

4.1 AESTHETICS

This section of the EIR analyzes the potential environmental effects on aesthetics from implementation of the proposed project. Data for this section were taken from the Beach and Edinger Corridors Specific Plan (BECSP) Environmental Impact Report and the Huntington Beach General Plan Urban Design Element. Full reference-list entries for all cited materials are provided in Section 4.1.5 (References) and project studies.

4.1.1 Environmental Setting

■ Project Location

The proposed mixed-use project is located on a 9.4-acre, L-shaped parcel at the southwest corner of Beach Boulevard and Warner Avenue. The project site is located approximately 3.7 miles from the Pacific Ocean.

The project site is bound to the north by Warner Avenue, to the east by Beach Boulevard, to the south by Cypress Avenue and Sycamore Avenue, and to the west by Elm Street and Ash Street. The project site is located on Beach Boulevard and is designated as a Neighborhood Center within the BECSP. The proposed project is subject to the BECSP Development Code, and more specifically development standards included as BECSP Section 2.1.5 (Neighborhood Center).

To the east and north of the project site, development consists predominantly of auto-oriented, low-rise commercial uses. To the west and south of the project site, development consists primarily of one- and two-story, multi-family, and single-family residential uses.

■ Beach Boulevard Corridor Characteristics

Overall, the visual character of the Beach Boulevard Corridor can be characterized as a linear pattern of strip commercial buildings, typically low-rise with some visible exceptions, set back behind surface parking lots and monument signs. Numerous automotive dealerships exist along either side of the corridor and signage is very prevalent in these areas. Landscaping along Beach Boulevard consists of trees and ornamental shrubs located along the edge of the retail/commercial centers and within the center median of Beach Boulevard.

Neighborhood Boulevard

Beach Boulevard, extending from Five Points to Warner Avenue where the project site is located, is identified in the BECSP as the Neighborhood Boulevard segment. This segment is characterized by a significant amount of ageing strip development. Development types are predominantly one-story, single-loaded commercial buildings surrounded by, or set back behind, surface parking lots. Exceptions to this pattern include hospital and medical uses that tend to be larger in scale than the standard strip malls, and typically range from one- to four-stories. A fifteen-story office tower located on the project site is a distinct feature of this area, as the height of the building is unusual for this segment of the Beach

Boulevard Corridor and the City as a whole. There is little in the way of coordinated landscaping through this segment.

■ Surrounding Area Characteristics

Development along Warner Avenue, just west of Beach Boulevard, consists of low-scale, single-use buildings, such as restaurant and commercial uses setback from the road by sidewalks, landscaping and substantial surface parking lots. The density and mass of development oriented towards Warner Avenue is reduced compared to development oriented towards Beach Boulevard which typically includes strips of development in contrast to single-use development. A center median within Warner Avenue, landscaped with grass and tall palm trees, is the dominant visual feature along this portion of the road.

West of the project site along Warner Avenue, the visual character of the street transitions into a residential neighborhood with institutional uses. Warner Avenue through this area is wider due to the absence of the landscaped center median. Landscaping is limited to trees and bushes that function to screen buildings. South of Warner Avenue on smaller residential streets, development consists primarily of one-story, single-family homes. These single-family homes are shielded from Warner Avenue by walls and fencing. North of Warner Avenue, just west of the project site is a multi-family residential community. A row of multi-family buildings are oriented towards Warner Avenue and setback from the roadway by a sidewalk and landscaping. Pedestrian pathways from the sidewalk provide access to these buildings.

Southwest of the project site along the adjacent residential streets, including Ash Street, Elm Street, Sycamore Avenue, and Cypress Avenue, development consists of a mix of one- and two-story, single-family, and multi-family residential development. Homes are setback from the roadway by small landscaped front yards and feature driveways and attached garages oriented to the side of the house. Low screening in front of homes consists of fences and/or shrubs. The sidewalks through this area do not include street trees or other forms of landscaping. The dominant visual feature through this area is the cars parked along the street and the mature trees associated with the proposed project site and the residential uses.

■ Project Site Characteristics

Existing development on the project site includes a fifteen-story office tower at the corner of Beach Boulevard and Warner Avenue, several one-story strips of retail and restaurant uses or office uses, oriented towards Beach Boulevard and Warner Avenue, as well as a two-story movie theater, a six-story parking structure, and a two-story Bally's total fitness. A portion of the project site on the corner of Cypress Avenue and Elm Street is currently undeveloped. Buildings range from one to fifteen stories and no consistent style of architecture or design is evident. Surface parking lots surround each of the buildings setting each building apart from the next. Landscaping is present along the perimeter of the proposed project site and each of the buildings. Figure 4.1-1 (Project Site Views) provides photos of the project site from various vantage points on the adjacent streets.



