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## SECTION 4: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

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### Organization of Issue Areas

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This Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR) provides analysis of impacts for those environmental topics where it was determined in the Initial Study, as provided in Appendix A, or through subsequent analysis that the proposed project would result in “potentially significant impacts.” Sections 4.1 through 4.14 discuss the environmental impacts that may result with approval and implementation of the proposed project.

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### Issues Addressed in this EIR

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The following environmental issues are addressed in this chapter:

- Aesthetics, Light, and Glare
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soils, and Seismicity
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services and Recreation
- Transportation
- Urban Decay
- Utility Systems

Each environmental issue area in Sections 4.1 through 4.14 contains a description of:

1. The environmental setting as it relates to the specific issue
2. The regulatory framework governing that issue
3. The methodology used in identifying the issues
4. The significance criteria
5. An evaluation of the project-specific impacts and identification of mitigation measures
6. A determination of the level of significance after mitigation measures are implemented

**Level of Significance**

Determining the severity of project impacts is fundamental to achieving the objectives of CEQA. CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 requires that decision makers mitigate, as completely as is feasible, the significant impacts identified in the Final Subsequent EIR (FSEIR). If the FSEIR identifies any significant unmitigated impacts, CEQA Guidelines Section 15093 requires decision makers in approving a project to adopt a statement of overriding considerations that explains why the benefits of the project outweigh the adverse environmental consequences identified in the FSEIR.

The level of significance for each impact examined in this DSEIR was determined by considering the predicted magnitude of the impact against the applicable threshold. Thresholds were developed using criteria from the CEQA Guidelines and checklist; State, federal, and local regulatory schemes; local/regional plans and ordinances; accepted practice; consultation with recognized experts; and other professional opinions.

As a tiered SEIR, the analysis in this document considers the incremental change in impact when compared with the previous City of San Ramon General Plan EIR and City Civic Center EIR. Where appropriate, this document evaluates impacts in relation to net change in development on the project site considering the demolition of Bishop Ranch 2 and the vested office entitlement on Parcel 1A.

**Impact Analysis and Mitigation Measure Format**

The format adopted in this DSEIR to present the evaluation of impacts is described and illustrated below.

**Summary Heading of Impact**

**Impact AES-1:** An impact summary heading appears immediately preceding the impact description (Summary Heading of Impact in this example). The impact abbreviation identifies the section of the report (AES for Aesthetics, Light, and Glare in the example) and the sequential order of the impact (1 in the example) within that section. To the right of the impact number is the impact statement, which identifies the potential impact.

**Impact Analysis**

A narrative analysis follows the impact statement.

**Significance Before Mitigation**

This section identifies the level of significance of the impact before any mitigation is proposed.

**Mitigation Measures**

In some cases, following the impact discussion, reference is made to State and federal regulations and agency policies that would fully or partially mitigate the impact. In addition, policies and programs from applicable local land use plans that partially or fully mitigate the impact may be cited.

Project-specific mitigation measures, beyond those contained in other documents, are set off with a summary heading and described using the format presented below:

**MM AES-1a** Project-specific mitigation is identified that would reduce the impact to the lowest degree feasible. The mitigation number links the particular mitigation to the impact with which it is associated (**AES-1** in this example); the letter identifies the sequential order of that mitigation for that impact (**a** in this example).

***Significance After Mitigation***

This section identifies the resulting level of significance of the impact following mitigation.



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## 4.1 - Aesthetics, Light, and Glare

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### 4.1.1 - Introduction

This section describes the existing aesthetics, light, and glare and potential effects from project implementation on the site and its surrounding area. Descriptions and analysis in this section are based on site reconnaissance performed by Michael Brandman Associates (MBA); project renderings prepared by Cooper, Robertson & Partners; visual simulations of the project prepared by Gates and Associates; and shade and shadow simulations prepared by Focus 360.

As explained in Section 1, Introduction, this project-level Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR), where applicable, tiers off and incorporates by reference information and analysis contained in the City of San Ramon General Plan EIR and the San Ramon City Civic Center EIR, certified by the San Ramon City Council in 2001 and 2003, respectively. The General Plan EIR contemplated buildout of the General Plan at a programmatic level and concluded that all impacts related to aesthetics, light, and glare were less than significant after mitigation, as discussed in Section 4.1 of the document. The City Civic Center EIR provided project-level analysis of the smaller and less intense City Civic Center project and concluded that all impacts related to aesthetics, light, and glare were less than significant and did not require mitigation, as discussed in Section 4.7 of the document. This DSEIR also incorporates by reference the City of San Ramon Zoning Ordinance Final Negative Declaration and the Addendum to the City of San Ramon Zoning Ordinance Final Negative Declaration, both of which were certified by the San Ramon City Council in 2006.

This DSEIR accounts for modifications to the baseline conditions that have occurred since certification of the previous EIRs and changes that have increased the size and intensity of the proposed project. Accordingly, not all of the conclusions in the previous EIRs are applicable to the proposed project, and new analysis is provided for potential impacts not previously considered in those documents.

### 4.1.2 - Environmental Setting

#### Visual Setting

##### ***San Ramon Valley***

The San Ramon Valley stretches from Alamo in the north to Dublin in the south and is characterized by low rolling foothills to the west and east. The valley bottom is mostly developed with urban uses, while significant portions of the hillsides and nearly all of the ridgelines have remained undeveloped. Mt. Diablo, elevation 3,849 feet above mean sea level, is the most prominent visual feature in the region and is located northeast of the San Ramon Valley. West of the City limits is Wiedemann Hill, elevation 1,850 feet above mean sea level. Most of the prominent western slopes of Wiedemann Hill are undeveloped and contain clusters of oak woodlands. Within the City limits are the Dougherty Hills, which separate the San Ramon Valley from the Dougherty Valley to the east. The sides and ridgelines of the Dougherty Hills contain urban development, most notably the Canyon Lakes Golf Course and the Canyon Lakes commercial center. Additional development on the sides and

ridgelines of the Dougherty Hills is associated with the Old Ranch area in the southern portion of the City limits.

### **Project Site**

The project site consists of four parcels, described individually below. Photos of the project site are provided in Exhibit 3-3a through Exhibit 3-3e.

#### *Parcel 1A*

Parcel 1A consists of 14.27 acres of undeveloped land and developed parking areas associated with Bishop Ranch 1. The northern portion of Parcel 1A contains approximately 7.56 acres of an undeveloped City-owned rectangular-shaped property. This land consists of ruderal vegetation, with ornamental landscaping dominated by mature trees surrounding the property on all four sides. This portion of the parcel contains fill imported from other nearby parcels that have been developed. The southern 6.71-acre portion of Parcel 1A contains parking areas associated with Bishop Ranch 1. The parking areas are characterized as at-grade, asphalt-paved with landscaped islands. Sidewalks are present along its frontages with Bollinger Canyon Road and the Bishop Ranch 1 East roadway. Photographs of Parcel 1A are shown in Exhibits 3-3d and 3-3e.

