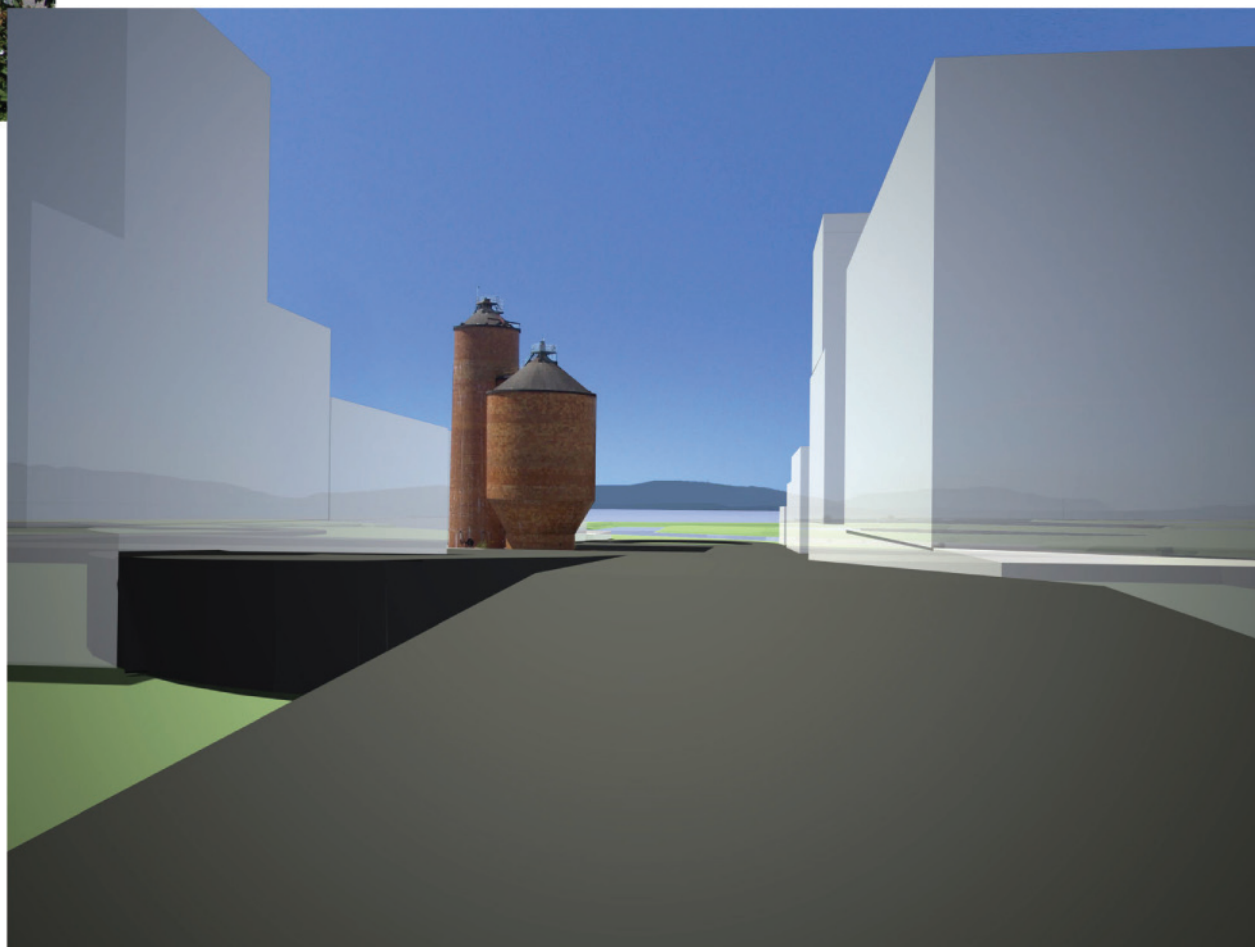
Straight Street Grid Option

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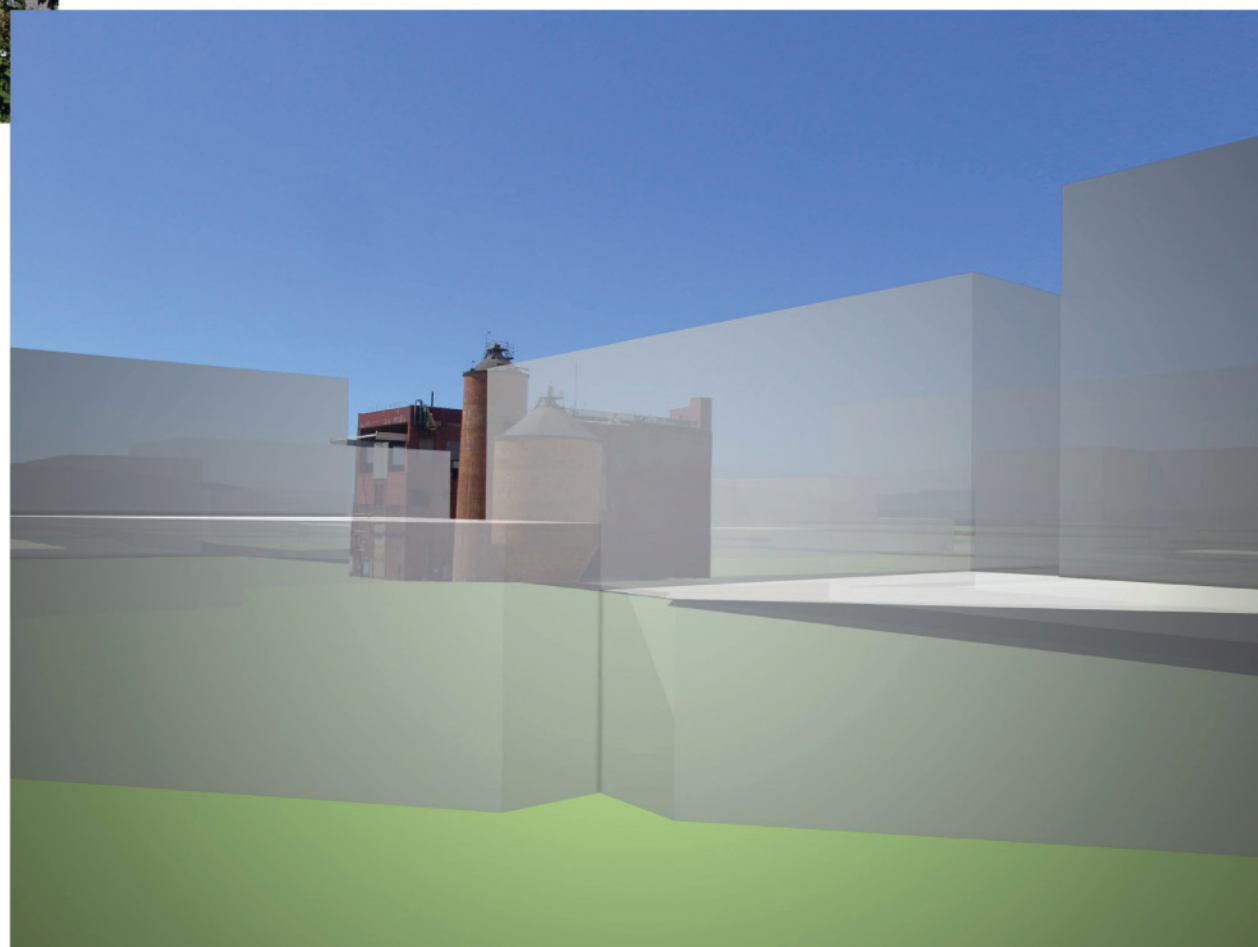
Preferred Alternative