View 1: View of Project Site looking southwest across the intersection of Beach Boulevard and Warner Avenue



View 2: View of Project Site looking northwest from Beach Boulevard, south of Warner Avenue.



View 3: View of Project Site looking south from Warner Avenue, west of Beach Boulevard



View 4: View of Project Site looking north on Elm Street towards the intersection of Elm and Ash Streets.

Source: PBS&J, an Atkins company, 2010.



FIGURE 4.1-1
Project Site Views

100000407

Development on the project site is setback from Beach Boulevard and Warner Avenue by a sidewalk, perimeter landscaping and in some cases surface parking lots. An internal roadway that runs through the center of the project site connecting Beach Boulevard and Warner Avenue features decorative paving and landscaped medians. This roadway provides access for both cars and pedestrians to an internal surface parking lot, a plaza, and the existing parking structure on the west side of the project site. The plaza and surface parking areas surround the existing office tower, restaurants and the Bally's building. Several pedestrian paths are located between and in front of buildings and are landscaped with planters.

Along Ash Street, Sycamore Avenue, Elm Streets, and Cypress Avenues where the project site is located across from existing residential uses, a combination of low, cinder block walls, bushes, and trees screen the developed portion of the project site. The undeveloped portion of the site on the corner of Elm Street and Cypress Avenue is surrounded by a chain link fence and has been graded flat. Existing development on the project site is oriented away from the adjacent residential uses and built out to the sidewalk along these streets. Due to the absence of a substantial setback and lack of pedestrian scale features such as doorways, awnings and walkways, buildings appear larger than they are and somewhat nondescript from the perspective of these residential uses.

■ Views to and from the Project Site

Due to the built-out nature of Beach Boulevard and the surrounding area, as well as the overall flat terrain of the area, views are of a typical urban landscape. No views of scenic resources, such as the ocean, open space, historical resources, or unique architectural features, are available from the proposed project site. Expansive views are not available from this area. Most views consist of the immediately adjacent, low-scale commercial development, with the exception of the fifteen-story office building on the project site. Due to its substantial height and mass, this building is a dominant visual feature in the vicinity. Features visible in the foreground include roadways, automobiles, streetscape (streetlights and landscaping), surface parking lots, and signage, as well as commercial or residential development.

Because of the substantial width and straight orientation of both Beach Boulevard and Warner Avenue, long-range, channelized views are available down these roadways. These views are framed by urban development and landscaping. As development is typically setback from the roadways by sidewalks, landscaping and parking lots, when looking down these roadways the types and styles of development are often not distinguishable, with the exception of the high-rise office building located on the project site and a few other buildings that exceed the height of nearby buildings. Mid-ground views from various vantage points may also include signage, transmission lines, and roadway infrastructure. Background views consist of tall buildings, transmission lines, tall trees, signage, and sky.

Views into the project site are only available from adjacent roadways, while views of the high-rise office building on the project site can be seen from a considerable distance in the surrounding area. Landscaping along the perimeter of the project site and the presence of surface parking lots along Beach Boulevard and Warner Avenue partially shields development on site, as seen from these streets. Additionally, the orientation of the buildings and the presence of an internal roadway create an interior plaza area that is not visible from the roads. Landscaping and decorative paving on the project site improve the visual quality of the project site.

From the adjacent residential streets including Cypress Avenue, Elm Street, Ash Avenue, and Sycamore Street, views through the project site are limited due to the presence of a low wall, and the mass of the buildings located adjacent to these streets. However, substantial landscaping consisting of a row of mature trees, shrubs, and grass along the southwest perimeter of the developed portion of the project site improves the visual quality of the area. The undeveloped lot located on the corner of Elm Street and Cypress Avenue is visible only from the adjacent residential uses, and is not visible from Beach Boulevard.

Light and Glare

The project site and the surrounding area currently have ambient nighttime lighting levels typical of an urbanized area. A variety of sources from both the project site and surrounding area produce artificial light, including streetlights, illuminated signs, automobile headlights, security lights associated with buildings and parking lots, and interior and exterior lighting from development.

Glare results from sharply reflected light caused by sunlight or artificial light reflecting from highly finished surfaces such as window glass or brightly colored surfaces. The high-rise office building located on the project site, has the potential to generate glare due to the large glass windows. The remaining surrounding commercial/retail development presents limited potential for glare, such as from light reflected off vehicle windows, and is typical of urban environments.

The types of land uses that are typically sensitive to excess light and glare include residential, hospitals, senior housing, and other types of uses where excessive light and glare may disrupt sleep. In addition, light and glare may interfere with the vision of drivers. Light-sensitive uses in the project area include residents located to the west, south and southwest of the project site. No light-sensitive uses are currently located on the project site.