#### *Parcel 1B*

Parcel 1B consists of approximately 3.52 acres of a developed parking area associated with Bishop Ranch 1. The parking area is characterized as at-grade, asphalt-paved with landscaped islands. Ornamental landscaping surrounds the parcel on the west, north, and east sides. Sidewalks are present along its frontages with Bollinger Canyon Road and the Bishop Ranch 1 entrance road. Photographs of Parcel 1B are shown in Exhibits 3-3c and 3-3d.

#### *Parcel 2*

Parcel 2 consists of the existing 14.57-acre Bishop Ranch 2 office complex. Bishop Ranch 2 contains 194,652 square feet of office space spread amongst four multi-story office structures with an interior turf courtyard landscaped area. Parking areas are located around the perimeter of the parcel and are characterized as at-grade, asphalt-paved areas with landscaped islands. Ornamental landscaping, dominated by mature redwood and hardwood trees, is present along its frontages with Sunset Drive, Bishop Drive, Camino Ramon, and Bollinger Canyon Road. Sidewalks are present along its entire frontage with Sunset Drive and portion of its frontage with Bishop Drive. Photographs of Parcel 2 are shown in Exhibits 3-3b and 3-3c.

#### *Parcel 3A*

Parcel 3A is an undeveloped 11.29-acre City-owned parcel containing ruderal vegetation. A storage container surrounded by fencing is located in the eastern portion of the parcel. The parcel contains fill imported from other nearby parcels that have been developed. Ornamental landscaping is present along its frontage with Camino Ramon. Sidewalks are present along its frontages with Camino

Ramon and Bollinger Canyon Road. The site is used for temporary parking and special events such as car shows and festivals. Photographs of Parcel 3A are shown in Exhibits 3-3a and 3-3b.

**Surrounding Land Uses**

The project vicinity is comprised of existing developments that include commercial and residential uses, as well as public places for recreational uses. A summary of surrounding uses for each parcel is provided in Table 4.1-1.

**Table 4.1-1: Surrounding Land Use Summary**

| Parcel No. | Surrounding Land Uses   |   |   |  |
|------------|---|---|---|--|
|            | West  | North   | East  | South  |
| 1A         | Bishop Ranch 1 office structure and Bishop Ranch 1 entrance road; parking lot (Parcel 1B) | Bollinger Canyon Road; Parcel 3A                                  | Bishop Ranch 1 East roadway; Iron Horse Trail; Market Place commercial uses (i.e., Marriot Residence Inn and Orchard Supply Hardware); Reflections Condominiums | Bishop Ranch 1 East roadway; Bishop Ranch 1 surface parking area; single-family residential uses |
| 1B         | Chevron Park, including buildings and parking areas                                       | Bollinger Canyon Road; Parcel 2                                   | Bishop Ranch 1 entrance road; Parcel 1A   | Bishop Ranch 1 office structure; Bishop Ranch 1 surface parking areas                            |
| 2          | Sunset Drive; Shops at Bishop Ranch   | Bishop Drive; AT&T campus   | Camino Ramon; Parcel 3A   | Bollinger Canyon Road; Chevron Park; parking lot (Parcel 1B)                                     |
| 3A         | Camino Ramon  | Bishop Ranch 3 parking structure; Bishop Ranch 3 office structure | Iron Horse Trail; Watson Canyon Drainage; Central Park  | Bollinger Canyon Road; Parcel 1A; Bishop Ranch 1 office structure                                |

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2007.

**Views**

Views are described in terms of what can be seen from the parcels comprising the project site, as well as from locations from which the parcels can be seen. Views from the project site are important, since the project will involve development of public places and residential units and since there are nearby residences and public places from which the project features will be visible.

**Views from the Project Site**

Views from the project site are shown in Exhibit 4.1-1a and Exhibit 4.1-1b.

*Parcel 1A*

Ornamental landscaping surrounds the developed and undeveloped portions of Parcel 1A and partially obstructs views of surrounding land uses. Bishop Ranch 1 and Chevron Park office

structures, including the 125-foot communications tower, are visible to the west and south. Bollinger Canyon Road, Parcel 3A, the Bishop Ranch 3 parking garage, the Iron Horse Trail, and vegetation associated with Central Park are visible to the north. Vegetation associated with the Iron Horse Trail and the rooflines of the Marriot Residence Inn, the Orchard Supply Hardware, and the Reflections Condominiums are partially visible to the east. Views from Parcel 1A are shown in Exhibits 4.1-1a and 4.1-1b.

#### *Parcel 1B*

Ornamental landscaping surrounds Parcel 1B and partially obstructs views of surrounding land uses. The rooflines of structures in Chevron Park are visible to the west. Bollinger Canyon Road and ornamental landscaping on the perimeter of Bishop Ranch 2 are visible to the north. The Bishop Ranch 1 entrance roadway and Parcel 1A are visible to the east. The Bishop Ranch 1 office structures are visible to the south. Views from Parcel 1B are shown in Exhibit 4.1-1b.

#### *Parcel 2*

Ornamental landscaping surrounds Parcel 2 and partially or completely obstructs views of surrounding land uses. Sunset Drive and the Shops at Bishop Ranch are partially visible to the west. Bishop Drive and ornamental landscaping associated with the AT&T campus are visible to the north. Views to the east are almost entirely obstructed by ornamental vegetation; however, Camino Ramon and Parcel 3A are partially visible in some places. Views to the south are almost entirely obstructed by ornamental vegetation; however, Bollinger Canyon Road, Parcel 1A, and vegetation associated with Chevron Park are partially visible in some places. Views from Parcel 2 are shown in Exhibit 4.1-1b.

#### *Parcel 3A*

Camino Ramon and vegetation associated with Bishop Ranch 2 are visible to the west. The Bishop Ranch 3 parking structure and the roofline of one of the Bishop Ranch 3 office buildings is visible to the north. The Iron Horse Trail and vegetation associated with Watson Canyon Drainage within Central Park are visible to the east. (Note that Watson Canyon Drainage is a man-made drainage channel that is also known as Watson Canyon Creek.) Bollinger Canyon Road, vegetation associated with Parcel 1A, and the rooflines of Bishop Ranch 1 and Chevron Park are visible to the south. Views from Parcel 3A are shown in Exhibits 4.1-1a and 4.1-1b.

#### ***Views from Surrounding Land Uses***

A summary of views from surrounding land uses is provided below. Viewer sensitivity tends to be highest from public places, such as Bollinger Canyon Road, Camino Ramon, Central Park, and the Iron Horse Trail. Views from surrounding land uses are provided in Exhibits 4.1-2a and 4.1-2b.





View of Bishop Ranch 3 and Camino Ramon from Parcel 3A.



View of Bishop Ranch 3 from Parcel 3A.



View of Bollinger Canyon Road from Parcel 3A.



View Iron Horse Trail, Central Park, and Bishop Ranch 3 from Parcel 1A.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2007.



Michael Brandman Associates

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## Exhibit 4.1-1a Views From Project Site

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View of The Shops at Bishop Ranch from Parcel 2.



View of Chevron Park from Parcel 2.



View of Bishop Ranch 1 from Parcel 1B.



View of Bishop Ranch 1 East Roadway and the Iron Horse Trail from Parcel 1A.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2007.



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## Exhibit 4.1-1b Views From Project Site

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View of Parcels 1A, 1B, and 3A from Bishop Ranch 3.