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Straight Street Grid Option

Source: PRIMEDIA GROUP





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Preferred Alternative

Source: PRIMEDIA GROUP





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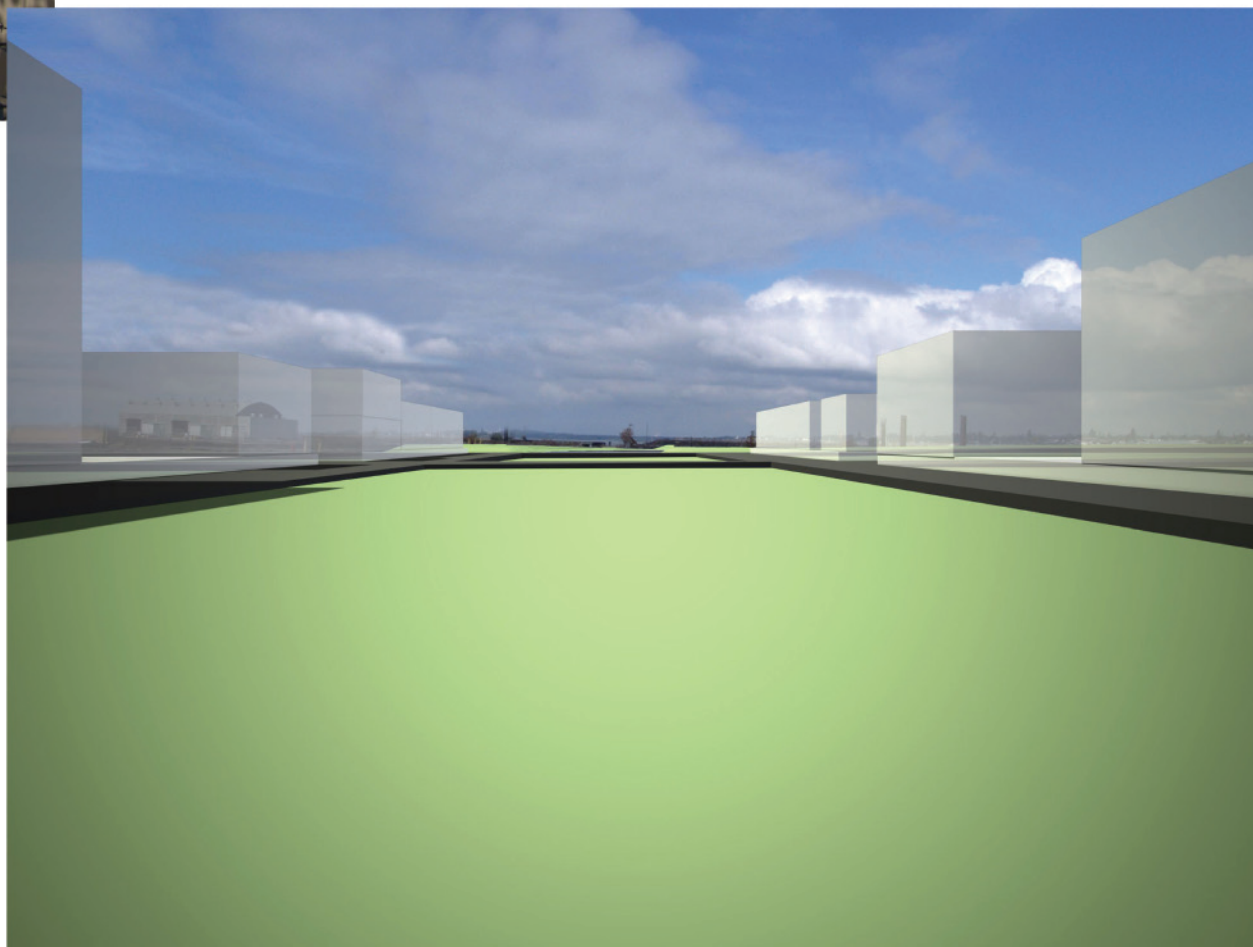
