920 BAYSWATER AVENUE PROJECT

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

Prepared for the City of Burlingame

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VISUAL ASSESSMENT

1 Purpose

The purpose of this Visual Assessment for the 920 Bayswater Avenue Project (project) is to evaluate the aesthetic change that would occur during project construction and operation. Aesthetic values are, by their nature, subjective; opinions on what constitutes a degradation of visual character will differ among individuals. In order to better analyze visual changes associated with the project, the project site was considered from the following five key viewpoints (KVPs) that best represent views of the site from public places:

- Looking west from the intersection of Bayswater Avenue and Anita Road
- Looking north from Bayswater Avenue near the Caltrain tracks
- Looking east from Myrtle Road
- Looking southeast from the intersection of Howard Avenue and Myrtle Road
- Looking south from the front of the school playground on Anita Road

Of these five locations, the KVPs located at the intersection of Bayswater Avenue and Anita Road (KVP 1) and Bayswater Avenue near the Caltrain tracks (KVP 2) were used to create visual simulations of the project. These KVPs were chosen for further analysis because they represent the greatest potential visual change. An overview showing the locations of these two KVPs is presented in **Figure 1**.

2 Existing Conditions

The City of Burlingame is located within San Mateo County, east of the Santa Cruz Mountains and west of the San Francisco Bay (Bay). Burlingame is surrounded by the City of Millbrae to the northwest, the Bay to the east, the City of San Mateo to the southeast, and the Town of Hillsborough to the southwest. Most of the City is located on gently sloping valley floor and is a highly developed, urban/suburban area. The western portions of the City are located on foothills rising to the Santa Cruz Mountains that offer scenic views of the Santa Cruz Mountains, the Bay, and the East Bay Hills.

The project site is located within both the Myrtle Road Mixed Use and Anita Road Residential Areas of the Downtown Specific Plan in the R-3 and MMU zoning districts. The project site is located in an urban area adjacent to major roadways and residential and commercial development. The surrounding area consists of automobile service uses and residential uses. The existing structures on the project site, including an automobile repair garage, single-family residences, and apartments, are visible to the surrounding residential and automobile services uses and to motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists traveling along Myrtle Road and Bayswater Avenue (see **Figure 2a** and **Figure 3a**).