View of Parcel 3A from the Iron Horse Trail.



View of Parcel 3A from Central Park.



View of Parcel 3A from Central Park.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2007.



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## Exhibit 4.1-2a Views From Surrounding Land Uses

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View of Parcel 1B from Bishop Ranch 1.



View of Parcel 2 from Chevron Park.



View of northern portion of Parcel 1A from Iron Horse Trail.



View of southern portion of Parcel 1A from Iron Horse Trail.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2007.



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## Exhibit 4.1-2b Views From Surrounding Land Uses

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### *Bollinger Canyon Road*

Bollinger Canyon Road has unobstructed views of Parcel 3A; landscaping and berms partially obstructed views of Parcels 1A, 1B, and 2. Views of the Dougherty Hills and Wiedemann Hill are available from vantage points along Bollinger Canyon Road.

### *Camino Ramon*

Landscaping partially obstructs views of Parcels 1A, 1B, 2, and 3 from Camino Ramon. Generally, only partial views of the Dougherty Hills and Wiedemann Hill are available because of the presence of landscaping and large multi-story office buildings on either side of the roadway.

### *Bishop Ranch 1*

The north and east facing upper floor offices of Bishop Ranch 1 have unobstructed views of Parcels 1A and 1B, and partially obstructed views of Bishop Ranch 2 and Parcel 3A. Ground and lower floor views of Parcels 1A and 1B are partially obstructed by ornamental landscaping. Views of the Dougherty Hills and Wiedemann Hill are available from Bishop Ranch 1.

### *Iron Horse Trail*

North of Bollinger Canyon Road, the Iron Horse Trail has unobstructed views of Parcel 3A. Views of Parcel 2 are obstructed by ornamental landscaping along Camino Ramon. South of Bollinger Canyon Road, views of Parcel 1A are mostly obstructed by ornamental vegetation located with the trail right-of-way. Views of the Dougherty Hills and Wiedemann Hill are available from the trail.

### *Market Place*

The Marriot Residence Inn is the only Market Place tenant with direct views of the project site. Several upper floor rooms have unobstructed views of Parcel 1A and partial views of Parcel 3A; however, most upper floor room views are entirely or partially obstructed by ornamental landscaping. Views from lower floor rooms are obstructed by a 6-foot high wood fence located along the property line with the Iron Horse Trail. Views of the Dougherty Hills and Wiedemann Hill are available from the Market Place.

### *Reflections Condominiums*

Views of Parcel 1A from upper floors of the Reflections Condominiums located east of the Iron Horse Trail are almost entirely obstructed by ornamental landscaping. Views from lower floor rooms are obstructed by a 6-foot high wood fence located along the property line with the Iron Horse Trail. Views of the Dougherty Hills and Wiedemann Hill are available from the Reflections Condominiums.

### *Single-Family Residences*

The single-family residences located south of Bishop Ranch 1 have only distant, partial views of the southern portion of Parcel 1A. In addition, ornamental landscaping present along the fence line of these residences also obstructs views to the north. Views of the Dougherty Hills and Wiedemann Hill are available from the single-family residences.

### *Chevron Park*

The structures within Chevron Park are located in the center of the property and dense vegetation surrounds the perimeter. A 125-foot communications tower is located in the center of the campus. With the exception of the tower, which is unoccupied, there are virtually no unobstructed views of Parcel 1B or Parcel 2 from the upper or lower floors of the Chevron Park structures. Views of the Dougherty Hills and Wiedemann Hill are available from Chevron Park.

### *Shops at Bishop Ranch*

The Shops at Bishop Ranch structures are situated along the perimeter of the property and are oriented towards the parking lot. As such, the building orientation obstructs most views of Bishop Ranch 2. Views of Bishop Ranch 2 are available at the signalized entry point with Sunset Drive and from the eastern edge of the Whole Foods store and parking area. Views of the Dougherty Hills and Wiedemann Hill are available from The Shops at Bishop Ranch.

### *AT&T Campus*

The ornamental landscaping located around the eastern and southern perimeters of AT&T campus partially or entirely obstructs views of Bishop Ranch 2 and Parcel 3A. Views of the Dougherty Hills and Wiedemann Hill are available from the AT&T campus.

### *Bishop Ranch 3*

The Bishop Ranch 3 parking structure and the upper floors of the Bishop Ranch 3 office buildings have unobstructed views of Parcel 3A and Bishop Ranch 2 and distant, partial views of Parcels 1A and 1B. Views from the ground and lower floors are obstructed by the parking structure. Views of the Dougherty Hills and Wiedemann Hill are available from Bishop Ranch 3.

### *Central Park*

Generally, views to the west from Central Park are obstructed by dense vegetation located along Watson Canyon Drainage. However, unobstructed views of Parcel 3A are available at gaps in the vegetation and at bridge crossings of the creek. Views of the Dougherty Hills and Wiedemann Hill are available from Central Park.

## **State Scenic Highways**

The 29.9-mile segment of Interstate 680 (I-680) between Mission Boulevard in Fremont and State Route 24 in Walnut Creek is classified as an “Officially Designated” State Scenic Highway. The nearest portion of the project site to I-680 is Parcel 2, which is approximately 1,400 feet from the freeway right-of-way. Exhibit 4.1-3 shows various view angles from I-680 near the Bollinger Canyon Road interchange.

## **Light and Glare**

The project vicinity is comprised of developed commercial and residential land uses; two of the four parcels comprising the project site are developed. Below is a summary of existing sources of light and glare on each parcel.



View of the northbound on-ramp to Interstate 680.



View of the Bollinger Canyon Road overcrossing of Interstate 680.



View from the northbound on-ramp to Interstate 680.



View from southbound Interstate 680.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2007.



Michael Brandman Associates

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## Exhibit 4.1-3 Views From Interstate 680

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### *Parcels 1A and 1B*

The Bishop Ranch 1 parking areas contain freestanding lights approximately 25 feet above grade. Nearby sources of light include building lighting associated with Bishop Ranch 1, street lighting along the Bishop Ranch 1 East roadway, the Bishop Ranch 1 entrance road, and Bollinger Canyon Road, and pedestrian lighting located along the sidewalk parallel to roadways within Bishop Ranch 1. Vehicular headlights also generate light within the Bishop Ranch 1 parking areas and along nearby roadways.

### *Parcel 2*

Bishop Ranch 2 contains exterior and interior building lighting, freestanding parking lot lights approximately 25 feet above grade, and pedestrian lighting located within the courtyard area. Nearby sources of light include street lighting along Sunset Drive, Bishop Drive, Camino Ramon, and Bollinger Canyon Road, and illuminated signs and exterior building lighting in the Shops at Bishop Ranch. Vehicular headlights also generate light within the Bishop Ranch 2 parking areas and along nearby roadways.

### *Parcel 3A*

There are no existing sources of light on Parcel 3A. Nearby sources of light include street lighting along Camino Ramon and Bollinger Canyon Road, lighting in the Bishop Ranch 3 parking structure, and athletic and basketball court lighting in Central Park. Parcel 3A receives a substantial amount of light spillover from vehicular headlights along nearby roadways.