Straight Street Grid Option

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Preferred Alternative

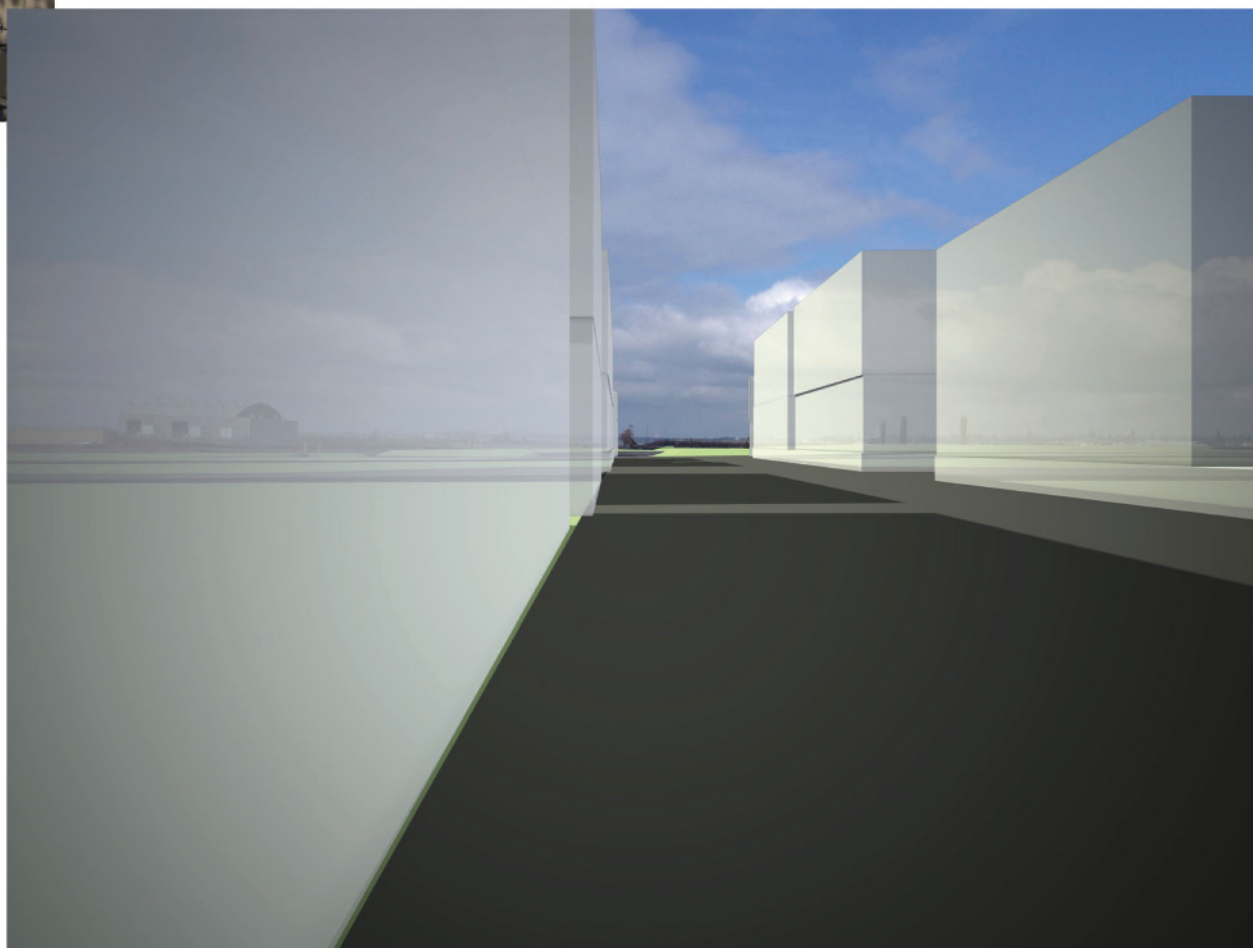
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Straight Street Grid Option