Shade and Shadow

The nearest shadow-sensitive uses are the residential uses located to the west, southwest, and south of the project site. No shadow-sensitive uses are currently located on the project site. Existing one and two-story development on the proposed project site currently creates limited shade and shadow patterns. However, during the winter solstice when the days are shortest and the angle of the sun in the sky has the potential to cast the longest shadows, the fifteen-story high rise office tower casts a substantial shadow extending across Warner Avenue and Beach Boulevard to the northwest, north and northeast of the project site onto the existing uses at those locations. The six-story parking structure located on the corner of Sycamore Avenue and Ash Street casts a shadow across Sycamore Avenue and Warner Avenue to the northwest and north during the winter solstice. During the summer solstice, shadows cast from existing development on the project site are contained within the project site, with shadows from the fifteen-story office tower extending onto Beach Boulevard for only a brief period of time. Nearby development ranges in height from one to four stories and creates limited shade and shadow. Overall, throughout the year, shadows cast from development on the project site and in the immediate vicinity fall mostly within the adjacent roadways, and sidewalks, with shadows occasionally extending onto nearby commercial development, but do not extend onto nearby shadow-sensitive uses, including the adjacent residential uses located along Cypress Avenue, Elm Street, Sycamore Avenue, and Ash Street.

4.1.2 Regulatory Framework

Refer to Section 4.1.2 (Regulatory Framework) of the BECSP Program EIR, for applicable federal, state, and local regulations applicable to the proposed project. No new regulations have been implemented since certification of the Program EIR.

The BECSP Development Code which includes development standards, development regulations and guidelines, governs all development actions with the BECSP area, including the proposed project site. The proposed project would be subject to development standards specific to the proposed project site's BECSP designation of Neighborhood Center, included as BECSP Section 2.1.5 (Neighborhood Center).

■ General Plan and BECSP Consistency Analysis

The proposed project would be designed in accordance with the BECSP Development Code, which contains development standards specific to the project site designation of Neighborhood Center. Conformance with BECSP development standards, which is mandatory for all development occurring within the BECSP area, would ensure that future development along Beach Boulevard, including the proposed project, would provide high quality design and would be compatible and complimentary with surrounding development. BECSP Section 2.5 includes street regulations that establish the design of specific streetscape improvements based on segments of the BECSP. The proposed project would comply with the BECSP Development Code, including the provisions of Section 2.5 which calls for a Palm Tree Boulevard configuration along Beach Boulevard in front of the proposed project site and a Parkway configuration along Warner Avenue, and therefore would be consistent with General Plan Policy UD 1.3.1 and Policy CE 7.1.4, which call for consistent and established landscape and urban streetscape design themes.

4.1.3 Project Impacts and Mitigation

■ Analytic Method

A qualitative assessment of visual impacts was prepared by evaluating the existing visual character and setting and comparing it to visual conditions anticipated to occur under the proposed project. It is important to note that an assessment of visual impacts is not a quantitative analysis, but rather qualitative and can be largely subjective. The project site and surrounding uses were observed, and photographs were taken to determine the short- and long-term visual effects of the proposed project. Policies from the City's General Plan and provisions of the BECSP Development Code were identified to determine if the project design was consistent with these adopted plans.

■ Thresholds of Significance

The following thresholds of significance are based on Appendix G of the 2010 CEQA Guidelines. For purposes of this EIR, implementation of the proposed project may have a significant adverse impact on aesthetics if it would do any of the following:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista

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

■ Effects Not Found to Be Significant

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

The California Department of Transportation designates scenic highway corridors. The project site is not located within a state scenic highway; nor is the project site visible from any (officially designated or eligible) scenic highway. The nearest eligible scenic highway is Pacific Coast Highway, located approximately 3.7 miles west of the site. However, Pacific Coast Highway is not designated in this area at this time. In addition, as the project site is currently developed, the site does not contain rock outcroppings or historic buildings. No impact would occur.

■ Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold	Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?
-----------	--

Impact 4.1-1 Implementation of the proposed project would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista. This impact is considered *less than significant*.

The proposed project site is not located within the viewshed of a scenic vista. Scenic vistas are considered publicly available views of scenic resources. For the purposes of this analysis, “scenic resources” can include natural open spaces, topographic formations, and landscapes. Many people associate natural landforms and landscapes with scenic resources, such as oak woodlands, lakes, rivers, streams, and some historical areas. However, scenic resources can also include urban open spaces and the built environment, such as parks, trails, pathways, nature centers, archaeological, historical resources, and architectural features. Changes to a scenic vista would be considered substantial if the project results in the obstruction of a view of a scenic resource from a public vantage point, or results in the degradation of a scenic vista through the removal, alteration, or demolition of a scenic resource, which constitutes the scenic vista as viewed from public vantage points.

