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DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

ROBERTS RANCH SUBDIVISION

SCH # 2016011053

PREPARED FOR

City of Hollister Development Services

January 9, 2017

EMC PLANNING GROUP INC.
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SUMMARY

CEQA REQUIREMENTS

CEQA Guidelines section 15123 requires an EIR to contain a brief summary of the proposed project and its consequences. The summary identifies each significant effect and the proposed mitigation measures and alternatives to reduce or avoid that effect; areas of controversy known to the lead agency; and issues to be resolved, including the choice among alternatives and whether or how to mitigate the significant effects.

PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed project is summarized below. The full description of the location, environmental setting, and project description are included in Section 2.0 Project Description.

Location and Setting

The 54.9-acre flag-shaped project site is located between Fairview Road and Enterprise Road, partially located in unincorporated San Benito County (“county”) southeast of and adjacent to the city limits of Hollister (“city”) and within the City of Hollister General Plan Planning Area. All of San Benito County is unincorporated with the exception of the cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista, both of which are located near the northern county line.

Project Description

The proposed project is a prezone and annexation 54.9 acres to the City of Hollister, a vesting tentative map for a 206-lot residential subdivision and related infrastructure with a net residential density of 6.3 dwelling units per acre, and a Planned Unit Development (PUD). The residential subdivision includes 192 single-family residential lots, 14 multi-family lots for which a PUD is

required, and dedication of 2.54 acres of land adjacent to Valley View Park to enable the city to expand the park in the future. The 14 multi-family residential lots would consist of seven duplex lots and seven triplex lots (35 dwelling units). The proposed project would provide a total of 227 residences. The proposed project is consistent with the City of Hollister General Plan Low Density Residential land use designation residential density of 1-8 dwelling units per acre.

Planning Designations

A 1.55-acre portion of the project site is located within the City of Hollister city limit; the remaining 53.35 acres would require annexation to the city prior to development. The Hollister General Plan land use designations for the site are Low Density Residential (1-8 dwelling units per acre) and Public. The Public land use designation applies to a portion of the site that adjoins the existing Valley View Park. The San Benito County 2035 General Plan land use designation for the portions of the site that are located outside the city limit is “Residential Mixed” (RM) (County of San Benito 2035, Figure 3-2). The county’s Residential Mixed land use designation allows a maximum residential density of 20 dwelling units per acre.

SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Impacts identified as significant or potentially significant and the mitigation measures that reduce them are presented in a summarized format in Table S-1. The full text of the environmental setting, regulatory setting, project analysis, impacts, and mitigation measures can be found in Section 3.0 Environmental Effects.

Table S-1 provides a summary of the impacts and mitigation measures.

Table S-1 Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measure Summary

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
Air Quality	ROG emissions above the air district's threshold	AQ-1	Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall include the following air emissions reduction features on the project plans: a. Solid fuel heating appliances (i.e., wood-burning fireplaces; wood stoves; etc.) shall be prohibited. Restrictions on solid fuel heating appliances shall be included on deeds for individual parcels.	LTS
Air Quality	Construction dust that would exceed the air district standards (82 lbs per day) for suspended particulate matter (PM ₁₀), which also would contribute to the air basin's nonattainment status for PM ₁₀	AQ-2	Prior to issuance of grading, or building permits, the applicant or developers of the project site shall prepare a grading plan subject to review and approval by the city. In the event ground disturbance exceeds 2.2 acres per day for initial site preparation activities that involve extensive earth moving activities (grubbing, excavation, rough grading), and 8.1 acres per day for activities that involve minimal earth moving (e.g. finish grading) these limits, the required grading plans shall include the following dust control measures: a. Water all active construction sites continuously. Frequency should be based on the type of operation, soil, and wind exposure;	LTS

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
		AQ-3	b. Prohibit all grading activities during periods of high wind (over 15 mph); c. Apply chemical soil stabilizers on inactive construction areas (disturbed lands within construction projects that are unused for at least four consecutive days); d. Apply non-toxic binders (e.g., latex acrylic copolymer) to exposed areas after cut and fill operations and hydroseed area; e. Maintain at least 1'-0" of freeboard on haul trucks; f. Cover inactive storage piles; g. Sweep streets if visible soil material is carried out from the construction site; h. Limit the area under construction at any one time. Prior to commencement of construction activities, the contractor shall appoint a qualified site monitor to ensure that the dust control measures are implemented. Evidence of implementation shall be submitted to the City of Hollister Planning Department within three days of commencement of grading, and monthly thereafter as long as grading occurs. In addition, a publicly-visible sign	

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
			written in English and Spanish with the telephone number and person to contact regarding dust complaints should be posted at the project site. This person shall respond and take corrective action within 48 hours. The phone number of the air district shall also be visible to ensure compliance with rule 402 (nuisance).	
Air Quality	Increased exposures to diesel exhaust that can cause adverse health effects during construction.	AQ-4	AQ-4. The developer shall reduce nitrogen oxides exhaust and particulate matter emissions by implementing one of the following measures prior to the start of construction: ■ Provide a plan, acceptable to the air district, demonstrating that the heavy-duty (> 50 horsepower) off-road vehicles and equipment to be used in the construction project, including owned, leased and subcontractor vehicles, will achieve a project wide fleet-average 20 percent nitrogen oxides reduction and 45 percent particulate matter reduction compared to the most recent CARB fleet average for the time of construction; or ■ Provide a plan, acceptable to the air district, that all off-road construction vehicles/equipment greater than 50 horsepower that will be used on site for more than one week shall be manufactured during or after 2001, or equipped with diesel particulate matter filters such	LTS

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
		AQ-5	that they meet the nitrogen oxides emissions standard of 6.9 grams per brake horsepower hour. Prior to the onset of site preparation, grading and construction activities, the project applicant(s) or developer(s) shall require in construction contracts that all off-road construction vehicles comply with the detailed specifications required in Mitigation Measure AQ-4 and shall submit evidence demonstrating compliance with this measure to the City of Hollister Planning Department for review and approval. The developer shall reduce NOx and particulate matter exhaust emissions by implementing the following measures prior to the start of construction: ■ Contractors shall install temporary electrical service whenever possible to avoid the need for independently-powered equipment (e.g. compressors). ■ Signs at the construction site shall be clearly visible to advise that that diesel equipment standing idle for more than two minutes within 200 feet of sensitive receptors shall be turned off. This would include trucks waiting to deliver or receive soil, aggregate, or	

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
			other bulk materials. Rotating drum concrete trucks may keep their engines running continuously if on-site and staged at least 100 feet away from residential areas. - Properly tune and maintain equipment for low emissions. - Stage large diesel powered equipment at least 200 feet from any sensitive land uses (e.g., occupied residences).	
Air Quality	Increased exposures to criteria air pollutant emissions from off-road construction equipment and from trucks hauling debris and delivering materials	AQ-2 AQ-3 AQ-4	Implement Mitigation Measures AQ-2 – AQ-4	LTS
Air Quality	Exposures to new sources of toxic air contaminants	AQ-4 AQ-5	Implement Mitigation Measures AQ-4 and AQ-5	LTS
Cumulative Air Quality	Cumulatively considerable contribution to emissions of ozone precursors and particulate matter for which the region is in unattainment.	AQ-1, AQ-2 AQ-3 AQ-4 AQ-5	Implement Mitigation Measures AQ-1 – AQ-5	LTS

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
Biology	Construction That Results in Harassment, Habitat Removal, or Direct Mortality of California Tiger Salamander (CTS), a Federally- and State-listed as Threatened Species; California Red-legged Frog (CRLF), a Federally-listed Threatened and State-listed Species of Special Concern, and Western Spadefoot Toad, a State-listed Species of Special Concern.	BIO-1 BIO-2	BIO-1. At least 15 days prior to ground disturbance, the applicant shall submit the name(s) and credentials of biologists who will conduct activities specified in the measures BIO-1 through BIO-8 (“qualified biologist”). No project activities shall begin until the applicant has received written approval from the USFWS and CDFW that the biologist is qualified to conduct the work. The qualified biologist will supervise and/or implement all protection measures at the expense of the applicant. Before construction activities begin, the qualified biologist shall conduct a training session for all construction personnel. At a minimum, the training shall include a description of CRLF, CTS, and western spadefoot and their habitats, general measures that are being implemented to conserve CRLF and CTS as they relate to the project, and the boundaries within which the project occurs. Informational handouts with photographs clearly illustrating the species’ appearances shall be used in the training session. All new construction personnel shall undergo this mandatory environmental awareness training.	LTS

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
		BIO-3	During construction the qualified biologist will be present during all initial ground disturbance activities. Only the qualified biologist will be allowed to handle CTS, CRLF, and western spadefoot. The qualified biologist will have the authority to halt construction work at any time to prevent harm to CTS, CRLF, and/or or western spadefoot when any protection measures have been violated. Work will commence only when authorized by the qualified biologist. If work is stopped due to potential harm to CTS, CRLF, or western spadefoot, the qualified biologist will contact the USFWS and/or CDFW by telephone or email on the same day. The qualified biologist will train biological monitors designated by the construction contractor. Before the start of work each day, the monitors will check for animals under any equipment such as vehicles and stored pipes within active construction zones that are fenced. The monitors will also check all excavated steep-walled holes or trenches greater than one foot deep for trapped animals. If a CTS, CRLF, or western spadefoot is observed within an active construction zone, the qualified biologist will be notified immediately and all work within 100 feet of the individual will be halted and all equipment turned off	

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
			until the biologist has captured and removed the individual from the work area. CTS, CRLF, and/or western spadefoot will be relocated to a USFWS/CDFW-approved off-site location.	
Biology	Disturbance That Results in the Loss of Habitat for California Tiger Salamander (CTS), a Federally- and State-listed Threatened Species and California Red-legged Frog (CRLF), a Federally-listed Threatened and State-listed Species of Special Concern.	BIO-4	To compensate for the permanent loss of CTS and CRLF upland habitat, the applicant shall preserve or purchase in-kind grassland habitat that is known to provide upland habitat for CTS and CRLF at a minimum 2:1 ratio of area preserved to area impacted. Compensatory mitigation may be accomplished through one of the following options: ■ Establishing a conservation easement on or off site in a suitable San Benito County location and providing a non-wasting endowment for management and monitoring of the property in perpetuity. Lands placed in a conservation easement must be documented to support CTS and CRLF; ■ Depositing funds into an USFWS- and CDFW-approved in-lieu fee program; or ■ Purchasing credits in a USFWS- and CDFW-approved conservation bank that includes the Roberts Ranch site in its service area.	LTS

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
Biology	Impacts to Western Burrowing Owl, a State-listed species of concern	BIO-5	No more than 14 days prior to any ground disturbing activities, a qualified biologist will conduct a preconstruction/take avoidance survey for burrowing owls using CDFW methods, and at the expense of the applicant. If no owls are detected during the initial take avoidance survey, a final survey shall be conducted within 24 hours prior to ground disturbance to confirm that owls are still absent. If take avoidance surveys conducted during the non-breeding season (September 1 to January 31) identify any burrowing owls within the construction footprint, owls may be excluded from burrows using one-way doors provided that a Burrowing Owl Exclusion Plan is developed and approved by CDFW prior to implementation. Any burrow exclusion efforts will be monitored prior to, during, and after exclusion of burrowing owls from burrows to ensure that take is avoided. If burrow exclusion will occur immediately after the end of the breeding season, daily monitoring shall be conducted for one week prior to the exclusion to confirm that any young of the year have fledged. If owls are found within the construction footprint during the breeding season, occupied burrows will be avoided by establishing buffers around the burrows in	LTS

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
			which no work shall be allowed until a qualified biologist has determined that the nest attempt has failed or that young have fledged and can forage independently of the adults. A minimum buffer of 250 feet will be maintained during the breeding season around active burrows. Owls present on site after February 1 will be assumed to be nesting on or adjacent to the site unless focused monitoring by a qualified biologist familiar with burrowing owl reproductive behavior indicates that the observed individual is unpaired or that egg-laying has not yet begun. A Burrowing Owl Exclusion Plan will be developed and approved by CDFW prior to implementation.	
Biology	Impacts to San Joaquin kit fox, a Federally-listed endangered species and a State-listed threatened species.	BIO-6	Preconstruction/pre-activity surveys for San Joaquin kit fox in accordance with USFWS protocols shall be conducted no less than 30 days prior to the beginning of ground disturbance and/or construction activities. The surveys shall include all work areas and a minimum 200-foot buffer. If a natal/pupping den is discovered within the project area or within 200 feet of the project boundary, the applicant will consult with CDFW and USFWS to establish an appropriate avoidance buffer.	LTS

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
			The avoidance buffer will be maintained until such time as the burrow is no longer active and/or an incidental take permit is determined to be required and is obtained.	
Biology	Direct Removal and Filling of a Protected Wetland	BIO-7	To compensate for permanent impacts to 0.08 acre of wetlands of the United States and achieve “no net less” of wetland acreage or habitat value, the applicant will create, preserve, or purchase in-kind wetland habitat at a 2:1 ratio. Compensatory mitigation may be accomplished through one of the following options: ■ The applicant shall create at least 0.16 acre of off-site mitigation wetlands elsewhere in the Hollister region, or in a location approved by the CDFW. A conservation easement shall be placed on the mitigation site to preserve the site in perpetuity subject to the review and approval of the county, USACE, and RWQCB for the long-term maintenance and monitoring of the mitigation site. Off-site wetland creation would also require the following: • A wetland mitigation replacement plan subject to review and approval by USACE, and RWQCB prior to city approval of the grading plan.	LTS

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
			• A performance bond, letter of credit, or other financial instrument shall to guarantee any remedial work that might need to occur if the prior effort fails. ■ As an alternative to creating wetlands, the applicant may purchase minimum of 0.16 acre of credits at an approved mitigation bank to compensate for the loss of waters of the United States and State at a ratio of 2:1. The purchase of mitigation bank credits shall be subject to review and approval by the county, USACE, and RWQCB prior to the initiation of construction or filling of wetlands.	
Biology	Construction near Nesting and Migratory Birds and Raptors	BIO-8	If construction activities are scheduled during the nesting season, a qualified biologist, shall conduct preconstruction nest surveys no more than 14 days prior to the start of work. If the survey indicates the presence of nesting birds, the biologist will determine an appropriately sized buffer around the nest in which no work will be allowed until the young have successfully fledged. The size of the nest buffer will be determined by the biologist and will be based on the nesting species and its sensitivity to disturbance.	LTS
Cumulative	Cumulatively considerable	BIO-1 –	Implement mitigation measures BIO-1 – BIO-8.	LTS

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
Biology	contribution to the cumulative loss of important biological resources, including wetlands, protected species and their habitat	BIO-8		
Cultural Resources	Proposed Grading Activities Could Result in Disturbance to Human Remains or a Substantial Adverse Change in the Significance of Previously Undiscovered Archaeological and/or Tribal Cultural Resources	CR- 1	The following language shall be included in any permits issued for the project site: If archaeological resources or human remains are unexpectedly discovered during construction, work shall be halted within 50 meters (160 feet) of the find until it can be evaluated by a qualified professional archeologist. If the find is determined to be significant, appropriate mitigation measures shall be formulated, with concurrence of the City of Hollister, and implemented.	LTS
		CR-2	The applicant shall include the following language on all improvement and construction documents: If human remains are found during construction there shall be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent human remains until the coroner of San Benito County is contacted to determine that no investigation of the cause of death is required. If the coroner determines the remains to be Native	

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
			American the coroner shall contact the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours. The Native American Heritage Commission shall identify the person or persons it believes to be the most likely descendent from the deceased Native American. The most likely descendent may then make recommendations to the landowner or the person responsible for the excavation work, for means of treating or disposing of, with appropriate dignity, the human remains and associated grave goods as provided in Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. The landowner or their authorized representative shall rebury the Native American human remains and associated grave goods with appropriate dignity on the property in a location not subject to further disturbance if: a) the Native American Heritage Commission is unable to identify a most likely descendent or the most likely descendent failed to make a recommendation within 24 hours after being notified by the commission; b) the descendent identified fails to make a recommendation; or c) the landowner or their authorized representative rejects the recommendation of the descendent, and the mediation by the Native American Heritage Commission fails to provide measures acceptable to the landowner.	

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
Cultural Resources	Proposed Grading Activities Could Result in Damage or Destruction to Previously Undetected Paleontological Resources	CR-3	The following language shall be included in any permits issued for the project area: If paleontological resources are unexpectedly discovered during construction, work shall be halted within 50 meters (160 feet) of the find until it can be evaluated by a qualified professional paleontologist. If the find is determined to be significant, appropriate mitigation measures shall be formulated, with concurrence of the City of Hollister, and implemented.	LTS
Geology and Soils				LTS
Geology and Soils	Soil Erosion During Construction	AQ-2 AQ-3 HYD-1	Implement Mitigation Measure HYD-1 to control storm water runoff (see below). Implement Mitigation Measures AQ-2 and AQ-3 to control dust during construction.	LTS
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Generation of GHG Emissions that Exceed the 2027 Threshold of Significance of 2.92 MT CO ₂ e per Year	GHG-1	Prior to issuance of building permits, the applicant shall demonstrate that one or more GHG reduction measures have been incorporated into the project to reduce projected 2027 GHG emissions to below 2.92 MT CO ₂ e/service population (or by a minimum of 0.04 MT CO ₂ e/year). Numerous GHG reduction options are available to achieve this reduction. These include, but are not limited to:	LTS

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
			a. Include a 240-volt electric vehicle charger in the garage or off-street parking area of residences to allow for future installation of electric vehicle chargers; b. Residences shall be designed to exceed the Title 24 standards in effect at the time that building permits are issued; c. On-site renewable energy features (e.g. solar photovoltaic cells) shall be installed in a sufficient number of residences; d. Other measures demonstrated by the applicant to the satisfaction of the Planning Director that achieve measurable, validated GHG emissions reductions. To demonstrate compliance with this mitigation measure, the applicant shall prepare a GHG reduction plan that specifies the measure(s) to be incorporated into the project and includes detailed calculations of GHG reductions to be achieved through the measure(s). The GHG reduction plan shall be submitted with the improvement plans and is subject to review by the Planning Director for conformance with this mitigation measure.	
Hazards and Hazardous Materials				

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
Surface Hydrology and Water Quality	Generation of Storm Water and Polluted Runoff during Construction and Operations that could Violate Water Quality Standards or Waste Discharge Requirements	HYD-1	Prior to issuance of a grading permit, the applicant shall obtain city approval of a final drainage plan for the project that complies with the City of Hollister Best Management Practices and standards established by the regional water quality control board for compliance with non-point source storm water discharge. The drainage plan shall demonstrate that basin capacity, percolation rates, and storm water treatment meets the performance objectives and design criteria requirements of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. The drainage plan shall outline BMPs and low impact development strategies that will be utilized by the proposed project to control and minimize storm water runoff and may include on-site retention and siltation basins, reduction of impervious surfaces, vegetated swales, permeable paving, landscaping, and other strategies. The drainage plan shall be subject to the review and approval of the City Engineer.	LTS
Surface Water and Hydrology	Increased Runoff that Could Result in Off-site Flooding by Exceeding the Capacity of Existing or Planned Storm Water Drainage Systems	HYD-1	Implement Mitigation Measure HYD-1	LTS
Noise	Exposures to Unacceptable Noise Levels During	N-1	N-1. The following measures shall be incorporated into all bid and construction documents prior to issuance of	LTS

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
	Construction		any permit and shall be implemented by the project developer during construction: a. All construction equipment shall be properly maintained and equipped with intake and exhaust mufflers that are in good condition and recommended by the vehicle manufacturer. b. Unnecessary idling of internal combustion engines shall be strictly prohibited. c. Wheeled earth moving equipment shall be used rather than track equipment. d. A detailed construction plan shall be prepared and submitted with the grading and improvement plans identifying the schedule for major noise-generating construction activities. The construction plan shall identify a procedure for coordination with adjacent residential land uses so that construction activities can be scheduled to minimize noise disturbance. e. A noise disturbance coordinator shall be designated to handle complaints and the site shall be posted with a phone number and email address so that the nearby residents have a contact person in case of a noise problem.	

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
			f. Vehicle routes clean and smooth both on site and off site to minimize noise and vibration from vehicles rolling over rough surfaces. g. Nail guns shall be used where possible as they are less noisy than manual hammering. h. Stationary equipment, such as compressor and generators shall be housed in acoustical enclosures and placed as far from sensitive receptors as feasible. i. Utilize “quiet” air compressors and other stationary noise sources where technology exists. j. Control noise from construction workers’ radios to a point where they are not audible at existing residences bordering the project site. k. Restrict noise-generating activities at the construction site or in areas adjacent to the construction site to the hours of 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM Monday through Friday and 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM on Saturday. Construction-related noise-generating activities shall be prohibited on Sundays.	

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
Noise	Increase of 3dBA in Ambient Noise Levels along Portions of Enterprise Road	N-1	N-2. Prior to issuance of building permits, the applicant shall demonstrate that one or more of the following noise reduction measures have been incorporated into the project to ensure that project-related mobile source noise level increases are less than 3 dBA at existing residences along Enterprise Road between State Route 25 and Glenview Drive. Measures necessary to reduce the increase in noise levels include but are not limited to one or more of the following items: 1. Larger noise barriers or other noise reduction techniques could be constructed to protect existing residential land uses where reasonable and feasible. The necessary height and final design of new or modified sound barriers shall be included with the improvement plans for the proposed project and are subject to the review and approval of the Planning Director; 2. As part of the required improvements to Enterprise Road, alternative noise reduction techniques including traffic calming measures such as speed bumps and/or re-paving streets with "quieter" pavement types including Open-Grade Rubberized Asphaltic Concrete, which can reduce noise levels by 2 to 5 dBA, depending on	LTS

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
			the existing pavement type, traffic speed, traffic volumes, and other factors. 3. Other measures demonstrated by the applicant to the satisfaction of the Planning Director that achieve measurable, validated noise reductions, such as a program to provide building sound insulation, such as sound-rated windows and doors, on a case-by-case basis, as a method of reducing noise levels in interior spaces to affected residences; To demonstrate compliance with this mitigation measure, the applicant shall prepare a noise reduction plan that specifies the measure(s) to be incorporated into the project and includes detailed calculations of acoustical noise level reductions to be achieved through the measure(s). The noise reduction plan shall be submitted with the improvement plans and is subject to review by the Planning Director for conformance with this mitigation measure.	
Noise	Compatibility of Proposed Land Uses with Projected Exterior and Interior Noise Levels	N-3	For the lots abutting Enterprise Road, the project developer shall ensure that exterior noise levels are reduced to 60 dBA or less by incorporating an eight-foot tall sound wall along the first two lots north of State Route	LTS

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
		N-4	25 and a six-foot tall sound wall along the remaining lots to Mimosa Street. The developer may choose to install the sound wall utilizing the construction of traditional noise barriers or earth berms, or in combination of the above. The sound wall shall be free of cracks or gaps over the face and at the base of the barrier and shall be constructed from materials with a minimum surface weight of 3 lbs./ft.². The construction of each barrier is required at or near the property line for the residential properties. The sound wall design is subject to the review and approval of the City Engineer prior to issuance of any building permits along Enterprise Road. Prior to submittal of improvement plans for lots abutting Fairview Road, State Route 25, and Enterprise Road, the building designs shall include noise-reducing construction methods and building facade treatments identified by a qualified acoustical consultant at the developers expense to ensure that noise levels in the proposed residential interiors are 45 dBA or less. These treatments may include, but are not limited to, sound rated windows and doors, sound rated wall constructions, acoustical caulking, protected ventilation openings, etc. Building sound insulation requirements may also need to include forced-	

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
			air mechanical ventilation for all perimeter residential structures, so the windows could be kept closed at the occupant's discretion to control noise. The determination of necessary and specific noise insulation treatments shall be determined by the acoustical consultant. Results of the analysis, including the description of the necessary noise control treatments, shall be submitted with the building plans and approved design, and is subject to approval by the building inspector prior to issuance of a building permit.	
Traffic/Circulation	Increased Traffic that Leads to Level of Service Below Acceptable Standards at Two Signalized Intersections: State Route 25 and Union Road, and Union Road/Mitchell Road and State Route 156	T-1 T-2.	T.1 Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall be responsible for its proportionate and fair share contribution to and payment of the applicable traffic impact fee for the widening of Union Road to four lanes between San Benito Street and State Route 25 at the State Route 25 and Union Road (Caltrans) intersection. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall be responsible for its proportionate and fair share contribution to and payment of the applicable traffic impact fee for the widening of Union Road to four lanes between San Benito Street and State Route 156, which includes modification of the Union Road/Mitchell Road and State Route 156 intersection (Caltrans), the	LTS

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
			construction of which will mitigate the project's direct related to exceedances of performance standards at this intersection.	
Traffic/Circulation	Increased Traffic Leading to Levels of Service Below Standard on the Following Highway Segments: State Route 25 Between San Felipe Road and State Route 156; State Route 25 Between State Route 156 and U.S. 101; and State Route 156 Between the Alameda in San Juan Bautista and Union Road in Hollister	T-3	The applicant shall be responsible for its proportionate and fair share contribution of the applicable traffic impact fee for the widening of State Route 25 between San Felipe Road and State Route 156, State Route 25 between State Route 156 and U.S. 101, and State Route 156 between the Alameda in San Juan Bautista and Union Road in Hollister.	SU
Traffic/Circulation	Contribution to Cumulative Intersection Levels of Service that Exceed Standards at the Signalized Intersections of State Route 25 and Hillcrest Road, and State Route 25 and Santa Ana Road	CUM T-1	Prior to issuance of a building permit in any phase, provided there is a funding mechanism established by San Benito County and in place at the time of building permit issuance, and if requested by Caltrans, the project developer, or developers, shall contribute fair share funds for the improvements to the intersection of State Route 25 and Hillcrest Road. These required improvements consist of the acquisition of 12 feet of right-of-way along the south side of Hillcrest Road for approximately 150 feet and the construction of a dedicated eastbound right-turn lane.	SU

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
		CUM T-2	Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant and/or project site developers shall be responsible for the payment of a fair-share transportation impact fee toward the cost of constructing a separate southbound right-turn lane at the intersection of State Route 25 and Santa Ana Road, if requested by the Caltrans and a county program is in place to determine the fair share amount.	
Traffic/Circulation	Increased Traffic that Contributes to Cumulative Unacceptable Level Of Service at the Unsignalized Intersections of Fairview Road and Hillcrest Road, and Enterprise Road and State Route 25	CUM T-3 CUM T-4	Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall be responsible for its proportionate and fair share contribution to in the form of payment of the applicable traffic impact fee for the installation of a signal at the county-controlled intersection of Fairview Road and Hillcrest Road, the construction of which will mitigate the project's contribution to the cumulative impacts at this intersection. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall be responsible for its proportionate and fair share contribution in the form of payment of the applicable traffic impact fee for the installation of a signal at the state-controlled intersection of Enterprise Road and State Route 25, the construction of which will mitigate the project's contribution to the cumulative impacts at this intersection.	SU

SUMMARY

Area of Concern	Significant Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
Traffic/Circulation	Increased Traffic Contributing to Levels of Service Below Standard on the Following Highway Segments: State Route 25 Between San Felipe Road and State Route 156; State Route 25 Between State Route 156 and U.S. Highway 101; and State Route 156 Between The Alameda in San Juan Bautista and Union Road in Hollister	T-3	Implement Mitigation Measure T-3.	SU

Source: EMC Planning Group Inc. 2016

Notes: LTS = Less than Significant; M = Mitigation; SU = Significant and Unavoidable

SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES

The following alternatives were evaluated and are discussed further in Section 5.0 of this EIR:

No Project Alternative

The No Project alternative assumes that the project site would remain vacant. The prezone, vesting tentative map, annexation, and planned unit development application would not be approved and no new development would occur on the project site. For the analysis of this alternative the existing land use on the site is assumed to continue unchanged. Development within Hollister would continue within the existing city limit and other areas within the sphere of influence, or potentially within new additions to the sphere of influence in other parts of the city, resulting in various and potentially significant environmental impacts in those locations. However, this analysis focuses on the environmental effects within the project site under a no build scenario.

Reduced Density Alternative

This alternative assumes that the project site would be developed with 25 percent fewer dwellings, which would consist of 11 duplex units, 16 triplex units, and 144 single family residential uses only, with a net density of 4.8 dwelling units per acre. Like the proposed project this alternative also would be consistent with the general plan Low-Density Residential land use designation.

Alternatives Considered but not Selected

Several alternatives to the proposed project or alternatives to the project site were considered but not selected for further analysis. These alternatives and the reasons for not selecting them are discussed in greater detail in Section 5.0, Alternatives. In summary, none of the project alternatives considered would avoid or eliminate the significant impacts that would result from the proposed project.

The alternatives considered but not selected consist of a no project, future development consistent with general plan alternative, an increased density alternative and three alternative locations. Failure to proceed with the project would not preclude other similar development consistent with the general plan. If the proposed project is not approved, the environmental consequences of another project consistent with the general plan could occur, which would be expected to result in environmental impacts similar to the impacts that would result from the proposed project. Therefore, an analysis of a no project alternative with future development of

the site consistent with the Hollister general plan Low Density Residential land use designation would not avoid or reduce the significant impacts and is not included in this analysis.

The “Increased Density” alternative that assumed the eventual development of the site with approximately 286 small-lot single-family and multi-family residential uses was considered but rejected from further discussion. This alternative increased the number of duplex and triplex units from 35 to 44 dwelling units, and increased the number of single-family dwelling units from 192 units to 240 dwelling units, for a total of 284 dwelling units. The development density of this alternative is consistent with the maximum permitted eight (8) dwelling units per net acre permitted by the Hollister general plan Low Density Residential land use designation, and with the San Benito County general plan target average density of eight (8) dwelling units per acre for development within the county’s “Residential Mixed” (RM) land use designation. This alternative would not eliminate or avoid or reduce the proposed project’s significant impacts, and may result in new or greater impacts than those of the proposed project.

Several alternative locations within the city’s planning area were identified but eliminated from further consideration. Alternative sites that are currently vacant but for which development applications are pending or approved with the City of Hollister were considered but rejected from further analysis. Three potential sites of comparable size for which development applications have not been received by the City were identified and are analyzed in this EIR; however, development on each of the alternative locations would result in similar impacts to agricultural resources and traffic as would the proposed project.

AREAS OF KNOWN CONTROVERSY

A similar 206-unit single-family residential subdivision was previously proposed on a portion of the project site and applications were submitted to San Benito County in 2014. An NOP was published by the county from March 16, 2015 to April 15, 2015 and comments were received. The county also held a scoping meeting for the similar project on March 30, 2015, to present the project to the public, and during which comments from the public were obtained. However, this previously proposed project was withdrawn from the county application process by the applicants.

Based upon the decision to prepare an EIR, the City of Hollister as lead agency prepared and distributed an NOP for a 30-day comment period from January 20, 2016 to February 18, 2016 in accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15082. Twenty one comment letters including four letters from public agencies were received. A scoping meeting was not conducted by the City of Hollister on the proposed project.

At the request of the applicants, comments on the former project proposal previously submitted to the county during its NOP and scoping meeting processes are addressed in this EIR. Comments on the city and county NOPs were received from the Cielo Vista Homeowners' Association and from a number of individual property owners and residents of the adjacent Cielo Vista subdivision (east) and Valley View (west) residential neighborhoods. The comments identified concerns regarding the proposed residential density, an increase in sources of lighting and effects to day and nighttime views, project design, exposure to construction noise and dust, traffic congestion, and impacts to public services. The city's NOP and comment letters are included in [Appendix A](#). The county NOP and comment letters are included in [Appendix B](#). Comments regarding environmental impacts are discussed in Section 3.0 Environmental Setting, and in Section 4.0, Other CEQA Considerations.

ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

There are no known issues to be resolved.

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I.0 INTRODUCTION

I.1 ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

This environmental impact report (hereinafter “EIR”) is organized into the following sections:

S.0 Summary

The summary, presented earlier, provides a brief overview of the proposed Roberts Ranch Subdivision Prezone, Annexation, and Vesting Tentative Map (referred to hereinafter as “proposed project”), significant environmental effects, proposed mitigation measures, alternatives, areas of controversy known to the lead agency, and issues to be resolved including the choice among alternatives and whether or how to mitigate significant effects.

I.0 Introduction

The introduction presents the organization of this draft EIR, purpose of preparing the report, standards used in the environmental analysis, the California Environmental Quality Act (hereinafter “CEQA”) process, and terminology used.

2.0 Project Description

The project description presents the location and boundary of the proposed project, a statement of objectives, a general description of the project’s technical and environmental characteristics, and a description of the intended uses of the EIR.

3.0 Environmental Effects

The environmental effects section presents the local and regional setting as applicable to each environmental topic area addressed, regulations and policies applicable to each section, thresholds for determining the significance of environmental impacts, analysis of the environmental effects of the proposed project, and mitigation measures to avoid or reduce environmental effects that are found to be significant. Topics addressed in detail in this EIR are aesthetics, agricultural resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, water service, wastewater service, storm drainage facilities, and transportation and traffic.

4.0 Other CEQA Considerations

This section presents the cumulative project scenario and evaluates whether the proposed project's contribution to cumulative impacts is considerable. This section also presents a discussion of energy demand, how the proposed project could induce growth, and summary discussions of impacts that are significant and unavoidable or would have irreversible effects on the environment.

5.0 Alternatives

The alternatives section presents the environmental effects of variations of the proposed project, alternatives to the proposed project, or alternative locations to the proposed project.

6.0 References

This final section provides the sources referenced in the EIR, a list of persons contacted, and a list of report preparers.

1.2 PURPOSE AND STANDARDS

Authorization and Purpose

EIRs are authorized by Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq., the California Environmental Quality Act. CEQA was passed by the California legislature in 1970 to establish protocols for environmental review of proposed projects, and has been amended numerous times since. The California Office of Planning and Research developed the CEQA Guidelines to assist in implementing CEQA. The City of Hollister is the lead agency for this EIR.

Preparation Standards and Methods

An EIR is an informational document that will inform public agency decision makers, as well as the general public, of the significant environmental effects of a project, identify feasible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project.

This EIR has been prepared by EMC Planning Group (hereinafter "consultant") under contract to the lead agency in accordance with CEQA and its implementing guidelines in effect at the time the EIR was released for public review. This EIR has been prepared using available information from private and public sources noted herein, as well as information generated by the consultant through field investigation. This EIR will be used to inform public decision-makers and their constituents of the environmental impacts of the proposed project.

This EIR describes and evaluates the existing environmental setting of the project site and surrounding areas in effect at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) was published.

If an EIR identifies a significant adverse impact, the lead agency may approve the project only if it finds that mitigation measures have been required to reduce the impact's significance, or that such mitigation is infeasible for specified social, economic, and/or other reasons (Public Resources Code section 21081). The lead agency may not omit from the project conditions a mitigation measure associated with a project impact identified in the EIR as significant, unless it makes specific findings regarding the omission.

This EIR is an objective public disclosure document that takes no position on the merits of the proposed project. Therefore, the findings of this EIR do not advocate a position "for" or "against" the proposed project. Instead, this EIR provides information on which decisions about the proposed project can be based. The EIR has been prepared according to the professional standards and practices of the EIR participants' individual disciplines and in conformance with the legal requirements and informational expectations of CEQA and its implementing guidelines.

1.3 CEQA PROCESS

Notice of Preparation

CEQA Guidelines section 15082 requires the lead agency to prepare a notice of preparation (hereinafter "NOP") to solicit agencies' input on the scope of the EIR. CEQA Guidelines section 15375 describes an NOP as:

a brief notice sent by the lead agency to notify the responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and involved federal agencies that the lead agency plans to prepare an EIR for the project. The purpose of the notice is to solicit guidance from those agencies as to the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR.

The lead agency has determined that the proposed project may result in significant adverse environmental effects, as defined by CEQA Guidelines section 15064. Therefore, the lead agency has had this EIR prepared to evaluate the significant adverse environmental impacts of the proposed project.

Based upon the decision to prepare an EIR, the City of Hollister as lead agency prepared and distributed an NOP for a 30-day comment period from January 20, 2016 to February 18, 2016 in accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15082. A scoping meeting was not conducted by the City of Hollister on the proposed project.

Written responses to the City of Hollister NOP were received from the following agencies, organizations, and members of the public:

- Cielo Vista Homeowners Board of Directors (January 25, 2016)
- Hollister School District (January 28, 2016)
- Native American Heritage Commission (February 8, 2016)
- California Department of Transportation District 5 (February 8, 2016)
- Marta Denice (February 8, 2016)
- Ben Mendez (February 12, 2016)
- Stacy Jenkins (February 12, 2016)
- Dawn Koistinen (February 12, 2016)
- David Crandall (February 12, 2016)
- Rick Davis, Treasurer, Cielo Vista Homeowners Association (February 16, 2016)
- Nancy Roberts-Knight (February 16, 2016)
- Amber Kluga (February 17, 2016)
- Yvonne Flippo (February 18, 2016)
- Bryan Daniel (February 18, 2016)

- Dennis and Becky Humphreys (February 18, 2016)
- James and Patricia Hunt (February 19, 2016)
- Gerald C. and Mary Jane Rockwell (February 20, 2016)
- Don Hogue (February 20, 2016)
- Michael and Shannon German (February 21, 2016)
- Catrina Antoniono (February 22, 2016)
- Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District (February 22, 2016)

The City of Hollister NOP and responses received are contained in [Appendix A](#).

A similar 206-unit residential subdivision was previously proposed on the project site and applications were submitted to San Benito County in 2014. An NOP was published by the county from March 16, 2015 to April 15, 2015 and comments were received. The county also held a scoping meeting for the similar project on March 30, 2015, to present the project to the public, during which comments from the public were obtained. However, this previously proposed project was withdrawn by the applicants from the county application process. At the request of the applicants, comments on the former project proposal previously submitted to the county during its NOP and scoping meeting processes are addressed in this EIR. Over 40 people attended the county scoping meeting and six commented on the former similar project. The following attendees submitted comments during the county's scoping meeting on the former similar project:

- Bob Golebic
- Roberta Daniel
- Jerry Rockwell
- Larry Drexler
- Ashley Sand
- Brian Sand

Written responses to the San Benito County NOP for the former similar project were received from the following agencies, organizations, and members of the public:

- California Department of Transportation District 5 (March 23, 2015; April 1 2015)
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (April 9, 2015)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- Roberta Daniel, President, Cielo Vista Homeowners Association (March 20, 2015)
- Bryan W. Daniel (April 3, 2015)
- Rick Davis, Treasurer, Cielo Vista Homeowners Association (March 31, 2015)
- Rod and Janet George (April 6, 2015)
- Michael and Shannon German (April 10, 2015)
- Don Hogue (Date Unknown)
- Hollister School District (April 2, 2015)
- James and Patricia Hunt (April 11, 2015)
- Jeffrey and Nancy Knight (April 13, 2015)
- Nancy and Bill Knott (March 28, 2015)
- Catrina Antoniono (April 12, 2015)
- Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District (February 22, 2016)
- Hollister School District (April 2, 2015)
- James and Patricia Hunt (April 11, 2015)
- Jeffrey and Nancy Knight (April 13, 2015)
- Nancy and Bill Knott (March 28, 2015)
- Catrina Antoniono (April 12, 2015)
- Local Agency Formation Commission of San Benito County (May 13, 2015)
- Benjamin Mendez Jr. (April 10, 2015)
- Marianne Miller (April 10, 2015)
- Gerald C. Rockwell and Mary Jane Rockwell (April 13, 2015)
- Dale and Darcy Stevenson (April 12, 2015)
- George and Patricia Rocha (April 10, 2015)
- Beth Boyer (March 24, 2015)

The county NOP, comments on the county NOP, a list of attendees of the county scoping meeting, and a summary of the comments made on the former project during the county scoping meeting are included in [Appendix B](#).

Public Review and Comment

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15105, this draft EIR is available for a 45-day public comment period, during which any person or organization may provide comments on the content of the draft EIR to the lead agency. Information on the public review period can also be found on the Office of Planning and Research website: <http://www.ceqanet.ca.gov/QueryForm.asp>.

Comments may be submitted by the following means:

In writing: Abraham Prado, Associate Planner
City of Hollister Development Services
375 Fifth Street Street
Hollister, CA Hollister, CA 95023

By FAX: (831) 634-4913

By email: abraham.prado@hollister.ca.gov

This draft EIR is available for public review at the City of Hollister Development Services Department during regular business hours and on the city's website (www.hollister.ca.gov).

Final EIR

At the conclusion of the 45-day public review period, the City of Hollister will prepare a final EIR, which will include comments received on the draft EIR, responses to comments that raise valid environmental concerns, and any necessary revisions to the draft EIR. The city's proposed responses to comments on the draft EIR will be provided to commenters at least 10 days in advance of project consideration by the City Council.

Public Hearings

The Hollister Planning Commission will consider the EIR and the proposed project at a public hearing and provide a recommendation to the Hollister City Council. The City Council will consider the EIR and the proposed project and make final determinations on both. Public comment will be accepted at the Planning Commission and City Council hearings. Hearing dates will be advertised in accordance with the provisions of State meeting laws and the City of Hollister Municipal Code.

I.4 TERMINOLOGY

Characterization of Impacts

This EIR uses the following terminology to denote the significance of environmental impacts:

- “No impact” means that no change from existing conditions is expected to occur;
- A “less-than-significant impact” is an adverse impact, but would not cause a substantial adverse change in the physical environment, and no mitigation is required;
- A “significant impact” or “potentially significant impact” would, or would potentially, cause a substantial adverse change in the physical environment, and mitigation is required;
- A “less-than-significant impact with implementation of mitigation measures” means that the impact would cause no substantial adverse change in the physical environment if identified mitigation measures are implemented; and
- A “significant and unavoidable impact” would cause a substantial change in the physical environment and cannot be avoided if the project is implemented; mitigation may be recommended, but will not reduce the impact to less-than-significant levels. In some cases the mitigation measures are outside the jurisdiction or control of the lead agency and therefore the lead agency cannot guarantee implementation.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AB	Assembly Bill
AMBAG	Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments
afy	acre-feet per year
BMP	Best Management Practices
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
CALGreen	California Green Building Standards Code
CAP	Climate Action Plan
CAPCOA	California Air Pollution Control Officers Association
CARB	California Air Resources Board

CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CFC	Chlorofluorocarbons
CH ₄	Methane
CNDDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO	Carbon Monoxide
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
CO ₂ e	Carbon Dioxide Equivalent
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
gpda	gallons per day per acre
gpm	gallons per minute
LAFCO	Local Agency Formation Commission
LCC	Land Capability Classification
LESA	Land Evaluation and Site Assessment
LID	Low Impact Development
LOS	Level of Service
mgd	million gallons per day
MMT	Million Metric Tons
MT	Metric Tons
NO ₂	Nitrogen Dioxide
NO _x	Nitrogen Oxides

NOP	Notice of Preparation
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
O ₃	Ozone
PM ₁₀	Inhalable Particulates
PM _{2.5}	Fine Particulates
ppb	parts per billion
ppm	parts per million
ROG	Reactive Organic Gasses
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SB	Senate Bill
SCH	State Clearinghouse
SO ₂	Sulfur Dioxide
SO _x	Sulfur Oxides
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
USA	Urban Service Area
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
VOC	Volatile Organic Compounds

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

Location

The project site is partially located in unincorporated San Benito County (“county”) southeast of and adjacent to the city limits of Hollister (“city”). See [Figure 1, Project Location](#). All of San Benito County is unincorporated with the exception of the cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista, both of which are located near the northern county line.

Existing Project Site and Vicinity Conditions

The 54.9-acre project site is a flag-shaped lot that is located within the southeastern corner of the City of Hollister Sphere of influence but outside of the city limit. A 1.55-acre portion of the project site is located within the City of Hollister city limit; the remaining 53.35 acres would require annexation to the city prior to development. [Figure 2, Aerial Photograph](#), presents an aerial photograph of the project site relative to the City of Hollister Sphere of Influence and city limit.

As illustrated in Figure 2, the project site is bound by existing residential uses and vacant land to the north; Fairview Road and the existing Cielo Vista residential neighborhood to the east; State Route 25 (Airline Highway) to the south, and Enterprise Road and other residential neighborhoods to the west. The northwest corner of the project site adjoins Valley View Park, which is owned and operated by the City of Hollister. The City of Hollister recently approved a residential subdivision on the vacant parcel adjoining the project site to the north. A Gavilan College San Benito Campus, approved by the Gavilan Joint Community College District and the Fairview Corners Residential Specific Plan (which will include 220 residential lots), recently

approved by the county, is planned in the future on land east of Fairview Road at the intersection of Fairview Road and State Route 25. The Sunnyslope County Water District administrative offices, a residential neighborhood, and the Ridgemark Golf and Country Club, which includes a gated residential community, are located further to the south across State Route 25.

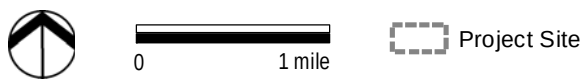
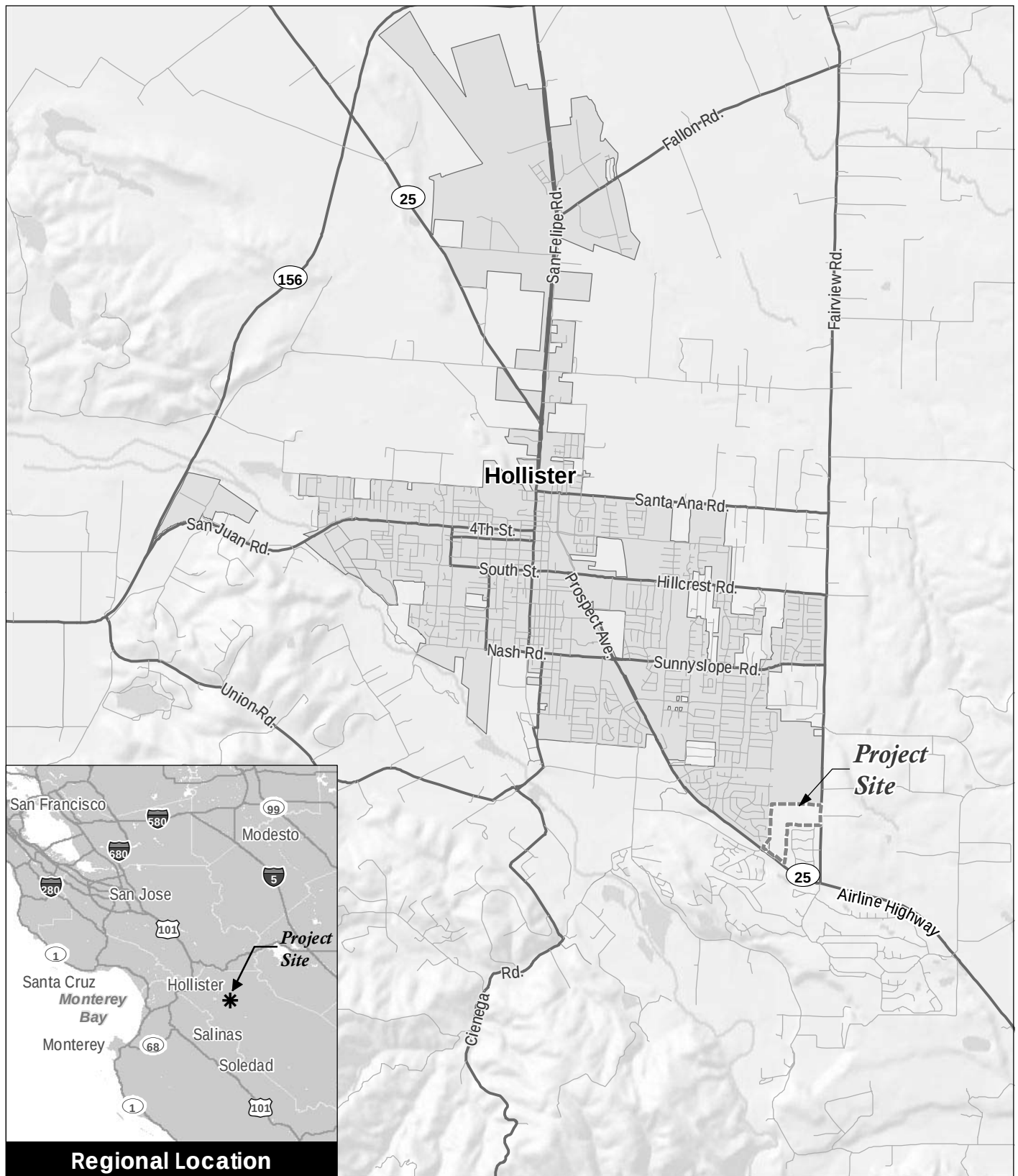
The project site Assessor's parcel numbers are 020-310-009, 057-049-010, and 057-049-002. The undeveloped site has been continuously cultivated since at least 1969 (Hellmann 2015a) and parcel 020-310-009 is currently used for the cultivation of row crops. Unpaved roads encircle the site and are used to facilitate the farming operations. Wire fencing is present along the northerly property boundary and wood fencing separates the site from the Cielo Vista neighborhood to the east. There are no other fences or structures on the property.

The topography of the project site is gently sloped from east to southwest at an average gradient of 2.8 percent, with a gradual elevation change of 51 feet (LSA Associates 2014c). Site drainage is provided by one-foot to three-foot deep agricultural drainage ditches excavated around much of the perimeter of the parcel, with interior drainage only provided by crop furrows. Crops are irrigated by sprinklers and agricultural water is provided by the San Benito County Water District. A small seasonal wetland was delineated at the southwest corner of the site (LSA Associates 2013b). Much of the wetland area had been recently graded and was not present during EMC Planning Group's site reconnaissance survey conducted on July 23, 2014. [Figures 3 and 4, Site Photographs](#), present the existing conditions on the project site.

Project Site and Vicinity Planning Designations

The Hollister general plan land use designations for the site are Low Density Residential (1-8 dwelling units per acre) and Public. The Public land use designation applies to a portion of the site that adjoins the existing Valley View Park. The *San Benito County 2035 General Plan* land use designation for the portions of the site that are located outside the city limit is "Residential Mixed" (RM) (County of San Benito 2035, Figure 3-2). The county's Residential Mixed land use designation allows a maximum residential density of 20 dwelling units per acre.

The City of Hollister and San Benito County general plan land use designations for the site and vicinity are presented in [Figure 5, Land Use Designations](#). As illustrated by Figure 5, land north of the site is designated as "Low Density Residential" (1-8 dwelling units per acre) by the Hollister general plan. The Cielo Vista residential subdivision adjoins the project site to the east and is located in unincorporated San Benito County within the City of Hollister Sphere of Influence. The Hollister general plan land use designation for this neighborhood is also "Low Density Residential". The *San Benito County 2035 General Plan* land use designation for the Cielo Vista neighborhood is "Residential Mixed" (RM). Unincorporated areas adjoining the south side



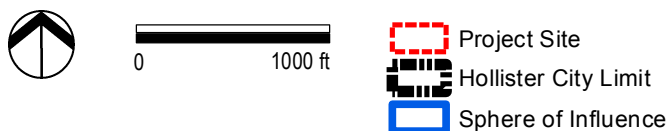
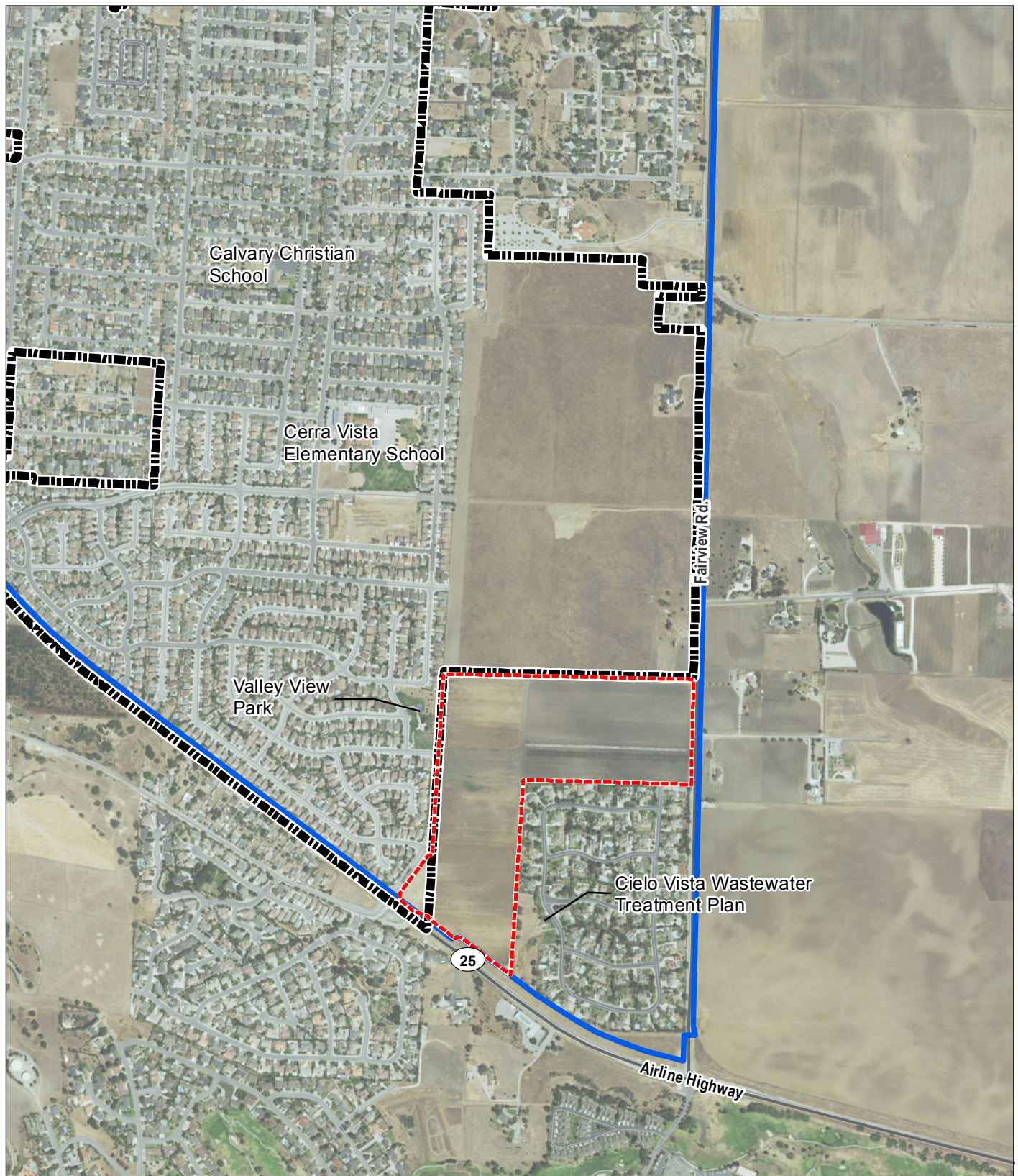
Source: ESRI 2015

Figure 1

Project Location

Roberts Ranch Subdivision EIR

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Source: Esri 2015

Figure 2

Aerial Photograph

Roberts Ranch Subdivision EIR

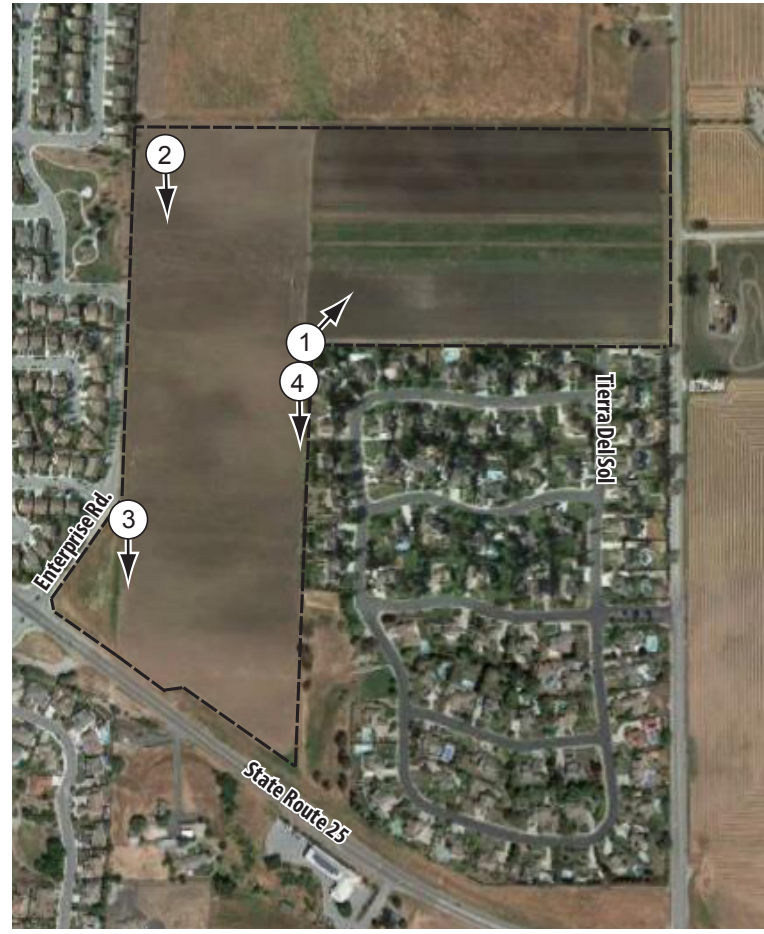
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① Active agricultural row crops on eastern portion of site



② Fallow western portion of site covered with weedy plants



 Project Boundary



Source: Google Earth 2016



③ Seasonal wetland in southwestern corner.



④ Existing dirt maintenance road along the eastern edge of the site and wood fencing as part of the Cielo Vista subdivision

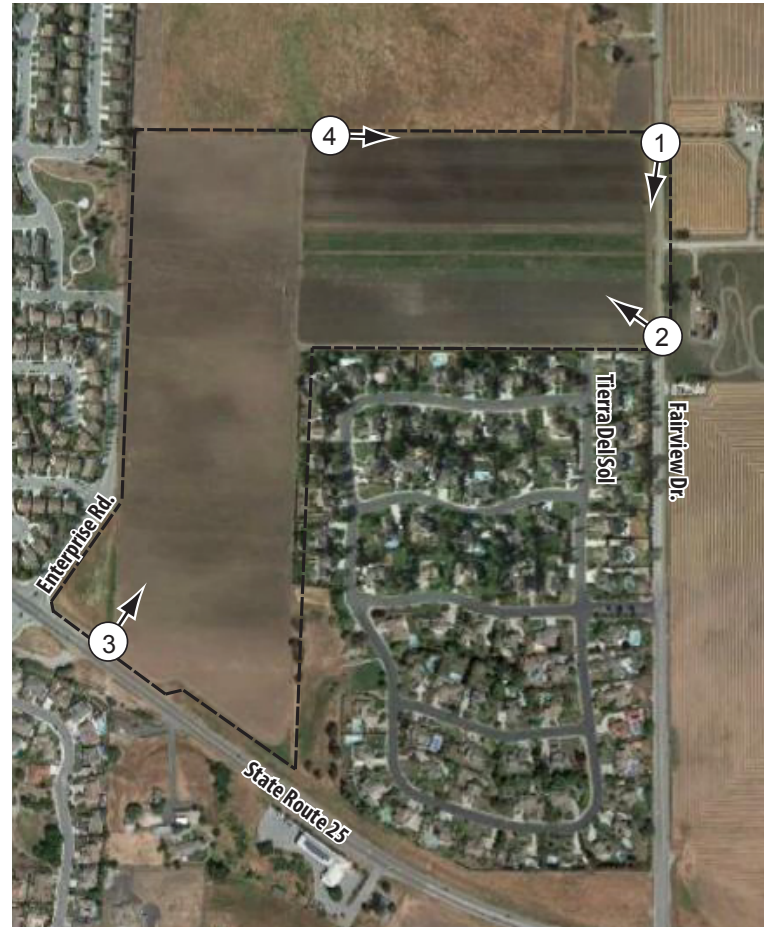
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① Agriculture access road and drainage ditch along north eastern portion of the project site



② Active agricultural row crops on eastern portion of site



 Project Site



Source: Google Earth 2016



③ View north from southern portion of the project site, north of State Route 25



④ Wire fencing and dirt access road along northern project boundary

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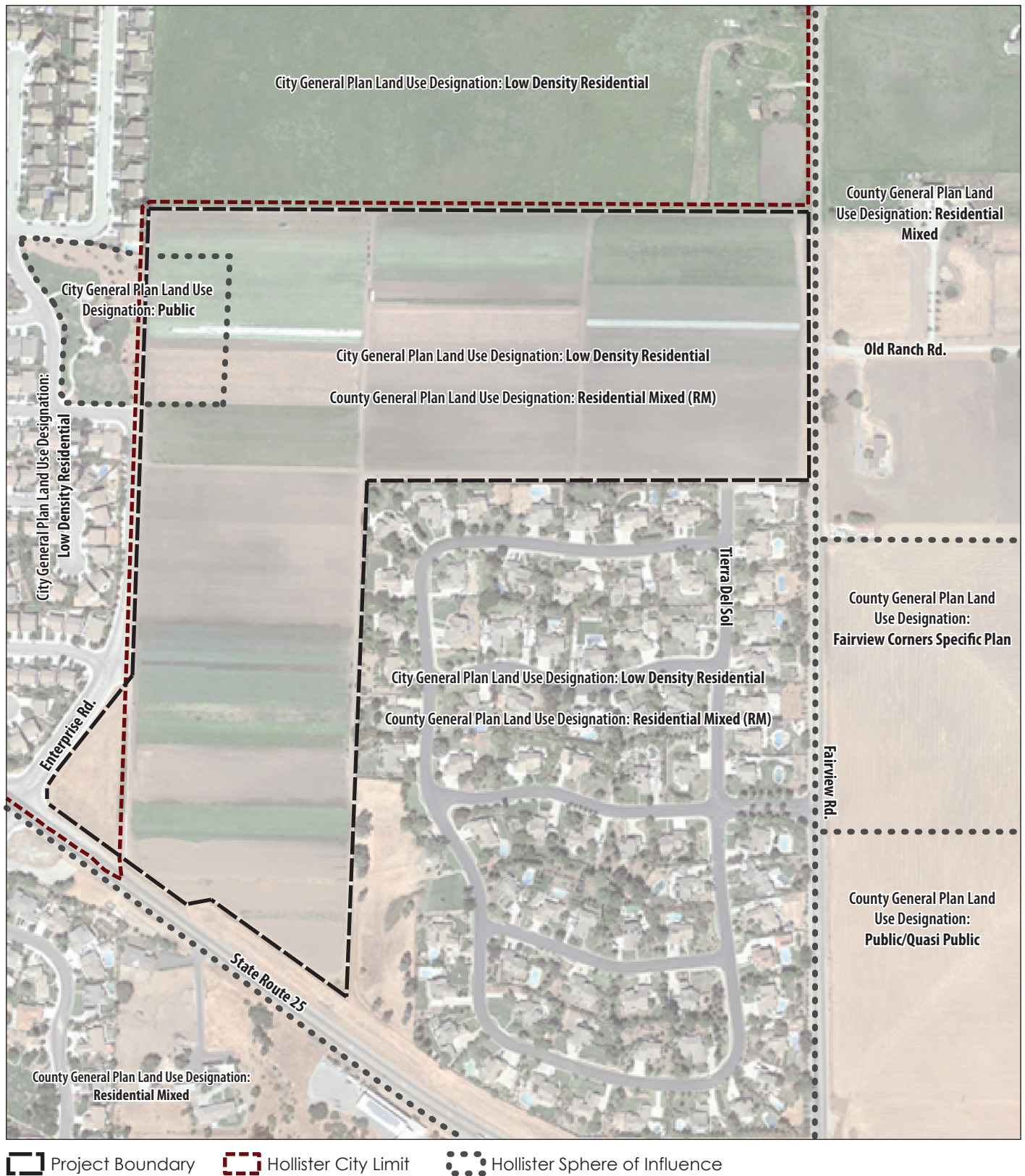


Figure 5

Land Use Designations

Roberts Ranch Subdivision EIR

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of State Route 25 also are designated by the *San Benito County 2035 General Plan* as “Residential Mixed”. The Valley View Estates neighborhood to the west of the project site opposite Enterprise Road is located within the city limit and designated by the Hollister general plan as “Low Density Residential”. Valley View Park is designated as “Public”.