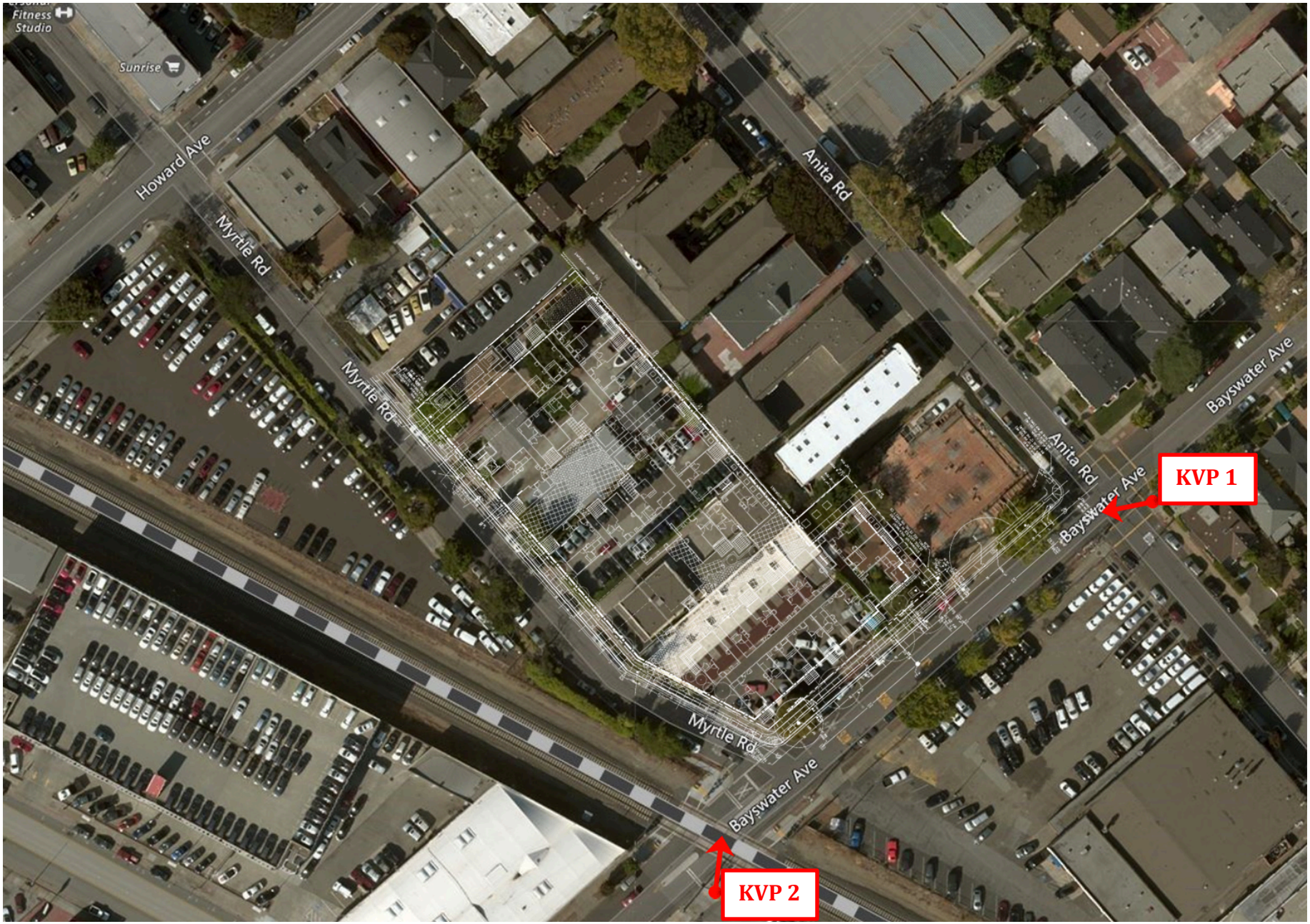
3 Project Improvements

The project would involve merging the seven parcels, demolishing all existing structures on the site, and constructing a new, three- and four-story, 128-unit apartment building with two levels of subterranean parking. The multi-level subterranean parking garage would provide a total of 179 standard-size parking stalls, which exceeds the required 170 parking stalls for this project.[1] Additionally, 36 bicycle parking spaces would be provided. Ten percent of the units would be affordable.

The building footprint would cover 34,440 square feet of the 53,012 square foot project site (65.6 percent of the lot) and the building would be approximately 46 feet high. Unlike the existing conditions, there would be no uncovered parking with implementation of the project. The project has been designed to promote compatibility with surrounding buildings. The exterior siding would be finished with wood paneling ranging between brown, gray, and white color tones. The residences would feature white balconies facing Myrtle Road and Bayswater Avenue (see **Figure 2b** and **Figure 3b**).