## **4.1.3 - Methodology**

MBA performed site reconnaissance of the four parcels comprising the project site and surrounding land uses on multiple occasions. Photographs were taken of all four parcels, surrounding land uses, and view corridors to document existing conditions. Cooper, Robertson & Partners prepared renderings of the Plaza District component and Hoover Associates prepared renderings of the Bishop Ranch 1A, City Hall, and Transit Center components. Gates and Associates prepared visual simulations of the project site showing before and after views from surrounding land uses. Focus 360 prepared shade and shadow simulations for summer and winter solstice scenarios to identify worst-case impacts.

## **4.1.4 - Regulatory Framework**

### **Local**

#### ***City of San Ramon General Plan***

The City of San Ramon General Plan sets forth the following goals and policies related to scenic vistas, visual character, and light and glare:

- **Policy 2.4-I-14:** Use development controls to minimize adverse visual effects of the transportation components of development.

- **Policy 4.6-I-18:** Ensure that neighborhood retail centers and commercial service buildings are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and incorporate a 360° design element.
- **Policy 4.6-I-22:** Establish design standards for mixed use development that will result in a high quality pedestrian-scaled environment, with one-to-four-story buildings, side or rear parking areas, street front windows and entries, and public and private open space.
- **Policy 4.6-I-24:** Allow for the revitalization and intensification of infill sites within the Bishop Ranch Business Park, consistent with FAR limitations, and amend the Zoning Ordinance so that they do not inhibit appropriate infill development.
- **Policy 4.8-I-2:** Ensure that the design, location, and size of new development blends with the environment and a site's natural features.
- **Policy 4.8-I-3:** Establish citywide lighting standards to ensure appropriate illumination levels for residential, commercial, and industrial land uses, and that lighting is of a consistent character and quality while reducing light pollution.
- **Policy 4.8-I-8:** Use the development review process to ensure that new development preserves and/or enhances significant views of the natural landscape.
- **Policy 4.8-I-9:** Continue to implement landscaping guidelines for public roadways that improve their visual character.
- **Policy 4.8-I-10:** Continue to implement gateway treatments for City entries that help residents and visitors know they have arrived in San Ramon.
- **Policy 4.8-I-11:** Require new office and commercial development to provide outdoor art that is clearly visible to the public.
- **Policy 4.8-I-13:** Require appropriate landscape treatment for public rights-of-way in all new residential, office, and commercial development.
- **Policy 4.8-I-14:** Ensure that businesses provide signs that are attractive and consistent with neighboring commercial uses, minimize visual clutter from roadways and other public areas, and, where possible, cannot be seen from residential neighborhoods.
- **Policy 4.8-I-17:** Establish urban design standards in the Zoning Ordinance for large-scale office development, including:
  - Limitations on maximum building height (five stories/75 feet)
  - Maximum vertical wall dimensions without a minimum upper-story stepback or setback (four stories/65 feet)
  - Required upper-story setbacks above four stories (1:1)

- Limitations on projections above height limits for towers, spires, and technical features, such as elevator penthouses and mechanical equipment enclosures (up to 25 percent of total roof area)
- Limitations on blank walls visible from public streets
- Sun access planes adjacent to public parks (1:3.5) to prevent substantial shadow impacts

The City Center Mixed Use zone (CCMU) is excluded from the requirements of Policy 4.8-I-17, with the exception of the sun access plane requirements adjacent to public parks. (Refer to Impacts AES-1 and AES-3 for further discussion of this policy.)

- **Policy 4.8-I-18:** Allow encroachments into the sun access plane to provide architectural flexibility. This may be done by allowing, for example, a 15-foot vertical projection above the sun access plane for up to 25 percent of the length of the lot line opposite the public park.
- **Policy 4.8-I-21:** Require all walls and fences to be designed to minimize visual monotony.
- **Policy 4.8-I-22:** Encourage underground parking in new development, where feasible.

### **San Ramon Zoning Ordinance**

The project site parcels are zoned City Center Mixed Use (CCMU). The provisions of the zoning district are discussed below:

#### *City Center Mixed Use (CCMU)*

The City Center Mixed Use (CCMU) zone consists of the City-owned portion of Parcel 1A, Parcel 1B, Parcel 2, and Parcel 3A. The Zoning Ordinance states that development in the City Center Mixed Use (CCMU) zone should reflect high quality design, with integrated open space and recreational or cultural amenities, as well as opportunities for workforce housing. The City Center Mixed Use (CCMU) zoning provisions do not have any height limits. The City Center Mixed Use (CCMU) provisions allow a FAR of 0.70, which can be increased to 1.35 if affordable housing and significant public benefits or amenities such as public art and plazas, public facilities, or a transit facility is nearby or in close proximity.

### **4.1.5 - Methodology**

MBA personnel conducted site reconnaissance, reviewed aerial and site photographs, and referenced the applicable planning documents for the project site. MBA personnel photographed the project site from multiple short-range and long-range viewpoints. Photographs include views of and from the project site. Visual simulations of the proposed project were prepared by Gates and Associates. MBA has used the above information in applying the threshold criteria cited below. The impacts and mitigation measures are also provided below.

#### 4.1.6 - Thresholds of Significance

According to the CEQA Guidelines' Appendix G Environmental Checklist, to determine whether impacts to aesthetic resources are significant environmental effects, the following questions are analyzed and evaluated. Would the project:

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

#### 4.1.7 - Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This section discusses potential impacts associated with the development of the project and provides mitigation measures where appropriate.

##### Scenic Vistas

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**Impact AES-1:        The proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.**

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##### *Impact Analysis*

The City of San Ramon General Plan does not identify any scenic vistas on any of the four parcels comprising the project site. The primary scenic vistas visible from the project site and surrounding land uses are the Dougherty Hills, Wiedemann Hill, and Mt. Diablo. Impacts on views of scenic vistas resulting from the proposed project are analyzed by project component. Visual simulation of the proposed project as viewed from 11 different vantage points are provided in Exhibit 4.1-4a through Exhibit 4.1-4l.

##### *Plaza District*

The proposed project would result in the development of structures in excess of 80 feet in the Plaza District. The hotel would be approximately 91 feet above finished grade, the cinema would be slightly more than 83 feet above finished grade, and the residential uses on Blocks F-G would be slightly more than 85 feet above finished grade. The height of these structures has the potential to obstruct views of the aforementioned scenic vistas, most notably from the Iron Horse Trail and Central Park.

North of Bollinger Canyon Road, views of the hills to the west are available from the Iron Horse Trail. The existing quality of these views is high because of the lack of visual obstructions on Parcel 3A in the foreground that allow for expansive views of Wiedemann Hill and the hills to the west. The Plaza District structures would introduce foreground visual obstructions to Parcel 3A that would eliminate views of the hills to the west either partially or entirely. Exhibit 4.1-4l provides a depiction





Source: Google Earth.



### Exhibit 4.1-4a View Location Key Map





View from Memorial Park before.



View from Memorial Park after.



Final view from Memorial Park key map.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2007.



Michael Brandman Associates

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## Exhibit 4.1-4b View From Memorial Park

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View from Market Place before.



Final view from Market Place after.



