

Appendix K
Visual Impact Assessment

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

West Oakland Link Project

June 2022

California Department of Transportation
EA 4H9710 EFIS 0413000324
4-ALA-80 PM 0.5/3.8

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Statement of Compliance: Produced in compliance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements, as appropriate, to meet the level of analysis and documentation that has been determined necessary for this project.

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

West Oakland Link Project

I. PURPOSE OF STUDY AND ASSESSMENT METHOD

The purpose of this visual impact assessment (VIA) is to document potential visual impacts caused by the West Oakland Link Project (Project) and propose measures to lessen any detrimental impacts that are identified. Visual impacts are demonstrated by identifying visual resources in the Project area, measuring the amount of change that would occur as a result of the Project, and predicting how the affected public would respond to or perceive those changes. This visual impact assessment follows the guidance outlined in the publication *Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects* published by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in March 1981. The *Questionnaire to Determine Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) Level* prepared for the Project is contained in Appendix A.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project proposes to construct a new bicycle/pedestrian path connection (Link) between West Oakland and the Bay Bridge Trail in Oakland, California (**Figure 1**). The Link would be approximately 6,030 linear feet. On the west end, the Link would connect to the existing bicycle/pedestrian path on the Bay Bridge (Bay Bridge Trail) on the south side of the Bay Bridge toll plaza. On the east end, the Link would connect to the existing bicycle/pedestrian path on Mandela Parkway. Refer to **Figure 2**.

The purpose of the Project is to provide a safe connection for bicyclists and pedestrians to travel between West Oakland and the Bay Bridge Trail and the Class I trail along the east side of Maritime Street. The area in between is occupied by industry, roadways, railways, and Interstate (I-) 880. Current access for bicyclists and pedestrians is on roadways extending through the industrial area that have heavy truck traffic, roadway intersections, and multiple at-grade rail crossings at Burma Road.

The Link was originally proposed by the Gateway Park Working Group as an element of Gateway Park, which is now named Judge John Sutter Regional Shoreline. The Gateway Park Working Group includes the following nine local, regional, and state agencies: The Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA), the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), California Transportation Commission (CTC), East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), City of Oakland, Port of Oakland (Port), East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD), and Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG's). Subsequently, the Link, with its own independent utility and logical termini, was bifurcated from the Judge John Sutter Regional Shoreline Project to become a standalone project. The agency responsible for operation and maintenance of the bike path is anticipated to be Caltrans, with full financial contribution from BATA.

Caltrans is the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). BATA is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The environmental documents are a CEQA initial study/mitigated negative declaration (IS/MND) and a NEPA categorical exclusion.

The Project is a new Class I bike path¹ located in the City of Oakland, Alameda County, near the I-880 and I-80 interchange and the new East Span of the Bay Bridge (**Figures 1, 2, and 3**).

¹ Bicycle Path Classifications: **Class I bikeways (bike paths)** are separate paths with exclusive right of way for bicycles and pedestrians, with minimal vehicular crossings. **Class II bikeways (bike lanes)** are striped lanes on streets, separating bicycles from vehicles, within the road right-of-way. **Class III bikeways** are lanes shared with

Project Location

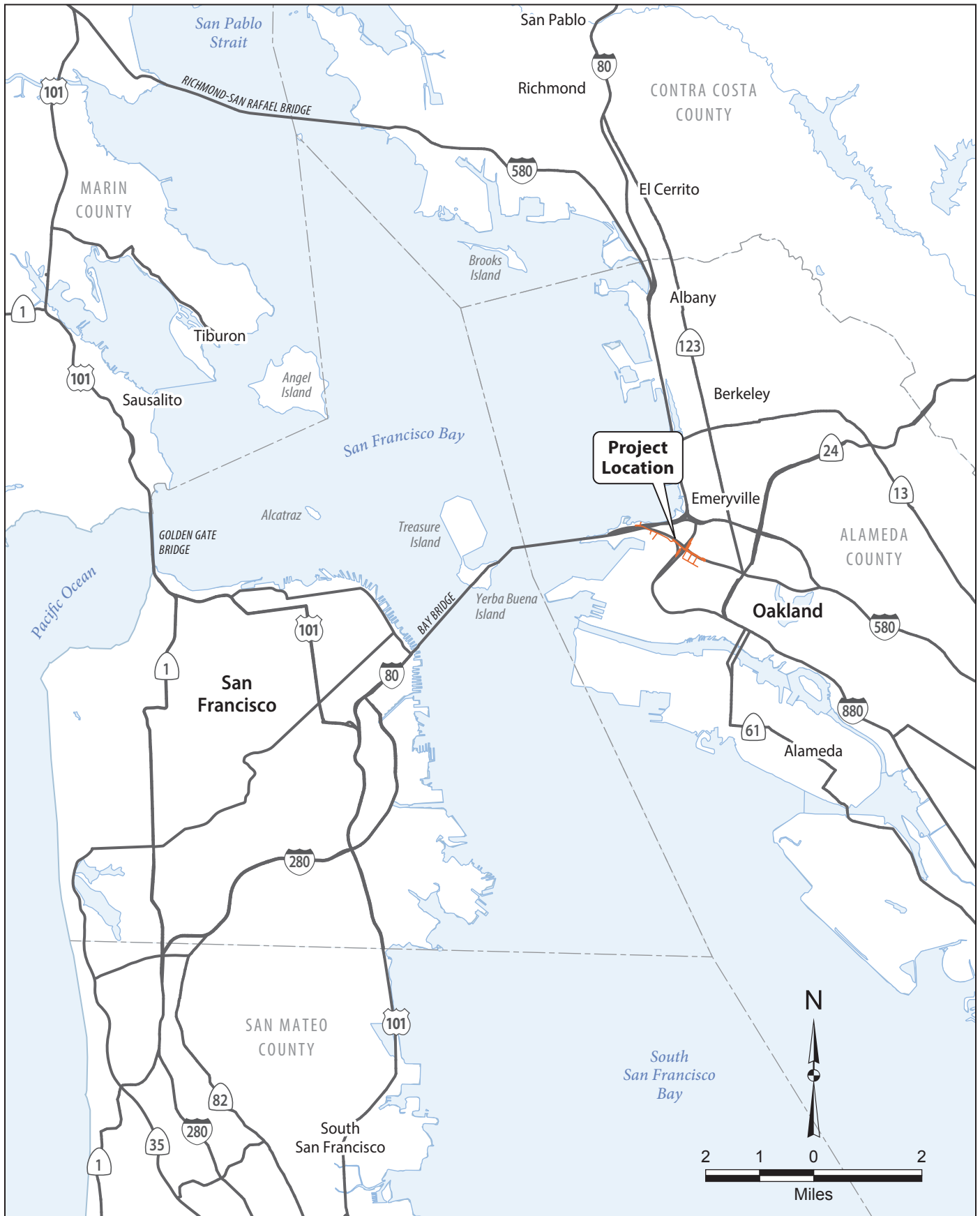
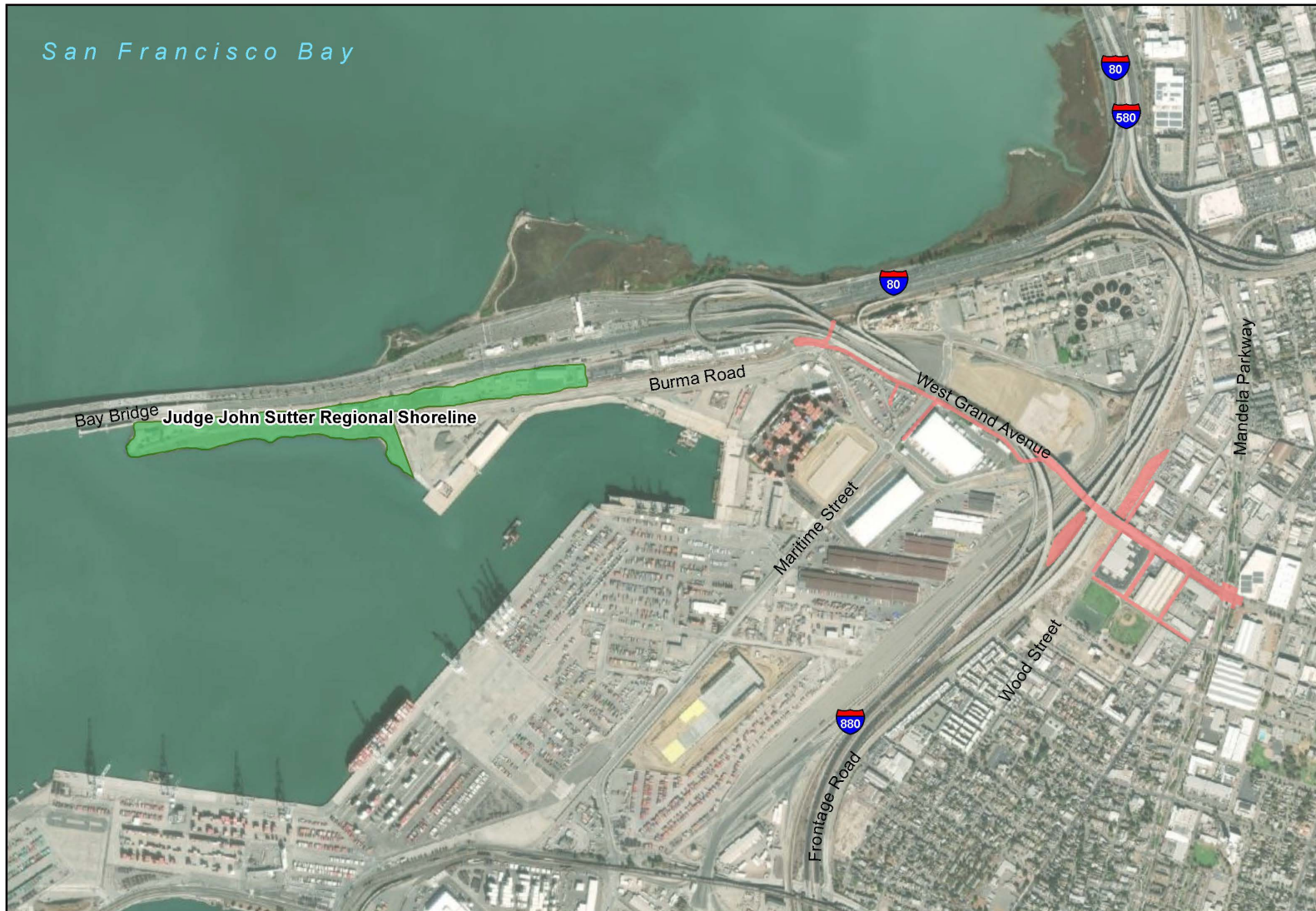


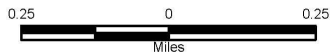
Figure 1

West Oakland Link

Project Area



Source: Aerial Imagery, ESRI 2013



Note: No proposed alterations to highways or railways.

Project Area

West Oakland Link

Figure 2



Bike Path Segments

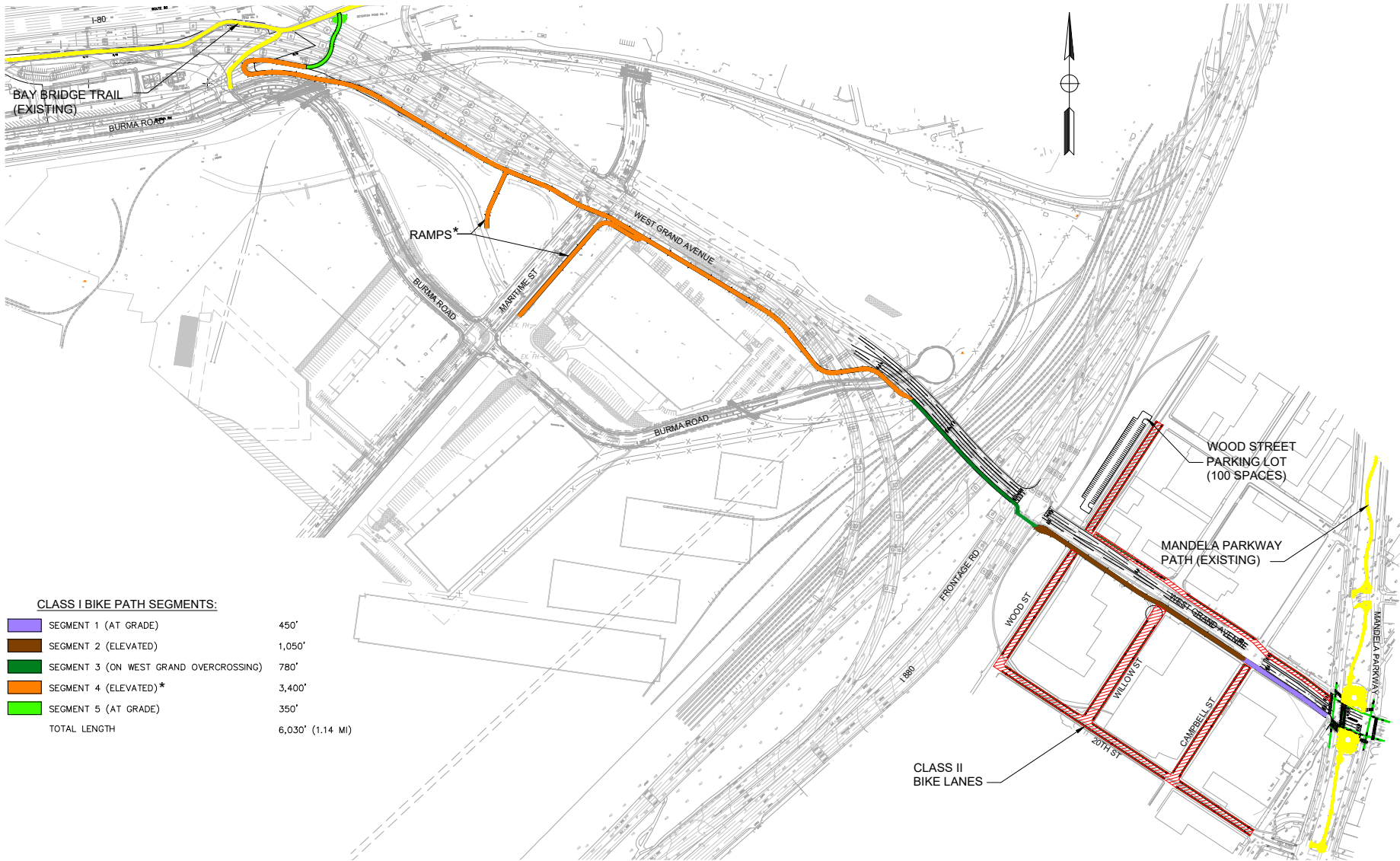


Figure 3

The Class I portion of the Link would extend 6,030 feet (1.14 miles) between Mandela Parkway on the east and the Bay Bridge Trail on the west. The Link is an elevated structure for most of this distance to provide access across existing freeways, railways, and industrial areas. It is an independent structure, except over the railroad tracks where it would be on the West Grand Avenue overcrossing structure. The elevated Link reaches a maximum height of 37 feet where it is on the overcrossing structure.

The Class I portion of the Link would be 17 feet wide (15 feet clear width and 2 feet for fencing), except on the West Grand Avenue overcrossing structure where it is 14 feet wide (10 feet clear width and 4 feet for barrier and fencing). The Link would have a maximum grade of 5 percent.

The Link would also include 8,170 feet of Class II bike lanes. A 100-space parking lot at the east end of the Class I bike path would also be included, if funding is available. The Class II bike lanes constructed for the Link would extend along surface streets near the east touchdown of the Link, providing connections to Mandela Parkway and to the proposed Wood Street parking lot.

The Project could also include an innovative spur connection to the proposed Oakland Maritime Support Services (OMSS) building; the connection would be designed to land on the roof of this building. This connection would provide lookout areas for path users and access for first responders when attempting to reach path users in the event of an emergency.

The Class I portion of the Link at the Maritime Street area could also include a ramp that would tie into the Class I path along the east side of Maritime Street and connect with the Port of Oakland.

The Project would require the conversion of roadway shoulders to a bicycle path for the Link and a lane reduction at the West Grand Avenue/Mandela Parkway intersection.