2.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

A similar residential subdivision proposal for this site was submitted to San Benito County in January 2013. A Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR was published by the county for that project (March 13, 2015 – April 13, 2015) and comments were received (SCH # 2015031055). A scoping meeting was conducted by the county for the project. The applications were subsequently withdrawn from the county and the applicants submitted new applications for a redesigned project to the City of Hollister.

2.3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Overview

The proposed project is a prezone and annexation to the City of Hollister, a vesting tentative map for a 206-lot residential subdivision with a net residential density of 6.3 dwelling units per acre, and a Planned Unit Development (PUD). The residential subdivision includes 192 single-family residential lots, 14 multi-family lots for which a PUD is required, and dedication of 2.54 acres of land adjacent to Valley View Park to enable the city to expand the park in the future. The 14 multi-family residential lots would consist of seven duplex lots and seven triplex lots. The proposed project would provide a total of 227 residences. The proposed project is consistent with the City of Hollister General Plan Low Density Residential land use designation, and, according to the population estimates for the City of Hollister provided by the California Department of Finance (2016), the proposed project would provide housing for an estimated 788 persons (based on 3.47 persons per household).

Design level details are not yet available for the proposed multi-family uses; however, design approval would be required once residential development design details are submitted for the multi-family component of the project, and as a condition of approval for the Planned Unit Development application. The proposed project also includes public land uses including roadways, rights-of-way, a linear park, improved bicycle and pedestrian paths and utilities easements. The construction of recreational facilities on the 2.54-acre land dedication for

expansion of Valley View Park would be undertaken by future developers of the project site as a condition of approval required by the city. All public improvements and the expanded community park would be maintained by the city, with the costs of the maintenance funded through the existing Mello-Roos District No. 1 and by annexing into the city's existing landscape and lighting district, once the project site is annexed into the City of Hollister and required planning applications are approved. The lot configuration and site plan for the entire project site is presented in [Figure 6, Vesting Tentative Map](#), and in [Appendix C](#). A conceptual site plan for the proposed multi-family residential lots is presented in [Figure 7, Multi-family Residential Site Plan](#).

Project Characteristics

The following components of the project are based on the project application materials and the proposed vesting tentative map (Figure 6). The proposed land subdivision shown on the map, including public right-of-way, parkland dedication, and storm drainage facilities is summarized in [Table 1, Project Characteristics](#).

Table 1 Project Characteristics

Land Use	Acres	Lots	Residential Units
Single-family Residential	32.94	192	192
Multi-family Residential	2.70	14	35
Residential Units	35.64	206	227
Roadways (right-of-way)	13.92	n/a	n/a
Community Park Land Dedication	2.54	1	n/a
Linear Park	0.79	1	n/a
ROW Dedications/Easements	1.09	5	
Storm Drainage Facilities	0.78	2	n/a
Total	54.90	9	227

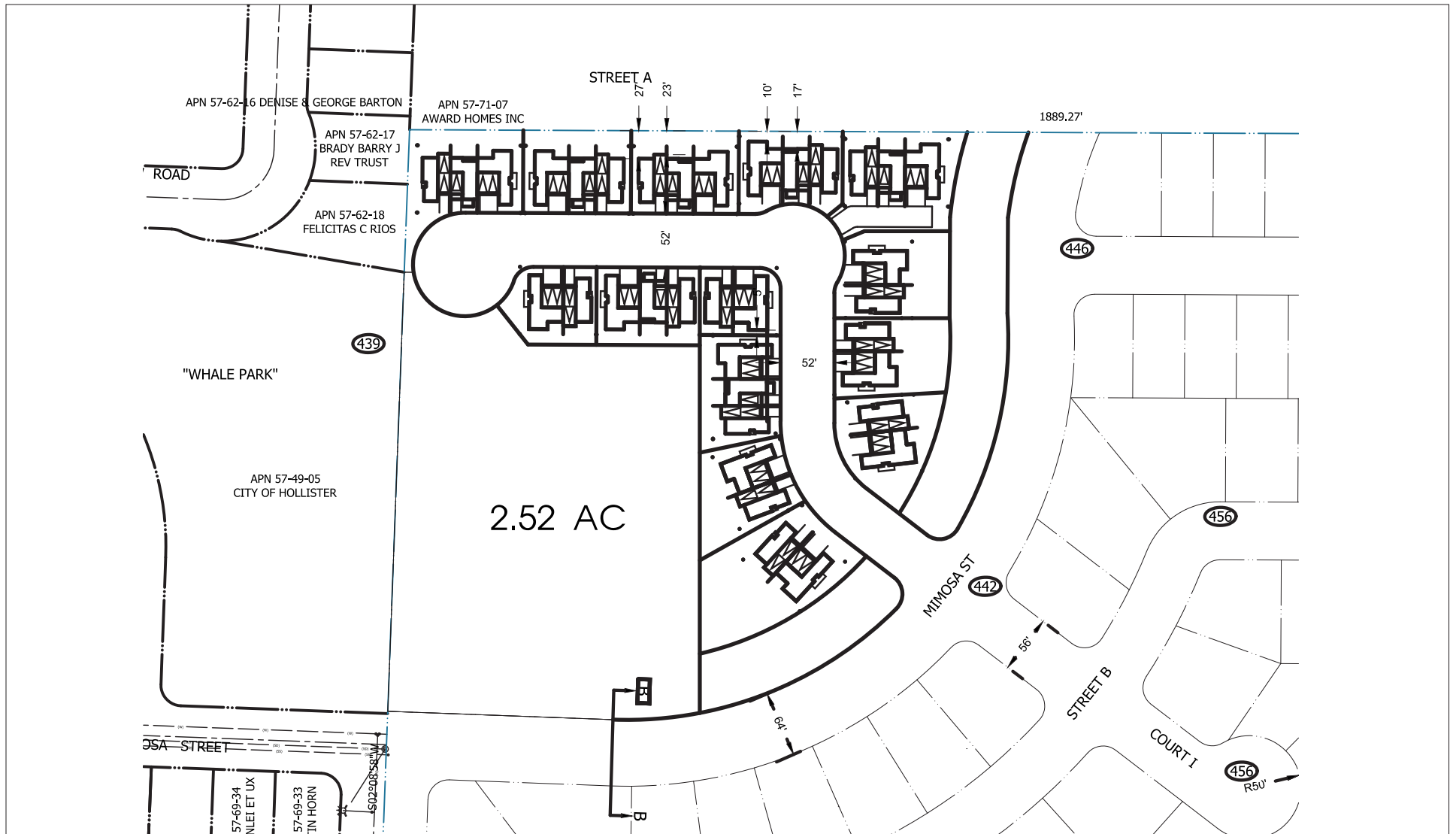
Source: Builders Land Group 2016, San Benito Surveying & Engineering 2016



Source: San Benito Surveying & Engineering 2016

Figure 6
Vesting Tentative Map
Roberts Ranch Subdivision EIR

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Source: William Hezmalhalch Architects 2016

Figure 7
Multi-family Residential Site Plan

Roberts Ranch Subdivision EIR

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Proposed Subdivision

The proposed residential uses on the site would include multi-family uses near the northwest corner of the site, adjacent to the proposed parkland site, north of Mimosa Street and would contain 14 lots with triplex and duplex uses. The minimum lot size for the multi-family parcels is 6,000 square feet. Proposed single-family residential uses would wrap around the perimeter of the adjoining Cielo Vista single-family residential subdivision, and consist of single-family residential lots ranging in size from a minimum of 10,890 square feet (one-quarter-acre) to approximately 19,265 square feet. The remainder of the site would consist of single-family residential lots also with a minimum size of 6,000 square feet. Other than the 14 multi-family lots near the park, each single-family lot is anticipated to support construction of a one- or two-story single-family residence. A 30-foot rear yard setback is proposed on all lots adjoining the Cielo Vista neighborhood. The vesting tentative map and preliminary utilities plans are included on sheets 3 and 4 of the vesting tentative map included in [Appendix C](#).

Circulation

Vehicle access to the project would be provided by roadway extensions from Enterprise Road off of Glenview Drive and Mimosa Street. Enterprise Road would be widened and improved with new curbs, gutters, and sidewalks on the east side of the road within and adjoining the project site. Mimosa Street would be extended through the site to the adjacent residential neighborhood to the north. All internal roadways would include curbs, gutter, and sidewalks. Internal roadway circulation consists primarily of a grid pattern radiating outward from the proposed parkland dedication area adjacent to Valley View Park. The street configuration includes one cul-de-sac located at the southwest corner of the project site, and another cul-de-sac in the multi-family neighborhood near the park. The proposed project includes an approximate 32.8-foot-wide land dedication over a distance of approximately 244 feet near to the Caltrans public Right-of-Way along the project site frontage of State Route 25 (refer to Sheet 2 of the vesting tentative map), and a 32-foot-wide land dedication to San Benito County along the Fairview Road frontage for future widening of this roadway by San Benito County.

A summary of the widths of public right-of-way improvements and dedications for future public roadway improvements on and off the site are summarized in [Table 2, Public Roadway Improvements and Right of Way Dedications](#).

In addition to these roadway improvements, the proposed project includes construction of a 20-foot wide emergency vehicle access between lots 110 and 111 to provide access exclusively for emergency vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. Proposed construction includes bollards that would be designed and installed in conformance to city standards to prevent unauthorized vehicle access. The proposed project also includes the construction of landscaped bicycle and pedestrian paths between lots 131 and 132, and lots 27 and 28 to provide connectivity between

Valley View Park, Cerra Vista Elementary School, and other areas of Hollister with existing and future residential developments located north and east of the project site.

Table 2 Public Roadway Improvements and Right of Way Dedications¹

Roadway/ROW	ROW	Median	Travel Lanes	Curb, Gutter, and Sidewalk
Interior (Streets A-H)	52-56	-	18	8-10.5
Mimosa Street	64	14	20	12-13
Enterprise Road	84	14	12-13	10
Fairview Road (Land Dedication)	32	-	-	-
State Route 25 (Land Dedication)	32.8	-	-	-

Source: San Benito Engineering 2016, Sheet 4.

Note: 1. All values are shown in linear feet.

Park and Linear Park

The proposed project includes dedication of 2.54 acres of land adjoining Valley View Park to allow for its expansion, and a 40-foot wide linear park (0.79 acres) that would be improved with a meandering path for bicycles and pedestrians. The linear park would provide a connection between Valley View Park and existing and approved but not yet built neighborhoods to the north. The project developer would be responsible for construction of a public restroom and recreational facilities such as turf areas, pathways, and other landscaping within the 2.54-acre expansion site. The City of Hollister enforces parkland requirements through conditions of project approval.

Infrastructure/Utilities

Water. The project is located within the Sunnyslope County Water District (water district) service area boundary for potable and recycled water. The proposed project would connect to the water district's infrastructure for potable and recycled water. The proposed project includes several water connection options based on the pace of other approved development in the vicinity. As noted on Sheet 3, utility plan, of the vesting tentative map, if the approved West of Fairview project adjoining the northern boundary of the project site is developed before the proposed project, connection would be made to the water district's potable and recycled water systems off Mimosa Street within that development. If the proposed project is developed prior to the West of Fairview project, connections would be made to the water district's existing water and recycled water main infrastructure on Fairview Road. Recycled water pipelines would be

extended to the parkland dedication parcel with the intent of providing recycled water for irrigation of the future extension of Valley View Park. Domestic water pipelines would be installed under roadway infrastructure and would connect into existing water mains immediately adjacent to the site on Enterprise Road, Fairview Road, and State Route 25. A redundant water line also is included as potential connection to the Cielo Vista residential neighborhood in a utility easement between lots 190 and 191.

Wastewater. The project site is currently located within the Sunnyslope County Water District Cielo Vista Community Service Area, which is included in the Hollister Urban Area boundary for sanitary sewer collection and treatment services (City of Hollister 2010). City of Hollister sewer mains are present on Enterprise Road, near Glenview Drive and Mimosa Street immediately adjacent to the west boundary of the project site. The proposed project would connect to the existing City of Hollister sanitary sewer main in Enterprise Road near Glenview Drive and Mimosa Street, once the City annexes the project site into the City's wastewater service area.

As illustrated by the Utility Plan (Appendix C, Vesting Tentative Map Sheet 3 and Sheet 4), the proposed project provides bicycle and pedestrian easements that provide utility connection opportunities for the adjacent Cielo Vista Subdivision or development within the Hollister Urban Area east of Fairview Road, should these developments choose in the future to connect to the city's sanitary sewer and/or water infrastructure through the project site. Three 20-foot wide sanitary sewer easements and construction of sewer stub infrastructure are proposed in the following locations, beneath the proposed landscaped bicycle and pedestrian paths:

- between lots 169 and 170 to enable future connections by the existing Cielo Vista neighborhood and the approved, but not yet constructed, Fairview Corners and Gavilan College projects located in unincorporated San Benito County east of Fairview Road; and
- between lots 23 and 24 that will enable future development in unincorporated San Benito County along Old Ranch Road east of Fairview Road to connect to the city's sanitary sewer system.

Storm Water. The entire site would be graded to drain through catch basins and underground street pipes for conveyance westward. Storm water would discharge into two proposed storm water retention and treatment basins on the two parcels that flank the project entry at the intersection of Enterprise Road with the proposed Glenview Drive. A bioinfiltration swale and retention basin is proposed within the parkland dedication area. The proposed project would implement best management practices to treat the storm water in the basins prior to discharge into the existing storm drain system that is located within the adjacent Valley View Estates subdivision west of Enterprise Road. Storm water would ultimately be conveyed to the Enterprise Basin located south of State Route 25.

Grading

Mass grading is proposed during the first phase of the proposed project; site-specific grading for utilities infrastructure and building pads would occur as development of each phase proceeds. As shown on Sheet 3 of the vesting tentative map (Appendix C), the proposed project would require topographical alternations with a maximum excavation depth of four feet and maximum fill of eight feet at the lower elevations of the site. Grading would consist of approximately 72,600 cubic yards of excavation and approximately 102,500 cubic yards of fill. The proposed site contours would require approximately 29,900 cubic yards of imported soils.

Public Services

Law enforcement services will be provided by the Hollister Police Department, and fire protection will be provided by the Hollister Fire Department. Local telephone service will be provided by AT&T, cable television by Charter TV, and gas and electric service by PG&E.

Phasing

The proposed project would be implemented by phases over a period of eight (8) years. The anticipated construction start date is 2019. Mass grading, erosion control measures, and storm water detention, retention and treatment facilities would be completed in the first phase over a period of 18 months. The project could begin construction as soon as 12 months after receiving necessary approvals and completion of mitigation requirements. Therefore, buildout of the project site consistent with the vesting tentative map is anticipated in approximately 2027.

Off-site Changes

A portion of Enterprise Road is located on the project site. As shown on the vesting tentative map the proposed project also includes widening the Enterprise Road right-of-way from 42 feet to 84 feet with dual traffic lanes separated by a 14-foot median (refer to Table 2). Sidewalk, curbs and gutters would be constructed along the west side of the roadway. Connections to existing potable and recycled water mains present in adjacent roadway rights-of-way may involve construction within adjacent roadways. Roadway improvements and the land upon which they are constructed would be dedicated to the City of Hollister.

Project Approvals

Prezone and Annexation

The proposed project would prezone 53.35 acres of the 54.9-acre project site to R-1, and require annexation of the 53.35-acre site into the City of Hollister.

Subdivision

The proposed project includes a Vesting Tentative Map with 192 lots for single-family residences, seven (7) lots for duplex residences and seven (7) lots for triplex residences, for a total of 206 lots and 227 dwelling units. The proposed residential density is 6.37 units per net acre based on 35.64 net acres of residential uses (Refer to Table 1), consistent with the Hollister General Plan Low Density Residential land use designations.

Planned Unit Development

The proposed project includes a Planned Unit Development to allow a mix of housing types and classes (duplex and triplex uses) within the R-1 zone district.

2.4 STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15124(b), a clear statement of objectives and the underlying purpose of the project must be included in an EIR. The following is a statement of the project objectives based on information provided by the project applicant:

- Provide an opportunity to implement the Hollister 2005 General Plan infill strategy by obtaining approval for residential development of a 54.9-acre site identified by the Hollister 2005 General Plan as a “Phase I Priority Infill Area”;
- Provide a visually attractive and distinctive high-quality residential community with an average net residential density of six dwelling units per acre, consistent with the Low Density Residential (1-8 dwelling units per acre) land use designation and typical residential densities (Hollister 2005, Table A23) that are necessary to meet the city’s regional housing needs;
- Provide a mix of housing types to increase the city’s available housing opportunities to meet the needs of, and be affordable to, a variety of household sizes, types and income levels;
- Provide cohesive and integrated land uses and infrastructure in proximity to existing utilities, infrastructure, and public services, adjacent existing neighborhoods, and public spaces;
- Dedicate land sufficient to complete the existing Valley View Park and a linear park that will provide pedestrian and bicycle access to Valley View Park;

- Promote an energy efficient community that supports quality of life through energy and water conservation, and connectivity with existing infrastructure and services;
- Provide an economically competitive, financially feasible, and environmentally sound development plan that promotes community livability and quality of life;
- Provide safe and quiet neighborhoods, by creating an internal circulation pattern that minimizes speed of traffic and related noise in neighborhoods;
- Create a convenient, attractive pedestrian and bicycling network that will encourage and facilitate walking and bicycling, consistent with the city's Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School policies and programs, by providing pedestrian and bicycle connections from existing and planned neighborhoods to the north and east for convenient and safe access to parks, recreational and school facilities; and
- Enable independent development of each planned phase within the project, while ensuring that all infrastructure, facilities, services and amenities needed to serve the project are constructed in a timely manner and have adequate capacity for each phase.

2.5 EIR USES AND APPROVALS

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15124(d), following is a list of agencies that are expected to use this EIR in their decision-making, and a list of the approvals for which this EIR will be used. These lists include information that is known to the lead agency.

Lead Agency – City of Hollister

- Pre-zone the portion of the property outside the city limit to the Single-family Residential (R-1) District.
- Annexation approval prior to submittal of annexation request to LAFCO.
- Vesting Tentative Map (206 residential lots and related infrastructure).
- Planned Unit Development (duplex and triplex uses on 14 of the 206 residential lots).
- Contract approval to provide sanitary sewer and storm drain service with the City of Hollister.
- Development Agreement, if appropriate.

Other Agencies

Development of the proposed project will require the following related permits and approvals from the listed responsible agencies:

- LAFCO
 - Annexation of 53.35 acres by the City of Hollister
- Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board ("RWQCB")
 - Water quality certification pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.
- Caltrans District #5
 - Encroachment permit (utilities infrastructure connections in State Route 25)
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife ("CDFW")
 - An incidental take permit pursuant to Section 2081 of the California Endangered Species Act.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ("USFWS")
 - Consultation pursuant to Section 7 and Section 10 of the Endangered Species Act.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ("Corps")
 - A permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, following consultation with the USFWS and water quality certification with the RWQCB as identified above.
- Sunnyslope County Water District
 - Water and recycled water service connections

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3.0

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

3.1 AESTHETICS

This section of the Draft EIR addresses the project's effects on visual resources, the change in the visual character of the project site and its surroundings due to the project, and the impacts of new sources of glare and light that would be added by the project. Unless otherwise noted the discussion in this section is based upon independent site investigation, information found in the *City of Hollister General Plan (2005)* the *San Benito County 2035 General Plan (2015)*.

Comments on the city and county NOPs were received from the Cielo Vista Homeowners' Association and from a number of individual property owners and residents of the adjacent Cielo Vista subdivision (east) and Valley View (west) residential neighborhoods. The comments identified concerns regarding an increase in sources of lighting, effects to day and nighttime views, and project design. The city's NOP and comment letters are included in [Appendix A](#). The county NOP and comment letters are included in [Appendix B](#).

Environmental Setting

Scenic Vistas

A scenic vista is generally described as a clear, expansive view of significant regional features possessing visual and aesthetic qualities of value to the community. The City of Hollister is surrounded on three sides by mountains: the Gabilan Mountains to the south and west, and the Diablo Range to the east. These mountains provide scenic vistas and a natural backdrop to the city's highly modified landscape and visually important attributes of the scenic character of Hollister. In addition to the distant rim of the coastal mountains further to the west, the city is ringed by foothills to the east, south and west.

Visual Quality and Character

The overall visual character of the city has transformed over the past three decades from a predominantly agricultural community composed of a residential core arranged in a traditional tree-lined grid pattern and surrounded by orchards and fields into a largely suburban community of subdivisions and commercial strips that sprawl into farmlands. The visual character of the city is further defined by a lack of visually cohesive community design elements as evidenced by a variety of competing land uses, and building scales and types (City of Hollister 2005b, p. 4.7-1). The project site is located immediately south of the city, and is bounded by existing residential neighborhoods to west and east, by the Valley View Park and a planned residential neighborhood to the north, and by State Route 25 to the south. The topography of the site is relatively flat with a descending 51-foot change in elevation from northeast to southwest. There are no trees on the site. The project site is vacant and has historically been used primarily for agricultural production. Representative photographs showing the visual character of the site are presented in Figures 3 and 4, Site Photographs. As illustrated by Figure 3 and Figure 4, the predominant visual character of the project site consists of agricultural crops or fallow farmland.

Public Views

Existing public views of the site that would be altered by the proposed project are available from Enterprise Road and public roadways in the adjacent subdivision to the west, Valley View Park, Fairview Road, public roadways within the Cielo Vista residential subdivision to the east, and from State Route 25 to the south. Public views are unobstructed from all vantage points along Enterprise Road and from within the park. Public views from Fairview Road are limited due to the shape and orientation of the project site relative to Fairview Road and Enterprise Road. Public views of the project site are limited from within the adjacent Cielo Vista residential subdivision, a gated community. Views of the site from State Route 25 are limited by topography; the roadway is at a slightly lower elevation than the project site.

Regulatory Setting

State

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) through its California Scenic Highway Mapping System considers certain scenic corridors along travel routes as visual resources of statewide importance. Although there are no officially designated scenic highways in San Benito County, State Route 25 between State Route 198 and State Route 156 is identified by Caltrans as being eligible for listing as a scenic highway.

City of Hollister General Plan

The following policies and implementation actions of the City of Hollister general plan address visual resources and aesthetics, and are relevant to the proposed project:

Policies

LU1.9 Cohesive Design Elements. Use cohesive design elements in street trees, lighting and street furniture to strengthen character of the special planning areas and residential neighborhoods.

LU3.2 Street Trees. Promote street tree planting and other community design features to maintain visual quality and small town atmosphere.

LU3.5 Open Space Preservation. Require the provision of usable open space in multi-family residential developments in the form of ground-floor patios, upper-floor decks and balconies, and common recreational facilities.

LU3.6 Landscaping On Public and Private Sites. Require landscaping on public and private sites, including entry areas, street medians, parks, schools, parking lots, plazas, courtyards and recreational areas.

LU4.5 Lighting and Furniture. Require compatible pedestrian and bicycle pathways and automobile routes with design elements that use buildings, trees, lighting and street furniture to define spaces for travelers.

LU7.1 Site Planning. Promote and encourage the use of creative residential site planning techniques such as clustered development and planned development to facilitate the objective of providing a mix and range of housing types.

LU8.3 Residential Character. Ensure that new development in multifamily neighborhoods supports, rather than detracts from, the existing residential character of the area.

LU8.4 Neighborhood Scale. Preserve and enhance the character of existing residential neighborhoods by limiting encroachment of new buildings and activities that are out of scale and character with surrounding uses.

LU9.1 Natural Design Elements. Ensure that building design takes into consideration air circulation, natural lighting, views, solar orientation, and shading areas to interior and exterior spaces.

LU11.1 Well-Articulated Buildings. Ensure that buildings are well articulated. Avoid large unarticulated shapes in building design such as blank walls or an unbroken series of garage doors on street frontages.

LU11.2 Unique Design Elements. Ensure that building designs include varied building façades, rooflines, and building heights to create interesting and differentiated building forms and shapes.

H2.2 Design that Fits into the Neighborhood Context. Enhance neighborhood identity and sense of community by designing new housing with a sensitive transition of scale and compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood.

H2.3 Housing Design Principles. Provide stable, safe, and attractive neighborhoods through high quality architecture, site planning, and amenities that address the following principles:

- a. Building Bulk Requirements
- b. Street Patterns
- c. “Sense of Place”
- d. Visual Impact of Parking and Garages
- e. Quality Building Materials

Implementation Actions

LU.J. Lighting Guidelines. In order to minimize light trespass and greater overall light levels in the city, new development and projects making significant parking lot improvements or proposing new lighting shall be required to prepare a lighting plan for review by city planning staff. Require design guidelines to include the following provisions for lighting plans:

- a. All light sources should be fully shielded from off-site view.
- b. All lights to be downcast except where it can be proved to not adversely affect other parcels.
- c. Escape of light to the atmosphere should be minimized.
- d. Low intensity, indirect light sources should be encouraged, except where other types of lighting is warranted for public safety reasons.
- e. On-demand lighting systems should be encouraged.

- f. Mercury, metal halide, and similar intense and bright lights should not be permitted except where their need is specifically approved and their source of light is restricted.

City of Hollister Municipal Code

Section 16.16.030 of the Hollister Municipal Code provides the general requirements for Planned Unit Developments including maximum net densities consistent with general plan land use densities, minimum development standards, and lot sizes, and allows mixes of dwelling unit classes and types beyond that allowed by existing zoning.

Municipal Code Section 17.16.090 regulates exterior lighting, and includes performance and design standards for new development to provide adequate lighting for safety and security; reduce light pollution, light trespass, glare, sky glow impacts, and offensive light sources; prevent inappropriate, poorly designed or installed outdoor lighting; encourage quality lighting design, light fixture shielding, uniform light intensities, maximum lighting levels within and on property lines, and lighting controls; and promote efficient and cost-effective lighting to conserve energy. These lighting standards require that lighting be shielded with full cutoff or recessed to reduce light splay to adjoining properties, public right-of-way, and the night sky, through the use of measures such as down lighting and fixture shielding to confine glare and reflection within the site.

Municipal Code Section 17.24.240 provides for the use of Planned Development Permits to afford maximum flexibility in site planning/property development, design, and density/intensity, while protecting the integrity and character of the residential areas of the city; encourage innovation and the development of affordable housing; and ensure consistency with the general plan. This section also outlines architectural and site plan design review procedures for Planned Unit Development and requires conformance with adopted design guidelines and policies.

Thresholds or Standards of Significance

CEQA Guidelines Appendix G indicates that a project may have a significant effect on the environment if it would:

- have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- substantially damage scenic resources including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway;

- substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings; and/or
- create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the adjacent area.

City of Hollister General Plan EIR

The general plan EIR evaluated the environmental effects of general plan buildout using the following criteria:

“a significant impact on visual quality [would occur] if one or more of the following conditions would result from the implementation of the proposed project: (1) A substantial change to the existing visual quality of the region or elimination of visual resources therein; (2) Development that is incompatible in scale with adjoining development; or (3) Obstruction of any scenic vista or view open to the public, or the creation of an aesthetically offensive site open to public view.”

The general plan EIR did not identify any impacts to visual and scenic resources resulting from general plan buildout conditions that could not be mitigated to a less than significant level through compliance with the general plan policies identified previously in this section. The Development Services Department is responsible for implementing and monitoring those policies and programs.

Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

Environmental Topics Eliminated from Further Analysis

Section 21002.1.e of the CEQA statute requires an EIR discussion to focus on those potential effects on the environment of a proposed project which the lead agency has determined are or may be significant. Lead agencies may limit discussion on other effects to a brief explanation as to why those effects are not potentially significant.

The project site is not located within a designated scenic vista identified by either the City of Hollister general plan or the San Benito County general plan. There are no State-designated scenic highways in San Benito County; however, the county has designated U.S. Highway 101, State Route 129, and State Route 146 as scenic highways (San Benito County 2015a). The project site is not within view of these locally-designated scenic highways. Therefore, no impacts to scenic vistas or to visual resources within a state or locally-designated scenic highway would occur, and no further analysis of these topics is required.

Less than Significant Impact: Substantially Degrade the Existing Visual Character or Quality of the Site and its Surroundings

The proposed project would change the visual character of the project site from a rural agricultural landscape to a residential neighborhood. Future development of the project site would include one- and two-story single-family homes, one- to three-story multifamily homes, new landscaping and trees, fencing, as well as other structures and elements ancillary to residential development, consistent with existing residential neighborhoods in the city's adjacent R-1 residential zone districts, land dedication for an extension of Valley View Park and the provision of a linear park.

As noted in the environmental setting, the site has limited contribution to the overall visual quality and character of the city and adjacent neighborhoods. Public views of the site are limited to those available from public streets including Fairview Road, Enterprise Road and State Route 25 in the immediate vicinity of the project site. The aesthetic value of these public views is low due to the proximity of adjacent residential development and topography when viewed from State Route 25.

The general plan EIR identified buildout of the city's general plan planning area to have a potentially significant impact on the visual character of the area; however, implementation of design guidelines, as well as the application of other design policies intended to mitigate any potentially adverse aesthetic effects of development, reduced this impact to a less-than-significant level. The proposed project would contribute to the impacts identified in the general plan EIR. Although architectural plans and building elevations are not yet prepared, the proposed project is subject to compliance with the general plan policies listed previously in this section and with the city's planned development permit regulations, which require the provision of design guidelines and site planning standards to ensure harmonious development consistent with other nearby neighborhoods within the city.

Development of the project site is subject to conformance with these general plan policies and design guidelines, in addition to the planned development permit requirements of Municipal Code Section 17.24.240. Compliance with these policies, implementing actions and code provisions would ensure that new development is consistent with the city's neighborhood and community character. Therefore, the visual impact associated with the change from agricultural to urban visual character is less than significant. Additionally, developers of the project site are required to implement a performance agreement, which would ensure that the proposed project would comply with these policies and programs. No mitigation is required.

Less than Significant Impact: New Sources of Substantial Light or Glare that Adversely Affect Public Day or Nighttime Views

The project would introduce new sources of light and glare where none currently exist. Future development of the site would include exterior residential lighting and outdoor lighting for streets and the parks and recreational facilities constructed on the extension of Valley View Park. Future development of the project site is subject to conformance with general plan policies listed previously in this section, and design guidelines in addition to Municipal Code Section 17.16.090 that regulates exterior lighting. Compliance with these policies, actions and municipal code provisions would ensure that new sources of light and glare would not result in a significant impact. Therefore, the light and glare impacts associated with the proposed project would be less than significant. No mitigation is required.

3.2 AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST RESOURCES

This section presents the project's impacts on agricultural and forest resources, specifically, the conversion of agricultural uses to suburban uses, any conflicts with Williamson Act contracts, and other changes that could result in conversion of important farmland or forest resources on or adjacent to the project site. Unless otherwise noted, the following analysis is based on information obtained from the Hollister General Plan (general plan) and general plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Comments on the city and county NOPs received from residents within the adjacent Cielo Vista neighborhood requested discussion of the loss of agricultural land on the project site. The city NOP and comment letters are included in [Appendix A](#). The county NOP and comment letters are included in [Appendix B](#).

Environmental Setting

Importance of Agriculture in San Benito County

Agriculture is the largest economic activity in San Benito County, with a total agricultural commodity value of \$328,261,000 according to the most recent San Benito County crop report (San Benito County 2014). The fertile soils of the area support field crops, fruit and nut crops, vegetable and row crops, cattle, and other livestock and poultry. Over the past decade, gross agricultural value has grown by \$62,261,000. Vegetable and row crops had the highest gross sales with \$226,798,000 which accounted for 69 percent of the total agricultural commodity value. Of the field crops, pasture/rangeland and nursery stocks had the highest value worth \$10,160,000 and 10,260,000 respectively. Spinach, (\$31,281,000) and miscellaneous vegetables

and row crops (\$59,842,000) were the highest grossing row crops. Wine Grapes (\$15,335,000) and miscellaneous fruit and nut crops (\$19,979,000) were the highest grossing fruit and nut crops. Gross cattle production value was \$23,284,000. San Benito County's top export countries were Mexico, Canada, Japan, Italy, and Taiwan. Organic farming is an important part of the agricultural economy with over 75 certified registered organic growers. The highest grossing organic products include salad mix (\$56,469,000) and miscellaneous vegetables (\$36,598,000).

Farmland Value Assessment Methods

Land Capability Classification. The United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service classifies each soil type in a land capability classification, which indicates the suitability of soils for most kinds of crops. Groupings are made according to the limitations of the soils when used to grow crops, and the risk of damage to soils when they are used in agriculture. Soils are rated from Class I to Class VIII, with soils having the fewest limitations receive the highest rating (Class I). Specific subclasses are also utilized to further characterize soils. The land capability classification generally shows soil suitability for most kinds of farming. [Table 3, Soil Classifications](#), shows the general agricultural land uses for each soil classification.

Storie Index Rating. The Natural Resources Conservation Service uses the Storie index rating system to numerically express (from 0, lowest, to 100, highest) the relative degree of suitability and value of a soil map unit for general intensive farming purposes. The rating is based on soil profile characteristics; texture of the surface horizon; slope; and other conditions, such as high water table, risk of erosion, and high alkalinity.

Important Farmlands Mapping Program. Under the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, the California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, publishes an important farmlands map and a list of soil types that qualify for determination as important farmlands. The Important Farmlands Map for San Benito County provides an inventory of agricultural resources in the county. The map does not necessarily reflect general plan or zoning designations, city limit lines, changing economic or market conditions, or other land use policies, although developed areas are designated as such.

The Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program defines Prime Farmland as land with the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics able to sustain long-term production of agricultural crops. The land must have been used for production of irrigated crops some time during the four years prior to the mapping date. Farmland of Statewide Importance is land with a good combination of physical and chemical characteristics for agricultural production, having only minor shortcomings, such as less ability to store soil moisture, compared to prime farmland. Unique Farmland is farmland of lesser quality soils but used for production of the state's leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated, but can include some non-irrigated orchards or vineyards appropriate in certain climatic zones of California.

Table 3 Soil Classifications

Class	Definition
I	Soils have few limitations that restrict their use.
II	Soils have moderate limitations that reduce the choice of plants, or require special conservation practices.
III	Soils have severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants, require conservation practices, or both.
IV	Soils have very severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants, require very careful management, or both.
V	Soils are not likely to erode but have other limitations; impractical to remove soils that limit their use largely to pasture or range, woodland, or wildlife habitat.
VI	Soils have severe limitations that make them generally unsuited to cultivation and limit their use largely to pasture, or range, woodland, or wildlife habitat.
VII	Soils have very severe limitations that make them unsuited to cultivation and that restrict their use largely to pasture or range, woodland, or wildlife habitat.
VIII	Soils and landforms have limitations that preclude their use for commercial plant production and restrict their use to recreation, wildlife habitat or water supply, or to aesthetic purposes.

Sources: USDA 1969; Custom Soil Resource Report for San Benito County, Roberts Ranch, 2015

Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA). The LESA Model was developed by the California Department of Conservation to describe a site's agricultural value. The LESA Model uses a variety of factors (soil characteristics, water availability, surrounding land uses, and farmland protection status) to arrive at a set of scores ("Land Evaluation" and "Site Assessment"). According to the California Department of Conservation, loss of Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance with a LESA score of 80 to 100 points is considered a significant adverse impact. The loss of agricultural land with a LESA score of between 60 and 79 is considered significant if either the Land Evaluation or the Site Assessment subcategories have scores of 20 or better. The loss of agricultural land with a LESA score of between 40 and 59 is considered significant if both the Land Evaluation and the Site Assessment subcategories have scores of 20 or better.

Project Site

The project site is designated as Prime Farmland (26.30 acres), Farmland of Statewide Importance (27.05 acres), and Urban Land (1.56 acres) by the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping Program (California Department of Conservation 2010). [Figure 8, Important Farmland Map](#), illustrates the extent of important farmland on the site and in the vicinity. Figure 3 of the LESA prepared for the proposed project (EMC Planning Group 2016), reveals that there are no parcels with Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance within one-quarter mile of the project site (refer to [Appendix D](#)).

According to the Soil Survey of San Benito County and the Soils Report (US Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service 1969; US Department of Agriculture, 2015), the project site is comprised of Rincon Silty Clay Loam (2-9 percent slopes) and Antioch Loam (2-5 percent slopes). These soils are described below:

Rincon Silty Clay Loam, 2-9 percent slopes. The Rincon series consists of well drained soils formed in alluvium derived from sandstone and shale. These soils have a loam surface and clay sub-soil. These soils occur on benches, terraces, or fans and are nearly level to strongly sloping. Runoff is low to medium and the erosion hazard is slight to moderate. The available water holding capacity is about eight inches. Rincon soils are used for irrigated apricots, prunes, grapes, walnuts, alfalfa, sugar beets, tomatoes, and other vegetables, and for dryland grain and incidental pasture. The land use capability unit is IIIe-1 (14) and IIIe-3 (15); soils in this series are considered Class III soils.

Antioch Loam, 2-5 percent slopes. The Antioch Series consists of well drained soils that formed in alluvium from material derived from a wide range of sedimentary rock. Antioch soils with 2 to 5 percent slopes is found on long terraces and fans. The available water holding capacity of this soil is approximately nine inches. It has a loam surface and clay subsoil. This soil is non-ponding and non-flooding and the hazard of erosion is slight. This soil is used for dry-farmed grain and pasture and irrigated fruits. The land use capability unit is IIIs-3 (14); soils in this series are considered Class III soils.

Soils on the project site have severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants and/or require conservation practices (United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service 2015). According to the LESA, the combined Storie index rating for on-site soils is 66.5.

There are no Williamson Act land conservation contracts on any portion of the project site. There are no trees on the project site and the site is not located within an area zoned by either the county or the City of Hollister for forestland, timberland, or timberland production. As illustrated in Figure 2, and identified in Section 2.1, the project site is surrounded by existing or

planned urban development and is designated for residential uses in both the City of Hollister and San Benito County general plans. According to application materials, about 53 acres of the site have been continuously cultivated since at least 1969. Irrigation has historically been supplied to this portion of the site by the San Benito County Water District; however, according to the applicant, the water allocation for the project site was reduced in 2015 by the district, which has resulted in field operators cutting back on the agricultural operations on the site (Hellman, pers. com. August 10, 2016).

Regulatory Setting

State

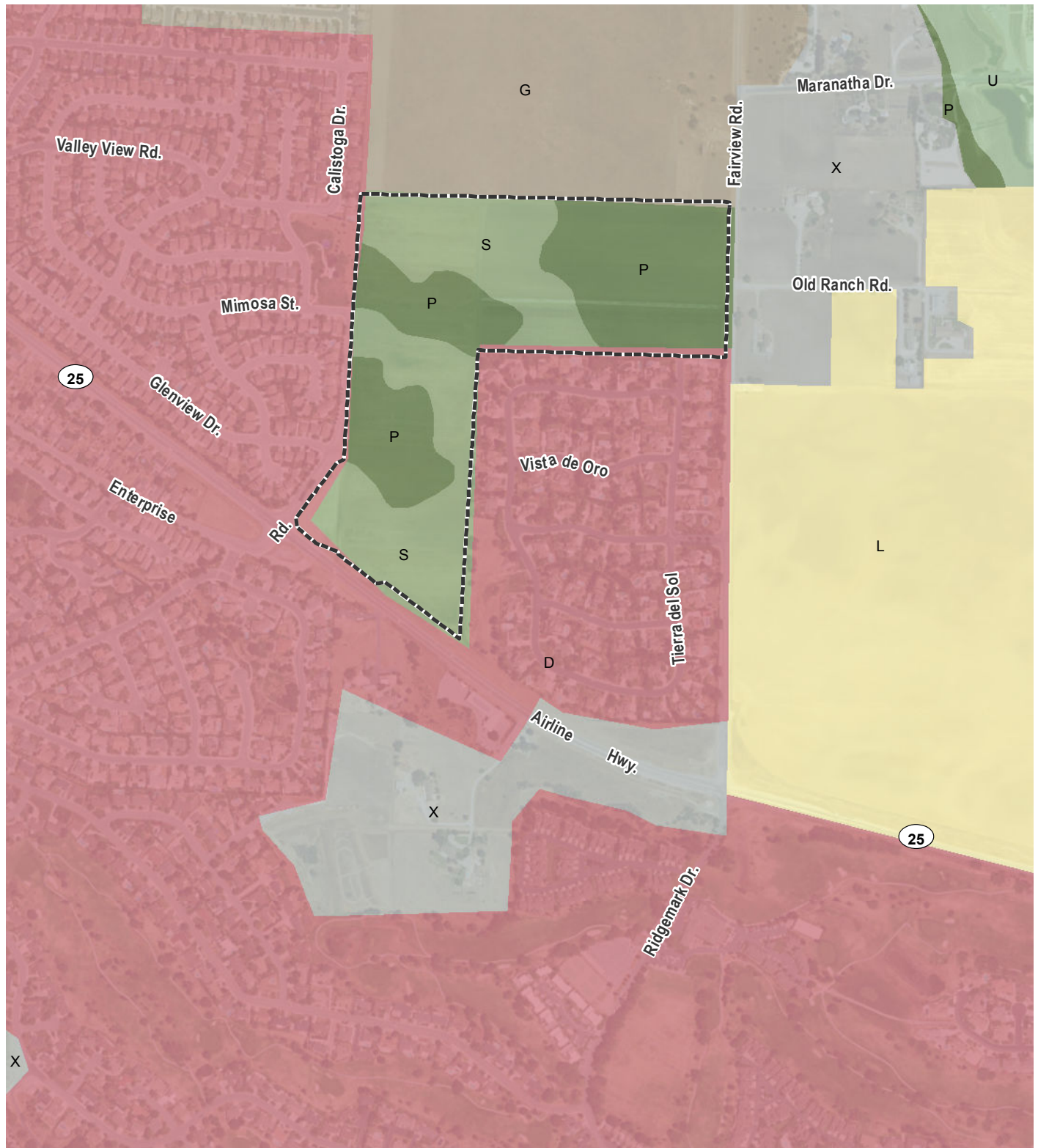
Williamson Act. The California Land Conservation Act, otherwise known as the Williamson Act, was enacted by the State Legislature in 1965 as a means of preserving California's prime agricultural lands from urbanization. The Williamson Act involves voluntary contracts between landowners and a city or county in which the owners agree to retain their lands in agricultural or other open space uses for a minimum of 10 years. In return for entering into this contract, the landowners receive property tax relief on the lands under contract. None of the project site is covered by a Williamson Act contract.

Local

City of Hollister General Plan. The following general plan policies are applicable to the proposed project:

Policy OS1.2 Cluster Development. Wherever feasible, encourage those proposing development to cluster planned residential development, leaving open space buffers in proposed site plans, particularly on the borders of development facing agricultural uses and State Routes 25 and 156. This will diminish the potential for land use conflicts and improve opportunities for visual harmonization between agricultural and urban activities.

Policy OS2.1 Premature Conversion of Prime Farmland. Whenever possible, minimize the premature conversion of prime farmland to nonagricultural uses by directing urban growth toward portions of the Hollister Planning Area which have not been identified as prime farmland.



 Project Site	 Farmland of Statewide Importance (S)	 Farmland of Local Importance (L)	 Urban and Built-Up Land (D)
 Prime Farmland (P)	 Unique Farmland (U)	 Grazing Land (G)	 Other Land (X)



0 720 feet

Source: California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping & Monitoring Program 2012, San Benito County 2015, Esri 2015

Figure 8

Important Farmlands Map

Roberts Ranch Subdivision EIR

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Policy OS2.4 Residential Development Near Agricultural Areas.

Require developers to inform potential buyers of homes near agricultural areas of the possible hazards associated with the application of pesticides/herbicides and nuisances from other cultivation practices. In those cases where the County of San Benito's "Right-to-Farm" Ordinance applies to the City review of projects, homeowners shall also be informed of this ordinance by developers.

City of Hollister General Plan EIR. The loss of Prime Farmland due to buildout of the general plan was identified in the Hollister general plan EIR as a significant impact to agricultural activity within the county. The general plan EIR concluded that compliance with the general plan policies and implementing actions would reduce the impact, but not to a less-than-significant level. In adopting the general plan, the city found that the loss of agricultural land was an important consideration in the development of new land uses, but the benefits of converting Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance for residential uses to meet the city's regional housing needs outweighed the significant environmental impact. A Statement of Overriding Considerations was adopted by the City Council for the loss of important farmland within the general plan planning area, including the project site.

Standards of Significance

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project may have a significant effect on the environment if it would result in any of the following:

- Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to nonagricultural use;
- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract;
- Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g));
- Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use; or,
- Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

Environmental Topics Eliminated from Further Analysis

Section 21002.1.e of the CEQA statute requires an EIR discussion to focus on those potential effects on the environment of a proposed project which the lead agency has determined are or may be significant. Lead agencies may limit discussion on other effects to a brief explanation as to why those effects are not potentially significant.

There are no Williamson Act parcels on the project site; there are no trees on the project site and the project site does not contain forestland designated by either the county or city for commercial timber harvesting or recreational use. Therefore, no impacts to these resources would occur and no additional discussion of these environmental topics is required.

Less than Significant Impact: Loss of Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance.

The proposed project would convert approximately 26.30 acres of Prime Farmland and 27.05 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural uses. A comparison between the California Department of Conservation Important Farmland Map (Figure 8) with the City of Hollister and San Benito County general plan land use designations (Figure 5) for the vicinity of the project site indicates that the California Department of Conservation has not yet adjusted its map to reflect lands committed to development through city and county approvals for subdivisions and development projects since 2010. These city and county-approved projects include the approved development of the West of Fairview Specific Plan area (north of the project site) and the Fairview Corners Residential Specific Plan and Gavilan College San Benito Campus projects at the intersection of State Route 25 and Fairview Road. These parcels are committed to urban development by the City of Hollister and San Benito County general plans and development approvals have been obtained for each site. In addition, 1.54 acres of the project site was formerly part of the Valley View subdivision approved by the city, but never developed. The LESA analysis does not include these areas in the agricultural lands calculations. The LESA prepared for the proposed project found that the overall Land Evaluation score for the entire 54.9-acre project site is 52.7 points and the subscores are 34.13 points and the Site Assessment Score is 18.61 points. As reported previously, the loss of agricultural land with a LESA score of between 40 and 59 is considered significant if both the Land Evaluation and the Site Assessment subcategories have scores of 20 or better. Since only one score exceeds the LESA threshold of 20 points, the loss of farmland on the project site is a less than significant impact.

The city's general plan, zoning, and sphere of influence maps identify the project site as a priority infill area targeted for residential development. The proposed project would fully utilize and improve an underutilized vacant site identified in the city's general plan as "Vacant Land Inventory - Low Density Residential," "Infill Development Strategy: Priority Infill" and

“Phasing Strategy: Phase 1;” and, with approval of a PUD the proposed project would provide a mix of housing types to serve the housing needs of the city consistent with the general plan. As such, the proposed project would not result in premature conversion of prime farmland, since conversion of the site from agricultural uses to urban uses is contemplated in the general plan and the environmental effects of the loss of prime farmland on this site were addressed in the general plan EIR.

Hollister general plan policy OS2.1 addresses the premature conversion of Prime Farmland, and calls for directing urban growth, whenever possible, toward portions of Hollister that are not identified as Prime Farmland. As noted previously, the Hollister general plan EIR identified the loss of Prime Farmland due to buildout of the general plan as a significant impact to agricultural activity within the county. The general plan EIR noted that compliance with the general plan policies and implementing actions would reduce the impact, but not to a less-than-significant level. In adopting the general plan, the city found that the loss of agricultural land was an important consideration in the development of new land uses, but the benefits of converting Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance for residential uses outweighed the significant environmental impact. The proposed project is consistent with the general plan land use designations for the site and would not result in new or greater impacts resulting from the loss of prime farmland on the site that were not addressed in the general plan EIR.

The city’s general plan policy OS2.2 also calls for coordination with San Benito County “to maintain prime farmlands in active agricultural use whenever possible and in all efforts to maintain the continued economic viability of agriculture within the Hollister Planning Area.” Relevant to the city’s coordination effort called for by this policy, the San Benito County general plan policies adopted in 2015 encourages the preservation of Prime Farmland in rural areas of the county that contain Class I soils. The proposed project is surrounded by existing and planned urban development and, as noted in the setting, soils on the project site are identified as Class III soils by the Department of Conservation (2015).

Additionally, it is clear that the City of Hollister and San Benito County general plans target land along Fairview Road for urban uses. The proposed project would result in the direct loss of Prime and Important Farmland; however, opportunities for continued use of the site for agricultural purposes are limited, given the extent of existing, approved and planned development in the vicinity of the site. For these reasons, the conversion of Prime Farmland on the site would not be premature and loss of farmland would not result in significant impacts. No mitigation is required.

Less than Significant Impact: Agricultural Noise, Dust, and Pesticide Drift

Existing agricultural operations in proximity to the project site are located in unincorporated San Benito County east of Fairview Road. As the proposed project is implemented, agricultural operations could continue. The likelihood of noise, dust, and pesticide drift from these uses is

reduced by prevailing northwesterly winds that typically blow away from the project site and toward nearby agricultural uses. Farmer(s) with continuing agricultural operations in the vicinity could experience trespassing, vandalism, damage to crops, urban pets, and other infringements on farming operations, however, most of the new development on the flag-shaped project site would occur between established and planned urban development along Fairview Road and Enterprise Road, and not directly adjacent to active farming operations. Compliance with city's general plan policies OS 1.2 and OS2.4 further minimize the potential for land use conflicts to occur along the urban/agriculture interface. The proposed project minimizes the potential for conflicts by clustering higher density multi-family uses on the north side of the project site adjacent to existing urban uses. The proposed project is subject to compliance with these general plan policies, which reduce potential impacts to less than significant. No mitigation is required.

3.3 AIR QUALITY

This section identifies existing air quality conditions in the project vicinity and North Central Coast Air Basin ("air basin"), sources and character of emissions from the proposed project, and potential impacts and mitigation measures. This section is based primarily on Monterey Bay Air Resources District (formerly Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, hereinafter "air district") guidance and methodologies for preparation of environmental documents, and the results of emissions modeling using the CalEEMod emissions modeling software. CalEEMod results are included in [Appendix F](#).

Comments on the Hollister NOP regarding air quality were received from the air district and from several members of the public, and comments on the county NOP for the former project regarding air quality were also received from several members of the public. The comment letters are included in [Appendix A](#).

Environmental Setting

Air Basin Characteristics and Climate

The air basin lies along the central coast of California covering an area of approximately 5,159 square miles. The air basin is comprised of several interconnected valleys: a portion of the Santa Clara Valley; San Benito Valley; Salinas Valley, and Carmel Valley. The semi-permanent high-pressure cell in the eastern Pacific Ocean is the basic controlling factor in the climate of the air basin. In the summer, the high pressure cell is dominant and causes persistent west and northwest winds over the entire California coast. Air descends in the Pacific high-pressure cell forming a stable temperature inversion of hot air over a cool coastal layer of air. The onshore air currents pass over cool ocean waters to bring fog and relatively cool air into the coastal valleys and the warmer air aloft acts as a lid to inhibit vertical air movement.

The generally northwest-southeast orientation of mountain ridges restricts and channels the summer on-shore air currents. Surface heating in the interior portion of the Salinas and San Benito valleys creates a weak low pressure, which intensifies the on-shore airflow during the afternoon and evening.

The air pollution potential for the county as a whole is relatively high (particularly with respect to photochemical pollutants) due to hot summer temperatures, abundant sunlight, and the presence of these frequent temperature inversions that limit the dispersion of pollutants and mixing of air layers. The air basin encounters its most significant air quality problems in late spring and fall when a combination of weak onshore winds and a stable temperature create an inversion that restricts the vertical and horizontal dispersion of pollutants. It is most often during this season that the north or east winds develop to transport pollutants from either the San Francisco Bay Area or the Central Valley into the air basin. This relatively stationary air mass is sustained by a high pressure cell along the Pacific Ocean which can enable pollutants to build up over several days (City of Hollister 2005b).

During the winter, the Pacific high-pressure cell migrates southward and has less influence on the air basin. Air frequently flows in a southeasterly direction out of the Salinas and San Benito valleys, especially during night and morning hours. Northwest winds are nevertheless still dominant in winter, but easterly flow is more frequent. The general absence of deep, persistent inversions and the occasional storm systems usually result in good air quality for the basin as a whole in winter and early spring.

Existing Air Quality Conditions

Existing air quality concerns within the air basin are primarily related to increases of regional criteria air pollutants (i.e., ozone and particulate matter); exposure of sensitive receptors to toxic air contaminants; and odors.

Criteria Air Pollutants and their Effects on Human Health

The six most common and widespread air pollutants of concern, or “criteria pollutants,” are ground level ozone, nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and lead. In addition, volatile organic compounds are a key contributor to the criteria pollutants because they react with other substances to form ground level ozone. In general, criteria pollutants are pervasive constituents, such as those emitted in vast quantities by the combustion of fossil fuels. The common properties, sources, and related health and environmental effects of these pollutants are summarized in [Table 4, Common Air Pollutants](#). The primary pollutants of concern in San Benito County include ozone, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter 10 and 2.5 microns or less in size.

Table 4 Common Air Pollutants

Pollutant	Properties	Major Sources	Related Health and Environmental Effects
Ozone (O ₃)	Created by the chemical reaction between oxides of nitrogen and volatile organic compounds (VOC) in the presence of heat and sunlight. Ground level ozone is the principal component of smog.	▪ Motor vehicle exhaust; ▪ Industrial emissions; ▪ Gasoline vapors; ▪ Chemical solvents.	▪ Reduced lung capacity; ▪ Irritation of lung airways and inflammation; ▪ Aggravated asthma; ▪ Increased susceptibility to respiratory illnesses (i.e. bronchitis).
Suspended Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀)	Describes particles in the air, including dust, soot, smoke, and liquid droplets. Others are so small that they can only be detected with an electron microscope.	▪ Motor vehicles; ▪ Factories; ▪ Construction sites; ▪ Tilled farm fields; ▪ Unpaved roads; ▪ Wood burning.	▪ Aggravated asthma; ▪ Increases in respiratory symptoms; ▪ Decreased lung function; ▪ Premature death; ▪ Reduced visibility.
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	Colorless, odorless gas that is formed when carbon in fuel is not burned completely.	▪ Fuel combustion; ▪ Industrial processes; ▪ Highly congested traffic.	▪ Chest pain for those with heart disease; ▪ Vision problems; ▪ Reduced mental alertness; ▪ Death (at high levels)
Nitrogen Oxides (NO _x)	Generic form for a group of highly organic gases, all of which contain nitrogen in varying amounts. Many of the nitrogen oxides are odorless and colorless.	▪ Motor vehicles; ▪ Electric utilities; ▪ Industrial, commercial, and residential sources that burn fuel.	▪ Toxic to plants; ▪ Reduced visibility; ▪ Respiratory irritant.

Pollutant	Properties	Major Sources	Related Health and Environmental Effects
Sulfur Dioxides (SO _x)	Sulfur oxide gases are formed when fuel containing sulfur such as coal and oil is burned and when gasoline is extracted from oil, or metals are extracted from ore.	▪ Electric utilities (especially coal-burning); ▪ Industrial facilities that derive their products from raw materials to produce process heat.	▪ Respiratory illness, particularly in children and the elderly; ▪ Aggravates existing heart and lung diseases.
Reactive Organic Gases (ROG)	Precursor of ground-level ozone.	▪ Petroleum transfer and storage; ▪ Mobile sources; ▪ Organic solvents.	▪ Potential carcinogen (e.g. benzene); ▪ Toxic to plants and animals.

Source: Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, August 2008

Ozone. Ozone, also known as “O₃” is produced by chemical reactions, which are triggered by sunlight, involving nitrogen oxides and reactive organic gases. Nitrogen oxides are created during combustion of fuels, while reactive organic gases are emitted during combustion and evaporation of organic solvents. Since ozone is not directly emitted to the atmosphere, but is formed because of photochemical reactions, it is considered a secondary pollutant. Ozone is a seasonal problem, occurring roughly from April through October.

Ozone is a strong irritant that attacks the respiratory system, leading to the damage of lung tissue. Asthma, bronchitis, and other respiratory ailments, as well as cardiovascular diseases, are aggravated by exposure to ozone. A healthy person exposed to high concentrations may become nauseated or dizzy, may develop a headache or cough, or may experience a burning sensation in the chest. Research has shown that exposure to ozone damages the alveoli (the individual air sacs in the lung where the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide between the air and blood takes place). Research has shown that ozone also damages vegetation.

Calculating reactive organic gases and nitrogen oxides emissions from typical construction equipment is not necessary because temporary emissions of these ozone precursors have been accommodated in State- and federally-required air plans.

Reactive Organic Gasses (Ozone Precursor). Reactive organic gasses (“ROG”), also known as volatile organic compounds (“VOC”), are emitted from a variety of sources, including liquid and solid fuel combustion, evaporation of organic solvents, and waste disposal.

Nitrogen Oxides (Ozone Precursor). Most nitrogen oxides (“NO_x”) are created during combustion of fuels. Nitrogen oxides are a major contributor to ozone formation. Nitrogen dioxide is a reddish-brown gas that can irritate the lungs and can cause breathing difficulties at high concentrations. Like ozone, nitrogen dioxide is not directly emitted, but is formed through a reaction between nitric oxides and atmospheric oxygen. Nitrogen dioxide also contributes to the formation of particulate matter (see discussion below). Nitrogen dioxide concentrations in the air basin have been well below ambient air quality standards; therefore, nitrogen dioxide concentrations from land use projects are not a concern.

Sulfur Oxides. Sulfur oxides are gases formed when fuel containing sulfur, such as coal and oil, is burned, when gasoline is extracted from oil, or metals are extracted from ore. Sulfur oxides dissolve in water vapor to form acid, and interact with other gases and particles in the air to form sulfates and other products that can be harmful to people and their environment.

Particulate Matter. Particulate matter is comprised of small, suspended particles, primarily composed of dust particles, nitrates, and sulfates. Particulate matter is classified as under 10 microns (PM₁₀) and under 2.5 microns (PM_{2.5}). PM₁₀ is directly emitted to the atmosphere as a byproduct of fuel combustion, wind erosion of soil and unpaved roads, and from construction or agricultural operations. Small particles are also created in the atmosphere through chemical reactions. Approximately 64 percent of fugitive dust is PM₁₀. Minimal grading typically generates about 10 pounds per day per acre on average while excavation and earthmoving activities typically generate about 38 pounds per day per acre.

Although particles greater than 10 microns in diameter can cause irritation in the nose, throat, and bronchial tubes, natural mechanisms remove much of these particles. Particles less than 10 microns in diameter are able to pass through the body's natural defenses and the mucous membranes of the upper respiratory tract and enter into the lungs. The particles can damage the alveoli. The particles may also carry carcinogens and other toxic compounds, which can adhere to the particle surfaces and enter the lungs.

Carbon Monoxide. Carbon monoxide (“CO”) is a component of motor vehicle exhaust, which contributes about 56 percent of all carbon monoxide emissions nationwide. Other non-road engines and vehicles (such as construction equipment and boats) contribute about 22 percent of all carbon monoxide emissions nationwide. Carbon monoxide can cause harmful health effects by reducing oxygen delivery to the body's organs (like the heart and brain) and tissues. Carbon monoxide contributes to the formation of ground-level ozone. In cities, 85 to 95 percent of all carbon monoxide emissions may come from motor vehicle exhaust. Concentration of carbon

monoxide is a direct function of vehicle idling time and, thus, traffic flow conditions. Transport of carbon monoxide is extremely limited; it disperses rapidly from the source under normal meteorological conditions. Under certain meteorological conditions, however, carbon monoxide concentrations close to a congested roadway or intersection may reach unhealthful levels, affecting local sensitive receptors (residents, school children, hospital patients, the elderly, etc.). Emissions thresholds established for carbon monoxide apply to direct or stationary sources.

Typically, high carbon monoxide concentrations are associated with roadways or intersections operating at unacceptable levels of service. Congested intersections with high volumes of traffic could cause carbon monoxide “hot spots,” where localized high concentrations of carbon monoxide occur.

Lead. Lead was formerly a major air pollutant of concern. Levels of lead in the air decreased 94 percent between 1980 and 1999, following the removal of lead from gasoline. Today, the highest levels of lead in air are usually found near lead smelters and a few other industrial and utility plants.

Toxic Air Contaminants and their Effects on Human Health

Toxic air contaminants are pollutants that may be expected to result in an increase in mortality or serious illness or may pose a present or potential health hazard. Health effects include cancer, birth defects, neurological damage, damage to the body's natural defense system, and diseases that lead to death. Toxic air contaminants can be classified as either carcinogens or non-carcinogens. The air district considers an incremental risk of ten excess cancer cases per million at the Maximally Exposed Individual would result in a significant impact. The ten-in-one-million risk level is used by the Air Toxics “Hot Spots” (AB 2588) program and California’s Proposition 65 as the public notification level for air toxic emissions from existing sources. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (hereinafter “EPA”) has established National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants, which are applicable to asbestos, beryllium, mercury, vinyl chloride, benzene, arsenic, and radon/radionuclides.

Diesel Emissions. Diesel exhaust is the predominant toxic air contaminant in urban air and is estimated to represent about two-thirds of the cancer risk from toxic air contaminants. Diesel engines emit a complex mix of pollutants including nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, and toxic air contaminants. The most visible constituents of diesel exhaust are very small carbon particles or “soot,” known as diesel particulate matter. Diesel exhaust also contains over 40 cancer-causing substances, most of which are readily adsorbed on the soot particles. Among the toxic air contaminants contained in diesel exhaust are dioxin, lead, polycyclic organic matter, and acrolein.

Short-term exposure to diesel particulate matter is associated with variable irritation and inflammatory symptoms. Diesel engine emissions are responsible for a majority of California's estimated cancer risk attributable to air pollution. In 2000, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) identified an average potential cancer risk of 540 excess cases per million people, statewide, from diesel particulate matter. In addition, diesel particulate matter is a significant fraction of California's particulate pollution. Assessments by CARB and EPA estimate that diesel particulate matter contributes to approximately 3,500 premature respiratory and cardiovascular deaths and thousands of hospital admissions annually in California. Diesel exhaust contains several chemicals detrimental to visibility and vegetation (Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment 2001).

Diesel exhaust is especially common during the grading stage of construction (when most of the heavy equipment is used), and adjacent to heavily trafficked roadways where diesel trucks are common. The risks of exposure to diesel particulate matter and potential health effects resulting from prolonged exposure are greater near high-volume freeways.

Asbestos. Asbestos handling and disposal is regulated by federal and state law, as well as by air district regulation. Asbestos is found in several kinds of building materials. Asbestos is generally not harmful when asbestos-containing materials are left undisturbed, but when disturbed microscopic fibers can be dislodged and remain in the air for long periods. If asbestos fibers are inhaled they can become lodged in body tissues and pose a serious health threat, especially lung disease.

Asbestos is also found naturally-occurring in certain rock formations in the California Coast Ranges and elsewhere. Asbestos is the generic term for the naturally-occurring fibrous (asbestiform) varieties of six silicate minerals. These minerals are: chrysotile, tremolite (when fibrous), actinolite (when fibrous), crocidolite (fibrous riebeckite), anthophyllite (when fibrous), and amosite (fibrous cummingtonite-grunerite). Chrysotile is the most common asbestos mineral in California and belongs to the serpentine mineral group. Naturally occurring asbestos can be released from serpentinite and ultramafic rocks when the rock is broken or weathered. At the point of release, the asbestos fibers may become airborne, causing air quality and human health hazards. Weathered asbestos becomes a component of the soil and can migrate downstream. Asbestos-containing rock has sometimes been used for unpaved gravel roads, landscaping, and fill. Asbestos may be released to the atmosphere due to vehicular traffic on unpaved roads, during grading for development projects, and at quarry operations.

The project site is not located in an area where naturally occurring asbestos-containing rock is likely to be present. Major areas of serpentine rock outcroppings within San Benito County are located in the southern portion of the county (California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology 2000). Therefore the project site is not likely to contain significant amounts of asbestos.

Sensitive Receptors

Although air pollution can affect all segments of the population, certain groups are more susceptible to its adverse effects than others. Children, the elderly, and the chronically or acutely ill are the most sensitive population groups. These sensitive receptors are commonly associated with specific land uses such as residential areas, schools, parks, retirement homes, and hospitals.

In April 2005, CARB released the *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook*, which is intended to encourage local land use agencies to consider the risks from air pollution prior to making decisions that approve the siting of new sensitive receptors (e.g., schools, homes, or daycare centers) near sources of air pollution. Unlike industrial or stationary sources of air pollution, siting of new sensitive receptors does not require air quality permits or approval by air districts, but could create air quality problems.