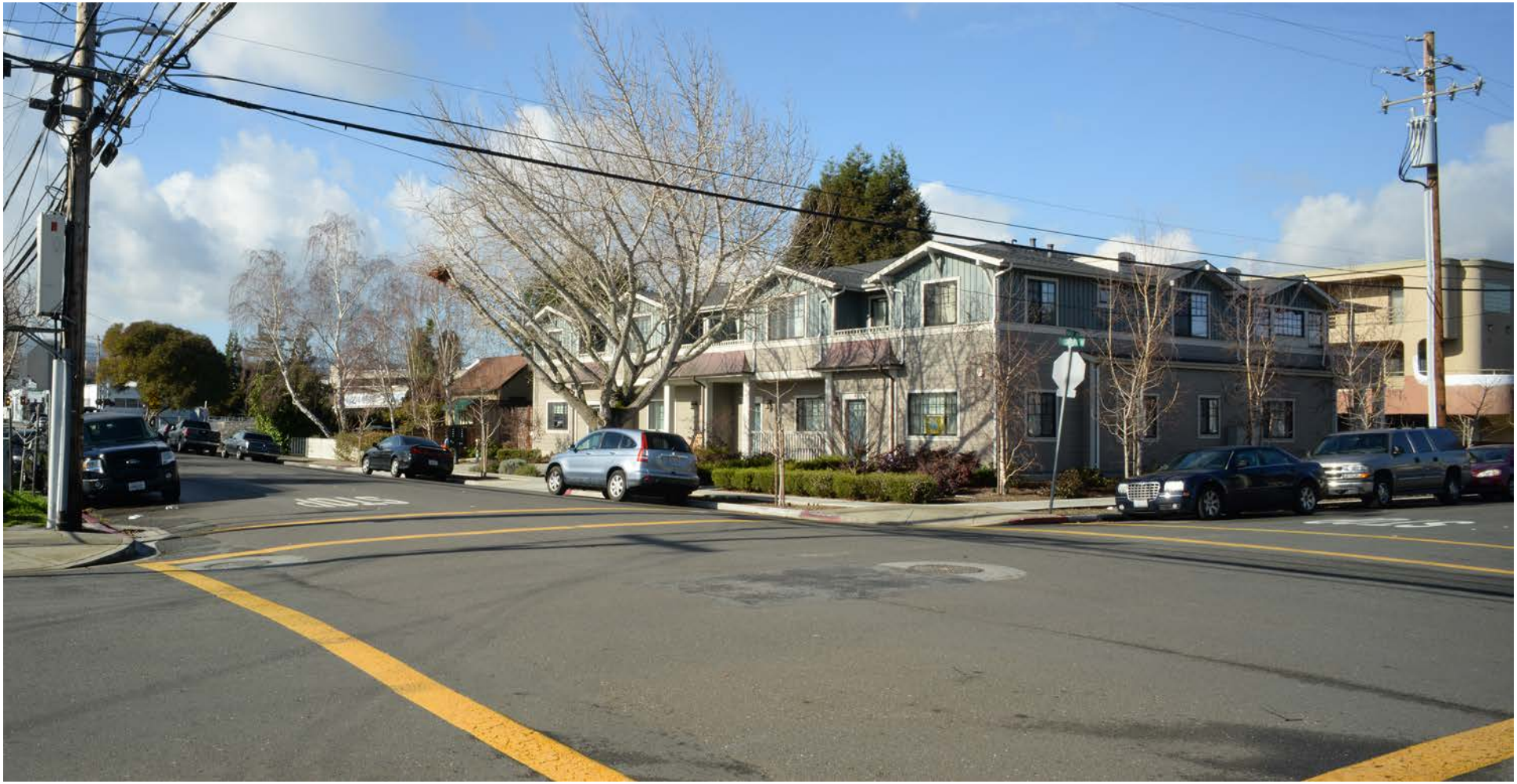
The project would include removal of 8 of the existing 16 trees and replanting of 18 new trees, for a total of 26 trees on the developed project site. *Ginkgo biloba* trees would be planted along Bayswater Avenue in order to meet the themed block requirement. Crimson Spire oak would be planted within City right-of-way along Myrtle Road. Other new ornamental trees would be featured in raised planters around the perimeter of the project. Shrubs, groundcover, and plantings on wall-mounted trellises would also be featured around the property.

[1] State affordability/density bonus regulations would require a total of 170 parking stalls to be provided.