The project site is currently developed with a fifteen-story office-tower, office and retail uses, a fitness facility, a movie theater, and a parking structure in a highly urbanized area of the City. No scenic resources are located on the project site. As such, development of the proposed project would not result in the removal, alteration, or demolition of a scenic resource that contributes to the quality of a scenic vista.

Based on the scenic resources, referred to as visual assets, inventoried in the City’s General Plan Urban Design Element, views of the Pacific Ocean, the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve, landscaping in the Downtown area and Central Park, Huntington Harbour, and City parks are considered scenic vistas in

the City. Views of these scenic resources are available from the coast and adjacent to the identified open space areas. Due to the flat topography and built-out nature of the project site and surrounding area, and the distance of the project site from the coast (3.7 miles), there are no scenic vistas visible from the project site or from public vantage points in the vicinity of the project site. As such, development of the proposed project would not obstruct views of a scenic resource and would therefore not result in changes to a scenic vista. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista. This impact is considered *less than significant*.

Threshold	Would the proposed project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?
-----------	---

Impact 4.1-2 **Implementation of the proposed project would not degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. This impact is considered *less than significant*.**

For the purpose of this analysis, a substantial degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the site would occur if the project introduces a new visible element that would be inconsistent with the overall quality, scale, and character of the surrounding development. This analysis considers the degree of contrast between existing and anticipated features that represent the area's aesthetic image, in addition to the degree to which the project would contribute to or degrade the area's aesthetic value.

The proposed project site is located on the corner of Beach Boulevard and Warner Avenue within the BECSP area. As identified in Section 3.3 (Project Objectives) of this EIR, an objective of the BECSP is to ensure that new buildings and landscaping contribute to the emergence of an increasingly visible and memorable visual identity appropriate to the unique history and character of the City. This objective is achieved through the application of the BECSP Development Code, which provides development standards for all new development within the BECSP area, as well as development regulations in the form of municipal policies and design guidelines pertaining to issues of visual character and aesthetics. To ensure that all projects within the BECSP comply with the Development Code, all development, including the proposed project is subject to site plan review. The proposed project must adhere to development standards for the Neighborhood Center designation, included as BECSP Section 2.1.5.

Under the proposed project, the existing fifteen-story, 196,000 sf office tower; the 18,531 sf retail/restaurant building along Warner Avenue; the 7,205 sf restaurant on Beach Boulevard; and the six-story, 863 stall parking structure located on the northeast corner of Sycamore Avenue and Ash Street would remain. All other existing buildings on the project site would be replaced with new development.

The project proposes three components; the construction of a mixed-use building on Beach Boulevard, a mixed-use building on Warner Avenue, and two retail buildings on the corner of Beach Boulevard and Warner Avenue, as described in the following paragraphs.

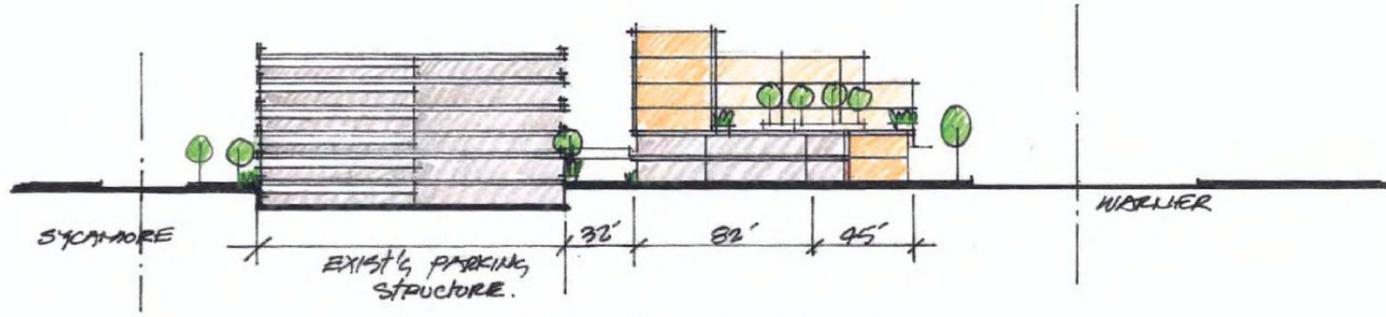
Two new one-story, 5,500 sf retail buildings would be constructed on the corner of Beach Boulevard and Warner Avenue, flanking the existing fifteen-story office tower. The orientation of the proposed buildings and the existing fifteen-story office would activate a public plaza on the corner.