Class I Link Segments

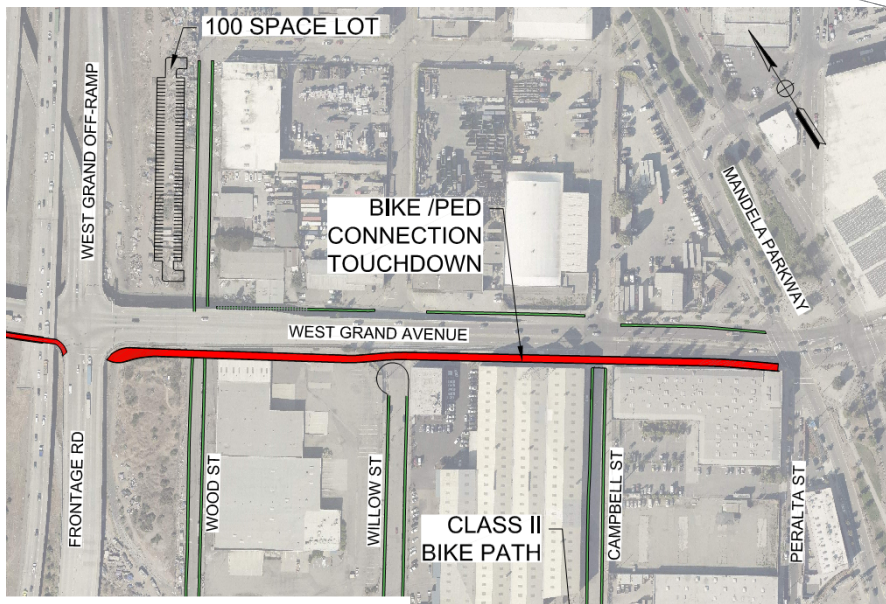
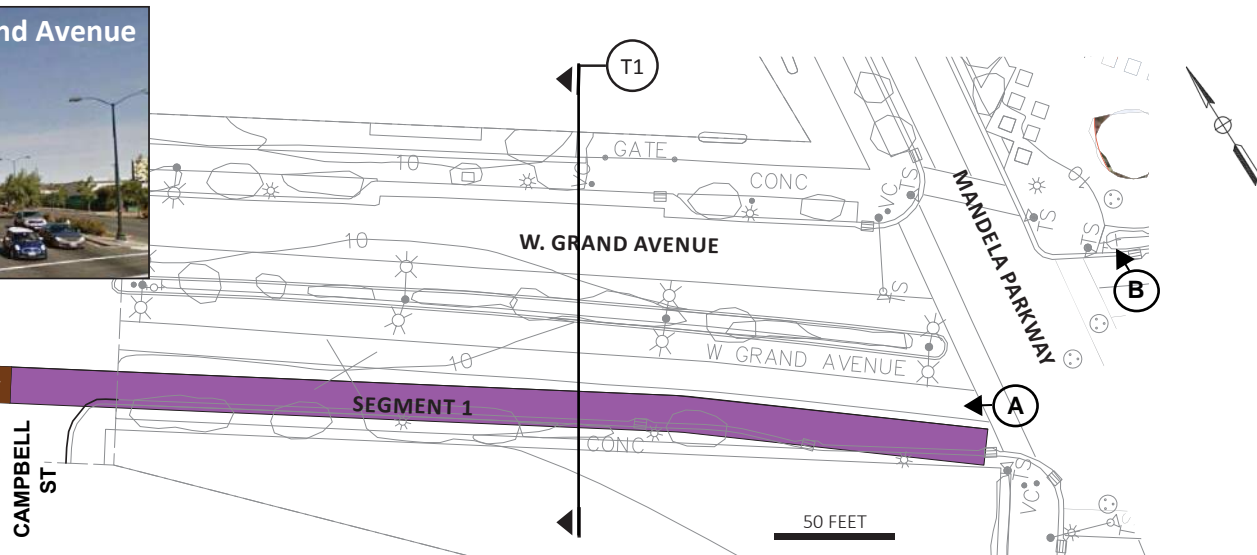
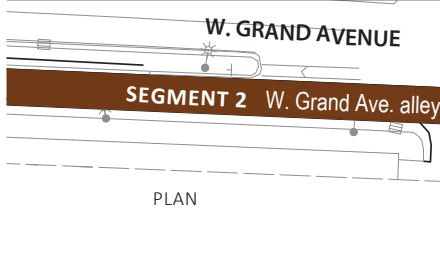
The Link has been divided into five segments, described below from east to west (**Figure 3**).

Segment 1. At-Grade Connection to Mandela Parkway: The Class I portion of the Link would be at-grade along the south side of West Grand Avenue, between Mandela Parkway and Campbell Street (**Figure 4**). This segment would be approximately 450 feet long and 15-feet wide since no fencing is required. There would be a landscape island on the north side of the Link to separate the Link from vehicular traffic. Campbell Street and Willow Street would dead end or become a cul-de-sac where they intersect with the West Grand Avenue alley (the extension of West Grand Avenue that extends between Campbell and Wood Streets) on the south side of West Grand Avenue. This would prevent regular vehicular traffic from crossing the new Class I portion of the Link because there would not be sufficient vertical clearance under the Link structure for vehicles. The West Grand Avenue alley on the south side of the West Grand Avenue structure would be permanently closed to vehicle traffic or vacated. The north side of West Grand Avenue alley would remain open.

Segment 2. Separate Elevated Structure East: From Campbell Street, the Class I portion of the Link would continue for approximately 1,050 feet as a separate structure along the south side of West Grand Avenue (**Figure 5a**). The Link would increase in elevation with a gradient that would be Americans with Disability Act (ADA) compliant and cross over Willow Street and Wood Street (**Figure 5b**). After the Wood Street crossing, the Link would connect to the existing West Grand Avenue overcrossing (refer to Segment 3 below) just east of Frontage Road. The West Grand Avenue/Frontage Road crosswalk would

motor vehicles. **Class IV bikeways (separated bikeways)** are bikeway for the exclusive use of bicycles. Source: California Department of Transportation. *Highway Design Manual*. Chapter 1000, Bicycle Transportation Design. Last updated July 1, 2000. Available: dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/design/documents/chp1000-a11y.pdf.

Bike Path Segment 1



(X) → Direction and Location of Photo



Photo B: Mandela Parkway

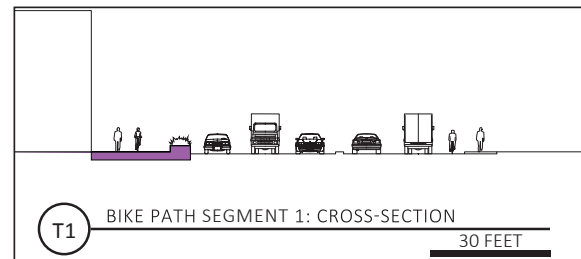
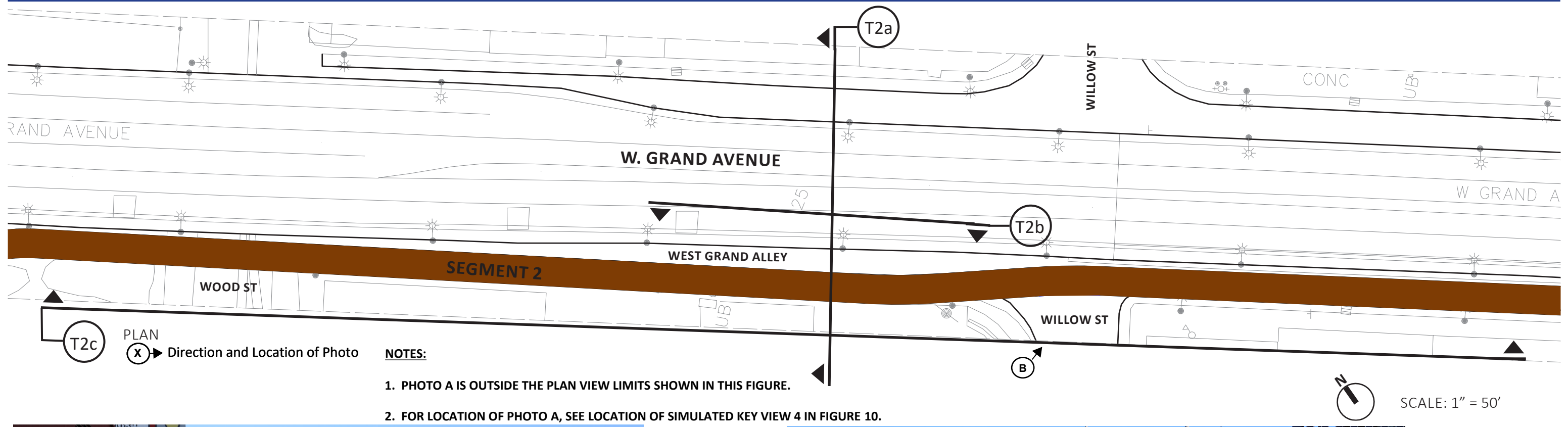


Figure 4

Bike Path Segment 2



- NOTES:**
1. PHOTO A IS OUTSIDE THE PLAN VIEW LIMITS SHOWN IN THIS FIGURE.
 2. FOR LOCATION OF PHOTO A, SEE LOCATION OF SIMULATED KEY VIEW 4 IN FIGURE 10.



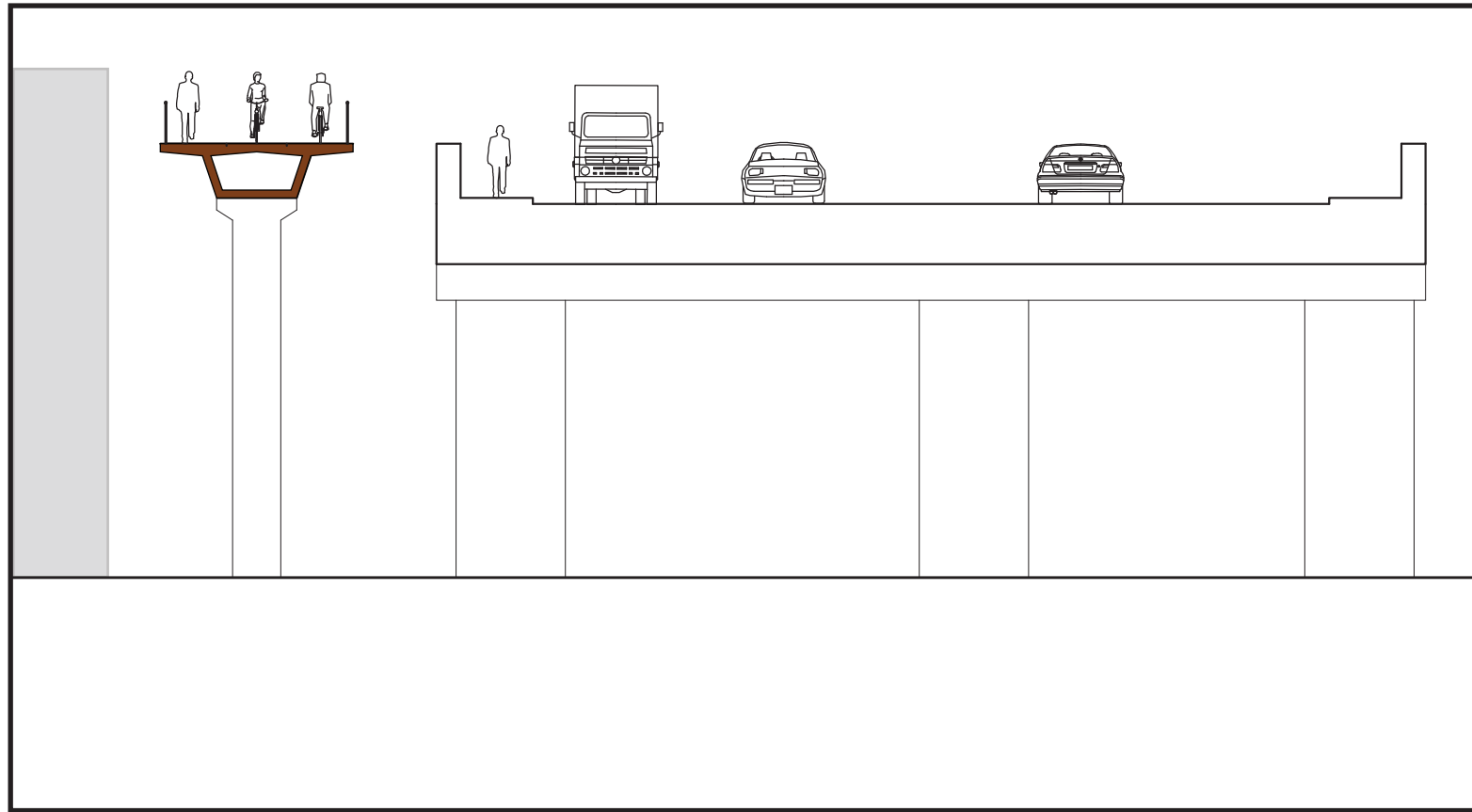
Photo A: West Grand Avenue



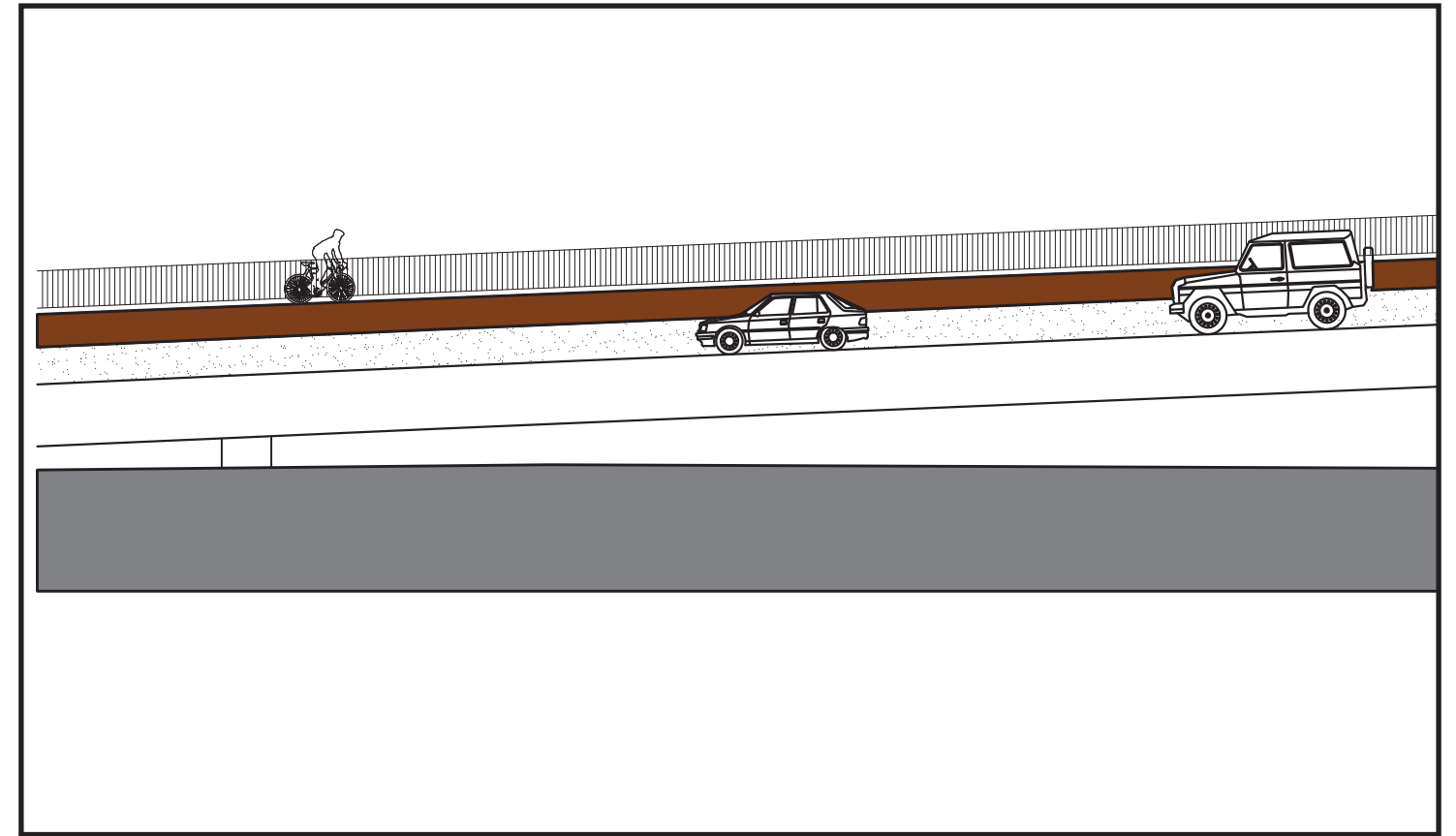
Photo B: Willow Street

Figure 5a

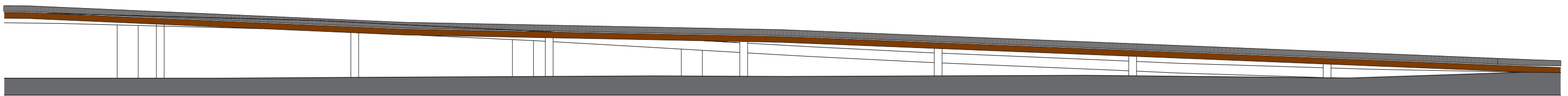
Bike Path Segment 2



T2a SEGMENT 2: CROSS SECTION
SCALE: 1" = 15'



T2b SEGMENT 2: ELEVATION LOOKING SOUTH
SCALE: 1" = 15'



T2c BIKE PATH ELEVATION LOOKING NORTH
SCALE: 1" = 50'

be improved. Construction of this segment would require permanently closing or vacating the existing West Grand Avenue alley. Where Campbell Street currently intersects with West Grand Avenue, bollards would be installed to allow emergency vehicles access to Campbell Street but prevent regular vehicular traffic from crossing the new Class I portion of the Link on the south side of West Grand Avenue. Where Willow Street currently intersects with West Grand Avenue, a cul-de-sac would be created on the south side of West Grand Avenue to prevent vehicular traffic, other than emergency vehicles, from crossing the new Class I portion of the Link.

Segment 3. West Grand Avenue Overcrossing: After the Wood Street overcrossing, the Class I portion of the Link would continue on the West Grand Avenue overcrossing for approximately 780 feet (**Figure 6a**). It would cross over Frontage Road and the railroad tracks (narrow gauge tracks or spur line), under the I-880 freeway structures, and over the Port of Oakland, Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railroad and Union Pacific railroad tracks (**Figure 6b**). The width of the travel lanes and striped median would be reduced to provide enough width for Link using the existing West Grand Avenue structure. After crossing the railroad tracks, the Link would continue as a separate structure on the south side of West Grand Avenue (refer to Segment 4).