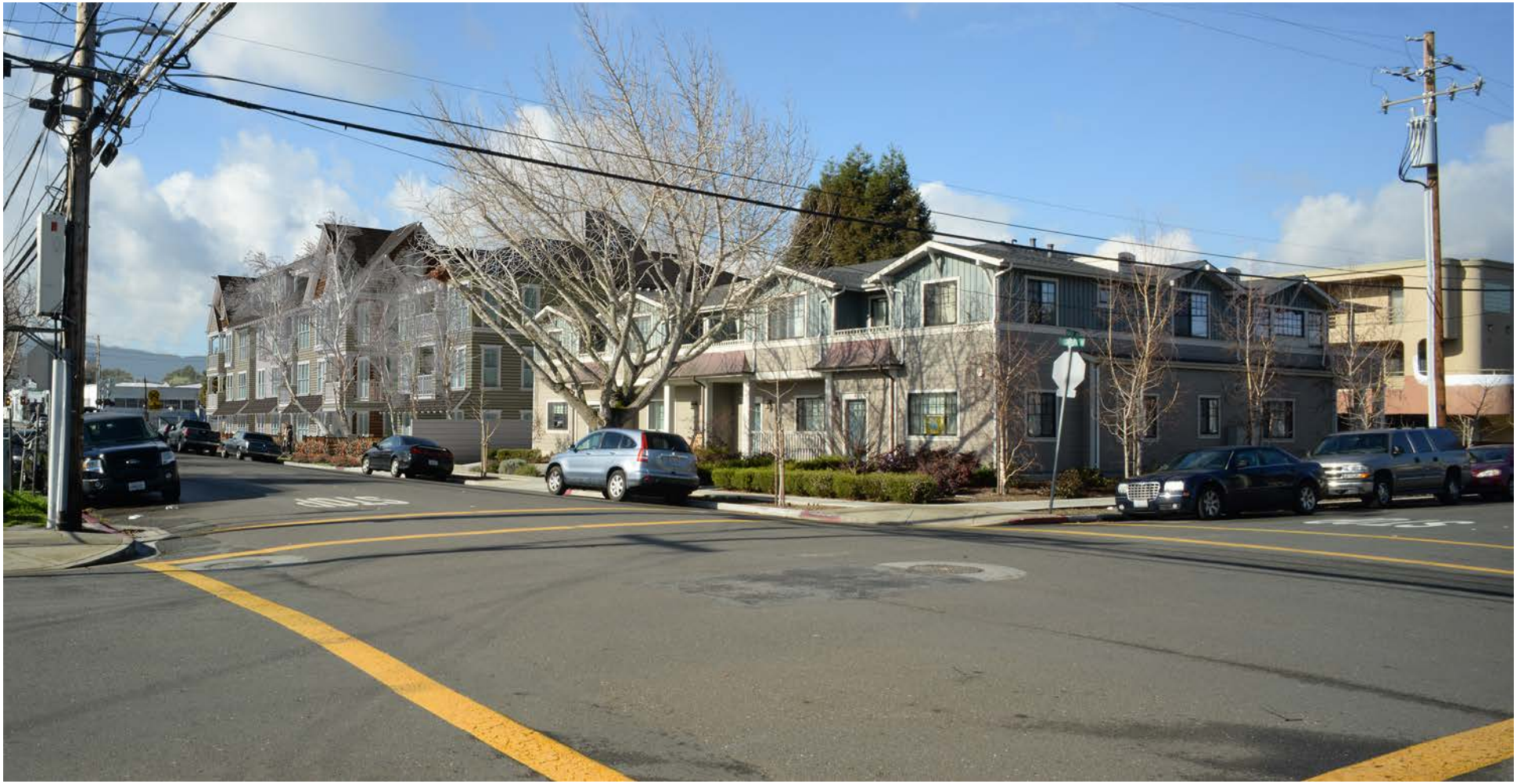
Key Viewpoint Overview Figure **1**

Source: Square One Productions, 2018



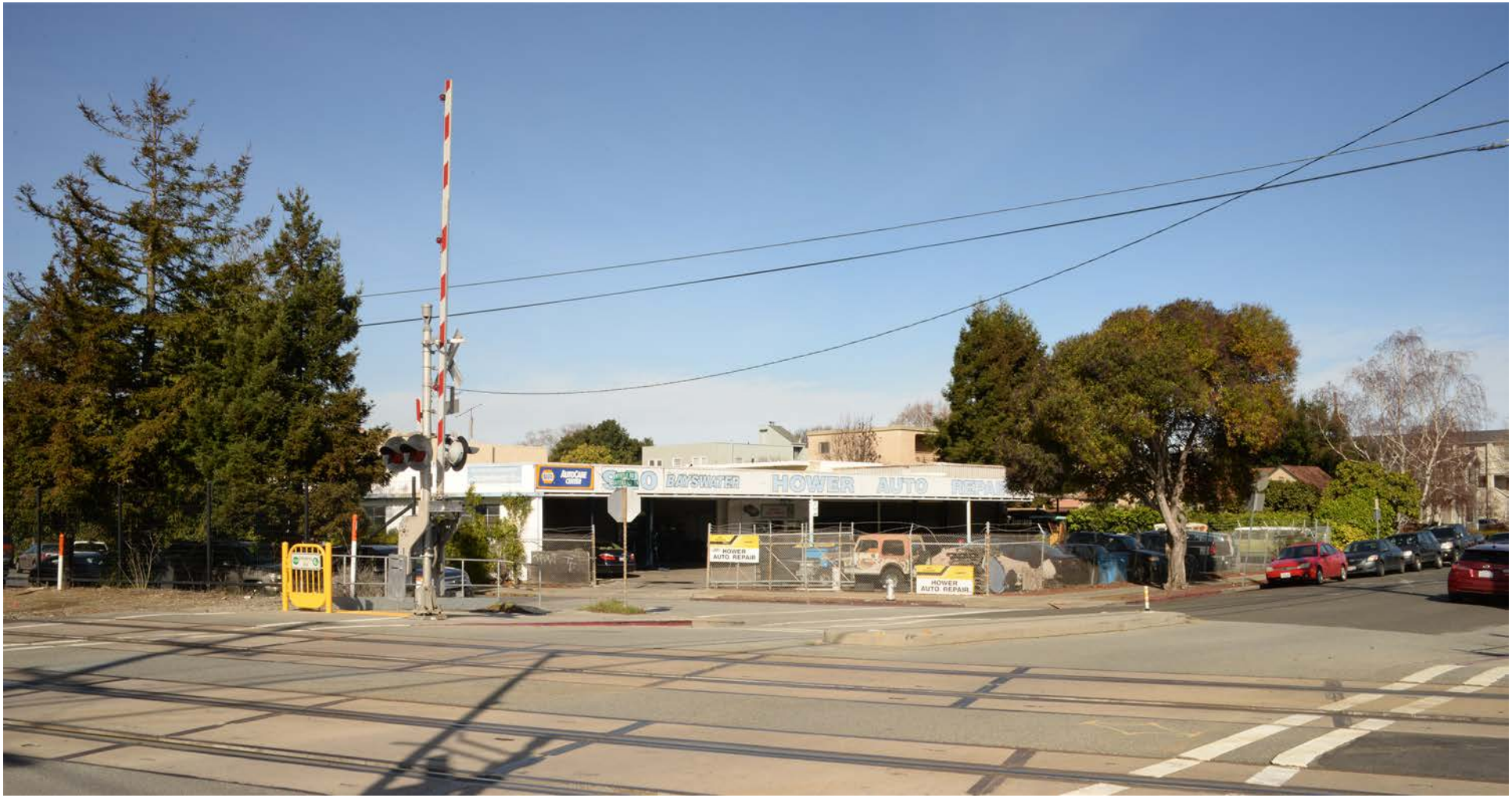
Key Viewpoint 1 - Existing Figure **2a**