Source: PRIMEDIA GROUP



Existing

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Preferred Alternative

Source: PRIMEDIA GROUP



Existing

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Straight Street  
Grid Option

Source: PRIMEDIA GROUP





Existing

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Preferred Alternative

Source: PRIMEDIA GROUP





Existing

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Straight Street Grid Option

Source: PRIMEDIA GROUP

Views from this viewpoint under the Preferred Alternative (**Figure 3.10-3**) would include the park and open space along the southern edge of the waterway, buildings reflecting a range of heights (including some up to the 200-foot height limit proposed for the Downtown Waterfront Area and buildings up to 50 feet in height within the shoreline zone), the Commercial St. Green and the Ceramic Tanks potentially to be retained within the Green. The skyline would reflect a range of building heights including taller buildings interspersed with lower buildings and plaza/open space areas. The Commercial St. Green and Ceramic Tanks would be visually prominent and would provide a visual link between the waterfront and downtown. Views to the Whatcom Museum of History and Art would be retained. Portions of views to the hills and Mt. Baker would be retained; however, depending on the ultimate location of taller buildings, views to Mt. Baker could be obstructed from this viewpoint.

Under the Straight Street Grid Option (**Figure 3.10-4**), views to the site from this location would include park and open space area long the waterway, buildings reflecting a relatively uniform building height (all buildings are assumed to be 75-feet in height except those within the shoreline), and all or portions of several assumed to be retained buildings (views to the retained Ceramic Tanks would be blocked by assumed to be retained existing buildings and would not be visible from this location). The skyline would be uniform in height with few gaps between buildings. Because there would not be a large green space connecting the waterfront with downtown (as the Commercial Green proposed under the Preferred Alternative), the visual connection from this viewpoint location to downtown would be more limited. Views to the Whatcom Museum of History and Art would be retained. Views to portions of the hillside and Mt. Baker would be retained; because of the lower building heights, the potential to obstruct views to Mt. Baker from this location would be less than under the Preferred Alternative.

Viewpoint 5.2 (ASB/Marina West) is located at the western edge of the existing ASB breakwater. The existing view from this location looking to the southeast (**Figure 3.10-5**) includes foreground views of the ASB breakwater and the Whatcom Waterway, bulkhead and wharf area on the south side of the waterway, an extended pier, and buildings located within the Log Pond Area portion of the site. Views to a portion of downtown, the upper portion of Mt. Baker and the South Hill are available in the background.