Final view from Market Place key map.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2007.



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## Exhibit 4.1-4c View From Market Place

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View from Camino Ramon before.

View from Camino Ramon after.



View from Camino Ramon key map.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2007.



Michael Brandman Associates

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## Exhibit 4.1-4d View From Camino Ramon

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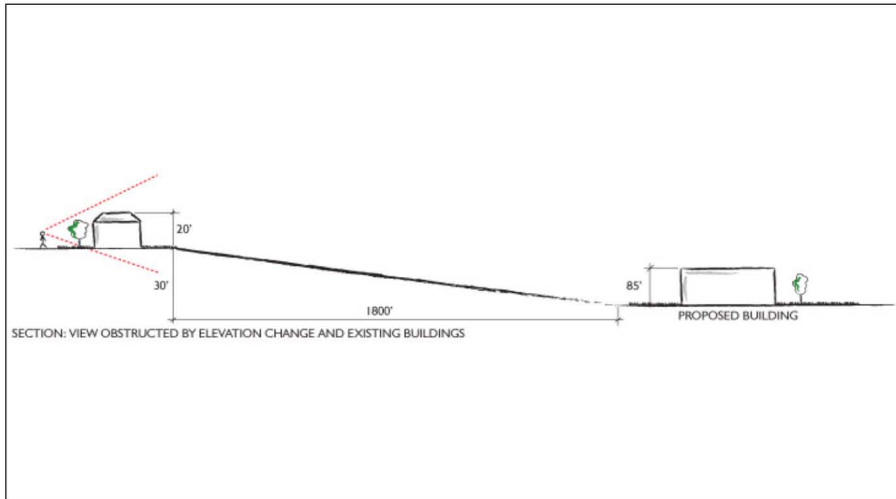




View from Ridgeview Court before.



View from Ridgeview Court after.



Final view from Ridgeview Court section.



Final view from Ridgeview Court key map.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2007.



Michael Brandman Associates

24910007 • 07/2007 | 4.1-4e\_view\_ridgeview\_court.cdr

## Exhibit 4.1-4e View From Ridgeview Court

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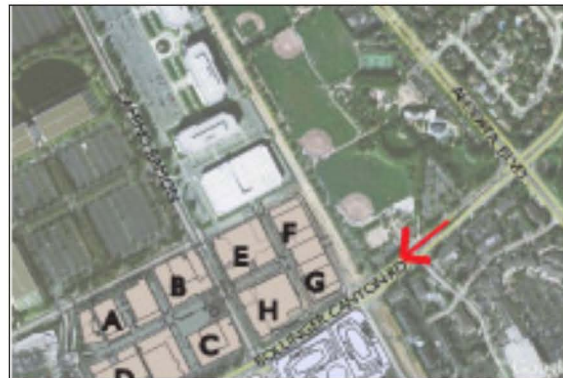




View from Central Park before.



View from Central Park after.



Final view from Central Park key map.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2007.



Michael Brandman Associates

24910007 • 07/2007 | 4.1-4f\_view\_central\_park.cdr

## Exhibit 4.1-4f View From Central Park

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View from Iron Horse Trail looking north before.



View from Iron Horse Trail looking north after.



Final view from Iron Horse Trail looking north key map.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2007.



Michael Brandman Associates

24910007 • 06/2007 | 4.1-4g\_view\_iron\_horse\_trail\_north.cdr

## Exhibit 4.1-4g View From Iron Horse Trail Looking North

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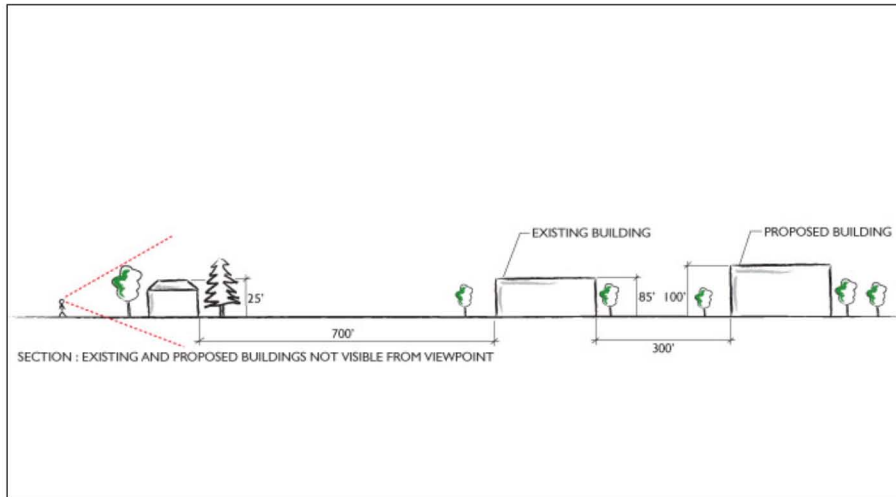




View from Chaucer Circle before.



View from Chaucer Circle after.



Final view from Chaucer Circle section.



Final view from Chaucer Circle key map.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2007.









View from Chevron Park before.



View from Chevron Park after.



Final view from Chevron Park key map.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2007.



Michael Brandman Associates

24910007 • 06/2007 | 4.1-4i\_view\_chevron\_park.cdr

## Exhibit 4.1-4i View From Chevron Park

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View from Bishop Drive before.

View from Bishop Drive after.



View from Bishop Drive key map.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2007.



Michael Brandman Associates

24910007 • 06/2007 | 4.1-4j\_view\_bishop\_drive.cdr

## Exhibit 4.1-4j View From Bishop Drive

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View from Bollinger Canyon Road Median before.



View from Bollinger Canyon Road Median after.



View from Bollinger Canyon Road Median key map.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2007.



Michael Brandman Associates

24910007 • 06/2007 | 4.1-4k\_view\_bollinger\_canyon\_drive.cdr

## Exhibit 4.1-4k View From Bollinger Canyon Road Median

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View from Iron Horse Trail looking south before.



View from Iron Horse Trail looking south after.



Final view from Iron Horse Trail looking south key map.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2007.



Michael Brandman Associates

24910007 • 06/2007 | 4.1-4I\_view\_iron\_horse\_trail\_south.cdr

## Exhibit 4.1-4I View From Iron Horse Trail Looking South

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of the change in views from this segment of the Iron Horse Trail. The development of the Plaza District would have a similar effect on views of these hills from the trail at the current Bishop Ranch 3 structures. The existing Bishop Ranch 3 structures mostly screen views of the hills from the Iron Horse Trail, although views are available in gaps between buildings and along internal roadways.

Views from Central Park would only be slightly affected by the proposed project. Dense vegetation along the Watson Canyon Drainage corridor currently screens most views of Parcel 3A from Central Park and, therefore, the Plaza District would mostly be obscured from view. There are gaps in the vegetation that allow for unimpeded views of Parcel 3A and the hills to the west; however, these constitute small discrete points in the park that are not typically accessed by park users and, therefore, would not be considered substantial vantage points.