Sensitive receptors nearest to the project site are the existing residences in the Cielo Vista residential subdivision east of the site and other residential neighborhoods to the north and west. There are no hospitals or schools located within one quarter mile of the project site.

Other Emissions Sources

Other potential sources of concentrated air pollutant emissions potentially affecting sensitive receptors include stationary sources such as power and industrial plants, large generators, gas stations and dry cleaners. The project site is located adjacent to established residential neighborhoods and vacant land. Other than the adjacent Cielo Vista batch wastewater treatment plant located east and downwind of the project site there no other stationary sources within 1,000 feet of the project site (refer to the project aerial, Figure 2).

Construction Emissions

Emissions generated during construction are “short-term” in the sense that they would be limited to the actual periods of site development and construction. Short-term construction emissions are typically generated by the use of heavy equipment (exhaust and dust), the transport of materials, and construction employee commute trips. Construction-related emissions consist primarily of reactive organic gasses, nitrogen oxides, PM₁₀, and carbon monoxide. Emissions of reactive organic gasses, nitrogen oxides, and carbon monoxide are generated primarily by the operation of gas and diesel-powered motor vehicles, asphalt paving activities, and the application of architectural coatings. Emissions of PM₁₀ are generated primarily by wind erosion of exposed graded surfaces.

Odors

Odors are generally regarded as an annoyance rather than a health hazard, although some odorous substances can be harmful at higher concentrations. Manifestations of a person's reaction to odors can range from psychological (e.g., irritation, anger, or anxiety) to physiological (e.g., circulatory and respiratory effects, nausea, vomiting, and headache). Although offensive odors rarely cause any physical harm, they can be very unpleasant, leading to considerable stress among the public and often generating citizen complaints to local governments and the air district. Common sources of odors include wastewater treatment plants, landfills, confined animal facilities, farming, composting operations, food manufacturing plants, paper mills, refineries, and chemical plants. Geothermal power plants, petroleum production and refining, and sewer gas are specific sources of hydrogen sulfide in California. Statewide standards or regulation of odors is limited to hydrogen sulfide and odors associated with composting operations. The project site is surrounded by residential uses and the Cielo Vista batch wastewater treatment plant adjacent to the east border of the project site is the only source of potential odors. Because offensive odors rarely cause any physical harm and no requirements for their control are included in state or federal air quality regulations, the air district does not regulate odor emissions other than through its nuisance rule. Any actions related to odors are based on citizen complaint.

Air Basin Attainment Status

In accordance with the Clean Air Act, CARB is required to designate regions of the state as attainment, non-attainment, or unclassified with regard to that region's compliance with criteria air pollutants standards. An "attainment" designation for a region signifies that pollutant concentrations do not violate the standard for that pollutant in that region. A "non-attainment" designation indicates that a pollutant concentration violated the standard at least once. An "unclassified" designation signifies that available data does not support either an attainment or non-attainment status. The California Clean Air Act divides designations into moderate, serious, and severe air pollution attainment categories, with increasingly stringent control requirements mandated for each category. The air basin is in non-attainment with state mandated thresholds for ozone and suspended particulate matter. [Table 5, North Central Coast Air Basin Attainment Status Designations](#), identifies the current status within the air basin for each criteria pollutant.

Ambient Air Quality

Ambient air pollutant levels are monitored at several monitoring stations in the air basin. Air quality monitoring stations usually measure pollutant concentrations ten feet above-ground level; therefore, air quality is often referred to in terms of ground-level concentrations.

Table 5 North Central Coast Air Basin Attainment Status Designations

Pollutant	State	Federal
Ozone (O ₃)	Non-attainment	Attainment/Unclassified
Suspended Particulates (PM ₁₀)	Non-attainment	Attainment
Fine Particulates (PM _{2.5})	Attainment	Attainment/Unclassified
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	San Benito Co – Unclassified	Attainment/Unclassified
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO ₂)	Attainment	Attainment/Unclassified
Sulfur Dioxide (SO ₂)	Attainment	Attainment
Lead	Attainment	Attainment/Unclassified

Source: Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, January 2016

Local ambient air quality in San Benito County is monitored by the air district at Hollister (Fairview Road), and at Pinnacles National Park by the National Park Service. The air district monitoring station closest to the project site is located near the intersection of Fairview Road and Hillcrest Road, approximately 1.5 miles north of the project site.

Table 6, *Summary of Ambient Air Quality Data (2013-2015)*, summarizes the most recent three years of published monitoring data from the district's monitoring station.

Table 6 Summary of Ambient Air Quality Data (2013-2015)

Pollutant and Measurement Standard	2013 ¹	2014 ¹	2015 ¹
Ozone (O ₃)			
Maximum concentration, 1-hr/8-hr (ppm)	0.076/0.070	0.083/0.071	0.079/0.065
# days state standard (1-hr/8-hr) exceeded ³	0/0	0/2	0/0
# days federal standard (8-hr) exceeded ³	0	0	0
Suspended Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀)			
Maximum 24-hour concentration (µg/m ³) ²	98.4	48.4	65.8
Estimated number of days state standard exceeded ³	NA ⁴	NA ⁴	NA ⁴
Estimated number of days federal standard exceeded ³	0	0	0
Fine Particulate Matter (PM _{2.5})			
Maximum 24-hour concentration (µg/m ³) ²	21.2	24.3	18.6
Estimated number of days federal standard exceeded ³	0	0	0

Source: CARB 2016. Aerometric Data Analysis and Measurement System, as found at <http://www.arb.ca.gov/adam/>

Notes: 1. Ozone and particulate data obtained from the Hollister Fairview Road monitoring station

2. µg/m³ = Micrograms per Cubic Meter

3. Estimated average number of days per year

4. Not enough data available.

According to the air district, there are no known CO “hot spots” or localized areas containing high concentrations of carbon monoxide in San Benito County (Amy Clymo, pers. com., September 1, 2016)

Regulatory Setting

Federal Plans and Regulations

The federal Clean Air Act, adopted in 1970 and amended in 1990, provides the basis for federal air quality standards. The Clean Air Act is implemented by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Clean Air Act established two types of national air standards: primary and secondary. Primary standards set limits to protect public health, including the health of sensitive persons such as asthmatics, children, and the elderly. Secondary standards set limits to protect public welfare, including protection against decreased visibility, damage to animals, crops, vegetation, and buildings.

State Plans and Regulations

Ambient air quality is described in terms of compliance with the state and national standards. The state and federal clean air acts established two types of National Ambient Air Quality Standards for each criteria pollutant. Primary standards set limits to protect public health, including the health of "sensitive" populations such as asthmatics, children, and the elderly. Secondary standards set limits to protect public welfare, including protection against decreased visibility, damage to animals, crops, vegetation, and buildings.

In general, criteria pollutants are pervasive constituents, such as those emitted in vast quantities by the combustion of fossil fuels. Both the state and federal governments have developed ambient air quality standards for the identified criteria pollutants, which include ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5}. [Table 7, Federal and State Ambient Air Quality Standards](#), lists state and federal ambient air quality standards for criteria air pollutants. The state standards generally have lower thresholds than the federal standards, yet both are applicable to the proposed project. When thresholds are exceeded at regional monitoring stations, an “attainment plan” must be prepared that outlines how an air quality district will achieve compliance. Generally, these plans must provide for district-wide emission reductions of five percent per year averaged over consecutive three-year periods.

Table 7 Federal and State Ambient Air Quality Standards

Pollutant	Averaging Time	California Standards ¹		Federal Standards ²			
		Concentration ³		Primary ^{3,4}		Secondary ^{3,5}	
		ppm	µg/m ³	ppm	µg/ m ³	ppm	µg/ m ³
Ozone ⁶	1 Hour	0.09	180	-	-	-	-
	8 Hour	0.07	137	0.070	137	0.070	137
PM ₁₀ ⁷	24 Hour	-	50	-	150	-	150
	Annual	-	20	-	-	-	-
PM _{2.50} ⁷	24 Hour	-	-	-	35	-	35
	Annual	-	12	-	12	-	15
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	8 Hour	9.0	10	9	10	-	-
	1 Hour	20.0	23	35	40	-	-
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO ₂) ⁸	Annual	0.030	57	0.053	100	0.053	100
	1 Hour	0.18	339	0.100	188	-	-
Sulfur Dioxide (SO ₂) ⁹	Annual	-	-	0.030	See note ⁸	-	-
	24 Hour	0.04	105	0.14	See note ⁸	-	-
	3 Hour	-	-	-	-	0.5	1,300
	1 Hour	0.25	655	0.075	196	-	-
Lead ^{10,11}	30 Day Average		1.5	-	-	-	-
	3 month revolving	-	-		0.15		0.15
	Calendar Quarter	-	-	See note ¹¹	1.5	See note ¹¹	1.5
Visibility Reducing Particles ¹²	8 Hour	See note ¹²		No Federal Standards			
Sulfates	24 Hour		25				
Hydrogen Sulfide	1 Hour	0.03	42				
Vinyl Chloride ¹⁰	24 Hour	0.01	26				

Source: CARB, May 4, 2016. <http://www.arb.ca.gov/research/aaqs/aaqs2.pdf>.

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Notes:

1. California standards for ozone, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide (1 and 24 hour), nitrogen dioxide, suspended particulate matter—PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, and visibility reducing particles, are values that are not to be exceeded. All others are not to be equaled or exceeded. California ambient air quality standards are listed in the Table of Standards in Section 70200 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations.
 2. National standards (other than ozone, particulate matter, and those based on annual averages or annual arithmetic mean) are not to be exceeded more than once a year. The ozone standard is attained when the fourth highest eight hour concentration in a year, averaged over three years, is equal to or less than the standard. For PM₁₀, the 24 hour standard is attained when the expected number of days per calendar year with a 24-hour average concentration above 150 µg/m³ is equal to or less than one. For PM_{2.5}, the 24 hour standard is attained when 98 percent of the daily concentrations, averaged over three years, are equal to or less than the standard. Contact EPA for further clarification and current federal policies.
 3. Concentration expressed first in units in which it was promulgated. Equivalent units given in parentheses are based upon a reference temperature of 25°C and a reference pressure of 760 torr. Most measurements of air quality are to be corrected to a reference temperature of 25°C and a reference pressure of 760 torr; ppm in this table refers to ppm by volume, or micromoles of pollutant per mole of gas.
 4. National Primary Standards: The levels of air quality necessary, with an adequate margin of safety to protect the public health.
 5. National Secondary Standards: The levels of air quality necessary to protect the public welfare from any known or anticipated adverse effects of a pollutant.
 6. On October 1, 2015, the national 8-hour ozone primary and secondary standards were lowered from 0.075 to 0.070 ppm.
 7. On December 14, 2012, the national annual PM_{2.5} primary standard was lowered from 15 µg/m³ to 12.0 µg/m³. The existing national 24-hour PM_{2.5} standards (primary and secondary) were retained at 35 µg/m³, as was the annual secondary standard of 15 µg/m³. The existing 24-hour PM₁₀ standards (primary and secondary) of 150 µg/m³ also were retained. The form of the annual primary and secondary standards is the annual mean, averaged over three years.
 8. To attain the 1-hour national standard, the three-year average of the annual 98th percentile of the 1-hour daily maximum concentrations at each site must not exceed 100 ppb. Note that the national 1-hour standard is in units of parts per billion (ppb). California standards are in units of parts per million (ppm). To directly compare the national 1-hour standard to the California standards the units can be converted from ppb to ppm. In this case, the national standard of 100 ppb is identical to 0.100 ppm.
 9. On June 2, 2010, a new 1-hour SO₂ standard was established and the existing 24-hour and annual primary standards were revoked. To attain the 1-hour national standard, the three-year average of the annual 99th percentile of the 1-hour daily maximum concentrations at each site must not exceed 75 ppb. The 1971 SO₂ national standards (24-hour and annual) remain in effect until one year after an area is designated for the 2010 standard, except that in areas designated nonattainment for the 1971 standards, the 1971 standards remain in effect until implementation plans to attain or maintain the 2010 standards are approved. Note that the 1-hour national standard is in units of parts per billion (ppb). California standards are in units of parts per million (ppm). To directly compare the 1-hour national standard to the California standard the units can be converted to ppm. In this case, the national standard of 75 ppb is identical to 0.075 ppm.
 10. CARB has identified lead and vinyl chloride as 'toxic air contaminants' with no threshold level of exposure for adverse health effects determined. These actions allow for the implementation of control measures at levels below the ambient concentrations specified for these pollutants.
 11. The national standard for lead was revised on October 15, 2008 to a rolling 3-month average. The 1978 lead standard (1.5 µg/m³ as a quarterly average) remains in effect until one year after an area is designated for the 2008 standard, except that in areas designated nonattainment for the 1978 standard, the 1978 standard remains in effect until implementation plans to attain or maintain the 2008 standard are approved.
 12. In 1989, CARB converted the general statewide 10-mile visibility standard to instrumental equivalents, which is "extinction of 0.23 per kilometer" for the statewide standard.
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State and Federal Hazardous Air Pollutant Standards

The EPA has established National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants, which are regulated by source-specific rules. Examples of regulated sources include asphalt processing, boat manufacturing, chromium electroplating, coke ovens, dry cleaning, leather finishing, plywood manufacturing, polymer and resin manufacturing, and surface coating of various products. The standards for a particular source category require the maximum degree of emission reduction that the EPA determines to be achievable, which is known as the Maximum Achievable Control Technology.

The Toxic Air Contaminant Identification and Control Act (AB 1807, Tanner 1983) created California's program to reduce exposure to air toxics. The Air Toxics "Hot Spots" Information and Assessment Act (AB 2588, Connelly 1987) supplements the AB 1807 program, by requiring a statewide air toxics inventory, notification of people exposed to a significant health risk, and facility plans to reduce these risks.

Under AB 1807, CARB is required to use certain criteria in the prioritization for the identification and control of air toxics. In accordance with California Health and Safety Code section 39666(f), CARB must consider criteria relating to "the risk of harm to public health, amount or potential amount of emissions, manner of, and exposure to, usage of the substance in California, persistence in the atmosphere, and ambient concentrations in the community." AB 1807 also requires CARB to use available information gathered from the AB 2588 program to include in the prioritization of compounds.

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment assists CARB by developing the health assessment part of the toxic air contaminants identification documents; reviews facility risk assessments for the "Hot Spots" Program; is developing new risk assessment guidelines for the "Hot Spots" Program; and is the lead agency for Proposition 65. The Department of Pesticide Regulation regulates toxic air contaminants that are also pesticides. No quantified concentration thresholds are established, because the state has determined there is insufficient available scientific evidence to support the identification of a threshold exposure level. As noted previously, the air district has not identified any "Hot Spots" in San Benito County.

Diesel-powered construction equipment is regulated by both the EPA and CARB. Beginning in 1996, new diesel equipment engines were required to meet emission standards. EPA Tier 2 diesel engine standards were implemented from 2001 and 2006, Tier 3 standards from 2006-2008, Engines are now in Tier 4 designs, reducing emissions of NO_x and PM₁₀ significantly since the first requirements were introduced. CARB requires that equipment fleets' average emissions meet increasingly stringent standards, and requires the phase-in of diesel particulate matter filters on older equipment. With exemptions for some specialized equipment, CARB restricts engine idling time to five minutes.

California's Regulation for In-use Off-road Diesel Vehicles establishes a state program to reduce nitrogen oxides and particulate emissions from older construction equipment. Several provisions of the regulation are in force (idling restrictions and reporting), and other provisions are being phased in from 2014 to 2029 (fleet composition). As the regulation is fully implemented, it will reduce construction equipment emissions over time (California Air Resources Board 2014b). Ultralow sulfur diesel fuel, at 15 parts per million (ppm), has been the standard in California for both on-road and off-road vehicles since 2006 (Clean Diesel Fuel Alliance 2014). California is phasing in the use of particulate matter filters on heavy on-road trucks, beginning in 2014, with all heavy trucks to be compliant by 2020 (California Air Resources Board 2014a). The Tier 4 engines and ultralow sulfur fuels will reduce annual emissions by an estimated 738,000 tons of NO_x and 129,000 tons of particulate emissions (DieselNet 2016).

Monterey Bay Air Resources District

The air district is the regional agency with responsibility for monitoring air quality and achieving attainment of state and federal standards in the three Monterey Bay counties. The air district exercises its jurisdiction within the air basin. The air district is charged with regulatory authority over stationary sources of air emissions, monitoring air quality within the air basin, providing guidelines for analysis of air quality impacts pursuant to CEQA, and preparing an air quality management plan to maintain or improve air quality in the air basin. In their comments on the NOP the air district recommended the use of the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) emissions modeling software to estimate construction and operation emissions from the proposed project. The air district also recommends that the following design measures be incorporated to minimize impacts related to air quality and greenhouse gas emissions:

- Prohibit wood-burning fireplaces or stoves;
- Increase building energy efficiency beyond Title 24 requirements;
- Provide solar panels as an option or incentivize buyers to install solar panels on homes;
- Design homes with an electric vehicle charging option in the garage; and
- Provide information on alternative forms of transportation to home buyers, i.e., through sanbenitorideshare.org or other websites.

Air Quality Management Plan. The air district is delegated with local responsibility to implement both federal and state mandates for improving air quality in the air basin through implementation of an air quality plan. The air district adopted the *Air Quality Management Plan for the Monterey Bay Region* ("Air Quality Management Plan") in 1991 and completed several updates in subsequent years, most recently in 2008 (see also the 2012 Triennial Plan Revision, below). The Air Quality Management Plan presents measures to control emissions of volatile

organic compounds from stationary and mobile sources in order to meet the ozone standard mandated by the California Clean Air Act. In 2006, CARB made the ambient air quality standards more stringent by adding an 8-hour ozone average to the standard.

The Air Quality Management Plan outlines the steps that will be taken to come into attainment with the state and federal standards, and also requires measures to further reduce ozone levels in the air. The principal strategies for ozone reduction that are relevant to the proposed project are construction equipment emissions control measures, transportation control measures, and low-NO_x gas-fired water heater and furnace requirements. The Air Quality Management Plan transportation control measures reflect relevant projects included in Monterey Bay Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program.

To achieve and maintain ambient air quality standards, the air district also has adopted various rules and regulations for the control of airborne pollutants. Air district rules and regulations applicable to the proposed project include the following:

Rule 402 (Nuisances). The purpose of this rule is to prohibit emissions that may create a public nuisance. Applies to any source operation that emits or may emit air contaminants or other materials.

Rule 425 (Use of Cutback Asphalt). The purposed of this rule is to limit emissions of vapors of organic compounds from the use of cutback and emulsified asphalt. This rule applies to the manufacture and use of cutback, slow cure, and emulsified asphalt during paving and maintenance operations.

Rule 426 (Architectural Coatings). The purpose of this rule is to limit emissions of volatile organic compounds (ROG, NO_x, etc.) from architectural coatings.

Projects related directly to population growth will generate population-related emissions (e.g., motor vehicles, residential heating and cooling emissions). These emissions have been forecast in the Air Quality Management Plan using population forecasts adopted by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG). Thus, population-related projects which are consistent with AMBAG regional population forecasts are consistent with the Air Quality Management Plan. For a proposed residential project, consistency is determined by comparing the project population at the year of project completion with the forecast for the appropriate five year increment (e.g., if project completion is 2018, the project would be compared with year 2020 forecasts) for the jurisdiction in which the project is located. A proposed residential project is consistent with the Air Quality Management Plan if the population increase resulting from the project will not cause the estimated cumulative population (i.e., existing population plus population from locally-approved and unconstructed projects) to exceed forecasts for the next five year increment.

Air District 2012 Triennial Plan Revision. This is an update to elements included in the 2008 Air Quality Management Plan based on a review of the time period 2009-2011 and shows that the region continues to make progress toward meeting the state ozone standard. The air district's focus continues to be on achieving the 8-hour component of the ozone standard since the region has attained the 1-hour standard. The primary elements from the 2008 Air Quality Management Plan updated in this revision include the air quality trends analysis, emission inventory, and mobile source programs.

Air District CEQA Air Quality Guidelines (2008). The purpose of the air district air quality guidelines is to inform public agencies, consultants, project proponents and the general public of the air district's adopted thresholds of significance and to provide guidance in the review and evaluation of air quality impacts of projects that are subject to CEQA. The air quality guidelines are intended to provide uniform procedures for assessing air quality impacts and preparing the air quality section of environmental documents. They are also intended to help streamline the CEQA review process for project proponents, lead agencies, and the air district.

Local Plans and Regulations

City of Hollister General Plan. The general plan Natural Resources and Conservation (NRC) element includes the following policies and implementing actions to reduce air quality impacts.

Policies

NRC 2.1, State and Federal Standards for Air Quality. Continue to comply and strive to exceed state and federal standards for air quality. Review all development proposals for consistency with the current Air Quality Management Plan of the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District.

NRC 2.3, Air Quality Planning and Coordination. Integrate air quality considerations with the land use and transportation processes by mitigating air quality impacts through land use design measures, such as encouraging project design that will foster walking and biking.

NRC 2.4, Particulate Matter Pollution Reduction. Promote the reduction of particulate matter pollution from roads, parking lots, construction sites, agricultural lands and other activities. This would include: (1) requiring the watering of exposed earth surfaces during excavation, grading and construction activities; (2) requiring the daily (or as needed based upon actual circumstances) cleanup of mud and dust

carried onto street surfaces by construction vehicles; and (3) requiring that appropriate measures to be taken to reduce wind erosion during construction, such as watering of soil, replanting and repaving.

Implementing Actions

CSF.D.9. Adopt a performance standards ordinance. As part of the ordinance, establish procedures for the review and referral of applications to ensure that the proposed development will not make a significant contribution to the emission of regional air pollutants (i.e., carbon monoxide, reactive hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides).

NRC.H, Apply air quality standards in development review. Through development review, require developers to implement strategies for air quality improvement. Ensure that any proposed new sources of particulate matter use latest control technology (such as enclosures, paving unpaved areas, parking lot sweeping and landscaping) and provide adequate buffer setbacks to protect existing or future sensitive receptors.

NRC.I, Apply standards to sensitive air quality receptors. Through development review, ensure that siting of any new sensitive receptors provides for adequate buffers from existing sources of toxic air contaminants or odors.

NRC.J, Apply Title 24 requirements. Meet or exceed Title 24 energy conservation requirements, and, where possible, require structural and landscaping design to make use of natural heating and cooling. Encourage the use of solar and alternative energy technologies to meet or exceed Title 24 requirements.

NRC.L, Coordinate with other agencies in air quality planning. Cooperate with the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District and other agencies in their efforts to ensure compliance with existing air quality regulations.

NRC.M, Establish buffers to protect air quality. Through development review, ensure that any proposed new sources of toxic air contaminants or odors provide adequate buffers to protect sensitive receptors and comply with existing health standards.

NRC.N, Identify opportunities for transit-oriented development.

Assist in educating developers and the public on the benefits of pedestrian and transit-oriented development.

Standards of Significance

Based on the air quality guidelines (Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District 2008b, p. 5-14), and air district guidance on consistency with the Air Quality Management Plan (Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District 2008a), the project would have a significant air quality impact if it would:

- Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the Air Quality Management Plan:
 - Exceed AMBAG population forecasts for the jurisdiction.
- Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation:
 - Emit 137 pounds per day or more of an ozone precursor air pollutant (volatile organic compounds or nitrogen oxides);
 - Directly emit 550 pounds per day or more of carbon monoxide;
 - Generate traffic that significantly affects levels of service;
 - Emit 82 pounds per day or more of suspended particulate matter on-site, which is equivalent to general construction activity over an area of at least 8.1 acres per day, or grading/excavation over an area of at least 2.2 acres per day;
 - Emit 82 pounds per day or more of suspended particulate matter from vehicle travel on unpaved roads; or
 - Directly emit 150 pounds per day or more of sulfur oxides.
- Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the air basin is non-attainment (ozone/ozone precursors, and suspended particulate matter) under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard.
- Expose existing or reasonably foreseeable sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations:

- Cause or contribute to an exceedance of a carbon monoxide standard as measured by Level of Service (LOS) degradation at a project-affected intersection and confirmed by dispersion modeling. The air quality guidelines require carbon monoxide hot spot analysis under the following project conditions:
 - a) Intersections degrading to below LOS D;
 - b) Volume to capacity ratio increases by 0.05 at LOS E or F intersections;
 - c) The delay at LOS E or F intersections increases by 10 seconds or more; or
 - d) Reserve capacity at un-signalized LOS E or F intersections decreases by 50 or more.
 - Cause a violation of suspended particulate matter standard at a sensitive receptor.
 - Expose sensitive receptors or the general public to substantial levels of toxic air contaminants if the source of the contaminants results in an additional cancer risk of ten in one million or greater over a 70-year exposure period, for the maximally exposed individual.
- Create or expose a substantial number of people to objectionable odors.

Emissions Modeling

Emissions modeling for the proposed project was conducted using the California emissions estimator model (CalEEMod). The CalEEMod platform estimates both project mobile-source and operational emissions, including vehicular, direct, and indirect emissions. The model also estimates greenhouse gas emissions from land development projects. The model contains default data for vehicular emissions (e.g., meteorology, source inventories, energy and water consumption, emission factors, trip lengths, etc.) provided by various California air districts and approved by CARB, to account for local requirements and conditions. Direct emissions include natural gas combustion associated with the heating of water and space, along with the emissions from use of gas-powered landscape equipment. Indirect emissions include off-site generation of electricity, and off-site processes associated with the land use, such as water treatment and delivery. Vehicular emission rates of volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides are sensitive to the year of analysis because emissions rates are decreasing as vehicles with more effective emission controls dominate the fleet mix. Construction of the proposed project is estimated to be completed in 2026. The anticipated operational year for the analysis performed for the proposed project is the model's default operational date of 2030.

Model inputs include air basin information from the air district, and project-related inputs based upon the amount and type of existing and proposed land uses. Detailed CalEEMod results are

presented in [Appendix F](#). Model results for criteria pollutants, including ozone, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, and suspended particulate matter, are summarized in the following discussion of impacts and mitigation measures.

Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

Environmental Topics Eliminated from Further Analysis

Section 21002.1.e of the CEQA statute requires an EIR discussion to focus on those potential effects on the environment of a proposed project which the lead agency has determined are or may be significant. Lead agencies may limit discussion on other effects to a brief explanation as to why those effects are not potentially significant.

Consistency with the Air Quality Management Plan. The proposed project would not conflict with the Air Quality Management Plan. Projects related directly to population growth generate population-related emissions (e.g., motor vehicles, residential heating and cooling emissions). Population-related emissions have been estimated in the Air Quality Management Plan using population forecasts adopted by AMBAG. Population-related projects that are consistent with these forecasts are consistent with the Air Quality Management Plan. For cumulative impacts, the air district recommends that projects be assessed for consistency with the Air Quality Management Plan. AMBAG updated its regional population forecast in 2014, but the air district has not yet updated the Air Quality Management Plan and recommends that Air Quality Management Plan consistency be determined using the air district's *2011 Consistency Determination Procedure for Residential Development Projects for the 2008 Air Quality Management Plan*.

The proposed project (227 dwelling units) was evaluated for consistency using an anticipated buildout/occupancy year of 2026. The results of the evaluation process are included as [Appendix E](#). The evaluation determined that the proposed project would be consistent with the Air Quality Management Plan at 2020 and later time periods.

According to the Monterey Bay Area 2014 Regional Growth Forecast (AMBAG 2014), the city's population was 34,928 in 2010. The estimated population for 2020 is anticipated to be 39,975, and for 2025 is anticipated to be 41,704. The 2014 AMBAG population projections are based upon an anticipated 1.05 percent annual growth rate. The AMBAG forecast reported that the housing unit requirements for the city in 2010 were 10,401. Projected housing units requirements are expected to be 11,176 in 2020 and the anticipated number of housing units to accommodate expected population growth in 2025 is 11,534. More recent demographic data is available from the California Department of Finance, which maintains general inventories of housing stock and population data based upon U.S. Census data. The Department of Finance Table E-1 reports that in 2016, the population of the City of Hollister was 36,484 persons, a 0.5

percent increase from the 2014 population of 36,291 (California Department of Finance 2016a). According to the Department of Finance Table E-5, as of January 1, 2016, the city's existing housing stock consists of 10,827 total housing units with 10,454 units occupied and an average of 3.47 persons per household (California Department of Finance 2016b). Both the most recent growth rate and the anticipated population reported by the Department of Finance are below the AMBAG projections for the year 2025.

At project buildout (estimated 2026), the proposed project would provide housing for approximately 788 persons, based on a uniform application of an average 3.47 persons per household to 227 dwelling units regardless of housing type. The increase in the city's total population resulting from development of the proposed project would be less (a total of 37,370 persons) than the AMBAG 2025 projections (41,704 persons) upon which the Air Quality Management Plan is based. The increase in population generated by the proposed project would be accommodated by city and regional growth projections and is consistent with air district air quality planning efforts. Therefore, no impacts would occur from inconsistencies with the Air Quality Management Plan.

Create or Expose Existing and Future Sensitive Receptors to Unacceptable Levels of CO (Create or Contribute to CO "Hotspots"). The proposed project would generate approximately 159 vehicle trips during the AM peak hour and 210 vehicle trips during the PM peak hour, and would contribute to congestion at several intersections (refer also to Section 3.16, Traffic and Circulation). Traffic generated by the proposed project would cause the level of service to decline from LOS D to unacceptable LOS F and cause delays of more than ten seconds during PM peak hours at the intersection of Airline Highway and Union Road intersection when added to existing traffic levels and also under the background plus project scenario evaluated in the project traffic report (Hexagon Transportation Consultants 2016, Table ES 1). Traffic generated by the proposed project would also cause a delay of more than ten seconds during the PM peak hour at the intersection of Enterprise Road and Airline Highway, which operates at LOS F under background plus project conditions.

Modeling for CO emissions at these potentially affected intersections was not conducted. According to the air district there are no known CO hotspots in the vicinity of Hollister (Amy Clymo, pers. com., September 1, 2016). Additionally, modeling conducted by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District for the San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin north of San Benito County, has found that impacts from exposures to mobile-source CO emissions would not be significant if the a project's traffic would not increase traffic volumes at affected intersections to more than 44,000 vehicles per hour (Bay Area Air Quality Management District, p.3-4).

Traffic volumes at the affected intersections with and without the project are presented in [Table 8, Traffic Volumes](#).

Table 8 Traffic Volumes

Intersection	Existing Conditions	Existing Plus Project	Background Conditions	Background Plus Project
Airline Highway and Union Road	3,568	3,855	4,598	4,887
Enterprise Road and Airline Highway	N/A	N/A	2,290	2,588

Source: Hexagon Transportation Consultants, Inc. 2016, Figures 6, 9, 10, and 11

Note: Traffic volumes include total of vehicles traveling during the AM and PM peak hours for each scenario.

Traffic volumes with or without the project under each scenario would be well under the Bay Area Air Quality Management District threshold of 44,000 vehicles that would be considered a significant impact. Therefore, the proposed project would not create or contribute to unacceptable levels of CO at studied intersections.

Expose Sensitive Receptors to Residual Pesticides or Pesticide Drift. The project site has historically been used for agriculture, and construction activities for the proposed project have the potential to release pesticides into the environment. Based on the results of the soil sampling conducted as part of the soils analysis for the project site (Bergolar Stevens & Associates 2013), there is no evidence of harmful pesticide residues on the property. It is unlikely that residual pesticides from historical agricultural operations at the project site would be a new source of toxic air contaminant. As previously discussed in Section 3.2, Agricultural Resources, there are existing off-site agricultural production operations in proximity to the project site located east of Fairview Road that could continue as the proposed project is implemented. The likelihood of exposure to pesticide drift from adjacent agricultural operations is reduced by prevailing northwesterly winds that typically blow away from the project site and toward nearby agricultural uses. In addition, the project site can be assumed to be located at least 100 feet from these existing off-site agricultural operations. Therefore, no impacts would occur from residual pesticides or pesticide drift and no further discussion is required.

Odors. The proposed project does not include uses that would be expected to generate odors that would result in significant impacts. The air district does not regulate odor emissions other than through its nuisance rule. The Cielo Vista batch wastewater treatment plant and leachfields are located adjacent to the east border of the project site, but, due to its size (refer to the discussion in Section 3.17, Wastewater) and location downwind from the project site, the facility is not expected to be a source of substantial odors that could not be addressed through compliance with the nuisance rule. As such, no significant impact would occur and no further discussion is required.

Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation: Generate Operational Criteria Pollutant Emissions that Exceed Air Quality Standards

Operational Emissions. The proposed project would result in new sources of mobile and area source emissions. Operational criteria air pollutant emissions are reported as winter emissions, which represent worst case emissions. The CalEEMod modeling results for the proposed project (227 dwelling units and related infrastructure) are summarized in [Table 9, CalEEMod Operational Modeling Results Winter Emissions \(Pounds per Day\)](#). Detailed emissions modeling results are presented in [Appendix F](#).

Table 9 CalEEMod Operational Modeling Results, Winter Emissions (Pounds per Day)

	Reactive Organic Gases (ROG)	Nitrogen Oxides	Suspended Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀)	Carbon Monoxide (CO)
Unmitigated	389.28	19.82	74.02	516.31
Mitigated ¹	40.29	15.11	14.17	88.38
<i>Air District Thresholds</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>82</i>	<i>550</i>
Percent Reduction	89.65	23.78	80.86	82.88

Source: Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District and EMC Planning Group Inc. 2016

Note: 1. Assumes only non-wood-burning hearths would be allowed in new development.

As summarized in [Table 9](#), the proposed project would result in unmitigated operational emissions that exceed the air district thresholds for ROG, and CO. According to the model, the bulk of operational emissions are from area sources, and can be reduced prohibiting the use of wood-burning fireplaces and stoves in new residential development. Additional reductions in emission can be gained through the use of low VOC-emitting paints and solvents. Eliminating wood-burning appliances from development of the site would reduce area source operational ROG emissions by about 89.7 percent; NOx emissions would be reduced by 23.8 percent; PM₁₀ emissions would be reduced by 80.9 percent; and CO emissions by about 82.9 percent; all to levels well below the air district thresholds. Other reductions in area source emissions could also be achieved by compliance with the air district's Rule 426 that requires low VOC architectural coatings in new development.

Therefore, the proposed project would result in significant ROG emissions above the air district's threshold. This is a significant adverse environmental impact. Implementation of the following mitigation measure will reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level, as presented in Table 9 above.

Mitigation Measure

AQ-1. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall include the following air emissions reduction features on the project plans:

- a. Solid fuel heating appliances (i.e., wood-burning fireplaces; wood stoves; etc.) shall be prohibited. Restrictions on solid fuel heating appliances shall be included on deeds for individual parcels.

Implementation of mitigation measure AQ-1 would reduce project-related area source emissions below the air district thresholds and ensure operational area source emissions are at a less-than-significant level.

Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation: Construction Emissions that Potentially Contribute to the Air Basin's Non-attainment Status

The proposed project would generate dust and other emissions from construction equipment during site preparation and construction activities, which contributes to the air basin non-attainment status.

Construction Dust. The project site is 54.9 acres and initial site preparation and mass grading activities proposed in the first phase of construction would exceed 2.2 acres per day. Site improvements conducted in later phases also could include grading or other light earth movement exceeding 8.1 acres in a day. As noted above, according to the air district's CEQA guidelines, a project that includes excavation or grading to that extent would generate dust that would exceed the air district standards (82 lbs per day) for suspended particulate matter (PM₁₀), which also would contribute to the air basin's nonattainment status for PM₁₀. Construction dust at these levels is considered a significant, adverse environmental impact. The air district has identified the following feasible measures, that when implemented, reduce the impacts of construction dust emissions to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure

AQ-2. Prior to issuance of grading, or building permits, the applicant or developers of the project site shall prepare a grading plan subject to review and approval by the city. In the event ground disturbance exceeds 2.2 acres per day for initial site preparation activities that involve extensive earth moving activities (grubbing, excavation, rough

grading), and 8.1 acres per day for activities that involve minimal earth moving (e.g. finish grading) these limits, the required grading plans shall include the following dust control measures:

- a. Water all active construction sites continuously. Frequency should be based on the type of operation, soil, and wind exposure;
- b. Prohibit all grading activities during periods of high wind (over 15 mph);
- c. Apply chemical soil stabilizers on inactive construction areas (disturbed lands within construction projects that are unused for at least four consecutive days);
- d. Apply non-toxic binders (e.g., latex acrylic copolymer) to exposed areas after cut and fill operations and hydroseed area;
- e. Maintain at least 1'-0" of freeboard on haul trucks;
- f. Cover inactive storage piles;
- g. Sweep streets if visible soil material is carried out from the construction site;
- h. Limit the area under construction at any one time.

AQ-3. Prior to commencement of construction activities, the contractor shall appoint a qualified site monitor to ensure that the dust control measures are implemented. Evidence of implementation shall be submitted to the City of Hollister Planning Department within three days of commencement of grading, and monthly thereafter as long as grading occurs. In addition, a publicly-visible sign written in English and Spanish with the telephone number and person to contact regarding dust complaints should be posted at the project site. This person shall respond and take corrective action within 48 hours. The phone number of the air district shall also be visible to ensure compliance with rule 402 (nuisance).

Implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-2 and AQ-3 would reduce the impacts of dust generated by construction activities to a less-than-significant level.

Construction Diesel Exhaust. Diesel exhaust includes air contaminants that can cause adverse health effects. Development of the project site would likely utilize diesel-fueled heavy equipment, which would increase exposures of existing residences located in adjacent residential subdivisions to the east and west and potential future residences to the north if the approved Award Homes project is constructed and occupied prior to the proposed project. Diesel-powered trucks and equipment would emit NO_x, acrolein, and diesel particulate matter during the construction phase. Construction equipment can emit substantial amounts of NO_x that could have a small, but cumulative effect on ozone concentrations.

Calculating ROG and NO_x emissions from typical construction equipment is not required by the air district because temporary emissions of these ozone precursors have been accommodated in State- and federally-required air plans (Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District 2008b, p. 7-1). Therefore, the air quality impacts of construction ROG and NO_x emissions are less than significant.

Construction activities associated with the proposed project would likely involve use of the heavy-duty off-road equipment and large trucks that use diesel fuel and emissions of diesel particulate matter. CARB's Regulation for In-use Off-road Diesel Vehicles establishes a state program to reduce emissions from older construction equipment. Equipment built to EPA Tier 4 diesel engine standards and utilizing ultralow sulfur fuel would result in diesel emissions that are substantially lower than older equipment. However, older equipment not meeting the Tier 4 standards would result in greater emissions and increased risks of exposure to them, which is a potentially significant air quality impact.

Implementation of the following mitigation measures would reduce construction equipment exhaust emissions from older vehicles (NO_x and diesel particulate matter) to less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

AQ-4. The developer shall reduce nitrogen oxides exhaust and particulate matter emissions by implementing one of the following measures prior to the start of construction:

- Provide a plan, acceptable to the air district, demonstrating that the heavy-duty (> 50 horsepower) off-road vehicles and equipment to be used in the construction project, including owned, leased and subcontractor vehicles, will achieve a project wide fleet-average 20 percent nitrogen oxides reduction and 45 percent particulate matter reduction compared to the most recent CARB fleet average for the time of construction; or
- Provide a plan, acceptable to the air district, that all off-road construction vehicles/equipment greater than 50 horsepower that will be used on site for more than one week shall be manufactured during or after 2001, or equipped with diesel particulate matter filters such that they meet the nitrogen oxides emissions standard of 6.9 grams per brake horsepower hour.

Prior to the onset of site preparation, grading and construction activities, the project applicant(s) or developer(s) shall require in construction contracts that all off-road construction vehicles comply with the detailed specifications required in Mitigation Measure AQ-4 and shall submit evidence demonstrating compliance with this measure to the City of Hollister Planning Department for review and approval.

AQ-5. The developer shall reduce NO_x and particulate matter exhaust emissions by implementing the following measures prior to the start of construction:

- Contractors shall install temporary electrical service whenever possible to avoid the need for independently-powered equipment (e.g. compressors).
- Signs at the construction site shall be clearly visible to advise that that diesel equipment standing idle for more than two minutes within 200 feet of sensitive receptors shall be turned off. This would include trucks waiting to deliver or receive soil, aggregate, or other bulk materials. Rotating drum concrete trucks may keep their engines running continuously if on-site and staged at least 100 feet away from residential areas.
- Properly tune and maintain equipment for low emissions.
- Stage large diesel powered equipment at least 200 feet from any sensitive land uses (e.g., occupied residences).

These mitigation measures are consistent with the measures recommended in the air district's air quality guidelines (Table 8-3) that limit the number of vehicles, type of fuel used, hours of daily operation and duration of use. Implementation of these measures would reduce and subsequently limit exposure to construction exhaust emissions. Implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-4 – AQ-5, would ensure that construction emissions are reduced to a less than significant level.

Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation: Exposures to Substantial Pollutant Concentrations

The proposed project would expose sensitive receptors to criteria air pollutant emissions from off-road construction equipment and from trucks hauling debris and delivering materials. There are no hospitals, convalescent homes or schools in the immediate vicinity of the project site. However, sensitive residential receptors are located to the east and west and during construction activities on the project site, these sensitive receptors could be exposed to substantial PM₁₀ and equipment exhaust emissions. Implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-2 – AQ-4 would reduce dust and equipment exhaust emissions and corresponding impacts of exposure to these emissions to a less-than-significant level.

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation: Exposures to New Sources of Toxic Air Contaminants.

The proposed project is a residential subdivision located adjacent to established residential development. Diesel exhaust from construction equipment has the potential to emit toxic air contaminants and increase exposures to them.

Implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-4 – AQ-5, would ensure that diesel exhaust emissions from construction equipment are reduced to a less than significant level at nearby houses.

3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

This section of the Draft EIR addresses the existing biological resources conditions on the site; the federal, state, and regional/local regulatory framework pertaining to biological resources; and an evaluation of anticipated biological resources impacts due to the proposed project. The discussion in this section is based on the results of a reconnaissance-level field survey conducted by EMC Planning Group biologists on July 23, 2014 and the following biological documentation prepared for the project site:

- *Biological Resource Report, Roberts Ranch Project, Hollister, San Benito County, California* (“2013 Biological Report,” LSA Associates, Inc. 2013a).
- *California Red-Legged Frog Site Assessment, Roberts Ranch Project Site, Hollister, San Benito County, California* (LSA Associates 2014a)
- *Request for Preliminary Jurisdictional Determination for the Roberts Ranch Property, City of Hollister, San Benito County, California* (LSA Associates, Inc. 2013b)
- *Waters of the United States Map* (LSA Associates, Inc., July 1, 2014b)
- *Permit Application, Section 401 Water Quality Certification Application Form, submitted to the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Coast Region by LSA Associates, Inc. on behalf of Hollister Enterprise, LLC. July 22, 2014.* (LSA Associates, Inc. 2014d)
- *Biological Report Peer Review for the Proposed Roberts Ranch Subdivision* (EMC Planning Group 2014).
- *Responses to Biological Report Peer Review for the Roberts Ranch Project, Hollister, San Benito County* (LSA Associates 2014e).

Copies of these documents are included in [Appendix G](#).

Comments on the county NOP were received from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), which expressed concerns that the project site could include suitable habitat for the state and federally threatened California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*), the state species of special concern and federally threatened California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*), the state species of special concern western spadefoot (*Spea hammondi*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), nesting bird species, and rare plants.

Additional NOP comments were received by both the county and the city from neighboring residents regarding potential impacts to wildlife species and their habitat. The City of Hollister NOP and comment letters are included in [Appendix A](#). The county NOP and comments on the former project are included in [Appendix B](#).

Environmental Setting

The project site is located on the southeastern edge of the City of Hollister in San Benito County, within the Central Coast range of California. The Diablo mountain range borders the county to the east and the Gabilan mountain range to the west. The city is located on the nearly flat valley floor between these ranges in the northern portion of the county. The valley floor is underlain by geologically young, unconsolidated stream deposits (Graymer et. al. 2006). Vegetation within the valley includes annual grassland and oak woodland to the east and flat agricultural and urban land to the west. The climate of the Hollister area is characterized by warm summers and cool, moist winters. The average temperatures for summer and winter are 73°F and 46°F, respectively. However, it is not unusual for temperatures to rise above 100°F occasionally in the spring and summer or to fall below 40°F occasionally in the winter. The average yearly rainfall is 13 inches, with most of this precipitation occurring from October to May.

The 54.9-acre site is bound on the north by Valley View Park and vacant parcels upon which residential development has been approved by the City of Hollister but not yet constructed, on the east by Fairview Road and the existing Cielo Vista residential subdivision, on the south by State Route 25, and by Enterprise Road and a residential neighborhood to the west. A detention basin is located adjacent to the project site within the Cielo Vista residential subdivision, between the southeast portion of the site and existing homes in that neighborhood. The basin supports a stand of cattails (*Typha* sp.) and is fed by a culvert carrying runoff from the Cielo Vista residential subdivision under an adjacent park. The basin discharges through an underground culvert in the road embankment on the southern side of State Route 25.

Site drainage is provided by one- to three-foot-deep unlined agricultural drainage ditches dug around the perimeter of the parcel. The agricultural fields are bound on all sides by dirt roads and no structures are located on the site. The topography of the project site slopes gradually to the southwest and changes in elevation from 486 feet above sea level in the northeast corner to 435 feet above sea level in the southwest corner.

Vegetation

There are no trees or shrubs on the site. As described in the 2013 Biological Report and observed during the July 2014 reconnaissance-level survey, vegetation is primarily limited to row crops in active cultivation. Strips of non-native, weedy species are found around the site perimeter and

adjacent to the access roads. Species observed during the site visits are common within disturbed areas within San Benito County and include wild oats (*Avena* sp.), ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), wild radish (*Raphanus raphanistrum*), Harding grass (*Phalaris aquatic*), large barnyard grass (*Echinochloa crus-galli*), cheeseweed (*Marva parvifolia*), wild lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*), bristly ox-tongue (*Helminthotheca echioides*), and field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*).

A small seasonal wetland near the southwestern corner of the site was identified in 2013 (LSA Associates, Inc. 2013a; 2013b). Hydrophytic (water-loving) and facultative plant species were observed within the wetland, including cattails, nutsedge (*Cyperus eragrostis*), curly dock (*Rumex crispus*), rabbitsfoot grass (*Polypogon monspeliensis*), and hyssop loosestrife (*Lythrum hyssopifolium*).

Wildlife

Wildlife species observed and expected to occur on the site are those adapted to agricultural and rural residential habitats. Dense ruderal vegetation found along the site perimeter could support habitat for reptile species such as western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), southern alligator lizard (*Elgaria multicarinatus*), and gopher snake (*Pituophis catenifer*).

Nesting habitat for birds is not expected within the agricultural fields due to ongoing disturbance and the lack of cover, however foraging species, such as killdeer (*Charadrius vociferous*), red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), American pipit (*Anthus rubescens*), savannah sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*), and western meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*) are expected to occur.

Mammal species observed or expected to occur include Botta's pocket gopher (*Thomomys bottae*), black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californica*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), and striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*). A few old California ground squirrel (*Spermophilus beecheyi*) burrows were identified along the northern site boundary, but no active burrows were observed.

No amphibian or reptile species were observed during the site surveys, however the seasonal wetland and the southwestern corner of the site provides breeding habitat for western toads (*Anaxyrus boreas*) and Sierran treefrog (*Pseudacris sierra*).

Potentially Jurisdictional Waters

A formal delineation of potential Clean Water Act Section 404 jurisdictional features was performed on the site on September 10, 2013 (LSA Associates, Inc. 2013b). One jurisdictional feature was identified, consisting of the seasonal wetland at the southwestern corner. The wetland delineation letter report and map was submitted to the USACE for formal verification and a field verification visit with the USACE was completed on June 3, 2014. The wetland encompasses 0.08 acre (3,355 square feet). No other potentially jurisdictional areas were

identified. As of July 20, 2015, the USACE confirmed that this project could be permitted under the Nationwide Permit Program (personal communication between Ross Dobberteen, LSA, and Lisa Mangione, USACE, July 20, 2015).

In addition to the request for a preliminary jurisdictional determination submitted to the USACE, the applicant also submitted a permit application in July 2014 for Section 401 Water Quality Certification Application Form to the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Coast Region.

Special-Status Species

As explained below and more fully in the 2013 Biological Report, the project site and adjacent areas were evaluated for the presence or potential presence of a variety of special-status species. Data from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on-line species list (USFWS 2016), the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB 2016), and the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) on-line inventory (CNPS 2016) were reviewed to determine the potential for special-status species to occur at the project site, within the Tres Pinos United States Geologic Survey (USGS) 7.5" quadrangle (in which the project site occurs), or within the eight surrounding USGS quadrangles (Cherry Peak, Hollister, Mariposa Peak, Mt. Harlan, Paicines, Quien Sabe Valley, San Felipe, and Three Sisters). [Figure 9, Special-Status Wildlife Species within the Project Vicinity](#), shows known locations of special-status species in the vicinity of the project site. Special-status species include species listed by the USFWS as threatened or endangered; the USFWS candidates for listing as threatened or endangered; species designated as "Species of Concern" by the USFWS; species listed by the CDFW as threatened, endangered, or designated as "Species of Special Concern"; and species included on the CNPS Lists 1A, 1B, 2, 3, or 4. The results of the CNDDB, CNPS, and USFWS queries discussed below and are also found in the 2013 Biological Report.

Special-Status Plant Species. Special-status plants generally occur in relatively undisturbed areas and are largely found within unique plant communities and/or habitats such as serpentine grasslands, vernal pools, or alkali flats. Special-status plant species that have the potential to occur on the property based on the above data are listed in [Table 10, Special-Status Plant Species with the Potential to Occur in the Project Vicinity](#), along with their legal status and suitable habitat. This list was determined by evaluating the geographic ranges and habitat requirements of species and habitat conditions on the property. The table information also indicates whether these species were observed or are likely to occur on the property.

Table 10 Special-Status Plant Species with the Potential to Occur in the Project Vicinity

Common and Scientific Name	Status (Fed./State/ CNPS)	Habitat	Potential to Occur on the Site
Alkali milk-vetch (<i>Astragalus tener</i> var. <i>tener</i>)	--/--/1B.2	Alkaline soils of playas, adobe clay valley and foothill grasslands, and alkali vernal pools at elevations of up to 60 meters. Blooms March-May.	Unlikely. The property has been managed for agricultural purposes. While moderately alkaline soils may persist on the site, any suitable habitat that may have once been present has been eliminated from the property.
Chaparral hairbell (<i>Campanula exigua</i>)	--/--/1B.2	Chaparral (rocky, usually serpentine), 275-1250m elevation. Blooms May – June.	Unlikely. Chaparral vegetation and serpentine soils not found on property.
Gabilan Mountains manzanita (<i>Arctostaphylos gabilanensis</i>)	--/--/1B.2	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, granitic substrates 300-700m elevation. Blooming Period: March.	Not found. Species identifiable outside of the blooming period.
Hernandez spineflower (<i>Chorizanthe biloba</i> var. <i>immemora</i>)	--/--/1B.2	Chaparral and cismontane woodland, 600-800m elevation. Blooming period: May – September.	Unlikely. Chaparral or cismontane woodland species not found on property.
Hoover's button-celery (<i>Eryngium aristulatum</i> var. <i>hooveri</i>)	--/--/1B.1	Vernal pools. Alkaline depressions, roadside ditches, and other wet places near the coast, 5-45m elevation. Blooming Period: July – August.	Unlikely. The property has been impacted by agricultural and grazing land uses. Any suitable habitat that may have once been present has been eliminated from the site.

Common and Scientific Name	Status (Fed./State/CNPS)	Habitat	Potential to Occur on the Site
Indian Valley bush-mallow (<i>Malacothamnus aboriginum</i>)	--/--/1B.2	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, rocky, often burned areas, elevation 150 - 1700m. Blooming Period: April – October.	Unlikely. Suitable, rocky, chaparral or cismontane woodland vegetation not found at the project site.
Marsh microseris (<i>Microseris paludosa</i>)	--/--/1B.2	Closed-cone coniferous forest, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, and valley and foothill grassland at elevations between 5 and 300 meters. Blooms April-June and rarely in July.	Unlikely. The property has been managed for agricultural purposes. Any suitable habitat that may have once been present has been eliminated from the site.
Pajaro manzanita (<i>Arctostaphylos pajaroensis</i>)	--/--/1B.1	Sandy soils in chaparral habitat; evergreen, elevation 30 – 760m. Blooming Period: December – March.	Not found. Species identifiable outside of the blooming period.
Pinnacles buckwheat (<i>Eriogonum nortonii</i>)	--/--/1B.3	Chaparral, valley and foothill grassland/sandy, often on recent burns, elevation 300 - 975m. Blooming Period: May – June.	Unlikely. The property has been managed for agricultural purposes. Any suitable habitat that may have once been present has been eliminated from the site.
Prostrate vernal pool navarretia (<i>Navarretia prostrata</i>)	--/--/1B.1	Mesic soils of coastal scrub, meadows and seeps, alkaline valley and foothill grassland, and vernal pools at elevations of between 15 and 700 meters. Blooms April-July.	Unlikely. The property has been managed for agricultural purposes. While moderately alkaline soils may persist on the site, any suitable habitat that may have once been present has been eliminated from the site.

Common and Scientific Name	Status (Fed./State/CNPS)	Habitat	Potential to Occur on the Site
Round-leaved filaree (<i>California macrophylla</i>)	--/--/1B.1	Clays of cismontane woodlands and valley and foothill grasslands at elevations between 15 and 1200 meters. Blooms March-May.	Unlikely. The property has been managed for agricultural purposes. Any suitable habitat that may have once been present has been eliminated from the site.
Saline clover (<i>Trifolium hydrophilum</i>)	--/--/1B.2	Marshes and swamps, valley and foothill grassland, vernal pools. Mesic, alkaline sites, 0-300m elevation. Blooming Period: April – June.	Unlikely. Species not identified during surveys occurring during the species' blooming period.
San Joaquin spearscale (<i>Atriplex joaquiniana</i>)	--/--/1B.2	Chenopod scrub, meadows and seeps, playas, and valley and foothill grasslands on alkaline soils at elevations of up to 835 meters. Blooms April-October.	Unlikely. Species not identified during surveys occurring during the species' blooming period
Shining navarretia (<i>Navarretia nigelliformis</i> ssp. <i>radians</i>)	--/--/1B.2	Cismontane woodland, valley and foothill grassland, and vernal pools at elevations of between 76 and 1000 meters. Blooms May-July.	Unlikely. The property has been managed for agricultural purposes. Any suitable habitat that may have once been present has likely been eliminated from the site.
Communities			
Sycamore alluvial woodland			Not found. Species composition associated with this plant community absent from property.

Source: LSA Associates 2013, CDFW 2016, CNPS 2016, USFWS 2016

Notes: FE: Listed as "Endangered" by the Federal Endangered Species Act.

FT: Listed as "Threatened" by the Federal Endangered Species Act.

FC: A candidate for listing as threatened or endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

CE: Listed as "Endangered" by the California Endangered Species Act.

CT: Listed as "Threatened" by the California Endangered Species Act.

1B: Plants considered by California Native Plant Society (CNPS) to be rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere due to their limited or vulnerable habitat, their low numbers of individuals per population (even though they may be wide-ranging), or their limited number of populations.

CNPS Threat Code Extensions:

- .1: Seriously endangered in California (over 80% of occurrences threatened/high degree and immediacy of threat)
 - .2: Fairly endangered in California (20-80% occurrences threatened)
 - .3: Not very endangered in California (<20% of occurrences threatened or no current threats known)
-

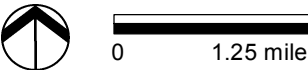
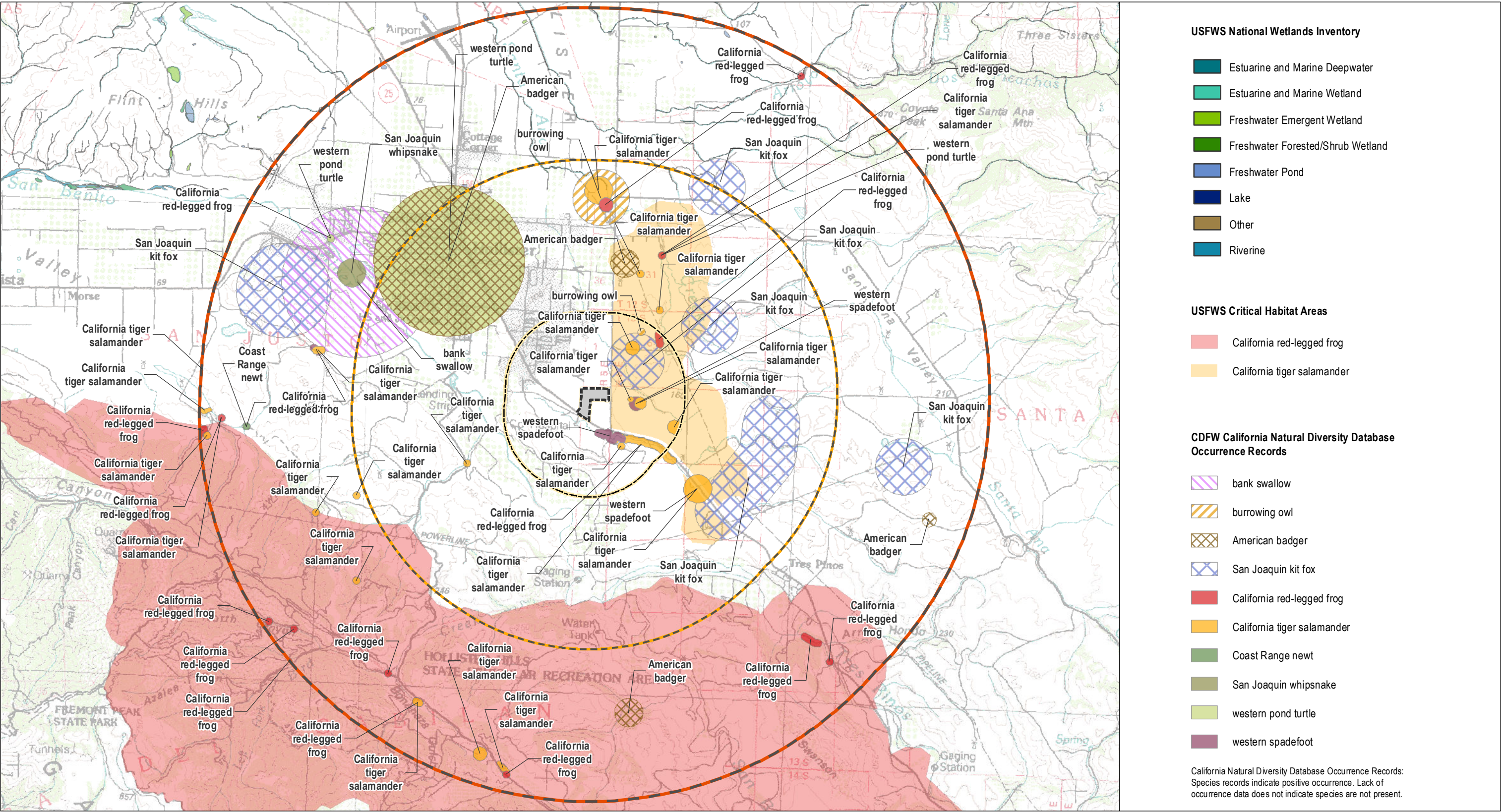
Special-Status Wildlife Species. Special-status animal species that were initially judged to have the potential to be found in the project site based on the above data are listed in [Table 11, Special-Status Wildlife Species with the Potential to Occur in the Project Vicinity](#), along with their legal status and habitat. This list was determined by evaluating the geographic ranges and habitat requirements of species and habitat conditions in the project site. The table information also indicates whether these species were observed or are likely to occur in the project site.

California Tiger Salamander. The California tiger salamander (CTS) is federally- and state-listed as threatened. CTS typically occur in the Central Valley and in surrounding foothills of both the Coast Range and Sierra Nevada mountains. Adult CTS spend the non-breeding season below ground in existing ground squirrel or other rodent burrows. CTS migrate to aquatic breeding sites (i.e., seasonal ponds, stock ponds, reservoirs, lakes, and occasionally stream pools that are devoid of fish) during the winter and spring rainy season. The larvae spend approximately two to four months in the water before transforming to adults and seeking suitable terrestrial habitat. CTS can migrate considerable distances (more than one mile) to aestivation (summer) habitat (typically ground squirrel burrows in open grasslands) and to aquatic breeding sites (winter/spring).

Critical habitat for the Central Valley Distinct Population Segment of CTS was designated on August 23, 2005 (final rule) (CFR Vol. 70, No. 162). Unit 15a is located just east of Fairview Road; however the project site is not located within any critical habitat unit.

LSA Associates Inc. conducted a survey on September 25, 2014 of the detention basin located on the adjacent parcel to the southeast to determine its potential to support special-status amphibians. According to the 2013 Biological Report, the *Biological Report and the California Red-Legged Frog Site Assessment, Roberts Ranch Project Site, Hollister, San Benito County, California* (LSA Associates 2014a), and information provided in response to the peer review (LSA Associates Inc. 2014), the adjacent detention basin does not provide breeding habitat for CTS since it does not appear to hold water long enough to support adequate larval development of CTS. Adjacent uplands are also subject to historic and ongoing disturbance from informal recreational use (e.g., pedestrians and pets, bicycles), urban-adapted predators (e.g., cats, dogs, raccoons), intensive agricultural operations, and a highly trafficked road. For these reasons, it is highly unlikely that the adjacent detention basin provides suitable breeding, foraging, or dispersal habitat for CTS (LSA Associates 2014a).

The 2013 Biological Report also concludes that the on-site seasonal wetland is of poor quality for CTS breeding due to an abundance of dense hydrophytic vegetation and consequent lack of necessary open water conditions. Additionally, upland habitat on the project site is marginal to poor for CTS due to the limited number of gopher burrows adjacent to the wetland and throughout the fields, as well as on-going agricultural operations. The regular application of irrigation water to the fields during the dry season does not create soil conditions favorable for



1-mile Buffer 3-mile Buffer 5-mile Buffer

Source: CDFW 2015, USFWS 2015, USGS 2006

CNDDDB version 09/2015. Please Note: The occurrences shown on this map represent the known locations of the species listed here as of the date of this version. There may be additional occurrences or additional species within this area which have not yet been surveyed and/or mapped. Lack of information in the CNDDDB about a species or an area can never be used as proof that no special status species occur in an area. In addition, this map represents a subset of the species listed in the CNDDDB database; only the wildlife species that are most likely to occur and/or require protective measures are depicted.



Figure 9
Special-Status Wildlife Species within the Project Vicinity
Roberts Ranch Subdivision EIR

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Table 11 Special-Status Wildlife Species with the Potential to Occur in the Project Vicinity

Common and Scientific Name	Status (Fed./State)	Habitat	Potential to Occur on the Site
American badger (<i>Taxidea taxus</i>)	--/CSC	Found in drier open stages of most shrub, forest, and herbaceous habitats with friable soils.	Unlikely. Not expected to occur due to lack of grassland and ongoing agricultural disturbance. No dens observed during surveys.
Bank swallow (<i>Riparia riparia</i>)	--/CT	(Nesting) Colonial nester, nests primarily in riparian and other lowland habitats west of the desert; requires vertical banks/cliffs with fine-textured/sandy soils near streams, rivers, lakes, or ocean to dig nesting hole.	Unlikely. Suitable bank/cliff habitat not found on the property.
Blunt-nosed leopard lizard (<i>Gambelia sila</i>)	FE/CE	Resident of sparsely vegetated alkali and desert scrub habitats, in areas of low topographic relief. Seeks cover in mammal burrows, under shrubs or structures such as fence posts; they do not excavate their own burrows.	Unlikely. The property has been managed for agricultural purposes. Any suitable habitat that may have once been present has likely been eliminated from the site.
Burrowing owl (<i>Athene cunicularia</i>)	--/CSC	Open, dry grasslands, deserts, and ruderal areas. Requires suitable burrows. This species is often associated with California ground squirrels.	Unlikely. Suitable foraging habitat within agricultural fields but lack of ground squirrel burrows precludes regular use of the site. Could potentially occur in the future, if ground squirrels were to colonize the site perimeter.