Views from this viewpoint (**Figure 3.10-5**) under the Preferred Alternative would include park area associated with the marina breakwater, park and open space along the southern edge of the waterway, buildings reflecting a range of building heights (including some up to 200 feet in the Downtown Waterfront portion of the site, some up to 100 feet in the Log Pond portion of the site and up to 50 feet within the shoreline zone). Views to the South Hill and Mt. Baker would be retained, although views to Mt. Baker from this viewpoint could be obstructed depending on the ultimate location of taller buildings in the Downtown Waterfront Area.

Under the Straight Street Grid Option, (**Figure 3.10-6**) views to the site from this location would include park area associated with the marina breakwater, park and open space along the southern edge of the waterway, assumed to be retained buildings in the Downtown Waterfront Area, and buildings reflecting a uniform building height (50 feet within the shoreline zone and 75 feet in the area outside of the shoreline). Views to the South Hill and Mt. Baker would be retained.

Viewpoint 6 (Bay St.) illustrates the view from Bay St. looking west to the site (**Figure 3.10-7**). This viewpoint provides direct view to the site and an existing large wood structure located at



the edge of the Downtown Waterfront Area. Views to the water or Lummi Island are not currently available from this location.

From this viewpoint (Viewpoint 6 – **Figure 3.10-7**), the view under the Preferred Alternative would reflect new building development along Bay St. that would extend into and through the site. Because the proposed Bay St. corridor would extend to the waterfront, new views to the Whatcom Waterway and hillsides beyond would be provided. Upper level setbacks (above 45 feet in height) are depicted.

Under the Straight Street Grid Option (**Figure 3.10-8**) the view would reflect new building development along the edge of the site. Based on the alignment of the roadway network, views to the water would not be provided from this viewpoint. Views into the site, although not to the water, would be provided along the Bay St. alignment under this option.

Viewpoint 7 (Parkade Parking Structure) (**Figure 3.10-9**) provides panoramic views of downtown and the waterfront area. Views of existing buildings in downtown are available in the foreground, with existing buildings throughout the site visible in the mid-ground view. Views of Bellingham Bay and Lummi Island are available in the background.

The view from the Parkade Parking Structure under the Preferred Alternative would feature panoramic views of redevelopment in the Downtown Waterfront and Log Pond areas of the site (**Figure 3.10-9**). Although maximum building heights in these areas are assumed to be 200 feet in the Downtown Waterfront Area and 100 feet in the Log Pond Area, it is assumed that redevelopment would feature a range of building heights as depicted in the simulation. From this location, new onsite buildings and the potentially retained Ceramic Tanks would be visually prominent. Redevelopment on the site would generally appear as a continuation of existing downtown buildings, although some buildings would be taller than the majority of the existing buildings located downtown. Portions of the view of Bellingham Bay to the west and northwest would be obstructed by new buildings on the site, although some views of the Bay between buildings would remain.

Under the Straight Street Grid Option (**Figure 3.10-10**), panoramic views of 75-foot tall buildings throughout the site would result. The upper portions of several existing buildings assumed to remain would also be visible from this location. The assumed 75-foot high buildings would appear as a continuation of the existing buildings downtown, although the range of building heights downtown would differ from the uniformity of building heights on the site. The majority of the existing views to the Bay and Lummi Island would remain from this viewpoint.

Viewpoint 9 (E. Maple St. and Cornwall Ave.) illustrates the existing view of the Downtown Waterfront Area of the site from the intersection of E. Maple St. and Cornwall Ave. (**Figure 3.10.11**). The view from this location looking west includes paved area and existing buildings on the site in the Downtown Waterfront and Log Pond Areas. Limited views of Bellingham Bay and Lummi Island are available across the site. A limited view of the tip of South Hill is also available in the background.

Views from this viewpoint under the Preferred Alternative (**Figure 3.10-11**) would include new building development along either side of the proposed diagonal Log Pond Dr., which is intended to provide a view corridor through the site to Bellingham Bay; buildings on the east side of Log Pond Dr. could be up to 200 feet in height and buildings on the west side of Log Pond Dr. could be up to 100 feet in height. As illustrated in this figure, a limited view of

Bellingham Bay framed by buildings would be provided; although portions of the views across the site towards Bellingham Bay and Lummi Island would be obstructed by redevelopment. The existing limited view of the tip of South Hill would not be affected.

Under the Straight Street Grid Option (**Figure 3.10-12**), the Cornwall Ave. corridor would be framed by buildings on either side of the roadway which would provide some views to the Bay. The upper portion of an existing building assumed to be retained would be available. Views to Lummi Island and the tip of South Hill would not be afforded.