Before and after views of the Plaza District from the Market Place frontage on Bollinger Canyon Road are shown in Exhibit 4.1-4c. The Plaza District structures would partially obstruct views of the hills to the west. The quality of this vantage point is low to begin with because of existing visual obstructions including landscaping, signals, street lighting, and overhead power lines. Therefore, the additional obstruction of the hills by the Plaza District structures would not be considered substantial.

Before and after views of the Dougherty Hills to the east from The Shops at Bishop Ranch frontage with Bishop Drive is shown in Exhibit 4.1-4j. As shown in this exhibit, only the upper floors of the Plaza District structures would be visible, and they would not be high enough to obstruct views of the hills.

Before and after views of the Dougherty Hills from the median of Bollinger Canyon Road are shown in Exhibit 4.1-4k, and similar views from Chevron Park are shown in Exhibit 4.1-4i. Both exhibits indicate that the Plaza District structures would be less imposing than the existing vegetation located along the Bishop Ranch 2 frontage and would allow for a slight improvement in views of the hills from both vantage points.

Before and after views from higher elevations on the east and west sides of the project site would not be affected by the development of the proposed project. Views from Memorial Park on the west side of I-680 are shown in Exhibit 4.1-4b, and views from Ridgeview Court on the east side of Alcosta Boulevard are shown in Exhibit 4.1-4e. Both exhibits show that the Plaza District structures would be either barely noticeable or not visible because of existing visual obstructions.

#### *Bishop Ranch 1A*

The three office structures contained in Bishop Ranch 1A would be approximately 110 feet above finished grade.

Before and after views of the Bishop Ranch 1A structures from the Iron Horse Trail are provided in Exhibit 4.1-4g. The Bishop Ranch 1A structures would be distinctly visible from the Iron Horse Trail and would obstruct views of the hills to the west. These structures would be set back approximately

200 feet from the trail corridor but would be closer to the trail than the existing Bishop Ranch 1 structures. The existing vegetation located along the Bishop Ranch 1 East road obstructs views to the west, and only the upper floors of Bishop Ranch 1A would be visible in most places. Views of the Dougherty Hills and Mt. Diablo would not be affected by the Bishop Ranch 1A structures.

Before and after views of the Bishop Ranch 1A structures from the Market Place frontage on Bollinger Canyon Road are shown in Exhibit 4.1-4c. The Bishop Ranch 1A structures would partially obstruct views of the hills to the west. The quality of this vantage point is initially low, because of existing visual obstructions including landscaping, signals, street lighting, and overhead power lines. Therefore, the additional obstruction of the hills by the Bishop Ranch 1A structures would not be considered substantial.

Before and after views from the Central Park frontage on Bollinger Canyon Road are presented in Exhibit 4.1-4f. The existing quality of these views is moderate to good because of the large extent of ridgelines and hillsides, although visual obstructions including signals, street lighting, landscaping, and overhead power lines diminish the quality of these views. After the development of the Bishop Ranch 1A structures, views of the hills from the Central Park frontage would be almost entirely obstructed.

Views from the intersection of Chaucer Circle and Ascot Drive are shown in Exhibit 4.1-4h. Bishop Ranch 1A would not be visible from this intersection because of existing visual obstructions.

Before and after views of the Dougherty Hills from the median of Bollinger Canyon Road are presented in Exhibit 4.1-4k, and similar views from Chevron Park are shown in Exhibit 4.1-4i. Both exhibits show that the Bishop Ranch 1A structures would be more imposing than the existing vegetation located along the Bishop Ranch 1 frontage and would add visual obstructions to views of the hills from both vantage points.

Before and after views from higher elevations on the east and west sides of the project site would not be affected by the development of the proposed project. Views from Memorial Park on the west side of I-680 are shown in Exhibit 4.1-4b, and views from Ridgeview Court on the east side of Alcosta Boulevard are presented in Exhibit 4.1-4e. Both exhibits show that the Bishop Ranch 1A structures would be either barely noticeable or not visible because of existing visual obstructions.

#### *City Hall and Transit Center*

The maximum height of City Hall would be approximately 70 feet above finished grade, which would be less than the finished grade height of the Plaza District and Bishop Ranch 1A structures, as well as the existing Bishop Ranch 1 structures. Because of its lower height, views of City Hall from the north would be screened by the Plaza District (Exhibit 4.1-4d), views from the east would be almost entirely screened by Bishop Ranch 1A and the Plaza District (Exhibits 4.1-4c and 4.1-4f), and views from the south would be screened by the existing Bishop Ranch 1 structures. City Hall would be

visible from the west, as shown in Exhibits 4.1-4i and 4.1-4k. However, the exhibits indicate that City Hall will be much less prominent than Bishop Ranch 1A and, therefore, would not have any affect on views of the Dougherty Hills. Therefore, City Hall would not affect views of any hills.

### ***Summary of Impacts***

While views of the Dougherty Hills, Wiedemann Hill, and the hills to the west would be obstructed by structures associated with the proposed project, obstruction would be primarily limited to the Iron Horse Trail and the Bollinger Canyon Road corridor. Aside from its frontage with Bollinger Canyon Road, no substantial changes in views from Central Park would occur because of the presence of the existing dense vegetation along Watson Canyon Drainage.

Other land uses, most notably the residential areas located south of Bishop Ranch 1, east of Alcosta Boulevard, and west of San Ramon Valley Boulevard, would not experience any significant changes in views of the surrounding hills or Mt. Diablo because of the development of the proposed project.

Several policies in the City of San Ramon General Plan recognize that the City Center project is unique in its size, location, and characteristics, and they allow for flexibility of architectural design, building height, massing, and scale. Policy 4.8-I-17 provides an exception for the City Center project from the 75-foot maximum building height; limitations on height limits for towers, spires, and technical features, such as elevator penthouses and mechanical equipment enclosures; maximum vertical wall dimensions without a minimum upper-story stepback or setback; and limitations on blank walls visible from public streets. In addition, the Zoning Ordinance does not establish a height limit for buildings in the City Center Mixed Use (CCMU) zone. The Plaza District and Bishop Ranch 1A structures would be located within this zoning district and, therefore, would not be subject to any height requirements. Moreover, the actual number of vantage points impacted by the proposed project is relatively small—approximately 0.5 mile of Bollinger Canyon Road and approximately 0.5 mile of the Iron Horse Trail. Nearly every other surrounding street or land use would not experience a significant loss in views of the surrounding hills.

Finally, the proposed project would create new public and private view opportunities. The east-west trending Center Street and the pedestrian plaza in the Plaza District would have view corridors of the Dougherty Hills, Wiedemann Hill, and the hills to the west. The upper floors of the Plaza District, Bishop Ranch 1A, and City Hall would have views of the surrounding hills, as well as north-south views of the San Ramon Valley. Because these views currently do not exist, this is considered a benefit of the proposed project.

For these reasons, the proposed project's impacts on scenic vistas would be less than significant.

### ***Level of Significance Before Mitigation***

Less than significant impact.

**Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation is necessary.

**Level of Significance After Mitigation**

Less than significant impact.