Common and Scientific Name	Status (Fed./State)	Habitat	Potential to Occur on the Site
California condor (<i>Gymnogyps californianus</i>)	FE/CE	Requires vast expanses of open savannah, grasslands, and foothill chaparral in mountain ranges of moderate altitude. Deep canyons containing clefts in the rocky walls provide nesting sites. Forages up to 100 miles from roost/nest.	Unlikely. Species may fly over site or possible forage in the vicinity; however, suitable nesting habitat is not found on the property.
California horned lark (<i>Eremophila alpestris actia</i>)	--/CSC	Coastal regions, chiefly from Sonoma County to San Diego County; also within the main part of the San Joaquin Valley and east to the foothills. Prefers short-grass prairie, mountain meadows, open coastal plains, fallow grain fields, and alkali flats.	Unlikely. The property has been managed for agricultural purposes. Any suitable habitat that may have once been present has likely been eliminated from the site.
California red-legged frog (<i>Rana draytonii</i>)	FT/CSC	Rivers, creeks, and stock ponds of the Sierra foothills and coast range, preferring pools with overhanging vegetation. May also be found in a variety of upland habitats.	Unlikely. Species-specific surveys and analysis (LSA Associates, Inc. 2014a) indicate the site lacks suitable habitat and is isolated from adjacent habitat areas by significant dispersal barriers.
California tiger salamander (<i>Ambystoma californiense</i>)	FT/CT	Breeds in vernal pools and stock ponds of central California; adults aestivate in grassland habitats adjacent to the breeding sites.	Unlikely. Seasonal wetland at southwestern corner of site provides marginal breeding habitat but is isolated from known occurrences to east and southeast by high-volume roads (Fairview Rd. and State Route 25).

Common and Scientific Name	Status (Fed./State)	Habitat	Potential to Occur on the Site
Coast Range newt (<i>Taricha torosa torosa</i>)	--/CSC	Breeds in ponds, reservoirs, and slow-moving water. May also occur in large streams and rivers.	Unlikely. Suitable perennial aquatic habitat for this species is absent from the property.
Foothill yellow-legged frog (<i>Rana boylei</i>)	--/CSC	Found primarily in swiftly flowing creeks.	Unlikely. Suitable creek habitat for this species is absent from the property.
Giant kangaroo rat (<i>Dipodomys ingens</i>)	FE/CE	Annual grasslands on the western side of the San Joaquin Valley; marginal habitat in alkali scrub. Needs level terrain and sandy loam soils for burrowing.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat for this species is absent from the property.
Golden eagle (<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>)	--/CSC	Typically frequents rolling foothills, mountain areas, woodland areas, sage-juniper flats, and desert habitats.	May occasionally forage over agricultural fields but not expected to nest or roost due to lack of trees and shrubs.
Hoary bat (<i>Lasiurus cinereus</i>)	--/CSC	Forages over many habitats. Roosts mainly in coniferous and deciduous trees.	Unlikely. While suitable roosting, breeding, and foraging habitat is marginal to absent. This species may occasionally pass through the site.
Least Bell's vireo (<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>)	FE/CE	(Nesting) Summer resident of Southern California in low riparian habitats in the vicinity of water or in dry river bottoms (below 2,000 feet). Nests placed along margins of bushes or on twigs projecting into pathways.	Unlikely. Suitable riparian habitat for this species is absent from the property.

Common and Scientific Name	Status (Fed./State)	Habitat	Potential to Occur on the Site
Loggerhead shrike (<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>)	--/CSC	Frequents open habitats with sparse shrubs and trees, other suitable perches, bare ground, and low herbaceous cover. Often found in cropland.	Observed. One observed at northeastern corner of the site on October 30, 2013 by LSA Associates, Inc. Likely forages along site perimeter where fences provide perch sites, but not expected to nest on the site due to the lack of trees and shrubs.
Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>)	--/CSC	Breeds in Canada but winters in a variety of California habitats, including grasslands, savannahs, and wetlands.	Unlikely. Breeding habitat is absent from the site, and foraging habitat is marginal to absent. This species may occur as an occasional winter migrant.
Prairie falcon (<i>Falco mexicanus</i>)	--/CSC	Nesting habitats: open terrain, either level or hilly breeding sites located on cliffs. Forages far distances, including to marshlands and ocean shores.	Unlikely. Breeding habitat is absent from the site, and foraging habitat is marginal to absent.
Peregrine falcon (<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>)	--/CE	Individuals breed on cliffs in the Sierras or in coastal habitats. Occurs in many habitats during migration and winter.	Unlikely. Peregrine falcons may occur incidentally on the site during migration or foraging. Suitable nesting habitat is absent from the site.
San Joaquin whipsnake (<i>Masticophis flagellum ruddocki</i>)	--/CSC	Frequents chaparral habitats, specifically scrublands, rocky hillsides, gullies, canyons, and stream courses of the foothills.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat for this species is marginal to absent from the property.

Common and Scientific Name	Status (Fed./State)	Habitat	Potential to Occur on the Site
San Joaquin kit fox (<i>Vulpes macrotis mutica</i>)	FE/CT	Frequents annual grasslands or grassy open stages with scattered shrubby vegetation. Needs loose-textured sandy soils for burrowing and suitable prey base. Utilizes enlarged (4 to 10 inches in diameter) ground squirrel burrows as denning habitat. May forage in adjacent agricultural habitats.	Unlikely. No dens were observed during the surveys and the presence of adjacent development, feral cats, and domestic dogs preclude this site as foraging habitat.
Southwestern willow flycatcher (<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>)	FE/CE	Breeds within thickets of willows or other riparian understory usually along streams, ponds, lakes, or canyons. Migrants may be found among other shrubs in wetter areas.	Unlikely. Suitable willow or riparian habitats are absent from the property.
Swainson's hawk (<i>Buteo swainsoni</i>)	--/CT	Nests in large trees especially in riparian corridors. Forages in agricultural fields and grasslands.	Unlikely. Although trees occurring on the site could present perch sites and/or breeding habitat, the distribution of this species is concentrated within the Central Valley.
Townsend's big-eared bat (<i>Plecotus townsendii townsendii</i>)	--/CSC	Primarily a cave-dwelling bat that may also roost in buildings. Occurs in a variety of habitats.	Unlikely. Suitable roosting and breeding habitat is absent for this species, and foraging habitat is marginal to absent. This species may occasionally pass through the site.

Common and Scientific Name	Status (Fed./State)	Habitat	Potential to Occur on the Site
Tricolored blackbird (<i>Agelaius tricolor</i>)	--/CE	Breeds near fresh water, primarily emergent wetlands, with tall thickets. Forages in nearby grassland and cropland habitats.	Unlikely. Suitable breeding habitat is absent from the site, and foraging habitat is marginal. However, this species may occasionally pass through the site.
Vernal pool fairy shrimp (<i>Branchinecta lynchi</i>)	FT/--	Endemic to the grasslands of the Central Valley, Central Coast Mtns., and South Coast Mtns. in astatic rain-filled pools. Inhabit small, clear-water sandstone depression pools and grassed swale, earth slump, or basalt-flow depression pools.	Unlikely. Seasonal wetland at southwestern corner of the site does not support the clear-water habitat required.
Western pond turtle (<i>Emys marmorata</i>)	--/CSC	Open slow-moving water of rivers and creeks of central California with rocks and logs for basking.	Unlikely. Suitable perennial aquatic habitat for this species is absent from the property.
Western spadefoot (<i>Spea hammondi</i>)	--/CSC	Primarily occurs in grasslands, but also occurs in valley and foothill hardwood woodlands. Requires vernal pools or other temporary wetlands for breeding.	Unlikely. Seasonal wetland at southwestern corner of the site provides marginal breeding habitat but it is isolated from known occurrences to the east and southeast by high-volume roads (Fairview Road and State Route 25).
Western yellow-billed cuckoo (<i>Coccyzus americanus occidentalis</i>)	FC/CE	Nests in dense riparian forests. Inhabits broad, lower flood bottoms of larger river systems.	Unlikely. This species has not been observed within San Benito County since 1899 in the vicinity of Paicines. Furthermore, suitable habitat for this species is absent from the property.

Common and Scientific Name	Status (Fed./State)	Habitat	Potential to Occur on the Site
Yellow-breasted chat (<i>Icteria virens</i>)	--/CSC	Breeds in brushy tangles, briers, and stream thickets. May occur in overgrown pastures and upland thickets.	Unlikely. Suitable breeding habitat is absent from the site, and foraging habitat is marginal to absent.

Source: LSA Associates 2013, CDFW 2016, USFWS 2016

Notes: FE: Listed as 'Endangered' by the Federal Endangered Species Act.

FT: Listed as "Threatened" by the Federal Endangered Species Act.

FC: A candidate for listing as threatened or endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

CE: Listed as "Endangered" by the California Endangered Species Act.

CT: Listed as "Threatened" by the California Endangered Species Act.

CSC: CDFW "Species of Special Concern." The CDFW "Species of Special Concern" designation does not afford these species any federal or state protection. These species should be taken into special consideration when decisions are made concerning the future of any land parcel. A species is included as a "Species of Special Concern" when their breeding populations in California are declining. Species are also included that are not declining worldwide, but in California the population is so low that it is potentially vulnerable to extirpation.

use by CTS (i.e., dried soil cracks). In addition, the presence of two high-volume traffic roads between known CTS occurrences to the east and southeast greatly reduces the likelihood that individuals from these ponds could successfully move onto the site. Despite these factors, the 2013 Biological Report concludes that the potential presence of CTS cannot be completely ruled out due to its presence in the project vicinity and potential to migrate through the site.

California Red-Legged Frog. The California red-legged frog (CRLF) is federally-listed as threatened and is a California species of special concern. The project site is not located within federally-designated critical habitat for this species.

The CRLF is California's largest native frog, and is generally restricted to riparian and lacustrine (lake) habitats. This species prefers deep, still pools, usually greater than two feet in depth, in creeks, rivers or lakes below 5,000 feet in elevation. Breeding habitats require fresh water emergent vegetation or thick riparian vegetation, especially willow thickets adjacent to shorelines. CRLF can survive in seasonal bodies of water that dry up for short periods if a permanent water body or dense vegetation is nearby. They can move considerable distances overland, with dispersal occurring predominantly within creek drainages. Individuals are often found during the summer in foraging habitat not suitable for breeding, and therefore presumed to move seasonally between summer foraging and winter breeding habitats.

Seventeen known occurrences of CRLF have been recorded within five miles of the project site, and a site assessment following the *Revised Guidance on Site Assessments and Field Surveys for the California Red-legged Frog* (USFWS 2005b) was conducted by LSA Associates Inc. in May 2014 (*Biological Report and the California Red-Legged Frog Site Assessment, Roberts Ranch Project Site, Hollister, San Benito County, California, "CRLF Site Assessment,"* LSA Associates 2014a). The potential for CRLF to occur on the project site based on the known occurrences within the project vicinity was analyzed and a survey of the detention basin located adjacent to the site was conducted. As with CTS, the survey revealed that the basin does not provide breeding habitat for CRLF since it does not appear to hold water long enough to support adequate larval development of either species. Adjacent off-site upland areas are also subject to historic and ongoing disturbance from informal recreational use (e.g., pedestrians and pets, bicycles), urban-adapted predators (e.g., cats, dogs, raccoons), intensive agricultural operations, and a highly trafficked road. For these reasons, it is highly unlikely that the adjacent detention basin provides suitable breeding, foraging, or dispersal habitat for CRLF.

The 2013 Biological Report and the CRLF Site Assessment concluded that the presence of CRLF on the project site is very unlikely. The project site lacks habitat suitable for a CRLF breeding population and is isolated from adjacent habitat areas by significant dispersal barriers. As such, the project is not anticipated to have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modification, on CRLF or its movement. However, despite the low probability

of CRLF utilizing the site for breeding or foraging, individual CRLF may occur on the site during dispersal movements and the possibility for CRLF to occur cannot be completely ruled out.

Western Spadefoot. Western spadefoot is a California species of special concern. This species lives within grassland habitats of Central California and the Southern California coast. It requires temporary pools of water free of predators (such as fish, bullfrogs, or crayfish) for egg-laying. Breeding usually occurs in late winter. With the exception of the breeding season and foraging excursions during rain events, this species spends most of its life aestivating in self-excavated burrows, although burrows of small mammals are sometimes utilized.

According to the 2013 Biological Report, potential spadefoot habitat on the site is limited to the seasonal wetland near the southwestern corner where breeding western toads were observed in June 2013 (Olberding Environmental 2013 as cited by LSA Associates 2014a, p.6). The presence of western toads suggests that the wetland could also support western spadefoot, although none have been observed on the site by Olberding Environmental, LSA, or EMC Planning Group. The likelihood of western spadefoot (and other special-status amphibians) occurring in the wetland is reduced by its small size and limited adjacent upland habitat; however due to the presence of seasonal wetland habitat suitable for a species with similar habitat requirements, use of the site by western spadefoot cannot be ruled out.

Western Burrowing Owl. Western burrowing owl is state-listed as a species of concern. Burrowing owls live and breed in burrows in the ground, especially in abandoned ground squirrel burrows. Optimal habitat conditions include large open, dry and nearly level grasslands or prairies with short to moderate vegetation height and cover, areas of bare ground, and populations of burrowing mammals. Resident burrowing owls are rare in northern San Benito County, although wintering owls are known to occur in the area and have been sighted within several miles of the project site. There are no known breeding records of this species in the immediate vicinity of Hollister, although this may due to lack of survey effort rather than reflect true absence.

According to the 2013 Biological Report, the open fields on the project site provide high-quality foraging habitat for burrowing owls but the lack of active ground squirrel burrows or other structures suitable for nesting severely reduces its overall habitat value. The fields and adjacent maintenance roads and drainage ditches appear to be actively managed, including the use of ground squirrel poisoning stations, to discourage ground squirrel colonization.

In summary, burrowing owls are highly unlikely to occur on the project site due to the lack of active ground squirrel burrows and rodent management practices. Nevertheless, the presence of a few old ground squirrel burrows at the northern site boundary suggests that ground squirrels have been present in the area in the past, and could potentially re-colonize the site in the future.

San Joaquin Kit Fox. The San Joaquin kit fox is a federally-listed endangered species and a state-listed threatened species. The present range of the San Joaquin kit fox extends from the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley, north to Tulare County, and along the interior Coast Range valleys and foothills to central Contra Costa County. San Joaquin kit foxes typically inhabit annual grasslands or grassy open spaces with scattered shrubby vegetation, but can also be found in some agricultural habitats and urban areas. This species needs loose-textured sandy soils for burrowing, and they also need areas that provide a suitable prey base, including black-tailed hare, desert cottontails, and California ground squirrels, as well as birds, reptiles, and carrion.

The project site does not contain any mammal burrows of sufficient size to be used by denning kit foxes. The agricultural fields could be used by kit foxes moving through the area but the presence of residential development on three sides of the site and a high-volume road on the other reduces the likelihood that kit fox would regularly occur. In addition, feral cats and domestic dogs originating from adjacent development further reduces the habitat quality for kit fox on the site. Nevertheless, if ground squirrels re-colonize the site in the future, there is low potential for kit foxes to use burrows that may become available.

Nesting Raptors and Migratory Birds. Many bird species are migratory and fall under the jurisdiction of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, protections for birds of prey, and are considered Fully-Protected Species (discussed further in Regulatory Setting, below). Several avian species were observed at the project site during the surveys, including killdeer, red-tailed hawk, loggerhead shrike, American crow, American pipit, savannah sparrow, and western meadowlark. Additional species may forage at the site, including merlin and golden eagle. There are no trees or shrubs present on the project site that could offer nesting habitat on the site and no nesting activity was observed during the surveys; however, ground nesting species may occur and nesting varies from year to year.

Regulatory Setting

Federal

Federal Endangered Species Act. The Federal Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. § 1531) forms the basis for the protection of threatened or endangered plants, insects, fish and wildlife. The act contains four key sections. Section 4 of the act outlines the procedure for listing endangered plants and wildlife. Section 7 imposes limits on the actions of federal agencies that might impact listed species. Section 9 prohibits the “taking” of a listed species by anyone, including private individuals, and state and local agencies. Section 10 requires the issuance of an incidental take permit before any public or private action may be taken that would harm, harass, injure, kill, capture, collect or otherwise hurt any individual of an endangered or threatened species. In the case of salt water fish and other marine organisms, the requirements of the act are

enforced by the National Marine Fisheries Service. The USFWS enforces all other cases. Sections 9, and 10 of the federal act are discussed since these are the two sections most relevant to the proposed project.

Generally, Section 9 prohibits the “take” of any fish or wildlife species listed as “endangered” or “threatened.” “Take” is defined as follows: “to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” “Harm” is defined to mean an act that actually kills or injures wildlife. Such an act may include significant habitat modification or degradation where it actually kills or injures wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding or sheltering. Section 9 applies to any person, including natural persons, corporations, and federal, state and local agencies.

If “take” of a listed species is necessary to complete an otherwise lawful activity and if a federal agency will carry out, fund or approve that activity, this triggers the need for consultation under Section 7 of the act. For those projects, such as the proposed project, that do not involve federal agency action (i.e., a federal agency is carrying out, funding, or approving a project), Section 10 of the act can be utilized to obtain authorization for the “incidental take” of listed species. In accordance with the statutory criteria set forth in Section 10(a)(2)(B), the project applicant is required to submit a “habitat conservation plan” to the USFWS that specifies, among other things, the impacts that are likely to result from the taking; the measures that the applicant will undertake to minimize and mitigate such impacts; and the funding that will be available to implement those steps.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Migratory birds are protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. §§ 703-711). This act makes it unlawful to take, possess, buy, sell, purchase or barter any listed migratory bird, including their feathers or other parts, nests, eggs, young or products, except in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior (50 CFR § 21). The vast majority of birds found in San Benito County and the region are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, including geese, ducks, shorebirds, raptors, songbirds, wading birds, seabirds, and passerine birds.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Jurisdiction and General Permitting. The USACE is a federal agency with regulatory authority over navigable waters and other aquatic sites, including wetlands, which may be impacted by development. The goal of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. §§ 1342, 1344) is to “restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation’s waters.” To meet this objective, the Clean Water Act prohibits the discharge of any pollutants into navigable waters, except as allowed by permits issued under Sections 402 and 404 of the act. Section 402 establishes the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program, which allows the issuance of NPDES permits by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or by the states (such as California) with EPA-

approved permit programs. Section 404 authorizes the USACE (or the EPA under certain circumstances) to issue permits for and to regulate the discharge of dredged or fill materials into waters of the United States.

State

California Endangered Species Act. Under the California Endangered Species Act, the CDFW maintains a list of endangered and threatened species (Cal. Fish & Game Code § 2070). The CDFW also maintains a list of “candidate species,” which are those species that the CDFW is considering listing as endangered and threatened species. Finally, the CDFW maintains lists of “species of special concern,” which serve as species “watch lists.”

Under the state’s endangered species act, an agency reviewing a proposed project within its jurisdiction must determine whether any state-listed endangered or threatened species may be present in the project study area and determine whether the proposed project will have a potentially significant impact on such species. In addition, the CDFW encourages informal consultation on any proposed project that may impact a candidate species.

Section 2080 prohibits, among other things, the “take” of state-listed threatened or endangered species. “Take” means to “hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill,” or to attempt any of these acts. However, the CDFW has the authority to permit the “incidental take” of state-listed species, subject to certain conditions. State-listed species are fully protected under the mandates of the act. Project-related impacts to species on the California Endangered Species Act endangered or threatened list would be considered significant.

Birds of Prey. Under Section 3503.5 of the California Fish and Game Code, it is unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds in the orders of *Falconiformes* or *Strigiformes* (birds of prey) or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird, except as otherwise provided by the applicable statute and regulations.

Fully-Protected Species. The classification of Fully Protected was the State's initial effort in the 1960's to identify and provide additional protection to those animals that were rare or faced possible extinction. California statutes accord “fully-protected” status to a number of specifically identified birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. Specific species subject to this level of protection are listed in Sections 3505 and 3511 (birds), Section 4700 (mammals), and Section 5050 (reptiles and amphibians).

Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. Under the California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) may necessitate Waste Discharge Requirements for the fill or alteration of “Waters of the State,” which according to California Water Code Section 13050 includes “any surface water or groundwater, including saline waters, within the boundaries of the state.” The RWQCB may,

therefore, necessitate Waste Discharge Requirements even if the affected waters are not under USACE jurisdiction. Also, under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, any activity requiring a USACE Section 404 permit must also obtain a state Water Quality Certification (or waiver thereof) to ensure that the proposed activity will meet state water quality standards. The applicable state RWQCB is responsible for administering the water quality certification program and enforcing National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits.

Clean Water Act, Section 401: Water Quality Certification. If an applicant proposes to discharge dredged or fill material into jurisdictional waters, Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1341) requires that the applicant obtain a Water Quality Certification from the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board to confirm that the discharge will comply with applicable effluent limitations and water quality standards.

Streambed Alteration Agreement. State and local public agencies are subject to Section 1602 of the California Fish and Game Code. Under this statute, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) must approve any proposed activity that would substantially divert, obstruct, or alter the natural flow, or substantially modify the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream or lake, the purpose of which is to protect fish and wildlife resources, through the issuance of a Streambed Alteration Agreement.

California Native Plant Protection Act. The Native Plant Protection Act (Cal. Fish & Game Code §§ 1900-1913) is intended to preserve, protect and enhance endangered or rare native plants in California. The Act directs the CDFW to establish criteria for determining which native plants are rare or endangered. Under the Act, a species is endangered when its prospects for survival and reproduction are in immediate jeopardy from one or more causes. A species is rare, although not threatened with immediate extinction, if it is in such small numbers throughout its range that it may become endangered if its present environment worsens. This Act prohibits any person from importing into or taking, possessing, or selling within the state any endangered or rare native plant, except as incident to the possession or sale of the real property on which the plant is growing or as otherwise excepted under the Act.

California Native Plant Society. The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) maintains a list of plant species native to California that have low numbers, limited distribution, or are otherwise threatened with extinction. This information is published in the Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants of California. Potential impacts to populations of rare plants receive consideration under CEQA. The CNPS ranking systems are defined below:

- **List 1A:** Plants presumed extinct
- **List 1B:** Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere
- **List 2:** Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more numerous elsewhere

- **List 3:** Plants about which more information is needed (a review list)
- **List 4:** Plants of limited distribution (a watch list)

A new threat code extension has been added to the CNPS ranking system:

- **.1:** Seriously endangered in California (over 80 percent of occurrences threatened / high degree and immediacy of threat)
- **.2:** Fairly endangered in California (20-80 percent occurrences threatened)
- **.3:** Not very endangered in California (<20 percent of occurrences threatened or no current threats known)

In general, plants appearing on the CNPS Lists 1A, 1B, or 2 are considered to meet the criteria of endangered, rare or threatened under the state CEQA Guidelines. Additionally, plants identified on the CNPS Lists 1A, 1B, or 2 meet the definition of rare or endangered species under the California Fish and Game Code.

Standards of Significance

The following thresholds for evaluating a project's environmental impacts are based on the state CEQA Guidelines (Appendix G). For purposes of this EIR, a project may have a significant effect on the environment if it would:

- have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modification, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, endangered, threatened or other special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, coastal, riverine, stream, marsh, vernal pool, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means;
- interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites;

- conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance; and/or
- conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional or state habitat conservation plan.

Analysis, Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The information below identifies the anticipated biological resource impacts of the proposed project. Where potentially significant impacts are identified, an applicable mitigation measure is included to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level.

Topics Eliminated from Further Evaluation

Riparian Habitat and Sensitive Natural Communities. The project would not have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies or regulations, or by the CDFW or the USFWS, as none are present adjacent to or on the project site. Therefore, the project would have no impact on riparian habitat and special-status natural communities of concern, and no further analysis is required.

Protected Trees. There are no trees on the project site. Therefore the proposed project would not conflict with the provisions of with local policies or ordinances protecting trees. No impact would occur and no further analysis is required.

Adopted Habitat Conservation Plans. The project site is not located within an area covered by any adopted habitat conservation or other approved biological resources recovery or habitat conservation plan of any local, regional or state agency plans. Therefore, no impact would occur and no analysis is required.

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation: Construction That Results in Harassment, Habitat Removal, or Direct Mortality of California Tiger Salamander (CTS), a Federally- and State-listed as Threatened Species; California Red-legged Frog (CRLF), a Federally-listed Threatened and State-listed Species of Special Concern, and Western Spadefoot Toad, a State-listed Species of Special Concern.

Although CTS, CRLF and western spadefoot are considered unlikely to occur on the site, their presence cannot be completely ruled out. If present in or adjacent to the seasonal wetland at the southwestern corner of the project site, project grading could result in the mortality of individuals. Harassment, habitat removal, or direct mortality of CTS or CRLF individuals

would constitute “take” under the ESA and/or CESA. Western spadefoot is not protected under the ESA or CESA, but is protected under CEQA regulations. Take of protected species is considered a significant impact.

Implementation of the following mitigation measures would reduce these significant impacts to a less-than-significant level. In addition, the applicant will implement any additional measures required by the USFWS and/or CDFW as part of the ESA Section 7 (Biological Opinion) and CESA Section 2081 (Incidental Take Permit) permitting process.

Mitigation Measures

BIO-1. At least 15 days prior to ground disturbance, the applicant shall submit the name(s) and credentials of biologists who will conduct activities specified in the measures BIO-1 through BIO-8 (“qualified biologist”). No project activities shall begin until the applicant has received written approval from the USFWS and CDFW that the biologist is qualified to conduct the work. The qualified biologist will supervise and/or implement all protection measures at the expense of the applicant.

BIO-2. Before construction activities begin, the qualified biologist shall conduct a training session for all construction personnel. At a minimum, the training shall include a description of CRLF, CTS, and western spadefoot and their habitats, general measures that are being implemented to conserve CRLF and CTS as they relate to the project, and the boundaries within which the project occurs. Informational handouts with photographs clearly illustrating the species’ appearances shall be used in the training session. All new construction personnel shall undergo this mandatory environmental awareness training.

BIO-3. During construction the qualified biologist will be present during all initial ground disturbance activities. Only the qualified biologist will be allowed to handle CTS, CRLF, and western spadefoot. The qualified biologist will have the authority to halt construction work at any time to prevent harm to CTS, CRLF, and/or or western spadefoot when any protection measures have been violated. Work will commence only when authorized by the qualified biologist. If work is stopped due to potential harm to CTS, CRLF, or western spadefoot, the qualified biologist will contact the USFWS and/or CDFW by telephone or email on the same day.

The qualified biologist will train biological monitors designated by the construction contractor. Before the start of work each day, the monitors will check for animals under any equipment such as vehicles and stored pipes within active construction zones that are fenced. The monitors will also check all excavated steep-walled holes or trenches greater than one foot deep for trapped animals. If a CTS, CRLF, or western spadefoot is observed within an active construction zone, the qualified biologist will be notified immediately and

all work within 100 feet of the individual will be halted and all equipment turned off until the biologist has captured and removed the individual from the work area. CTS, CRLF, and/or western spadefoot will be relocated to a USFWS/CDFW-approved off-site location.

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation: Disturbance That Results in the Loss of Habitat for California Tiger Salamander (CTS), a Federally- and State-listed Threatened Species and California Red-legged Frog (CRLF), a Federally-listed Threatened and State-listed Species of Special Concern.

The project will result in the loss of approximately 54.9 acres of potential upland dispersal habitat for CRLF and potential upland habitat for CTS. Although the status of CTS and CRLF on the project site is unknown and Fairview Road and SR 25 present significant barriers to movement onto the site, the site is within dispersal distance of several known occurrences to the east and southeast. In addition, the site may have served as upland habitat for these species prior to development of adjacent areas. As such, the project will contribute to cumulative upland habitat loss for these species in the Hollister region. The loss of upland habitat for protected species is considered a significant impact.

Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce these significant impacts to a less-than-significant level. In addition, the applicant would be required to implement any additional measures required by the USFWS and/or CDFW as part of the ESA Section 7 (Biological Opinion) and CESA Section 2081 (Incidental Take Permit) permitting process.

Mitigation Measure

BIO-4. To compensate for the permanent loss of CTS and CRLF upland habitat, the applicant shall preserve or purchase in-kind grassland habitat that is known to provide upland habitat for CTS and CRLF at a minimum 2:1 ratio of area preserved to area impacted. Compensatory mitigation may be accomplished through one of the following options:

- Establishing a conservation easement on or off site in a suitable location and providing a non-wasting endowment for management and monitoring of the property in perpetuity. Lands placed in a conservation easement must be documented to support CTS and CRLF;
- Depositing funds into an USFWS- and CDFW-approved in-lieu fee program; or
- Purchasing credits in a USFWS- and CDFW-approved conservation bank that includes the Roberts Ranch site in its service area.

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation: Impacts to Western Burrowing Owl, a State-listed species of concern

The proposed project could result in the destruction of burrows occupied by burrowing owls. Although the project site currently does not support burrows and is considered unsuitable for burrowing owls, there is slight potential for the species to occur in the future if ground squirrels colonize the site perimeter (e.g., embankments of drainage ditches, margins of maintenance roads). Project grading that destroys occupied burrows and the losses of individuals are considered significant impacts. Implementation of the following mitigation measures would reduce these significant impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure

BIO-5. No more than 14 days prior to any ground disturbing activities, a qualified biologist will conduct a preconstruction/take avoidance survey for burrowing owls using methods described in Appendix D of the CDFW *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFG 2012), and at the expense of the applicant. If no owls are detected during the initial take avoidance survey, a final survey shall be conducted within 24 hours prior to ground disturbance to confirm that owls are still absent.

If take avoidance surveys conducted during the non-breeding season (September 1 to January 31) identify any burrowing owls within the construction footprint, owls may be excluded from burrows using one-way doors provided that a Burrowing Owl Exclusion Plan is developed and approved by CDFW prior to implementation. Any burrow exclusion efforts will be monitored prior to, during, and after exclusion of burrowing owls from burrows to ensure that take is avoided. If burrow exclusion will occur immediately after the end of the breeding season, daily monitoring shall be conducted for one week prior to the exclusion to confirm that any young of the year have fledged.

If owls are found within the construction footprint during the breeding season, occupied burrows will be avoided by establishing buffers around the burrows in which no work shall be allowed until a qualified biologist has determined that the nest attempt has failed or that young have fledged and can forage independently of the adults. A minimum buffer of 250 feet will be maintained during the breeding season around active burrows. Owls present on site after February 1 will be assumed to be nesting on or adjacent to the site unless focused monitoring by a qualified biologist familiar with burrowing owl reproductive behavior indicates that the observed individual is unpaired or that egg-laying has not yet begun. A Burrowing Owl Exclusion Plan will be developed and approved by CDFW prior to implementation.

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation: Impacts to San Joaquin kit fox, a Federally-listed endangered species and a State-listed threatened species.

The proposed project could result in the destruction of burrows occupied by San Joaquin kit fox. Although the project site currently does not support burrows and is considered unsuitable for San Joaquin kit fox, there is slight potential for the species to occur in the future if ground squirrels colonize the site perimeter (e.g., embankments of drainage ditches, margins of maintenance roads). Project grading that destroys occupied burrows and the losses of individuals are considered significant impacts. Implementation of the following mitigation measures would reduce these significant impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure

BIO-6. Preconstruction/pre-activity surveys for San Joaquin kit fox in accordance with USFWS protocols shall be conducted no less than 30 days prior to the beginning of ground disturbance and/or construction activities or any project activity that may impact the San Joaquin kit fox. The surveys shall include all work areas and a minimum 200-foot buffer. The preconstruction surveys shall identify kit fox habitat features on the project site and evaluate use by kit fox and, if possible, assess the potential impacts of the proposed activity. The status of all dens should be determined and mapped.

If a natal/pupping den is discovered within the project area or within 200 feet of the project boundary, the applicant will consult with CDFW and USFWS to establish an appropriate avoidance buffer. The avoidance buffer will be maintained until such time as the burrow is no longer active and/or an incidental take permit is determined to be required and is obtained.

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation: Direct Removal and Filling of a Protected Wetland

Construction activities would fill the 0.08-acre seasonal wetland on the southwestern corner of the project site. Filling a wetland is considered a significant adverse environmental impact. The applicant is required to obtain appropriate regulatory approvals/authorizations from the USACE and RWQCB. Although the wetland is of limited size and dominated by ruderal vegetation, permanent fill without compensatory mitigation would violate the “no net loss” policy of the Clean Water Act and would thus be a significant impact. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce this significant impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure

BIO-7: To compensate for permanent impacts to 0.08 acre of wetlands of the United States and achieve “no net less” of wetland acreage or habitat value, the applicant will create, preserve, or purchase in-kind wetland habitat at a 2:1 ratio. Compensatory mitigation may be accomplished through one of the following options:

- The applicant shall create at least 0.16 acre of off-site mitigation wetlands elsewhere in the Hollister region, or in a location approved by the CDFW. A conservation easement shall be placed on the mitigation site to preserve the site in perpetuity as natural open space. A long-term management plan shall be developed for the mitigation site. The applicant shall provide an endowment in an amount to be determined by the county, USACE, and RWQCB for the long-term maintenance and monitoring of the mitigation site. Off-site wetland creation would also require the following:
 - A wetland mitigation replacement plan that includes, at a minimum, 1) a discussion of the impacted wetland’s plant species composition and hydrology and the proposed plant species composition and hydrology of the mitigation site; 2) performance standards by which success will be evaluated; 3) monitoring procedures; 4) a contingency plan, 5) annual reporting requirements, and 6) rationale for expected success. The mitigation plan shall be approved by USACE, and RWQCB prior to city approval of the grading plan. The mitigation wetland shall be monitored for five years after installation.
 - A performance bond, letter of credit, or other financial instrument shall to guarantee any remedial work that might need to occur if the prior effort fails.
- As an alternative to creating wetlands, the applicant may purchase mitigation credits at an approved mitigation bank in San Benito County (e.g., Pajaro River Mitigation Bank). If this alternative approach is chosen, a minimum of 0.16 acre of credits shall be purchased to compensate for the loss of waters of the United States and State at a ratio of 2:1. The purchase of mitigation bank credits shall be subject to approval by the county, USACE, and RWQCB. If this mitigation alternative is pursued, the applicant shall prepare a mitigation plan that provides detailed information about the bank. Mitigation credits must be verified by the county, USACE, and RWQCB prior to the initiation of construction of filling of wetlands.

Less than Significant Impact: Interference with Wildlife Corridors

The proposed project would develop the site and eliminate the natural features of the site that may provide native resident or migratory wildlife corridors for wildlife species. The project site, along with the neighboring undeveloped property to the north, likely facilitates local, non-directional movement of urban-adapted generalist species as they forage in and around nearby residential development. However, the site is completely surrounded by development or heavily trafficked roads, reducing its functional value for wildlife species moving through the larger landscape. Undeveloped lands in unincorporated San Benito County to the east likely support much more regional wildlife movement. Therefore, the proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact on the movement of native resident or migratory wildlife species.

Less than Significant Potential Impact with Mitigation: Construction near Nesting and Migratory Birds and Raptors

If conducted during the bird nesting season (March 15 through August 30), project construction activities could directly impact nesting birds by removing vegetation that supports active nests. This is a significant impact to migratory birds and raptors. The dense ruderal vegetation within and adjacent to the seasonal wetland provide nesting habitat for resident bird species such as red-winged blackbird. Ruderal vegetation around the site perimeter may also support nesting birds during the nesting season. The nests of native birds are protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Section 3503 of the California Fish and Game Code. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure

BIO-8. If construction activities are scheduled during the nesting season, a qualified biologist, shall conduct a preconstruction nest survey of all vegetation in and within 50 feet of the limits of work. The survey shall be conducted no more than 14 days prior to the start of work. If the survey indicates the presence of nesting birds, the biologist will determine an appropriately sized buffer around the nest in which no work will be allowed until the young have successfully fledged. The size of the nest buffer will be determined by the biologist and will be based on the nesting species and its sensitivity to disturbance.

3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

This section presents the regional and project site setting with regard to cultural resources, discusses the likelihood of cultural resource presence on project site, and evaluates impacts to cultural resources. Unless otherwise noted, the information contained within this section is based on the *City of Hollister 2005 General Plan* (“Hollister general plan” or “general plan”), *City of*

Hollister 2005 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (Hollister General Plan EIR) (general plan EIR), and a *Preliminary Archaeological Reconnaissance for the Roberts Ranch Subdivision Project, Hollister California* (archaeological report) (Archaeological Consulting 2014). One comment on the City's NOP was received from the Native American Heritage Commission outlining recommendations for compliance with tribal consultation requirements per Assembly Bill (AB) 52. No requests for consultation per AB 52 have been received by the city. The NOP and comments are included in [Appendix A](#).

Environmental Setting

The project site is vacant and much of it is currently used for agricultural row crop production. The project site is located within the City's "area of greater archaeological sensitivity" identified on Figure 15 of the City's general plan EIR (City of Hollister 2005b, p. 4.6-2). "Areas of greater archeological sensitivity" represent general areas where archaeological resources are likely to exist based on topography and location of natural resources.

Prehistoric Period

Impacts to cultural resources were studied in the general plan EIR (2005b), which notes that little is known of the original peoples of the Hollister area (p 4.6-1). According to the general plan EIR, evidence suggests that the Ausayma Indians, who were part of the Costanoan or Ohlone linguistic group, inhabited the area since 5,000 B.C. They were generally divided among "tribelets" that occupied villages of less than 200 people. Their communities likely occupied sites along the Santa Ana Creek, which is approximately 1.50 miles northeast of the project site, and the San Benito River, which is located approximately 1.25 miles west of the project site. The combination of resources that could be found in and beside the watercourses prior to Spanish and American settlement made such areas well suited for human habitation: Tule reeds as thatch material for housing; willows for baskets and poles; oaks for acorns; as well as abundant fish and prey species, e.g. geese, antelope, and mule deer. The tribal economy was subsistence-based. Like most other California Indians, the Ausaymas were exclusively hunter-gatherers. Residual artifacts include shell, stone and bone implements, particularly projectile points (City of Hollister 2005b, p. 4.6-1).

The archaeological report prepared for the project site provides additional information on potential archaeological resources associated with prehistoric habitation patterns in the area. The project site lies within the currently recognized ethnographic Mutsun territory of the Costanoan (often called Ohlone) linguistic group. In brief, the group followed a general hunting and gathering subsistence pattern with partial dependence on the natural acorn crop. Habitation is considered to have been semi-sedentary, and occupation sites can be expected most often at the confluence of streams, other areas of similar topography along streams, or in the vicinity of

springs. Evidence of occupation sites can be expected most often at the confluence of streams, other areas of similar topography along streams, or in the vicinity of springs. These original sources of water may no longer be present. Also, evidence of resource gathering and processing areas, and associated temporary campsites, are frequently found in coastal or other locations containing resources utilized by the group. Factors which influence the location of these sites include the presence of suitable exposures of rock for bedrock mortars or other milling activities, ecotones, the presence of specific resources (oak groves, marshes, quarries, game trails, trade routes, etc.), proximity to water, and the availability of shelter. Temporary camps or other activity areas may also be found along ridges or other travel corridors.

Historic Period

The city's general plan EIR (2005b) provides a brief background of the history of Hollister. Several Spanish expeditions crossed the San Benito Valley in the late 18th century, and a mission was established in 1797 in San Juan Bautista. Historic settlement in the Hollister area began in 1868 when 50 farmers formed the San Justo Homestead Association and purchased 21,000 acres of land from sheep rancher, Colonel William Hollister. They subdivided the land into homesteads and set aside 100 acres for a town site. The association voted to name the future City Hollister after the prior owner of the Rancho San Justo. Settlement proceeded in and around Hollister, particularly in the wake of the extension of a Southern Pacific Railroad line through the community in 1870.

The city incorporated in 1868 and became the seat of government for the newly-formed San Benito County in 1874. Hollister also became the economic hub of the County, surpassing San Juan Bautista in the 1870's in terms of commerce and social activity. Surrounded by fertile, alluvial soils, Hollister primarily derived its importance from its traffic in grains grown in the upper San Benito Valley. Some of the best wheat and hay in the state was raised here, and by 1890 Hollister had become known as "Hay City" for being the primary distribution point for the high volume of hay produced in the vicinity.

The Southern Pacific Railroad line reached Hollister in 1870 and Tres Pinos by 1873. The railroad facilitated shipments of the area's hay, grain, cattle and ore production to nearby areas. In 1872, the City of Hollister was incorporated and two years later the County of San Benito was created from the inland portion of Monterey County, and Hollister became the county seat. The City of Hollister continues to be the focus of commercial and social activity in the predominantly agricultural county (San Benito County Historical Society 2016).

Paleontological Setting

Paleontology is the science of life of past geological periods from fossil remains. Paleontological resources include fossil remains as well as fossil localities and unique geologic formations that have produced fossil materials.

San Benito County is within the Coast Range physiographic province of California. Bounded by the Pacific Ocean to the west and Central Valley to the east, the region is typified by northwest-southeast trending mountain ranges and fault systems. From the Upper Cretaceous geological period through the Miocene epoch, much of the Hollister area was covered by shallow, warm seas. Sediment washed from adjacent mountains accumulated in the valleys producing extensive terrestrial sediment deposits, within which paleontological remains are preserved.

Known paleontological resources are located along Tres Pinos Creek, southeast of the city, and approximately 2.5 miles southeast of the project site. The paleontological features associated with the Tres Pinos Creek deposit consist primarily of micro fossils and invertebrates, but also include a small number of vertebrate fossils (Mintier Harnish 2010, pp. 10-42 - 10-43).

Site surveys for paleontological resources were not conducted because evidence of paleontological resources is typically not apparent on the ground surface, and would only be discovered in any event during project excavation. Soils underlying the Hollister Valley consist of interbedded sand, silt, and clay deposits as deep as 1000 feet. The bedrock underlying these sediments is believed to be Pliocene sedimentary Rock (Raney Geotechnical 2012). No unique geological features are present on the site surface.

A county-wide database search of the files of the University of California Berkeley Museum of Paleontology, and the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology was undertaken in 2010 as part of the County's general plan update. The results are summarized in the *San Benito County General Plan Background Report* (Mintier Harnish 2010). According to the background report, the first major paleontological discovery in the county occurred in 1937. This find consisted of "the most complete Plesiosaur skeleton ever found" and was excavated from the Moreno Formation in the Panoche Hills (p. 10-42). The background report notes that fossils are found in the Moreno and Tremblor Formations, the exposed faces, of which, are located mostly within the Panoche-Coalinga area of the county. Other invertebrates, vertebrates, and plant fossils have been found in other areas, primarily in rock formations in the southern portion of the County. The background report did not identify any paleontological finds in the vicinity of the City of Hollister.

Another search of the database records for localities with the City of Hollister and San Benito County was conducted with assistance from a University of California Berkeley Museum of Paleontology Senior Museum Scientist and Collection Manager (Dr. Ken Finger, pers. com., March 9, 2015). This search revealed that there are no records of finds near the City of Hollister in the museum database. In summary, there are no known paleontological resources or unique geological features within the boundaries of the project site; however, it is possible that undiscovered paleontological resources exist within the project site. Therefore, this analysis assumes that the project area may contain sensitive paleontological resources.

Archaeological Reconnaissance

The archaeological report was prepared based on the results of a field reconnaissance of the project site and a background records search at the Northwest Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System, located at Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park. The literature search was undertaken to determine if there are any previously recorded archaeological resources within the project site, and whether the site has been included in any previous archaeological research or reconnaissance project. The record search of the Northwest Information Center files found that one historic resource has been recorded within one mile of State Route 25 south of the project site. No other recorded cultural resources were found to be located on or immediately adjacent to the project site. The California Register of Historical Resources, California Historical Landmarks, and the National Register of Historic Places were also checked for listed cultural resources, which might be present in the project area; none were discovered.

The field reconnaissance was conducted on August 4, 2014. The survey consisted of a “general surface reconnaissance” of all parts of the project area which could reasonably be expected to contain visible cultural resources, and which could be viewed without major vegetation removal or excavation. At the time of the field survey, more than half of the project site was overgrown with weeds, while the remainder was a mix of fallow and cultivated fields. Overall, soil surface visibility was considered adequate for the purposes of this reconnaissance (Archaeological Consulting 2014, p. 1). None of the materials frequently associated with prehistoric archaeological resources in this area (dark midden soil, eroded marine shell fragments, bones or bone fragments, fire-altered rocks, flaked or ground stone, bedrock mortars, etc.) were noted during the survey. A barbed wire fence extended along the southern boundary of the project area. Both machine-cut square and wire nails were observed in one of the fence boards. The fence is not considered to be a significant historical resource. No evidence of historical period resources was seen during this survey (Archaeological Consulting 2014, p. 4).

Regulatory Setting

Federal

American Indian Religious Freedom Act and Native American Graves and Repatriation Act.

As national policy, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (1978) and Native American Graves and Repatriation Act (1990) and their amendments establish that Native American traditional religious practices and beliefs, sacred sites (including right of access), Native American remains and the use of sacred objects shall be protected and preserved. These laws, together with environmental laws discussed below, establish the requirements for new development that may affect Native American resources.

National Register of Historic Places. Archaeological and historical sites can be given a measure of protection if they are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register of Historic Places was established to recognize cultural resources associated with the accomplishments of all peoples who have contributed to the country's history and heritage. Guidelines were designed for federal and state agencies in nominating cultural resources to the national register. These guidelines are based upon integrity and significance of the resource.

Integrity is defined in Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, (National Park Service 1982) as: “the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property’s historic or prehistoric period. If a property retains the physical characteristics it possessed in the past then it has the capacity to convey association with historical patterns or persons, architectural or engineering design and technology, or information about a culture or peoples.

Quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture is present in resources that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- a. that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to broad patterns of our history;
- b. that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- c. that embody distinctive characteristics of type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction, and;
- d. that have yielded, or are likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.”

The criterion most often applied to archaeological sites is criterion (d), which addresses the potential of a site to yield information important in prehistory or history. A cultural resource that is added to the National Register of Historic Places is automatically included on the California Register of Historical Resources. However, it is possible that a cultural resource eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources may not retain sufficient integrity to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

State

Assembly Bill 52. Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52) added Public Resources Code Sections 21073, 21074, 21080.3.1, 21080.3.2, 21082.3, 21083.09, 21084.2, and 21084.3 to CEQA. In effect, this added “tribal cultural resources” to the list of cultural resources that must be considered under

CEQA and imposes new requirements for tribal consultation regarding projects that may affect a tribal cultural resource. The requirements of this legislation as they pertain to CEQA compliance are included in the description of these Public Resource Code sections and are presented in greater detail later in this section in the discussion of Tribal Cultural Resources (CEQA).

State Laws Pertaining to the Discovery of Human Remains. Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code requires that in the event of discovery or recognition of human remains in any location other than a dedicated cemetery, there shall be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent remains until the coroner of the county in which the human remains are discovered has determined whether the remains are those of a Native American. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the coroner must contact the California Native American Heritage Commission. CEQA Guidelines (Public Resources Code Section 5097) specify the procedures to be followed in the event of discovery of human remains on non-Federal land. The disposition of Native American burials is within the jurisdiction of the Native American Heritage Commission. Upon request, the Native American Heritage Commission will provide project leaders with a list of Most Likely Descendants, who will specify treatment and disposition of any Native American remains found within a project area.

Archaeological Resources (CEQA). Under Public Resources Code Section 21083.2 Subsection (g) and Subsection (h) define unique and non-unique archaeological resources. Unique archaeological resources are defined as archaeological artifacts, objects, or sites “about which it can be clearly demonstrated that, without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it meets any of the following criteria:

1. Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and that there is a demonstrable public interest in that information.
2. Has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type.
3. Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.”

Non-unique archaeological resources are defined as archaeological artifacts, objects, or sites, which do not meet these criteria. Archaeological resources that are determined to be “non-unique” require no further consideration by the lead agency.

Subsection (i) allows a lead agency to make provisions for archaeological resources accidentally discovered during construction, including, but not limited to, immediate evaluation of finds, contingency funding and time allotments sufficient to allow for recovery or to employ avoidance measures noted in Subsection (b), and allows construction to continue on other parts of the project site while mitigation takes place.

Historical Resources (CEQA). Under Public Resources Code Section 21084.1, a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. An historical resource is a resource listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources. Historical resources included in a local register of historical resources, or deemed significant pursuant to local register criteria, are presumed to be historically or culturally significant unless the preponderance of the evidence demonstrates that the resource is not historically or culturally significant. The fact that a resource is not listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources, not included in a local register of historical resources, or not deemed significant pursuant to criteria set forth for listing does not preclude a lead agency from determining whether the resource may be an historical resource.

Tribal Cultural Resources (CEQA). The CEQA statute as amended by AB 52 (Public Resources Code Sections 21073 and 21074) define “California Native American tribe” and “tribal cultural resources.” A California Native American tribe is defined as a Native American tribe located in California that is on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission. “Tribal cultural resources” are defined as:

1. “Sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are either of the following:
 - a. Included or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources.
 - b. Included in a local register of historical resources as defined in subdivision (k) of Section 5020.1” (discussed below).
2. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Section 5024.1.

Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1 outlines procedures for tribal consultation as part of the environmental review process.

CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Title 14 Section 15000 et seq.). The guidelines provide additional direction on the treatment and evaluation of cultural resources that meet significance criteria qualifying them as “unique” or “of importance,” and listed or determined eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources. If a project has or might have an adverse effect or effects on unique or important cultural resources, the project is determined to have a significant effect on the environment, and the effect(s) must be mitigated. If a cultural resource is found not to be significant or unique under the qualifying criteria, it need not be considered further in the planning process.

CEQA Guidelines section 15064.5, subdivision (e) and California Health and Safety Code section 7050.5 require that construction or excavation be stopped in the vicinity of discovered human remains until the county coroner has been informed and has determined that no investigation of the cause of death is required. Additionally, if the remains are of Native American origin, work may not resume unless:

- the descendants of the deceased Native Americans have made a timely recommendation to the landowner or the person responsible for the excavation work, for means of treating or disposing of, with appropriate dignity, the human remains and any associated grave goods as provided in Public Resources Code section 5097.98;
- the Native American Heritage Commission was unable to identify a descendant or the descendant failed to make a recommendation within 24 hours after being notified by the Commission; or
- the landowner or his or her authorized representative rejects any timely recommendations of the descendent, and mediation conducted by the Native American Heritage Commission has failed to provide measures acceptable to the landowner.

Most Native American prehistoric sites are eligible to be included on the California Register of Historical Resources due to their age, scientific potential, and/or burial remains.

CEQA Guidelines section 15064.5(a)(i) defines an historical resource as, among other things, a resource listed or eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources. In addition, a resource is presumed to constitute a historical resource if it is included in a local register of historical resources unless the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that it is not historically or culturally significant (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064.5 (a)(2)).

Local

City of Hollister General Plan. The following Hollister General Plan policy is applicable to the proposed project:

LU1.2 Historical Preservation Ordinance. Supplement the existing Historical Preservation Ordinance with an inventory and designation of potential sites and structures of architectural, historic, archeological and cultural significance.

City of Hollister Municipal Code. The Hollister Municipal Code Section 17.16.030 archaeological and historic resources, addresses the incidental disruption of archaeological or historic resources discovered during any construction. This section requires cessation of construction activity, notification of the Planning Department and examination by a qualified

archaeologist or historian for historic resources, so that the extent and location of discovered materials may be recorded, subject to the approval of the planning director, and disposition of artifacts may occur in compliance with applicable state and federal laws.

Standards of Significance

According to the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G a significant impact to a cultural resource may occur if the proposed project would result in any of the following:

- cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource;
- cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource;
- cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resources;
- directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature; and/or
- disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.

Public Resources Code Section 21084.1, defines a “substantial adverse change in the significance” of an historical, archaeological, or tribal cultural resource as physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of the resource is materially impaired.

Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation

Environmental Topics Eliminated from Further Analysis

Section 21002.1.e of the CEQA statute requires an EIR discussion to focus on those potential effects on the environment of a proposed project which the lead agency has determined are or may be significant. Lead agencies may limit discussion on other effects to a brief explanation as to why those effects are not potentially significant.

There are no buildings on the project site. According to photographic evidence provided in the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (Raney Geotechnical 2012), the site has historically been vacant and used for agricultural since at least 1939. Therefore, no impacts to historically significant buildings would occur and no further discussion of this topic is required.

As noted in the Geotechnical Report (Berlogar Steven’s and Associates 2013), the onsite soils are predominately silty clays with some fine to medium grained sand. These unconsolidated soils typically do not contain unique geologic features. Therefore, no impacts would occur to unique geological resources and no further discussion of this topic is required.

Less than Significant Potential Impact with Mitigation: Proposed Grading Activities Could Result in Disturbance to Human Remains or a Substantial Adverse Change in the Significance of Previously Undiscovered Archaeological and/or Tribal Cultural Resources

Previously undiscovered archaeological resources, including human remains and/or Tribal Cultural Resources, could be present on the site and accidentally discovered during earth moving activities associated with site preparation and construction of the proposed project. Disturbance of these resources would be a potentially significant impact.

As noted previously, site investigations and archival research determined that the project site is not located within a recorded archaeological deposit; however, the research revealed the presence of a recorded archaeological resource within one quarter mile of the site.

Therefore, the report concluded that although the likelihood of archaeologically significant resources, including human remains, on the project site is low, there is a possibility that unknown and unanticipated buried cultural resources, including potentially significant archaeological resources or human remains, could occur during site preparation and grading activities. Damage that would affect the significance of an archaeological resource would be a significant impact.

The proposed project is subject to compliance with Hollister Municipal Code Section 17.16.030, which regulates incidental disruption of archaeological or historic resources discovered during any construction. The archaeological report includes recommendations for incidental discovery and treatment of archaeological resources should they be inadvertently discovered during site preparation and grading activities. This recommendation is reflected in Mitigation Measure CR-1, below.

California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 requires that all construction and excavation activity cease if human remains are discovered during construction. Further, if the remains are of Native American descent, a series of actions would be triggered to identify and appropriately treat the remains, including the coroner's notification of the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours and notification to the most likely descendent pursuant to Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code.

Compliance with the requirements of the California Health and Safety Code and Hollister Municipal Code in addition to the following mitigation measures would reduce potential impacts to undiscovered and potentially significant archaeological resource, including human remains, to a less-than-significant.

Mitigation Measures

CR-1. The following language shall be included in any permits issued for the project site:

If archaeological resources or human remains are unexpectedly discovered during construction, work shall be halted within 50 meters (160 feet) of the find until it can be evaluated by a qualified professional archeologist. If the find is determined to be significant, appropriate mitigation measures shall be formulated, with concurrence of the City of Hollister, and implemented.

CR-2 The applicant shall include the following language on all improvement and construction documents:

If human remains are found during construction there shall be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent human remains until the coroner of San Benito County is contacted to determine that no investigation of the cause of death is required. If the coroner determines the remains to be Native American the coroner shall contact the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours. The Native American Heritage Commission shall identify the person or persons it believes to be the most likely descendent from the deceased Native American. The most likely descendent may then make recommendations to the landowner or the person responsible for the excavation work, for means of treating or disposing of, with appropriate dignity, the human remains and associated grave goods as provided in Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. The landowner or their authorized representative shall rebury the Native American human remains and associated grave goods with appropriate dignity on the property in a location not subject to further disturbance if: a) the Native American Heritage Commission is unable to identify a most likely descendent or the most likely descendent failed to make a recommendation within 24 hours after being notified by the commission; b) the descendent identified fails to make a recommendation; or c) the landowner or their authorized representative rejects the recommendation of the descendent, and the mediation by the Native American Heritage Commission fails to provide measures acceptable to the landowner.

The City of Hollister has not received requests for notification or consultation from California Native American tribes pursuant to AB 52 (Morales, pers. com. March 9, 2016). However, it is possible that previously undiscovered archaeological resources that are also Tribal Cultural Resources may be present below the surface of the site. Implementation of Mitigation Measures CR-1 – CR-2 would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level. No additional mitigation is required.

Less than Significant Potential Impact with Mitigation: Proposed Grading Activities Could Result in Damage or Destruction to Previously Undetected Paleontological Resources

As previously discussed, the project site has not been surveyed for paleontological resources. A database search did not identify any paleontological resources within the boundaries of the project site. However, paleontological resources have been identified along Tres Pinos Creek (Mintier Harnish 2010, pp. 10-42 - 10-43), which is approximately 2.5 miles southeast of the project site. Although several studies and database searches have not identified records of paleontological resources on the project site, a site-specific investigation has not occurred. Due to the location of the project site in proximity to known paleontological resources it is presumed that there is a possibility of incidental discovery of paleontological resources during grading and construction of the proposed project. Disruption of these undiscovered resources would be considered a significant impact. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce impacts to paleontological resources to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure

CR-3. The following language shall be included in any permits issued for the project area:

If paleontological resources are unexpectedly discovered during construction, work shall be halted within 50 meters (160 feet) of the find until it can be evaluated by a qualified professional paleontologist. If the find is determined to be significant, appropriate mitigation measures shall be formulated, with concurrence of the City of Hollister, and implemented.

3.6 FIRE SERVICES

The discussion in this section is based upon information contained in the City of Hollister general plan (2005) and general plan EIR, the Roberts Ranch Subdivision Plan for Services (Hellman 2015), and supplemented by correspondence with fire services personnel.

Comments on the city and county NOPs were received from multiple residents of the adjacent Cielo Vista subdivision and Valley View neighborhood in Hollister as well as the Cielo Vista Homeowners' Association. Identified concerns included individual and cumulative effects equipment and staffing needs related to response times and maintenance of service levels. The Hollister NOP and comment letters are included in [Appendix A](#). The county NOP and comments on the former project are included in [Appendix B](#).

Environmental Setting

The project site is located within the existing service area of the Hollister Fire Department and will continue to be serviced by the fire department upon annexation. The Hollister Fire Department is the primary service provider of fire protection services for the City of Hollister, the City of San Juan Bautista, and northern San Benito County. The department is the first responder for emergency medical services, medical aid requests, vehicle accidents, specialized rescue and fire suppression, and fire prevention services including building plan review, site inspection and public education, arson investigation, and hazardous material releases.

The fire department operates four fire stations. Station 1 is located at 110 5th Street, a distance of about 2.5 miles from the northern portion of the project site. Station 1 consists of three personnel, one engine, a rescue vehicle and a ladder truck. Station 2 is located on the southern side of the city at 1000 Union Road between Valley View Road and Airline Highway, a distance of about one mile west of the project site. This station consists of one engine, a brush engine, a water tender, and an air/light support engine manned by three personnel. Station 2 would be the station that would directly serve the proposed development (Josh Buzzetta, telephone & email correspondence, February 1, 2016).

Station 3 has recently been selected by the San Benito County Board of Supervisors to be relocated near the intersection of Fairview Road and Rosa Morada Road to provide fire protection services for northern Hollister and San Benito County. Station 3 is currently located at 110 5th Street and is staffed with three firefighters equipped with one engine and one patrol brush rig (Josh Buzzetta, email correspondence, February 1, 2016). A fourth station, Station 4, is located in the City of San Juan Bautista at 24 Polk Street, with the Hollister Fire Department providing service under contract to the City of San Juan Bautista. Station 4 consists of one engine and staffed with two personnel. Hollister Fire Department's response time goal to any incident is under five minutes and the response time to the proposed project site would be less than five minutes as Station 2 is less than one mile from the project site (Josh Buzzetta, email correspondence, February 12, 2016).

The San Benito County Fire Department provides initial response in certain areas of the city under an automatic aid agreement between the City of Hollister and San Benito County. In turn, the Hollister Fire Department has a mutual aid agreement with the San Benito County for fire protection in unincorporated areas just beyond the Hollister city limits. The San Benito County Fire Station operates under contract with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) and is located at 1979 Fairview Road (approximately 1.5 miles from the project site). CalFire is a state wildland fire agency established to protect non-federal unincorporated lands within California.

When available, the San Benito – Monterey Unit of CalFire also assists with fire protection services in San Benito County, including responding to incidents in wildland fire areas adjacent to the City of Hollister. However, CalFire is not automatically dispatched to EMS calls either within their districts or the automatic aid areas, but responds only on the request of a law enforcement agency or other fire protection agency (Brice Muenzer, email correspondence, May 1, 2016). Five CalFire stations and bases are located in San Benito County, including the Hollister Station on Fairview Road east of the city and facilities at the Hollister Airport. It should be noted that the 1979 Fairview Road CalFire Station is only open during certain portions of the year and only would respond to assist with city fire-fighting efforts during those periods (Muenzer 2016).

Regulatory Setting

Fire Hazard Severity Zones

California Public Resources Code Sections 4201-4204 and California Government Code Sections 51175-89 direct CalFire to map areas of significant fire hazards based on fuels, terrain, weather, and other relevant factors. These zones, referred to as Fire Hazard Severity Zones are used to identify appropriate mitigation strategies to reduce risk associated with wildland fires. The project site is not located in a fire hazard severity zones (CalFire 2015).

Hollister General Plan

The following general plan policies and implementing actions are applicable to the proposed project.

Policies

LU2.2 Fiscally Sound Development. Evaluate the fiscal impact of projects as part of the development review process to assure that new development does not reduce standards or unduly increase the burden on existing residents.

CSF1.1 Adequate Capabilities and Capacity of Local Public Services. Ensure that future growth does not exceed the capabilities and capacity of local public services such as wastewater collection and treatment, local water supply systems, fire and police protection, maintenance of streets and roads, local school systems, parks and recreational facilities, and landfill capacity, and ensure that public services meet Federal and State standards and are available in a timely fashion.

CSF1.2 New Development Requirements for Public Services. Require new development applications to identify the impacts that the proposed development would have on the provision of public services, and approve those applications that can mitigate impacts or contribute a proportional fair share so that local public services can be maintained at an acceptable level.

CSF1.3 Performance Standards. Require all applicants proposing development projects within the Hollister Planning Area to meet performance standards for community services and facilities to be established in the Performance Standards Ordinance. Once adopted, require applications for new development to provide evidence that such development will meet all performance standards prior to approval, as provided by the Performance Standards Ordinance.

CSF1.6 Other Infrastructure Planning. Require the preparation of infrastructure master plans in areas outside the designated Sphere of Influence as a prerequisite to annexation. Such plans shall contain, but not be limited to, plans for sewer services, water service, storm drainage, traffic circulation, recreation facilities, school facilities and funding alternatives for police and fire services.

CSF1.7.3 Development Review Criteria for Public Services. Prior to granting approval, evaluate each new development in terms of whether the proposed development would be located within the existing service areas of local service providers (fire protection, police protection, solid waste disposal, schools, etc.), and not result in a reduction in their current capabilities.

CSF4.8 Fire Safety. Ensure that development within the Hollister Planning Area does not exceed the capability of the Hollister Fire Department and the San Benito County Fire Department to provide an adequate level of fire protection.

CSF4.11 Requirements for Fire Safety. Ensure that all new development will be adequately designed to minimize risks to life and property through the implementation of the Fire Protection Master Plan. New development will be protected from fire hazards through the provision of peak load water supply systems capable of providing the flow required for fire suppression, through the design of roads with adequate widths and turning radii, and through adequate separation between buildings, prior to project approval.

Implementing Actions

CSF.II Require fire agency review. Require the appropriate fire protection agency to review all development proposals within the Hollister Planning Area to verify that the peak-load water supply system will provide an adequate flow of water for fire suppression, and to ensure that there are adequate road widths and turning radii, and adequate separation distances between buildings to meet the fire protection standards established in the Fire Protection Master Plan.

CSF.JJ Require fire protection mitigation in new development. Require individual project developers to negotiate with the Hollister Fire Department to determine additional mitigation for proposed projects prior to the issuance of building permits. Such mitigation may include the payment of impact fees, the development of new fire protection facilities and/or the provision of firefighting equipment.

Hollister Municipal Code

Municipal Code Chapter 3.16, Police and Fire Protection Fees, requires the payment of impact fees to offset the costs of additional manpower and equipment demands due to the development and growth of new residential areas. The fees are fixed by the City Council from time to time, by resolution, and the payment of these fees is required prior to the issuance of a building permit or the filing of a parcel or final map, whichever occurs first. Fees are dedicated for the hiring of new personnel and procurement of equipment associated with new personnel.

Standards of Significance

Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines indicates that a project may result in a significant effect on the environment if it would:

- Result in the need for new or altered fire protection facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable response times or other performance objectives.
- Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands.