The proposed project also includes the construction of the Beach Mixed-Use building bound by Beach Boulevard to the east, Cypress Avenue to the south, Elm Street to the west, and the internal roadway to the north. The Beach Mixed-Use building would include a total of 247,421 sf of building area, consisting of retail, restaurant, and residential units. This building would replace one of the existing restaurants and all of the retail and office uses located on Beach Boulevard, as well as the Bally's Total Fitness, and would develop the vacant lot on the corner of Elm Street and Cypress Avenue. Proposed retail and restaurant uses would front Beach Boulevard, while residential uses would front Elm and Cypress, and be located on the upper levels of the remainder of the building.

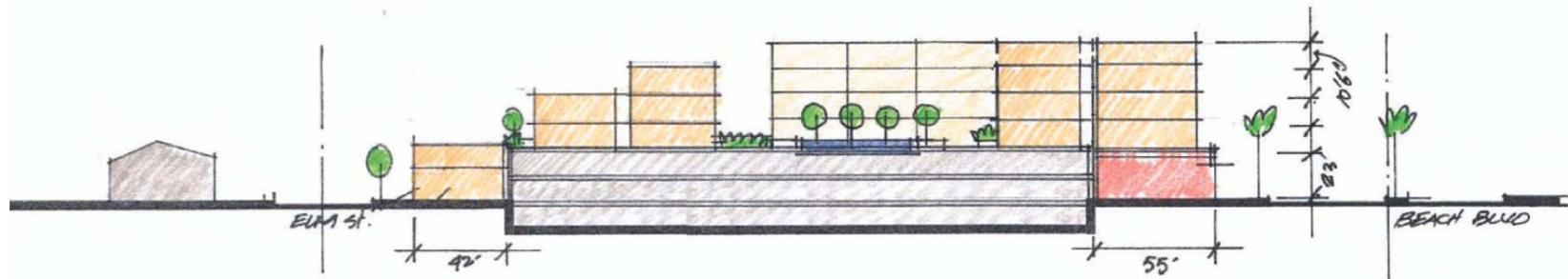
Finally, the proposed project includes the Warner Mixed-Use building bound to the north by Warner Avenue, to the east by the internal roadway, to the south by the existing six-story parking structure, and to the west by Sycamore Avenue. The Warner Mixed-Use building would include a total of 89,044 sf of building area, consisting of retail, restaurant, and residential uses. This building would replace the existing two-story movie theater building located on the corner of Warner Avenue and Sycamore Street. Retail and restaurant uses would front Warner Avenue and the internal roadway. Residential uses would front Ash Street and Warner Avenue, and be located on the upper levels of the remainder of the building.

As the project site is almost entirely developed with uses that are visually consistent with those proposed, implementation of the proposed project would not substantially change the visual character of the project site. Development of the undeveloped portion of the project site would be considered infill development in an otherwise built out area, and would complement the visual character of the remainder of the project site and the surrounding area. Additionally, the proposed project would retain a number of the buildings located on the project site, and would therefore expand on the existing established visual character of the project site from the perspective of Beach Boulevard and Warner Avenue. Furthermore, proposed development has been designed to comply with the design standards included in the BECSP for the Neighborhood Center designation. Development standards relating to the visual quality and character of proposed development include regulations for building scale; frontage and building placement; streets; open space; architecture; and signage. Compliance with these development standards would ensure that implementation of the proposed project would not degrade the existing visual character and quality of the project site and surrounding area and would be visually consistent with the BECSP vision for the Neighborhood Center designation and for the Neighborhood Boulevard segment.

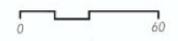
The height of the proposed buildings would range from one to six stories, as shown in Figure 4.1-2 (Project Sections), with the greatest height concentrated in the southeast portion of the project site near Beach Boulevard and Cypress Avenue. These heights are consistent with the heights of existing development on the project site that would remain with implementation of the proposed project, including the fifteen-story office tower and six-story parking structure. BECSP Section 2.3.1 allows building heights up to five stories in the Neighborhood Center designation, however Special Condition C13 of the development standards, allows buildings up to six stories in height with a conditional use permit (CUP) when existing development on the project site exceeds six stories. Along Beach Boulevard, as illustrated in Figure 4.1-2, building heights would be limited to four stories for a horizontal distance of 65 feet from the back-of-sidewalk, as required by Building Scale Regulation 2.3.2(1) of the BECSP. Consistent with BECSP Section 2.3.2, which requires development across the



Section at Warner Mixed Use Project



Section at Beach Mixed Use Project



Source: StudiONEleven, 2010.



FIGURE 4.1-2
Project Sections

100000407

street from housing to be a maximum of two stories in height, townhouses proposed on Elm Street would be two stories in height. However, additional levels, up to six stories would be stepped back from the street, as shown in Figure 4.1-2. All building frontages would be oriented toward existing roadways or the internal roadway, as required by BECSP Section 2.4.1 (Building Orientation to Street and Public Open Spaces) and would be designed in compliance with BECSP Section 2.4.2 (Private Frontage Types). BECSP Section 2.4.2(3) includes specifications for private building frontages, including allowable façade and entrance treatment for various types of entrances.