Source: Square One Productions, 2018



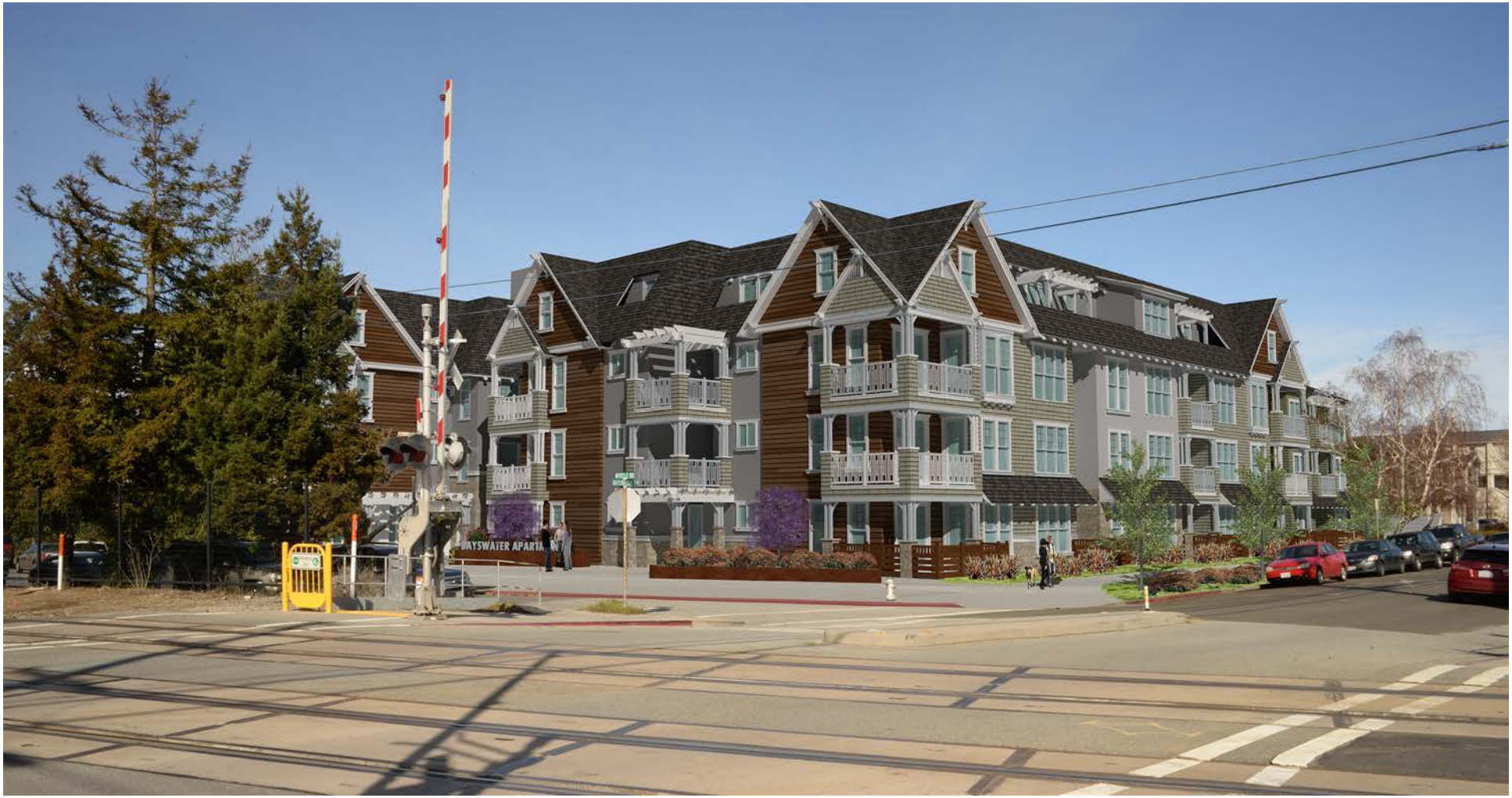
Key Viewpoint 1 - Proposed Figure **2b**