Analysis, Impacts & Mitigation

Environmental Topics Eliminated from Further Analysis

Section 21002.1.e of the CEQA statute requires an EIR discussion to focus on those potential effects on the environment of a proposed project which the lead agency has determined are or may be significant. Lead agencies may limit discussion on other effects to a brief explanation as to why those effects are not potentially significant.

Wildland Fire. According to CalFire's San Benito County Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map (2007), the project site is not located in a fire hazard severity zone where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands. Therefore there are no risks of wildlands fires associated with the proposed project and no impact would occur. No further discussion of this topic is required.

Construction of New Fire Facilities. The proposed project would increase demand for fire protection services but would not require additional facilities. The closest fire station to the site is Station 2 located at 1000 Union Road between Valley View Road and Airline Highway, roughly one mile from the northern portion of the site. City Fire Engineer Josh Buzzetta (pers. com. February 12, 2016) stated that the Hollister Fire Department's response time to the project site would be less than five minutes. The increase in service demand resulting from the proposed project would not affect the Fire Department's current response time of five minutes for each incident within response areas. Because the project site is located within the Hollister Fire Department's response time standard, no new fire facilities would be required to serve the project. Any additional staff and equipment required to serve the project could be accommodated by existing facilities (Josh Buzzetta email and phone communication, February 1, 2016). As no new facilities would need to be constructed, the proposed project would not result in any physical environmental impacts and no further discussion is required.

The following information is included for informational purposes.

Upon annexation and development, the proposed project would require an incremental increase in staffing levels and capital equipment due to the increase in population. The need for additional equipment would be financed by the imposition of a Mello-Roos Community Facilities public safety tax and by the imposition of fire impact fees collected at the time of building permit issuance or prior to occupancy of the site. The developer would be required to pay the applicable fire service impact fee in compliance with Hollister Municipal Code Chapter 3.16 to offset the increased demand for fire department services.

3.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

This section of the Draft EIR provides a discussion of the project site's geologic, seismic, and soil conditions. The project's potential impacts related to existing geologic, seismic and soil conditions are evaluated and feasible mitigation measures are proposed where applicable.

The following analysis is based on information in the *City of Hollister General Plan – Final Program EIR* (City of Hollister 2005b) and the *Tentative Map Level Geotechnical Investigation 51 Acre Roberts Ranch* (Bergolar Stevens & Associates 2013) (geotechnical report). The geotechnical report is included in [Appendix H](#).

Comments on the city and county NOPs included concerns from neighbors related to soil settlement and alterations to topography that could affect drainage and other soil stability on the adjacent Cielo Vista residential subdivision. The city NOP and comments received are included in [Appendix A](#). The county NOP and comments on the former project are included in [Appendix B](#).

Environmental Setting

Regional Geologic Setting

The project site is located in the California Coast Range Geomorphic Province near the City of Hollister. The primary local geologic feature is the Hollister Valley, which is bounded on the southwest by the San Andreas fault zone and the Gabilan Mountain Range, which is composed of granitic and tertiary marine, as well as volcanic rocks. To the north and east, the valley is bounded by the Diablo Mountain Range, which is composed of metamorphosed marine sedimentary and igneous rocks of the Franciscan Formation and Great Valley Sequence.

Regional Faults

Regionally, the Hollister area is considered an area of high seismicity with earthquakes strong enough to cause damage. According to the City of Hollister general plan EIR, four fault zones traverse the county in the vicinity of the planning area: the San Andreas Fault, the Quien Sabe Fault, the Tres Pinos Fault, and the Calaveras Fault. The active San Andreas Fault lies approximately four miles southwest of the project site. The San Andreas Fault system is capable of generating an earthquake of up to 8.3 magnitude on the Richter scale. The Calaveras Fault, a branch of the San Andreas Fault, bisects the City of Hollister and lies about one-half mile southwest of the project site. The Calaveras Fault runs south and north and bisects the city through downtown. This fault creeps about one centimeter per year and has the capacity for a quake of seven and above on the Richter scale. The Quien Sabe Fault registered an earthquake

of at least 5.5 on the Richter scale in 1986. Faults that have the possibility of causing significant ground shaking at the project site are listed in [Table 12, Late Quaternary Faults in the Project Vicinity](#).

Table 12 Late Quaternary Faults in the Project Vicinity

Fault	Distance¹	Activity²	Classification³	Earthquake Magnitude⁴
Calaveras, Southern Segment	0.5 miles	<150	Active	6.2
Sargent Fault Zone, Southeastern Segment	5 miles to the northwest	<15,000	Recently Active	6.8
San Andreas Fault, Santa Cruz Mountains Segment	6 miles west-northwest	<150	Active	7.0
San Andreas Fault, Creeping Segment	4 miles southwest	<150	Actively Creeping	N/A
Zayante-Vergeles Fault	6 miles west	<15,000	Potentially Active	6.2
Quien Sabe Fault	3.4 miles northeast	<15,000	Potentially Active	6.4
Tres Pinos Fault	0.28 miles east	<15,000	Potentially Active	N/A

Source: San Benito County 2012, Bryant 1985

Note: 1. Distance from project site

2. Most recent activity in years. Defines one of three time categories in which the most recent prehistoric surface-rupturing or surface-deforming earthquake occurred based on geologically recognizable evidence of faulting, folding, or liquefaction. The categories are (1) Historic (<150 years), (2) latest Quaternary (<15 ka), and (3) late Quaternary (<130 ka).

3. An “active” fault is defined by the State of California as a fault that has had surface displacement within Holocene time (approximately the last 10,000 years). A “potentially active” fault is defined as a fault that has shown evidence of surface displacement during the Quaternary (last 1.6 million years), unless direct geologic evidence demonstrates inactivity for all of the Holocene or longer.

4. Anticipated Maximum Moment Magnitude

Current data estimates that there is a 62 percent probability of a large magnitude (6.7 or greater) earthquake in the San Francisco Bay Area as a whole in the 30-year period ending in 2032. For a large earthquake along specific faults, percentage estimates are 21 percent for the San Andreas Fault and 11 percent for the Calaveras Fault (USGS 2003).

Intensity Criteria for Earthquakes. Earthquake magnitude is a measure of the total amount of energy released in an earthquake. With increasing magnitude (i.e., larger earthquakes), ground motions are stronger, last longer, and are felt over larger areas. Earthquake intensity is a measure of the effects of earthquake ground motions on people and buildings. Earthquake intensity is often more useful than magnitude when discussing the damaging effects of earthquakes. The most common intensity scale is the Modified Mercalli Intensity Scale, which ranges from I to XII. [Table 13, Modified Mercalli Intensity Scale for Earthquakes](#), describes the effects of earthquakes and compares the Richter scale (magnitude) to the Modified Mercalli Scale (intensity).

Classification of Faults. In addition to the Modified Mercalli Scale that classifies the intensity of the event, faults are classified according to criteria provided by the Uniform Building Code, as identified in [Table 14, Uniform Building Code Fault Classifications](#).

Project Site Setting

The project site is situated in an alluvial valley underlain by the marine sediments of the Pliocene Purisma Formation, primarily recent alluvium and uplifted, older alluvial deposits (i.e., Plio-Pleistocene river terraces). The surficial materials consist of young and old alluvium and terrace deposits, which are unconsolidated layers of sand, gravel, silt and clay.

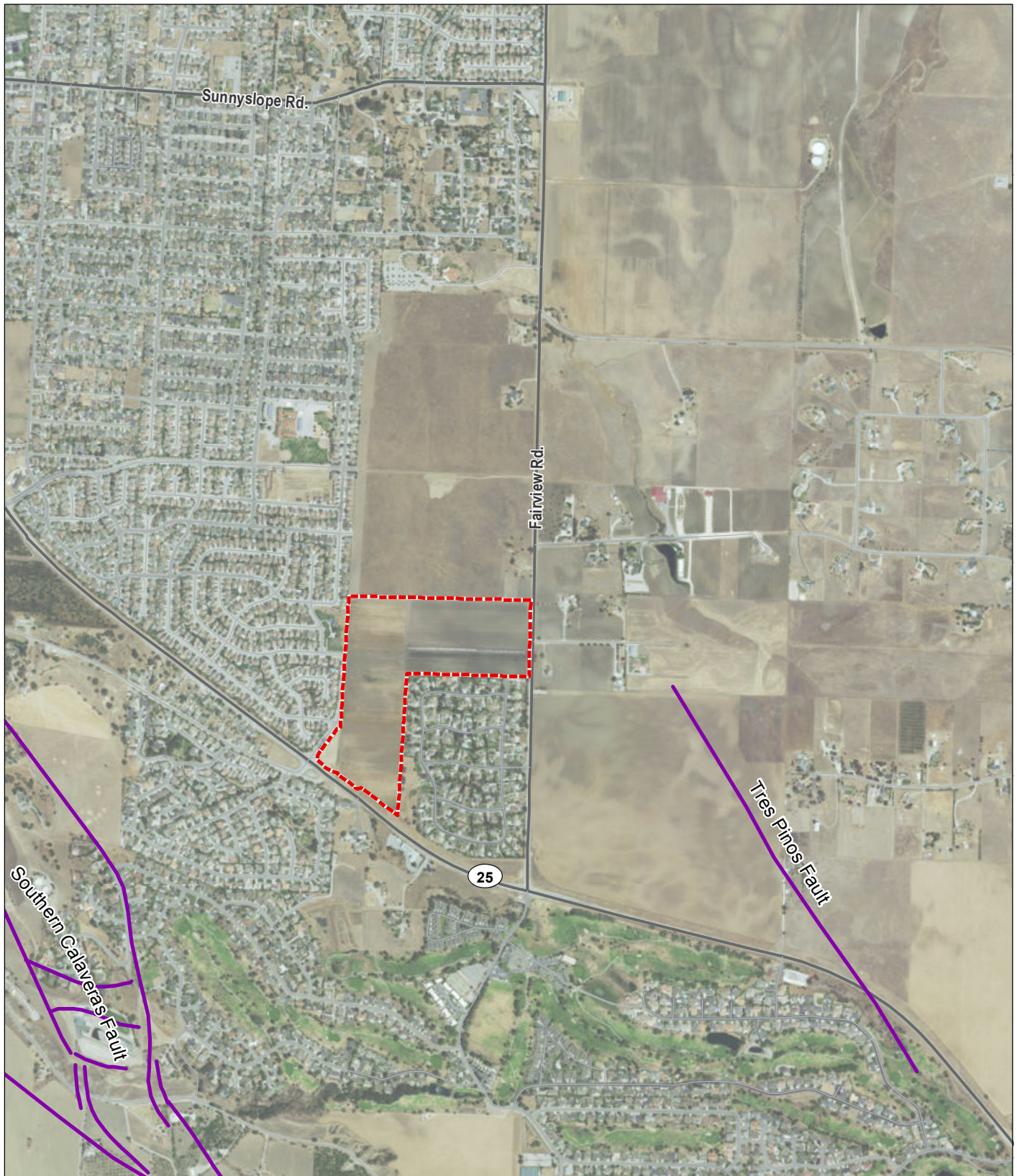
Faulting and Seismicity. The project site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone or a Seismic Hazard Zone. Visual evidence of faulting was not observed at the project site during the October 2013 geotechnical investigation. The Tres Pinos Fault, a potentially active fault, has been mapped approximately one-quarter mile to the east-southeast of the project site. The Calaveras Fault, a branch of the San Andreas Fault, lies about one-half mile southwest of the project site. [Figure 10, Earthquake Faults](#), presents the locations of the Tres Pinos and Calaveras faults nearest and their proximity to the site. Given the active seismic environment in the Hollister area, it is reasonable to expect very intense ground shaking at the project site if a large magnitude earthquake were to occur on one of the branches of the Calaveras Fault or the San Andreas Fault.

Topography and Hydrogeology. The project site's topography is slightly sloping with an overall gradual elevation change of about 60 feet from east to southwest. According to the geotechnical report, the highest elevation is approximately 495 feet above mean sea level on the eastern portion of the property and the lowest elevation is approximately 435 feet above mean sea level on the southwestern portion of the property. Years of cultivation and small-scale earthwork have removed any micro topography.

Table 13 Modified Mercalli Intensity Scale for Earthquakes

Richter Magnitude Scale	Modified Mercalli Scale	Effects of Intensity
0.1-3.0	I	Earthquake shaking not felt.
0.1-3.0	II	Shaking felt by those at rest.
3.0-4.0	III	Felt by most people indoors; some can estimate duration of shaking.
4.0-5.0	IV	Felt by most people indoors. Hanging objects rattle, wooden walls, frames creak.
4.0-5.0	V	Felt by everyone indoors; many estimate duration of shaking. Standing autos rock. Crockery clashes, dishes and glasses rattle. Doors open, close and swing.
5.0-6.0	VI	Felt by all; many frightened and run outdoors. Some heavy furniture moved; a few instances of fallen plaster or damaged chimneys. Damage slight.
6.0	VII	People frightened and walls unsteady. Pictures and books thrown, dishes/glass is broken. Weak chimneys break. Plaster, loose bricks and parapets fall.
6.0-7.0	VIII	Difficult to stand, waves on ponds, cohesionless soils slump. Stucco and masonry walls fall. Chimneys, stacks, towers, elevated tanks twist and fall.
7.0	IX	General fright as people are thrown down. Hard to drive, trees broken, damage to foundations and frames. Reservoirs damaged, underground pipelines break.
7.0-8.0	X	General panic, ground cracks, masonry and frame buildings destroyed. Bridges destroyed, dams, dikes and embankments damaged. Railroads bent.
8.0	XI	Large landslides, water thrown, general destruction of buildings; pipelines destroyed; railroads bent.
8.0+	XII	Total nearby damage, rock masses displaced. Lines of sight/level distorted. Objects thrown into air.

Source: California Geologic Survey, 2002



Source: ESRI 2015, USGS 2010

Figure 10

Faultlines

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Table 14 Uniform Building Code Fault Classifications

Fault Class	Characteristics
A	Faults that have a Richter magnitude potential of 7.0 and a slip rate equal to or greater than five millimeters/year. These types of faults are considered to be active and capable of producing large magnitude events. Most segments of the San Andreas Fault are classified as a Type A fault.
B	All faults that are not Type A or Type C. Includes most of the active faults in California.
C	Faults that have a Richter magnitude potential of less than 6.5 and a slip rate of less than or equal to two millimeters/year. These faults are considered to be sufficiently inactive and not capable of producing large magnitude events, such that potential near-source ground shaking effects can be ignored. Most faults outside of California are Type C.

Source: California Building Standards Commission, 2010 California Building Code California Code of Regulations

County groundwater contour maps suggest that the regional groundwater gradient in the vicinity of the project site trends to the southwest (Raney Geotechnical Inc. 2012). The nearest surface water body is the San Benito River, located approximately one mile west of the property. The geotechnical report for the project site noted that the subsurface soils are stiff to very stiff clay and silt, and that groundwater beneath the site is anticipated to be greater than 20 feet below ground surface (Bergolar and Stevens 2013).

Soil Characteristics. According to the Soil Survey of San Benito County (1969), soils on the project site consist of two types: Rincon silty clay loam, two to nine percent slopes (51.7 percent); and Antioch loam, two to five percent slopes (48.3 percent). These soil series have slight to moderate erosion potential based on the topography where they are found, and are described more fully in Section 3.2, Agricultural and Forest Resources. [Figure 11, Soil Map](#), presents the distribution of soil types on the project site.

Surface and near-surface soils observed during the October 2013 preliminary geotechnical investigation on the site consisted of predominately silts and clays with some fine to medium grained sand (Berlogar Stevens & Associates 2013). These soils were reported to be very highly expansive with stiff to very stiff clayey silts and silty clays to a depth of 20 feet below ground surface, which was the total depth explored. The 2013 geotechnical report included design recommendations and seismic design parameters for construction of proposed structures on expansive soils. The report also included a recommendation for a design level geotechnical investigation to perform additional subsurface exploration to evaluate liquefaction potential with deeper soil borings.

Landslides. The project site is located within the City of Hollister planning area. According to the City of Hollister general plan EIR, landslides are not an environmental concern within the planning area. Topography of the project site is relatively flat with an uneven but gentle slope from east to southwest at an average gradient of 2.8 percent, from a maximum elevation of 495 feet in the east to a minimum elevation of 435 feet in the southwest. The gradual slopes of the site are not prone to landslide or erosion activity.

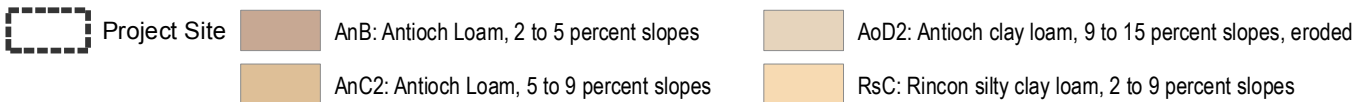
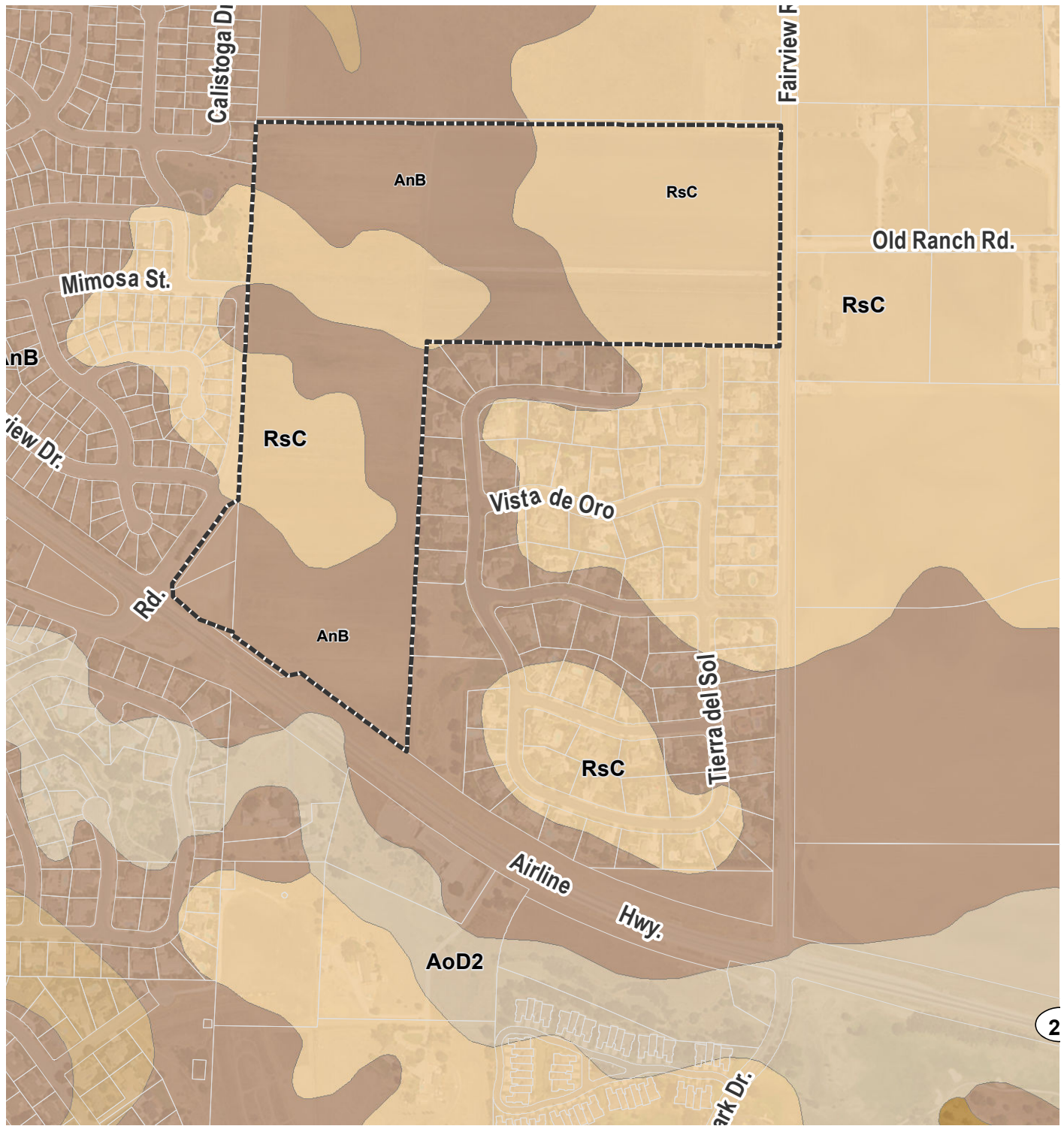
Liquefaction. Soil liquefaction occurs where saturated, cohesion-less or granular soils undergo a substantial loss in strength due to excess build-up of water pressure within the pores during cyclic loading such as earthquakes. Due to the loss of strength, soils gain mobility that can result in significant deformation, including both horizontal and vertical movement where the liquefied soil is not confined. Intensity and duration of seismic shaking, soil characteristics, overburden pressure, and depth to water are all primary factors affecting the occurrence of liquefaction. Soils most susceptible to liquefaction are saturated, loose, clean, uniformly graded, Holocene age, and fine grained sand deposits. Silts and silty sands have also proven susceptible to liquefaction or partial liquefaction. The occurrence of liquefaction is generally limited to soils within 50 feet of the ground surface. Although no specific liquefaction hazard areas have been delineated in City of Hollister or San Benito County, liquefaction conditions in Hollister are expected in areas within the flood plain around the San Benito River due to alluvial soils and perched water table. As noted above, the soils at the project site are highly expansive, but additional geotechnical investigation is required to evaluate susceptibility of site soils to liquefaction.

Expansive Soils. As noted previously, the predominant geotechnical conditions at the site are the presence of soil with very high expansion potential (Berlogar Stevens & Associates 2013). These soils expand when wet and contract when dry. This shrink-swell characteristic of expansive soils can cause distress and damage to structures supported by the soil. Proper design and construction in accordance with building code requirements would mitigate the effects of expansive soils. The October 2013 geotechnical report for the proposed project recommends the preparation of a design level geotechnical investigation to provide additional design criteria and performance standards for construction on expansive soils.

Regulatory Setting

State

California and Uniform Building Codes. The California Building Code (Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations) and the Uniform Building Code provide standards for testing and building construction as well as safety measures for development within earthquake prone areas. The project site is located within Seismic Zone 4, which is expected to experience the greatest effects from earthquakes, and which requires the most stringent standards for seismic design.



0 720 feet

Source: Soil Survey Staff, Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture 2014, San Benito County 2015, Esri 2015

Figure 11

Soil Map



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Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act. The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act (Pub. Res. Code Division 2, Chapter 7.5, commencing with Section 2621) was passed in 1972 to mitigate the hazard of surface faulting to structures for human occupancy. The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act's main purpose is to prevent the construction of buildings used for human occupancy on the surface trace of active faults. The legislation only addresses the hazard of surface fault rupture and is not directed toward other earthquake hazards.

Seismic Hazards Mapping Act. The Seismic Hazards Mapping Act (Pub. Res. Code Division 2, Chapter 7.8, commencing with Section 2690) (1990) requires the State Geologist to designate Seismic Hazard Zones. These zones assist cities and counties in fulfilling their responsibilities for protecting the public from the effects of non-surface fault rupture earthquake hazards such as strong ground shaking, earthquake-induced landslides, liquefaction, or other ground failures. The California Geological Survey has not issued a Seismic Hazards Map for the Hollister area, which includes the project site.

Local

City of Hollister General Plan. The following general plan policies are applicable to the proposed project.

HS1.1 Location of Future Development. Permit development only in those areas where potential danger to the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the community can be adequately mitigated, including development which would be subject to severe flood damage or geological hazard due to its location and/or design.

Development also should be prohibited where emergency services, including fire protection, cannot be provided.

HS1.2 Safety Considerations in Development Review. Require appropriate studies to assess identified hazards and assure that impacts are adequately mitigated.

HS1.4 Seismic Hazards. Assure existing and new structures are designed to protect people and property from seismic hazards. Review all development proposals for compliance with the Alquist- Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act and the Uniform Building Code as a way to reduce the risk of exposure to seismic hazards for those who will be living and working within the Hollister Planning Area.

HS1.5 Geotechnical and Geologic Review. Require all geologic hazards be adequately addressed and mitigated through project development. Development proposed within areas of potential geological hazards shall not be endangered by, nor contribute to, the hazardous conditions on the site or on adjoining properties.

HS1.6 Engineering Tests for Geologic Conditions. Require engineering tests for those development projects which may be exposed to impacts associated with expansive soils, so that building foundation footings, utility lines, roadways and sidewalks can be designed to accept the estimated degree of soil contraction, expansion and settlement, according to the standards of the Uniform Building Code.

City of Hollister Municipal Code. Hollister Municipal Code Section 16.28.010 requires the preparation of soils reports. Section 16.28.030 requires additional investigation for sites that have critically expansive soils or other soils problems which, if not corrected, would lead to structural defects. The report shall identify corrective action needed to prevent structural damage to each structure proposed to be constructed in the area where such soils problem exists, and requires compliance with soils and engineering reports as conditions of project approval.

Standards of Significance

According to the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, a project may result in significant impacts any of the following would result from implementation of the proposed project:

- Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:
 - Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault. Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publications 42;
 - Strong seismic ground shaking;
 - Seismic-related ground failure including liquefaction;
 - Landslides;
- Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil;

- Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse;
- Be located on an expansive soil, as defined in the Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code, creating substantial risks to life or property; and
- Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater.

Analysis, Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Environmental Topics Eliminated from Further Analysis

Section 21002.1.e of the CEQA statute requires an EIR discussion to focus on those potential effects on the environment of a proposed project which the lead agency has determined are or may be significant. Lead agencies may limit discussion on other effects to a brief explanation as to why those effects are not potentially significant.

Fault Rupture. The project site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Special Study Zone or a Seismic Hazard Zone. Therefore, there would be no impact from fault rupture zones and this topic is not evaluated further.

Landslides. According to the city's general plan EIR, landslides are not an environmental concern for the general plan planning area (City of Hollister 2005b, p. 4.9-3). The project site is relatively flat with a gradual elevation change of 60 feet from the northeast to the southwest, which confirms that site-specific landslide risks are not present on the site. Therefore, there is no potential for impacts involving landslides on the project site and this topic is not evaluated further.

Soils Unsuitable for Septic Systems. The project does not propose septic tanks or alternative waste disposal systems because the project site is located within the city's service boundary for sanitary sewer service, and will connect to existing wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure. Therefore, no impact would occur and no further analysis of this topic is required.

Less than Significant Potential Impact: Increased Risks of Exposure to Seismic Ground Shaking that Could Result in Human Harm, Loss of Life, or Property Damage.

Future development of the project site would increase the risks associated with seismic activity. Historically, major earthquakes centered on the Calaveras and San Andreas faults have resulted

in moderate to severe ground shaking in the project vicinity. It is expected that a major earthquake will result in severe ground shaking on the project site and elsewhere in the vicinity of Hollister during the life of the project. City of Hollister General Plan Health and Safety Element Policies HS1.4 and HS1.5 require new structures to be designed to protect people and property from seismic hazards, and that geologic hazards be adequately addressed and mitigated through project development. City of Hollister Municipal Code 16.28.010 requires submittal of a soils report prepared by a registered civil engineer for every subdivision and standard conditions of approval require compliance with seismic building standards in the most recent version of the California Building Code.

The geotechnical report prepared for the proposed project includes design recommendations and seismic design parameters for site preparation and construction (Bergolar Stevens and Associates 2013, pp. 3-4). Compliance with general plan policies identified in this section, and with the seismic design and construction standards of the California Building Code in addition to the recommendations of the design level geotechnical report would reduce the impacts associated with increased risks of seismic ground-shaking to less than significant. No mitigation is required.

Less than Significant Impact: Increased Risks of Exposure to Seismic-induced Liquefaction or Ground Failure That could Result in Human Harm, Loss of Life, or Property Damage.

Seismically-induced liquefaction is a potential concern where there are loose-uniformly graded, saturated, fine-grained soils that lie close to the ground surface. The geotechnical report for the project site noted that the subsurface soils are stiff to very stiff clay and silt, and that groundwater beneath the site is anticipated to be greater than 20 feet below ground surface. The geotechnical report determined that these soil and subsurface conditions are conducive to liquefaction during a seismic event and concluded that a design-level geotechnical investigation with deeper soil borings be performed (Bergolar Stevens and Associates 2013, p. 3). The design-level report would identify appropriate grading and structural design criteria for development of the site consistent with the tentative map. Development is subject to compliance with the city's general plan policies and municipal code requirements for the preparation and approval of a project-specific geotechnical report, in addition to the design criteria and performance standards contained in the most recent version of the California Building Code. Compliance with these standard conditions of approval reduce impacts associated with increased risks of seismically-induced liquefaction or ground failure on the project site to less than significant.

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation: Soil Erosion During Construction

Grading, removal of vegetation, and other construction-related activities would disturb the soil, which could increase soil erosion rates during the construction phases of the proposed project. Specifically, increased soil erosion may occur with the use of heavy earth-moving equipment to

grade the site, remove vegetation, and compact the soil in connection with the construction of the project's buildings, roads, drainage and other permanent improvements. However, the soils found on the project site have slight to moderate erosion potential based on the relatively flat topography of the site. Given that the project site is relatively flat with an average gradient of less than three percent, the water erosion hazards on the site are low. Windborne erosion is dependent on soil type, vegetation cover, slope length and gradient. Implementation of standard erosion control measures and re-vegetation of graded areas would reduce the likelihood of all erosion on the site.

In addition, the project site developer would be required to comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program. Specifically, during construction the developer would need to prepare and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which specifies Best Management Practices (BMPs) that would prevent all construction pollutants from contacting storm water and with the intent of keeping all products of erosion from moving off-site into receiving waters. In addition, the developer would be required to prepare a drainage plan that incorporates post-construction storm water pollution management measures, including source control measures that reduce storm water pollution during operation of the project, in accordance with Mitigation Measure HYD-1. See Chapter 3.10, Hydrology and Water Quality for additional information.

Windborne erosion is addressed in Section 3.3, Air Quality, which includes Mitigation Measures AQ-2 and AQ-3 to control dust during construction. Implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-2 and AQ-3 would reduce project-related wind erosion impacts during construction to a less than significant level. No additional mitigation measures are required.

Less than Significant Impact: Construction on Expansive Soils

According to the geotechnical report very highly expansive soils are present on the site. Expansive soils can experience significant volume changes with variations in moisture content usually during seasonal wet and dry cycles. Expansive soils swell when wet, and shrink when dried. Such changes can cause distress to building foundations, slabs on grade, pavements, and other surface structures if not designed properly. Depending on site conditions and the nature of a project, a variety of approaches may be used, including over excavation and replacement of native soils with non-expansive fills, amendment and on-site use of native soils, and implementation of specialized foundation designs. The geotechnical report includes preliminary design recommendations for construction of proposed structures on expansive soils, and recommends the preparation of a design-level geotechnical report. Compliance with general plan policies identified above, design and construction standards of the California Building Code and compliance with the recommendations of the approved design-level geotechnical report reduce the impacts associated with increased risks of unstable soils to less than significant. No mitigation is required.

3.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

This section of the EIR summarizes the greenhouse gas (GHG) environmental and regulatory setting, identifies potential climate change impacts from project implementation, and specifies mitigation measures for significant impacts. This analysis is based in part on the results of GHG modeling using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod). The CalEEMod results are included in [Appendix F](#). Additional information regarding related regulations and legislation was utilized as was information from the California Energy Commission and the California Air Resources Board (CARB).

The Monterey Bay Air Resources District (air district) submitted a comment on the city's NOP that requested analysis of GHG emissions and provided recommendations for reduction measures if needed. No other comments regarding GHG emissions or climate change were received. The Hollister NOP and comment letters are included in [Appendix A](#).

Global, National, State, and Local Environmental Setting

Climate Change Science

The international scientific community has concluded with a high degree of confidence that human activities are causing an accelerated warming of the atmosphere. The resulting change in climate has serious global implications and consequently, human activities that contribute to climate change may have a potentially significant effect on the environment. In recent years, concern about climate change and its potential impacts has risen dramatically. That concern has translated into a range of international treaties and national and regional agreements aimed at diminishing the rate at which global warming is occurring. The federal government has begun to tackle concerns about climate change through a range of initiatives and regulatory actions. Many states and local agencies, private sector interests, and other public and private interests have also taken initiative to combat climate change. At the state level, California has taken a leadership role in tackling climate change, as evidenced by the programs outlined in the Regulatory Setting section below.

Causes of Climate Change and Projected Local/State Effects

The greenhouse effect naturally regulates the Earth's temperature. However, human activity has increased the intensity of the greenhouse effect by releasing increasing amounts of greenhouse gasses GHGs into the atmosphere. GHGs can remain in the atmosphere for decades. The GHG emissions that are already in the atmosphere will continue to cause climate change for years to come, just as the warming being experienced now is the result of emissions produced in the past. Climatic changes are happening now and are projected to increase in frequency and severity

before the benefits of GHG emission reductions will be realized. Increased concentrations of GHGs in the atmosphere result in increased air, surface, and ocean temperatures. Many of the effects and impacts of climate change stem from resulting changes in temperature and meteorological responses to those changes.

Rising Temperatures. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which includes more than 1,300 scientists from the United States and other countries, estimated that over the last century, global temperatures have increased by about 1.3 degrees Fahrenheit (°F). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change forecasts indicate that global temperatures can be expected to continue to rise between 2.5 and 10°F over the next century. According to the California Climate Adaptation Strategy (California Natural Resources Agency 2009), average state temperatures are currently predicted to increase 1.8 to 5.4°F by 2050 and 3.6 to 9°F by 2100. Some regional models show average temperatures in California increasing as much as 10.8°F. Achieving the low emission scenarios has become unlikely, while the probability of reaching the medium and high scenarios is believed to be more likely.

The San Benito County area has already experienced a rise in average temperatures. Winters are now shorter and warmer than they were 30 years ago. Temperatures in California have already risen 1°F on average. According to Cal-Adapt, a climate change projection modeling tool developed by California Energy Commission, temperatures in the Hollister area have historically averaged about 55.8°F. Temperatures are projected to rise between 3.7 and 6.1°F by 2090, based on average low and high emissions scenarios (California Energy Commission 2016).

Precipitation Levels. Precipitation levels are difficult to predict compared to other indicators of climate change. Annual rain and snowfall patterns vary widely from year to year, especially in California. Generally, higher temperatures increase evaporation and decrease snowfall, resulting in a drier climate. On average, projections show little change in total annual precipitation in California. Furthermore, among several models, precipitation projections do not show a consistent trend during the next century. The Mediterranean seasonal precipitation pattern is expected to continue, with most precipitation falling during winter from North Pacific storms. One of the four climate models projects slightly wetter winters, and another projects slightly drier winters with a 10 to 20 percent decrease in total annual precipitation. However, even modest changes would have a significant impact because California ecosystems are conditioned to historical precipitation levels and water resources are nearly fully utilized.

Reduced Snowpack. The Sierra Nevada snowpack acts as a large natural reservoir that stores water during the winter and releases it into rivers and reservoirs in the spring and summer. It is expected that there will be less snowfall in the Sierra Nevada and that the elevations at which snow falls will rise. Similarly, there will be less snowpack water storage to supply runoff water in the warmer months. It has already been documented that California's snow line is rising. More

precipitation is expected to fall as rain instead of snow, and the snow that does fall will melt earlier, reducing the Sierra Nevada spring snowpack. The spring snowpack in the Sierra Nevada decreased by 10 percent in the last century and may decrease up to 80 percent by 2100. It is estimated that for each 1.8°F increase in Earth's average temperature, the Sierra snowpack will retreat 500 feet in elevation and an overall reduction of 25 to 40 percent reduction in snowpack by 2050 is projected. The Sierra Nevada snowpack provides approximately 80 percent of California's annual water supply. Although groundwater is the city's water source, the rapid decrease in snowpack and spring melt poses a threat to groundwater resources in many parts of the state where rivers that recharge groundwater with melt water from the Sierra Nevada will have reduced groundwater recharge potential.

Water Supply. Climate change is expected to increase pressure on and competition for water resources, further exacerbating already stretched water supplies. Decreasing snowpack and spring stream flows and increasing demand for water from a growing population and hotter climate could lead to increasing water shortages. Water supplies are also at risk from rising sea levels. Competition for water between cities, farmers, and the environment is expected to increase.

Anticipated changes to source water conditions including more intense storm events, longer drought periods, reduced snowpack at lower elevations, and earlier spring runoff will likely impact the quality of the source waters. Changes in source water quantity and quality may impact the treatment necessary to produce potable drinking water. These changes could result in additional treatment processes required and increased costs for treated drinking water in order to avoid potential for human health risk via drinking water consumption.

More Frequent and Extreme Storm Events. Extreme weather is expected to become more common throughout California. More extreme storm events are expected to increase water runoff to streams and rivers during the winter months, heightening flood risks. Warmer ocean surface temperatures have caused warmer and wetter conditions in the Sierra Nevada, increasing flood risk. Strong winter storms may produce atmospheric rivers that transport large amounts of water vapor from the Pacific Ocean to the California coast. They often last for days and drop heavy rain or snow for days. As the strength of these storms increase and transport increased amounts of precipitation, the risk of flooding is increased.

Diminished Air Quality. Climate change is expected to exacerbate air quality problems by increasing the frequency, duration, and intensity of conditions conducive to air pollution formation. Higher temperatures and increased ultraviolet radiation from climate change are expected to facilitate the chemical formation of more secondary air pollutants from ground-level sources. Conversely, decreased precipitation is expected to reduce the amount of particulates cleansed from the air.

Californians experience the worst quality air in the nation. More than 90 percent of California's population lives in areas that have ozone or particulate matter levels above the State air quality standard. Incidents of wildfires in nearby foothills and mountain regions are expected to increase and further contribute to air quality problems.

Environmental Protection. Climate change effects will have broad impacts on local and regional ecosystems, habitats, and wildlife as average temperatures increase, precipitation patterns change, and more extreme weather events occur. Species have adapted to natural and more gradual, environmental changes for millions of years. Species that cannot adapt are at risk of extinction. Some species could increase their habitat range. The risk of extinction could increase for many species. As temperatures increase, California vegetation is expected to change. Desert and grassland vegetation is projected to increase while forest vegetation is projected to generally decline. The natural cycle of plant flowering and pollination, as well as the temperature conditions necessary for a thriving locally-adapted agriculture, may also be affected. Perennial crops, such as grapes, may take years to recover. Increased temperatures also provide a foothold for invasive species of weeds, insects, and animals.

Social Vulnerability to Climate Change. The impacts of climate change will not affect people equally. Some people are more likely to be impacted than others. People exposed to the most severe climate-related hazards are often those least able to cope with the associated impacts, due to their limited adaptive capacity. Climate change is expected to have a greater impact on a larger populations living in poorer and developing countries with lower incomes that rely on natural resources and agricultural systems that will likely be affected by changing climates.

Certain groups in developed countries like the United States will also experience more impacts from climate change than others. People in rural areas are more likely to be affected by climate change impacts, such as droughts or severe storms, compared to their urban counterparts. However, certain groups living in cities will also be at higher risk than others. Hollister residents who are at greatest risk for the impacts described earlier in this section include children, the elderly, those with existing health problems (i.e., obese youth), the socially and/or economically disadvantaged (i.e., people of color, foreign born population, households speaking little English, low income households, unemployed, population without a high school diploma), those who are less mobile (i.e., living in group quarters, women giving birth in the last 12 months, households without a vehicle), and those who work outdoors. Place of residence is another vulnerability indicator, as renters, households without air conditioning, households lacking access to grocery stores, households in treeless areas, and households on impervious land cover are also more vulnerable to climate change impacts.

Health Effects/Illness. As temperatures rise from global warming, the frequency and severity of heat waves will grow and increase the potential for bad air days, which can lead to increases in illness and death due to dehydration, heart attack, stroke, and respiratory disease. Additionally, dry conditions can lead to a greater number of wildfires producing smoke that puts people with asthma and respiratory conditions at risk of illness or death.

Higher temperatures and the increased frequency of heat waves are expected to significantly increase heat-related illnesses, such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke, while also exacerbating conditions associated with cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, diabetes, nervous system disorders, emphysema, and epilepsy. An increase of 10°F in average daily temperature is associated with a 2.3 percent increase in mortality. During heat waves mortality rates can increase to about nine percent. As temperatures in Hollister increase, vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly, people with existing illnesses, and people who work outdoors will face the greatest risk of heat-related illness.

As climate change affects the temperature, humidity, and rainfall levels across California, some areas could become more suitable habitats for insects (especially mosquitoes), ticks, and mites that may carry diseases. Wetter regions are typically more susceptible to vector-borne diseases, especially human hantavirus cardiopulmonary syndrome, Lyme disease, and West Nile virus. Hollister is projected to have warmer winters with approximately 13-15 inches of rain under a low emissions scenario. This may attract vector populations (e.g., mosquito inhabited still-water pools may become more prolific). Floods can also increase the food supply available to rodents that may transmit Lyme disease, plague, tularemia, and rickettsial infections. In each of these cases the increase in vector-borne disease occurrences is expected to impact public health and increase demand on health care systems.

Flood Risk. Increased flood frequency and elevated flood risk are expected in California as a result of sea level rise, more intense storm events, and shifts in the seasonal timing of rainfall and snowpack runoff.

Greenhouse Gas Types

GHGs are emitted by natural processes and human activities. The human-produced GHGs most responsible for global warming and their relative contribution to it are carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and chlorofluorocarbons. The contribution of these GHGs to the U.S. inventory of GHGs in 2013 is summarized in [Table 15](#), GHG Types and Their Contribution to Global Warming.

Table 15 GHG Types and Their Contribution to Global Warming

Greenhouse Gas	Percent of all GHG	Typical Sources
Carbon dioxide (CO ₂)	81	Combustion of fuels, solid waste, wood
Methane (CH ₄)	11	Fuel production/combustion; livestock, decay of organic materials
Nitrous Oxide (N ₂ O)	6	Combustion of fuels, solid waste; agricultural and industrial processes
Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)	3	Industrial processes

Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency. Overview of Greenhouse Gases.
<https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/overview-greenhouse-gases>.

Note: Percentages reflect weighting for global warming potential.

Greenhouse Gas Global Warming Potentials

Each type of GHG has a different capacity to trap heat in the atmosphere and each type remains in the atmosphere for a particular length of time. The ability of a GHG to trap heat is measured by an index called the global warming potential expressed as carbon dioxide equivalent. Carbon dioxide is considered the baseline GHG in this index and has a global warming potential of one. Methane has a global warming potential of 21 times that of carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide has a global warming potential of 310 times that of CO₂. The families of chlorofluorocarbons, hydrofluorocarbons and perfluorocarbons have a substantially greater global warming potential than other GHGs, generally ranging from approximately 1,300 to over 10,000 times that of CO₂. See Table 16, GHG Global Warming Potentials, for reference on the global warming potential of various GHGs. While CO₂ represents the vast majority of the total volume of GHGs released into the atmosphere, the release of even small quantities of other types of GHGs can be significant for their contribution to climate change.

The GHG volume produced by a particular source is often expressed in terms of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e). Carbon dioxide equivalent describes how much global warming a given type of GHG will cause, with the global warming potential of CO₂ as the base reference. It is useful because it allows comparisons of the impact from many different GHGs, such as methane, perfluorocarbons or nitrous oxide. If a project is a source of several types of GHGs, their individual global warming potential can be standardized and expressed in terms of CO₂e.

Inventories of Greenhouse Gases

California GHG Emissions Inventory. California is a substantial contributor of global greenhouse gases. Based on CARB's most recent state GHG inventory, a net of about 459.28

million tons of CO₂e were generated in 2013 (California Air Resources Board 2015). In 2013, about 37 percent of all GHG gases emitted in the state came from the transportation sector. Industrial uses and electric power generation (in state generation and out of state generation for imported electricity) were the second and third largest categories at about 23 percent and 20 percent, respectively. The commercial and residential use sectors combined to generate about 12 percent of the 2013 emissions, while the agricultural sector contributed about eight percent.

Table 16 GHG Global Warming Potentials

GHG	Atmospheric Lifetime (Years)	Global Warming Potential
Carbon Dioxide CO ₂	50-200	1
Methane CH ₄	12 (+/- 3)	21
Nitrous Oxide N ₂ O	120	310
HFC-23	264	11,700
HFC-134a	14.6	1,300
HFC-152a	1.5	140
PFC Tetrafluoromethane CF ₄	50,000	6,500
PFC Hexafluoroethane C ₂ F ₆	10,000	9,200
Sulfur Hexafluoride SF ₆	3,200	23,900

Source: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Global Warming Potentials.
http://unfccc.int/ghg_data/items/3825.php

San Benito County GHG Emissions Inventory. A GHG inventory for the city is not currently available. Greenhouse gas emissions generated in San Benito County represent a small fraction of the statewide emissions inventory. Baseline GHG emissions in the unincorporated area of County were developed for 2010 as part of the County's 2035 general plan update draft EIR process and are found in a document entitled *Appendix D - Greenhouse Gas Emissions Technical Methods Appendix* (URS 2012).

The inventory includes emissions from five GHG emission sectors: transportation, area sources, energy use, solid waste, and agriculture. Based on this inventory, in 2010 there were 300,220 MT of CO₂e emitted in 2010. This is equivalent to 0.06 percent of the 2010 California GHG inventory. The greatest contributor to total baseline GHG emissions was transportation, followed by agriculture. In 2020 under business as usual conditions (no reductions from state measures or general plan policy implementation actions), GHG emissions volumes are projected to increase to 330,980 MT in 2020 and to 369,065 MT in 2035.

Existing Sources of GHG Emissions within the Project Site

The project site is currently in active row crop production. A minor volume of mobile source GHG emissions from use of agricultural machinery and indirect emissions from pumping agricultural irrigation water are the only notable existing baseline GHG emission sources. The site does not contain important sources of sequestered carbon such as trees that would be lost as a result of its conversion to urban use.

Regulatory Setting

State and regional policies and regulations pertaining to climate change are summarized below. These provide context for how climate change is being addressed and identify policy and regulatory actions whose implementation would lessen the contribution of the proposed project to climate change. The federal government is also taking significant regulatory steps toward addressing climate change. Generally, California legislation and regulations are as or more comprehensive than federal actions; therefore, this regulatory section focuses on state activity. Implementation of a number of policies and programs in the Hollister general plan would indirectly result in reduced GHG emissions.

State

California Assembly Bill No. 1493 (“Pavley I Rule”). AB 1493, enacted on July 22, 2002, required CARB to develop and adopt regulations that reduce GHGs emitted by passenger vehicles and light-duty trucks by improving fuel efficiency requirements. Pavley I requirements apply to these vehicles in the model years 2009 to 2016. CARB has estimated the effectiveness of Pavley I standards on vehicle emission factors and estimates that these standards will reduce GHG emissions in the transportation sector by 20 percent in 2020 and 25 percent in 2035 above and beyond a scenario without these standards.

Executive Order S-03-05. The Governor signed this executive order on June 1, 2005. It recognizes the anticipated effects of climate change, such as increased temperatures, reduced Sierra Nevada snowpack, worsened air quality, and sea level rise among others. The executive order includes GHG emission reduction targets for the purpose of combating these effects. GHG emissions are to be reduced to 2000 levels by 2010, 1990 levels by 2020, and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.

California Assembly Bill 32 (Global Warming Solutions Act). In September 2006, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed Assembly Bill (AB) 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. AB 32 establishes regulatory, reporting, and market mechanisms to achieve quantifiable reductions in GHG emissions and a cap on statewide GHG emissions. AB 32 requires that statewide GHG emissions be reduced to 1990 levels by 2020 consistent with

Executive Order S-03-05. This reduction will be accomplished through an enforceable statewide cap on GHG emissions that was phased in starting in 2012. To effectively implement the cap, AB 32 directs CARB to develop and implement regulations to reduce statewide GHG emissions from stationary sources.

Executive Order S-01-07 Low Carbon Fuel Standard. Issued on January 18, 2007, this order mandates that a statewide goal be established to reduce the carbon intensity of California's transportation fuels by at least 10 percent by 2020, and that a Low Carbon Fuel Standard for transportation fuels be established. The Low Carbon Fuel Standard has been developed and implemented by CARB. CARB has incorporated the GHG emissions reductions accruing to the Low Carbon Fuel Standard into the 2014 Scoping Plan as described above.

AB 32 Scoping Plan. In December 2008, CARB adopted the Climate Change Scoping Plan, which contains the main strategies California will implement to achieve reduction of approximately 118 million metric tons (MMT) CO₂e, or approximately 22 percent from the state's projected 2020 emission level of 545 MMT of CO₂e under a business-as-usual scenario. This is a reduction of 47 MMT CO₂e, or almost 10 percent, from 2008 emissions. CARB's original 2020 projection was 596 MMT CO₂e, but this revised 2020 projection takes into account the economic downturn that occurred in 2008. The Scoping Plan also includes CARB recommended GHG reductions for each emissions sector of the state GHG inventory. CARB estimates the largest reductions in GHG emissions would be by implementing the following measures and standards:

- improved emissions standards for light-duty vehicles (26.1 MMT CO₂e);
- the Low-Carbon Fuel Standard (Low Carbon Fuel Standard) (15.0 MMT CO₂e);
- energy efficiency measures in buildings and appliances (11.9 MMT CO₂e); and
- renewable portfolio and electricity standards for electricity production (23.4 MMT CO₂e).

In 2011, CARB adopted a cap-and-trade regulation. The cap-and-trade program covers major sources of GHG emissions in the state such as refineries, power plants, industrial facilities, and transportation fuels. The cap-and-trade program includes an enforceable emissions cap that will decline over time. The state distributes allowances, which are tradable permits, equal to the emissions allowed under the cap. Sources under the cap are required to surrender allowances and offsets equal to their emissions at the end of each compliance period. Enforceable compliance obligations started in 2013. The program applies to facilities that comprise 85 percent of the states GHG emissions.

With regard to land use planning, the Scoping Plan expects that reductions of approximately 3.0 MMT CO₂e will be achieved through implementation of Senate Bill (SB) 375, which is discussed further below.

California Senate Bill 375 (Sustainable Communities Strategy). This 2008 bill sets forth a mechanism for coordinating land use and transportation on a regional level for the purpose of reducing GHGs. The focus is to reduce miles traveled by passenger vehicles and light trucks. CARB is required to set GHG reduction targets for each metropolitan region for the years 2020 and 2035. Each of California's metropolitan planning organizations then prepares a sustainable communities strategy that demonstrates how the region will meet its GHG reduction target through integrated land use, housing, and transportation planning. Once adopted by the metropolitan planning organizations, the sustainable communities strategy is to be incorporated into that region's federally enforceable regional transportation plan. If a metropolitan planning organization is unable to meet the targets through the sustainable communities strategy, then an alternative planning strategy must be developed which demonstrates how targets could be achieved, even if meeting the targets is deemed to be infeasible.

Renewable Energy Legislation/Orders. The California Renewable Portfolio Standard Program requires electric utilities and other entities under the jurisdiction of the California Public Utilities Commission to meet a portion of their retail sales with renewable power. SB 1078, adopted in 2002, required 20 percent of retail sales to be met with renewable power by 2017. The requirement was accelerated to 20 percent by 2010 by SB 107 in 2006. The program was subsequently expanded in September 2010 by requiring all utilities to meet a 33 percent target by 2020. Governor Brown then signed AB 350, the Clean Energy and Pollution Reduction Act of 2015 (described below), which increases the Renewable Portfolio Standard Program requirement to 50 percent of all retail sales by 2030.

California Senate Bill 97. As directed by SB 97, the California Natural Resources Agency adopted amendments to the CEQA Guidelines for GHG emissions on December 30, 2009. On February 16, 2010, the Office of Administrative Law approved the Amendments, and filed them with the Secretary of State for inclusion in the California Code of Regulations. The amendments became effective on March 18, 2010. CEQA allows lead agencies to analyze and mitigate the significant effects of GHG emissions at a programmatic level, such as in a general plan, or as part of a separate plan (e.g., a climate action plan) to reduce GHG emissions.

Final Supplement to the AB 32 Scoping Plan Functional Equivalent Document. In 2011, CARB released this document to provide a more in-depth analysis of the five alternatives to the Scoping Plan that were originally included in that document. The supplemental analysis was conducted in response to litigation brought against CARB which challenged the adequacy of the alternatives analysis contained in the Scoping Plan. The supplemental analysis included an update of the business-as-usual GHG emissions projections that were contained in the Scoping Plan. The update is based on more recent economic conditions (including the economic downturn) and on reduction measures from the Scoping Plan that are already in place). The updated 2020 business-as-usual emissions forecast of 507 MMT CO₂e is lower than that

contained in the 2008 Scoping Plan. With this forecast, only a 16 percent reduction below business-as-usual levels would be needed to return to 1990 levels (e.g. 427 MMT CO₂e) by 2020.

California Green Building Standards Code. The Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen), which requires all new buildings in the state to be more energy efficient and environmentally responsible, took effect on January 1, 2011. These comprehensive regulations will achieve major reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, energy consumption and water use.

Advanced Clean Cars. In January 2012, CARB adopted an Advanced Clean Cars program aimed at reducing both smog-causing pollutants and GHG emissions for vehicles model years 2017-2025. Advanced Clean Cars refers to suite of regulations that combine what were previously independent regulations that targeted GHG emissions reductions and smog emissions from passenger cars and light-duty trucks. The regulations focus on substantially increasing the number of plug-in hybrid cars and zero-emission vehicles in the vehicle fleet and on making fuels such as electricity and hydrogen readily available for these vehicle technologies.

The Advanced Clean Cars program would provide major reductions in GHG emissions. By 2025, the program is projected to result in a 34 percent reduction in GHG emissions from new passenger cars and trucks above and beyond a scenario without the Advanced Clean Cars program (California Air Resources Board - No Date).

Title 24 Standards/Energy Conservation. California's Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential Buildings (California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 6) were first established in 1978 to reduce California's energy consumption. The Scoping Plan requires improved building energy efficiency with each new update to the Title 24, which is updated every three years. The ultimate goal is to achieve net zero energy demand from new residential buildings by 2020 and from new non-residential buildings by 2030. The standards were most recently updated in January 2013 and went into effect in July 2014. Energy efficient buildings require less electricity, natural gas, and other fuels, the use of which creates GHG emissions. The 2013 updated required new buildings to become more energy efficient than ever before by increasing the efficiency of new construction by 25 percent for residential uses and 30 percent for non-residential uses compared to the previous 2008 Title 24 standards. New updated standards are anticipated to take effect in 2017, which increased energy efficiency standards to make progress towards the net zero energy use goals.

2014 Scoping Plan Update. In response to comments on the 2008 Scoping Plan, and AB 32's requirement to update the Scoping Plan every five years, CARB revised and reapproved the Scoping Plan, and prepared the First Update to the 2008 Scoping Plan in 2014 (2014 Scoping Plan). The 2014 Scoping Plan contains the main strategies California will implement to achieve a reduction of 80 MMT of CO₂e emissions, or approximately 16 percent, from the state's projected 2020 emission level of 507 MMT of CO₂e under the business-as-usual scenario defined

in the 2014 Scoping Plan. The 2014 Scoping Plan also includes a breakdown of the amount of GHG reductions CARB recommends for each emissions sector of the state's GHG inventory. Several strategies to reduce GHG emissions are included: the Low Carbon Fuels Standard, the Pavley Rule, the Advanced Clean Cars program, the Renewable Portfolio Standard, and the Sustainable Communities Strategy.

Executive Order B-30-15. Issued on April 29, 2015, this order advances the intent of Executive Order S-03-05 by establishing a California GHG reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. The new emission reduction is intended to be an interim target that maintains a reduction trajectory towards meeting the state's goal of reducing emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050 as identified in Executive Order S-03-05. This is in line with the scientifically established levels needed in the U.S. to limit global warming below two degrees Celsius - the warming threshold at which scientists say there will likely be major climate disruptions such as super droughts and rising sea levels.

Local agencies that adopt land use, housing, and transportation policies that are consistent with and facilitate implementation of the related GHG reduction strategies in a sustainable communities strategy benefit through potential CEQA streamlining for qualifying projects proposed within their boundaries. Adoption of such policies can be a part of a general plan update or other similar policy adoption process. However a local agency's general plan is not required to be consistent with a sustainable communities strategy.

California Senate Bill 350 (Clean Energy and Pollution Reduction Act of 2015). This bill was approved by the Governor in October 2015. It has several aspects. Among its requirements are that the State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission must establish annual targets for statewide energy efficiency savings and demand reduction that will achieve a cumulative doubling of statewide energy efficiency savings in electricity and natural gas final end uses of retail customers by January 1, 2030. Local publicly owned electric utilities are now required to establish annual targets for energy efficiency savings and demand reduction consistent with this goal. The bill also is intended achieve GHG reductions through increased investments in transportation electrification and notes that reducing GHGs to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050 consistent with Executive orders S-03-05 and S-30-15 will require widespread transportation electrification.

California Senate Bill 32 (California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006: Emissions Limit). This bill was adopted in September 2016. It sets a new statewide GHG emissions reduction target of at least 40 percent below 1990 levels by the end of 2030. It represents an interim GHG reduction target designed to ensure that the state continues to adopt rules and regulations that keep the state on track to meet the 2050 statewide GHG reduction goal of 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050 set forth in Executive Order S-03-05. The emissions

reduction goal set in SB 32 sets expectations for GHG emissions reductions in the state in the post-AB 32 2020 environment given that emissions reduction goals set forth in AB 32 will have been reached by 2020.

California Air Pollution Control Officers Association. The California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) has prepared three guidance documents that together describe methods for quantifying GHG emissions and mitigation measures. The first document, *CEQA and Climate Change*, was released in 2008 and describes methods to estimate and mitigate GHG emissions from projects subject to CEQA. This CAPCOA report evaluates several GHG thresholds that could be used to evaluate the significance of a project's GHG emissions. The second document, *Model Policies for Greenhouse Gases in General Plans*, provides background information, examples, references, links, and a systematic worksheet to help local governments in moving toward GHG considerations in general plan updates, or in the development of specific Climate Action Plans. In cooperation with the Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management and the National Association of Clean Air Agencies, CAPCOA released a third document, *Quantifying Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Measures: A Resource for Local Government to Assess Emission Reductions from Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Measures*, in August 2010. The document provides methodologies to quantify project-level mitigation of GHG emissions associated with land use, transportation, energy use, and other related project areas.

Monterey Bay Air Resources District

The air district has been in the process of developing guidance for evaluation of GHG emissions impacts for several years. In June 2011, the air district proposed interim thresholds of significance for stationary sources for use in the CEQA analysis process. After release of the interim guidance, the air district consulted with various stakeholders regarding the proposed thresholds. To date, the air district has not formally adopted thresholds of significant or other district-specific guidance regarding analysis of GHG impacts as part of the CEQA process.

City of Hollister

The Hollister general plan was adopted in 2005. The consideration of climate change as an environmental, development planning, and general plan policy issue did not arise for local jurisdictions until after the passage of AB 32 in 2006. Therefore, the Hollister general plan does not contain policies that directly address climate change. However, a number of the policies do provide direction that would directly or indirectly result in reduced GHG emissions, especially from mobile sources (transportation) and energy use. These policies are found primarily in the Land Use, Circulation, and Natural Resources and Conservation elements. Representative applicable policies and implementation measures are as follows:

LU 4.1, Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities. Ensure that business areas have adequate pedestrian and bicycle facilities and universal accessibility and that easy connections to transit are available whenever possible. Secure funding to implement the Hollister Bicycle Master Plan.

LU 4.2, Alternatives to Automobiles. To the extent possible, encourage alternatives to the use of private automobiles. Encourage a range of transportation options, including driving, walking, biking and transit, without allowing any one to preclude the others.

LU 4.4, Streets, Paths and Bikeways. Ensure that streets, paths and bikeways contribute to the system of a fully connected transportation network.

LU 5.1, Local Jobs and Housing Balance. Strive to maintain balance between the number of local jobs and the number of available housing units within the planning area.

LU 5.2, Mixed-Use. Encourage mixed-use development types that enhance the viability of Downtown Hollister in order to preserve its social, cultural, historical and governmental significance.

LU 6.1, Infill Development. Facilitate infill development opportunities by establishing an annexation policy in cooperation with the County of San Benito and the Local Agency Formation Commission to annex unincorporated county areas surrounded by the city.

LU 9.1, Natural Design Elements. Ensure that building design takes into consideration air circulation, natural lighting, views, solar orientation, and shading areas to interior and exterior spaces.

LU 9.2, Energy Efficiency. Integrate good design with the use of energy efficient techniques and equipment and with materials and construction practices that minimize adverse environmental effects.

C 2.1, Bicycle Facilities. Cooperatively work with COG, Caltrans, and San Benito County to develop, implement and maintain bicycle facilities providing direct access to major public facilities, schools and employment centers as described in the San Benito County Bicycle Master Plan.

C 2.3, Pedestrian Connections. Work with local businesses, private developers, and public agencies to ensure provision of safe pedestrian pathways to major public facilities, schools and employment centers. Require new developments to provide internal pedestrian connections and linkages to adjacent neighborhoods and community facilities.

C 4.2, Public Transit. Cooperatively work with COG, Caltrans, and San Benito County to develop, implement and maintain public transit services.

NRC 3.1, Development Practices to Conserve Resources. Promote development practices, which will result in the conservation of energy, water, minerals and other natural resources, and promote the use of renewable energy technologies (such as solar and wind) when possible.

NRC 2.3, Air Quality Planning and Coordination. Integrate air quality considerations with the land use and transportation processes by mitigating air quality impacts through land use design measures, such as encouraging project design that will foster walking and biking.

NRC 2.5, Circulation Alternatives to Reduce Impacts on Air Quality. Promote circulation alternatives that reduce air pollution.

NRC.J, Apply Title 24 requirements. Meet or exceed Title 24 energy conservation requirements, and, where possible, require structural and landscaping design to make use of natural heating and cooling. Encourage the use of solar and alternative energy technologies to meet or exceed Title 24 requirements.

NRC.N, Identify opportunities for transit-oriented development. Assist in educating developers and the public on the benefits of pedestrian and transit-oriented development.

NRC 3.2, Resource-Efficient Organizations and Businesses. Encourage businesses, commercial property owners, apartment building owners and non-profit organizations to be resource, energy and water efficient.

NRC 3.3, Resource Efficiency in Site Development. Encourage site planning and development practices that reduce energy demand, support transportation alternatives and incorporate resource- and energy-efficient infrastructure.

NRC 3.4, Resource-Efficient Building Design. Promote and encourage residences to be resource, energy and water efficient by creating incentives and removing obstacles to promote their use. Require those proposing new development to incorporate energy conservation measures in the design and construction of all proposed residential, commercial, industrial and public buildings. This would include: 1. High-efficiency heating-ventilation-air conditioning systems for maximum energy efficiency; 2. Design window systems to reduce thermal gain during warm weather and heat loss during cool weather; and, 3. Install high-efficiency sodium lamps for all street and parking lot lighting.

NRC 3.5, Efficiency in Government. Promote and serve as an effective leader in implementing conservation practices and incorporating resource-efficient alternatives in government facilities and services.

The city currently does not have an adopted plan in place for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions.

Standards of Significance

CEQA Guidelines Appendix G indicates that a project may have a significant effect on the environment if it would:

- generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment; or
- conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases.

Climate Change as a Cumulative Effect

Global climate change is, as the name implies, a global phenomenon. Greenhouse gas emissions released to the atmosphere from a variety of human activities and natural processes that occur across the globe are contributing to global warming. While the U.S. emits the largest per capita volume of GHGs of any country in the world, other major countries contribute substantial volumes of emissions that continue to grow on a per capita basis. Because climate change is a global phenomenon, it is highly unlikely that any one development project located anywhere in the world would have a significant individual impact on climate change. It is the sum total of contributions of development around the world that contribute to the problem. Hence, global climate change is inherently a cumulative effect.

The individual contribution of a project to GHGs in the atmosphere can generally be quantified in terms of volume of greenhouse gas emissions that it generates. However, the precise indirect effects of that contribution are difficult if not impossible to identify due to the complexity of local, regional, and global atmospheric dynamics and to the broad scale at which global warming impacts such as sea level rise, increase in weather intensity, decrease in snowpack, etc. are known to occur.

Year 2020 Threshold of Significance

Though climate change is a cumulative, global issue, impacts of individual projects on climate change as assessed in the CEQA process are generally considered relative to the climate change context at the state, regional, and/or local jurisdiction boundary scale. CEQA thresholds of significance for GHG emissions address whether the incremental cumulative contribution of a specific project to GHG emissions is significant at the state, regional, and/or local scale. Where regional or local plans for reducing GHG emissions have been adopted, the thresholds contained in those plans generally serve as the appropriate threshold of significance. However, quantified thresholds of significance for GHG emissions have not yet been adopted by CARB at the state level, the air district at the regional level, or the city at the local level.