**State Scenic Highways**

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**Impact AES-2:**        **The project would not substantially damage scenic resources within a State scenic highway.**

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**Impact Analysis**

I-680 is an “Officially Designated” State Scenic Highway within the limits of the City of San Ramon. The primary scenic resources within the San Ramon city limits that are visible from I-680 are the Dougherty Hills, Wiedemann Hill, and Mt. Diablo. As shown in Exhibit 4.1-3, views of the four parcels that constitute the project site are not available from I-680 because of visual obstructions, including vegetation, located in the freeway right-of-way and The Shops at Bishop Ranch property, and in the Bollinger Canyon Road interchange.

*Plaza District*

The Plaza District component of the proposed project would include three structures in excess of 80 feet above finished grade, with the nearest building located at a distance of approximately 1,400 feet from I-680. Because of this distance and the presence of existing visual obstructions, these structures would not be visible from the freeway. Therefore, the Plaza District structures would not alter views of the surrounding hills from I-680.

*Bishop Ranch 1A and City Hall*

Bishop Ranch 1A and City Hall would be located next to the existing Bishop Ranch 1 office complex, which is not visible from I-680. While Bishop Ranch 1A would contain structures in excess of 100 feet above finished grade, these structures would be the furthest project structures from I-680 and would not be visible. Therefore, these structures also would not alter views of the surrounding hills from I-680.

**Summary of Impacts**

The four parcels that comprise the project site are not visible from I-680. Development of the proposed project would not affect views of the hills from I-680. Therefore, the proposed project’s impacts on State scenic highways would be less than significant.

**Level of Significance Before Mitigation**

Less than significant impact.

**Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation is necessary.

### **Level of Significance After Mitigation**

Less than significant impact.

### **Visual Character**

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**Impact AES-3:**      **Development of the proposed project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.**

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#### **Impact Analysis**

The proposed project would develop new buildings and infrastructure on approximately 44 acres of developed and undeveloped land in the Bishop Ranch Business Park. This impact assesses the proposed project's potential to substantially degrade the visual character of the project site and its surroundings. Included in this analysis is evaluation of the proposed project's architectural design and landscaping characteristics, building massing, and shade and shadow effects.

#### **Removal of Existing Structures and Infrastructure**

Existing building and infrastructure exists on Parcels 1A, 1B, and 2. Parcels 1A and 1B contain parking areas and roadways associated with Bishop Ranch 1. Parcel 2 contains the existing Bishop Ranch 2 office complex, which consists of 194,652 square feet of office space and associated parking and landscaped areas.

Development of the proposed project would result in the removal of all existing buildings and infrastructure on these three parcels. The parking areas on Parcels 1A and 1B contain surface, asphalt lots with landscaped islands. These areas do not contain any notable visual resources. Bishop Ranch 2 contains four two-story white buildings developed in the early 1980s, characterized as typical in appearance for that era. These buildings resemble other older office structures in the Bishop Ranch Business Park (e.g., Bishop Ranch 11 and Bishop Ranch 12) and do not have any unique or notable architectural elements or features. Therefore, the removal of existing buildings and infrastructure on these three parcels would not be considered a substantial degradation of existing visual quality.

#### **Architectural Design and Landscaping**

Below is a discussion of the proposed project's architectural design and landscaping features by project component. Exhibits 4.1-5a through 4.1-5c provide illustrative renderings of the proposed project's three components. Also referenced are exhibits in Section 3, Project Description, depicting building sections and landscaping.

#### **Plaza District**

The architectural design of the Plaza District structures would incorporate contemporary design elements that subtly balance scale, adjacency, and use mix to create a visually appealing destination. The Plaza District design emphasizes four themes that are intended to soften and harmonize the different uses together:

- Feature building exteriors that maximize distinctive, substantial, and forward-thinking materials to create a clean, contemporary, yet sustainable architecture
- Maximize the use of glass to emphasize a sense of clarity and transparency, incorporate views of the surrounding hills into building design, and increase natural day lighting of interior spaces
- Bring the dynamic movement of water into the design of important public spaces to activate the site as well as engage and attract pedestrians, creating great settings for public gatherings
- Promote a tranquil environment with stately landscaped streets and sidewalks; shade active sidewalks with dappled light of closely-spaced street trees paired with varied planting

All Plaza District structures would be multi-storied, ranging from approximately 40 feet to approximately 91 feet above grade. Most of the building massing for structures in the Plaza District would be no more than 72 feet above grade, although certain uses including the hotel, cinema, and residential uses in Blocks G and H would have features that exceed 75 feet. The pedestrian plaza portion of the Plaza District would include a water feature, decorative paving, street trees and landscaping intended to create a vibrant pedestrian-oriented environment.

The building sections of the Plaza District are shown in Exhibit 3-8a and Exhibit 3-8b. The conceptual landscaping plan for the Plaza District is shown in Exhibit 3-9.

#### *Bishop Ranch 1A*

The architectural design of the office buildings would employ a curved façade and prominently feature the use of white building colors and glass, similar to the appearance of the nearby Bishop Ranch 1 office structures. The maximum height of the office buildings would be approximately 110 feet above grade. The architectural design of Bishop Ranch 1A is shown in Exhibit 3-11. Landscaping would be provided throughout the office complex and is conceptually shown in Exhibit 3-12.

#### *City Hall and Transit Center*

The City Hall would feature a four-story City office building with an attached dome-shaped Council Chambers. A cast sculpting of the City symbol—an aloft crow with extended wings—would crown the top of the dome housing the Council Chambers. A tiered water fountain also would be incorporated into the exterior design of the Council Chambers, and a public plaza would be located in front of the entrance to City Hall. The height of City Hall would be approximately 70 feet. The architectural design of City Hall is shown in Exhibit 3-14. Landscaping would be provided throughout the City Hall complex and is conceptually shown in Exhibit 3-15.



Looking East over the Plaza



Looking East along Center Street



Seasonal Plaza View



San Ramon City Center Looking West to the Bay



The Courtyard at City Hall

Source: Sunset Development Company, April 30, 2007.



Michael Brandman Associates

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Exhibit 4.1-5a  
Plaza District Illustrative Renderings

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VIEW OF BR 1A COURTYARD



VIEW OF BR 1A LOOKING SOUTHWEST FROM BOLLINGER CANYON ROAD

Source: Sunset Development Company, April 30, 2007.