Segment 4. Separate Elevated Structure West: After crossing the railroad mainline and yard tracks, the Class I portion of the Link would continue for approximately 3,400 feet as a separate structure on the south side of West Grand Avenue and the I-880 outrigger structure. It would cross over Maritime Street, the four at-grade rail crossings on Burma Road and continue to the touchdown near the Caltrans maintenance facility (**Figures 7a, 7b, 8a, and 8b**). East of the Caltrans maintenance facility, the Link would descend with a switchback curve. This segment could also include two ramps, from the elevated structure to Maritime Street, which could be constructed if funding is available. On the east side of Maritime Street, there could be a 700-foot-long ramp extending toward Admiral Toney Way. On the west side of Maritime Street, there could be a 250-foot-long ramp extending to a roof-top landing and lookout area on the planned OMSS building. The maximum grade on the ramps would be 5 percent. The OMSS building completion date and operating hours are not yet known.

Segment 5. At-Grade Connection to Bay Bridge Trail: From the west touchdown, the Class I portion of the Link would continue another 350 feet at grade level under the I-880/I-80 connection lanes and connect to the existing Bay Bridge Trail (**Figures 8a and 8b**).

Ramp Connection to Class I Path Along East Side of Maritime Street

The Class I portion of the Link at the Maritime Street area could also include a ramp that would tie into the Class I path along the east side of Maritime Street to and from Admiral Toney Way. The tie-in at the Link segment would begin 600 feet east of Maritime Street, continue to the south, and touch down approximately 130 feet north of Admiral Toney Way. The tie-in would provide access to the Port of Oakland and additional access for first responders when attempting to reach path users in the event of an emergency

Ramp Connection to OMSS Building

The Project could also include an innovative spur connection to the OMSS building; the spur would be designed to land on the roof of this building. The OMSS building would provide lookout areas, restroom facilities, and concessions for path users and access for first responders when attempting to reach path users in the event of an emergency.

Class II Bike Lanes

The Project could also include Class II bike lanes along surface streets near the east touchdown of the Class I Link, providing connections to Mandela Parkway, the proposed Wood Street parking lot, and planned development along Wood Street (**Figure 3**). The width of the Class II bike lanes, extending along

each side of the street, would be 5 feet. The Class II bike lanes, which would cover approximately 8,170 linear feet, would be constructed after the Class I portion of the Link, if funding is available. Class II bike lanes would extend along the following surface streets:

- West Grand Avenue alley (westbound), from Peralta Street to Wood Street
- 20th Street, from Peralta Street to Wood Street
- Wood Street, from 20th Street to 24th Street
- Willow Street, from 20th Street to West Grand Avenue
- Campbell Street, from 20th Street to West Grand Avenue

The Project could include construction of a new 100-space parking lot on the west side of Wood Street, north of West Grand Avenue and beneath the east side of I-880 (**Figure 3**). The parking lot would cover 0.48 acre (21,217 square feet [sf]).

The parking lot would include lighting to achieve a minimum of 1 foot-candle² at primary circulation areas. The parking lot would include landscaping, which could include drought-tolerant trees, shrubs, and groundcover on an additional 6,000 sf. The purpose of the parking lot is (1) to provide a convenient way for some users of the Link to park and then walk/bicycle on the Link; and (2) to provide an alternative way for some users of Judge John Sutter Regional Park to reach the park by bicycling or walking rather than driving to the park itself. The parking lot would increase the range of users for the Link and park, including people who are unable to access the Link by walking or bicycling because of distance or other obstacles. Some users with mobility challenges may not be able to walk or bicycle the entire distance to reach the Link (or do it safely) but could use the Link if they were to drive to the parking lot and then walk or bicycle along the Link to reach the park or other destinations. The Wood Street parking lot would be constructed after the Link if funding is available.

Mandela Parkway Median

The Project could include streetscape improvements, such as landscaping and artwork, on the Mandela Parkway median within one block of West Grand Avenue. The landscaping would enhance the existing landscaping and would not involve any major changes.

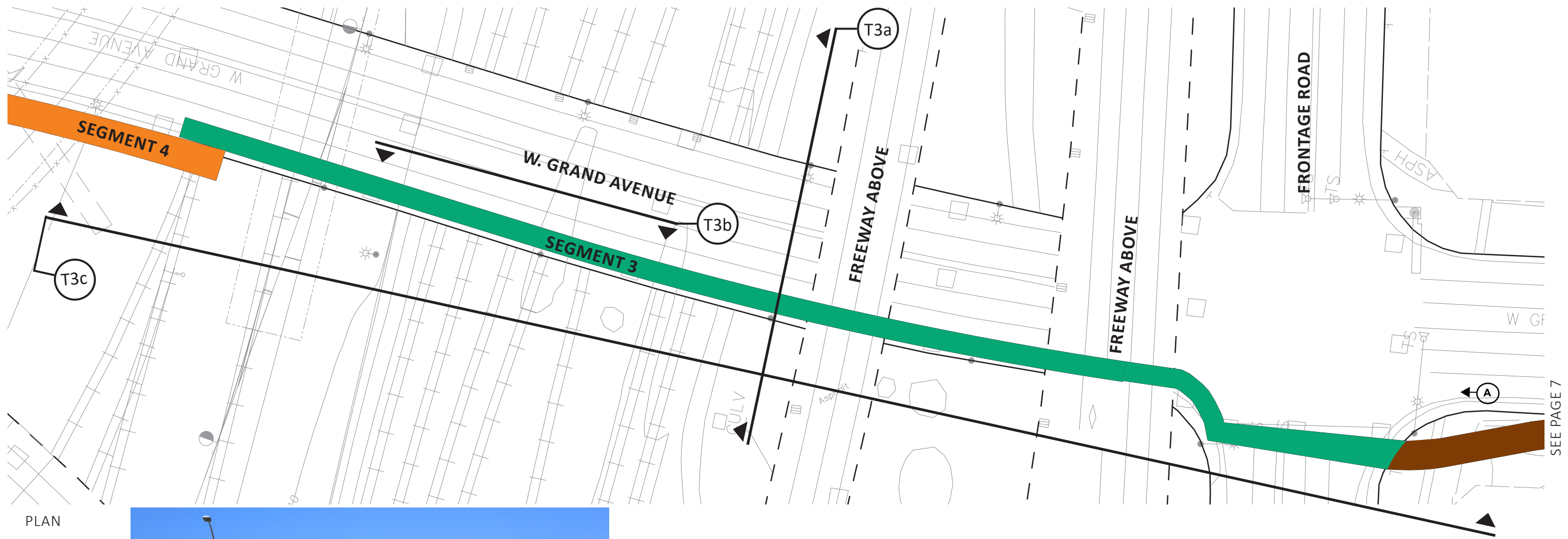
Project Features

Project features would include access points, fencing, lighting, lookout areas, way-finding and interpretive elements, landscaping, stormwater drainage infrastructure, safety measures, and operations and maintenance facilities. The final design process would include community workshops to solicit community input on Project aesthetics and landscaping, among other topics of interest to the community. The design would incorporate design elements desired by the community to instill a feeling of pride and Project ownership that reflects the values and character of the community.

Access Points: As described above for Segments 1 and 5, the Link would be accessible from Mandela Parkway at West Grand Avenue on the east end and from the Bay Bridge Trail on the west end (**Figure 3**). In addition, there could be access points on either side of Maritime Street, whereby the elevated portion of the Link could have ramps extending down to the east and/or west side of Maritime Street (**Figure 3**). On the west side of Maritime Street, the ramp would be approximately 250 linear feet and could include a landing on the roof top of the planned OMSS building. On the east side of Maritime Street, the ramp would be approximately 700 feet. Both ramps would have a maximum grade of 5

² The term foot-candle refers to a measurement of illumination. It is a unit of illumination equivalent to the illumination produced by one candle at a distance of one foot and equal to one lumen incident per square foot (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/foot-candle>).

Bike Path Segment 3



PLAN



Photo A: West Grand Avenue

(X) → Direction and Location of Photo

SCALE: 1" = 50'

SEE PAGE 7

Figure 6a

Bike Path Segment 3

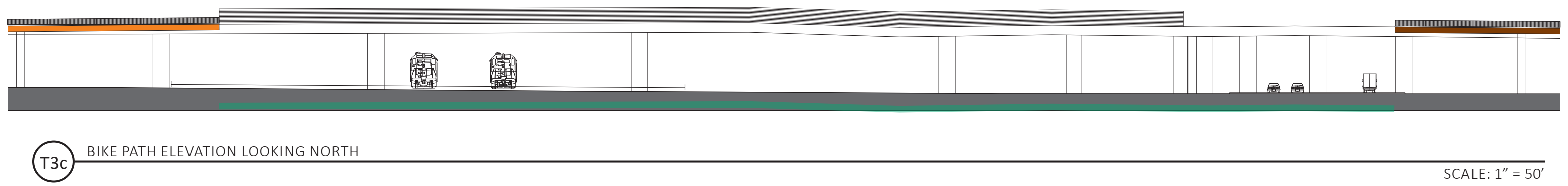
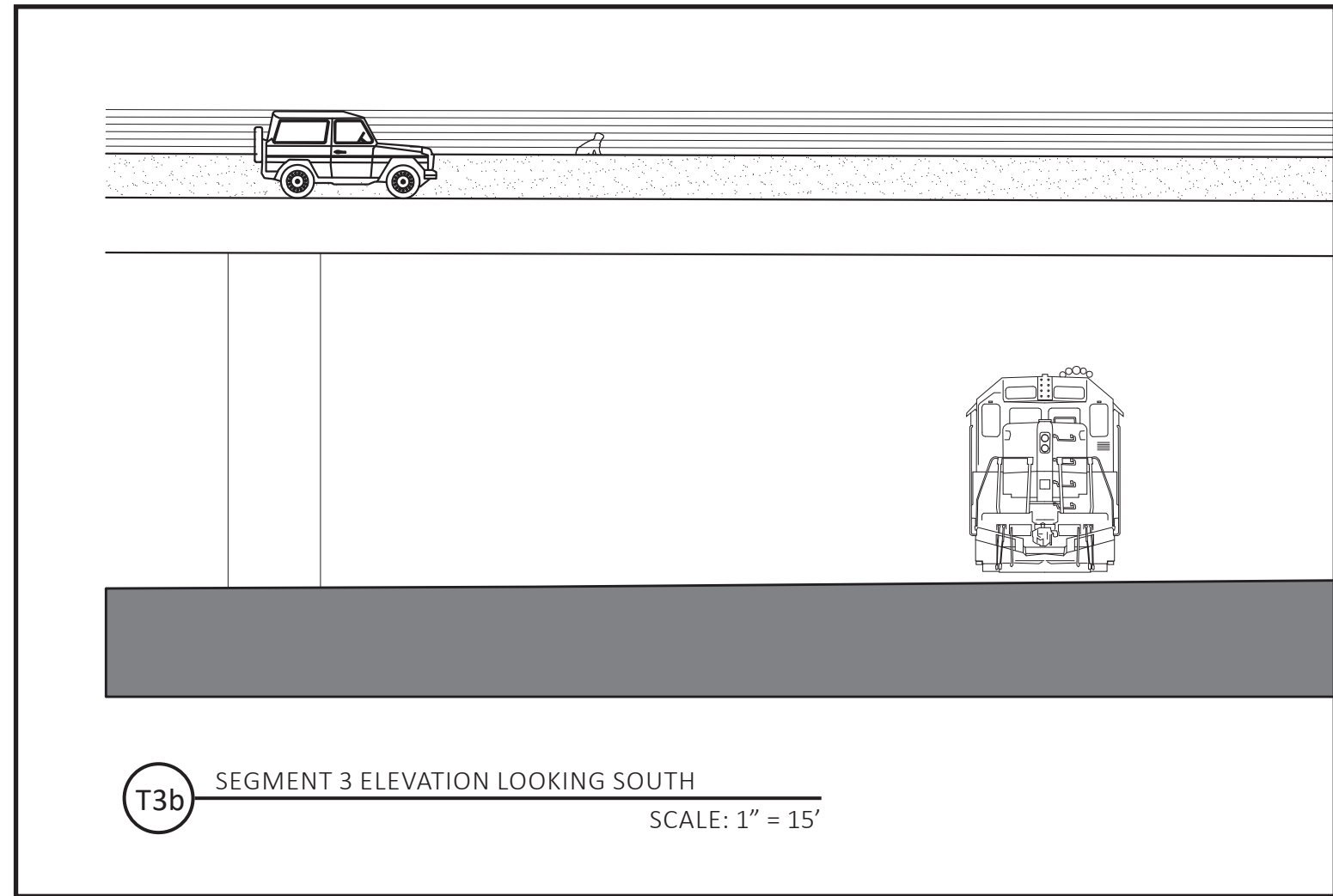
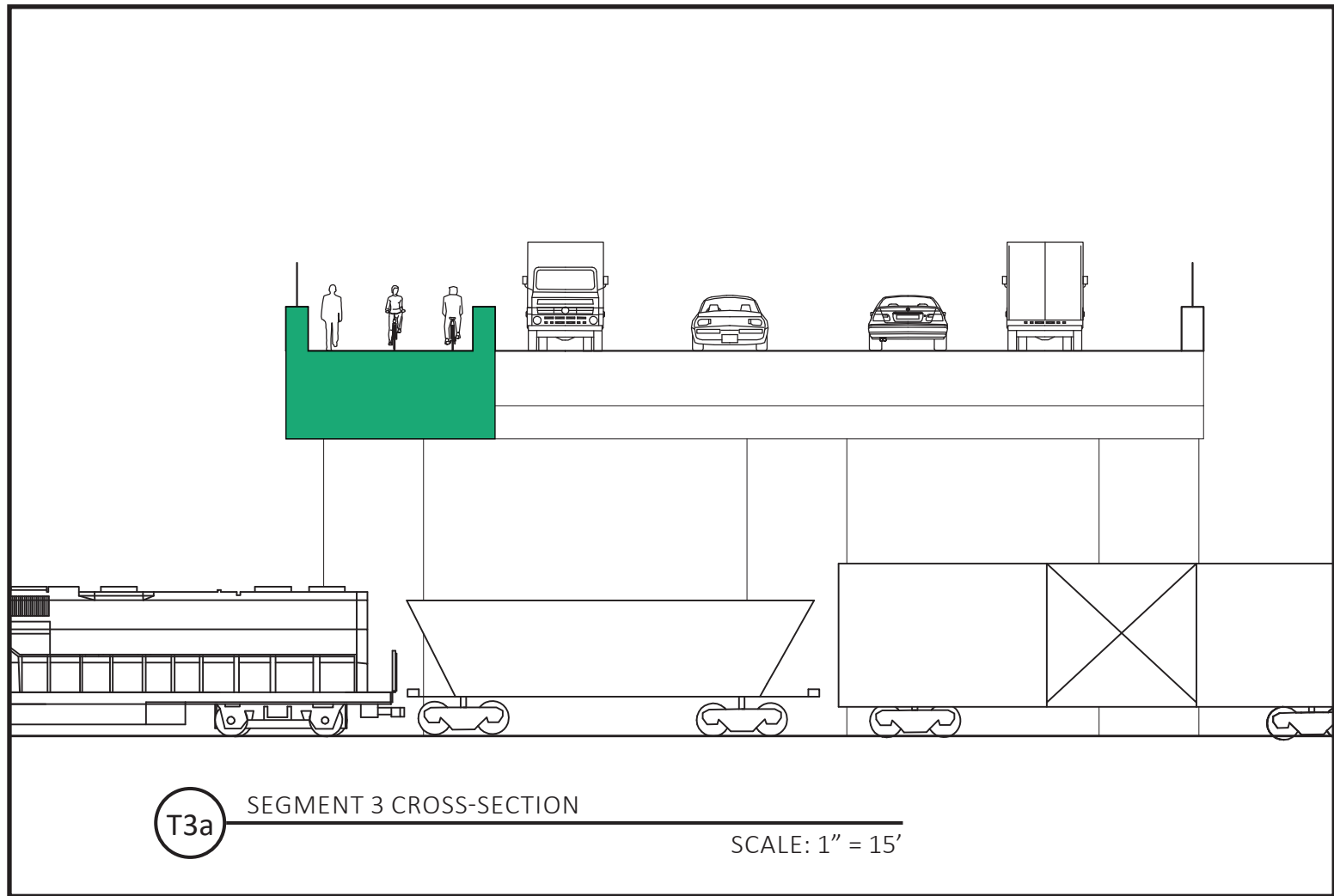
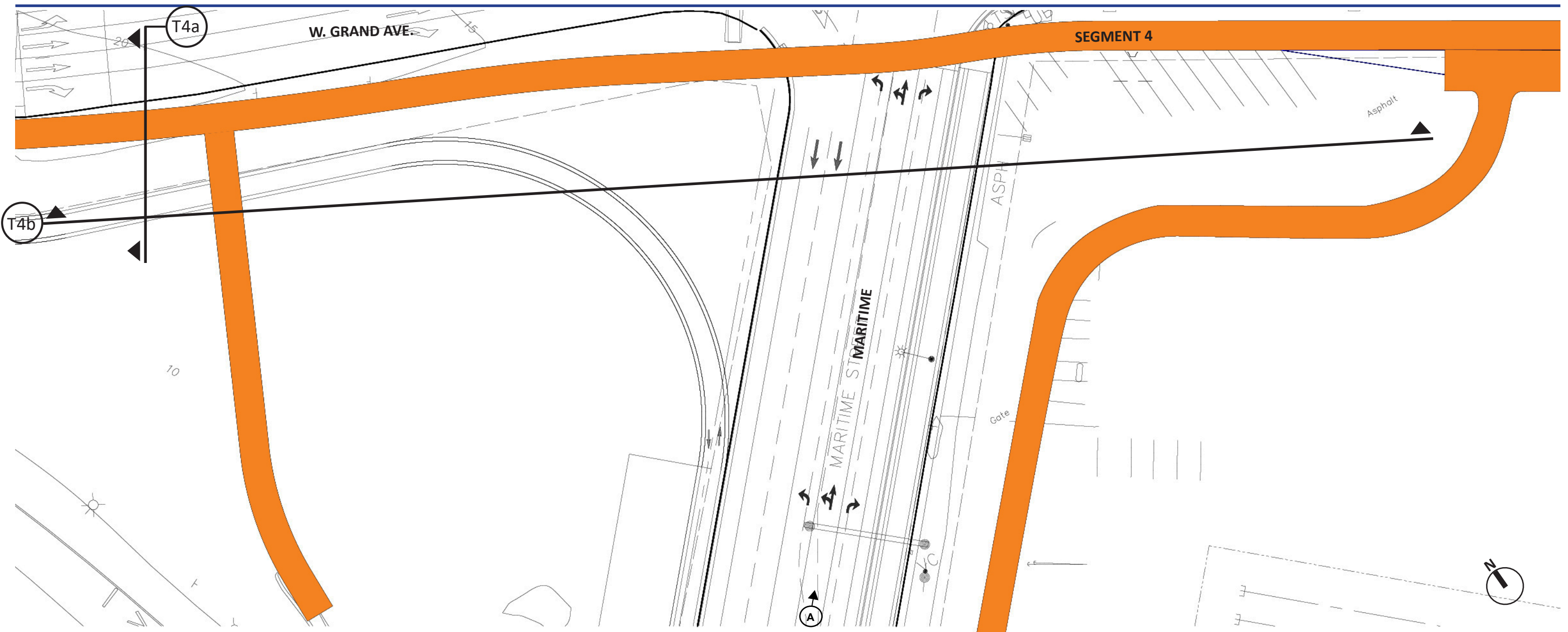