Viewpoint 10 (E. Laurel St. and N. State St.) is located at the intersection of Laurel St. and N State St. (**Figure 3.10-13**). The existing view looking north from this location includes a view of existing offsite buildings along Laurel St. in the foreground, with views of buildings on the site available in the background. Views across the site towards the residential areas of the Columbia neighborhood are also available farther in the background; no views of the Whatcom Waterway or Bellingham Bay are available from this location.

Under the Preferred Alternative (**Figure 3.10-13**), Laurel St. would not be extended through the site and views of the site would reflect new buildings up to 100 feet in height in the foreground (associated with the Log Pond Area), and new buildings up to 200 feet in the background (associated with the Downtown Waterfront Area). Existing views of the Columbia neighborhood would be obstructed by redevelopment. As under the existing conditions, no views to Bellingham Bay would be available.

Under the Straight Street Grid Option (**Figure 3.10-14**) it is assumed that Laurel St. would be extended through the site and would provide a view corridor through the site to park and open space areas. Views to the Columbia neighborhood beyond, framed by buildings up to 75 feet in height, would be provided.

Viewpoint A (Commercial St. Green) is located near the intersection of Commercial St. and W. Chestnut St. The existing view from this location looking northwest (**Figure 3.10-15**) includes foreground views of paved parking/storage area and buildings/structures within the Downtown Waterfront Area, including the Digester building and the Ceramic Tanks. Partial views to Lummi Island are available in the background; no views of Bellingham Bay are currently afforded from this viewpoint.

Views from the viewpoint (**Figure 3.10-15**) under the Preferred Alternative would include the extended and angled Commercial St. roadway and green open space area framed by new buildings up to 200 feet in height. It is assumed that the existing Digester building would be removed although the Ceramic Tanks could be retained; if retained, the tanks would represent a visual focal point. This view corridor would include new views to the water that are not afforded under existing conditions. Portions of the existing view to Lummi Island would be obstructed by new buildings, although a view to the island would be afforded at the terminus of the view corridor. The width of this view corridor would be approximately 220 feet.

Under the Straight Street Grid Option (**Figure 3.10-16**) the Commercial St. Green corridor would not be provided and the view would consist of new buildings (up to 75 feet in height) and portions of the existing Digester building and Ceramic Tanks. Because the Ceramic Tanks would be surrounded by existing and new buildings, the tanks may not be as visually prominent as under the Preferred Alternative. No new views to the water would be provided. Existing views to Lummi Island would be obstructed.



Viewpoint B (Commercial St. View Corridor) is located at the intersection of Commercial St. and E. Holly St. The existing view from this location looking southwest (**Figure 3.10-17**) includes foreground views of the Commercial St. roadway and associated street trees. Only limited views of the site and Lummi Island are available in the background. No views to Bellingham Bay are currently available from this location.

Views from this viewpoint (**Figure 3.10-17**) under the Preferred Alternative would include building redevelopment on either side of the formally defined Commercial St. view corridor consisting of both roadway rights-of-way and buildings subject to limited building heights (in portions of the corridor not in rights-of-ways). An uninterrupted view to Bellingham Bay and Lummi Island beyond would be afforded. Buildings framing the view corridor would be up to 200 feet in height (upper level setbacks would be provided to expand the view along this corridor) and buildings within the view corridor would be limited to 35 feet in height (within portions that are not located within road rights-of-way); the width of this view corridor would be approximately 65 feet.

Under the Straight Street Grid Option (**Figure 3.10-18**), views to the site from this location would include roadway area associated with an extension of Commercial St. through the site and new buildings on either side of the Commercial St. extension developed to a height up to 75 feet. The width of the view corridor associated with the extension of Commercial St. through the site would correlate with the right-of-way and would be assumed to be approximately 65 feet. Views to Bellingham Bay and Lummi Island would be partially obstructed from this viewpoint.

Viewpoint C (Ivy St. Green) is located on Cornwall Ave. at Ivy St. (**Figure 3.10-19**). The existing view from this location looking to the north includes the western end of the PSE Encogen Facility and paved roadway surface in the foreground, existing buildings in the Log Pond Area in the mid-ground view and the Whatcom Waterway and the ASB breakwater in the background.

Views from this viewpoint under the Preferred Alternative (**Figure 3.10-19**) would be dominated by green space (Ivy St. Green) providing a visual connection between Cornwall Ave. and the waterfront at the proposed park along the shoreline. Buildings up to 100 feet in height would frame this approximately 200-foot wide corridor. Views to the water and the marina breakwater would be available in the background.

Under the Straight Street Grid Option (**Figure 3.10-20**) views of the extended Ivy St. and buildings (up to 75 feet in height) along the Ivy St. right-of-way would be visible in the foreground and mid-ground view. Views to the shoreline park, water and marina breakwater would be available in the background. The view corridor provided along the roadway right-of-way would be assumed to be approximately 65 feet wide.