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.4 addresses the approach for evaluating the significance of GHG emissions effects. Lead agencies are encouraged to use a model or models to estimate GHG emissions volumes then determine whether the emissions exceed a threshold that the lead agency determines to be significant. State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.7(c) states that when adopting thresholds of significance, a lead agency may consider thresholds of significance previously adopted or recommended by other public agencies, or recommended by experts.

Like many local lead agencies, the city has not adopted its own thresholds of significance for GHG impacts. In many cases, cities lacking adopted thresholds have relied on guidance and thresholds that may have been adopted by the air district in which the city is located. In the absence of guidance from their respective districts, as a common practice, many cities have deferred to the statewide emissions reduction target of 29 percent below 1990 levels by 2020 as identified in the 2008 Scoping Plan as a defacto threshold of significance for individual projects.

The defensibility of using the Scoping Plan guidance as a threshold of significance for local land use projects has been called into question based on the 2015 California Supreme Court Decision in *Center for Biological Diversity v. California Department of Fish and Wildlife* (commonly referred to as the “Newhall” case). In November 2015, the California Supreme Court issued a ruling in the case which concluded that the statewide reduction target of 29 percent below business-as-usual can be used as a threshold of significance for individual development projects. However, the court also determined that if this threshold is used, substantial evidence must be provided to demonstrate that achieving this reduction at an individual project level and within the particular circumstances where a project is proposed is sufficient to determine that the project has a less-

than-significant GHG emissions impact. The court stated that applying statewide GHG reduction targets, which consider both existing and new development, to project-level analyses without any adjustments to isolate new development emissions or consider unique geographic conditions, could be misleading and therefore requires further justification. The court found that the CEQA document, which was the subject of the lawsuit, did not provide this evidence.

The ruling calls into question what has been a standard CEQA analysis methodology for assessing GHG impacts of individual projects within a city, county, or air district that has not adopted a qualified GHG reduction plan and/or a threshold of significance. The court provided no clear guidance on appropriate thresholds of significance for individual development projects that might be used to assess their GHG impacts. It did, however, suggest several options for evaluating the cumulative impacts of proposed land use developments. One of these is reliance on “existing numerical thresholds of significance for greenhouse gas emissions”.

To account for the Newhall decision, an efficiency-based GHG threshold of significance is being used in this EIR that is specific to assessing impacts from new land use development and is based on Scoping Plan guidance. Efficiency-based thresholds represent the rate of emissions reduction needed to achieve a fair share of the state’s GHG emissions reduction target established under AB 32. The efficiency-based threshold is calculated by dividing emissions associated with residential and commercial uses (also termed the “land use sector” in the AB 32 Scoping Plan) by the sum of jobs and residents within the same geographic area. The sum of jobs and residents is called the “service population”. A project’s service population is defined as the people that work and live within a project site. The efficiency approach allows lead agencies to assess whether any given project or plan would accommodate population and employment growth in a way that is consistent with the emissions limit established under AB 32.

AB 32 establishes a statewide goal of reducing emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. Accordingly, a 2020 efficiency-based threshold of significance that is consistent with this target can be calculated using the components of the 1990 statewide GHG emissions inventory that are land use based. GHG emissions related to individual land use sector development types (e.g. residential and commercial) can be isolated out of the 1990 statewide emissions inventory by eliminating emissions sources that are not land use driven and that would not accommodate projected new population or employment growth. For example, emissions associated with ocean transport or agriculture are not related to new land use development projects. Isolating emissions from the land use-driven sectors of the overall statewide inventory enables development of a GHG efficiency metric that is specific to the type of land use project under consideration. For example, emissions associated with on-road transportation, electricity, natural gas, wastewater treatment, and solid waste are typically part of the GHG emissions inventory for new proposed residential projects. The same GHG emissions sources identified in the statewide inventory can be isolated and used to create an AB 32-based efficiency-based threshold of significance that is specific to a residential project.

Table 17, 1990 California Greenhouse Gas Inventory for Residential Land Use Related Emissions Sectors, shows the adjusted residential-based land use-driven emissions inventory for 1990 for a residential project. Total land use driven emissions are projected at 272.85 million metric tons (MMT) CO₂e. This emissions volume represents the numerator for an efficiency based threshold of significance for the year 2020.

As noted above, the service population is the sum of population and employment projections for any selected target year and represents the denominator in the efficiency metric calculation. Year 2020 population is projected at 40,643,643 (California Department of Finance 2015). Year 2020 employment is projected at 15,199,000 jobs (California Department of Transportation 2015). Employment projections for 11 different employment sectors are provided. Farm and Manufacturing jobs are not included, as neither sector is land use driven. The 2020 service population equals 40,643,643 + 15,199,000 or 55,842,643.

Using the statewide residential land use related 1990 GHG emissions volume and the service population as shown above, the 2020 efficiency-metric threshold of significance is: $272.85 \text{ MMT CO}_2\text{e} / 55,842,643 = 4.88 \text{ MT CO}_2\text{e per service population}$.

Year 2027 (Project Buildout) Threshold of Significance

As described in the Regulatory Setting earlier in this section, Executive Order B-30-15 identifies a statewide GHG reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. The 2030 target is intended to serve as the successor to the 2020 target of 29 percent below business as usual established in Scoping Plan. SB 32 translates the executive order into law.

Neither Executive Order B-30-15 nor SB 32 provides specific direction to local agencies regarding their expected contribution to achieving the deeper statewide GHG emissions reductions. The executive order requires CARB to update the Scoping Plan to identify state level strategies and programs for achieving the deeper 2030 emissions reductions. The updated Scoping Plan will likely identify that local agencies, through their land use and development decision making processes, are expected to contribute their fair share to achieving deeper statewide reductions. The guidance is expected to inform local and regional agency decision making regarding GHG thresholds of significance for land use sector projects. Given the current lack of state guidance (or guidance from the air district) regarding post-2020 GHG reduction thresholds of significance, methodologies for assessing significance of project-specific GHG impacts are in a state of flux. Nevertheless, in the interim, the city recognizes the need to contribute to achieving post-2020 emissions reductions targets through the CEQA process for land use sector projects. For this reason, a 2027 GHG threshold of significance is being used to assess potential buildout year impacts of the proposed project.

Table 17 1990 California Greenhouse Gas Inventory for Residential Land Use Related Emissions Sectors

Land Use Type	Emissions (MMT CO ₂ e)
On-Road Transportation	
Passenger Cars	63.77
Light Duty Trucks	44.75
Motorcycles	0.43
Heavy Duty Trucks	29.03
Freight	0.02
Subtotal	138.00
Electricity Generation In-State	
Commercial Cogeneration	0.70
Merchant Owned	2.33
Transmission and Distribution	1.56
Utility Owned	29.92
Subtotal	34.51
Electricity Generation In-State	
Specified Imports	29.61
Transmission and Distribution	1.02
Unspecified Imports	30.96
Subtotal	61.59
Residential	
Household Use	29.66
Industrial	
Landfills	6.26
Domestic Wastewater Treatment	2.83
Subtotal	9.09
Total Emissions	272.85

Source: Derived from Ascent Environmental, Saratoga Estates Project Draft Environmental Impact Report, Appendix D, Table entitled "California Greenhouse Gas Inventory for 1990 – by Sector and Activity (Land Use-driven sectors only)".

Like the 2020 threshold, the 2027 threshold is efficiency based. It is derived by identifying a year 2027 statewide emissions volume target for the residential land use sector that is in line with achieving the year 2030 statewide reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels. The target year volume is then divided by the projected statewide service population in 2027. The 2027 emissions volume target is calculated by applying an annual GHG emissions reduction of 5.2 percent to the 2020 statewide GHG emissions volume of 272.85 MMT CO₂e for the residential land use sector. CARB has suggested that an annual average statewide GHG reduction of 5.2 percent is needed between the years 2020 to 2030 to achieve the 2030 target (California Air Resources Board 2015) Year 2027 target emissions would be 173.52 MMT.

Year 2027 population is projected at 43,182,796. This figure is based on annual average population growth of 365,518 between the years 2025 and 2027 as projected by the California Department of Finance (California Department of Finance 2015). Year 2025 population is forecast at 42,451,760, while year 2030 population is forecast at 44,279,354; the annual average increase is 365,518. Year 2027 employment is projected at 16,217,000 jobs (California Department of Transportation 2015). As previously noted, Farm and Manufacturing represent non-land use driven sectors. Therefore, the jobs projection for each sector is subtracted from total 2027 projection. The 2027 service population equals 43,182,796 + 16,217,000 or 59,399,796.

Using the statewide residential land use related 1990 GHG emissions volume and the service population as shown above, the 2027 efficiency-metric threshold of significance is: 173.52 MMT/59,399,796 = 2.92 MT CO₂e per service population.

Subsequent Use of 2020 and Post-2020 Threshold of Significance Determination Methodology

The 2020 and 2027 threshold of significance determination methodology utilized in this EIR applies to the proposed project only. The methodology reflects the city's best current effort to identify thresholds of significance in a GHG analysis environment that is in a state of flux. As new information and guidance becomes available from the state, regional, and/or other local agencies, the city's methodology for determining GHG thresholds of significance and the significance of individual project GHG impacts will be subject to change.

Analysis, Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Environmental Topics Eliminated from Further Analysis

Section 21002.1.e of the CEQA statute requires an EIR discussion to focus on those potential effects on the environment of a proposed project which the lead agency has determined are or may be significant. Lead agencies may limit discussion on other effects to a brief explanation as to why those effects are not potentially significant.

Conflict with AB 32 – the Applicable GHG Reduction Plan. The proposed project would conflict with AB 32, the applicable plan for reducing GHGs, if the GHG emissions it generates interfere with the state's ability to achieve GHG emissions reduction targets set forth in the Scoping Plan for the 2020 target year. As described in the Standards of Significance section above, the thresholds of significance developed for the proposed project are designed to determine whether project emissions would exceed 2020 emissions reductions goals in the Scoping Plan for 2020. Project emissions would be below the threshold for 2020. Therefore, the proposed would not conflict with AB 32.

There are currently no applicable GHG reduction plans in place at the state, regional, or local level designed to address the statewide 2030 GHG reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels as identified in SB 32. The current Scoping Plan is being updated to identify strategies and programs that will be implemented to reach this target.

Less than Significant: Generation of GHG Emissions that Exceed the 2020 Threshold of Significance of 4.88 MT CO₂e per Year

The proposed project would generate GHG emissions during its construction and long-term operation. These emissions are forecast using CalEEMod (refer also to Appendix F).

Construction Emissions Estimate. [Appendix F](#), Section 2.1, Overall Construction, Unmitigated Construction, shows the GHG emissions from project construction activities. Total construction emissions are projected at 5,569.25 MT CO₂e. Total construction emissions are amortized over a 30-year period and added to annual operational GHG emissions, discussed below, to arrive at a total project annual GHG emissions volume. The proposed project would generate construction emissions of about 185.64 MT CO₂e per year over 30 years. CalEEMod defaults have been used for the number and type of construction equipment to be utilized during the construction process and for other construction emissions because more project specific data is currently not available. No construction mitigation measures were utilized to calculate a mitigated construction emissions volume.

Annual Mitigated 2020 Operational Emissions Projection. [Table 18, Mitigated 2020 and 2027 Operational Phase GHG Emissions](#), presented previously shows a projected annual operational emissions volume of approximately 3,460 MT CO₂e for the year 2020. This volume is considered mitigated with implementation of mitigation measure AQ-1 in Section 3.3, Air Quality, which prohibits installation of solid fuel heating appliances in new homes. While targeted at reducing criteria air emissions, specifically VOC, mitigation measure AQ-1 also results in an incremental reduction in GHG emissions. The unmitigated GHG emissions volume is 3,642.01 MT CO₂e per year, a difference of 181.49 MT CO₂e per year. The mitigated emissions volume is taken from Appendix F, Section 2.2, Overall Operational, Mitigated Operational.

Table 18 Mitigated 2020 and 2027 Operational Phase GHG Emissions (MT/year)

Emissions Source	CO ₂ e
Area Source	165.79
Energy	818.17
Mobile Source	2,275.18
Waste	147.33
Water	54.02
Total	3,460.49¹

Source: CalEEMod, EMC Planning Group 2016

Notes: 1. Difference of .03 relative to volume reported in the text is due to rounding.

For purposes of this GHG impact analysis, the emissions volume reported in the table is assumed to apply both in the year 2020 and in the projected buildout year of 2027. The assumption that the 2020 year volume is the same as the buildout year volume is highly conservative. The assumption is made solely to evaluate a worst-case GHG emissions conditions scenario were the potential to exist for the applicant to accelerate the currently assumed 2027 buildout schedule.

Legislative and Regulatory GHG Emissions Reductions. The CalEEMod project-specific emissions volume incorporates GHG emissions reductions that would accrue from two key state legislative programs - the Pavley standards and Low Carbon Fuel Standard, as described in the Regulatory Setting section above. GHG emissions reductions will also result statewide from the state's implementation of other legislation and regulations enacted to implement the 2008 and 2014 Scoping Plans. These reductions are beyond the control of the applicant, but GHG emissions from operation of the project would be reduced as a result of statewide implementation of the programs.

Legislation and regulation that in effect as of 2020 and 2027 that would have this net effect is summarized in [Table 19, Assumed Legislative and Regulatory Emissions Reductions](#). See the Regulatory Setting section above for summaries of the noted legislation/regulations and the percentage reduction data for each. The "Emissions Sector" column identifies the sector of the project GHG emissions inventory to which the state reductions are applied. The "Applicable Target Year" column identifies in what target years the reduction can be applied based on the implementation status of the legislation or regulation.

Table 19 Assumed Legislative and Regulatory Emissions Reductions

Legislation/Regulation	Emissions Sector	Percent Reduction	Applicable Target Year
Renewable Portfolio Standard (2020 Standard)	Energy Water	33 percent in 2020	Year 2020 Year 2027
Renewable Portfolio Standard (2030 Standard)	Energy Water	50 percent in 2030 ¹	Year 2027
Title 24, Part 6, Building and Appliance Energy Efficiency	Energy	25 percent in 2020 ²	Year 2020 Year 2027
Advanced Clean Cars	Mobile	34 percent by 2025 ³	Year 2027

Source: EMC Planning Group 2016 (for “Applicable Target Year”)

Note:

1. With approval of AB 350 in 2015 the state target for procuring energy from renewable sources rises to 50 percent in 2030 from 30 percent in 2020. Because the state is poised to meet the 2020 target and has identified a clear path to achieving the 2030 reduction, the full 50 percent reduction in 2030 is assumed and applied only to the project buildout year of 2027.
2. Residential reductions are projected at 25 percent per California Energy Commission's *2013 Building Energy Efficiency Standards Adoption Hearing Presentation*.
3. The Advanced Clean Cars program applies to cars and light trucks. The fleet of vehicles to be used by residents will likely be comprised of cars and light trucks such that the full 34 percent Advanced Clean Cars reduction is applicable. Implementation of the Advanced Clean Cars program is reasonable and foreseeable. Therefore, this program is included as a legislative reduction for the 2027 buildout condition.

Table 20, Annual 2020 and 2027 GHG Emissions Reductions from Legislative and Regulatory Actions, shows reduction volumes that would result in 2020 when the legislative and regulatory reductions shown in Table 19, Assumed Legislative and Regulatory Emissions Reductions, are applied to the annual operational emissions shown in Table 18, Mitigated 2020 and 2027 Operational Phase GHG Emissions (MT/year).

The legislative/regulatory emissions reduction projection is conservative. It does not include reductions from implementing other legislation and regulations that is projected to result in accelerated emissions reductions after 2020. For example, California's Long-Term Energy Efficiency Strategy, adopted in 2008, has set aggressive goals that will be implemented through future updates to the Building Energy Efficiency Standards in 2016 (that become effective on January 1, 2017) and beyond; by 2020, all new residential construction will be required to achieve zero net GHG emissions. Omitting such legislative/regulatory reduction measures assures a conservative approach to assessing potential legislative reductions.

Table 20 Annual 2020 and 2027 GHG Emissions Reductions from Legislative and Regulatory Actions (MT CO₂e)

Legislation/Regulatory Program	Emissions Sector	Percent Reduction	Mitigated Operational	Volume Reduction
2020 Emissions Reductions				
Renewable Portfolio Standard	Energy	33	818.17	270.00
Title 24, Part 6, Building and Appliance Energy Efficiency		25	548.17 ¹	137.04
Renewable Portfolio Standard	Water	33	54.02	17.82
Total 2020 Emissions Reduction				424.86
2027 Emissions Reductions				
Renewable Portfolio Standard (2030)	Energy	50	818.17	409.08
Title 24, Part 6, Building and Appliance Energy Efficiency		25	409.08 ¹	102.27
Renewable Portfolio Standard (2030)	Water	50	54.02	27.01
Advanced Clean Cars	Mobile	34	2,275.18	773.56
Total 2027 Emissions Reduction				1,311.92

Source: EMC Planning Group 2016

Note: ¹To be conservative, the Title 24 reduction is taken from the balance of the Energy emissions volume after the 50 percent Renewable Portfolio Standard Program reduction is taken.

Table 21 Total 2020 and 2027 Annual GHG Emissions with Legislative/Regulatory Reductions and Comparison to Thresholds of Significance, shows the total annual project GHG emissions for each year, the service population, and a comparison to the service population threshold of significance for each year.

As noted previously, even if it is very conservatively assumed that the proposed project would build out by 2020, the projected annual GHG emissions of 4.10 MT CO₂e/service population in 2020 is well below the 2020 threshold of significance of 4.88 MT CO₂e/service population. Consequently, the proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact from generation of GHG emissions in the year 2020. No mitigation measures are required.

Table 21 Total 2020 GHG Emissions with Legislative/Regulatory Reductions and Comparison to Thresholds of Significance

Annual Operational Emissions	3,460.49
Legislative/Regulatory Reductions	(419.79)
Subtotal Annual Operational Emissions	3,040.70
Annual Amortized Construction Emissions	185.64
Total Annual GHG Emissions with Legislative/Regulatory Reductions	3,226.34
Service Population = 788 (population increase)	---
2020 Annual Emissions/Service Population (3,226.34 MT/788)	4.10
2020 Threshold of Significance	4.88
2020 emissions are BELOW the 2020 threshold of significance	

Source: EMC Planning Group 2016

Less than Significant with Mitigation: Generation of GHG Emissions that Exceed the 2027 Threshold of Significance of 2.92 MT CO₂e per Year

Table 22, [Total 2027 GHG Emissions with Legislative/Regulatory Reductions and Comparison to Thresholds of Significance](#), shows that the proposed project would generate annual GHG emissions of approximately 3.07 MT CO₂e/service population in the year 2027. The table reflects the legislative reductions applicable in the year 2027 as identified in Table #, Annual 2020 and 2027 GHG Emissions Reductions from Legislative and Regulatory Actions (MT CO₂e), previously. Year 2027 emissions would slightly exceed the 2027 threshold of significance of 2.92 MT CO₂e/service population. Consequently, the proposed project would have a significant impact from generation of GHG emissions in the buildout year of 2027. Mitigation measures are required to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level.

To meet the 2027 threshold of significance, GHG emissions from the proposed project would need to fall to below 2,300 MT CO₂e/year in 2027 (2027 emissions limit = 788 x 2.92). GHG emissions production from the proposed project would exceed the 2027 threshold of significance by approximately 0.04 MT CO₂e/year in 2027. To ensure that 2027 emissions fall below the threshold of significance, the following mitigation measure shall be implemented.

Mitigation Measure

GHG-1. Prior to issuance of building permits, the applicant shall demonstrate that one or more GHG reduction measures have been incorporated into the project to reduce projected 2027 GHG emissions to below 2.92 MT CO₂e/service population (or by a minimum of 0.04 MT CO₂e/year). Numerous GHG reduction options are available to achieve this reduction. These include, but are not limited to:

- a. Include a 240-volt electric vehicle charger in the garage or off-street parking area of residences to allow for future installation of electric vehicle chargers;
- b. Residences shall be designed to exceed the Title 24 standards in effect at the time that building permits are issued;
- c. On-site renewable energy features (e.g. solar photovoltaic cells) shall be installed in a sufficient number of residences;
- d. Other measures demonstrated by the applicant to the satisfaction of the Planning Director that achieve measurable, validated GHG emissions reductions.

To demonstrate compliance with this mitigation measure, the applicant shall prepare a GHG reduction plan that specifies the measure(s) to be incorporated into the project and includes detailed calculations of GHG reductions to be achieved through the measure(s). The GHG reduction plan shall be submitted with the improvement plans and is subject to review by the Planning Director for conformance with this mitigation measure.

Implementation of mitigation measure GHG-1 would reduce projected 2027 buildout GHG emissions to below the 2.92 MT CO₂e/service population threshold of significance, thereby reducing the impact to less than significant.

Table 22 Total 2027 GHG Emissions with Legislative/Regulatory Reductions and Comparison to Thresholds of Significance

Annual Operational Emissions	3,460.49
Legislative/Regulatory Reductions	(1,311.92)
Subtotal Annual Operational Emissions	2,148.57
Annual Amortized Construction Emissions	185.64
Total Annual GHG Emissions with Legislative/Regulatory Reductions	2,334.21
Service Population = 788 (population increase)	---
2027 Annual Emissions/Service Population (2,334.21MT/788)	2.96
2027 Threshold of Significance	2.92
Annual 2027 emissions are ABOVE the 2027 threshold of significance	

Source: EMC Planning Group 2016

3.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

This section of the Draft EIR discusses the presence and future use of hazardous materials and conditions on and near the project site, and analyzes the potential risk of any such conditions in proximity to existing and proposed development. Unless otherwise noted, the discussion in this section is based on the *City of Hollister General Plan* (City of Hollister 2005a) and *City of Hollister General Plan EIR* (City of Hollister 2005b), and the *Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Fairview Road Property APN 020-310-009* (Raney Geotechnical Inc. 2012) (hereinafter “Phase I report”). The Phase I report is included in [Appendix I](#).

Comments on the city and county NOPs were received from multiple residents from the adjacent Cielo Vista and Valley View neighborhoods regarding the duration of construction and potential exposures to toxic air contaminants and other emissions from equipment during construction. Toxic air contaminants are addressed in Section 3.3, Air Quality. The city NOP and comments on the proposed project are included in [Appendix A](#). The county NOP and comments on the former project are included in [Appendix B](#).

Environmental Setting

As noted in the project description the project site is surrounded by existing or approved residential development. The project site has never been developed and has historically been used for a variety of agricultural uses (cattle grazing, dry farming, and/or row crops) since the 1930s. The project site is currently used for cultivation of row crops, and has been continuously cultivated since at least 1969 (Hellmann 2014a). The site is surrounded by dirt roads to facilitate the farming operations. There are no buildings or other structures present on the property.

The Phase I report was prepared to identify and describe any recognized environmental conditions that may be present on the site as a result of current or past use of the site. Recognized environmental conditions are defined by the American Society for Testing and Materials Standard E1527-05 as “the presence or likely presence of any hazardous substances or petroleum products on a property under conditions that indicate an existing release, a past release, or a material threat of a release of any hazardous substances or petroleum products into structures on the property or into the ground, groundwater, or surface water of the property” (Raney Geotechnical Inc 2012, p. 1).

The Phase I report is based on a site reconnaissance, historical research for the project site and near site vicinity, and a review of available environmental records from various government agencies. Visual observations and research of the properties in the near site vicinity revealed no evidence of an existing, past, or present potential threat of a release of hazardous substances or petroleum products to the property from off-site sources (Raney Geotechnical Inc. 2012, p. 9).

According to the Phase I report, a review of government agency records also did not identify any nearby sources with documented contamination conditions that would impact the soils and/or groundwater at the project site. In addition, the Phase I report indicated there was no evidence of previous crop dusting or farm headquarters facilities operation on the property. The report concludes that no further environmental investigation of the property is necessary.

In addition to the Phase I report, a soils analysis for the site was conducted, the results of which are presented in the letter report dated June 24, 2013: *Summary of Shallow Soil Sampling and Testing Fairview Parcel Fairview Road, Hollister, California* (Berlogar Stevens and Associates) (soil analysis). The soil analysis assessed the extent of agricultural pesticide residues on the property. Samples were collected and analyzed for the presence of pesticide constituents. Pesticide constituents were not detected and no further analysis is required.

Regulatory Setting

Federal

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act. The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act requires community relations components during the assessment of hazardous substances at inactive waste sites. The purpose of this act is to identify and clean up chemically contaminated sites that pose a significant environmental health threat. The hazard ranking system is used to determine whether a site should be placed on the national priorities list for cleanup activities.

Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act. The Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act pertain primarily to emergency management of accidental releases. It requires formation of state and local emergency planning committees, which are responsible for collecting material handling and transportation data for use as a basis for planning. Chemical inventory data is made available to the community at large under the “right-to-know” provision of the law. In addition, this act also requires annual reporting of continuous emissions and accidental releases of specified compounds. These annual submissions are compiled into a nationwide toxics release inventory.

Hazardous Materials Transportation Act. The Hazardous Materials Transportation Act is the statutory basis for the extensive body of regulations aimed at ensuring the safe transport of hazardous materials on water, rail, highways, through air, or in pipelines. It includes provisions for material classification, packaging, marking, labeling, placarding, and shipping documentation.

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. Hazardous waste is regulated under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. Subtitle C establishes regulatory standards for the generation, transportation, storage, treatment, and disposal of hazardous wastes. In regulatory terms, hazardous waste under this act is a waste that appears on one of the four hazardous wastes lists (F-list, K-list, P-list, or U-list), or exhibits at least one of four characteristics: ignitability, corrosivity, reactivity, or toxicity.

State

The California Environmental Protection Agency and the State Water Resources Control Board establish rules governing the use of hazardous materials and the management of hazardous waste. The California Department of Toxic Substances Control has primary regulatory responsibility, with delegation of enforcement to local jurisdictions that enter into agreements with the California Environmental Protection Agency for the management of hazardous materials and the generation, transport, and disposal of hazardous waste.

California Hazardous Waste Control Act. The California Hazardous Waste Control Act (Health & Safety Code § 25100 et seq.) is the State's equivalent to the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and closely parallels it by regulating the generation, storage, transportation, treatment, and disposal of hazardous waste in the State. The primary authority for enforcement of California Hazardous Waste Control Act and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act itself lies with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control. The Environmental Protection Agency has granted the State the authority to administer all regulations under both the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and the California Hazardous Waste Control Act.

Regional

San Benito County Environmental Health Department. San Benito County is responsible for implementing Chapter 6.95 of Division 20 of the California Health and Safety Code (§ 25500 et seq.), relating to hazardous materials release response plans and inventory. The San Benito County Environmental Health Department has been designated the lead agency for hazardous materials programs, and acts as the single point of contact for issuance of permits. Site inspections of all hazardous materials programs (i.e., aboveground tanks and underground tanks, hazardous waste treatment, hazardous waste generators, hazardous materials management plans, etc.) are consolidated and accomplished by a single inspection.

The program provides emergency response to chemical events to furnish substance identification; health and environmental risk assessment; air, soil, water, and waste sample collection; incident mitigation and cleanup feasibility options; and on-scene coordination for state Superfund incidents. The program also provides for the oversight, investigation, and remediation of unauthorized releases from underground tanks.

San Benito County Emergency Operations Plan. The San Benito County Emergency Operations Plan (2012) provides guidance for the county's response to extraordinary emergency situations associated with natural disasters, technological incidents, and nuclear defense operations – both during war and peacetime. The emergency operations plan concentrates on operational concepts and response procedures relative to large scale disasters, and addresses operations for the entire county. In the event of a hazardous materials release to the environment, the City of Hollister fire district and police department will coordinate hazardous materials response and mutual aid requests for San Benito County and the City of Hollister.

City of Hollister

City of Hollister General Plan. The following City of Hollister general plan goals and policies are relevant to the proposed project regarding hazards and hazardous material impacts:

LU9.5 Avoidance of Hazardous Development Areas. Prohibit residential development in areas that present significant environmental hazards, such as unmitigated fault hazard areas, flood zones, or areas with high liquefaction potential.

HS1.1 Location of Future Development. Permit development only in those areas where potential danger to the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the community can be adequately mitigated, including development which would be subject to severe flood damage or geological hazard due to its location and/or design. Development also should be prohibited where emergency services, including fire protection, cannot be provided.

HS1.2 Safety Considerations in Development Review. Require appropriate studies to assess identified hazards and assure that impacts are adequately mitigated.

HS1.12 Potential Hazardous Soils Conditions. Evaluate new development prior to development approvals on sites that may contain hazardous materials.

HS1.13 Hazardous Waste Management. Support measures to responsibly manage hazardous waste to protect public health, safety and the environment, and support state and federal safety legislation to strengthen requirements for hazardous materials transport.

HS1.14 Hazardous Materials Storage and Disposal. Require proper storage and disposal of hazardous materials to prevent leakage, potential explosions, fires, or the escape of harmful gases, and to prevent individually innocuous materials from combining to form hazardous substances, especially at the time of disposal. Provide the public, industry, agriculture and local government with the available information needed to enable them to take rational and cost effective actions to minimize, recycle, treat, dispose of or otherwise manage hazardous wastes within the Hollister Planning Area.

HS.M Designate emergency evacuation routes. Designate emergency evacuation routes in conjunction with the County of San Benito, and make them known to the public.

HS.R Require cleaning on sites with hazardous soils. Sites within Hollister that are contaminated with hazardous substances should be cleaned through decontamination of soils and filtration of ground water.

Standards of Significance

CEQA Guidelines Appendix G states that a project may result in significant impacts if any of the following would occur:

- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials;
- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment (during operation or construction);
- Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within a quarter mile of an existing or proposed school;
- Be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would create a significant hazard to the public or the environment;
- Be located within an airport land use plan, or where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport, public use airport, or private airstrip, and thus result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area;

- Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan; or
- Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands.

Analysis, Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Environmental Topics Eliminated from Further Analysis

Section 21002.1.e of the CEQA statute requires an EIR discussion to focus on those potential effects on the environment of a proposed project which the lead agency has determined are or may be significant. Lead agencies may limit discussion on other effects to a brief explanation as to why those effects are not potentially significant.

Hazards from Prior Use. The Phase I report found no obvious evidence of past or present use of underground product storage tanks, associated pipelines, or oil and gas wells on the project site (Raney Geotechnical, Inc., 2012). Soil sampling conducted as part of the soils analysis (Bergolar Stevens & Associates, 2013) determined there is no evidence of harmful pesticide residues on the property. A review of the Envirostor website (Department of Toxic Substances Control 2015) revealed that there is no listed hazardous material site located on or within one-half mile of the project site. Therefore, there are no risks of exposures to hazardous material sites. No impact would occur and no further discussion is required.

Naturally Occurring Asbestos. As noted in Section 3.3, Air Quality, there are no significant concentrations of naturally occurring asbestos in the vicinity of Hollister. Therefore no impacts from exposure to naturally occurring asbestos would occur and no further discussion of this topic is required.

Emissions of Hazardous Materials within One-quarter Mile of Cerra Vista Elementary School. The Cerra Vista Elementary School at 2151 Cerra Vista Drive is located approximately one quarter mile northwest of the project site. The proposed residential project would not create new stationary sources of hazardous emissions that would increase exposure risks at the school. Residential uses would not routinely use, transport, or dispose of any hazardous materials in other than incidental quantities. As noted above, construction activities are subject to compliance with numerous federal state and local regulations regarding the handling and disposal of hazardous materials. Development of the project site also would not create or result in a significant threat of upset and/or accidental release of such materials that would be hazardous to the public or the environment. Therefore, no impacts would occur to Cerra Vista School as a result of the proposed project and no further discussion is required.

Air Traffic Conflicts. The project site is not located within an airport land use plan or located within two miles of a public airport, public use airport, or private airstrip. Therefore, no safety hazards would be created by the proposed project. No impacts would occur and no further analysis is required.

Emergency Response/Evacuation Plans. The city's emergency evacuation/response plans are coordinated with the San Benito County Emergency Operations Plan, which contains procedures for responding to various types of large-scale emergencies within San Benito County including incorporated cities, and defines emergency response and management roles for county and city officials. As identified in the city's general plan (p. 5.7) the city's primary evacuation routes would be along State Route 25 and State Route 156. The proposed project would not impair or obstruct these evacuation routes. Therefore, the proposed project would not impede or conflict with any adopted emergency response or evacuation plans. No impact would occur and no further analysis is required.

Wildland Fire Hazards. As noted in the discussion of wildland fires in Section 3.6, Fire Services, the project site is not located in an area identified by CalFire as prone to wildland fire or excessive fuel loading and as a consequence, the proposed project would not increase risks of wildland fires. No impact would occur and no further analysis of wildland fire hazards is required.

Less than Significant Impact: Transport, Use, and Disposal of Hazardous Materials

Residential uses do not routinely transport, use, or dispose of hazardous materials or present a reasonably foreseeable conditions that would result in release of hazardous materials in to the environment.

Project construction activities may involve the use and transport of hazardous materials. These materials may include fuels, oils, mechanical fluids, paint, solvents, and other chemicals used during construction. Transportation, storage, use and disposal of hazardous materials during construction activities is required to comply with applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations, including the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit process (refer to the discussion in Section 3.10 Hydrology and Water Quality). Compliance with the NPDES permitting requirements include preparation of a storm water pollution prevention plan, which includes a spill prevention plan and requires approval by the Regional Water Quality Control Board prior to issuance of a grading plan.

Compliance with applicable federal, state, and local hazardous material statutes and regulations, reduce the potential for accidental release of construction materials. Therefore, risks of exposure to these hazardous materials is less than significant and no mitigation is required.

3.10 SURFACE HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

This section of the Draft EIR addresses the project's environmental impacts associated with surface hydrology and water quality. Unless otherwise noted, the discussion in this section is based on information found in the *City of Hollister 2025 General Plan* (2005a), the *City of Hollister Stormwater Management Plan* (2000), available flood mapping and other technical information, and project application materials. Wastewater is discussed in Section 3.17 of this EIR. Groundwater impacts, water supplies and distribution are discussed in Section 3.18 of this EIR.

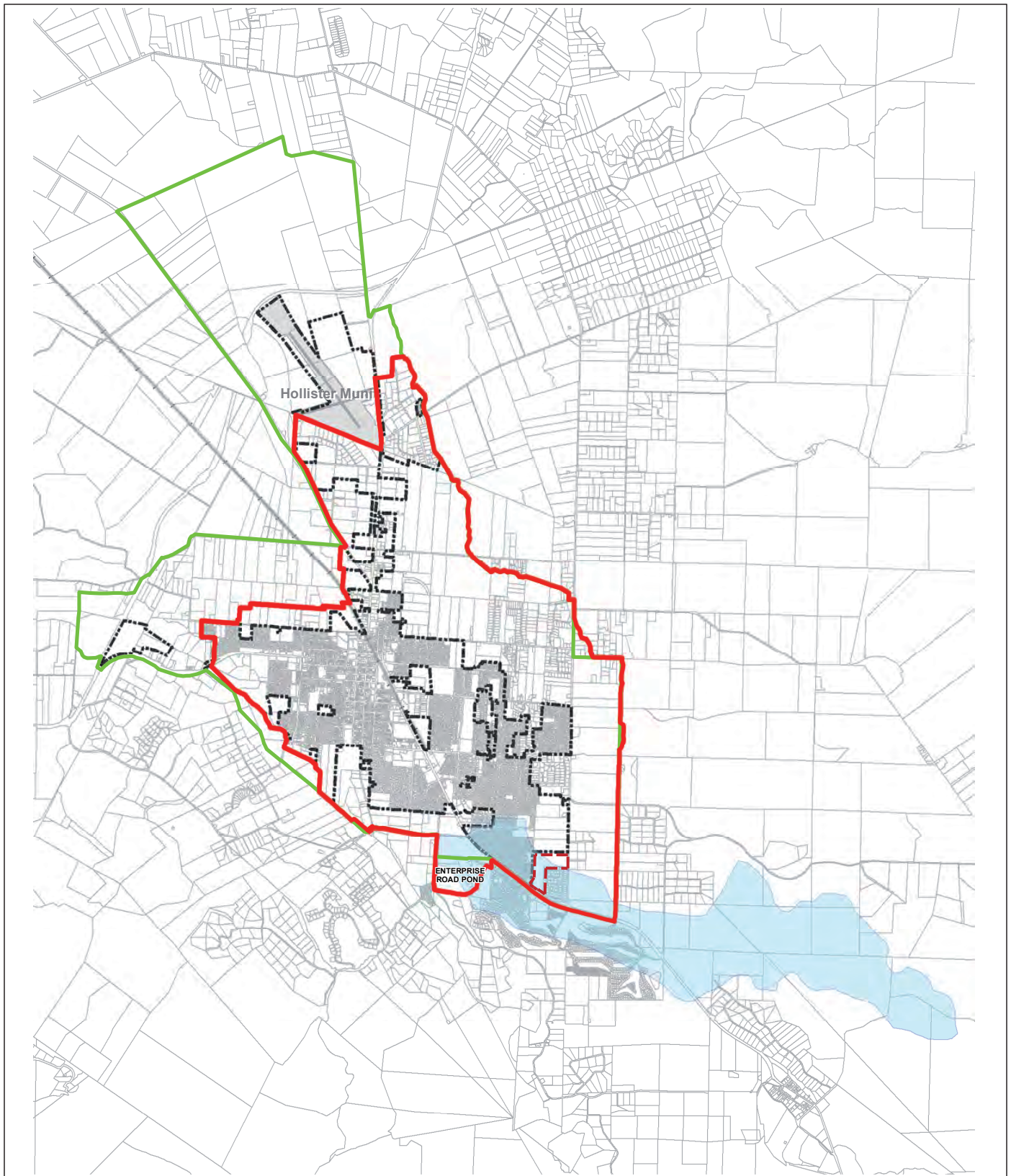
Comments on the city and county NOPs were received from homeowners in the adjacent Cielo Vista subdivision raising concerns for water quality and storm water drainage during and after construction both on and off the site. The City of Hollister NOP and comments received are included in [Appendix A](#). The county NOP and comments on the former project are included in [Appendix B](#).

Environmental Setting

Storm Water and Drainage

According to the City of Hollister's Storm Water Management Plan (City of Hollister 2000) (storm water management plan), the San Benito River, Santa Ana Creek, and the Santa Ana Creek tributary (north of the project site) are the three natural channels that receive storm water from the city's storm water collection system. Two large drainage areas are present in the vicinity of Hollister: the San Benito River Basin and the San Felipe Lake Basin. The San Felipe Lake Basin (located about ten miles northwest of the project site) collects runoff from the Santa Ana Creek, Dos Picachos, Arroyo De Los Viboras, Pacheco Creek, and the Tequisquita Slough sub-basins, and does not receive drainage from the project site.

The south and eastern portions of the Hollister Urban Area are within the Enterprise Pond Catchment Area, which is a large drainage area that extends south and east of the city. The storm drain master plan reports that the catchment area and city's storm drain system in the vicinity of the project site discharges into the Enterprise Road drainage pond located west of the Valley View residential neighborhood (refer also to the storm drain master plan Figure 2-3). The Enterprise Road drainage basin has a design capacity of approximately 29.8 acre-feet and can accommodate runoff from a 100-year storm event (p. 6-5) and ultimately discharges to the San Benito River. [Figure 12, Existing Drainage Facilities](#), presents the location of the Enterprise Pond Catchment Area and the Enterprise Road drainage pond, relative to the project site.



Not to scale

- Project Site
- SDMP Study Boundary
- Hollister General Plan Boundary

- Enterprise Pond Catchment Area
- Hollister City Limit
- San Benito County Parcels

Source: Wallace Group 2011

Figure 12

Drainage Facilities

Roberts Ranch Subdivision EIR

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The San Benito River, which flows through the southern and western portions of the city's planning area, is listed as an impaired water body under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. It is impaired by high levels of fecal coliform and sedimentation/siltation. As a result, storm water discharges into the San Benito River must meet water quality objectives and total maximum daily loads established by the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (regional water quality control board) for these pollutants. The city owns and operates a storm drain system comprised of multiple networks of inlets and pipes that flow to either toward the San Benito River, Santa Ana Creek, or a terminal basin within the city's system. The city's industrial wastewater treatment plant also accepts and provides treatment of some of the city's storm water during wet weather.

On-Site Drainage Patterns

The topography of the project site slopes gently from northeast to southwest with an overall gradual elevation change of about 60 feet. As noted in the Phase I ESA, county groundwater contour maps suggest that the regional groundwater gradient trends to the southwest (Raney Geotechnical Inc. 2012). The nearest surface water body is the San Benito River, located approximately one mile southwest of the property. Site drainage is provided by one-foot to three-foot deep agricultural drainage ditches excavated around much of the perimeter of the parcel, with interior drainage only provided by crop furrows. A seasonal wetland is present near the southwest corner of the project site, which is discussed in detail in Section 3.4, Biological Resources.

The project site is located within the Enterprise Pond Catchment Area identified in the storm drain master plan. Drainage from the project site follows the topography of the site and flows generally from northeast to southwest toward the Enterprise Road drainage pond and the San Benito River.

Flood Hazards

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map for the project area (FEMA 2009), the site is mapped as Zone X (Other Areas) and is not located within a 100-year flood zone. Zone X is defined as area outside the 500-year floodplain which has a 0.2 percent annual chance of occurring in any given year. No flood hazard areas are mapped on or in the immediate vicinity of the project site.

Urban Runoff

Urban development is widely regarded as a leading cause of pollution throughout California and the nation by altering watershed hydrology and introducing pollutants. Urban development alters the natural hydrology in the watershed in several ways. Natural drainage systems are

replaced with pipes and ditches, the land is graded, and impervious surfaces are created, all of which may reduce percolation, increase surface runoff, and damage aquatic habitat. Further, removal of vegetation increases erosion potential. In addition, urbanization tends to bring more pollutants. At the same time, the changes to the land's natural hydrology may reduce the land's natural capacity to remove pollutants, further heightening the problem of pollutants being washed into the storm drain system and ultimately into surface waters. Alternatively, urban runoff may be retained and treated on-site, prior to its release into a storm drain system that is directed to a wastewater treatment plant.

In summary, urban development produces runoff that may be substantially greater in volume, velocity, and/or pollutant load than pre-development runoff from the same area. Increased runoff volume and velocity can also significantly affect beneficial uses of aquatic ecosystems due to physical modifications of watercourses, such as bank erosion and widening of channels.

As noted in the Hollister storm water management plan, in the Hollister urban area, many different sources of urban runoff pollution have been identified due to the variety of land uses within the watershed (City of Hollister 2000). Sources and examples of activities that may generate urban pollutants are listed below:

- **Industrial facilities:** Industrial chemical processes, chemical and waste storage, fleet maintenance and vehicle washing, and landscaping;
- **Commercial businesses including food and vehicle service facilities:** vehicle and equipment maintenance, food processing, vehicle washing, landscaping, and chemical and waste storage.
- **Residential dwellings:** vehicle washing, home vehicle repair, home painting and construction projects, chemical waste and storage, and landscaping.
- **Construction and remodeling projects:** grading, vegetation removal, concrete washout, vehicle and equipment fluids, landscaping, and material and waste storage.
- **Municipal sewer system and private sewer laterals:** leaking, cracked, and debilitated pipelines, and overflows from blocked pipelines.

In general, urban areas contain a number of urban pollutants associated with various types of residential and ancillary uses (City of Hollister 2000). As noted in the Hollister storm water management plan, in the Hollister urban area, storm water pollutants of concern include metals, solvents, paint, concrete and masonry products, detergents, vehicle/equipment fuels and lubricants, oil and grease, household pesticides and fertilizers (organic compounds and nutrients), pet waste and sewage (bacteria, pathogens, and oxygen-demanding compounds), debris and litter, and sediment and silt.

Low Impact Development

Low Impact Development is the regional water quality control board's preferred means for achieving healthy watersheds and mitigating the effects of urban development. Low Impact Development is a land planning and design strategy with the goal of maintaining or replicating the pre-development hydrologic regime through the use of design techniques to create a functionally equivalent hydrologic site design. Hydrologic functions of storage, infiltration and groundwater recharge, as well as the volume and frequency of discharges, are maintained through the use of integrated and distributed small-scale storm water retention and detention areas, reduction of impervious surfaces, capture and reuse of runoff, and the lengthening of runoff flow paths and flow time. Other related strategies include the preservation and protection of environmentally sensitive site features such as riparian buffers, wetlands, steep slopes, valuable (mature) trees, flood plains, woodlands, and highly permeable soils.

Common Low Impact Development practices include site design that reduces and disconnects impervious surfaces, native vegetation preservation, bioretention, tree boxes to capture and/or infiltrate street runoff, vegetated swales, buffers, and strips, directing roof runoff into planter boxes and other vegetated areas, permeable pavement, and soil amendments to increase absorption and infiltration rates.

Regulatory Setting

Federal Clean Water Act

Section 303 Water Quality Objectives. Section 303 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1313) requires states to adopt water quality standards for all surface waters of the United States. Water quality standards are typically numeric, although narrative criteria based upon biomonitoring methods may be employed where numerical standards cannot be established or where they are needed to supplement numerical standards. Standards are based on the designated beneficial use(s) of the water body. Where multiple uses exist, water quality standards must protect the most sensitive use. In California, the State Water Resources Control Board and nine regional water quality control boards are responsible for assuring implementation of and compliance with the provisions of the Clean Water Act.

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System. The purpose of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program is to establish a comprehensive storm water quality program to manage urban storm water and minimize pollution of the environment to the maximum extent practicable. The NPDES program consists of: (1) characterizing receiving water quality; (2) identifying harmful constituents; (3) targeting potential sources of pollutants; and (4) implementing a Comprehensive Storm Water Management Program.

NPDES permits are issued by the U.S. EPA or by the states under U.S. EPA-approved permit programs that incorporate the Clean Water Act technological standards. Specifically, Section 402(p) of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1342(p)) establishes a framework for regulating municipal and industrial storm water discharges under the NPDES program, and requires controls to reduce the discharge of pollutants to the maximum extent practicable, including management practices, control techniques and systems, as well as design and engineering methods. California's Municipal Storm Water Permitting Program is implemented through the state water resources control board and the regional water quality control boards.

Section 402 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1342) mandates that certain types of construction activity comply with the requirements of the NPDES storm water program. In California, permitting occurs under the General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity, issued to the state water resources control board and implemented and enforced by the nine regional water quality control boards. The project site is within the jurisdiction of the central coast regional water quality control board.

The first iteration of the Phase II Rule, issued in 1999, required that construction activities that disturb land equal to or greater than one acre require permitting under the NPDES program.

The NPDES General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity (Construction General Permit) required all dischargers, where construction activity disturbed one or more acres, to take the following measures:

- Develop and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which specified Best Management Practices (BMPs) that would prevent all construction pollutants from contacting storm water with the intent of keeping all products of erosion from moving off-site into receiving waters;
- Eliminate or reduce non-storm water discharges to storm sewer systems and other waters of the U.S; and,
- Perform inspections of all BMPs.

On September 2, 2009, the state water resources control board adopted a revised NPDES General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity (Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ), which became effective in July 2010. This permit covers construction projects that disturb one or more acres, or those projects that are part of a larger common plan of development that disturbs more than one acre in total.

One of the biggest differences in the revised General Permit involves the specificity necessary for BMPs. Whereas the previous General Permit left the selection of BMPs to the discretion of the applicant and allowed the applicant to present them in qualitative terms, the revised General

Permit requires that the applicant implement a SWPPP that: (1) includes specific BMPs, (2) includes a greater number of BMPs, and (3) establishes quantitative numeric effluent limitations for water quality metrics such as pH and turbidity. The specific requirements will depend on an assessment of the risk level associated with a particular site. In addition, the revised General Permit requires a Rain Event Action Plan, which must be designed to protect all exposed portions of the site within 48 hours prior to any likely precipitation event.

On February 5, 2013, the state water resources control board adopted a NPDES General Permit for Waste Discharge Requirements for Storm Water Discharges from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s) (Order No. 2013-0001-DWQ), which became effective in July 2013. This permit requires the development of a management plan that discusses programs that will protect water quality by reducing or eliminating pollutant runoff from entering local water bodies. The City of Hollister has an active Phase II Small MS4 NPDES General Permit for storm water discharge.

State

State Porter Cologne Water Quality Control Act. The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act of 1969 (Cal. Water Code § 13020 et seq.) authorized the state water resources control board to provide comprehensive protection for California's waters through water allocation and water quality protection. This Act established the responsibilities and authorities of the nine RWQCBs, which include preparing water quality plans for areas in the region, identifying water quality objectives, and issuing NPDES permits and Waste Discharge Requirements.

Regional

Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. The state water resources control board and the nine regional water quality control boards have the authority in California to protect and enhance water quality, both through their designation as the lead agencies in implementation the Section 319 non-point source program of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1329) and under the State's primary water pollution control legislation, the Porter-Cologne Act. The Central Coast regional water quality control board guides and regulates water quality in streams and aquifers of the central coast region through designation of beneficial uses, establishment of water quality objectives, administration of the NPDES permit program for storm water and construction site runoff, and Section 401 (33 U.S.C. § 1341) water quality certification where development results in infill of jurisdictional wetlands or other waters of the U.S. under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1344). Water quality objectives are defined as limits or levels of water quality constituents and characteristics established for the reasonable protection of beneficial uses or prevention of nuisances.

All new and redevelopment projects that receive their first discretionary approval for design element on, or after, March 6, 2014, or if no discretionary approval is required, receive their first ministerial permit on, or after that date are subject to Resolution No. R3-2013-003, Post-Construction Stormwater Management Requirements for Development Projects in the Central Coast (regional water quality control board 2013) as mandated by the regional water quality control board, as applicable.

In general, projects which create and/or replace 2,500 square feet or more of impervious surface are subject to the requirements. The requirements for Tier 1 projects (projects including single-family homes that create or replace more than 2,500 square feet or more of impervious surface include implementation of Low Impact Development measures, summarized as follows:

- Limit disturbance of creeks and natural drainage features;
- Limit clearing, grading, and soil compaction;
- Minimize impervious surfaces; and,
- Minimize runoff by dispersing runoff to landscape or using permeable pavements.

City of Hollister

City of Hollister General Plan. Construction and maintenance of public services and utilities in the City of Hollister, such as drainage improvements, are enabled and regulated by the city's general plan. The following policies from the City of Hollister general plan associated with hydrological impacts are applicable to the proposed project.

Policy CSF3.1: Adequate Drainage Facilities. Require project developers to provide adequate storm drains for storm water runoff. Review all proposed development projects to ensure that adequate provisions have been included to accommodate peak flows and that projects will not significantly impact downstream lands, and will avoid impacts on riparian vegetation.

Policy CSF3.2: Erosion and Sediment Control. Require project developers to implement suitable erosion control measures.

Policy CSF3.4: Water Quality Tests and Mitigation. As part of the development review process, require developers to conduct well and ditch tailwater tests to determine the presence of "Category I" herbicides and pesticides, and triazide herbicides, as well as other chemicals that have the potential to pollute the groundwater and cause health risks. Based on findings, and at the project applicant's expense, implement appropriate requirements to protect public health.

Policy CSF3.5: Infiltration Areas. Require new development to identify sites which may be used for vegetated swales or strips, infiltration, media infiltration, water-oil separators, wet ponds, constructed wetlands, extended detention basins and multiple systems which may enhance water quality.

Policy CSF3.7: Pollution from Urban Runoff. Address non-point source pollution and protect receiving waters from pollutants discharged to the storm drain system by requiring Best Management Practices. This would include:

1. Support alternatives to impervious surfaces in new development, redevelopment, or public improvement projects to reduce urban runoff into storm drain system and creeks;
2. Require that site designs work with the natural topography and drainages to the extent practicable to reduce the amount of grading necessary and limit disturbance to natural water bodies and natural drainage systems; and
3. Where feasible, use vegetation to absorb and filter fertilizers, pesticides and other pollutants.

Policy HS1.1: Location of Future Development. Permit development only in those areas where potential danger to the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the community can be adequately mitigated, including development which would be subject to severe flood damage or geological hazard due to its location and/or design. Development also should be prohibited where emergency services, including fire protection, cannot be provided.

Policy HS1.9: Flood Hazards. Review all development proposals to verify that either no portion of the proposed development lies within the 100-year floodplain or that the applicant has taken adequate measures to eliminate the risk of flood damage in a 100-year storm consistent with the City of Hollister Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance as amended from time to time.

City of Hollister Storm Water Management Plan (2000). The storm water management plan defines strategies and guidelines for the protection of water quality and reduction of pollutant discharges within the city. Included in the storm water management plan are public education;

public participation; illicit discharge detection/elimination; construction site storm water runoff control; post construction storm water management; and pollution prevention/good housekeeping for municipal operations.

City of Hollister Storm Drain Management Plan (2011). The storm drain master plan prioritizes the city's existing and future storm drain system needs within the Hollister Urban Area through repair, rehabilitation, replacement, and new facility installation. The plan summarizes the existing facilities, storm water flows, identified system capacity deficiencies for existing and future conditions, recommended capital improvement projects, and conformance with existing and potential future NPDES regulations. The capital improvement projects are grouped into three categories; First Priority Projects are those projects that are required for existing problem areas as identified by the city, Second Priority Projects are those projects that are required to upgrade deficiencies identified in the plan, and Third Priority are upgrades that are required due to future development (duration depending on future development).

City of Hollister Municipal Code. The Hollister municipal code contains several regulations to address storm water runoff and drainage improvement design consistent with the requirements of the Regional Water Quality Control Board requirements. Municipal Code Section 15.22.190 identifies requirements for the provision of storm water management to minimize runoff and increase infiltration. Applicants are required to identify appropriate storm water BMPs into required landscape and grading design plans to demonstrate that runoff is minimized and are required to implement on-site retention and infiltration. This section also requires the use of rain gardens, cisterns, and other landscape features and practices that increase rainwater capture and create opportunities for infiltration and/or on-site storage. The provision of a Final BMP Control Plan is also required to be submitted with improvement plans for review and approval prior to issuance of a building permit (Municipal Code Section 15.24.132).

Standards of Significance

The following thresholds for evaluating a project's environmental impacts are based on the CEQA Guidelines and standards used by City of Hollister. For purposes of this Draft EIR, an impact to surface hydrology or water quality is considered significant if implementation of the proposed project would result in any of the following:

- Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements;
- Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;

- Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface run-off in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;
- Create or contribute runoff water, which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff;
- Otherwise substantially degrade water quality;
- Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on Federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map;
- Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows;
- Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam; or
- Cause inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow.

Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

Environmental Topics Eliminated from Further Analysis

Section 21002.1.e of the CEQA statute requires an EIR discussion to focus on those potential effects on the environment of a proposed project which the lead agency has determined are or may be significant. Lead agencies may limit discussion on other effects to a brief explanation as to why those effects are not potentially significant.

Flooding. The proposed project would not place housing or structures within a 100-year flood hazard area; increase risks of exposure to flooding, or inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow. As discussed earlier in this section, the project site is not located within a flood hazard area designated by FEMA; the site is within Flood Zone X, areas determined to be outside the 500-year floodplain which has a 0.2 percent annual chance of occurring in any given year. The project site also is not located in a dam or levee inundation area. Seiches and tsunamis are the result of waves in bodies of water created by earthquakes, most commonly associated with coastal areas. There are no large water bodies in the vicinity of the site that would generate seiches or tsunamis that could affect the project site. Therefore, no impact with respect to these environmental topics would occur and no further analysis is required.

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation: Generation of Storm Water and Polluted Runoff during Construction and Operations that could Violate Water Quality Standards or Waste Discharge Requirements

Construction. The proposed project would involve grading and future development of the 54.9-acre project site. Site preparation and construction could result in the transport of sediments and other urban pollutants off-site toward the San Benito River. Development of the project site would increase impervious surfaces, which in turn would increase the amount of storm water runoff that would drain from the site. Of particular concern is the contribution of additional sediments to the San Benito River, which is already impaired by sedimentation and siltation. The proposed project is subject to compliance with Hollister general plan policies that control erosion, drainage and sedimentation that could affect downstream water quality. Policy CSF3.1 requires developers to provide adequate drainage facilities that accommodate peak flows and Policy CSF3.2 requires erosion and sediment control measures during construction. In addition to these general plan policies, the proposed project is subject to compliance with the NPDES permit, including preparation and implementation of the required Storm Water Pollution Prevention storm water BMPs. Compliance with these general plan policies ensures that the project would not result in significant impacts to water quality during construction. No additional mitigation for construction runoff is required.

Operations. A number of pollutants and chemicals associated with development of the project that are typical of urban development, including bacteria from pet wastes, pesticides, fertilizers and landscape maintenance debris, petroleum products, hydrocarbons, litter, sediment, and construction debris, could enter urban runoff that is discharged from the project site. The impacts of urban runoff are particularly acute during the first storm event of the year, when accumulations of urban pollutants are flushed into the storm drain system.

Two storm water retention/detention and treatment basins are proposed on lots that flank the project entry at the intersection of Enterprise Road and Glenview Drive (Figure 6). These two lots consist of approximately 0.78 acres. An additional storm water retention/biofiltration basin would be located within the park dedication parcel or proposed linear park. The proposed project would discharge into the existing storm drain system that conveys storm water through the adjacent Valley View Estates subdivision west of Enterprise Road. The proposed project would contribute to area storm water that ultimately discharges into the Enterprise Basin located west and south of the project site. As noted previously, the Enterprise Basin discharges to the San Benito River.

Hollister general plan Policy CSF3.5 requires developers to identify and provide on-site infiltration areas, such as vegetated swales or strips, infiltration, media infiltration, water-oil separators, wet ponds, constructed wetlands, extended detention basins and multiple systems

which may enhance water quality; and Policy CSF3.7 requires developers to identify and implement BMPs to protect receiving waters from urban runoff pollutants discharged to the storm drain system. In addition to these general plan policies, the proposed project is subject to compliance with the Regional Water Quality Control Board's Post-Construction Stormwater Management Requirements for Development Projects that reduce the amount of runoff and pollution entering the storm drainage system through the use of low impact development measures, including landscape and grading design plans to minimize runoff, and the installation of storm water retention basins that would capture storm water and provide infiltration for the entire site. The proposed project is also subject to conformance to Municipal Code Section 15.22.190, which requires developers to identify appropriate storm water BMPs on improvement plans for review and approval prior to issuance of a grading permit. A Final Best Management Practices Control Plan is also required to be submitted with improvement plans for review and approval prior to issuance of a building permit.

Operations of the proposed project could generate storm water runoff that transports urban pollutants to the Enterprise basin and eventually to the impaired San Benito River. Compliance with the regional board requirements, Hollister general plan policies, and municipal code requirements reduce the project's impact of increased storm water flows that can affect water quality during project operations. However, design details are not yet available that outline the volume treatment capacity and treatment capacity of the proposed basins and therefore, it cannot be stated with certainty that significant impacts to water quality would not occur. Therefore, in addition to compliance with the policies and regulations identified above, implementation of the following mitigation measure ensures that residential development of the site would not generate sediments or other urban pollutants that would contribute to further degradation of water quality in the impaired San Benito River.

Mitigation Measure

HYD-1. Prior to issuance of a grading permit, the applicant shall obtain city approval of a final drainage plan for the project that complies with the City of Hollister Best Management Practices and standards established by the regional water quality control board for compliance with non-point source storm water discharge. The drainage plan shall demonstrate that basin capacity, percolation rates, and storm water treatment meets the performance objectives and design criteria requirements of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. The drainage plan shall outline BMPs and low impact development strategies that will be utilized by the proposed project to control and minimize storm water runoff and may include on-site retention and siltation basins, reduction of impervious surfaces, vegetated swales, permeable paving, landscaping, and other strategies. The drainage plan shall be subject to the review and approval of the City Engineer.

Implementation of mitigation measure HYD-1 in addition to compliance with NPDES and regional water quality control board's post-construction storm water management requirements, the proposed project would not violate any water quality standards or otherwise substantially degrade water quality project operation (post construction). Therefore, with implementation of mitigation measure HYD-1, the proposed project's impact to the water quality of the San Benito River would be less than significant.

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation: Increased Runoff that Could Result in Off-site Flooding by Exceeding the Capacity of Existing or Planned Storm Water Drainage Systems

Development of the project site would create impervious surfaces through construction of buildings, parking areas, roadways, and other project improvements. An increase in impervious surfaces has the potential to increase runoff from the site, which in turn could cause off-site flooding if the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems is exceeded. As reported in the previous impact discussion, design details are not yet available for the proposed on-site storm water retention. Development of the site that generates runoff volumes that exceed capacity of on-site storm drainage facilities could result in downstream flooding.

The proposed project would create more than 2,500 square feet of impervious surfaces and, as noted above, is subject to compliance with the regional water quality control board's post-construction storm water management requirements. As noted previously, these requirements include low impact development measures that limit disturbance of natural drainage features, minimize grading and soil compaction, minimize impervious surfaces and reduce runoff by including infiltration methods in project design and dispersing runoff to landscape.

Residential development will include construction of a storm drain system to collect and convey storm water to onsite storm water retention and biofiltration basins, which would treat the storm water prior to discharge into the Enterprise Road storm drain detention basin, which in turn discharges into the San Benito River. The Enterprise Road storm drain detention basin capacity is approximately 29.84 acre-feet and is designed to accommodate a 100-year storm event (City of Hollister 2011, p. 3-3).

In addition to Hollister general plan policies and municipal code requirements that provide design specifications and performance standards for storm water facilities, mitigation measure HYD-1 requires the preparation of a drainage plan to ensure that the proposed storm water infrastructure improvements meet the performance capacity objectives and design criteria required by the regional board. Compliance with these requirements and implementation of mitigation measure HYD-1 ensures that the proposed drainage infrastructure would not exceed capacity of storm water drainage systems and reduces the impact of potential off-site flooding to less than significant. No additional mitigation is required.

3.11 NOISE

This section of the Draft EIR includes a summary of relevant background information and applicable regulations, a description of existing ambient noise conditions, and an analysis of potential noise impacts of the proposed project. The information contained within this section is based on information and data from the *County of San Benito 2035 General Plan* and the *Roberts Ranch Residential Development Noise and Vibration Assessment San Benito County, California* (Illingworth & Rodkin, Inc. 2016) (hereinafter “noise report”). A copy of the noise report is included in [Appendix J](#).

Comments on the city and county NOPs were received from individual residents in the adjacent Cielo Vista neighborhood and from the Cielo Vista Homeowners Association, regarding noise impacts during construction, traffic noise and long term increases in ambient noise levels. The city NOP and comments received are included in [Appendix A](#). The county NOP and comments on the former project are included in [Appendix B](#).

Environmental Setting

Acoustic Fundamentals

Noise may be defined as unwanted sound. Noise is usually objectionable because it is disturbing or annoying. Noise is generated by many mobile sources (e.g., automobiles, trucks, and airplanes) and stationary sources (e.g., construction sites, machinery, and industrial operations).

Airborne sound is a rapid fluctuation of air pressure above and below atmospheric pressure. Sound levels are usually measured and expressed in decibels (dB) with 0 dB corresponding roughly to the threshold of hearing. Most of the sounds we hear in our normal environment do not consist of a single frequency, but rather a broad range of frequencies. As humans do not have perfect hearing, environmental sound measuring instruments have an electrical filter built in so that the instrument's detector replicates human hearing. This filter is called the "A-weighting" network and filters out low and very high frequencies. The most common method of characterizing sound in California is the A-weighted sound level or dBA. Although the A-weighted noise level may adequately indicate the level of noise at any instant in time, community noise levels vary continuously. Most environmental noise includes a mixture of noise from distant sources that create a relatively steady background noise from which no particular source is identifiable. To describe the time-varying character of environmental noise, the statistical noise descriptors, L_1 , L_{10} , L_{50} and L_{90} are commonly used.

The three most commonly used descriptors are L_{eq} , DNL (or “ L_{dn} ”), and CNEL. The energy-equivalent noise level, L_{eq} , is a measure of the average energy content (intensity) of noise over

any given period. The day-night average noise level, DNL, is the 24-hour average of the noise intensity, with a 10-dBA “penalty” added for nighttime noise (10 PM to 7 AM) to account for the greater sensitivity to noise during this period. CNEL, the community equivalent noise level, is similar to DNL but adds an additional 5-dBA “penalty” for night-time noise. Common noise level descriptors are summarized below in [Table 23, Definitions of Acoustical Terms](#).