Figure 6b

Bike Path Segment 4



PLAN

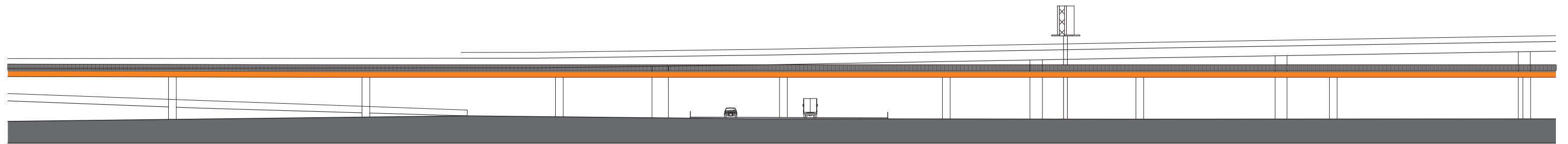
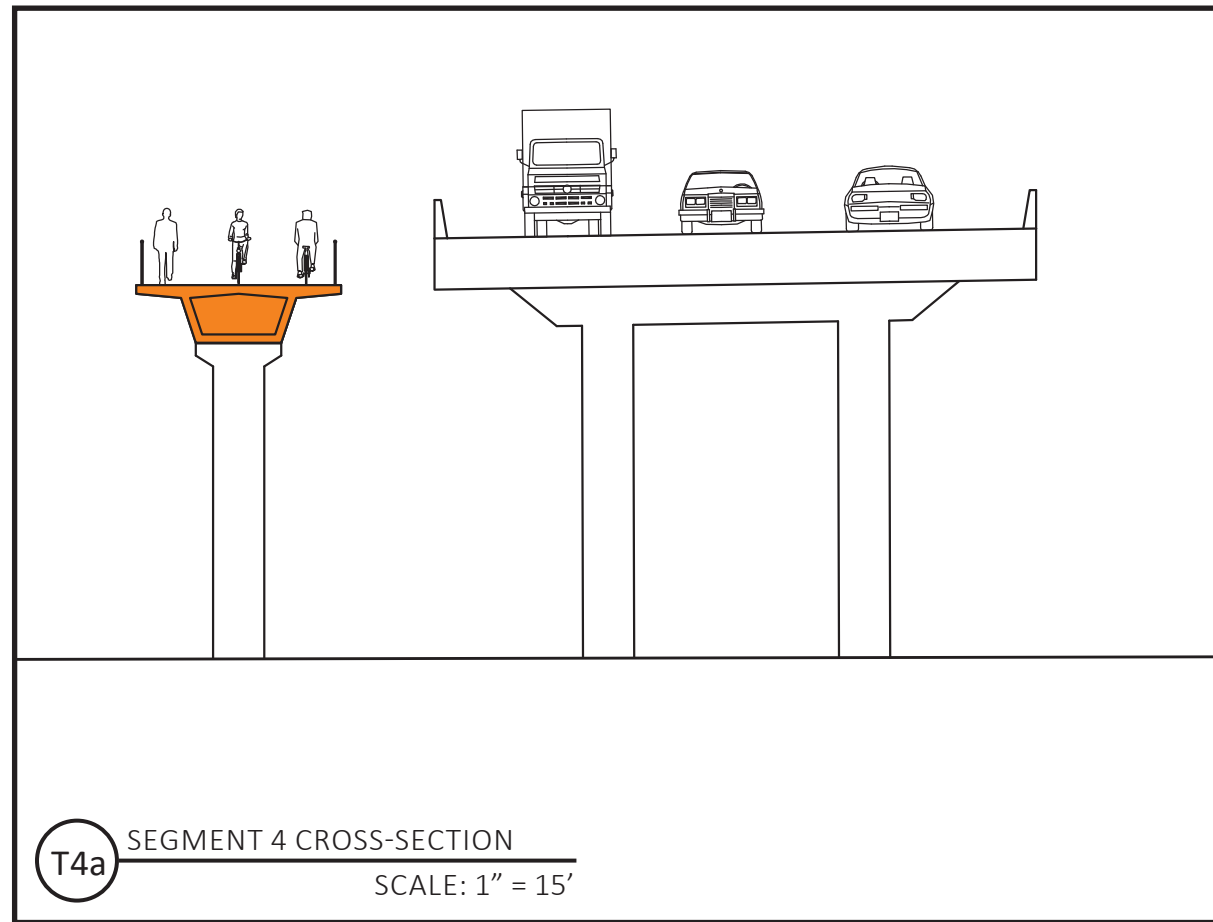
SCALE: 1" = 50'



(X) → Direction and Location of Photo

Figure 7a

Bike Path Segment 4



Bike Path Segment 5

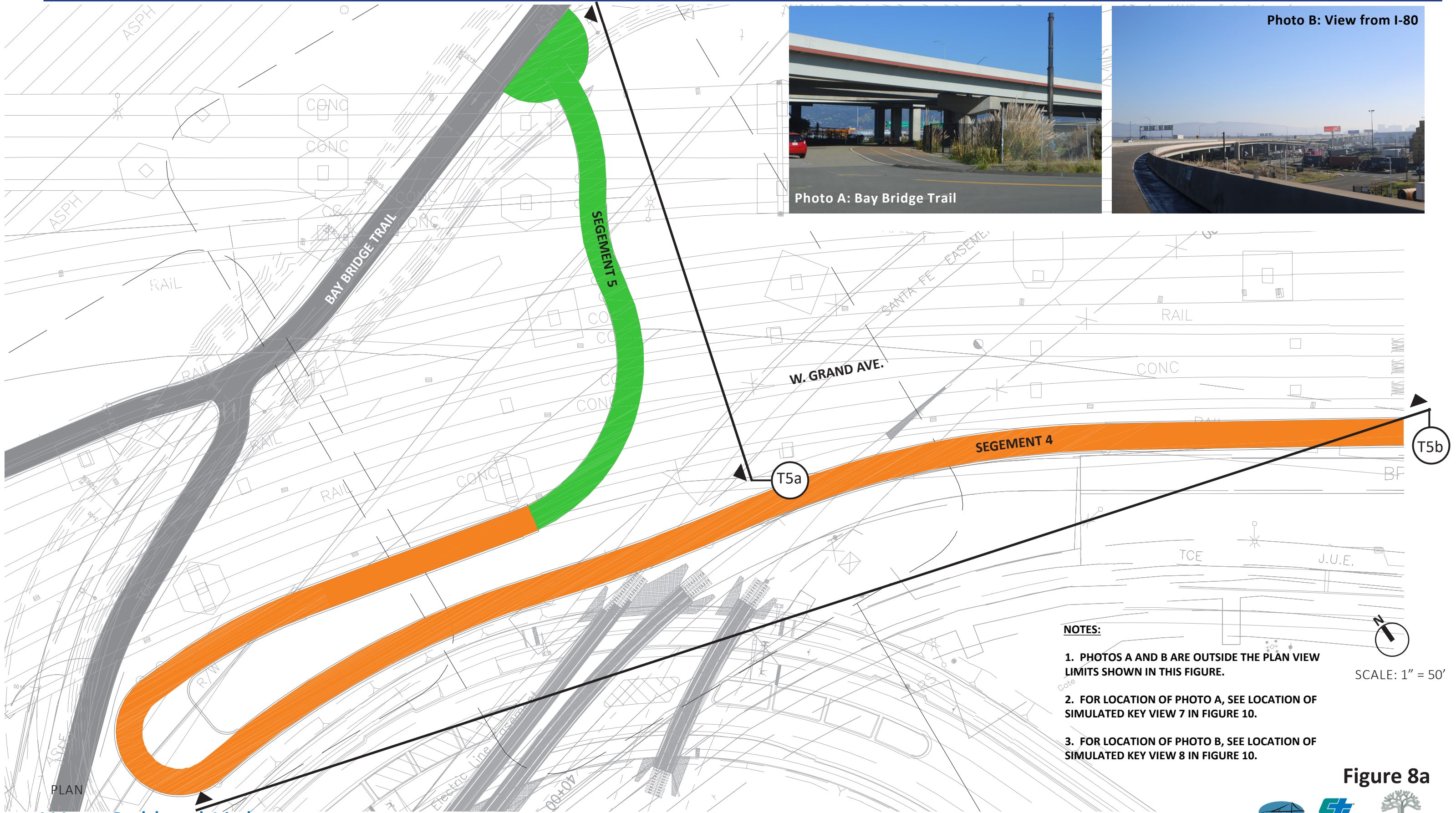


Photo A: Bay Bridge Trail

Photo B: View from I-80

NOTES:

1. PHOTOS A AND B ARE OUTSIDE THE PLAN VIEW LIMITS SHOWN IN THIS FIGURE.
2. FOR LOCATION OF PHOTO A, SEE LOCATION OF SIMULATED KEY VIEW 7 IN FIGURE 10.
3. FOR LOCATION OF PHOTO B, SEE LOCATION OF SIMULATED KEY VIEW 8 IN FIGURE 10.

SCALE: 1" = 50'

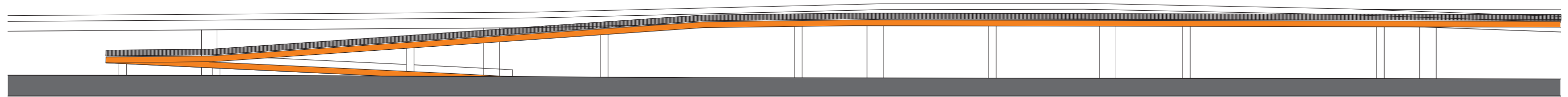
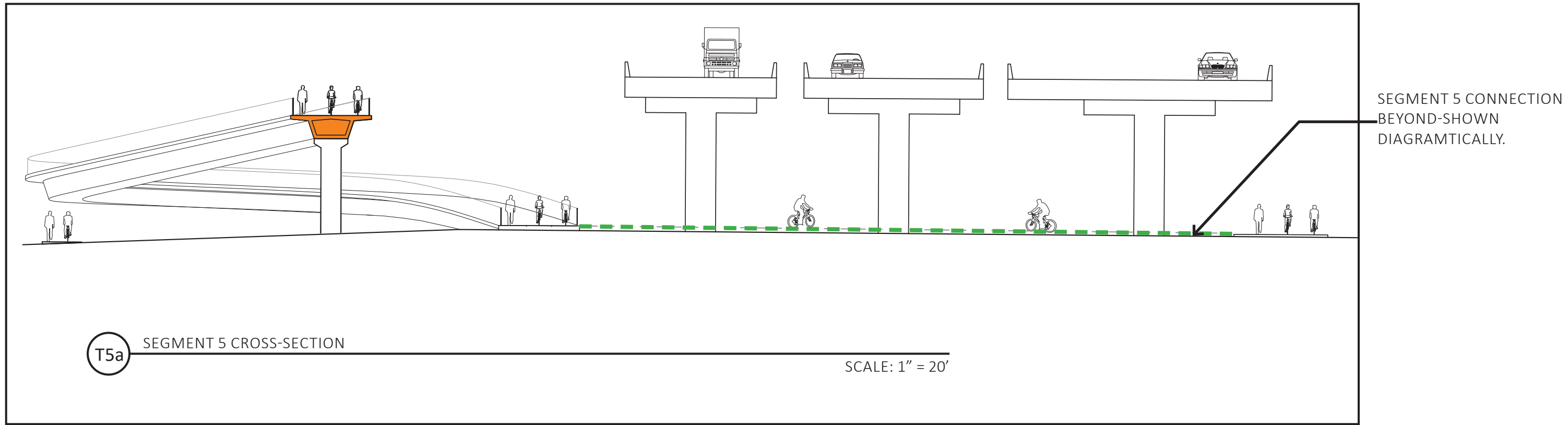
Figure 8a

PLAN
West Oakland Link

©INWILLER/KUEHL



Bike Path Segment 5



percent. As mentioned previously, the Link and landing would be open at all times and would include low-level lighting. OMSS building hours are unknown at this time.

Design: The Class I portion of the Link would be a multipurpose facility and accessible to bicyclists and pedestrians. It would be designed to comply with the Caltrans *Highway Design Manual* standards for paths. The elevated structure would also be designed to comply with current Caltrans structural design requirements for pedestrian bridges, including Caltrans Standard Plans and 2018 Standard Specifications (or the most current). Ramps and curb cuts would comply with ADA requirements. In addition, the elevated portions of the Link and any retaining walls would have some texture on the columns and very likely on the outside edge of the bridge deck.

Fencing and Barriers: The elevated portion of the Link would include fencing that would be 8 feet in height above the finished surface. Fencing would be needed where the path crosses over a road or railroad; metal guardrail barriers would be used over other areas. The fencing and barriers would comply with all relevant building and safety codes. The specific types of fencing and metal guardrail barriers have not been determined; however, it is likely that chain-link fencing would be used for the path on West Grand Avenue over the railroad tracks (Segment 3). For Segment 3, there would be a concrete barrier with a minimum height of 42 inches between the Link and vehicular traffic. Designs and details regarding the fencing and metal guardrail barriers would meet the technical and safety requirements of the *Highway Design Manual* while following the Project aesthetic theme and language developed during the community design workshops.

Lighting: The Link would be open at all times. Therefore, low-level lighting would be installed along the Link. It is anticipated that 1-foot candle (minimum) light-emitting diode (LED) lights would be side mounted in the barrier along the elevated segments, although there could also be some overhead lights installed at the top of the fencing if deemed necessary for safety. Lighting along the at-grade segments would be provided by new or existing streetlights or pedestrian light standards and in conformance with the City of Oakland's Outdoor Lighting Standards and the Port of Oakland's Exterior Lighting Policy. The design of the lighting system would prioritize safety while preventing light pollution. The community can help develop creative design alternatives to the traditional cobra-head lighting option.

Lookout Areas: The elevated portion of the Link could have some wider areas that would serve as lookout areas, but the number and location have not been determined. It is anticipated that there would be up to three such lookout areas dispersed along the elevated segments.

Way-Finding and Interpretive Elements: The Link would include centerline striping and way-finding signage. There could also be safety signage, such as signs indicating the bicycle speed limit. In addition, the Link could include *way-finding and interpretive elements*, which may include topics of community interest such as old Bay Bridge artifacts, to help guide users to the existing paths and new East Span of the Bay Bridge. Proposed signage on West Grand Avenue would adhere to Caltrans's Gateway Monument Policy.

Landscaping: The elevated portion of the Link could include planters in the wider lookout areas or attached to the exterior sides of the structure. There could also be some landscaping under the structure at the west end touchdown (where path makes a switchback curve and descends) and at the east end (between Wood Street and Campbell Street).

Stormwater Drainage: Stormwater on the elevated structure would likely drain off at downspouts at the columns, and continue as surface flows or be conveyed to an existing drainage system, depending on the existing drainage patterns and facilities at each location. There would be no stormwater flowing directly into existing wetlands or drainages. The Project would include the provision of approximately 0.93 acre (40,510 sf) of stormwater treatment because the Project would add approximately 1.68 acres

(73,180 sf) of new impervious surfaces (WRECO 2014). This represents a treatment ratio of 1:1.8. Stormwater treatment options include vegetated flow-through treatment areas or bio-treatment basins beneath the elevated path and/or in vacant areas by freeways and the proposed Wood Street parking lot (**Figure 9**).

Safety: In addition to the fencing and lighting described above, the elevated portion of the Link would include solar call boxes and security cameras. It is anticipated that the Link would be patrolled periodically by California Highway Patrol (CHP) or City of Oakland officers on bicycles. Closed-circuit television would record and retain images for up to four weeks; this information would be available to law enforcement should a crime occur.