Viewpoint D (Cornwall Beach) is located along the shoreline of the Cornwall Beach Area. Looking to the northeast, the existing view from this location (**Figure 3.10-21**) includes vegetation along the Cornwall Beach Area shoreline and Bellingham Bay in the foreground. Views to buildings and ships associated with the Shipping Terminal Area are prominent in the background. Views of the hillside neighborhoods to the east, beyond the site, are also available in the distant background.

Views from this viewpoint under the Preferred Alternative would include park/open space associated with a park along the shoreline and Bellingham Bay in the foreground. The background would include views of new buildings at a maximum potential height of 50 feet

within the 200-foot shoreline zone and up to 100 feet in other portions of the area. Several existing buildings in the Shipping Terminal Area are assumed to remain. Portions of distant background views toward existing neighborhoods beyond the site would be affected by redevelopment.

Under the Straight Street Grid Option (**Figure 3.10-22**), foreground views would consist of park open space and Bellingham Bay. The background would include views of new buildings at a maximum potential height of 50 feet within the 200-foot shoreline zone and up to 75 feet in other portions of the area. Several existing buildings in the Shipping Terminal Area are assumed to remain. Portions of distant background views toward existing neighborhoods beyond the site would be partially obstructed by redevelopment but to a lesser extent than under the Preferred Alternative.

Viewpoint E (Cornwall Ave. View Corridor) is located at the intersection of Cornwall Ave. and E. Holly St. The existing view from this location looking southwest (**Figure 3.10-23**) includes the Cornwall Ave. roadway and associated vehicles, street trees and buildings in the foreground. Limited views to the site and Bellingham Bay beyond are available in the background.

Views from Viewpoint E under the Preferred Alternative (**Figure 3.10-23**) would include building redevelopment on either side of the defined Cornwall Ave. view corridor consisting of roadway rights-of-way, buildings subject to limited building heights (35 feet) in the portions of the corridor not in rights-of-way, and open space. An uninterrupted view corridor to Bellingham Bay would be provided. Buildings adjacent to the view corridor could be up to 100 feet in height and would affect a portion of the existing view (upper level setbacks would be provided along this corridor).

Views from this viewpoint under the Straight Street Grid Option (**Figure 3.10-24**) would include building redevelopment on either side of an extended Cornwall Ave., providing an informal view corridor through the site to Bellingham Bay. Buildings adjacent to the view corridor could be up to 75 feet in height and would affect a portion of the existing view.

As stated earlier, it is assumed that the roadway network and building height assumptions associated with the Marine Trades Area under the Preferred Alternative and Straight Street Grid Option would be similar to those analyzed under the DEIS Alternatives. The DEIS Alternatives assumed that building heights within this area could range from 50 feet in the shoreline zone (i.e. the area within 200 feet of the shoreline) to a maximum of 100 feet in the remaining portions of this area. As a result, visual conditions from viewpoints overlooking this area, such as the Broadway St. Overlook (DEIS Viewpoint #2), would be generally as analyzed in the DEIS. Redevelopment under the Preferred Alternative and Straight Street Grid Option would change the visual character of the site from a low-rise industrial area to a more densely developed mixed-use area. As illustrated in Figure 3.10-5, 3.10-18, 3.10-23, 3.10-29, and 3.10-35 of the DEIS, redevelopment on the site would obstruct a portion of the views across the site to the South Hill neighborhood; however, portions of the hillside, including the Sehome Hill Arboretum, would remain within the field of view (refer to **Appendix L** for the visual simulations prepared for the DEIS).

### Light and Glare

Similar to DEIS Alternatives 1-3, redevelopment under the Preferred Alternative and Straight Street Grid Option would result in new light and glare sources on the site, indicative of an urban mixed-use neighborhood. The DEIS indicates that new light and glare sources would be typical

of an urban environment and significant impacts would not be anticipated. Light and glare conditions under the Preferred Alternative and the Straight Street Grid Option would be similar to those identified for DEIS Alternatives 1-3 and significant impacts would not be anticipated.

### 3.10.3 Conclusions

The general aesthetic character of the site under the Preferred Alternative would reflect an urban mixed use development with buildings surrounded by parks, open space, trails and roadways. Levels of redevelopment under the Preferred Alternative would be within the range of alternatives analyzed in the DEIS. The Preferred Alternative would provide a “mix and match” approach and would be comparable to DEIS Alternatives 1 and 2. The amount of open space would be similar to DEIS Alternative 1 (33 acres), as would maximum building heights which would range from 35 to 200 feet in height. The variability of height limits would provide opportunities for buildings to be separated by open spaces and could result in substantial view opportunities to the waterfront and Bay from onsite structures. The Preferred Alternative includes several formal view corridors through the site to provide visual connections from established neighborhoods to Bellingham Bay, Whatcom Waterway and the site’s waterfront. No view corridors currently exist or would be assumed under the No Action Alternative.