Source: Square One Productions, 2018



Key Viewpoint 2 - Existing Figure **3a**

Source: Square One Productions, 2018



Key Viewpoint 2 - Proposed Figure **3b**

Source: Square One Productions, 2018

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4 Visual Assessment

Construction

Construction of the project would involve demolition, earthmoving operations, and grading activities. Temporary fencing, construction equipment, construction vehicles, staging areas, and associated construction debris would be visible on the project site for the duration of construction (approximately 22 months). The visual character and quality of the site would change temporarily, depending on the work and equipment used. However, the visual impacts of construction activities would be similar to other types of development and construction that typically occur within the area and would be temporary in nature.

Operation

According to the City of Burlingame General Plan, important vistas include the hillside leading to the Skyline Ridge as seen from the Bay plain, and the Bay as seen from the hillside. The project would not impact either scenic resource. Public views of the foothills rising to the Santa Cruz Mountains are obscured by existing development and landscaping in the project vicinity (see **Figure 2a** and **Figure 3a**). The new development would be four stories at its highest point (46 feet in height; see **Figure 3b**) would not exceed the 46-foot height limit allowed as part of the density bonus incentive under State law and Code Section 25.63.040(c)(1) for the MMU zoning district.

The area surrounding the project is fully developed. No rock outcroppings, historic buildings, state scenic highways or other scenic resources are visible from the project site. Views of trees located on adjacent properties may be obstructed with implementation of the project. However, 18 new trees would be planted with implementation of the project, improving views of the project site over current conditions.

The project would change the existing character of the project site by removing all existing structures (none of which exceed two stories in height) and redeveloping the site with a three and four-story apartment complex. Such redevelopment could improve the visual character of the site by replacing the incongruous mixture of residential uses and a aged auto repair garage with a new residential building designed in harmony with surrounding structures. At a maximum height of 46 feet, the project would be taller than the buildings directly surrounding the site (see **Figure 2b**). However, the project would be similar in height to the approved three-story development at 988 Howard Avenue, located approximately 300 feet north along Myrtle Road (City of Burlingame 2018). The project would also be similar in height to the four-story Atria assisted living facility located approximately 700 feet north along Myrtle Road.

The project's appearance, which would include wood cement fiber siding ranging between brown, beige, and white color tones and would feature balconies facing Myrtle Road and Bayswater Avenue (see **Figure 2b** and **Figure 3b**). This design would be compatible with the adjacent residential complex located at the corner of Bayswater Avenue and Anita Road.

Given the above and based on the visual representation of the visual simulations provided in this assessment, the project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site. The project would replace an existing inharmonious view with one cohesive residential complex designed to be complimentary to the surrounding structures and is consistent with development anticipated under the Burlingame Downtown Specific Plan (City of Burlingame 2010). The project would also increase views of vegetation by increasing the number of trees on the site from 16 to 26 and by planting new shrubs, groundcover, and ornamental plants on wall-mounted trellises. Furthermore, the new apartment complex would require an application to the Planning Commission for Residential Design Review. The project would be reviewed for compliance with the Residential Design Guidebook, which offers guidance on appropriate design based on the style of the existing home and the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

5 References

Square One Productions, 2018. *920 Bayswater Visual Simulations.*

City of Burlingame, 2010. *Burlingame Downtown Specific Plan*. Available: https://www.burlingame.org/departments/planning/general_and_specific_plans.php

City of Burlingame, 2018. Major Project - 988 Howard Avenue. Available: https://www.burlingame.org/business_detail_T54_R22.php