

4.12 AESTHETICS/LIGHT and GLARE

4.12.1 Impacts of the Proposed Master Plan

Construction

Demolition and construction activities, including site clearing and grading, would be visible from nearby off-site residences and on-site residents east of 8th Avenue SW. Impacts would include dust and the visibility of construction equipment, stockpiles of materials, and overall redevelopment activities. Construction impacts would be temporarily and are not anticipated to be significant.

Operation

Visual Character and Continuity

Redevelopment under the Proposed Master Plan would result in changes to the community's visual character. These changes would be primarily related to an increased number of structures with greater intensity, bulk, scale, and height, with interspersed landscaping and open space. The overall change would be from one form of residential community to another form of residential community. Many elements of the change (e.g. building and site design) could be viewed as positive. However, some viewers could experience this change as adverse. As the project site is redeveloped through 2012, changes in visual quality would be experienced incrementally.

The Proposed Master Plan would provide a mix of single-family detached residences, cottages, townhouses over flats, attached townhouses, and apartment buildings. New buildings would predominately range from one to three stories in height. Three to four-story apartment complexes and two-story community facilities would be concentrated between 8th Avenue SW and 7th Avenue SW, at the central portion of the project site. This neighborhood core would combine denser housing with community services, recreation space, and limited commercial facilities. Building facades would be similar in appearance to those west of 8th (three to four stories). Building scale and mass would decrease as the distance from 8th becomes greater.

The Proposed Master Plan is intended to improve overall visual quality, including streetscapes, views, and open space (see Figure 2.6-3). Proposed street improvements, vacations and dedications would add greenery, soften edges, tie the community together visually, and contribute a sense of order. Approximately 1,950 trees would be planted along streets, alleys, parking lots, parks, and trails. Approximately 2,175 trees would be planted near residences. On-site landscaping would also include lawns and shrubs. Landscaping would complement the rolling topography of the project site and contribute to the overall visual continuity of project elements.

Viewer Groups and Views

Primary viewer groups include existing and future residents, residents adjacent to the project site, motorists and pedestrians using area roadways, and visitors. Most viewers would likely perceive the change from an older public housing development to a revitalized mixed-use

community as a positive change and visual improvement. Residents of upper story apartments and some townhouses would have territorial views of the Duwamish River Valley, foothills, and Cascade Mountains to the east. Territorial views from off-site locations would not be noticeable affected.

Due to the rolling topography of the area, the project site has the greatest visibility off-site from nearby residences north of SW Roxbury Street, south of SW 100th Street (between 11th Avenue SW and 8th Avenue SW), and from vehicles traveling on surrounding streets. As discussed below, and in *Section 4.9, Land Use and Socioeconomics*, Proposed Master Plan elements would be visually integrated with surrounding neighborhoods, Visual buffers would not be necessary and are not proposed.

The most intensive redevelopment (apartments and community facilities) would occur between 8th Avenue SW and 7th Avenue SW. The higher density, larger scale buildings in this area would be compatible with the adjacent three-story townhomes proposed along the west side of 8th Avenue SW. The apartments would be in visual contrast (i.e., large in scale) to the detached residences in the east portion of the project site. However, they would be separated by a significant distance, with buildings of decreasing scale in between them. The apartment complexes would be constructed in a style of architecture similar to other similar size residences and would be visually compatible. Views north and south along the central 8th Avenue SW corridor would include more street trees and landscaped areas. However, views in this area would be similar to existing conditions.

Townhomes would be located primarily west of 8th Avenue SW and would contribute to the visual variety of that area. The architectural design of townhomes would emphasize individuality among units. This visual distinction would be in noticeable contrast to existing residential units that consist primarily of one building style. Sidewalks in front of townhomes would either curve or provide straight paths to accentuate the individuality of units.

Detached housing and cottages would be located primarily east of 4th Avenue SW. Typical single-family detached housing and cottages would be designed to emphasize architectural variety. Low fences at the alley side lot lines would allow for visual definition of yards and landscaped areas. Common open spaces would include walkways to adjacent homes. Open spaces would also be provided between residences and the elementary school. A terraced hill with gardens or lawn space would be visible along the southern portion of common areas.

The majority of single-family residences, attached townhomes, and cottages would have front and back yards. Apartment complexes would have a group entry. The features and scale of yards and entries would vary based on the residence type (detached residence, townhouse, and apartment), location relative to the street, topography, and available space. Visible building materials would include concrete and asphalt paving, and painted or stained wood for siding, fences, and trellises.

Open spaces would include a mix of parks, and a network of trails and natural areas providing visual relief and softening edges of buildings (see *Section 4.13, Parks and Recreation*). The largest concentrations of open space would be in the four neighborhood parks that would be located roughly in each quadrant of the project site. Existing open spaces near the east and west boundaries of the project site would remain in their natural state but debris would be removed. Trees and ornamental landscaping would visually enhance open spaces.

The Proposed Master Plan would improve visual quality on-site and could exert a positive influence on nearby neighborhoods and the White Center area. However, some viewers could consider the intensification of buildings on-site as adverse. No long-term adverse impacts to visual quality are anticipated.

Light and Glare Impacts

Light from streetlights, parking lots, vehicle headlights, and buildings would increase with the increased number of residences. Glare could occur primarily from larger scale buildings along the east side of 8th Avenue SW. However, use of reflective building materials is not anticipated. Light and glare impacts are not anticipated to be significant.

Cumulative Impacts

Overall changes to visual quality would be considered positive. Positive changes would enhance the perceived visual quality in nearby neighborhoods and the White Center area.

4.12.2 Impacts of the Alternatives

Design Alternative Master Plan

Impacts on visual quality would be similar to the Proposed Master Plan. However, more garages would front onto streets, blocks would be longer, and there would be less efficient utilization of space. In addition, the open space strategy does not include the hierarchy of parks and trails to visually link the variety of residence types (detached, townhomes, and apartments). Retention of the existing street system would not allow for the large open space opportunities afforded under the Proposed Master Plan. Fewer landscaped buffer areas would be provided on-site. However, more perimeter buffers would be required. These changes would result in less visual continuity and unification of project elements.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no demolition or redevelopment would occur. Overall, the visual quality of the project site would continue to deteriorate. Aesthetic improvements would not occur and new view opportunities would not be created.

4.12.3 Mitigation Measures

Changes in visual quality would be positive and would not require mitigation. Potential lighting impacts from non-residential uses would be minimized through use of low-level sodium lighting and full cut-off lighting fixtures, particularly in locations where the project site abuts surrounding neighborhoods. Reflective building materials would not be used for exterior building surfaces.

4.12.4 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

No significant unavoidable adverse impacts to visual quality are anticipated.