Proposed development would be required to comply with Architecture Regulations included as BECSP Section 2.8 (Architecture Regulations). These regulations are intended to ensure that proposed development within the BECSP area embodies the architectural characteristics that maintain the desired human scale, rhythm, and character appropriate for Beach Boulevard. BECSP Section 2.8.2 (Architectural Elements Regulations) would ensure that proposed development maintains the quality and character of Huntington Beach through the imposition of requirements and guidelines for facades, roofs, and sustainable practices. Furthermore, BECSP Section 2.8.3 (Architectural Character) would ensure that proposed development considers the existing character and identity of the City, and incorporates these characteristics into building design. Incorporation of these development regulations into the project design would ensure that the visual character and quality of the proposed development would be consistent with the desired Neighborhood Center character and visual quality.

Both existing and proposed streets would include public frontage improvements, as required by BECSP Section 2.5.1. Along Beach Boulevard, Palm Tree Boulevard specifications with Neighborhood Center Street-front improvements would be implemented. As such, the sidewalk along Beach Boulevard would be a minimum of 18 feet wide with coordinated streetscape, including streetlights, landscaping and furnishings. The center median within Beach Boulevard would also be improved and planted with clusters of tall palm trees with uplighting and native/water efficient, low groundcover of green foliage. Compliance with street regulations included as BECSP Section 2.5 would ensure that streets that are improved as part of the proposed project are built to enhance the connectivity of the area and create a safe and attractive streetscape environment.

The proposed project includes a public plaza to be located on the corner Beach Boulevard and Warner Avenue, a courtyard plaza, and several pedestrian paseos. A plaza as defined by the BECSP Section 2.6.4(4) is an open space available for civic purposes, commercial activities and community recreation, open to a public street, and located at the intersection of primary pedestrian routes. Landscaping would consist of enhanced/enriched hardscape. Both public and private open space on the project site would incorporate landscaping consistent with BECSP Section 2.6.8 (Open Space Landscaping), which includes guidelines for public spaces, paved areas, planted areas, walls and fences, lighting, and other site furnishings. Setback areas along the perimeter of the site would be landscaped in accordance with regulations included in BECSP Section 2.6.9 (Setback Area Landscaping). As such, compliance with BECSP Section 2.6 (Open Space Regulations) would ensure that publicly accessible open spaces are built with quality and enhance the livability of the project site and BECSP area, as a whole.

Proposed structures would range from one to six stories in height. This would result in a potentially significant impact if the proposed structures create shade/shadow impacts on light-sensitive uses. As

defined in BECSP MM4.1-1 included in BECSP Appendix A, shadowing impacts are considered significant when shadows would be cast upon potentially sensitive uses during a substantial portion (greater than 50 percent) of the main daylight hours (9:00 AM to 3:00 PM during the fall, winter, and spring seasons, and 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM [daylight savings time] during the summer season). Light-sensitive uses are those that depend upon light for their operation (e.g., solar panels) or for which solar access is essential for their function (e.g., swimming pools). Light-sensitive uses also include public parks and routinely useable outdoor spaces associated with residences and schools (e.g., yards and playgrounds). Light-sensitive uses located in the vicinity of the project site are limited to the immediately adjacent residential uses located along Cypress Avenue, Elm Street, Sycamore Avenue, and Ash Street. As required by mitigation measure BECSP MM4.1-1 a shade/shadow analysis was prepared to determine if the proposed project would result in significant impacts based on the established criteria.

Pursuant to BECSP MM4.1-1, Figure 4.1-3 (Summer Solstice) and Figure 4.1-4 (Winter Solstice) illustrate shadows under the best-case and worst-case scenarios of the summer and winter solstices, respectively. It should be noted that several of the existing building on the project site would remain with implementation of the proposed project, including the fifteen-story office building and the six-story parking structure which are the tallest on site and therefore most likely to cast shadows. The fifteen-story office tower currently casts a shadow across Warner Avenue and Beach Boulevard to the northwest, north, and northeast of the project site shadowing the existing, although not shadow-sensitive, uses at these locations. The six-story parking structure located on the corner of Sycamore Avenue and Ash Street casts a shadow across Sycamore Avenue and Warner Avenue to the northwest and north during the winter solstice. However, this shadow does not encroach upon shadow-sensitive uses on the western or northern sides of these roadways, respectively. These uses would remain as part of the proposed project; therefore, the associated, existing shadows would also remain. However, as discussed further below, the shadows from the proposed development would fall substantially within the existing shadows or on existing roadways and would not exacerbate the existing shadow conditions. Shadows from existing development at the project site do not currently substantially affect the adjacent residential uses located along Cypress Avenue (south), Elm Street (west), and Sycamore Avenue (south). For purposes of this analysis, only shadows created by new structures are considered.