Project Phasing

The Project may be implemented in phases to respond to timing considerations and the availability of funds as well as the schedule for related projects. The sections that follow discuss the possible phasing options. All Class II bicycle lanes and bicycle boxes would be installed as part of the initial period of construction, regardless of phasing option.

Phasing Option 1

Phasing Option 1 would construct approximately 2,900 feet of Class I path structure, beginning approximately 600 feet east of Maritime Street and continuing to the Bay Bridge Trail. Starting from the east, the structure would begin approximately 600 feet east of Maritime Street with an interim connection to the multi-use path (MUP), which was installed as part of the high-occupancy vehicle/bus extension project. Under Phasing Option 1, the West Oakland Link profile would be lowered to tie into West Grand Avenue. The structure would continue west, parallel to West Grand Avenue. The elevated Link structure would span Maritime Street and the existing at-grade railroad crossings near Burma Road. The structure would then continue under the I-80 ramps and tie in at the connection to the Bay Bridge Trail. Construction under the initial build portion of Phasing Option 1 would correspond to a portion of Segment 4 and all of Segment 5.

When additional funding for construction is available, the Link would be extended to Mandela Parkway. The interim connection to West Grand Avenue could either be demolished or retained as an emergency access point. The remaining easterly portion of Segment 4 would be constructed with a slightly revised vertical profile. Segments 1 through 3 as well as the ramps to Maritime Street and the OMSS building (the remainder of Segment 4) would also be constructed.

Phasing Option 2

Phasing Option 2 would be similar to Phasing Option 1. However, a 600-foot segment on the east side of Maritime Street would be designed and constructed so that the bridge deck could be raised during a future phase of the Project, providing a smooth profile and minimizing elevation changes for the Link under the full-build condition. Construction under the initial build portion of Phasing Option 2 would correspond to a portion of Segment 4 and all of Segment 5.

When additional funding for construction becomes available, the Link would be extended to Mandela Parkway. The above-mentioned 600 feet of the bridge deck could be raised to its final elevation by extending the bridge columns. Segments 1 through 3, the remaining easterly portion of Segment 4, and the ramps to Maritime Street and the OMSS building would also be constructed.

Phasing Option 3

Phasing Option 3 would construct Segment 4, except for the ramps to Maritime Street, the OMSS building, and Segment 5 of the Link. When additional funding for construction is available, Segments 1 through 3 and the ramps to Maritime Street and the OMSS building could be constructed.

Potential Stormwater Treatment Areas

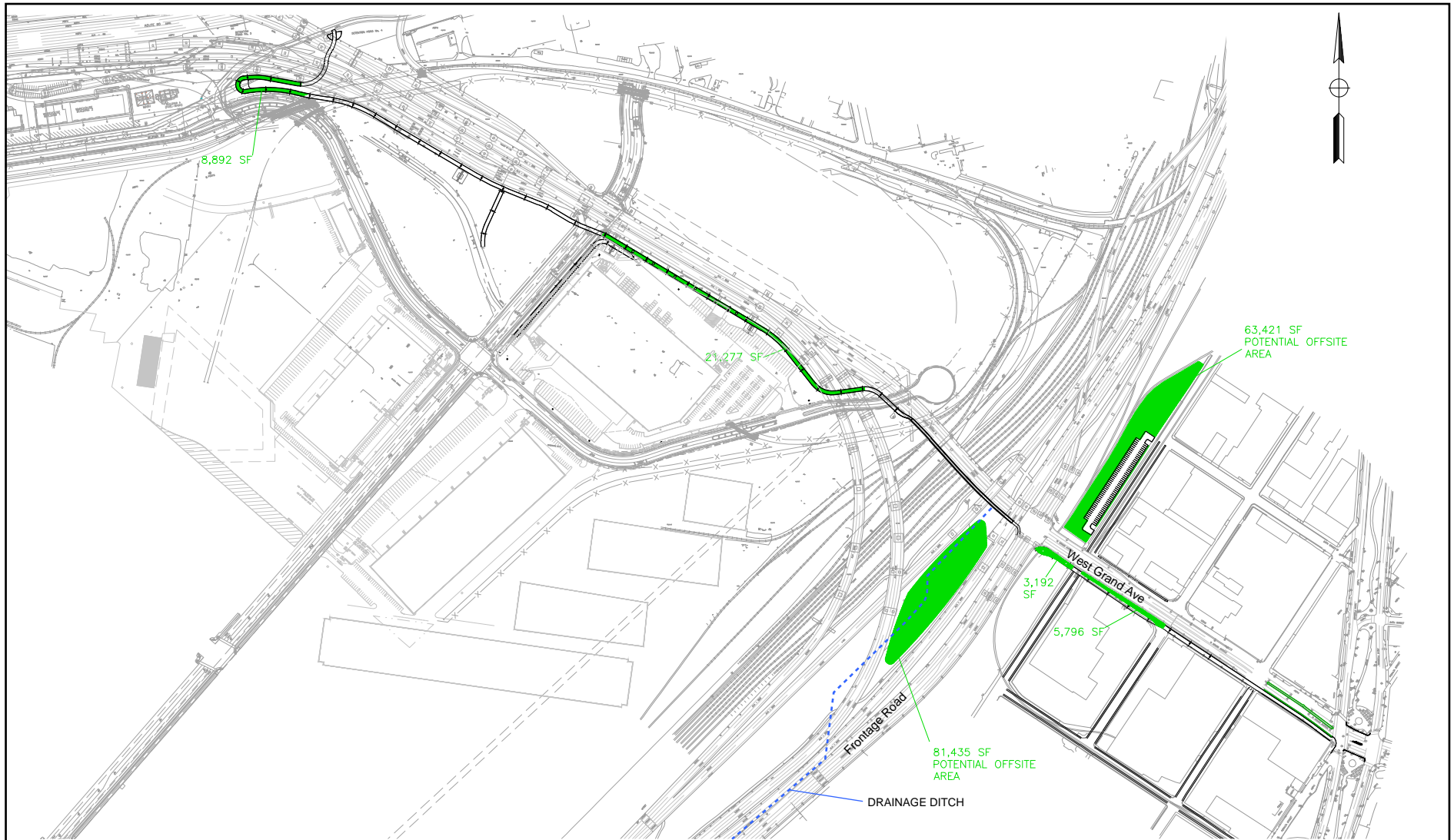


Figure 9

Project Construction

Excavation and Grading: Project construction would require excavation, grading and new pavement as follows:

- Excavation up to 5 feet deep for 45 column footings for the elevated portion of the Link (note that supporting piles would be driven 50-60 feet deep);
- Excavation up to 3 feet deep for at-grade modifications at the west end touch down near the Caltrans maintenance facility and the east touch down at Campbell Street and Willow Street, where there would be intersection modifications to create cul-de-sacs;
- Excavation up to 3 feet deep for at-grade modifications along City streets for new pavement sections, sidewalks, and driveways; and
- Excavation up to 3 feet deep and grading for gravel and asphalt pavement at the Wood Street parking lot.

It is estimated that the Project would result in up to approximately 2,600 cubic yards of cut material. During excavation, soils would be tested for contamination. Clean soils would be used or sold for reuse at nearby construction sites. Contaminated soils would be disposed of at an appropriate facility. It is estimated that approximately 44 trees could be removed, based on review of an aerial photo. Replacement planting would proceed consistent with City of Oakland Municipal Code.

Construction Hours and Duration: Construction is anticipated to occur between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday. It is possible that evening work would be required for construction over Maritime Street and Burma Road. There would be no construction after 7:00 p.m. or on weekends or national holidays without special permission from the City of Oakland. If the Project is constructed as a single contract, construction is estimated to occur over 24 months, from October 2023 to October 2025. However, as discussed above, the Project may be constructed in phases:

- Phasing Option 1 would take 21 months for the initial build and the remaining construction would take an additional 18 months.
- Phasing Option 2 would take 21 months for the initial build and the remaining construction would take an additional 18 months.
- Phasing Option 3 would take 21 months for the initial build and the remaining construction would take an additional 15 months.

Vehicle Access: Construction truck activity and haul routes would be limited to key collector roads, including West Grand Avenue, Maritime Street, Frontage Parkway, and Wood Street. Construction vehicles may also use Burma Road, Mandela Parkway, Campbell Street, Willow Street, Peralta Street, and 20th Street. Construction activities are not anticipated to result in any long-term road closures, except for eastbound West Grand Avenue alley and its intersections with Willow Street and Campbell Street West. Temporary road closures could include Campbell Street for intersection modifications at West Grand Avenue, West Grand Avenue alley and its intersections with Willow Street and Campbell Street West, and Maritime Street to place falsework over Maritime Street for the new elevated structure. Temporary lane closures could occur on West Grand Avenue, Maritime Street, Wood Street, Willow Street, Engineers Road, Peralta Street, Campbell Street, and 20th Street. In those instances, detours would be provided.

Construction Equipment: Construction equipment and vehicles could include: backhoes, loaders, excavators, tractors, cranes, lifts, pile drivers, concrete trucks and pump, paving machine, compactors/rollers, and trucks for demolition, grading, and materials delivery. Construction equipment and power tools could include: jackhammers, air compressors, generators, concrete saws, power drills, welding equipment, sandblasting equipment, painting equipment, power and impact wrenches, and the like. Piles for the 45 footings (estimated amount to support the elevated portion of the Link) could be driven piles (precast concrete or steel) or cast-in-drilled-hole concrete piles, or a combination depending on the specific site conditions along the structure.

Staging: Construction staging would be on a disturbed or paved area, away from drainages. Options include using the Wood Street parking lot area before parking lot construction begins and/or renting a nearby parcel, possibly along Maritime Street or Burma Road.

Project Operations and Maintenance

The Link would be open 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Maintenance would include weekly trash removal, monthly sweeping, and bi-annual inspections for restriping, resurfacing, repairs, and bridge inspection and maintenance per state requirements. BATA would be financially responsible for maintenance of the completed Project, including any installed landscaping. BATA is currently in discussion with Caltrans regarding operations and maintenance responsibilities. An agreement is expected to be concluded before the start of construction.

III. PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

The Project location and setting provide the context for determining the type and severity of changes to the existing visual environment.

Regional Setting

The Project is located in the San Francisco Bay Area (Bay Area), approximately 1.3 miles northwest of downtown Oakland and approximately 5.5 miles east of the San Francisco shoreline, with views of both city skylines from the Project area.

The regional visual setting of the Bay Area is scenic and combines water, islands, bridges, mountains, and urban skylines. The Bay is a rich marine resource providing navigable waterways for commerce and recreation and habitat for numerous species. The Bay includes four major islands: Alcatraz, Angel Island, Treasure Island, and Yerba Buena Island. Seven bridges span the Bay, connecting communities and constituting significant scenic resources in their respective areas. The Golden Gate Bridge, Bay Bridge, Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, San Mateo Bridge, Dumbarton Bridge, Benicia Bridge, and Carquinez Bridge span significant stretches of open water and are highly visible from vantage points around the Bay and these bridges also provide views out and around to the scenic resources associated with the Bay Area landscape. Mount Tamalpais and the hills of the Marin headlands are to the northwest; the East Bay Hills of Oakland and Berkeley are located to the east; and the Santa Cruz Mountain Range along the Peninsula is located to the southwest. The city skylines of Oakland and San Francisco also complement the region's natural and urban setting. Regional urban development in the cities of Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland, and Alameda are also visible and are largely concentrated between the East Bay Hills to the east (the dominant topographic feature in the area) and the Bay to the west.

The Bay Trail is an important recreational feature in the region that parallels a significant portion of the Bayshore in all nine Bay Area counties. The Bay Trail is a series of existing and planned regional hiking and bicycle trails that will eventually continuously connect around a 400-mile perimeter of the San Francisco and San Pablo Bays (ABAG 1989). On January 27, 2022, the San Francisco Bay Trail Project

approved the addition of the West Oakland Link to the spine alignment of the Bay Trail System (Lo pers. comm. 2022).

Transportation corridors are also a notable feature within the region and include six interstate freeways: I-80, I-280, I-380, I-580, I-880, and I-980; numerous state routes and local highways and surface streets; and several rail corridors.

Vicinity Setting

The Project vicinity largely composed of transportation facilities and industrial land uses associated with the Port of Oakland, East Bay Municipal Utility District wastewater treatment plant, and other industry. Representative areas within the Project vicinity are mapped on **Figure 10**. The Project is located 0.5 mile west of a major transportation hub created by the intersection of three interstate freeways: I-80, I-880, and I-580, known as the MacArthur Maze. Due to the large number of vehicles that travel on these freeways each day, the Project area is visible to motorists that pass quickly by the site. I-80 is an eight-to ten-lane freeway that serves San Francisco and the East Bay. North of Emeryville, I-80 runs in a north-south direction; but at the MacArthur Maze, I-80 turns and travels in an east-west direction between Oakland and San Francisco. This segment of I-80 is an eligible state scenic highway, but not officially designated (Caltrans 2013). This segment of I-80 is also a part of the MacArthur Freeway, which is a city designated scenic route from the San Leandro City limits to the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge approach (City of Oakland 1974). I-880 is an eight-lane freeway that serves West Alameda County, the South Bay, and San Jose. I-580 is an eight-lane freeway that connects to Sacramento.

The Link would extend along the south side of West Grand Avenue, which generally runs in an east–west direction, extending beneath I-880 and connecting to westbound I-80. In addition, the path would provide be incorporated into the existing Bay Trail in proximity to Maritime Street, Burma Road, and Admiral Toney Way. In this area, the existing Bay Trail travels under the many elevated ramps and roadway structures that connect West Grand Avenue and Maritime Street to I-80; the trail has one connection to Burma Road. A large portion of the Bay Trail near the connection to Burma Road is shaded because of the extent of elevated roadway infrastructure that casts shadows on the trail. Burma Road starts at Maritime Street and extends west through the Project area, running parallel to I-80 and terminating at the Bay. Admiral Toney Way also starts at Maritime Street but extends eastward to the point where it terminates in a cul-de-sac just east of West Grand Avenue. The Port of Oakland, Bay Bridge Toll Plaza, and Caltrans’ District 4 San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge (SFOBB) complex are south of the Link; the EBMUD wastewater treatment facility is to the north. From the toll plaza administration building site, the Link site is largely obscured by Caltrans’ District 4 SFOBB complex and the elevated West Grand Avenue/Maritime Street exit ramp from westbound I-80 (**Figure 11a, Photo 1**). In this area, most of West Grand Avenue is grade separated and allows for views of the Port (**Figure 11a, Photo 2**). Views of the Port consist of a heavy-industrial, manmade environment that is mostly paved and has little to no vegetation. These views contain a number of warehouses, chain-link fencing surrounding facilities, streetlights, and utility poles and wires (similar to the ground-level views shown on **Figure 11b, Photo 3**). Most of the industrial facilities are older, except along Maritime Street, near its intersection with Admiral Toney Way, where long, linear distribution warehouses and older buildings have been removed. In their place, large-scale, modern distribution warehouse facilities have been constructed, retaining the industrial nature of the Project area. These views are typical of views from Maritime Street, Burma Road, and Admiral Toney Way, which provide access to the Port. West Grand Avenue does have an at-grade intersection and on-ramps at Maritime Street, which is used primarily by trucks for Port operations and activities. While portions of West Grand Avenue are elevated through the Port, vista views are very limited by adjacent elevated transportation structures. Most views are not scenic because they are largely comprised of the surrounding transportation infrastructure and industrial land

Locations of Project Areas and Photo Simulations



Source: Aerial Imagery, ESRI 2013



Note: No proposed alterations to highways or railways.

Project Area

Location of Key View

Location of Simulated Key View

Figure 10

West Oakland Link



Project Area Photographs



Photo 1. Looking southeast toward the Link project area from the Bay Bridge Toll Plaza.
Source: Google Earth



Photo 2. Looking northwest from Burma Road toward Port storage yards and West Grand Avenue.

Project Area Photographs



Photo 3. Looking east at the Maritime Street.
Source: Google Earth



Photo 4. Looking northwest toward Frontage Road and I-80 connection overpass from West Grand Avenue.

Project Area Photographs



Photo 5. Looking northeast toward the rail line, elevated freeway connectors, and the Berkeley Hills from West Grand Avenue.



Photo 6. Looking north toward the EBMUD wastewater treatment facility at the Frontage Road and West Grand Avenue intersection.

Project Area Photographs



Photo 7. Looking northeast toward elevated freeway connectors, the rail line, western edge of Oakland, and Berkeley Hills from West Grand Avenue.



Photo 8. Looking northeast toward the rail line and elevated freeway connectors from Wood Street.

Project Area Photographs



Photo 9. Looking northwest toward West Grand Avenue and elevated freeway connectors from Mandela Parkway.



Photo 10. Looking southwest toward the landscaped median of Mandela Parkway from the Bay Trail Bike Path.

Project Area Photographs



Photo 11. Looking southwest toward the landscaped median of Mandela Parkway at the Bay Trail way-finding sign.

uses with very limited views of the Bay, East Bay Hills, and city skylines (**Figure 11b, Photo 4, and Figure 11c, Photo 5**). The primary location where scenic vista views are available are near the West Grand Avenue intersection with I-80, which is located closer to the Bay. The EBMUD wastewater treatment facility is somewhat visible (**Figure 11c, Photo 6**). The only notable change in the Project vicinity.

The Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way, Frontage Road, and I-880 separate Port land uses from other industrial/warehouse land uses east of these transportation facilities (**Figure 11d, Photo 7**). The Link crosses over the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way and Frontage Road, which extend parallel to each other in a generally north-south direction. I-880 travels between the rail right-of-way and Frontage Road. The rail right-of-way and I-880 are currently surrounded by a chain-link fence and are inaccessible to the public (**Figure 11d, Photo 8**). The area is flat with a combination of paved surfaces and ruderal vegetation growing in small unpaved areas. Massive concrete pillars (some with graffiti) are evenly spaced throughout this area, supporting the I-880 aerial structure. The freeway overcrossing creates a visual barrier and separates the Port from the western edge of Oakland.

The eastern terminus of the Link is one block west of Mandela Parkway, at Campbell Street, where the aerial structure touches down and continues to the southeast at-grade to Mandela Parkway (**Figure 11e, Photo 9**). East of the rail right-of-way and I-880, the local surface streets form a grid-like pattern and include light industrial warehouses, storage facilities, expansive paved areas, and a neighborhood park (Raimondi Park) on large parcels of land. All buildings are one or two stories in height and feature little to no exterior articulation. The exception is the Peralta building, between Mandela Parkway and Campbell Street. The building is made of brick and has windows along West Grand Avenue. Although the Peralta building has great visual appeal compared to other buildings in the area, it does not stand out as overly unique. In addition, there is little separation between busy West Grand Avenue and the building, and the existing landscaping along the roadway is very sparse and does little to improve the aesthetics associated with the building.

East of Campbell Street, the elevated West Grand Avenue acts to segment this area and create a distinct separation between the buildings north and south of the roadway. Businesses north of West Grand Avenue do not have views toward the West Grand Avenue alley, which is where Segment 2 would be located, either because the elevated West Grand Avenue acts as a physical barrier to views to the south or the businesses do not have windows facing West Grand Avenue. Near the West Grand Avenue touchdown at Campbell Street, the building north of West Grand Avenue could have views toward the Project corridor. However, this building does not have south-facing windows, and privacy fencing drastically limits views toward the Project from within the property bounds. Buildings located immediately next to Segment 2, south of West Grand Avenue, include large warehouse structures that do not have windows facing the Project. However, the Lyft Oakland Hub building does have a windowed corner that is largely screened by security fencing with wide vertical rails. Therefore, there may be partial views toward the Project from this portion of the building. In addition, the Lyft Oakland Hub parking lot and adjacent sidewalks and roadways have fairly open views toward the Project. In the morning, West Grand Avenue casts a slight shadow on the West Grand Avenue alley because the roadway elevates westward from its touchdown at Campbell Street. Although the alley is not shaded when the sun is at solar noon, buildings along the West Grand Avenue alley cast shadows in the afternoon, leaving the alley mostly shaded. Although Lyft has invested in improving the visual quality of the buildings associated with its facility (e.g., by painting the warehouses and operations building and planting trees along the sidewalk), this portion of the Project remains visually degraded. This is because of a lack of maintenance for the remaining sidewalks and roadsides; tall weeds, trash, and graffiti are common. However, the elevated portion of West Grand Avenue offers highly channelized views of the East Bay Hills to the east.

Mandela Parkway extends in a north-south direction with a wide median in the middle. Although not a designated park, the Mandela Parkway median is designated open space extending 1.25 miles, between 32nd Street on the north to 8th Street on the south. Mandela Parkway provides an attractive parkscape in highly industrialized setting. It features a wide bicycle/pedestrian path, manicured lawns, maintained shrubs and trees, ornamental light fixtures, benches, and drinking fountains (**Figure 11e, Photo 10**). As shown on **Figure 11f, Photo 11**, Mandela Parkway also serves as a spur of the Bay Trail. Mandela Parkway is owned and operated by the City of Oakland Parks and Recreation Department.

The sidewalks and center median of West Grand Avenue, between Campbell Street and Mandela Parkway, are landscaped with street trees and ornamental grasses, as shown in Photo 9. Views toward the Project area are available from Mandela Parkway, as viewers briefly pass by the West Grand Avenue roadway corridor. However, trees along Mandela Parkway and West Grand Avenue would allow for only partial views of the Link as it descends along West Grand Avenue and touches down at Campbell Street. Views of the elevated structures west of this point are associated with West Grand Avenue and I-880.

Lastly, although not currently built, the 2011–2195 Wood Street project would construct a multi-level, mixed-use development with 235 residential units, if the project moves forward. That project would be constructed between Frontage Road, West Grand Avenue, and Wood Street where West Grand Avenue is elevated and introduce additional residential and commercial viewers (City of Oakland 2021a; Japlot 2020).

Overall, the Project vicinity is highly industrialized and composed of large parcels of land with substantial paved surfaces, aerial transportation structures and concrete pillars with graffiti, utility poles and lights, and ruderal vegetation (with the exception of Mandela Parkway and the landscaped block of West Grand Avenue). The vividness of the Project vicinity is low, intactness is moderate, and unity is low to moderate. The resulting visual quality is moderately low.

Regulatory Setting

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines currently require a project in an urbanized area to analyze whether it would conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality or, if located in a non-urbanized area, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. The Project would be located entirely within an urbanized area. Therefore, a regulatory setting has been added to this VIA. No rural areas would be affected by the Project.

Federal and State

There are no roadways within or near the Project area that are designated in federal or state plans as a scenic highway or route worthy of protection for maintaining and enhancing scenic viewsheds. The segment of I-80 passing near the Project area is an eligible state scenic highway but is not officially designated (Caltrans 2019). No other state regulations apply to visual resources within the Project area.

Regional and Local

City of Oakland General Plan

Land Use and Transportation Element

The City of Oakland (City) General Plan, Land Use and Transportation Element (City of Oakland 1998), contains the following policies relevant to the Project and aesthetics:

Policy I/C4.1 Protecting Existing Activities. Existing industrial, residential, and commercial activities and areas that are consistent with long-term land use plans for the City should be protected from the intrusion of potentially incompatible land uses.

Policy T3.5 Including Bikeways and Pedestrian Walks. The City should include bikeways and pedestrian walks in the planning of new, reconstructed, or realized streets, wherever possible.

Policy T6.2 Improving Streetscapes. The City should make major efforts to improve the visual quality of streetscapes. Design of the streetscape, particularly in neighborhoods and commercial centers, should be pedestrian oriented and include lighting, directional signs, trees, benches, and other support facilities.

Policy T6.3 Making the Waterfront Accessible. The waterfront should be made accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists throughout Oakland.

Policy T6.5 Protecting Scenic Routes. The City should protect and encourage enhancement of the distinctive character of scenic routes within the city through prohibition of billboards, design review, and other means.

Policy N9.5 Marking Significant Sites. Identify locations of interest and historic significance by markers, signs, public art, landscape, installations, or by other means.

Policy N10.1 Identifying Neighborhood “Activity Centers.” Neighborhood Activity Centers should become identifiable commercial, activity, and communication centers for the surrounding neighborhood. The physical design of neighborhood activity centers should support social interaction and attract persons to the area. Some of the attributes that may facilitate this interaction include plazas, pocket parks, outdoor seating on public and private property, ample sidewalk width, street amenities such as trash cans and benches, and attractive landscaping.

Policy N12.4 Undergrounding Utility Lines. Electrical, telephone, and related distribution lines should be undergrounded in commercial and residential areas, except where special local conditions such as limited visibility of the poles and wires make this unneeded. They should also be underground in appropriate institutional, industrial, and other areas and generally along freeways, scenic routes, and heavily traveled streets. Programs should lead systematically toward the eventual undergrounding of all existing lines in such places. Where significant utility extensions are taking place in these areas, such as in new subdivisions, utilities should be installed underground from the start.

Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element

The City of Oakland General Plan, Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element (OSCAR) (City of Oakland 1996), contains the following policies relevant to the Project and aesthetics:

Policy OS-2.1: Protection of Park Open Space. Manage Oakland’s urban parks to protect and enhance their open space character while accommodating a wide range of outdoor recreational activities.

Policy OS-2.6: Street Closures for Parks, Plazas, and Gardens. Where there is broad community and local support and where legally permissible, allow local street closures as a way of creating new parks, plazas, and garden sites in urban neighborhoods.

Policy OS-3.6: Open Space Buffers along Freeways. Maintain existing open space buffers along Oakland’s freeways to absorb noise and emissions and enhance the scenic quality of the roadways. Manage steeply sloping or wooded parcels adjacent to highways owned by the State of California (Caltrans) to conserve natural resources and protect open space. Where compatible with adjacent land uses, support the use of land along, under, or over freeways in urban settings for greenbelts, recreation, public art, or other activities that enhance the usefulness and appearance of such land.

Policy OS-5.1: Priorities for Trail Improvement. Improve trail connections within Oakland, emphasizing connections between the flatlands and the hill and shoreline parks, lateral trail connections between the hill-area parks, and trails along the waterfront.

Policy OS-5.2: Joint Use of Rights-of-Way. Promote the development of linear parks or trails within utility or transportation corridors, including transmission line rights-of-way, abandoned railroad rights-of-way, and areas under the elevated BART [Bay Area Rapid Transit] tracks.

Policy OS-5.3: Trail Design Principles. Plan and design all new trails in a manner that (a) minimizes environmental impacts, (b) fully considers neighbor privacy and security issues, (c) involves the local community in alignment and design, and (d) considers the needs of multiple users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and those in wheelchairs.

Policy OS-7.5: Lateral Access and Links to the Flatlands. Improve lateral access along the Oakland shoreline and linkages between the shoreline and nearby neighborhoods by creating a “Bay Trail” along the length of the Oakland waterfront. Where an alignment immediately along the waterfront is not possible, site the trail as close to the water as possible, with spur trails leading to the water’s edge. In the transitional areas between Jack London Square and High Street, interim alignments may be designated along local streets, but the ultimate goal should be an unbroken trail along the water’s edge between Jack London Square and Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline.

Policy OS-9.2: Use of Natural Features to Define Communities. Use open space and natural features to define city and neighborhood edges and give communities within Oakland a stronger sense of identity. Maintain and enhance city edges, including the greenbelt on the eastern edge of the city, the shoreline, and San Leandro Creek. Use creeks, parks, and topographical features to help define neighborhood edges and create neighborhood focal points.

Policy OS-9.3: Gateway Improvements. Enhance neighborhood and city identity by maintaining or creating gateways. Maintain view corridors and enhance the sense of arrival at the major entrances to the city, including freeways, BART lines, and the airport entry. Use public art, landscaping, and signage to create stronger city and neighborhood gateways.

Policy OS-10.1: View Protection. Protect the character of existing scenic views in Oakland, paying particular attention to (a) views of the Oakland Hills from the flatlands, (b) views of downtown and Lake Merritt, (c) views of the shoreline, and (d) panoramic views from Skyline Boulevard, Grizzly Peak Road, and other hillside locations.

Policy OS-10.2: Minimizing Adverse Visual Impacts. Encourage site planning for new development that minimizes adverse visual impacts and takes advantage of opportunities for new vistas and scenic enhancement.

Policy OS-10.3: Underutilized Visual Resources. Enhance Oakland’s underutilized visual resources, including the waterfront, creeks, San Leandro Bay, architecturally significant buildings or landmarks, and major thoroughfares.

Policy OS-10.4: Retention of City-Owned Open Space in Scenic Corridors. Retain City-owned parcels adjacent to Skyline Boulevard, Shepherd Canyon Road, and other scenic roadways to preserve panoramic views, vegetation, and natural character.

Policy OS-11.3: Public Art Requirements. Continue to require public art as a part of new public buildings or facilities. Consider expanding the requirement or creating voluntary incentives to private buildings with substantial public spaces.

Policy OS-11.4: Siting Public Art. Site public art with sensitivity to its surroundings. Locate public art in a manner that does not reduce useable open space in City parks or impede recreational activities.

Policy OS-12.1: Street Tree Selection. Incorporate a broad and varied range of tree species, which are reflected on a City-maintained list of approved trees. Street tree selection should respond to the general

environmental conditions at the planting site, including climate and micro-climate, soil types, topography, existing tree planting, maintenance of adequate distance between street trees and other features, the character of existing development, and the size and context of the tree planting area.

Policy OS-12.3: Street Tree Removal. Remove street trees only if they are hazardous, severely and incurably infested with insects or blight, or are severely and irreversibly damaged and deformed. Provide replacement trees in all cases where the site is suitable for street trees.

Policy CO-4.2: Landscaping with Drought-Tolerant Plants. Require use of drought-tolerant plants to the greatest extent possible and encourage the use of irrigation systems that minimize water consumption.

Policy CO-7.4: Tree Removal. Discourage the removal of large trees on already-developed sites unless removal is required for biological, public safety, or public works reasons.

Policy REC-3.3: Park Location Factors. Consider a range of factors when locating new parks or recreational facilities, including local recreational needs, projected operating and maintenance costs, budgetary constraints, surrounding land uses, citizen wishes, accessibility, the need to protect or enhance a historic resource, and site visibility.

Policy REC-6.3: Use of Surplus or Underutilized Properties. In areas where park deficiencies exist, pursue recreational use of open space at surplus schools, military bases, utility and watershed properties, and transmission and transportation corridors. Recreational uses in such locations should not conflict with the functional use of the property and should be compatible with prevailing environmental conditions.

Policy REC-7.6: Recognition of Local History. Promote programs, events, and markers at local parks that increase public awareness of local history and provide a sense of continuity with the past.

West Oakland Planning Area Strategy

The West Oakland Planning Area Strategy within the OSCAR recommends the following that can improve visual access:

- Improve access to the shoreline. This should include construction of the Bay Trail, along with spur trails along Maritime and Seventh Street/Middle Harbor Road.
- Where feasible, incorporate connections (arcades, landscaped easements, etc.) to parks in West Oakland (DeFremery, Lowell, Raimondi) as old industrial sites along Mandela Parkway are redeveloped.
- Continue street tree planting efforts and other programs to “green” West Oakland.

Scenic Highways Element

As described in the Scenic Highways Element (City of Oakland 1974), the MacArthur Freeway scenic corridor is a City-designated scenic route from the San Leandro city limits to the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge approach. Although I-580 is also known as the MacArthur Freeway, the City-designated scenic route includes a segment of I-80 from its intersection with I-580 to the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge approach (refer to Map 2 in the Scenic Highways Element). The Scenic Highways Element contains the following policies pertaining to aesthetic resources:

General Policy 2. All or portions of visually significant trafficways are eligible for future designation as scenic routes and for the protective restrictions that may be appropriate thereto.

General Policy 3. Urban development should be related sensitively to the natural setting.

General Policy 4. High standards for preserving and enhancing natural landforms and vegetation should be established and maintained to regulate all activities related to earthwork and the removal of trees, shrubs, or ground cover.

General Policy 5. Budgets for street improvements will, as a matter of course, include items for landscaping and tree planting, and the City budget should reflect the need for continued maintenance.

General Policy 6. Overhead utilities should be undergrounded along all freeways, scenic routes, and major streets. Programs should be developed to increase the present rate of undergrounding for existing overhead utilities.

General Policy 7. Billboards should be prohibited, and other signs should be controlled along freeways and parkways.

MacArthur Freeway Policy 1. The signs within the scenic corridor that are visible from the freeway should be for identification purposes only; no advertising should be permitted.

MacArthur Freeway Policy 2. Visual intrusions within the scenic corridor should be removed, converted, buffered, or screened from the motorist's view.

MacArthur Freeway Policy 3. Panoramic vistas and interesting views now available to the motorist should not be obliterated by new structures.

MacArthur Freeway Policy 4. New construction within the scenic corridor should demonstrate architectural merit and a harmonious relationship with the surrounding landscape.

City of Oakland Standard Conditions of Approval

The City of Oakland's adopted *Conditions of Approval and Uniformly Applied Development Standards Imposed as Standard Conditions of Approval* (SCA) includes general conditions of approval for all projects, general conditions for major permits, and uniformly applied development standards, which are imposed as standard conditions of approval (City of Oakland 2020). The SCA below may be considered relevant because the Project would be subject to trash and blight removal and graffiti control. In addition, the Project includes landscaping and new exterior lighting along the Link and in the Wood Street parking lot.

16. Trash and Blight Removal. The project applicant and their successors shall maintain the property free of blight, as defined in chapter 8.24 of the Oakland Municipal Code. For nonresidential and multifamily residential projects, the project applicant shall install and maintain trash receptacles near public entryways as needed to provide sufficient capacity for building users.

17. Graffiti Control.

- a. During construction and operation of the project, the project applicant shall incorporate best management practices reasonably related to the control of graffiti and/or the mitigation of the impacts of graffiti. Such best management practices may include, without limitation:
 - i. Installation and maintenance of landscaping to discourage defacement of and/or protect likely graffiti-attracting surfaces.
 - ii. Installation and maintenance of lighting to protect likely graffiti-attracting surfaces.
 - iii. Use of paint with anti-graffiti coating.
 - iv. Incorporation of architectural or design elements or features to discourage graffiti defacement in accordance with the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

- v. Other practices approved by the City to deter, protect, or reduce the potential for graffiti defacement.
- b. The project applicant shall remove graffiti by appropriate means within seventy-two (72) hours. Appropriate means include the following:
 - i. Removal through scrubbing, washing, sanding, and/or scraping (or similar method) without damaging the surface and without discharging wash water or cleaning detergents into the City storm drain system.
 - ii. Covering with new paint to match the color of the surrounding surface.
 - iii. Replacing with new surfacing (with City permits if required).