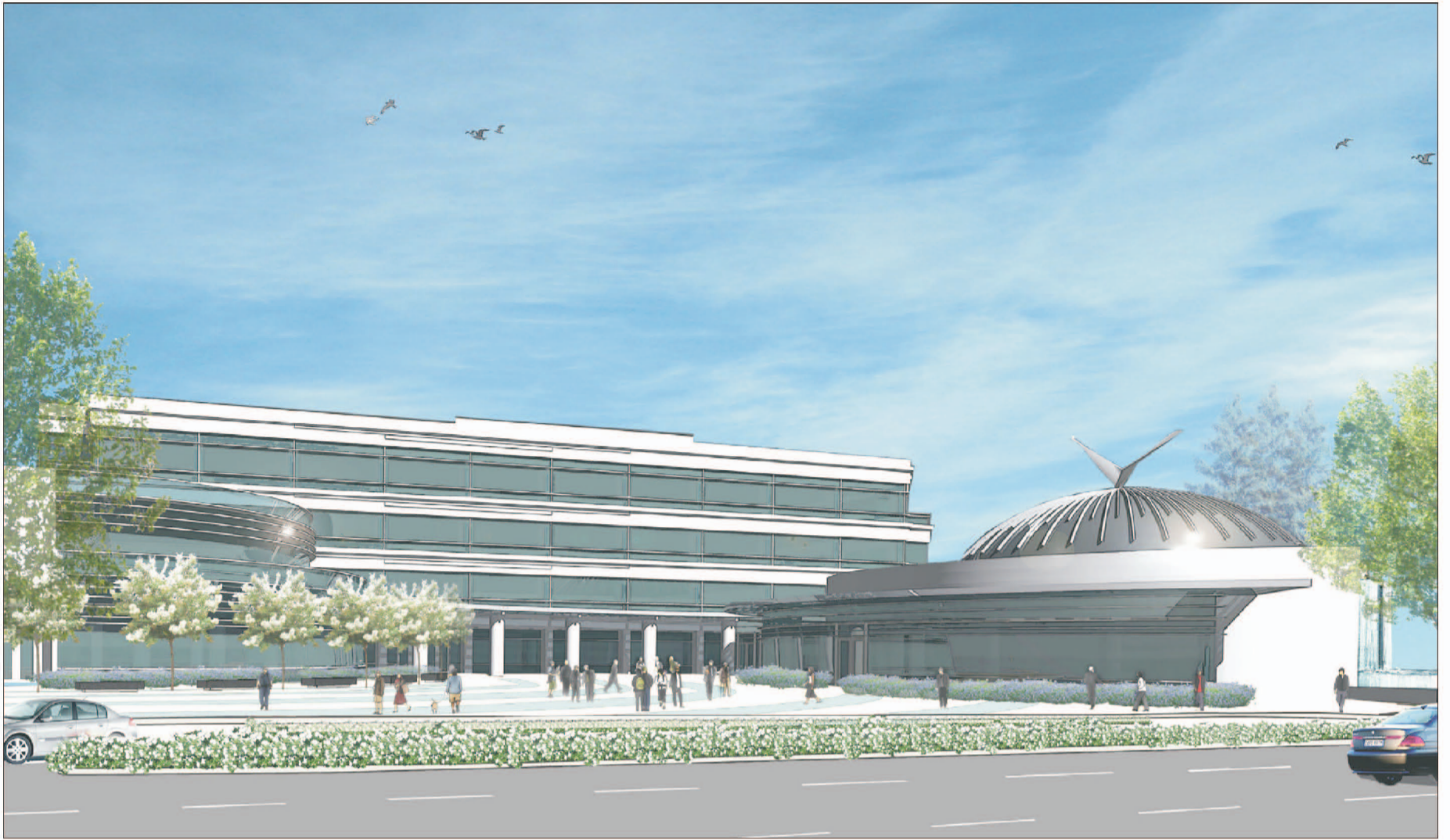
Michael Brandman Associates

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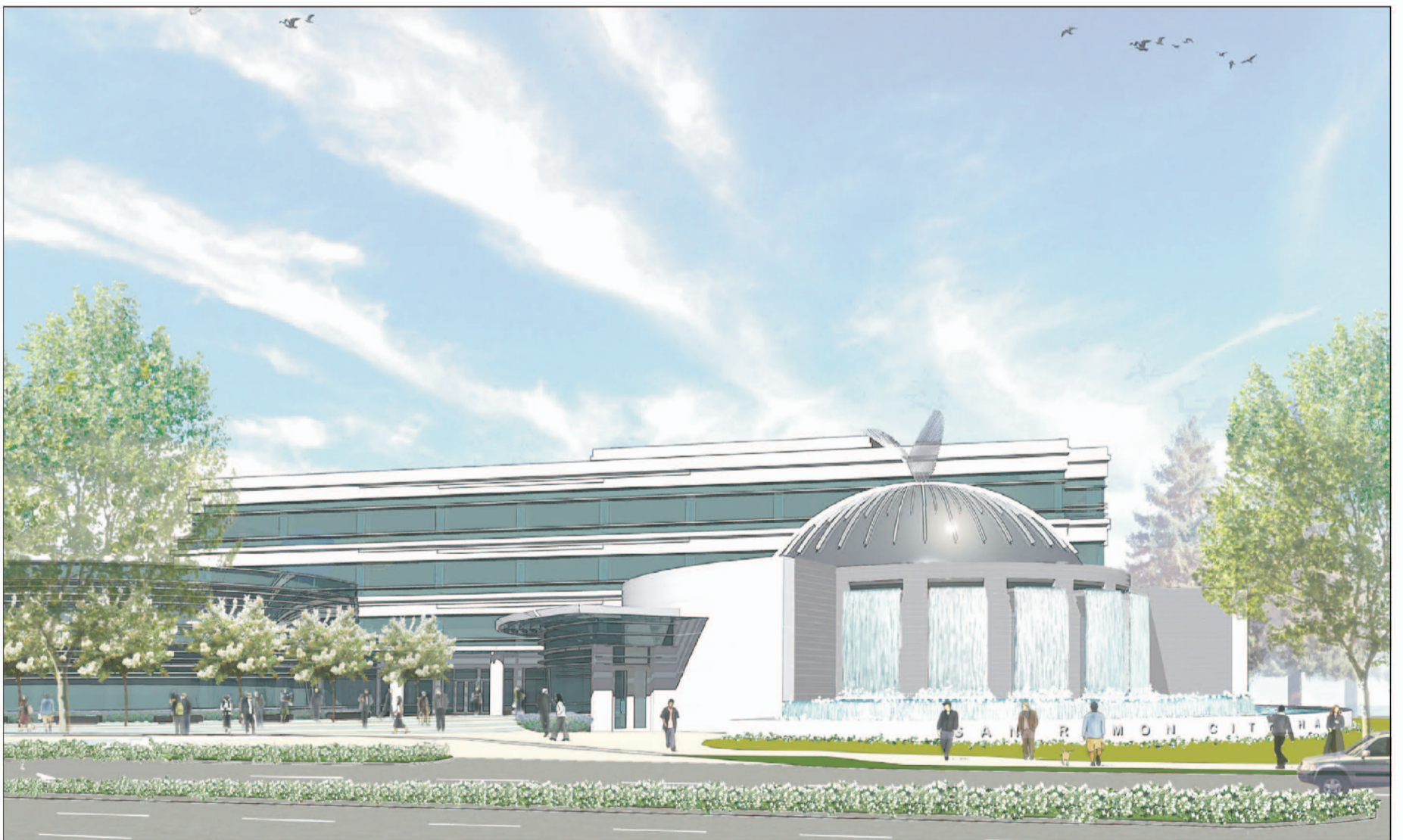
Exhibit 4.1-5b  
Bishop Ranch 1A Illustrative Renderings

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VIEW LOOKING SOUTHWEST FROM BOLLINGER CANYON ROAD



VIEW LOOKING NORTHWEST INTO PLAZA

Source: Sunset Development Company, April 30, 2007.



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24910007 • 06/2007 | 4.1-5c\_city\_hall\_renderings.cdr

Exhibit 4.1-5c  
City Hall Illustrative Renderings

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