As shown in Figure 4.1-3, during the summer solstice, shadows cast from existing development on the project site are contained within the project site, with only shadows from the fifteen-story office tower briefly extending onto Beach Boulevard.

As shown in Figure 4.1-4, during the winter solstice the fifteen-story office tower casts a substantial shadow extending across Warner Avenue and Beach Boulevard to the northwest, north and northeast of the project site shadowing the existing, although not shadow-sensitive, uses at these locations. The six-story parking structure located on the corner of Sycamore Avenue and Ash Street casts a shadow across Sycamore Avenue and Warner Avenue to the northwest and north during the winter solstice. However, this shadow does not encroach upon shadow-sensitive uses on the western or northern sides of these roadways, respectively. Shadows created by the Warner Mixed-Use building would fall within the shadow cast by the existing six-story parking structure and extend briefly into Warner Avenue and Ash Street but would not substantially encroach upon uses on the opposite sides of these roadways, respectively.



Source: PBS&J, an Atkins company, 2010.



FIGURE 4.1-3
Summer Solstice

100000407



Source: PBS&J, an Atkins company, 2010.



FIGURE 4.1-4
Winter Solstice

100000407

Further, as described above, the shadow from the existing parking structure does not affect shadow-sensitive uses. Additionally, shadows cast by the Beach Mixed-Use building would fall on Beach Boulevard and encroach for a brief time on commercial uses on the east side of Beach Boulevard. However, these uses are not identified as being light sensitive and the shadow would be cast for only a brief period of time in the late afternoon. Therefore, the proposed structures would not create shadows on off-site, light-sensitive receptors located to the south and west of the project site and impacts would be less than significant.

With regard to the proposed plaza, the existing fifteen-story office tower and proposed one-story retail building located on Beach Boulevard in combination would create shadows on the proposed plaza throughout the day. However, at 9:00 AM and 12:00 PM only a portion of the public plaza area would be cast in shadow, while at 3:00 PM the entire public plaza would be cast in shadow. As such, the entirety of the proposed plaza would not be cast in shadow for greater than 50 percent of the main daylight hours during the winter solstice. BECSP Section 2.6.8(1) states that public open spaces should provide areas of sun and shade year-round for climatic comfort. As such, shadows that would be cast during the winter solstice between the hours of 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM would not result in the decreased utility of the public open space, as areas of sun would be available at 9:00 AM and 12:00 PM. Furthermore, the shadow cast by the fifteen-story office tower is an existing condition that would not be exacerbated by the proposed project. Proposed residential common areas would also be cast in shadow throughout most of the winter solstice, however for the reasons listed above shadows would not decrease the utility of the open space area. Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially affect existing or proposed light-sensitive uses as defined by the BECSP, and implementation of the proposed project would result in a less than significant impact due to shade/shadow.

In conclusion, compliance with the BECSP Development Code would ensure that the proposed project would not degrade the existing visual character and quality of the project site and surrounding area. Rather, implementation of the proposed project would transform the character of the site to that envisioned by the BECSP for the Neighborhood Boulevard and Neighborhood Center designation. The proposed project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings and this impact would be *less than significant*.

Threshold	Would the proposed project create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?
-----------	--

Impact 4.1-3 **Implementation of the proposed project would introduce new sources of light and glare into the project vicinity. However, these sources would not adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. This impact is considered *less than significant*.**

For the purposes of this analysis, light or glare effects are evaluated by the change in illumination levels as a result of project light sources and the extent to which project lighting would spill off the project site and affect adjacent light-sensitive uses.

Light

Proposed development would increase overall nighttime lighting in the project area with the introduction of additional street lighting, exterior lighting (safety and way-finding), and vehicle headlights. The closest sensitive receptors that could be affected by nighttime lighting include adjacent residential uses located to the south and west of the project site across Cypress Avenue, Elm Street, Sycamore Avenue, and Ash Street.

Nighttime illumination can affect people in several ways. For example, where intense lighting is viewed against a dark background, the contrast attracts the attention of the viewer and could be considered annoying. Under low-light conditions, the human eye adjusts to the brightest light within the field of view. If the range of light intensity to which the eye is exposed is large, the eye will be relatively insensitive to the more dimly lighted areas within the field of view. In addition, increased illumination can affect the suitability of sleeping areas, use of outdoor areas at natural light levels, and privacy. The degree of impact is related to the degree of change from the illumination levels to which people have become accustomed.