18. Landscape Plan.

- a. *Landscape Plan Required.* The project applicant shall submit a final Landscape Plan for City review and approval that is consistent with the approved Landscape Plan. The Landscape Plan shall be included with the set of drawings submitted for the construction-related permit and shall comply with the landscape requirements of chapter 17.124 of the Planning Code. Proposed plants shall be predominantly drought-tolerant species. Specification of any street trees shall comply with the Master Street Tree List and Tree Planting Guidelines, which can be viewed at <http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oakca1/groups/pwa/documents/report/oak042662.pdf> and <http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oakca1/groups/pwa/documents/form/oak025595.pdf>, respectively, and with any applicable streetscape plan.
- b. *Landscape Installation.* The project applicant shall implement the approved Landscape Plan unless a bond, cash deposit, letter of credit, or other equivalent instrument acceptable to the Director of City Planning, is provided. The financial instrument shall equal the greater of \$2,500 or the estimated cost of implementing the Landscape Plan, based on a licensed contractor’s bid.
- c. *Landscape Maintenance.* All required planting shall be permanently maintained in good growing condition and, whenever necessary, replaced with new plant materials to ensure continued compliance with applicable landscaping requirements. The property owner shall be responsible for maintaining planting in adjacent public rights-of-way. All required fences, walls, and irrigation systems shall be permanently maintained in good condition and, whenever necessary, repaired or replaced.

19. Lighting Plan. Proposed new exterior lighting fixtures shall be adequately shielded to a point below the light bulb and reflector to prevent unnecessary glare onto adjacent properties.

City of Oakland Outdoor Lighting Standards

The City of Oakland’s adopted *Outdoor Lighting Standards* provides lighting design and specification standards for private development projects on public right of ways or City properties. The standards direct that “all lighting equipment used in the City of Oakland will be standardized for energy efficiency, low glare and light pollution features, and the effective operation and maintenance of the lighting system City-wide” (Section D, *Lighting Equipment Guide*). In addition, Section C of the standards, Reduce Glare and Light Pollution, includes the following measures, which prevent light pollution from up-lighting (City of Oakland 2021b):

1. Forbid the installation of luminaries with open bulbs.
2. Use up-light limiting shields to minimize up-light components. The shields will direct the lights to the roadways.

3. Use Light Emitting Diode (LED) up-light because it is not as powerful as other sources of light.
4. Use full-cut-off luminaires wherever such equipment is available. Use semi-cut-off luminaires if the full-cut-off luminaires are not available.
5. Forbid the lighting of building facade.
6. Forbid the use of decorating lighting, and lighting for signs, billboards, etc.

Port of Oakland Exterior Lighting Policy

The Port of Oakland's *Exterior Lighting Policy* prescribes measures to prevent light pollution from development and operations in all areas under the jurisdiction of the Port. The General Mitigation Measures and Practices of the policy identify that the "Design of exterior lighting shall generally follow Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA)- *Recommended Lighting Levels for Exterior Lighting*. The *Dark-Sky Association* further recommends that lighting designers minimize illumination levels, pole height and spacing, glare, lighting system depreciation and life-cycle cost. Additionally, lighting pollution mitigation measures include specifying full cutoff light fixtures, horizontally oriented lamps (bulb), and low-reflectivity architectural surfaces.

IV. VISUAL RESOURCES AND RESOURCE CHANGE

Visual resources of the Project setting are defined and identified below by assessing *visual character* and *visual quality* in the Project corridor. *Resource change* is assessed by evaluating the visual character and the visual quality of the visual resources that comprise the Project corridor before and after the construction of the proposed Project.

The visual character of the proposed Project would be compatible with the existing visual character of the corridor. The Link structure would be of similar height and made of similar materials to the many elevated roadways in the vicinity but would be narrower with less substantial support columns. Because of the predominance of similar transportation structures and materials, it is anticipated that the Link would blend very well with the existing visual landscape in terms of form, line, color, texture.

The proposed Project would not alter the visual quality of the existing corridor. The Project vicinity is highly industrialized and composed of large parcels of land with substantial paved surfaces, aerial transportation structures and concrete pillars with graffiti, utility poles and lights, and ruderal vegetation (with the exception of Mandela Parkway and the landscaped block of West Grand Avenue). The vividness of the Project vicinity is low, intactness is moderate, and unity is low to moderate. The resulting visual quality is moderately low. After the proposed Project is built, the existing visual quality of the Project area would remain the same if not improved by Project features that would beautify West Grand Avenue and provide access to views for recreationists.

Therefore, Resource Change (changes to visual resources as measured by changes in visual character and visual quality) would be low.

V. VIEWERS AND VIEWER RESPONSE

Neighbors (people with views to the road) and *highway and roadway users* (people with views from the road) would not be affected by the proposed Project. Neighbors include workers and visitors of the Port and other businesses in the vicinity and recreationists (pedestrians/joggers/bicyclists) using Mandela Parkway and other local surface streets and sidewalks. A virtual public meeting was conducted on December 17, 2020, for the Project; email comment-card submissions received from the public during this process express positive support for the Project (BATA 2020). Therefore, it is determined that

neighbors would have low sensitivity due to focus on work activities and limited availability of extended views of the Project site. Recreationists would have moderate-low sensitivity to changes resulting from the Project because while Mandela Parkway offers a pleasant viewer experience, recreational viewers are transient through the parkway, do not spend extended times there, and pass by the Project area fairly quickly. Recreational viewers on local roadways are also transient. Highway and roadway users include travelers on freeways and local roadways in the vicinity that would have low sensitivity to changes resulting from the proposed Project due to the focus on driving in an area with complex driving patterns, at higher rates of speed and with limited availability of extended views of the Project site. It is anticipated that the average response of all viewer groups would be low.

VI. VISUAL IMPACT

Visual impacts are determined by assessing changes to the visual resources and predicting viewer response to those changes. There are no officially designated state scenic routes in or around the Project area that would be affected by the Project, and thus there would be no impact. However, I-80 west of the MacArthur Maze is an eligible state scenic highway.

Construction

Construction of the Project would occur in an industrial area that lacks highly sensitive viewers. It would occur between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday, over a 2-year period of time. Therefore, construction would occur during daylight hours, would not require disruptive high intensity lighting for nighttime construction, would be short-term and temporary in nature, and would not affect sensitive viewers. Temporary construction impacts would also be experienced by recreational viewers who use the Bay Trail connection to Burma Road during construction of the Segment 4 switchback and Segment 5 connection to the Bay Trail (see **Figure 8a**). Viewers would see heavy equipment, the erection of falsework, and construction of the switchback and touchdown. No closures would be anticipated to construct the Link connection and touchdown to the Bay Trail. However, recreational viewers would either be restricted from using the Bay Trail connection to Burma Road for a short period of time or, to avoid trail closures, be rerouted to the adjacent paved roadway with a temporary trail realignment during construction of the temporary falsework for the switchback. Trail closures, if needed, would be minimized and all efforts would be made to keep the trail operationally safe at all times. Visual impacts resulting from Project construction would be low.

Visual Character

The existing visual character of the Project vicinity would not be degraded or substantially altered by the Project. As noted in the project description, the final design process would include community workshops to solicit community input on Project aesthetics and landscaping, ensuring that the Project would incorporate design elements desired by the community. This would instill a feeling of pride and Project ownership and ensure that the Project would reflect the values and character of the community. The Project would introduce an elevated structure adjacent to West Grand Avenue, as shown on **Figures 4 through 8**. This structure would be made of similar materials to the many elevated roadways in the vicinity, but would be narrower with less substantial support columns, as seen on **Figure 12, Simulation 1**. Because of the predominance of similar transportation structures and materials, it is anticipated that the Link would blend very well with the existing visual landscape in an area lacking highly sensitive viewers. The Project would also include 8-foot high fencing. The type of fencing has not been determined, but it is likely to be chain-link fencing along West Grand Avenue crossing over the railroad tracks. Fencing along other segments may be white, if community input is favorable, to create a sense of connectivity and tie into the theme of the fencing along the Bay Trail. Although fencing may vary slightly

Simulation 1



Existing Conditions. View of West Grand Avenue from Maritime Street.



Simulated Conditions.

Figure 12

in type, fencing along roadways, as well as the Bay Trail, is a common visual feature in the vicinity, including West Grand Avenue and elevated transportation structures. Therefore, fencing is a pre-existing visual condition, and the proposed fencing would not be different enough to stand out, visually, and contrast with the existing visual environment.

Link Segment 1, between Mandela Parkway and the West Grand Avenue overcrossing, may result in the removal of some of the existing landscaping associated with the sidewalks, as seen on **Figure 13, Simulation 2**. However, this would be minimized to the degree possible. As seen on **Figure 14, Simulation 3**, which is from the same vantage point as Simulation 2, a seat wall may be constructed as a design alternative. As seen in Simulations 2 and 3, the final design of the landscaping, seat wall, and signage may vary; however, the proposed landscaping would help retain the existing visual character, regardless of the variance. In addition, landscaping would help improve views from within the Peralta building by softening the visible landscape outside. Landscaping would also help improve views of the building by providing aesthetic appeal through a unified design, with greater separation between the building and the busy roadway. The City would review the final landscaping plans for compliance with City permit requirements with respect to tree type, spacing, setback, and required maintenance. It may also be perceived as an improvement to visual conditions for recreationists, nearby businesses, roadway travelers, and businesses and residents inside the Peralta building because signage at the Link entry, the Link itself, and new landscaping would contribute to a sense of place and destination in an area that is not currently very pedestrian friendly. New signage and striping for wayfinding would be similar to existing signage in the Project area, including Bay Trail Signage associated with Mandela Parkway. The Link may be painted green for safety; and although the green markings on the roadway would slightly stand out, it would not reduce the existing visual character of the industrial and commercial environment but would make the area more pedestrian friendly. Lookout areas along the elevated portions of the Link would not stand out as a visually separate structure from the Link segments, and associated landscaping would soften the visual appearance of an area that is dominated by hardscape and large, elevated transportation structures.

Views of the Link Segment 1 from Mandela Parkway are the most sensitive and would be minimally affected by the Project, as illustrated in Simulations 2 and 3 and described above. Link Segment 1 would be the most visible and result in limited visual changes. The primary changes that would be visible would be the at-grade portions of the Link, new landscaping in the medians, and minimal removal of existing sidewalk streetscape (i.e., existing trees that might be removed because of the Project). This portion of roadway is already paved so that the Link would not greatly alter the appearance of the view or increase the amount of pavement. The landscape median associated with Segment 1 would provide a visual separation between the roadway and Link and would reduce the available roadway width for vehicular traffic, as shown in the simulations. However, it would aid in further softening and improving the visual appearance of this portion of West Grand Avenue, in combination with the existing streetscape, and reduce the appearance of any streetscape removed as a result of the Project at this location. Overall, the changes at the point of connection to Mandela Parkway, an area where there is a higher concentration of residential, recreational, and commercial viewers, are likely to be viewed positively by the community and adjacent neighbors, especially because the final design process would include community workshops to solicit community input on Project aesthetics and landscaping. This would ensure that the Project would incorporate design elements that reflect the values and character desired by the community, which would instill a feeling of pride and Project ownership.

Views of the Link Segments 2 through 5 from Mandela Parkway would be limited and obscured by the existing streetscape and proposed median associated with Segment 1. Only glimpses of the elevated Link structure would be available as recreational viewers pass through Mandela Parkway because the

Simulation 2



Existing Conditions. View westward of West Grand Avenue from Mandela Parkway.



Simulated Conditions.

Note: Figures 13 and 14 show the types of landscaping and signage under consideration.

Figure 13

Simulation 3



Existing Conditions. View westward of West Grand Avenue from Mandela Parkway.



Simulated Conditions.

Note: Figures 13 and 14 show the types of landscaping and signage under consideration.

Figure 14

structure would blend with the existing visual environment. Therefore, viewers most likely would not focus on the structure in passing.

Views of Segment 2, in the area where the elevated structure starts to ramp up from the end of Segment 1, would not greatly affect neighboring viewers. As seen on **Figure 15, Simulation 4**, buildings located immediately next to Segment 2, south of West Grand Avenue, include large warehouse structures that do not have windows that face the Project. Businesses north of West Grand Avenue also do not have windows that face the Project. Furthermore, these businesses have privacy fencing that limits views to the Project or limited ground-level views because of the elevated West Grand Avenue. Therefore, businesses to the north would have limited or no views of the Link. The primary viewers who would see the new elevated Link would be those in the Lyft Oakland Hub parking lot along West Grand Avenue, pedestrians on adjacent sidewalks, and roadway users. As seen on **Figure 15, Simulation 4**, the Link would not detract from views and would appear to be a visual extension of West Grand Avenue. The Link would result in closure of the West Grand Avenue alley; Willow Street would dead-end into the structure, although sidewalk access would be retained for pedestrians. However, as seen on **Figure 15, Simulation 4, and Figure 16, Simulation 5**, the new structure would be in keeping with the existing structure that elevates West Grand Avenue, cover up the existing graffiti, and remove a section of the alley between Willow Street and Wood Street where illegal dumping occurs. As described above, viewers would not be negatively affected by the Project because community design input would ensure that the Project would incorporate design elements that reflect the values and character desired by the community, which would instill a feeling of pride and Project ownership. In addition, although not currently built, the 2011–2195 Wood Street project would construct a multi-level, mixed-use development with 235 residential units, if the project moves forward. That project would introduce additional residential and commercial viewers. This has the potential to affect future residences. However, residents would be aware of the Link and West Grand Avenue, which is already an elevated transportation structure, lit with overhead streetlights, and adjacent to the future development site. Therefore, it is not anticipated that residents would be negatively affected. Supplemental landscaping and artwork within Mandela Parkway would be beneficial, providing visual interest and enhancing the existing visual landscape at this location.

Link Segment 3 would travel over tracks (**Figure 6**). As seen on **Figure 17, Simulation 6**, the Link would not detract from views and would appear to be a visual extension of West Grand Avenue from most locations, as seen on **Figure 15, Simulation 4**. The pathway would blend very well with the existing environment, even with white fencing, which tends to attract views. Furthermore, the pathway would not detract from the existing visual character and quality of views along the roadways. Travelers and pedestrians on Frontage Road and West Grand Avenue would not experience a notable difference in views. In addition, pedestrians along West Grand Avenue would be able to use the pathway, which would be a safer travel route and most likely perceived to be beneficial.

Link Segment 4 could include access ramps on the east and/or west side of Maritime Street (**Figures 3 and 7**). As seen on **Figure 12, Simulation 1**, the ramp on the east side of Maritime Street would introduce a new structure into the viewshed, but views from this vantage point would not be greatly affected because trees along Maritime Street block much of the view of the ramp. Therefore, the ramp would not stand out in this view. In addition, this area is already dominated by transportation structures and industrial uses. The new ramp would add a similar visual element to this view and would not greatly alter or degrade existing views. The same would be true of a ramp on the west side of Maritime Street. Link Segment 4 would also include a switchback ramp that would connect to the touchdown at Segment 5, which ends at the Bay Trail. As seen on **Figure 18, Simulation 7**, the Link switchback and touchdown would not detract from views because this area is already dominated by transportation

Simulation 4



Existing Conditions. View of warehouse on West Grand Avenue alley.



Simulated Conditions.

Figure 15

Simulation 5



Existing Conditions. View of West Grand Avenue alley from Willow Street.



Simulated Conditions.

Figure 16

Simulation 6



Existing Conditions. View of West Grand Avenue from Frontage Road.



Simulated Conditions.

Figure 17

Simulation 7



Existing Conditions. View northward from Burma Road.



Simulated Conditions.

Figure 18

structures and industrial uses. The scale of the Link structure would be smaller than that of the surrounding freeway infrastructure. However, the new structure would be similar in form and color and therefore in keeping with existing elevated transportation structures in the area. The addition of this new structure would not detract from views seen by recreationists, roadway travelers, or people within businesses in the area. Lastly, as seen on **Figure 19, Simulation 8**, the Link switchback and touchdown would not greatly alter views from I-80. Although the structure would be visible, it would be part of a view that is dominated by freeway infrastructure and industrial land uses in an area that is undergoing extensive redevelopment, which travelers along I-80 are accustomed to seeing. In addition, travelers along I-80 would pass by the Link at a high rate of speed. This segment of the freeway requires considerable attention because of merging traffic patterns. Therefore, views would be fleeting

The Class II bike lanes on local surface streets would not greatly affect the visual environment because they would blend and appear as a visual extension of the roadways on which they are constructed. The cul-de-sac at Willow Street and bollards at Campbell Street would limit vehicular access but would not greatly alter the visual environment because dead-ends are common in the Project vicinity and because of the availability of alternate routes.

The Wood Street parking lot would also not greatly affect the visual environment. This area is covered with ruderal vegetation and surrounded by elevated transportation structures, paved roadways, utility infrastructure, warehouses, and lacking sensitive viewers (refer to Photo 7). Landscaping would be beneficial because trees would provide visual interest and shade in an area that is currently very exposed, improving aesthetics in this industrial location.

Therefore, overall visual impacts of the Project on the existing visual character and quality of the Project area would be low, if not beneficial.

Consistency with Regulations Governing Scenic Quality in an Urbanized Area

As described above, the existing visual character of the Project vicinity would not be degraded or substantially altered by the Project. The Project would introduce an elevated structure adjacent to West Grand Avenue. The structure would be made of materials similar to those used on the many elevated roadways in the vicinity and would blend well with the existing visual landscape in an area, which lacks highly sensitive viewers. Class II bike lanes on local surface streets would not greatly affect the visual environment because they would appear as a visual extension of the roadways on which they are constructed. Some existing landscaping in the Project area may be removed, but removals would be minimized to the degree possible. In addition, proposed landscaping would aid in retaining the existing visual character, even though the final design of the landscaping (e.g., inclusion of a seat wall and signage options) may change. Supplemental landscaping and landscape features (e.g., signage, seat wall, artwork) would improve the visual appearance of the Project area, in combination with the existing streetscape, and reduce the appearance of any streetscape removed as a result of the Project. Supplemental landscaping and landscape features may also be perceived as beneficial because signage at the Link entry, the Link itself, and new landscaping would provide visual interest, contribute to a creating a sense of place and destination, and enhance the existing visual landscape of the Project area. Green pavement markings, delineating the pathway, would not reduce the existing visual character of the industrial and commercial environment but instead make the area more pedestrian friendly. Lookout areas along the elevated portions of the Link would not stand out as visually separate structures from the Link segments, and associated landscaping would soften the visual appearance of areas that are dominated by hardscape and elevated transportation structures.