The Straight Street Grid Option would assume the same level of redevelopment as described under the Preferred Alternative. Under the Straight Street Grid Option, the street network would be slightly different and would continue the existing City of Bellingham street grid onto the site. Building height limits of 75 feet could result in a more uniform and less diverse character of building redevelopment that could reduce the opportunity of views of the water from certain onsite buildings. Rights-of-ways associated with the Straight Street Grid Option would be anticipated to provide opportunities for views through the site to the water and beyond.

Although the character of the site would substantially change over the 20-year buildout period under either the Preferred Alternative or the Straight Street Grid Option, this assessment does not indicate if a particular change in visual character would be adverse. The determination as to whether a particular change could be adverse should be defined by the subjective perceptions of an individual viewer. For example, some viewers could perceive the change in character of the site from vacant/industrial to an urban redevelopment with a range of uses as a negative impact, while others could perceive this change as a positive condition. On an overall basis, positive or negative perceptions related to visual aesthetic character would likely be defined by the quality and consistency of building design, the public spaces that are created and the “pedestrian-friendliness” of the site.

### 3.10.4 Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures to address any potentially significant aesthetics impacts of DEIS Alternative 1 - 3 are identified in the DEIS (see DEIS Section 3.10.3 for a list of these measures). These mitigation measures would also apply to the Preferred Alternative and the Straight Street Grid Option. Because no additional adverse aesthetic impacts were identified for the Preferred Alternative or the Straight Street Grid Option, no additional mitigation measures would be warranted.

As identified in the DEIS, mitigation measures include reference to development standards and design guidelines that could include standards for building heights, setbacks, modulation and



building materials. Provisions for the establishment of view corridors through the site are also identified as a potential element of the Master Development Plan and/or Development Agreement. The DEIS recognizes that standards and regulations could be refined as part of the ongoing master planning effort and would ultimately be reviewed and considered by the City as part of the decision-making process for the Waterfront District Master Development Plan (Subarea Plan).

The Port has formulated Preliminary Development Regulations that address view corridors, and building height limitations; these are intended as refinements to the measures identified in the DEIS to protect views to/from the site (refer to **Appendix D**, Preliminary Development Regulations, for preliminary regulations related to uses, building heights, minimum spacing of taller buildings, upper level setbacks, open space, parking, etc).

In addition, as part of the Preferred Alternative, the Port has identified specific view corridor locations on the site. Two primary types of view corridors would be established to provide uninterrupted views through the site to the water: 1) view corridors defined by rights-of way and open space; and 2) view corridors defined by a combination of rights-of-way and building height limitations (see the description of these corridors earlier in this Section and **Figure 3.10-1** for their location). The Master Development Plan (which could include the designation of corridors on the site) and the Development Regulations to be adopted would ensure that view opportunities are provided as part of long-term redevelopment.

To lessen the impacts of uniformity of building heights under the Straight Street Grid Option, development standards and design guidelines requiring variation in building heights could be adopted.

The DEIS also includes mitigation measures related to the establishment of lighting standards as part of the Master Development Plan, including provisions for: hours of construction lighting; use of shields to reduce light spillage; use of low-reflectivity building glazing and materials; use of landscape features to diffuse light and glare; and, use of timers to minimize ambient light levels. These measures would also apply to the Preferred Alternative and Straight Street Grid Option.

### 3.10.5 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Similar to DEIS Alternative 1 - 3, redevelopment under the Preferred Alternative and the Straight Street Grid Option would change the aesthetic character of the site from a primarily paved vacant/underutilized industrial site to a more dense urban, mixed-use development. Changes in aesthetic character would occur incrementally over the 20-year buildout period. The aesthetic/visual changes that would result from redevelopment of the site over the buildout period could be perceived by some to be significant and adverse; however, perceptions regarding such changes would ultimately be based on the subjective opinion of the viewer.

The Preferred Alternative would create formal view corridors through portions of the site, where none currently exist, that are intended to preclude significant adverse visual impacts from long-term redevelopment.

Redevelopment on the site under the Preferred Alternative and Straight Street Option would result in an increase in light and glare on the site. With implementation of the mitigation measures identified in the DEIS no significant light and glare impacts would be anticipated.