Due to the urbanized nature of the surrounding area, a significant amount of ambient nighttime light currently exists, reducing the views of stars and affecting views of the nighttime sky. Streetlights and headlights along adjacent roadways provide a significant amount of existing ambient light surrounding the project site. Nearby commercial uses on Beach Boulevard also provide substantial amounts of exterior lighting for security and way finding. The proposed project would introduce additional nighttime lighting sources directly onto the project site and the immediately surrounding area; including exterior building lighting for security and way finding, vehicle headlights entering and exiting the project site, and interior building illumination. Consequently, surrounding uses could be exposed to exterior lighting associated with the proposed buildings, streets, and open space. However, BECSP Section 2.6.8(5)(a) requires that lighting fixtures shall be directed downward from the horizontal plane of the light source to preserve a dark sky and prevent unnecessary light pollution, and requires that lighting and planting plans for public and private frontage areas be visually and aesthetically coordinated. Furthermore, BECSP Section 2.6.8(5)(d) requires specific luminaire types that would prevent light spill-over, and provide for an efficient distribution of lighting. Conformance with the BECSP would ensure that nighttime light produced by required exterior lighting would be consistent with nighttime lighting conditions of the project area and would not result in impacts to adjacent light-sensitive receptors. Therefore, light impacts would be *less than significant*.

Glare

Proposed structures would range from one to six stories. Generally, buildings three or more stories in height have the potential to include large building faces with reflective surfaces (e.g., brightly colored building façades, reflective glass) that could create daytime glare. However, BECSP MM4.1-2 requires that new structures are designed to maximize the use of nonreflective facade treatment, and BECSP Section 2.8.2(2)(c) requires that buildings utilize light colored roofs to reduce glare. As such, compliance with BECSP MM4.1-2 would ensure that impacts related to daytime glare would be reduced by managing the reflective properties of the building materials employed, such as glass, metal, or finished concrete. Impacts from glare would be *less than significant*.

BECSP MM4.1-2 Proposed new structures shall be designed to maximize the use of nonreflective façade treatments, such as matte paint or glass coatings. Prior to issuance of building permits for the proposed project, the Applicant shall indicate provision of these materials on the building plans.

4.1.4 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic context for the analysis of cumulative aesthetic impacts includes areas with views of the proposed project site.

Development of the proposed project site and areas located to the north and south of the proposed project site on Beach Boulevard are subject to the BECSP Development Code, which includes standards, requirements, and guidelines that guide development in the BECSP area. Moreover, the contribution of the proposed project to such cumulative impacts would not be cumulatively considerable, because as described above, the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on the visual character or quality of the project area. Therefore, the proposed project's contribution would not be cumulatively considerable, and the cumulative impact of the proposed project would be *less than significant*.

Huntington Beach is an urbanized City and contains numerous existing sources of nighttime lighting. Cumulative development would constitute intensification of an already urban and nearly built-out area and would generally occur through redevelopment or infill development. Although new development or redevelopment could include direct illumination of project structures, features, and/or walkways, the cumulative increase in ambient nighttime lighting levels in these areas would only rise minimally because a significant amount of ambient lighting currently exists due to the urbanized nature of the City as a whole. Thus, increases in nighttime lighting that would occur with cumulative development would not significantly affect nighttime views of the sky because such views are already limited. Cumulative development, in combination with the proposed project, is not anticipated to result in the creation of new sources of light that could negatively affect nighttime views. Therefore, cumulative impacts associated with ambient nighttime lighting would be considered *less than significant*.

The cumulative context for spillover light would be other development that could add to the spillover light effects of the project on properties in the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Spillover light is a site-specific effect that is affected only by projects in the immediate vicinity of the affected property. Implementation of the proposed project in combination with adjacent projects would add lighting typical of mixed-use residential and commercial developments. This includes directed lighting for architectural accents, signage, landscape elements, security and lighting from vehicles. Lighting impacts would be addressed through compliance with the BECSP which includes lighting requirements that would reduce the potential for spill lighting to occur from future development in the plan area. Therefore, a *less than significant* cumulative impact would result from spillover lighting.

Cumulative development could result in an increase in glare, as specific building materials and configurations are uncertain. However, these potential increases are likely to be minor and consistent with the existing built environment due to limited development potential and existing City regulations. Further, future projects would be subject to mitigation measure BECSP MM4.1-2, which would reduce the impacts to a less than significant level. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in a significant daytime glare impact and would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to this

impact. Consequently, cumulative glare within the surrounding area would be less than significant. Therefore, cumulative impacts associated with glare would be *less than significant*.

4.1.5 References

Huntington Beach, City of. *Beach and Edinger Corridors Specific Plan Environmental Impact Report*, November 2009.

———. *Beach and Edinger Corridors Specific Plan*, Adopted March 2010.

———. *City of Huntington Beach General Plan*, May 13, 1996.