Human Response to Noise

The human response to environmental noise is subjective and varies considerably from individual to individual. However, certain noise levels can be expected to elicit a response ranging from painfully loud to quiet for most individuals. [Table 24, Typical Noise Levels in the Environment](#), shows noise levels generated by typical noise sources.

Unfortunately, there is no completely satisfactory way to measure the subjective effects of noise or of the corresponding reactions of annoyance and dissatisfaction. This is primarily because of the wide variation in individual thresholds of annoyance and habituation to noise over differing individual experiences with noise. Thus, an important way of determining a person’s subjective reaction to a new noise is the comparison of it to the existing environment to which one has adapted: the so-called “ambient” environment. In general, the more a new noise exceeds the previously existing ambient noise level, the less acceptable the new noise will be judged.

Regarding increases in A-weighted noise levels, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has determined the following relationships that will be helpful in understanding this analysis:

- Except in carefully controlled laboratory experiments, 1-dB change cannot be perceived by humans;
- Outside of the laboratory, a 3-dB change is considered a just-perceivable difference;
- A change in level of at least 5 dB is required before any noticeable change in community response would be expected. An increase of 5 dB is typically considered substantial; and
- A 10-dB change is subjectively heard as an approximate doubling in loudness and would almost certainly cause an adverse change in community response.

Construction Noise

Construction activities generate considerable amounts of noise, especially during earth-moving activities when heavy equipment is used. Hourly average noise levels generated by the construction of residential units typically range from about 65 to 88 dBA Leq measured at a distance of 50 feet, but depend on the number and type of equipment used and the proximity of sensitive receptors. Construction-generated noise levels drop off at a rate of about 6 dBA per doubling of the distance between the source and receptor. Shielding by buildings or terrain often result in lower construction noise levels at distant receptors.

Table 23 Definitions of Acoustical Terms

Term	Definition
Decibel, dB	A unit describing the amplitude of sound, equal to 20 times the logarithm to the base 10 of the ratio of the pressure of the sound measured to the reference pressure.
Frequency, Hz	The number of complete pressure fluctuations per second above and below atmospheric pressure. Normal human hearing is between 20 Hz and 20,000 Hz. Infrasonic sounds are below 20 Hz and Ultrasonic sounds are above 20,000 Hz
A-Weighted Sound Level, dBA	The sound pressure level in decibels as measured on a sound level meter using the A-weighting filter network. The A-weighting filter de-emphasizes the very low and very high frequency components of the sound in a manner similar to the frequency response of the human ear and correlates well with subjective reactions to noise.
Equivalent Noise Level, L_{eq}	The average A-weighted noise level during the measurement period.
L_{max} , L_{min}	The maximum and minimum A-weighted noise level during the measurement period.
L_{01} , L_{10} , L_{50} , L_{90}	The A-weighted noise levels that are exceeded one percent, 10 percent, 50 percent, and 90 percent, respectively, of the time during the measurement period.
Day/Night Noise Level, DNL	The average A-weighted noise level during a 24-hour day, obtained after addition of 10 decibels to levels measured in the night between 10:00 pm and 7:00 am.
Community Noise Equivalent Level, CNEL	The average A-weighted noise level during a 24-hour day, obtained after addition of five decibels in the evening from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm and after addition of 10 decibels to sound levels measured in the night between 10:00 pm and 7:00 am.
Ambient Noise Level	The composite of noise from all sources near and far. The normal or existing level of environmental noise at a given location.
Intrusive Noise	That noise which intrudes over and above the existing ambient noise at a given location. The relative intrusiveness of a sound depends on its amplitude, duration, frequency, and time of occurrence, and tonal or information content and prevailing ambient noise levels.

Source: Illingworth and Rodkin 2016

Table 24 Typical Noise Levels in the Environment

Common Outdoor Activities	Noise Level (dBA)	Common Indoor Activities
Jet fly-over at 1,000 feet	110 dBA	Rock band
Gas lawn mower at 3 feet	100 dBA	
Diesel truck at 50 feet at 50 mph	90 dBA	Food blender at 3 feet
Noisy urban area, daytime	80 dBA	Garbage disposal at 3 feet
Gas lawn mower, 100 feet	70 dBA	Vacuum cleaner at 10 feet
Commercial area		Normal speech at 3 feet
Heavy traffic at 300 feet	60 dBA	
Quiet urban daytime	50 dBA	Large business office
Quiet suburban nighttime		Dishwasher in next room
Quiet rural nighttime	30 dBA	Library
		Bedroom at night, concert hall (background)
	20 dBA	
		Broadcast/recording studio
	10 dBA	
	0 dBA	

Source: Illingworth and Rodkin 2016

Vibrational Noise

Ground vibration consists of rapidly fluctuating motions or waves with an average motion of zero. Sources of ground vibration include large trucks and rail operations, and some construction activities such as pile driving and jackhammering. Several different methods are typically used to quantify vibration amplitude. One method is the Peak Particle Velocity (PPV). The PPV is defined as the maximum instantaneous positive or negative peak of the vibration wave. In this report, a PPV descriptor with units of mm/sec or in/sec is used to evaluate construction

generated vibration for building damage and human complaints. [Table 25, Responses to Vibration](#), presents the human response and the structural effects that can result from continuous vibration levels.

The annoyance levels shown above should be interpreted with care since vibration may be found to be annoying at much lower levels than those shown, depending on the level of activity or the sensitivity of the individual. To sensitive individuals, vibrations approaching the threshold of perception can be annoying. Low-level vibrations frequently cause irritating secondary vibration, such as a slight rattling of windows, doors, or stacked dishes. The rattling sound can give rise to exaggerated vibration complaints, even though there is very little risk of actual structural damage.

Construction activities can cause vibration that varies in intensity depending on several factors. The use of pile driving and vibratory compaction equipment typically generates the highest construction related groundborne vibration levels. Because of the impulsive nature of such activities, the use of the PPV descriptor has been routinely used to measure and assess groundborne vibration and almost exclusively to assess the potential of vibration to induce structural damage and the degree of annoyance for humans.

Table 25 Responses to Vibration

Velocity Level, PPV (in/sec)	Human Reaction	Effects on Buildings
0.01	Barely perceptible	No effect
0.04	Distinctly perceptible	Vibration unlikely to cause damage of any type to any structure
0.08	Distinctly perceptible to strongly perceptible	Recommended upper level of the vibration to which ruins and ancient monuments should be subjected
0.1	Strongly perceptible	Virtually no risk of damage to normal buildings
0.3	Strongly perceptible to severe	Threshold at which there is a risk of damage to older residential dwellings such as plastered walls or ceilings
0.5	Severe – Vibrations considered unpleasant	Threshold at which there is a risk of damage to newer residential structures

Source: Illingworth and Rodkin 2016

The two primary concerns with construction-induced vibration, the potential to damage a structure and the potential to interfere with the enjoyment of life, are evaluated against different vibration limits. Studies have shown that the threshold of perception for average persons is in the range of 0.008 to 0.012 in/sec PPV. Human perception to vibration varies with the individual and is a function of physical setting and the type of vibration. Persons exposed to elevated ambient vibration levels, such as people in an urban environment, may tolerate a higher vibration level.

Structural damage can be classified as cosmetic only, such as minor cracking of building elements, or may threaten the integrity of the building. Safe vibration limits that can be applied to assess the potential for damaging a structure vary by researcher and there is no general consensus as to what amount of vibration may pose a threat for structural damage to the building. Construction-induced vibration that can be detrimental to the building is very rare and has only been observed in instances where the structure is at a high state of disrepair and the construction activity occurs immediately adjacent to the structure.

Existing Noise Environment

Noise-Sensitive Land Uses. Noise-sensitive land uses generally include those uses where exposure to noise would result in adverse effects, as well as uses where quiet is an essential element of their intended purpose. Noise-sensitive land uses typically include residential uses, hospitals, convalescent facilities, parks, hotels, churches, libraries, and schools.

The project site is undeveloped and therefore does not contain any noise-sensitive land uses. Noise-sensitive land uses nearest to the project site consist of the existing residential uses within the adjoining Cielo Vista neighborhood to the east, and the Valley View Estates neighborhood to the west, across Enterprise Road. Cerra Vista Elementary School is approximately one-quarter-mile north of the project site and would not be noticeably affected by temporary or long term increases in ambient noise levels generated by the proposed project.

Existing Ambient Noise. Existing sources of noise on the site consist of irrigation or mechanical equipment used during agricultural operations. The noise report includes the results of an ambient noise monitoring survey conducted from July 17, 2014 through July 18, 2014, which serves as the basis for quantifying the existing noise environment on the project site and vicinity (Illingworth & Rodkin 2016). The report identifies vehicular traffic along Airline Highway/State Route 25 and Fairview Road, and occasional overhead aircraft associated with nearby airports as the primary source of ambient noise on the site and in the vicinity (p. 10).

Noise levels were monitored at three locations on the project site at long-term noise measurement points designated LT-1, LT-2, and LT-3, as described below. Noise measurement locations are shown on [Figure 13, Noise Measurement Locations](#).



0 1000 ft



Project Site



Long-term sound level measurements

Source: ESRI 2015, Illingworth and Rodkin 2016

Figure 13

Noise Measurement Locations

Roberts Ranch Subdivision EIR



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Long-term noise measurement LT-1 was made in the northeast corner of the intersection of Airline Highway/SR 25 and Enterprise Road. LT-1 was approximately 109 feet from the centerline of Airline Highway/SR 25 and approximately 43 feet from the centerline of Enterprise Road. Hourly average noise levels at this location typically ranged from 64 to 70 dBA Leq during the day, and from 50 to 65 dBA Leq at night. The day-night average noise level from July 17, 2014 through July 18, 2014 was 68 dBA Ldn.

Long-term noise measurement LT-2 was located along the western boundary of the project site, approximately 127 feet north of the centerline of the intersection at Enterprise Road and Mimosa Street. Hourly average noise levels at this location ranged from 34 to 59 dBA Leq during the day and from 36 to 45 dBA Leq at night. The day-night average noise level was 54 dBA Ldn.

The final long-term noise measurement, LT-3, was taken along the eastern boundary of the project site, to the north of an existing single-family residential development. LT-3 was approximately 27 feet west of the centerline of Fairview Road. Hourly average noise levels typically ranged from 65 to 70 dBA Leq during the day, and from 54 to 67 dBA Leq at night. The day-night average noise level from July 17, 2014 through July 18, 2014 was 70 dBA Ldn.

Measured ambient noise values (i.e., Leq, Ldn) are summarized in [Table 26, Existing Ambient Noise Levels on the Project Site](#).

Table 26 Existing Ambient Noise Levels on the Project Site

Site No.	Location	Day Leq (dBA)	Night Leq (dBA)	Ldn (dBA)
LT-1	Northeast corner of the intersection of Airline Highway/SR 25 and Enterprise Rd.	64-70	50-65	68
LT-2	Western boundary of the project site, approximately 127 feet north of the centerline of the intersection at Enterprise Rd and Mimosa St.	34-59	36-45	54
LT-3	Eastern boundary of the project site approximately 27 feet west of the centerline of Fairview Rd and to the north of an existing single-family residential development.	65-70	54-67	70

Source: Illingworth & Rodkin, Inc. 2016

Note: Leq = Average Hourly Noise Level shown as ranges during the day and night, Ldn = Average Day-Night Noise Level

Regulatory Setting

State

California Code of Regulations, Title 24. Title 24 of the State of California Code of Regulations (California Building Code), Ref. (b), uses the noise standard descriptor of the local jurisdiction, in this case the DNL, and specifies that when the exterior noise exposures at the building facades of multi-family housing exceed 60 dB DNL, an acoustical analysis must be performed. The noise analysis must provide the noise mitigation measures necessary to limit the interior noise exposures to 45 dB DNL or lower. Title 24 applies only to multi-family housing.

Local

City of Hollister General Plan. The Health and Safety Element contains goals and policies that establish limits on noise increases and overall noise exposure limits for various land uses based on the Land Use Compatibility Chart contained in the State of California Guidelines for the Preparation of a Noise Element. The land use compatibility chart identifies ranges for “Normally Acceptable,” “Conditionally Acceptable,” “Normally Unacceptable” and “Clearly Unacceptable” noise exposures for various land uses. The Normally Acceptable noise limits for residential land uses are: 60 dB Day-Night Level (DNL) for single-family and 65 dB DNL for multi-family. The noise report (Illingworth and Rodkin 2016) uses the 60 dB DNL and the 65 dB DNL noise limits as criteria for single-family and multi-family residences of the project as the basis for determining noise impacts to the project, as directed by policy HS3.2. Although not specifically stated, the Guidelines refer to applying an interior noise limit of 45 dB DNL to be consistent with the standards of Title 24.

The following City of Hollister general plan goals and policies are relevant to the proposed project regarding noise impacts:

HS3.1 Protection of Residential Areas from Unacceptable Noise Levels. Protect the noise environment in existing residential areas, requiring the evaluation of mitigation measures for projects under the following circumstances: (a) the project would cause the Ldn to increase 3 dB(A) or more; (b) an increase would result in an Ldn greater than 60 dB(A); (c) the Ldn already exceeds 60 dB(A); and (d) the project has the potential to generate significant adverse community response.

HS3.2 Noise Source Control. Work with property owners to control noise at its source, maintaining existing noise levels and ensuring that noise levels do not exceed acceptable noise standards as established in the Noise and Land Use Compatibility Guidelines.

HS3.3 Construction Noise. Regulate construction activity to reduce noise between 7:00 pm and 7:00 am.

HS3.4 Vehicle Noise. Strive to reduce traffic noise levels, especially as they impact residential areas, and continue enforcement of vehicle noise standards through noise readings and enforcement actions. In particular, strive to minimize truck traffic in residential areas and ensure enforcement of Vehicle Code provisions which prohibit alteration of vehicular exhaust systems in a way that increases noise emissions

HS3.6 Noise Standards Enforcement. Administer the policies identified in the Noise Element and comply with State requirements for certain other noise control programs through specific local enforcement programs.

Municipal Code Chapter 8.28 identifies prohibited noise and sets forth provisions for unacceptable noise reporting, abatement, and enforcement.

Standards of Significance

The CEQA Guidelines Appendix G indicate that a project may result in a significant environmental impact if one or more of the following would result from implementation of the proposed project:

- Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies;
- Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels;
- A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project;
- A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project;
- Expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels for a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport; and
- Expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels for a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip.

The noise report used the following criteria to determine whether noise increases or excessive groundborne vibration levels would be treated as “substantial”, which may result in a significant impact.

1. For short-term construction noise impacts, a substantial increase in ambient noise levels would be defined as construction-related hourly average noise levels received at noise-sensitive land uses that last for more than 12 months and: (1) exceed 60 dBA L_{eq} , and (2) increase the without-project ambient noise level by 5 dBA L_{eq} or more. Significant noise impacts could also result from construction if noise levels are sufficiently high to interfere with speech, sleep, or other normal residential activities during the more noise-sensitive evening and nighttime hours (i.e., 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.);
2. For increases in ambient noise levels due to project operations, an impact would occur if a project would cause the L_{dn} to increase 3 dBA or more consistent with Hollister general plan Policy HS3.1;
3. The City of Hollister does not establish an exterior noise threshold for residential outdoor use areas; therefore, the noise and land use compatibility guidelines presented in the County of San Benito’s general plan, which is in accordance with the State of California’s guidelines established in 1976, were used to assess exterior noise impacts at the proposed project site. Noise levels in outdoor use areas that are affected by transportation noise are required to be maintained at or below 60 dBA L_{dn} to be considered “clearly acceptable” for single-family residences, according to the County’s general plan. Noise levels at or below 65 dBA L_{dn} would be considered “normally acceptable.” For purposes of assessing compatibility of proposed land uses with projected noise levels, the project’s impact would be considered substantial if it exceeded a noise compatibility standard of up to 60 dB CNEL/ L_{dn} (“normally acceptable”) for residential uses and parks/playground uses; and,
4. For short-term groundborne vibration impacts, excessive groundborne vibration is defined as vibration levels exceeding 0.3 in/sec PPV which would have the potential to result in cosmetic damage to normal buildings.

Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

Environmental Topics Eliminated from Further Analysis

Section 21002.1.e of the CEQA statute requires an EIR discussion to focus on those potential effects on the environment of a proposed project which the lead agency has determined are or may be significant. Lead agencies may limit discussion on other effects to a brief explanation as to why those effects are not potentially significant.

Airport Noise Exposures. The proposed project is not located within the boundary of the Hollister Municipal Airport Land Use Plan or within two miles of a private airstrip. No impacts would occur and no further analysis of this environmental topic is required.

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation: Exposures to Unacceptable Noise Levels During Construction

The proposed project would generate construction noise that would result in a short-term increase in ambient noise levels, and would expose sensitive receptors to unacceptable noise levels. The nearest sensitive receptors to the project site are the residents within the Cielo Vista and Valley View neighborhoods adjacent to the site. Construction that occurs within 50 feet of adjacent residences could result in exposures to temporary construction noise that exceeds the general plan 60 dBA noise threshold for residential areas.

According to the noise report (Illingworth and Rodkin 2016, pp. 23-24), the highest maximum noise levels generated by project construction would range from about 90 to 95 dBA at a distance of 50 feet from the source. Hourly average construction-generated noise levels would be about 81 to 88 dBA measured at a distance of 50 feet from the center of the site during busy construction periods (e.g., earth moving equipment, impact tools, etc.). The noise report further states that construction activities on the site may be continuous over four phases consisting of two-year construction periods, during which adjacent residences may be exposed to construction noise. However, once construction activities move indoors, minimal noise would be experienced at off site locations.

The proposed project is subject to compliance with general plan policy HS3.3, which regulates construction activities between 7:00 pm and 7:00 am. Limiting construction activities within this time period would reduce exposures to unacceptable construction noise, but not to a less than significant level. The noise report includes recommendations, incorporated below into Mitigation Measure N-1, which reduce the project's construction noise impacts to a less-than-significant level. Implementation of Mitigation Measure N-1 would reduce construction-related noise levels and would reduce the temporary construction noise impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure

N-1. The following measures shall be incorporated into all bid and construction documents prior to issuance of any permit and shall be implemented by the project developer during construction:

- a. All construction equipment shall be properly maintained and equipped with intake and exhaust mufflers that are in good condition and recommended by the vehicle manufacturer.
- b. Unnecessary idling of internal combustion engines shall be strictly prohibited.
- c. Wheeled earth moving equipment shall be used rather than track equipment.
- d. A detailed construction plan shall be prepared and submitted with the grading and improvement plans identifying the schedule for major noise-generating construction activities. The construction plan shall identify a procedure for coordination with adjacent residential land uses so that construction activities can be scheduled to minimize noise disturbance.
- e. A noise disturbance coordinator shall be designated to handle complaints and the site shall be posted with a phone number and email address so that the nearby residents have a contact person in case of a noise problem.
- f. Vehicle routes clean and smooth both on site and off site to minimize noise and vibration from vehicles rolling over rough surfaces.
- g. Nail guns shall be used where possible as they are less noisy than manual hammering.
- h. Stationary equipment, such as compressor and generators shall be housed in acoustical enclosures and placed as far from sensitive receptors as feasible.
- i. Utilize “quiet” air compressors and other stationary noise sources where technology exists.
- j. Control noise from construction workers’ radios to a point where they are not audible at existing residences bordering the project site.
- k. Restrict noise-generating activities at the construction site or in areas adjacent to the construction site to the hours of 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM Monday through Friday and 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM on Saturday. Construction-related noise-generating activities shall be prohibited on Sundays.

Less than Significant Impact - Groundborne Vibration during Construction Activities

Although the proposed project is not located in proximity to sources of groundborne vibration such as trains or high-volume freeways with large volumes of truck traffic, and construction of the proposed project would not require the use of pile driving for foundations and infrastructure

improvements, certain site preparation activities will require the use of heavy equipment or impact tools (e.g. jackhammers, bulldozers) that can generate perceptible ground-borne vibration or vibration noise. Grading and infrastructure construction activities on the project site will involve heavy equipment that could expose sensitive receptors to ground-borne vibration.

To avoid structural damage to buildings, the California Department of Transportation recommends a vibration limit of 0.5 in/sec PPV for buildings structurally sound and designed to modern engineering standards, and 0.3 in/sec PPV for buildings that are found to be structurally sound but where structural damage is a major concern. Vibration levels vary depending on soil conditions, construction methods, and equipment used. Vibration levels in PPV generated by typical construction equipment at a distance of 25 feet are identified in the noise report Table 5 (p. 21). Adjacent single-family residences range from 27 to 309 feet from the project site. The noise report concludes that at these distances, vibration levels generated by construction equipment would be expected to be 0.2 in/sec PPV or less, which is below the 0.3 in/sec PPV significance threshold for buildings, but would be perceptible to the closest residences. Although the proposed project would not exceed the vibration standard and no impact to buildings would occur, nearby residents could be exposed to periodic and temporary vibration during construction. This is a less-than-significant temporary impact. No mitigation is required; however, implementation of Mitigation Measure N-1, which restricts hours of operation and locations of equipment further reduce exposures to vibration noise during construction.

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation: Increase of 3dBA in Ambient Noise Levels along Portions of Enterprise Road

The proposed project would create new sources of noise on the site, which would result in a permanent noise level increase ranging from 2 to 4 dBA Ldn at the existing residential land uses along Enterprise Road. The general plan policy HS3.1 requires the protection of residential areas from unacceptable noise levels and requires evaluation of mitigation measures when a project would cause an increase of 3 dBA; cause an increase in ambient noise levels that exceed 60 dBA; cause a perceptible increase in noise where existing ambient noise levels already exceed 60 dBA; or when a project has the potential to generate significant adverse community response. The noise report measures the change in ambient noise levels by measuring the existing noise levels and applying peak hour traffic volumes provided by the traffic consultant (see Section 3.16, Traffic and Circulation) for existing and future traffic levels. Noise levels were predicted in the noise report using the Federal Highway Administration's Traffic Noise Model, version 2.5. N.

A comparison between existing ambient noise and ambient noise levels with the proposed project are presented in [Table 27, Ambient Noise Levels With and Without the Project](#).

Table 27 Ambient Noise Levels With and Without the Project.

Roadway Segment	Existing Noise Levels	Existing Plus Project Noise Levels	Noise Level Change
State Route 25	60-61 dBA Ldn	61-62 dBA Ldn	1 dBA
Fairview Road, North of State Route 25	58-59 dBA Ldn	58-59 dBA Ldn	0 dBA
Enterprise Road, Between State Route 25 and Glenview Drive	55-57 dBA Ldn	57-59 dBA Ldn	2 dBA
Enterprise Road, Between Glenview Drive and Mimosa Street	54-55 dBA Ldn	57-58 dBA Ldn	3 dBA

Source: Illingworth and Rodkin 2016, Table 7.

The noise report identified traffic-related noise increases along Enterprise Road that would affect existing residences that adjoin the roadway within the Valley View neighborhood. The existing residences with backyards facing Enterprise Road, to the west of the project site, would be most affected by the proposed project, receiving noise level increases of up to 3 dBA Ldn, which is a significant impact. Although six-foot sound walls are present between the residences and Enterprise Road, and the acoustical modeling found that the increase in ambient noise levels would not exceed the general plan threshold of 60 dBA for residential uses (Illingworth and Rodkin 2016, pp. 21-22), mitigation is necessary to reduce the increase in noise level increase to less than 3 dBA in this location to meet the general plan standard. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce project-related noise increases along Enterprise Road to less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

N-2. Prior to issuance of building permits, the applicant shall demonstrate that one or more of the following noise reduction measures have been incorporated into the project to ensure that project-related mobile source noise level increases are less than 3 dBA at existing residences along Enterprise Road between State Route 25 and Glenview Drive. Measures necessary to reduce the increase in noise levels include but are not limited to one or more of the following items:

1. Larger noise barriers or other noise reduction techniques could be constructed to protect existing residential land uses where reasonable and feasible. The necessary height and final design of new or modified sound barriers shall be included with the improvement plans for the proposed project and are subject to the review and approval of the Planning Director;

2. As part of the required improvements to Enterprise Road, alternative noise reduction techniques including traffic calming measures such as speed bumps and/or re-paving streets with "quieter" pavement types including Open-Grade Rubberized Asphaltic Concrete, which can reduce noise levels by 2 to 5 dBA, depending on the existing pavement type, traffic speed, traffic volumes, and other factors.
3. Other measures demonstrated by the applicant to the satisfaction of the Planning Director that achieve measurable, validated noise reductions, such as a program to provide building sound insulation, such as sound-rated windows and doors, on a case-by-case basis, as a method of reducing noise levels in interior spaces to affected residences;

To demonstrate compliance with this mitigation measure, the applicant shall prepare a noise reduction plan that specifies the measure(s) to be incorporated into the project and includes detailed calculations of acoustical noise level reductions to be achieved through the measure(s). The noise reduction plan shall be submitted with the improvement plans and is subject to review by the Planning Director for conformance with this mitigation measure.

Implementation of mitigation measure N-2 would reduce projected noise levels and would reduce the impact to less than significant.

Less than Significant Impact: Increase in Ambient Noise Levels Where Existing Noise Levels are Greater than 60 dBA along State Route 25

Noise from project-generated traffic will result in a one dBA increase along State Route 25 and no measurable increase along Fairview Road when compared to the existing noise environment. Noise levels in the backyards of existing residences in the Valley View Neighborhood west of the project site along State Route 25 would be exposed to the increase in noise due to their proximity to the roadway and despite the presence of sound walls. To the east, existing sound walls for the Cielo Vista residences are located at least 100 feet from the centerline of State Route 25, and residents of this neighborhood would not be affected by the one dBA increase in noise levels on the highway (Carrie Janello, pers. com. October 13, 2016). The traffic report states that, except in carefully controlled laboratory experiments, a one decibel change in sound levels cannot be perceived by humans (Illingworth and Rodkin 2016). Although existing ambient noise levels are greater than 60 dBA Ldn along Airline Highway west of the project site, only an increase of 3 dBA would be perceptible at the affected residences, which would require mitigation consistent with general plan Policy HS3.1 (Abraham Prado, pers. com. October 24, 2016). Since the increase in noise levels is one decibel and not perceptible to humans, the impact is less than significant.

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation: Compatibility of Proposed Land Uses with Projected Exterior and Interior Noise Levels

The City of Hollister general plan specifies land use compatibility guidelines for residential land uses and identifies the “Normally Acceptable” exterior noise exposure standard as 60 dB DNL. Although not specifically stated, the city’s general plan guidelines refer to applying an interior noise limit of 45 dB DNL to be consistent with the standards of Title 24.

Modeling conducted as part of the noise report found that the proposed project would generate traffic that would cause unacceptable noise levels on parcels adjoining State Route 25, Enterprise Road, and Fairview Road. The proposed project includes the provision of eight-foot tall sound walls on parcels adjoining Fairview Road and State Route 25, but none on Enterprise Road.

As identified in the noise report the calculated worst-case exterior noise levels without the proposed sound walls would exceed the city’s single-family residential 60 dBA day and night community noise level threshold along these roadways. This is a significant, adverse environmental impact. The proposed eight-foot tall sound walls along Fairview Road and State Route 25 would reduce noise levels on these parcels to less than 60 dBA for outdoor areas (Illingworth and Rodkin 2016, pp. 15-16). Implementation of the following mitigation measures would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measures

N-3. For the lots abutting Enterprise Road, the project developer shall ensure that exterior noise levels are reduced to 60 dBA or less by incorporating an eight-foot tall sound wall along the first two lots north of State Route 25 and a six-foot tall sound wall along the remaining lots to Mimosa Street. The developer may choose to install the sound wall utilizing the construction of traditional noise barriers or earth berms, or in combination of the above. The sound wall shall be free of cracks or gaps over the face and at the base of the barrier and shall be constructed from materials with a minimum surface weight of 3 lbs./ft.². The construction of each barrier is required at or near the property line for the residential properties. The sound wall design is subject to the review and approval of the City Engineer prior to issuance of any building permits along Enterprise Road.

In addition to the identified attenuation for exterior noise levels, the noise report also includes recommendations to ensure future interior noise levels are reduced to at or below 45 dBA for lots abutting Enterprise Road, Fairview Road, and State Route 25. These design criteria are included in Mitigation Measure N-3, below. Implementation of Mitigation Measure N-3 would reduce on-site exposure to unacceptable interior noise to less than significant.

N-4. Prior to submittal of improvement plans for lots abutting Fairview Road, State Route 25, and Enterprise Road, the building designs shall include noise-reducing construction methods and building facade treatments identified by a qualified acoustical consultant at the developers expense to ensure that noise levels in the proposed residential interiors are 45 dBA or less. These treatments may include, but are not limited to, sound rated windows and doors, sound rated wall constructions, acoustical caulking, protected ventilation openings, etc. Building sound insulation requirements may also need to include forced-air mechanical ventilation for all perimeter residential structures, so the windows could be kept closed at the occupant's discretion to control noise. The determination of necessary and specific noise insulation treatments shall be determined by the acoustical consultant. Results of the analysis, including the description of the necessary noise control treatments, shall be submitted with the building plans and approved design, and is subject to approval by the building inspector prior to issuance of a building permit.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure N-2 ensures that interior noise levels would meet or fall below the 45 dBA interior noise threshold for the new residences located near sources of unacceptable noise and the impact would be less than significant.

3.12 PARKS AND RECREATION

This section of the Draft EIR addresses existing park and recreational facilities within San Benito County and the City of Hollister, as well as planned park facilities within the Roberts Ranch Subdivision project. The project's potentially significant impacts related to existing park and recreational facilities, as well as any significant impacts resulting from the future construction and use of proposed facilities within the project, are evaluated and feasible mitigation measures are included, where applicable. Unless otherwise noted, the analysis in this section is based upon information from the city's general plan (2005a) and general plan EIR (2005b), the City of Hollister Park Facility Master Plan (2002), and other technical documents and information provided in the project application materials.

The Hollister School District submitted comments on both city and county NOPs. The district requested that the City of Hollister acknowledge the need to designate land for green space and school sites to serve the community in the immediate area of the project site and within future residential developments throughout the city. Comments on the county's NOP were also received from San Benito County LAFCO, related to the appropriate municipal provision of public services for the proposed linear park and dedication of land for Valley View Park, as well as for public pedestrian and bikeways on the site. Other comments on the city and county NOPs were received from multiple residents of the adjacent Cielo Vista and Valley View neighborhoods, and from the Cielo Vista Homeowners' Association. The comments identified

concerns of impacts to Valley View Park including adequate parking, increased traffic congestion and increased nuisances, such as noise and vandalism, related to an expanded park. Traffic impacts are addressed in Section 3.16, Traffic and Transportation, and noise impacts are addressed in Section 3.11, Noise. Vandalism is not an environmental issue and therefore, is not addressed in this EIR.

The Hollister NOP and comment letters are included in [Appendix A](#). The county NOP and comments on the former project are included in [Appendix B](#).

Environmental Setting

The city maintains nine public park facilities within its jurisdictional limits to serve the needs of city residents. Parks that are located on or adjacent to school facilities are maintained by the Hollister School District. Maintenance of all other city parks and recreational facilities, as well as over 9,000 street trees, all public medians, city buildings and greenways, is provided by the Hollister Community Services Department, Division of Parks. Staffing includes full-time and seasonal employees.

Valley View Park is located in the Valley View neighborhood and adjoins the northwest corner of the project site. The park consists of turf and playground facilities, as well as picnic tables and a water-spraying play structure. The general plan land use designation for the northwestern corner of the project site is “Public”, and this portion of the project site is identified in the City of Hollister Park Facility Master Plan (2002) as a potential opportunity for expanding the existing Valley View Park.

San Benito County also provides regional park and recreational facilities. The principal county-operated park in the project vicinity is the 35-acre Veterans Memorial Park, located approximately 1.5 miles from the project site at Hillcrest Road and Memorial Drive. This park includes a tot-lot, lighted baseball and softball fields, basketball courts, soccer fields, and picnic areas.

Other public recreational areas of regional importance include Pinnacles National Park (approximately 26 miles south of the project site), Fremont Peak State Park (approximately 22 miles southwest of the project site), Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area (approximately nine miles southwest of the project site), and Bolado Park (approximately five miles southeast of the project site). Bolado Park is operated by the State of California 33rd Agricultural District and includes the San Benito County Fairgrounds and a nine-hole golf course. The County Historical Park is located adjacent to Bolado Park.

Regulatory Setting

Hollister General Plan

The following policies and implementing actions of the general plan are applicable to the proposed project.

Policies

LU2.2 Fiscally Sound Development. Evaluate the fiscal impact of projects as part of the development review process to assure that new development does not reduce standards or unduly increase the burden on existing residents.

CSF1.1 Adequate Capabilities and Capacity of Local Public Services. Ensure that future growth does not exceed the capabilities and capacity of local public services such as wastewater collection and treatment, local water supply systems, fire and police protection, maintenance of streets and roads, local school systems, parks and recreational facilities, and landfill capacity, and ensure that public services meet Federal and State standards and are available in a timely fashion.

CSF1.2 New Development Requirements for Public Services. Require new development applications to identify the impacts that the proposed development would have on the provision of public services, and approve those applications that can mitigate impacts or contribute a proportional fair share so that local public services can be maintained at an acceptable level.

CSF1.3 Performance Standards. Require all applicants proposing development projects within the Hollister Planning Area to meet performance standards for community services and facilities to be established in the Performance Standards Ordinance. Once adopted, require applications for new development to provide evidence that such development will meet all performance standards prior to approval, as provided by the Performance Standards Ordinance.

CSF1.4 Coordinate Facilities and Services Planning. Cooperate and coordinate with the County of San Benito, LAFCO and other local agencies in the provision of infrastructure and services within the Hollister Planning Area.

CSF1.7.3 Development Review Criteria for Public Services. Prior to granting approval, evaluate each new development in terms of whether the proposed development be located within the existing service areas of local service providers (fire protection, police protection, solid waste disposal, schools, etc.), and not result in a reduction in their current capabilities.

CSF4.4 Park and Recreation Standards. Provide for high-quality neighborhood and community parks to meet the recreational, open space, leisure and play needs and desire of existing and future residents. Coordinate efforts with the County of San Benito to provide an average of four acres of developed parks and recreational facilities for every 1,000 residents within the Hollister Planning Area.

Implementing Actions

CSF.D.5 Adopt a performance standards ordinance. Adopt a Performance Standards Ordinance that will include specific requirements that will be applied to all proposed development projects. As part of the ordinance, establish procedures for the review and referral of applications. The proposed development will either result in no impact on local parks and recreational facilities or the applicant will provide the resources required to mitigate the impacts associated with the proposed development.

City of Hollister Park Facilities Master Plan

The following Park Facilities Master Plan policies and corresponding implementing actions are relevant to the proposed project.

Policy 1.1–Parkland Requirements. Encourage a parkland provision standard of four acres of public park space per 1,000 residents for residential development projects.

Policy 1.2–Mini-Parks. The development of additional mini-parks within Hollister shall be discouraged. The City shall not accept any offers for dedication of parklands of less than 3 acres in size, unless location is appropriate to expand the site through acquisition, to a full neighborhood park.

Policy 1.3–Neighborhood Parks. Larger neighborhood parks (3-5 acres+) shall be developed based on the standards established in this Plan as new residential areas develop.

Policy 2.2–New Neighborhood Parks in Future Residential Areas. New neighborhood parks shall be acquired and developed in locations within and accessible to those portions of the community which receive new residential growth. Neighborhood parks should ideally serve 3,000–5,000 residents within a 1/2 mile radius.

Hollister Municipal Code

Hollister Municipal Code Section 16.16.030 requires the provision of adequate open space to maintain residential densities for phased development. Facilities and amenities shall be included with the initial increment or increments to insure an appropriate environmental quality even if subsequent increments are not developed.

Hollister Municipal Code Chapter 16.55, Park and Recreation Area Dedication and Fees, requires land dedication, payment of fees in lieu of dedicating land, or a combination of both, at the option of the city, for park or recreation purposes as a condition of approval of a final map. Parks or “recreation purposes” include neighborhood parks, community parks, and open space in accord with the principles and standards of the Hollister general plan and the Hollister park facility master plan, and the land, fees, or combination thereof are to be used only for the purpose of acquiring land and developing new or rehabilitating existing neighborhood or community parks or recreational facilities, including open space, to serve the subdivision. The chapter also provides a formula for calculating required land dedications based on the type of residential development and the parkland standard. The amount of land required for single-family residential development is 0.01408 acres per unit. The amount of land required for multifamily residential development is 0.01380 acres per unit.

Standards of Significance

CEQA Guidelines Appendix G indicates that a project may have a significant effect on the environment if it would:

- Require new or altered park facilities or services, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios or other performance objectives;
- Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated; or

- Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation

Environmental Topics Eliminated from Further Analysis

Section 21002.1.e of the CEQA statute requires an EIR discussion to focus on those potential effects on the environment of a proposed project which the lead agency has determined are or may be significant. Lead agencies may limit discussion on other effects to a brief explanation as to why those effects are not potentially significant.

Increased Demand that Requires Construction of New or Expanded Parks and Recreational Service Facilities Outside of the Proposed Project. Development of the project site would include the construction of 227 new residences providing housing for an estimated 788 persons (Department of Finance 2016b), which would increase the demand for park and recreational facilities. These residents would be expected to utilize federal, state, regional and city parks in the Hollister area. The project contribution to cumulative demand for nearby regional, state or federal parks is discussed in Section 4.1, Cumulative Impacts.

Impacts to the city's parks and recreational facilities resulting from implementation of the Hollister general plan were addressed in the general plan EIR, which did not identify significant impacts that could not be mitigated to a less than significant level by the implementation of general plan policies. The proposed project is consistent with the general plan Low-density Residential land use designation for the site and related demand for parks and recreation facilities is included in the general plan EIR analysis. The proposed project would not result in a greater demand than evaluated in the general plan EIR.

The proposed project is subject to compliance with the parkland provisions of the general plan policies, programs, and municipal code. The general plan requires the provision of four acres of public parkland for each 1,000 persons served; 3.15 acres is needed to serve the project population. Per the parkland dedication formula set forth in the Hollister Municipal Code Chapter 16.55, the amount of land required for single-family residential development is 0.01408 acres x 192 single-family residential units and 0.01380 x 35 multifamily units for a total of 2.75 acres.

The proposed project includes dedication of 2.54 acres of land adjoining the existing Valley View Park, to be improved by developers of the project site. The proposed project also includes a 40 foot-wide linear park (totaling 0.79 acres) along the north side of Mimosa Street that would connect the expanded Valley View Park to the approved West of Fairview project north of the site. The linear park would be landscaped and improved with a meandering path for bicycles and

pedestrians. Together, the parkland dedication and linear park consist of 3.33 acres, which is greater than the amount of public parkland required by the general plan and municipal code. The 2.54-acres of land to be dedicated for park uses is in an appropriate location to expand Valley View Park as a neighborhood park consistent with the city's parks and recreation facilities master plan. The proposed project also includes several easement areas that would enable the installation of public pedestrian and bicycle connections to Fairview Road and to the gated Cielo Vista residential neighborhood to the east (refer to Figure 5, Vesting Tentative Map).

Parkland dedications may be exchanged for credits against park in-lieu fees which would otherwise be payable pursuant to the Municipal Code Chapter 16.55 ("Park and Recreation Area Dedication and Fees"). In addition, the developer of the proposed residential uses is would improve the 2.54-acre Valley View Park extension with facilities identified by the city and in conformance with Hollister Municipal Code Section 16.16.030. City staff indicate that improvements to the land dedicated for the extension of the park would consist of landscaping, walking trails, bike paths, ball fields and courts, similar to the concept plan for the park identified in the Park facilities Master Plan (2002), and would also include a public restroom (Rubcic, pers. com. June 8, 2016).

Park and recreational facilities are therefore, not required outside of what is being provided in the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project would not increase demand that requires construction of new or expanded parks and recreational service facilities outside of the proposed project.

Less than Significant Impact: Increased Use of Valley View Park that Could Cause Substantial Physical Deterioration of the Facility

Development of residential uses would place new residents in proximity to Valley View Park, which contains playgrounds, picnic tables, and a popular water-spraying feature. There are no public bathrooms on the site. The proposed project would place residential uses in proximity to the existing park and an increase in use of the park facilities by these residents may result in an increase in noise, traffic, parking demand, and incidences of vandalism. These concerns were raised in the comments on the city and county NOPs. As noted above, the proposed project would dedicate 2.54 acres to the city to increase the size of the existing park to a neighborhood park facility, consistent with the city's Park Facilities Master Plan (2002). As shown on the vesting tentative map (Figure 6), the land dedicated for the park is contiguous with the existing park and is adjoined by the proposed Mimosa Avenue. Developers of the project site would construct new recreational facilities on the land dedicated to the city and a bathroom in the park in conformance to Hollister Municipal Code Section 16.16.030. Specific facilities improvements to the park extension would be determined by the city; however, as noted in the previous discussion, improvements would be limited to irrigated but informal turf playfields, landscaping, walking trails, bike paths, and picnic areas similar to the family-oriented neighborhood parks called for in the city's Park Facilities Master Plan (2002).

According to city staff park facility improvements would not include permanent features such as backstops, goal nets, storage lockers, or other facilities that are typically needed for organized recreational sports (Rubcic, Pers. Com. June 8, 2016). Night lighting would consist of only that necessary for security purposes, and would be consistent with municipal code requirements (refer to Section 3.1, Aesthetics). As such, traffic and noise and parking impacts associated with organized sports leagues activities would not occur on the park site. The proposed project is consistent with the Park Facilities Master Plan and is subject to the payment of applicable development impact fees as noted above. No mitigation is required.

3.13 POLICE SERVICES

The discussion in this section is based upon information contained in the city's general plan and general plan EIR, and supplemented by correspondence with police services personnel.

Several comments on the city and county NOPs regarding impacts to police services were received from multiple residents of the adjacent Cielo Vista and Valley View neighborhoods as well as the Cielo Vista Homeowners' Association. The Hollister NOP and comment letters are included in [Appendix A](#). The county NOP and comments on the former project are included in [Appendix B](#).

Environmental Setting

Police protection within the Hollister area is the responsibility of the Hollister Police Department within the city limits, and the San Benito County Sheriff's Department in the unincorporated areas of the county. The police department business office is located at 395 Apollo Way. According to the police chief, the existing facility was designed to accommodate staff levels to serve the city's population under buildout conditions of the general plan (David Westrick, email correspondence, January 6, 2016). The Sheriff's department is headquartered at 2301 Technology Parkway. The project site is contiguous to the city limits, which is the service area of the police department. Once annexed to the city, law enforcement at the site would be provided by the police department.

According to the police chief, the staffing standard for the department follows the California state average of 1.7 sworn officers per 1,000 residents. If fully staffed to this standard, the department would employ 63-64 sworn officers based on a total population of 37,305 people (Department of Finance 2016a). However, the department funds positions for only 26 sworn police officers and eight non-sworn personnel as well as one recruit undergoing police academy training (David Westrick, email correspondence, January 6, 2016). Three sworn officer positions are unfilled. This equates to approximately 0.70 police officers per 1,000 residents based on a

total population of 37,305 people (Department of Finance 2016a). When fully staffed, the department provides 0.77 officers per 1,000 residents, which is significantly less than the stated standard.

Regulatory Setting

Hollister General Plan

The following general plan policies and implementing actions are applicable to the proposed project.

Policies

LU2.2 Fiscally Sound Development. Evaluate the fiscal impact of projects as part of the development review process to assure that new development does not reduce standards or unduly increase the burden on existing residents.

CSF1.1 Adequate Capabilities and Capacity of Local Public Services. Ensure that future growth does not exceed the capabilities and capacity of local public services such as wastewater collection and treatment, local water supply systems, fire and police protection, maintenance of streets and roads, local school systems, parks and recreational facilities, and landfill capacity, and ensure that public services meet Federal and State standards and are available in a timely fashion.

CSF1.2 New Development Requirements for Public Services. Require new development applications to identify the impacts that the proposed development would have on the provision of public services, and approve those applications that can mitigate impacts or contribute a proportional fair share so that local public services can be maintained at an acceptable level.

CSF1.3 Performance Standards. Require all applicants proposing development projects within the Hollister Planning Area to meet performance standards for community services and facilities to be established in the Performance Standards Ordinance. Once adopted, require applications for new development to provide evidence that such development will meet all performance standards prior to approval, as provided by the Performance Standards Ordinance.

CSF1.4 Coordinate Facilities and Services Planning. Cooperate and coordinate with the County of San Benito, LAFCO and other local agencies in the provision of infrastructure and services within the Hollister Planning Area.

CSF1.6 Other Infrastructure Planning. Require the preparation of infrastructure master plans in areas outside the designated Sphere of Influence as a prerequisite to annexation. Such plans shall contain, but not be limited to, plans for sewer services, water service, storm drainage, traffic circulation, recreation facilities, school facilities and funding alternatives for police and fire services.

CSF1.7.3 Development Review Criteria for Public Services. Prior to granting approval, evaluate each new development in terms of whether the proposed development be located within the existing service areas of local service providers (fire protection, police protection, solid waste disposal, schools, etc.), and not result in a reduction in their current capabilities.

CSF4.7 Police Services. Ensure that development within the Hollister Planning Area does not exceed the capability of the Hollister Police Department and the San Benito County Sheriff's Department to provide an adequate level of police protection.

Implementing Actions

CSF.D.4 Adopt a performance standards ordinance. As part of the ordinance, establish procedures for the review and referral of applications to ensure that an adequate level of police protection can be provided for the proposed development.

Hollister Municipal Code

Municipal Code Chapter 3.16, Police and Fire Protection Impact Fees, sets forth provisions for police protection impact fees used to offset the costs of additional manpower and equipment demands due to the development and growth of new residential areas. Fees are set by the City Council resolution and payment is required prior to the issuance of a building permit or the filing of a parcel or final map, whichever occurs first. Revenues are dedicated for the hiring of new personnel and procurement of equipment associated with new personnel.

Standards of Significance

Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines indicates that a project may result in a significant effect on the environment if the project would result in new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts.

Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation

Environmental Topics Eliminated from Further Discussion

Increased Demands for Hollister Law Enforcement Services that Would Require Construction of New or Expanded Facilities. Development of the project site would include the construction of 227 new residences providing housing for an estimated 788 persons based on an average of 3.47 persons per household (Department of Finance 2016b). Applying the optimal service standard ratio (1.7 officers per 1,000 residents) to the estimated number of new residents, this population increase could result in the need for one to two additional officers. As noted previously, annexation and development of the site would not create the need for new or physically altered police facilities (David Westrick, email correspondence, January 6, 2016). Therefore, no impacts from facilities construction would result from the project's increased demand for services. No further discussion of this topic is required.

The following information is provided for informational purposes. According to the application materials provided by the applicant, funding for the proposed project's incremental increase in demand for police services would be provided through a Mello-Roos Community Facilities public safety tax. Per Municipal Code Chapter 3.16, project-related incremental increases in capital equipment needs would be financed through police impact fees collected at the time of building permit issuance or filing of the final map. The purpose of the city's development impact fees is to mitigate the cumulative effect on police facilities from build-out of the general plan, which are discussed in Section 4.1, Cumulative Impacts. The proposed project is consistent with the general plan Low Density Residential land use designation and subject to compliance with general plan policies and programs. Developers of the project site would be required to pay the applicable law enforcement impact fee for the proposed project.

3.14 SCHOOLS

Unless otherwise noted the discussion in this section is based upon information contained in the city's general plan and general plan EIR, and information obtained from the Hollister School District and San Benito High School District.

The Hollister School District commented on the city and county NOPs and identified potential impacts related to future needs for school facilities to serve the growing community in light of the proposed project and other pending and future residential developments. Other comments on the city and county NOPs were received from the Cielo Vista Homeowners' Association and multiple residents of the adjacent Cielo Vista and Valley View neighborhoods. The comments raised concerns regarding school capacity to accommodate existing and future school children including those generated by the proposed project and other approved or pending residential projects.

Cumulative impacts to schools are discussed in Section 4.1, Cumulative Impacts. The Hollister NOP and comment letters are included in [Appendix A](#). The county's NOP and comments on the former project are included in [Appendix B](#).

Environmental Setting

The project would be served by two school districts: the Hollister School District for students in grades kindergarten through eighth grade and the San Benito High School District for students in grades nine through 12.

The Hollister School District serves a student population of about 5,500 students and operates a total of eight elementary schools within six elementary school campuses, and two middle schools. The elementary schools include two magnet schools located within the Gabilan Hills Elementary School and Ladd Lane Elementary School campuses. Of the six non-magnet elementary schools, five serve students in grades kindergarten through fifth, and one serves grades kindergarten through eighth. The magnet schools include a Dual Language Immersion Academy (grades kindergarten through sixth, Spanish/English), and an Accelerated Achievement Academy (grades fourth through eighth). One of the middle schools, Marguerite Maze Middle School, serves grades sixth through eighth; the other middle school, Rancho San Justo Middle School, serves grades seventh and eighth. The Hollister School District employs more than 560 staff members, including certificated and classified employees, substitutes and others (Hollister School District 2014). The San Benito High School District has one school, San Benito High School, and employed 121 teachers in the 2014-15 school year (California Department of Education 2016). In the 2014-2015 school year enrollment at the high school was reported as 2,877 students, which was about one percent over current facility capacity (San Benito High School District 2016).

[Table 28, School District Facility Enrollment and Average Student Capacity \(2014-2015\)](#), presents current school enrollment and capacity for the school year for the facilities that would serve school-aged children generated by the proposed project.

Table 28 Hollister School District and San Benito High School Facility Enrollment and Capacity, School Year (2014-2015)

School	Existing Enrollment	Average Student Capacity	Percent of Capacity
<i>Hollister School District</i>			
Cerra Vista Elementary (K-5)	625	900 ¹	69
Ladd Lane Elementary (K-5)	617	900 ¹	69
Sunnyslope Elementary (K-5)	649	900 ¹	72
Marguerite Maze Middle School (6-8)	779	1,075	73
Rancho San Justo Middle School (7-8)	862	1,050	82
<i>San Benito High School District</i>			
San Benito High School (9-12)	2,877	2,853	101

Source: Hollister School District (2015), San Benito High School District (2015), California Department of Education (2016)

Note: 1. Cerra Vista, Ladd Lane, and Sunnyslope elementary schools use a general school district capacity goal of under 900 students (John Tehila, e-mail communication, February 3, 2016).

The closest public elementary school to the project site is Cerra Vista Elementary School located at 2151 Cerra Vista Drive approximately one mile northwest of the site. Ladd Lane Elementary School is located at 161 Ladd Lane approximately 1.5 miles northwest of the project site and Sunnyslope Elementary School is located at 1475 Memorial Drive approximately two miles north of the project site. San Benito High School is located at 1220 Monterey Street in Hollister, approximately 2.5 miles south of the project site. The Hollister School District is currently planning a K-8 school within the Santana Ranch master planned community east of Fairview Road. [Figure 14, Public Schools in Proximity to the Project Site](#), illustrates the locations of these existing schools and the planned school in relation to the project site.

Regulatory Setting

State

School Facilities Act of 1998. The School Facilities Act of 1998, also known as SB 50, provides state funding for new school construction projects that can satisfy criteria for such funding, including eligibility due to growth, Division of State Architect plan approval, and California Department of Education site approval. However, SB 50 limits the maximum amount of impact fees that can be charged by school districts or imposed by local jurisdictions as mitigation for

school impacts resulting from new residential, commercial, and industrial development. It also prohibits local agencies from denying a development application on the basis of the applicant's refusal to provide school facilities mitigation that exceeds the fee amount and prohibits local agencies from refusing to approve any legislative or adjudicative act on the basis that school facilities are inadequate.

Local

Hollister School District. The Hollister School District updated its facilities master plan in 2014. The Hollister School District 2014 Facilities Master Plan Update assesses current and future enrollment to define and prioritize facility needs through 2023. The plan also forecasts conceptual needs for facilities further into the future, at the Hollister community's full build out. According to the plan, portable classrooms have been, and will continue to be, utilized for short and mid-term capacity planning although modernization of existing school sites is an identified priority. The district's long-term goal, as funds are obtained, is to replace all portable classrooms with permanent classroom construction.

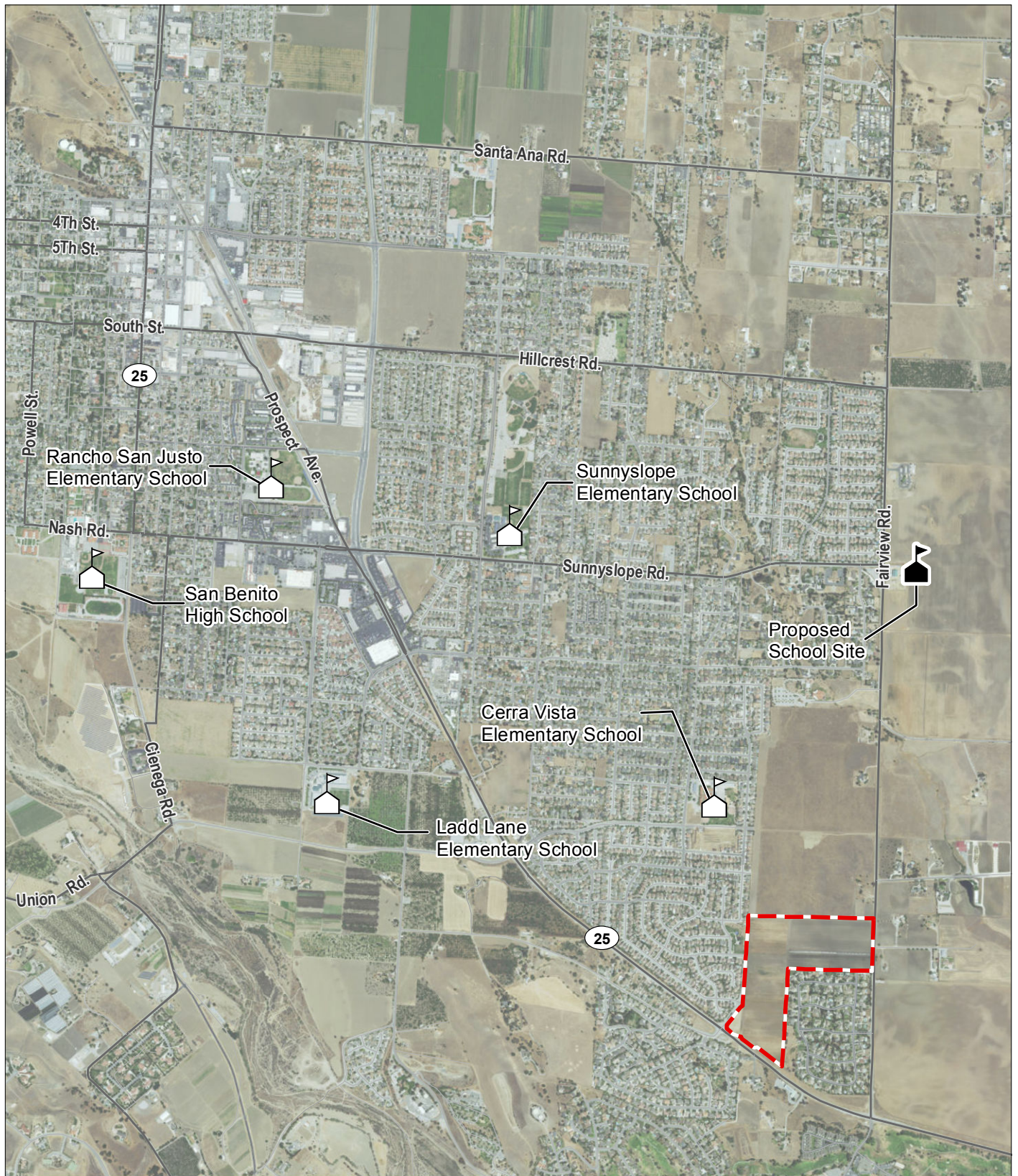
San Benito High School District. In June of 2014, voters in the San Benito High School District approved bond Measure G to fund needed facility upgrades and new construction to the high school facility, including the renovation, reconfiguration of existing classrooms, and addition of new classrooms to accommodate capacity needs.

Hollister General Plan. The following general plan policies are relevant to the discussion of environmental impacts to school facilities.

CSF1.1 Adequate Capabilities and Capacity of Local Public Services.

Ensure that future growth does not exceed the capabilities and capacity of local public services such as wastewater collection and treatment, local water supply systems, fire and police protection, maintenance of streets and roads, local school systems, parks and recreational facilities, and landfill capacity, and ensure that public services meet Federal and State standards and are available in a timely fashion.

CSF1.6 Other Infrastructure Planning. Require the preparation of infrastructure master plans in areas outside the designated Sphere of Influence as a prerequisite to annexation. Such plans shall contain, but not be limited to, plans for sewer services, water service, storm drainage, traffic circulation, recreation facilities, school facilities and funding alternatives for police and fire services.



Source: ESRI 2015

Figure 14

Public Schools in Proximity to the Project Site

Roberts Ranch Subdivision EIR



0 2000 ft

Project Site

Existing School



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CSF1.7.3 Development Review Criteria for Public Services. Prior to granting approval, evaluate each new development in terms of whether the proposed development be located within the existing service areas of local service providers (fire protection, police protection, solid waste disposal, schools, etc.), and not result in a reduction in their current capabilities.

CSF4.1 Providing Quality Education. Maintain a close, collaborative relationship with the school districts to maximize public benefit, and collaborate with schools, from preschools to the college level, in fostering educational programs to benefit the community.

CSF4.2 Community Use of School Facilities. Collaborate with schools to provide access to school facilities for neighborhood and community activities, and encourage joint planning with local school districts in determining the location of educational facilities. All new development shall be required to mitigate its fair share of the impact of such development on school facilities to the maximum extent permitted under state law.

Standards of Significance

The CEQA Guidelines Appendix G indicates that a proposed project may have a significant environmental impact if it results in the provision of or need for new or physically altered school facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts.

Analysis, Impacts & Mitigation

Less than Significant Impact: Generation of an Increase in School Children that Requires New or Expanded School Facilities that Would Result in Significant Environmental Impacts

The project would be served by two school districts: the Hollister School District for students in grades kindergarten through eighth and the San Benito High School District for students in grades nine through 12th.

For the Hollister School District, the student yield factor used in enrollment projections are 0.378 for kindergarten through sixth grade and 0.187 for grades seventh through eighth for all types of residential development (John Teliha, e-mail communication January 19, 2016). For facilities serving grades kindergarten through eighth a student yield factor of 0.565 is used (Hollister School District 2015). Student generation rates and school capacity information for

current conditions in San Benito High School District had not been received from the district as of September 2016; the most recent student generation rates available are from the Fairview Corners Residential Specific Plan EIR, which was identified as 0.190 students per dwelling unit for all types of residential development (San Benito County 2012). For the purposes of this analysis, the student generation rate for grades nine through twelve is presumed to be similar to the 2012 rate.

Using these rates, the proposed project is anticipated to generate a total of 172 school-aged children: 86 kindergarten through sixth grade students, 43 seventh through eighth grade students, and 43 high school students as presented in [Table 29, Student Generation](#), below.

Hollister School District. The proposed project would generate an estimated 129 students. It is anticipated that students from the project would attend existing public schools in the area. The estimated grade school-aged students would likely attend the currently planned K-8 school in the Santana Ranch master planned community, or one of the three nearby existing elementary schools: Cerra Vista Elementary School, Ladd Lane Elementary School, or Sunnyslope Elementary School, all of which are located within two miles of the project site.

Table 29 Student Generation

Grade Level	Generation Rate	Students ¹
Elementary School (K-6)	0.378	86
Middle School (7-8)	0.187	43
High School (9-12) ²	0.190 ¹	43
Total Students	-	172

Source: Teliha, John J. Director of Facilities for the Hollister School District. Email communication with Consultant, January 19, 2016)

Note: 1. Number may vary due to rounding.

2. This generation rate is taken from the Fairview Corners Residential Specific Plan EIR certified by the San Benito County Board of Supervisors in 2012.

According to Hollister School District Facilities Manager, John Tehila, each of the school district's elementary schools use a benchmark capacity goal of 900 students which the school district limits their facility capacity to (e-mail communication, February 3, 2016). As reported earlier in the discussion of current facility capacity, each of these elementary schools and the district's two middle schools have capacity sufficient to accommodate the students generated by the proposed project.

San Benito High School District. As discussed above, the project would generate approximately 43 new high school students. San Benito High School is currently operating at capacity and the addition of project-related students would exacerbate crowded conditions on the campus. However, the district is in the process of implementing its 2015 Facilities Masterplan, which includes classroom expansions to accommodate enrollment into the future.

The proposed project would increase the demand for expanded high school facilities; however, the project would comply with requirements to pay applicable school impact fees, and the San Benito High School District is already in the process of modifying its facilities on the existing campus to accommodate enrollment needs as it implements its 2015 facilities master plan. Any site-specific environmental effects of the district's planned and funded modifications would be evaluated as project-specific modifications are designed by the district.

Developers of the project site are required to pay the applicable school impact fees as calculated by the school districts, per statute, and consistent with Hollister's general plan policy CSF4.2, prior to issuance of occupancy permits. The payment of school impact fees would mitigate the proposed project's impact to schools.

3.15 SOLID WASTE

This section of the EIR evaluates the environmental impacts associated with the proposed project's effect on landfill capacity and its compliance with solid waste regulations. Unless otherwise noted, this analysis is based on information contained in the city's general plan, the project's application materials, and information supplied by solid waste service providers.

Comments on the city and county NOPs were received from the Cielo Vista Homeowners' Association and residents of the adjacent Cielo Vista and Valley View neighborhoods in Hollister. The comments identified potential impacts to local municipal services. The Hollister NOP and comment letters are included in [Appendix A](#). The county NOP and comments on the former project are included in [Appendix B](#).

Environmental Setting

Recology San Benito County provides garbage collection and recycling service in Hollister, San Juan Bautista, and unincorporated San Benito County. The collection program includes curbside recycling, garbage, yard waste, used motor oil, and used oil filters. Solid waste is taken to the John Smith Road Landfill, a county-owned facility located approximately 2.5 miles northeast of the project site on John Smith Road. The California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) monitors landfill capacity across the state. According to the most recent

diversion rates reported in the CalRecycle Jurisdiction Diversion/Disposal Rate Detail (CalRecycle 2014b), approximately 42,927 tons of solid waste was disposed of at this landfill by county residents (incorporated cities and unincorporated areas) in 2014.

Landfill Capacity and Waste Disposal Rates

According to CalRecycle (2016), the John Smith Road Landfill has a cease operation date of January 1, 2032. Total capacity of the landfill is 9.3 million cubic yards. Capacity as of November 30, 2012, was 4.6 million cubic yards. The maximum tonnage per day the landfill is permitted is 1,000 tons.

According to the most recent Jurisdiction Diversion/Disposal Rate Detail summary, the disposal rate for county residents is 4.1 pound of solid waste per person, per day and 15.0 pounds per employee per day (CalRecycle 2014a).

Regulatory Setting

State

California Integrated Waste Management Act. To minimize the amount of solid waste that must be disposed of by transformation and land disposal, the State Legislature passed the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (AB 939), effective January 1990. According to AB 939, all cities and counties were required to divert 25 percent of all solid waste from landfill facilities by January 1, 1995 and 50 percent by January 1, 2000.

AB 939 further requires every city and county to prepare two documents to demonstrate how the mandated rates of diversion would be achieved. The first document is the Source Reduction and Recycling (Element describing the chief source of the jurisdiction's waste, the existing diversion programs, and the current rates of waste diversion and new or expanded diversion programs intended to implement the Act's mandate. The second document is the Household Hazardous Waste Element, which describes what each jurisdiction must do to ensure that household hazardous wastes are not mixed with regular non-hazardous solid waste and deposited at a landfill.

As of 2007, with the passage of SB 1016, the Per Capita Disposal Measurement System, jurisdictional diversion rates were no longer utilized and only per capita disposal rates are measured. The new per capita disposal and goal measurement system moves the emphasis from an estimated diversion measurement number to using an actual disposal measurement as a factor, along with evaluating program implementation efforts. These two factors help determine each jurisdiction's progress toward achieving its Integrated Waste Management Act (AB 939) diversion goals. The 50 percent diversion requirement is now being measured in terms of per-capita disposal expressed as pounds per person per day. Actual diversion rates are tracked and reported on the CalRecycle website.