The proposed ramp on the east side of Maritime Street would introduce a new structure into the viewshed, but views from this area are already dominated by transportation structures and industrial

Simulation 8



Existing Conditions. View eastward from I-80.



Simulated Conditions.

Figure 19

uses. The proposed fencing would not be different enough to stand out visually and contrast with the existing visual environment (fencing is a pre-existing visual condition). Operation and maintenance would preserve the visual quality of the Link and would not introduce discordant visual elements. The Link would not result in notable changes in views from local scenic roadways. Trash removal would aid in improving portions of the Project area. Therefore, overall visual changes to the existing visual character and quality of the Project area would be low, if not beneficial, and would provide a linkage to the Bay Trail, Bay Bridge, and shoreline areas. As a result, the proposed Project is highly compatible with local regulations governing scenic quality set forth in the City's General Plan.

The proposed Project includes bikeways and pedestrian walks (Policy T3.5). Existing utilities are already underground (Policy N12.4) in much of this area, and the proposed Project does not propose aboveground utilities. The design of the proposed Project and effects on the existing visual character and quality of the site, summarized above from the 2015 VIA, ensure that the proposed Project would protect existing activities (City of Oakland General Plan Policy I/C4.1), improve streetscapes (Policy T6.2), make the waterfront accessible (Policy T6.3), protect scenic routes (Policy T6.5), mark significant sites (Policy N9.5), and support neighborhood "activity centers" (Policy N10.1). Therefore, the proposed Project would not conflict with the Land Use and Transportation Element of the City's General Plan.

The proposed Project would protect park open space (City of Oakland General Plan Policy OS-2.1), and local street closures would aid in creating a linear parkway (Policy OS-2.6). Furthermore, the Project would maintain open space buffers along freeways (Policy OS-3.6), improve trail connections within Oakland (Policy OS-5.1), use joint rights-of-way (Policy OS-5.2), follow the City's trail design principles (Policy OS-5.3), improve lateral access and linkages to the Oakland shoreline (Policy OS-7.5), maintain and enhance the city's edge (Policy OS-9.2), improve city gateways (Policy OS-9.3), protect the character of existing scenic views in Oakland (Policy OS-10.1), minimize adverse visual impacts (Policy OS-10.2), enhance Oakland's visual resources (Policy OS-10.3), retain City-owned open space in scenic corridors (Policy OS-10.4), include public art that would be sited appropriately (Policies OS-11.3 and OS-11.4), locate the Link in an appropriate area (Policy REC-3.3), make use of underutilized areas (Policy REC-6.3), and be respectful of local history (Policy REC-7.6). In addition, the City would review the proposed Project's final landscaping plans for compliance with City permit requirements with respect to tree type, spacing, setback, and required maintenance. This would ensure compliance with Policies OS-12.1, OS-12.3, CO-4.2, and CO-7.4. Therefore, the proposed Project would not conflict with the OSCAR Element of the City's General Plan. It would also be consistent with the West Oakland Planning Area Strategy within the OSCAR because the proposed Project would improve shoreline access, create connections to parks in West Oakland, and include street tree planting to help "green" the city.

Because the Link would be mostly obscured from view and would blend with views, where available, impacts on scenic highways would be low. Therefore, the proposed Project would not conflict with the Scenic Highways Element of the City's General Plan.

As with the original project evaluated in the 2015 VIA, the proposed Project is not anticipated to result in any impacts that would result in a substantial, adverse change in light and glare. In addition, the proposed Project would be required to comply with the City's and Port's lighting standards and policies. Therefore, the proposed Project would be consistent with standards and policies contained in the City of Oakland's adopted *Outdoor Lighting Standards* and the Port of Oakland's *Exterior Lighting Policy*.

Overall, the proposed Project would be compatible with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality and would not conflict with such zoning and regulations.

Scenic Vistas

Elevated vista views from West Grand Avenue are very limited, and most are industrial in nature and not considered scenic. There are scenic vista views near the West Grand Avenue intersection with I-80, which is located closer to the Bay, because there are views of the Bay and surrounding hills and city skylines. The Project would not impede vista views because the elevated segments of the Link are even with or slightly lower than West Grand Avenue (refer to the cross sections shown on **Figures 4, 6b, 7b, and 8b**). While Segment 2 is slightly higher than West Grand Avenue, as shown on **Figure 5b**, this portion of the roadway does not have scenic vista views. Where visible, the Link would blend with vista views available from roadways.

The Project would provide an elevated vantage where viewers can have vista views from the elevated portions of the Link, in safety, and pause to take in views. This experience is not currently provided along West Grand Avenue in the Project area because it is a very busy roadway. Therefore, overall visual impacts to the existing scenic vista views would also be low, if not beneficial.

Scenic Highways

In the Project area, I-80 is an eligible state scenic highway but is not officially designated. Therefore, there would be no impact to state scenic highways. Views of the Link from much of I-80 (eligible city scenic highway) would be obscured by elevated transportation structures and industrial uses. In particular, views of the Link from the eastbound lanes, which face the Link, are obscured by the West Grand Avenue/Maritime Street flyover, which is the horseshoe-shaped elevated structure extending from westbound I-80 to eastbound West Grand Avenue and Maritime Street. The Link would not be visible on approach from westbound lanes because West Grand Avenue would block views of the Link, which is located on the other side of the roadway. The Link could be somewhat visible from this flyover and from the eastbound I-80 connector ramp to I-880 southbound, but the views would be fleeting and somewhat obstructed. As seen on **Figure 19, Simulation 8**, the Link switchback and touchdown would not greatly alter views from I-80. Although the structure would be visible, it would be part of a view that is dominated by freeway infrastructure and industrial land uses in an area that is undergoing extensive redevelopment, which travelers along I-80 are accustomed to seeing. In addition, travelers along I-80 would pass by the Link at a high rate of speed. This segment of the freeway requires considerable attention because of merging traffic patterns. Therefore, views would be fleeting. An example of how the elevated Link would blend with existing roadways is shown in **Figure 12, Simulation 1** (View of West Grand Avenue from Maritime Street). Because the Link would be mostly obscured from view and blend with views, where available, impacts on scenic highways would be low.

sun is at solar noon, buildings along the West Grand Avenue alley cast shadows in the afternoon, leaving the alley mostly shaded.

Light and Glare

The Project would increase shade incrementally. As seen on **Figure 12, Simulation 1**, shade cast by the Link structure would not be discernable from existing shade cast by West Grand Avenue; this would be true along much of the Link. In the morning, West Grand Avenue casts a slight shadow on the West Grand Avenue alley as the roadway elevates westward from its touchdown at Campbell Street. As seen on **Figure 16, Simulation 5**, the Link structure would cast a slight shadow. However, although the alley is not shaded when the sun is at solar noon, buildings along the south side of the West Grand Avenue alley cast shadows in the afternoon, leaving the alley mostly shaded. As seen on **Figure 15, Simulations 4 and 5**, this would result in a situation where the Link would be shaded, just like the alley. Near its connection to the Bay Trail, the Link would cause shading because of the switchback structure. However, a large portion of the Bay Trail near the connection to Burma Road is already shaded because of elevated

roadway infrastructure that casts shadows on the trail. As seen on **Figure 18, Simulation 7**, the Link switchback would not be as tall as surrounding infrastructure and would cast a shadow on only a small area where it crosses the Bay Trail. Recreationists on the trail are accustomed to such shading; the trail is already shaded quite a bit in this area. Therefore, shading caused by the Link is considered to be negligible because of the shading caused by other transportation infrastructure and buildings in the area, as well as the nominal amount of shading caused by Link structures.

The Project would include low-level lighting along the Link that would be designed to prevent light pollution. West Grand Avenue currently has street lighting along much of its length in the Project area, and vehicle headlights also increase the amount of nighttime lighting. New low-level lighting associated with the Link would be negligible compared to existing conditions because it would be side mounted in the barrier along the elevated segments. The 1- to 2-foot-candles would light a 1- to 2-foot area, which would not be very noticeable to passing drivers.

The Project could also include some overhead lights at the top of the fencing along the elevated portions of the Link if deemed necessary for safety. Lighting along the at-grade portions of the Link and at the Wood Street parking lot would be provided by new or existing streetlights or pedestrian light standards. There is existing lighting along Wood Street and security lighting at nearby warehouses. Proposed overhead lighting and pedestrian light standards would constitute a minimal change in the amount of lighting introduced to the area, given the existing sources of light in the area. Proposed lighting at the parking lot would constitute a minimal change in the amount of lighting introduced to the area. Furthermore, the Project would be required to comply with the City of Oakland's adopted Outdoor Lighting Standards and the Port of Oakland's Exterior Lighting Policy, ensuring that impacts from lighting would be minimized. With these measures in place, it is not anticipated that future residents at 2011–2195 Wood Street would be negatively affected by lighting associated with the Project. The elevated transportation structure is lit with overhead LED streetlights that provide ample roadway lighting, which would be seen at the future development site. Project lighting would not substantially increase lighting beyond that created by the streetlights on West Grand Avenue. In addition, once trees mature, lighting would be screened and filtered by the trees' foliage.

Glare resulting from the Project would be negligible, as seen in all eight simulations, due to the predominance of pavement and hardscape features present in the Project vicinity. Similarly, shading introduced by the structure would be consistent with existing transportation structures and would result in a negligible increase in shading. The proposed vegetation would reduce glare. Therefore, impacts resulting from light and glare would be low.

VII. AVOIDANCE AND MINIMIZATION MEASURES

Avoidance or minimization measures have been identified and can lessen visual impacts caused by the Project. Also, the inclusion of aesthetic features in the Project design previously discussed can help generate public acceptance.

This section describes additional avoidance and/or minimization measures to address specific visual impacts. These will be designed and implemented with concurrence of the District Landscape Architect. No mitigation measures have been identified for the Project. The following avoidance or minimization measures, to minimize visual impacts, will be incorporated into the Project:

1. Community input will ultimately drive the design on aesthetics and finishes used for support columns, elevated structures, and retaining walls so that they incorporate design elements desired

by the community. However, at a minimum, Aa roughened, textured surface shall be used for support columns, elevated structures, and retaining walls. This will soften the verticality of surfaces by providing visual texture and will reduce the amount of smooth surfaces that can reflect light, reducing glare, and be attractive for graffiti. A different texture than the minimum requirement may be used if community input favors such a change.

2. Vegetation that is destroyed, damaged, or removed by the Project or through incidental construction activities will be replaced, irrigated, and maintained during a plant establishment period. The plant establishment period for plants installed as part of the Project will be 3 years (5 years for plants installed through mitigation). In addition, all disturbed areas shall be restored to their previous condition or better. Disturbed areas will be hydroseeded to blend the area into the surrounding context. In addition, tree and shrub planting may be feasible in disturbed areas, where necessary.

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Appendix A. Questionnaire to Determine Visual Impact Assessment Level

Questionnaire to Determine Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) Level

Use the following questions and subsequent score as a guide to help determine the appropriate level of VIA documentation. This questionnaire assists the VIA preparer (i.e. Landscape Architect) in estimating the probable visual impacts of a proposed project on the environment and in understanding the degree and breadth of the possible visual issues. The goal is to develop a suitable document strategy that is thorough, concise and defensible.

Enter the project name and consider each of the ten questions below. Select the response that most closely applies to the proposed project and corresponding number on the right side of the table. Points are automatically computed at the bottom of the table and the total score should be matched to one of the five groups of scores at the end of the questionnaire that include recommended levels of VIA study and associated annotated outlines (i.e., minor, moderate, advanced/complex).

This scoring system should be used as a preliminary guide and should not be used as a substitute for objective analysis on the part of the preparer. Although the total score may recommend a certain level of VIA document, circumstances associated with any one of the ten question-areas may indicate the need to elevate the VIA to a greater level of detail. For projects done by others on the State Highway System, the District Landscape Architect should be consulted when scoping the VIA level and provide concurrence on the level of analysis used.

Calculate VIA Level Score

PROJECT NAME: Gateway Bike Path	
CHANGE TO VISUAL ENVIRONMENT	
<p>1. Will the project result in a noticeable change in the physical characteristics of the existing environment?</p> <p><i>Consider all project components and construction impacts - both permanent and temporary, including landform changes, structures, noise barriers, vegetation removal, railing, signage, and contractor activities.</i></p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> Low Level of Change (1 point) ▼ </div>
<p>2. Will the project complement or contrast with the visual character desired by the community?</p> <p>Evaluate the scale and extent of the project features compared to the surrounding scale of the community. Is the project likely to give an urban appearance to an existing rural or suburban community? Do you anticipate that the change will be viewed by the public as positive or negative? Research planning documents, or talk with local planners and community representatives to understand the type of visual environment local residents envision for their community.</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> High Compatibility (1 point) ▼ </div>
<p>3. What level of local concern is there for the types of project features (e.g., bridge structures, large excavations, sound barriers, or median planting removal) and construction impacts that are proposed?</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> Moderate Concern (2 points) ▼ </div>

<p>Certain project improvements can be of special interest to local citizens, causing a heightened level of public concern, and requiring a more focused visual analysis.</p>	
<p>4. Will the project require redesign or realignment to minimize adverse change or will mitigation, such as landscape or architectural treatment, likely be necessary?</p> <p>Consider the type of changes caused by the project, i.e., can undesirable views be screened or will desirable views be permanently obscured so a redesign should be considered?</p>	<p>No Mitigation Likely (0 points) ▼</p>
<p>5. Will this project, when seen collectively with other projects, result in an aggregate adverse change (cumulative impacts) in overall visual quality or character?</p> <p>Identify any projects (both Caltrans and local) in the area that have been constructed in recent years and those currently planned for future construction. The window of time and the extent of area applicable to possible cumulative impacts should be based on a reasonable anticipation of the viewing public's perception.</p>	<p>Cumulative Impacts Unlikely to Occur (1 point) ▼</p>

VIEWER SENSITIVITY

<p>1. What is the potential that the project proposal will be controversial within the community, or opposed by any organized group?</p> <p>This can be researched initially by talking with Caltrans and local agency management and staff familiar with the affected community's sentiments as evidenced by past projects and/or current information.</p>	<p>Low Potential (1 point) ▼</p>
<p>2. How sensitive are potential viewer-groups likely to be regarding visible changes proposed by the project?</p> <p>Consider among other factors the number of viewers within the group, probable viewer expectations, activities, viewing duration, and orientation. The expected viewer sensitivity level may be scoped by applying professional judgment, and by soliciting information from other Caltrans staff, local agencies and community representatives familiar with the affected community's sentiments and demonstrated concerns.</p>	<p>Moderate Sensitivity (2 points) ▼</p>
<p>3. To what degree does the project's aesthetic approach appear to be consistent with applicable laws, ordinances, regulations, policies or standards?</p> <p>Although the State is not always required to comply</p>	

with local planning ordinances, these documents are critical in understanding the importance that communities place on aesthetic issues. The Caltrans Environmental Planning branch may have copies of the planning documents that pertain to the project. If not, this information can be obtained by contacting the local planning department. Also, many local and state planning documents can be found online at the [California Land Use Planning Network](#).

High Compatibility (1 point) ▼

4. Are permits going to be required by outside regulatory agencies (i.e., Federal, State, or local)?

Permit requirements can have an unintended consequence on the visual environment. Anticipated permits, as well as specific permit requirements - which are defined by the permitter, may be determined by talking with the project Environmental Planner and Project Engineer. Note: coordinate with the Caltrans representative responsible for obtaining the permit prior to communicating directly with any permitting agency.

Yes (3 points) ▼

5. Will the project sponsor or public benefit from a more detailed visual analysis in order to help reach consensus on a course of action to address potential visual impacts?

Consider the proposed project features, possible visual impacts, and probable mitigation recommendations.

Yes (3 points) ▼

Calculate Total

[It is recommended that you print a copy of these calculations for the project file.](#)

PROJECT SCORE: 15

Select An Outline Based Upon Project Score

The total score will indicate the recommended VIA level for the project. In addition to considering circumstances relating to any one of the ten questions-areas that would justify elevating the VIA level, also consider any other project factors that would have an affect on level selection.

SCORE 6-9

No noticeable physical changes to the environment are proposed and no further analysis is required. Print out a copy of this completed questionnaire for your project file or Preliminary Environmental Study (PES).

SCORE 10-14

A brief [Memorandum](#) (see sample) addressing visual issues and providing a rationale for why no formal analysis is required.

SCORE 15-19

An abbreviated VIA is appropriate in this case. The assessment would briefly describe project features, impacts and any avoidance and minimization measures. Visual simulations would be optional. Go to the [Directions](#) for using and accessing the VIA Annotated Outlines.

SCORE 20-24

A fully developed VIA is appropriate. This technical study will likely receive public review. Go to the [Directions](#) for using and accessing the VIA Annotated Outlines.

SCORE 25-30

A fully developed VIA is appropriate that includes photo simulations. It is appropriate to alert the Project Development Team to the potential for highly adverse impacts and to consider project alternatives to avoid those impacts. Go to the [Directions](#) for using and accessing the VIA Annotated Outlines.