Local

San Benito County Integrated Waste Management Regional Agency. The Integrated Waste Management Department is responsible for oversight of landfill operations and the county refuse/recycling contract. In addition, this department serves as lead agency for the San Benito County Integrated Waste Management Regional Agency, which consists of the unincorporated county and cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista and is responsible for compliance with State of California mandated waste diversion goals of 50 percent (AB 939). This department also implements the county-wide Household Hazardous Waste program and Small Quantity Generator program for qualifying business hazardous waste.

The San Benito County Integrated Waste Management Regional Agency is primarily responsible for ensuring compliance with federal and state mandated regulations that ensure public health and safety related to refuse and household hazardous waste.

Activities consist of the following:

- Landfill operations oversight and regulatory compliance;
- Refuse and recycling contract oversight;
- Household Hazardous Waste program;
- Small Quantity Generator program; and
- Public education on waste diversion and household hazardous waste.

Hollister General Plan. The following general plan policies and implementing actions are applicable to the proposed project.

CSF 4.10 Solid Waste Management. Coordinate with the County of San Benito in addressing solid waste management needs consistent with the Hollister General Plan.

CSF 4.11 Waste Reduction and Recycling. Encourage efforts to promote recycling, such as encouraging businesses to recycle building and other materials, promoting composting by restaurants, institutions and residences, and supporting programs to promote recycling. Encourage residential, commercial and industrial concerns to evaluate and reduce their waste streams and to participate in waste exchanges and used goods resale programs.

Standards of Significance

CEQA Guidelines Appendix G indicates that a project may have a significant effect on the environment if it would:

- Be served by a landfill with insufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs; or
- Would not comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

Analysis, Impacts & Mitigation

Environmental Topics Eliminated from Further Consideration

Compliance with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. As mandated by the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989, 50 percent of all solid waste must be diverted from landfills. According to the most recent Jurisdiction Diversion/Disposal Rate Detail summary prepared by CalRecycle, in 2014 the per capita Calculated Disposal Rate target was 5.1 pounds per person per day and the Calculated Disposal Rate for county residents was 4.1 pounds per person per day. Additionally, the Calculated Disposal Rate target for employees within the county was 18.3 pounds per employee per day and the Calculated Disposal Rate for county employees was 15.0 pounds per employee per day. Therefore, residents and employees within the county in 2014 disposed of less waste than the state's disposal rate targets. The county also achieved its target in 2013. (CalRecycle 2014a).

The disposal rate is one factor in determining a jurisdiction's compliance with the intent of AB 939. In conformance to the waste disposal requirements set by San Benito County Integrated Waste Management, waste generated by the proposed project would not result in the county exceeding its per capita disposal rate target. Therefore, the proposed project would not be in conflict with the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989. The proposed project is subject to all applicable regulations and general plan policies and therefore, would have no impact related to noncompliance with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations for solid waste disposal.

Generate Solid Waste that Exceeds Landfill Capacity. As previously discussed, the projected remaining capacity of the John Smith Road Landfill as of November 30, 2012, was 4.6 million cubic yards with a daily permitted capacity at the land fill of a maximum 1,000 tons per day (CalRecycle 2016). Currently, the land fill receives a weekly average of approximately 760 tons of solid waste per day (Chris Nottenkamper, pers. com., October 6, 2016). The landfill can accommodate up to an additional 240 tons of solid waste per day from future demand, as long as the daily amount is below the permitted capacity of 1,000 tons per day. Based on solid waste

generation rates, it is estimated that county residents (including residents in incorporated cities and unincorporated areas) produce approximately 4.1 pounds of solid waste per person, per day. Using an average household size of 3.47 persons per household (California Department of Finance 2016b), development of 227 dwelling units consistent with the vesting tentative map could generate an estimated 788 new residents. Therefore, the project would generate approximately 3,231 pounds (approximately 1.6 tons) of solid waste per day (788 residents x 4.1 pounds of solid waste per person per day). Including the proposed project, the landfill would receive 761.6 tons per day, which would not exceed the land fill's daily permitted capacity limit of 1,000 tons per day. The Hollister general plan Policy CSF 4.10 requires that the city coordinate with San Benito County in addressing solid waste management needs consistent with the Hollister general plan. Policy CSF 4.11 encourages efforts to promote recycling programs, waste exchanges, and used goods resale programs.

Compliance with the above general plan policies in conjunction with other state and local waste reduction programs and policies will facilitate Hollister's continued downward trend in solid waste disposal rates by the city and resultant demands on landfill facilities. Development of the proposed project would nominally increase the volume of solid waste generated in the city that is disposed of in existing landfills but would meet the county diversion rate and would not exceed the landfill's permitted daily tonnage. The proposed project is subject to compliance with city and county waste diversion policies. Therefore the proposed project would not generate waste that would exceed the land fill capacity. No further discussion is required.

3.16 TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION

This section of the Draft EIR examines potential traffic and circulation impacts resulting from the proposed project. Unless otherwise noted, the information presented in this analysis is based on the traffic impact analysis for the project prepared by Hexagon Transportation Consultants, (October 2016) (hereinafter "traffic report"). The traffic report is found in [Appendix K](#) of this Draft EIR.

The Hollister School District comments on the city NOP and the county NOP raise concerns over increased vehicular traffic and impacts to pedestrian safety near Cerra Vista Elementary School. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), District 5 comments on the county NOP for the former project requested that the project's transportation impacts be assessed in a report prepared in accordance with the Department's Guide for the Preparation of Traffic Impact Studies, use of the Highway Capacity Manual (2010), and provide setbacks along State Route 25 to allow for its widening in the future. LAFCO comments on the county NOP requested that the EIR identify the agency that will own and maintain the internal road system including pedestrian and bike facilities.

Comments on both NOPs were received from multiple residents of the adjacent Cielo Vista subdivision, the Cielo Vista Homeowners' Association, and other neighbors regarding potential impacts from traffic congestion and pedestrian safety during construction and operations. Comments on the city NOP are included in [Appendix A](#). Comments on the county NOP for the former project are included in [Appendix B](#).

Environmental Setting

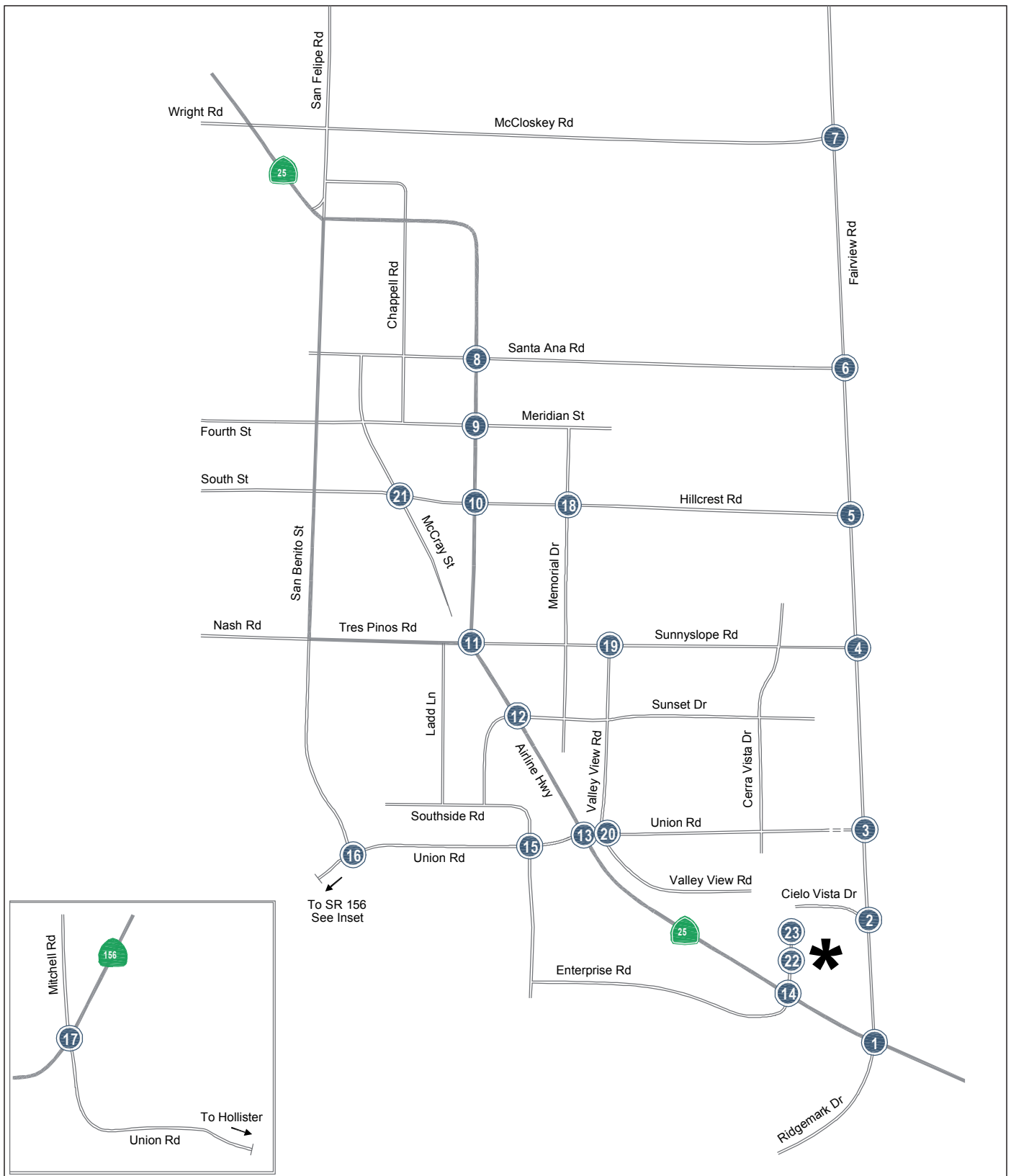
The project site is located west of Fairview Road, East of Enterprise Road and north of State Route 25. Regional access to the site is provided by State Route 25 and State Route 156 while local access to the project site is provided by a variety of local streets in the study area. These facilities are described below and shown on [Figure 15, Area Roadways, and Study Intersections](#).

Highways

State Route 25. State Route 25 is a two-lane highway that carries regional traffic between Gilroy and Hollister. This route begins at its junction with U.S. Highway 101 in Gilroy and extends south through Hollister towards Paicines, traversing the entire length of San Benito County southbound through Tres Pinos, Paicines and to the southern county boundary at the junction of State Route 198 near King City. In Hollister, State Route 25 includes State Route 25 (near the project site) and Bolsa Road. Caltrans classifies this route as a minor arterial, and the route is primarily a rural, two-lane facility, except for a three-mile section that runs through the City of Hollister, where it is six and four lanes. State Route 25 is the primary commuter route between Hollister and Gilroy and through Hollister. Within the City of Hollister, State Route 25 runs in a generally north-south direction from the intersection of Sunnyslope Road to San Felipe Road and the State Route 156 Bypass north of the City.

State Route 156. State Route 156 is generally a two-lane highway that carries regional traffic between U.S. Highway 101 and State Route 152. State Route 156 is a major roadway for trucks traveling between U.S. Highway 101 and Interstate 5. Between Hollister and San Juan Bautista, State Route 156 is a two-lane highway. Between San Juan Bautista and U.S. Highway 101, State Route 156 is a four-lane divided highway.

Airline Highway (State Route 25). State Route 25 is a two- to four-lane arterial roadway that runs through Hollister. State Route 25 begins at Tres Pinos Road/Sunnyslope Road where it changes designation from McCray Street to Airline Highway. Airline Highway is also State Route 25 in the south part of Hollister.



Not to scale



= Site Location



= Study Intersection

===== = Future Roadway

Source: Hexagon Transportation Consultants 2016

Figure 15

Area Roadways and Study Intersections

Roberts Ranch Subdivision EIR

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Area Streets

Fairview Road. Fairview Road is a two-lane north-south collector that is situated on the east edge of Hollister. Fairview Road provides access to State Route 25 (Airline Highway) to the south and to State Route 25 and State Route 156 to the north. Fairview Road forms a portion of the western boundary of the project site.

Union Road. Union Road is a two-lane roadway in south Hollister that extends from State Route 156 to its termination beyond State Route 25.

Enterprise Road. Enterprise Road is a north-south collector street composed of two lanes that provides access between Southside Road and Mimosa Street near Valley View Park. Enterprise Road crosses State Route 25 near the southwest corner of the project site, and forms the western boundary of the site.

Hillcrest Road. Hillcrest Road is an east-west minor arterial composed of a three-lane roadway segment (two eastbound and one westbound lane) from McCray Street to Memorial Drive, and a two-lane roadway segment from Memorial Drive to Fairview Road, where it terminates. West of McCray Street, Hillcrest Road changes designation to South Street.

Sunnyslope Road. Sunnyslope Road is an east-west arterial that extends from Fairview Road to Airline Highway, where it changes designation to Tres Pinos Road. Between Fairview Road and El Toro Drive, Sunnyslope Road is a two-lane roadway, and between El Toro Drive and State Route 25, it is a four-lane roadway.

San Benito Street. San Benito Street is a two-lane, north-south arterial roadway that makes a transition from San Felipe Road in the north part of Hollister and extends southward through downtown Hollister to Union Road.

Study Intersections and Roadway Segments

The intersections and roadway segments studied in the traffic report were selected for evaluation by the traffic consultant in consultation with the City of Hollister Public Works Department. The study included an analysis of 13 signalized intersections, 10 unsignalized intersections, three highway segments, and five roadway segments (refer to Figure 15).

Intersections. The following intersections are studied in the traffic report. Intersections under the jurisdiction of Caltrans or San Benito County are indicated parenthetically.

1. Fairview Road/Ridgemark Drive and State Route 25 (Caltrans);
2. Fairview Road and Cielo Vista Drive (county);

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

3. Fairview Road and Union Road (future county intersection);
4. Fairview Road and Sunnyslope Road (county);
5. Fairview Road and Hillcrest Road (county);
6. Fairview Road and Santa Ana Road (county);
7. Fairview Road and McCloskey Road (county);
8. State Route 25 and Santa Ana Road (Caltrans);
9. State Route 25 and Meridian Street (Caltrans);
10. State Route 25 and Hillcrest Road (Caltrans);
11. State Route 25 and Sunnyslope Road/Tres Pinos Road (Caltrans);
12. State Route 25 and Sunset Drive (Caltrans);
13. State Route 25 and Union Road (Caltrans);
14. Enterprise Road and State Route 25 (Caltrans);
15. Southside Road and Union Road (county);
16. San Benito Street and Union Road (county);
17. Union Road/Mitchell Road and State Route 156 (Caltrans);
18. Memorial Drive and Hillcrest Road;
19. Valley View Road and Sunnyslope Road;
20. Valley View Road and Union Road;
21. McCray Street and South Street/Hillcrest Road;
22. Enterprise Road and Glenview Drive; and,
23. Enterprise Road and Mimosa Street.

Highway Segments. The following highway segments are studied in the traffic report:

1. State Route 25, San Felipe Road/San Benito Street to State Route 156;
2. State Route 25, State Route 156 to U.S. Highway 101; and,
3. State Route 156, The Alameda to Union Road.

Roadway Segments. The following roadway segments are studied in the traffic report:

1. Cerra Vista Drive, south of Union Road;
2. Glenview Drive, between Brighton Drive and Valley Road;
3. Glenview Drive, between Valley View Road and Yarrow Street; and,
4. Mimosa Street, between Valley View Road and Yarrow Street.

Traffic Levels of Service

Intersection and roadway/highway segment operations were evaluated in accordance with the standards set forth by the City of Hollister and Caltrans. The traffic report was prepared using methodologies outlined in the Caltrans *Guidelines for the Preparation of Traffic Studies*, the 2010 *Highway Capacity Manual*, and the 2012 *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.

Traffic conditions were analyzed for the weekday AM and PM peak hours. The weekday AM peak-hour of traffic generally falls within the 7:00 to 9:00 AM period and the weekday PM peak-hour is typically in the 4:00 to 6:00 PM period. It is during these times that the most congested traffic conditions occur on an average day.

Existing Intersection Level of Service Operations. The existing lane configurations and traffic controls at the study intersections were determined by observations in the field, and are shown in the traffic report Figure 5; existing weekday AM and PM peak-hour traffic volumes were obtained from new intersection turning movement counts conducted in 2013 and 2014 and are shown in the traffic report Figure 6 ([Appendix K](#)).

Level of Service (LOS) ratings are qualitative descriptions of intersection operations and are reported using an “A” through “F” letter rating system to describe travel delay and congestion, with LOS A representing the best operating conditions, and LOS F the worst. The level of service standard for intersections under the jurisdictions of the City of Hollister and Caltrans is LOS C, and LOS D for San Benito County (San Benito County 2016a).

The results of the intersection level of service and signal warrant analyses under existing conditions are listed in Table 3 of the traffic report. According to the traffic report, only two intersections operate at unacceptable LOS D or worse during at least one peak hour under existing conditions. These intersections are the signalized Caltrans facilities at State Route 25 and Union Road and Union Road/Mitchell Road and State Route 156. According to the traffic report all remaining signalized intersections operate at acceptable LOS under existing conditions.

The following four unsignalized intersections experience peak hour traffic volumes that meet signal warrant thresholds under existing conditions:

1. Fairview Road/Ridgemark Drive and State Route 25 (Caltrans);
5. Fairview Road and Hillcrest Road (county);
14. Enterprise Road and State Route 25 (Caltrans); and
18. Memorial Drive and Hillcrest Road (city).

However, although the signal warrant is met, each of these unsignalized intersections operate within applicable level of service standards under existing conditions. All other study intersections have traffic conditions that fall below the thresholds that warrant signalization under existing conditions.

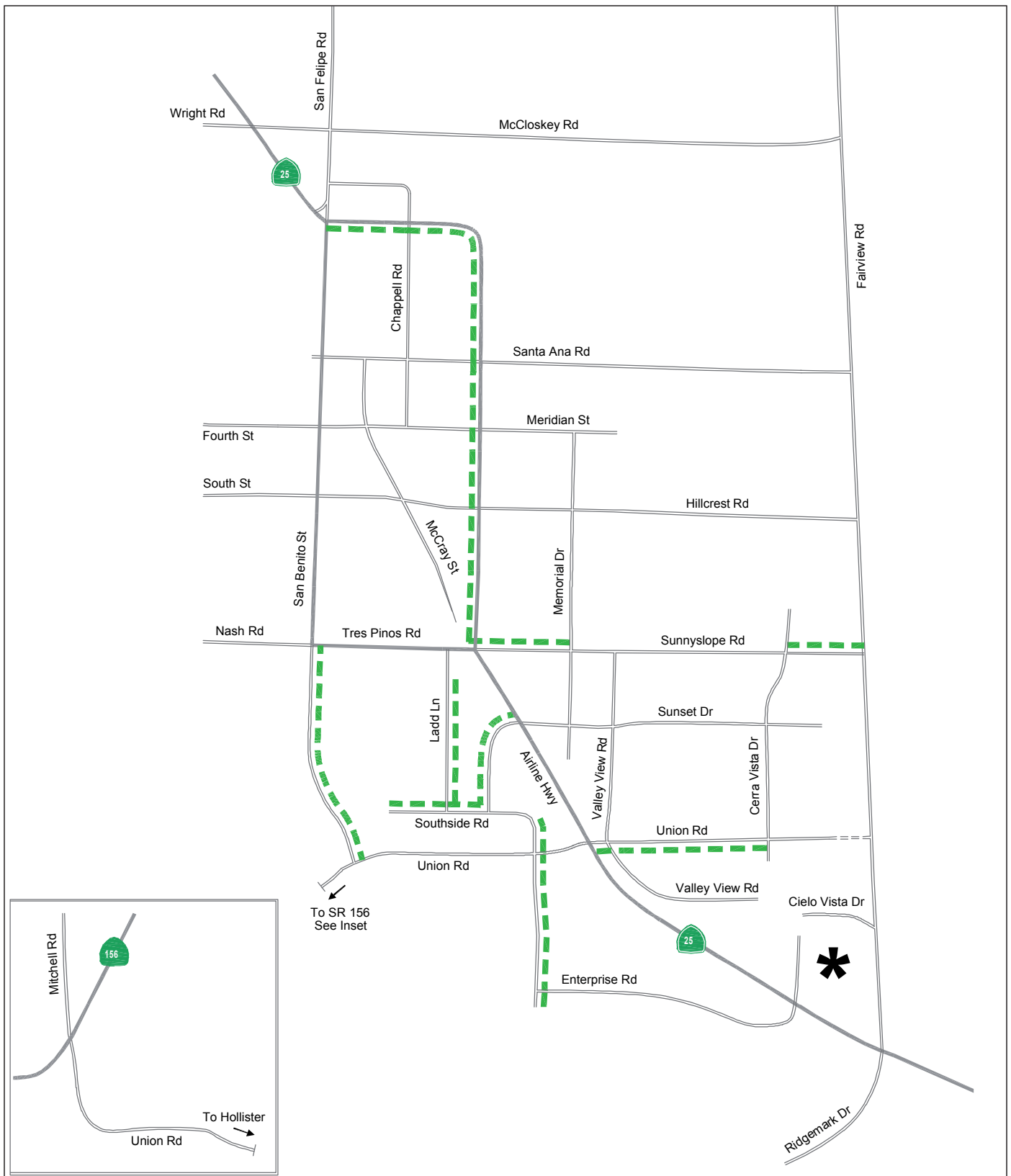
Roadway Segment Level of Service Operations. Observations of area roadways included traffic counts conducted in September 2014, which revealed that all study roadways currently carry no more than 1,000 daily vehicles (both directions combined), and most of them carry between 300 and 400 daily vehicles. The traffic report concludes that daily traffic volumes along all study roadway segments operate within the acceptable daily volume thresholds identified in the city's general plan.

Highway Segment Level of Service Operations. Traffic volumes on the study highway segments were derived from the new intersection turn-movement observations conducted at the intersections of State Route 25/State Route 156 and Union Road/State Route 156. Based on these counts, the report found that all highway segments studied currently operate at an unacceptable LOS D or E during peak hours.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Bicycle facilities are divided into three classes of relative significance. Class I bikeways are bike paths that are physically separated from motor vehicles and offer two-way bicycle travel on a separate path. Class II bikeways are striped bike lanes on roadways that are marked by signage and pavement markings. Class III bikeways are bike routes and only have signs to help guide bicyclists on recommended routes to certain locations. The locations of existing bicycle facilities are shown on [Figure 16, Existing Bicycle Facilities](#). The project site is not served directly by any bicycle facilities. However, as illustrated by Figure 16, Class II bike lanes are provided on the following roadways:

1. Sunnyslope Road between State Route 25 and Memorial Drive;
2. Highway 25 Bypass between San Felipe Road and Sunnyslope Road;



Not to scale



= Site Location

===== = Future Roadway

--- = Bike Lane

Source: Hexagon Transportation Consultants 2016

Figure 16

Existing Bicycle Facilities

Roberts Ranch Subdivision EIR



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3. San Benito Street between Nash Road and Union Road;
4. Southside Road between north of Union Road and south of Enterprise Road; and,
5. Union Road between State Route 25 and Cerra Vista Drive.

The Hollister general plan (City of Hollister 2005a) indicates that most bicycling within the city is done on roadway shoulders. The 2009 San Benito County Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plan indicates that Class II bike lanes are planned on the following roadways:

1. Fairview Road between State Route 25 and Fallon Road;
2. Union Road between Fairview Road and San Benito Street; and,
3. State Route 25 (Airline Highway) between Ridgemark and Sunset Drive.

There are no sidewalks present on the project site frontages along Enterprise Road or Fairview Road. The streets within the Valley View neighborhood west of the project site have sidewalks along both sides of each street. However, the streets within the Cielo Vista neighborhood southeast of the project site have sidewalks along one side of the street only. Sidewalks are not present on the portions of Fairview Road or State Route 25 that abut undeveloped land.

Transit Service

Transit service to the project area is provided by County Express Transit System. The transit services provided in the city are described below and shown in the traffic report Figure 4 (p. 23).

Local Bus Service. County Express operates several fixed-route buses in Hollister and San Benito County. However, the bus stop nearest to the project site is located near the intersection of Sunset Drive and State Route 25, approximately two miles north of the site.

Dial-A-Ride Service. Areas not served by the fixed-route bus service are eligible for Dial-a-Ride service. County Express provides the Dial-a-Ride service to Northern San Benito County, including Hollister, San Juan Bautista, and Tres Pinos, on weekdays between 6 AM and 6 PM and on weekends between 9 AM and 3 PM. County Express provides two types of Dial-a-Ride service: general public and paratransit. General public Dial-a-Ride serves those persons whose trips begin or end in a location more than three-quarters of a mile from the fixed route, and paratransit rides are available by appointment.

Inter-County Service. County Express also includes service to the Gilroy Transit Center and Gavilan Community College (school year only), Monday through Friday from 6:55 AM to 6:15 PM and connects to six trains per day operating between Gilroy and San Jose.

Regulatory Setting

Regional Transportation Planning

San Benito Council of Governments. The San Benito Council of Governments (council of governments) is an association of city and county governments created to address regional transportation issues. Its member agencies include the San Benito County and the cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista. As the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization and the state-designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency for San Benito County, the council of governments is responsible for developing and updating a variety of transportation plans and for allocating the federal and state funds to implement them, including the *On the Move: 2035 – San Benito Regional Transportation Plan* (regional transportation plan), adopted by council of governments in 2014.

Regional Transportation Plan. The regional transportation plan is a long-term blueprint for the region's transportation network, and encompasses projects for all types of travel, including aviation and freight movement based on growth, previously approved plans (including general plans), public input, and prior council of governments actions over a 20-year period. The regional transportation plan identifies and analyzes transportation needs of the metropolitan region and creates a framework for project priorities.

Development projects within San Benito County, including incorporated cities, are required to pay traffic impact fees into the Hollister/San Benito County Regional Traffic Impact Fee program. The council of governments administers the traffic impact fee program as authorized by the regional transportation plan. The purpose of the traffic impact fee program is to implement city and county roadway improvement projects identified in the San Benito County Traffic Mitigation Fee Study, based on anticipated regional development identified in the county's and the cities' general plans (San Benito Council of Governments 2014).

The council of governments including San Benito County, the City of Hollister, and the City of San Juan Bautista, have recently completed the process of updating the traffic impact fee program to ensure that the projects identified therein accurately represent the needs of the community and that the established fees are appropriate to fund the identified improvement projects, and to determine if new improvements are necessary (San Benito Council of Governments 2014).

San Benito County Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plan (2009). The *San Benito County Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plan* ("bikeway and pedestrian master plan"), adopted by the council of governments and the San Benito County Board of Supervisors, guides the future development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the County. The bikeway master plan provides strategies and recommended actions for the improvement of bicycle and walking

opportunities in the San Benito County region to expand the existing networks, connect gaps, address constrained areas, provide greater connectivity, educate, encourage, and maximize funding sources, as well as satisfy requirements of the California Bicycle Transportation Account and other state and federal funding programs that Caltrans oversees and reviews. The plan also outlines recommended bikeway improvement projects, which are organized into countywide, unincorporated, and incorporated areas (San Benito Council of Governments 2009).

In the vicinity of the project site, the bikeway and pedestrian master plan indicates that Class II bike lanes are planned for State Route 25 between the Hollister city limit and Tres Pinos Elementary School, and Fairview Road between State Route 25 and Sunnyslope Road (pp. 6-7 – 6-8). The plan notes that these improvements are not funded but can be capital projects or installed with roadway improvement projects or development/redevelopment of the adjacent properties.

The following bikeway and pedestrian master plan policies are relevant to the proposed project.

Objective 1-2. Expand bicycle and pedestrian facilities and access in and between neighborhoods, employment centers, shopping areas, schools, and recreational sites, in pursuit of the San Benito County Council of Governments General Plan and Regional Transportation Plan policies of encouraging bicycle and pedestrian travel.

Objective 1-3. Consider bicycle and pedestrian facilities in all projects (e.g. transportation, development, parks, etc.).

Objective 4-3. Complete a network of bikeways and walkways that are feasible, fundable, and that serve bicyclists' and pedestrians' needs, especially for travel to employment centers, schools, commercial districts, transit stations, institutions and recreational destinations.

Objective 4-4. Maintain and improve the quality, operation and integrity of bikeway and walkway network facilities.

Objective 4-6. Provide short- and long-term bicycle parking in employment and commercial areas, in multifamily housing, at schools, and at recreation and transit facilities.

City of Hollister

City of Hollister General Plan. The following Hollister general plan policies are applicable to the proposed project.

Policy C1.1 LOS C or Better Arterial Roads. Ensure, to the maximum extent feasible, that the designated arterial roadway system is planned to operate at Level of Service (LOS) C or better during peak and off-peak hours as of the horizon year of the adopted general plan.

Policy C1.2 Sub-Standard Roads. Determine the most practical (cost effective) means for bringing segments/intersections into compliance with the LOS standard when it has been determined that one more segments/ intersections along the designated arterial system is operating at LOS D or worse (below the City standard).

Policy C2.1 Bicycle Facilities. Cooperatively work with COG, Caltrans, and San Benito County to develop, implement and maintain bicycle facilities providing direct access to major public facilities, schools and employment centers as described in the San Benito County Bicycle Master Plan.

Policy C2.2 "Safe Routes to School Program." Work cooperatively with local school districts to develop, implement and maintain the "Safe Routes to School" program.

Policy C2.3 Pedestrian Connections. Work with local businesses, private developers, and public agencies to ensure provision of safe pedestrian pathways to major public facilities, schools and employment centers. Require new developments to provide internal pedestrian connections and linkages to adjacent neighborhoods and community facilities.

Policy C3.1 Regional Transportation Measures. Continue to collect traffic impact fees and require other site related transportation improvements from private developers to ensure implementation of transportation system improvements to local and regional facilities attributable to proposed development.

Policy LU4.4 Streets, Paths and Bikeways. Ensure that streets, paths and bikeways contribute to the system of a fully connected transportation network.

Policy LU4.8 Pedestrian Environment. Design safe, accessible, convenient, comfortable and functional pedestrian crossings, intersections, sidewalks, street plantings, street furniture and traffic signals.

HS2.4 Access for Emergency Vehicles. Provide adequate access for emergency vehicles and equipment, including providing a second means of ingress and egress to all development.

Standards of Significance

The following thresholds for evaluating a project's environmental impacts are based on the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, and standards used by City of Hollister, San Benito County, and Caltrans. For purposes of this Draft EIR, impacts may be significant if the proposed project would result in one or more of the following:

- Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit;
- Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways;
- Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that result in substantial safety risks;
- Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment);
- Result in inadequate emergency access; or
- Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities.

To evaluate project-level and cumulative impacts at study intersections, highway segments, and roadway segments, the following specific thresholds were used in this Draft EIR. The project would create a significant traffic impact if, as a result of the addition of project traffic:

Intersection Level of Service (County Intersections). San Benito County has adopted a LOS standard of D to adequately serve automobile traffic throughout the county while still promoting and accommodating non-auto modes of transportation.

For signalized intersections in San Benito County, a project would result in a significant adverse impact on traffic conditions if for any peak hour:

- The level of service at the intersection degrades from an acceptable LOS D or better under conditions without the project to an unacceptable LOS E or F under project conditions, or

- The intersection is already operating at an unacceptable LOS E or F and the addition of project traffic causes the average intersection delay at the intersection to increase beyond what it was without the project.

For unsignalized intersections in San Benito County, a project would create a significant adverse impact on traffic conditions at the intersection if for any peak hour:

- All-way stop: The average overall level of service at the intersection degrades from an acceptable LOS D or better under conditions without the project to an unacceptable LOS E or worse under project conditions, or
- All-way stop: The average overall intersection level of service is already at an unacceptable LOS E or worse without the project and the addition of project traffic causes the average overall delay to increase beyond what it was without the project, or
- One- or two-way stop: The delay on the worst approach at a one- or two-way stop-controlled intersection degrades from an acceptable LOS D or better under conditions without the project to an unacceptable LOS E or worse under project conditions and the traffic volumes at the intersection under project conditions are high enough to satisfy the peak-hour volume traffic signal warrant adopted by Caltrans, or
- One- or two-way stop: The delay on the worst approach at a one- or two-way stop-controlled intersection is already at an unacceptable LOS E or worse without the project and the traffic volumes at the intersection under project conditions are high enough to satisfy the peak-hour volume traffic signal warrant adopted by Caltrans, and the addition of project traffic causes the delay on the worst stop-controlled approach to increase beyond what it was without the project.

Intersection Level of Service (City of Hollister and Caltrans Intersections). Both the City of Hollister and Caltrans identify a level of service standard of LOS C for their respective facilities. Neither agency has specific criteria for determining project impacts.

For City of Hollister or Caltrans signalized intersections, a project would result in a significant adverse impact on traffic conditions if for any peak hour:

- The level of service at an intersection degrades from an acceptable LOS C or better under baseline conditions to an unacceptable LOS D or worse under project or cumulative conditions; or
- The level of service at an intersection is an unacceptable LOS D or worse under baseline conditions and the addition of project trips causes the average intersection delay to increase by five (5) or more seconds.

- The level of service at a Caltrans controlled intersection is an unacceptable LOS D or worse under baseline conditions and the addition of project traffic causes the average intersection control delay to increase by one (1) or more seconds.

For unsignalized intersections under the jurisdiction of the City of Hollister and Caltrans, a project would create a significant adverse impact on traffic conditions if the following circumstances are met:

- All-way stop: For either the AM or PM peak hour, the addition of project traffic causes the average overall level of service at the intersection to degrade from an acceptable LOS C or better under conditions without the project to an unacceptable LOS D or worse under project conditions; or
- All-way stop: The average overall intersection level of service is already at an unacceptable LOS D or worse without the project and the addition of project traffic causes the average overall delay to increase five (5) or more seconds; or
- One- or two-way stop: The delay on the worst approach at a one- or two-way stop-controlled intersection degrades from an acceptable LOS C or better under conditions without the project to an unacceptable LOS D or worse under project conditions and the traffic volumes at the intersection under project conditions are high enough to satisfy the peak-hour volume traffic signal warrant adopted by Caltrans; or
- One- or two-way stop: The delay on the worst approach at a one- or two-way stop-controlled intersection is already at an unacceptable LOS D or worse without the project and the traffic volumes at the intersection under project conditions are high enough to satisfy the peak-hour volume traffic signal warrant adopted by Caltrans, and the addition of project traffic causes the delay on the worst stop-controlled approach to increase beyond what it was without the project.

Roadway Segment Thresholds. The traffic report utilizes approximate volume ranges for specific roadway types, as prescribed in the Hollister general plan for its roadway segment analyses. Unlike the intersection level of service analysis methodology, which has established impact thresholds, there are no adopted analysis methodologies or impact thresholds for the evaluation of residential streets or neighborhood traffic issues. The general plan further describes residential facilities as having posted speed limits generally ranging between 25 and 30 mph, with traffic volumes generally less than 5,000 vehicles per day (also referred to as average daily traffic volumes) but can vary depending on available right-of-way and the adjacent land uses.

Highway Segment Thresholds. The highway segments studied in the traffic report are Caltrans facilities and therefore, the traffic report applies Caltrans level of service standard of LOS C for these facilities. Using these criteria a project would create a significant adverse impact on traffic conditions under the following circumstances:

- In either peak hour, the LOS on a two-lane highway degrades from an acceptable LOS C or better under baseline conditions to an unacceptable LOS D or worse under project conditions and cumulative; or
- The LOS on a two-lane highway is an unacceptable LOS D or worse under baseline conditions, and the addition of project traffic results in the addition of trips.

Traffic conditions were evaluated in the traffic report for the following five study scenarios:

Scenario 1: Existing Conditions. Existing conditions were represented by existing peak-hour traffic volumes on the existing roadway network. Existing traffic volumes were obtained from traffic counts in 2013 and 2014.

Scenario 2: Existing plus Project Conditions. Existing plus project conditions were represented by adding traffic volumes with the project to the existing traffic volumes. This scenario assumes that the eastern half of Enterprise Road would be completed as part of the proposed project (refer to Figure 6, Vesting Tentative Map). As part of the improvements to Enterprise Road, Glenview Drive would create a new east approach leg from the project site to the Enterprise Road and Glenview Drive intersection and would be stop-controlled on all four approaches. The east approach would have a shared left-through and right-turn lane; a left-turn lane would be added to the north approach; and the south approach would have one shared through and right-turn lane. The extension of Mimosa Street would create a new east approach leg from the project site to the Enterprise Road and Mimosa Street intersection. The intersection is assumed to have stop-control on the Enterprise Road approach to the intersection and uncontrolled Mimosa Street approaches. The east approach would have a shared left and right-turn lane; the east approach would provide one shared through and right-turn lane; and the south approach would have one shared left and right-turn lane. The traffic report assumes these improvements will be constructed as part of the project (p. 31).

Scenario 3: Background Conditions. Background conditions are represented by adding trips from approved but not yet constructed development projects to existing peak-hour traffic volumes on the transportation network. A list of approved but not yet constructed projects identified by the City of Hollister and San Benito County is included in the traffic report Table 8. Although the traffic report defines background conditions as conditions just prior to completion of the proposed project, for the purposes of this EIR analysis, background conditions are considered cumulative conditions due to the uncertainty of timing for each of the projects identified in table 8.

Scenario 4: Background plus Project Conditions. Background plus project conditions include the addition of traffic generated by the proposed project to the background conditions traffic levels, and taking into account planned improvements to Union Road that consist of extending it from State Route 25 eastward to Fairview Road. The future intersection of Fairview Road and

Union Road would be signalized. The traffic report assumes these improvements are in place under this scenario (p. 40). Discussion of the proposed project's impacts to background conditions are included in Section 4.1, Cumulative Impacts.

Scenario 5: Cumulative Conditions. Cumulative conditions represent future traffic volumes on the long-range future transportation network that include background conditions volumes and traffic generated by proposed but not yet approved (pending) development projects. For this scenario, the transportation network is the same as the background conditions scenario. The traffic report Table 13 lists the pending projects identified by the City of Hollister and San Benito County. The traffic report also notes that traffic generated by projects that are very small or remotely located from the study intersections are not included in the analysis (p. 55).

Cumulative plus project conditions are derived by adding the traffic generated by the proposed project to the cumulative conditions scenario. Cumulative impacts and the proposed project's contribution to them are discussed in Section 4.1, Cumulative Impacts.

Analysis, Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Environmental Topics Eliminated from Further Analysis

Section 21002.1.e of the CEQA statute requires an EIR discussion to focus on those potential effects on the environment of a proposed project which the lead agency has determined are or may be significant. Lead agencies may limit discussion on other effects to a brief explanation as to why those effects are not potentially significant.

Conflicts with Regional Transportation Plan. The proposed project is consistent with the Hollister general plan Low Density Residential land use designation and the population that would be served by development of the project site is included in the growth projections that form the basis of the regional transportation plan. Therefore, no conflicts with the regional traffic plan would occur and no further discussion of this topic is required.

Conflicts with Congestion Management Plan. A congestion management plan has not been adopted by the council of governments for San Benito County (Mary Gilbert, pers. com. October 11, 2016) or by the City of Hollister. Local agencies coordinate with each other to monitor traffic volumes and congestion on the roadway system in San Benito County in order to implement the regional traffic impact fee program. Therefore, no conflicts would occur and no further discussion of this topic is required.

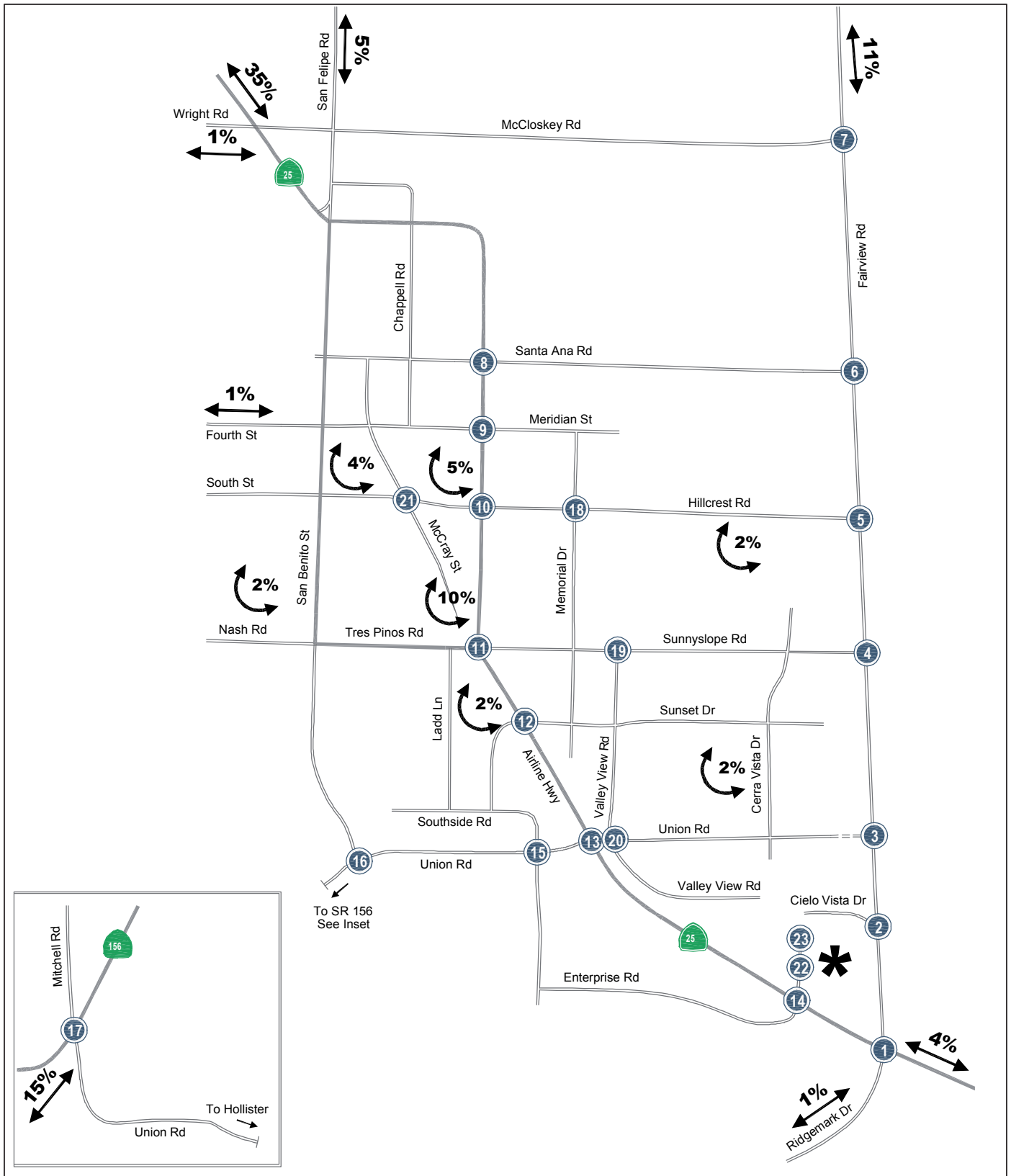
Air traffic. The project site is not located in proximity to any airport or landing strip and would not conflict with an airport master plan or interfere with air traffic patterns. Therefore, no impacts related to air traffic would occur. No further discussion of this environmental topic is required.

Circulation Hazards and Emergency Access. The project site adjoins an established urban area with existing streets and access points. The proposed on-site circulation system allows for continuous traffic circulation with accessibility to each lot. The traffic report notes that all cul-de-sacs appear to have adequate width and turn-around space to allow for the circulation of emergency vehicles and other large vehicles such as garbage trucks. The proposed project provides access to the project site via three roadways: the two new neighborhood streets off Enterprise Road and the extension of Mimosa Street to the approved but not yet constructed residential subdivision to the north. Street designs are subject to compliance with the city's design and performance standards for public streets, including cul-de-sac turning radii for large vehicles such as fire or other emergency vehicles and garage trucks. The design of roadway improvements is subject to review and approval by the City Engineer at the time the improvement plans are submitted and prior to issuance of any permits. Therefore, no the proposed project does not create traffic hazards or inadequate emergency access to the site. No impact would occur and no further discussion is required.

Demand for Transit Facilities. Development of the proposed project can be assumed to generate new riders for public transportation. A significant environmental impact would occur if the increased demand exceeds service capacity to the extent that new transit facilities, the construction of which would result in significant impacts, would be needed to serve the project's demand. The traffic report assumes that the proposed project's estimated transit demand would be three percent, which equates to approximately six to seven new transit riders during the AM and PM peak-hours. As noted previously, the nearest bus stop is several miles from the project site and the traffic report concludes that the demand for transit due solely from the project would not justify the extension of a service route, and the estimated number of new transit riders generated by the project could be served by the existing Dial-a-Ride service (p. 65). Therefore, although the project is assumed to generate additional demand where no transit facilities exist, the increase in demand can be accommodated by existing service providers and no new facilities are required. Therefore no impact would occur and no further review of this environmental topic is required.

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation: Increased Traffic that Leads to Level of Service Below Acceptable Standards at Two Signalized Intersections: State Route 25 and Union Road, and Union Road/Mitchell Road and State Route 156

According to the traffic report, the proposed project would generate 2,031 daily trips, with 159 trips during the AM peak-hour and 210 trips during the PM peak-hour (Hexagon Transportation Consultants 2016, p. 48). The project's anticipated trip distribution pattern is presented in [Figure 17, Project Trip Distribution Pattern](#), and assignment of project trips are shown graphically in the traffic report Figure 8 (Appendix K). The addition of project traffic would increase volume on area roadways and would affect operating conditions at two signalized study intersections.



Not to scale



= Site Location



= Study Intersection

===== Future Roadway

Source: Hexagon Transportation Consultants 2016

Figure 17

Project Trip Distribution Pattern

Roberts Ranch Subdivision EIR

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The results of the intersection level of service analysis indicate that, based on the applicable significance criteria, the State Route 25 and Union Road intersection would be significantly affected by the project under existing plus project conditions. [Table 30, Existing plus Project Level of Service Impacts at Signalized Intersections](#), summarizes the effects to existing operating conditions resulting from the addition of project traffic to these intersections.

Table 30 Existing plus Project Level of Service Impacts at Signalized Intersections

Study Intersection	Peak Hour	Existing		Existing With-Project		
		Delay ¹	LOS	Delay ¹	LOS	Change in Delay ²
State Route 25 and Union Road	AM	47.7	D	53.7	D	+6.0
	PM	55.0	D	71.9	E	+16.9
Union Road/Mitchell Road and State Route 156	AM	38.6	D	40.5	D	+1.9
	PM	31.3	C	32.3	C	+1.0

Source: Hexagon Transportation Consultants 2016, Table 6

Note: 1. Average delays reported in seconds.

2. Change in delay is measured relative to existing conditions for the analysis of project conditions impacts. Delay is in seconds.

The results of the intersection level of service analysis indicates that the project would add traffic that would increase volumes to the intersection of State Route 25 and Union Road and the intersection of Union Road/Mitchell Road and State Route 156 to the extent that a significant impact would occur during one or both peak hours.

State Route 25 and Union Road. As illustrated by the table above, the addition of project traffic to the Caltrans intersection of State Route 25 and Union Road would cause the overall level of service to decline from LOS D to LOS E during the PM peak hour and would increase average delays by more than one second during both peak hours. The State Route 25 and Union Road intersection level of service is currently an unacceptable LOS D during both peak hours under existing conditions and the addition of project traffic would cause the delay at the intersection to increase by more than one second during the AM and PM peak hours. This constitutes a significant impact by Caltrans standards.

Changes or alterations to this intersection that would address existing service level deficiencies are within the responsibility of Caltrans, and already are included in planned widening of Union Road to four lanes between San Benito Street and State Route 25. The widening project is identified in the San Benito County Regional Transportation Impact Mitigation Fee (regional

traffic impact) program and the proposed project would be required to pay for its proportionate fair share toward the costs of the improvement. Participation in the regional traffic impact fee program would reduce the proposed project's impact to existing operations at this intersection. Implementation of the following mitigation measure ensures that the project impacts are reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure

T-1 Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall be responsible for its proportionate and fair share contribution in the form of payment of the applicable traffic impact fee for the widening of Union Road to four lanes between San Benito Street and State Route 25 at the State Route 25 and Union Road (Caltrans) intersection.

Union Road/Mitchell Road and State Route 156. The Caltrans intersection of Union Road/Mitchell Road and State Route 156 would experience a 1.9 second increase in delay during the AM peak hour, during which the intersection already operates at LOS D, which is also a significant impact by Caltrans standards.

Changes or alterations to each the intersection that would address existing service level deficiencies are within the responsibility of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and already are included in planned widening of Union Road to four lanes between State Route 156 and San Benito Street. The widening project, which would include construction of intersection modifications to meet acceptable service thresholds, is identified in the San Benito County Regional Transportation Impact Mitigation Fee (regional traffic impact) program and the proposed project is required to pay for its proportionate fair share toward the costs of the improvement. Participation in the regional traffic impact fee program would mitigate the proposed project's impact to the intersection. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce the proposed project's impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure

T-2. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall be responsible for its proportionate and fair share contribution in the form of payment of the applicable traffic impact fee for the widening of Union Road to four lanes between San Benito Street and State Route 156, which includes modification of the Union Road/Mitchell Road and State Route 156 intersection (Caltrans), the construction of which will mitigate the project's direct related to exceedances of performance standards at this intersection.

Less than Significant Impact: Increased Traffic Leading to Level of Service below Standards at the Following four Unsignalized Intersections: Fairview Road/Ridgemark Drive and State Route 25; Fairview Road and Hillcrest Road; Enterprise Road and State Route 25; and Memorial Drive and Hillcrest Road.

The addition of project traffic would increase volume on area roadways and would affect operating conditions at four unsignalized study intersections. The intersection signal warrant analysis for existing plus project conditions indicates that the following unsignalized intersections would experience peak hour traffic volumes that meet the delay thresholds that warrant signalization with or without the project:

- Fairview Road/Ridgemark Drive and State Route 25 (Caltrans)
- Fairview Road and Hillcrest Road (San Benito County)
- Enterprise Road and State Route 25 (Caltrans)
- Memorial Drive and Hillcrest Road (Hollister)

Table 31, [Existing plus Project Level of Service Impacts at Unsignalized Intersections](#), lists the unsignalized intersections within the study area at which traffic operations would fall below the level of service standards under the existing plus project conditions. Detailed information on traffic conditions, including traffic movement volumes at the intersections, and information on intersections without significant impacts, is included in Appendix K.

All other unsignalized study intersections would continue to operate at acceptable service levels and the addition of project traffic would not result in traffic conditions that exceed the signal warrant thresholds. Intersections along State Route 25 are Caltrans facilities and the intersection of Fairview Road and Hillcrest Road is a county facility not under the jurisdiction of the city. The traffic report found that the four intersections operate at acceptable LOS C or better with or without the project despite all four already meeting the signal warrant threshold during existing peak hours. However, since the addition of project traffic would not cause the overall average LOS C to deteriorate to unacceptable levels, the impact is less than significant. Therefore the project's contribution to existing traffic delays at these intersections would not result in significant impacts under Caltrans, county, or city service thresholds. The impacts are less than significant and mitigation is not required.

Table 31 Existing Plus Project Level of Service Impacts at Unsignalized Intersection

Study Intersection	Control Type	Peak Hour	Existing		Existing With-Project		
			Delay ¹	LOS	Delay ¹	LOS	Change in Delay ²
Fairview Road/Ridgemark Drive and State Route 25 ³		AM	12.4	B	12.7	B	+0.3
		PM	11.2	B	11.2	B	+0.2
Fairview Road and Hillcrest Road ⁴		AM	16.7	C	17.0		+0.3
		PM	12.7	B	12.9		+0.2
Enterprise Road and State Route 25 ³		AM	14.9	B	17.5	C	+2.6
		PM	16.4	C	22.4	C	+6.0
Memorial Drive and Hillcrest Road		AM	14.9	B	14.9	B	+0.0
		PM	13.5	B	13.6	B	+0.1

Source: Hexagon Transportation Consultants 2016, Table 6

- Notes:**
1. The reported delay and corresponding level of service for signalized and all-way stop-controlled intersections represents the average delay for all approaches at the intersection. The reported delay and corresponding level of service for one- and two-way stop-controlled intersections are based on the stop-controlled approach with the highest delay.
 2. Change in delay is measured relative to existing conditions for the analysis of project conditions impacts. Delay is in seconds.
 3. Caltrans facility.
 4. San Benito County facility.

Significant and Unavoidable Impact: Increased Traffic Leading to Levels of Service Below Standard on the Following Highway Segments: State Route 25 Between San Felipe Road and State Route 156; State Route 25 Between State Route 156 and U.S. 101; and State Route 156 Between the Alameda in San Juan Bautista and Union Road in Hollister

The traffic report found that all highway segments studied operate at LOS D or LOS E during peak hours with or without the project under the existing and existing plus project conditions. Although the proposed project would not cause existing levels of service to decline further, the addition of project traffic on State Route 25 between San Felipe Road and State Route 156, State Route 25 between State Route 156 and U.S. 101, and State Route 156 between the Alameda in San Juan Bautista and Union Road in Hollister will increase the percent time-spent-following on these roadways. The addition of project trips to highway segments that already operate at unacceptable levels at any peak hour is a significant impact based on Caltrans standards.

The widening of State Route 156 and State Route 25 is included in the list of improvement projects identified in the regional transportation plan for which traffic impact fees are collected from development to fund the improvements and mitigate project impacts to these roadways. The planned road-widening project includes State Route 156 from two to four lanes between the Alameda in San Juan Bautista and Union Road in Hollister. Planned highway widening along State Route 25 would occur between San Felipe Road in Hollister, north to the Santa Clara County line. Implementation of these widening improvements on the affected highway segments would reduce the project's impacts to less than significant.

Given the regional significance of these improvements, their length and associated pre-planning, facility design, and acquisition of adjacent lands by Caltrans, as well as the substantial costs associated with their construction, requiring any one applicant to construct the improvements may be infeasible. The cost of construction of improvements and rights of way needed to accommodate buildout improvements would require the combined efforts of the County, AMBAG, Caltrans, the City of Hollister and other adjacent counties and cities, and there is no guarantee that other jurisdictions will elect to participate in the cost of identified improvements or that the improvements are constructed in a timely manner. Despite this, the widening improvements are included in the county-wide traffic impact fee program and the proposed project is subject to participation in the program. Refer to Section 4.1, Cumulative Impacts, for additional discussion of the project's contribution to cumulative impacts to these highway segments.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure T-3 requires the payment of traffic impact fees to reduce the project's impact; however, because the necessary improvements to these intersections may not receive funding from other agencies and may not be implemented in a timely manner by Caltrans, the project's impact is significant and potentially unavoidable.

Mitigation Measure

T-3 Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall be responsible for its proportionate and fair share contribution to in the form of payment of the applicable traffic impact fee for the widening of State Route 25 between San Felipe Road and State Route 156, State Route 25 between State Route 156 and U.S. 101, and State Route 156 between the Alameda in San Juan Bautista and Union Road in Hollister, the construction of which will mitigate the project's direct impacts to levels of service along these highway segments.

Less than Significant Impact: Increased Hazards for Bicyclists and Pedestrians

Comments on the city's NOP included neighborhood concerns regarding the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. The site is located within one-quarter mile of Cerra Vista Elementary

School, and it is anticipated that school children generated by the proposed project would attend this school and San Benito High School further west from the site. The proposed project would increase the number of bicyclists and pedestrians using public streets in the vicinity of the project site, which could lead to increased potential for conflicts between motorists, bicycles and pedestrians where sidewalks and bicycle facilities are not present. There are no bicycle facilities located on Enterprise Road adjacent to the project site, although sidewalks are present on the west side of Enterprise Road and on both sides of streets within the Valley View neighborhood west of the site, along Mimosa Street and the Valley View Park frontage to the north, and on one side of the streets within the adjacent Cielo Vista neighborhood to the east. There are no pedestrian or bicycle improvements along Fairview Road and State Route 25 bordering the site.

The bikeway and pedestrian master plan includes a list of priority sidewalk gap improvement projects within the City of Hollister. However, no pedestrian improvements are planned in the vicinity of the project site. Class II bike lanes are provided on several roadways in the vicinity of the project site (refer to Figure 16). Existing bicycle facilities that are nearest to the project site are the Class II bike lanes located on Union Road to the north and on Southside Road, west of the project site. The bikeway and pedestrian master plan (San Benito County 2009) calls for the installation of Class II bike lanes on Fairview Road, Union Road (once extended by others to Fairview Road) and State Route 25 in the vicinity of the project site.

The proposed project includes the installation of streets, sidewalks and pedestrian facilities on the project site and improvements to Enterprise Road. As shown on Sheet 4 of the vesting tentative map (Appendix C), Enterprise Road would be widened to include 25-foot wide roadway lanes, which are sufficient to accommodate a vehicle travel lane and at minimum a Class II bike lane. The proposed project includes land dedication along Fairview Road and State Route 25 that may be used by the County or Caltrans to provide bicycle and pedestrian facilities consistent with the county's bikeway and pedestrian master plan. The proposed on-site bicycle and pedestrian improvements include sidewalks on all internal streets and several easements (refer to Figure 6) that provide connections to Fairview Road and the Cielo Vista Neighborhood. The proposed linear park is an additional opportunity for an informal pathway between approved but not yet constructed development to the north and to Valley View Park.

Goal C2 of the Hollister general plan is to "provide a variety of pedestrian and bicycle facilities to promote safe and efficient non-motorized vehicle circulation in downtown and throughout Hollister." The general plan policies listed previously in this section further emphasize pedestrian connectivity by working private developers and public agencies to ensure provision of safe pedestrian pathways to major public facilities, schools, and employment centers. The proposed improvements to Enterprise Road are required to comply with general plan policies including Policy LU4.4, which requires that streets, paths and bikeways contribute to the system of a fully connected transportation network, and Policy LU4.8, that requires safe, accessible,

convenient, comfortable and functional pedestrian crossings, intersections, sidewalks, street plantings, as well as street furniture and traffic signals. Implementation of general plan Policy C2.1 calls for the provision of bicycle facilities consistent with the San Benito County pedestrian and bikeway plan. In compliance with the city's development impact fee program, new development is required to contribute its fair share toward completion of planned bicycle facilities along Fairview Road. General plan Policy C2.2 calls for coordination with school districts develop, implement and maintain the "Safe Routes to School" program. General plan policies and city development standards require all new streets to be designed following design criteria for complete streets including curb, gutter, sidewalk and bicycle facilities.

The proposed project is subject to compliance with these policies, programs, and design criteria. All street improvements are required to be shown on the improvement plans at the time of submittal for review and approval by the city's Director of Public Works. Compliance with general plan policies, programs, design criteria and standard conditions of approval reduce the risks of conflict to a less-than-significant level. No mitigation is required.

Less-than-Significant Impact: Increased Traffic on Neighborhood Streets

The traffic report estimates that the majority of the project traffic would utilize major thoroughfares by way of State Route 25 and Fairview Road for travel. Some project traffic could utilize adjacent local streets for travel between the project site and other nearby destinations, such as schools, parks, shopping centers, and others. The traffic report evaluated the effects of project traffic along surrounding roadway segments. Unlike the intersection level of service analysis methodology, which has established impact thresholds, there are no adopted analysis methodologies or impact thresholds for the evaluation of neighborhood traffic issues. Therefore, the traffic report based its analysis on approximate volume ranges for specific roadway types, as prescribed in the City of Hollister general plan. The analysis provides an indication of operational and/or safety issues that may arise due to a traffic volume increases as a result of the proposed project.

The evaluation of neighborhood traffic includes the proposed dedication and future improvement of the 2.54 acres of land for the expansion of the existing Valley View Park. The park expansion, which will be required as a condition of project approval, would include recreational facility improvements that may include a basketball court, turf area (baseball/soccer field), and open meadow. Other than a restroom, the improvements would not include permanent facilities (such as an infield, back stops, or soccer nets, etc.). The park is intended to serve the adjacent neighborhoods and would not provide designated public parking. Use of the park by nearby residents will likely result in the use of on-street parking on streets that bound the park (Driftwood Street, Mimosa Street, and Calistoga Drive). However, the use of the expanded park by organized recreational activities is not anticipated given that permanent recreational

structures would not be present. Therefore, traffic generated by the park expansion would not result in significant volume outside of that typically associated with recreational uses by surrounding residents.

The traffic report determined that the addition of project traffic on the study roadway segments would represent no more than a 16 percent increase in daily traffic on each of the roadways, and that daily traffic volumes along all study roadway segments would continue to be within the acceptable daily volume thresholds identified in the City of Hollister general plan. Speed surveys also were conducted along the study roadway segments. As noted in the traffic report, all roadway segments currently have a posted speed limit of 25 mph and the speed surveys revealed the 85th percentile speeds along all four of the study roadway segments exceed the posted speed limit by 2-4 mph. Speeds within five mph of the posted speed limits are considered reasonable and are not indicators of insufficient roadway capacity. The traffic report concluded that operational traffic generated by the proposed project would not have a significant effect to neighborhood streets.

3.17 WASTEWATER SERVICE

This section of the EIR addresses the project's environmental impacts associated with wastewater service and facilities that are not part of the proposed project's wastewater infrastructure. Unless otherwise noted the discussion in this section is based on information found in the *City of Hollister General Plan* (2005a), the *Hollister Urban Area Water and Wastewater Master Plan* (City of Hollister 2008) (hereinafter referred to as the "water and wastewater master plan"), the proposed project utility plan (refer to Sheet 3 and 4 of the vesting tentative map included as [Appendix C](#)), other technical information, and project application materials.

Comments on the city and county NOPs were received from residents of the Cielo Vista neighborhood in unincorporated San Benito County that adjoins the site and from residents of the adjacent Valley View neighborhood in the City of Hollister. The comments identified concerns of potential impacts to wastewater treatment capacity, and from the construction of off-site infrastructure connections to the existing wastewater infrastructure within the Cielo Vista subdivision. Comment letters on the Hollister NOP are included in [Appendix A](#). Comments on the county's NOP for the former project are included in [Appendix B](#).

Environmental Setting

Wastewater services within the Hollister Urban Area are provided by the City of Hollister and Sunnyslope County Water District. There are no wastewater facilities or infrastructure currently on the project site. The project site, along with the 70-acre Cielo Vista Estates subdivision

adjoining the project site is established as San Benito County Service Area No. 22 (San Benito County 2015b) for the purposes of wastewater treatment within the area. [Figure 18, Wastewater Service Areas](#), illustrates the locations of the three service areas.

The Cielo Vista residential neighborhood consists of approximately 76 residences and is served by an on-site enclosed package sequencing batch reactor (treatment facility) that has the capacity to treat up to 30,000 gpd of domestic wastewater. Influent is collected by approximately 1.2 miles of sewer collection pipelines within the subdivision and treated effluent is disposed of by leachfields adjacent to the treatment facility located at 121 Tierra Del Sol (see Figure 2). The *San Benito County 2035 General Plan EIR* (San Benito County 2015b, p. 20-12) reports that Cielo Vista has contracted privately to operate and maintain their wastewater treatment system; the plant disposes approximately 22 acre feet per year of treated wastewater through the leachfields;; the plant has met all discharge requirements on a consistent basis with the exception of salt levels due to water softener use by homeowners; and that the county has considered decommissioning the Cielo Vista treatment facility and conveying raw wastewater to the domestic wastewater treatment plant in Hollister.

The City of Hollister operates and maintains an industrial wastewater treatment plant and a domestic wastewater treatment plant. The industrial wastewater treatment plant primarily treats seasonal industrial waste from the tomato cannery located in the city and also treats excess municipal wastewater and storm water (City of Hollister 2008). The domestic wastewater treatment plant treats domestic, commercial and industrial wastewater in the city and produces Title 22 reclaimed water for irrigating parks and airport landscaping, and ground water recharge (City of Hollister 2016).

The domestic wastewater treatment plant is located on San Juan Road, approximately five miles northwest of the project site. The domestic wastewater treatment plant utilizes a pond system with percolation beds, and a dual-powered multi-cellular process to improve efficiency. According to the water and wastewater master plan, the facility's hydraulic capacity (pumps, tanks, blowers, etc.) is approximately 5.0 million gallons per day (mgd) and permitted treatment capacity is approximately 4.0 mgd. Wastewater system improvements identified in the water and wastewater master plan have been identified and planned to ensure that the domestic wastewater treatment plant is capable of treating 5.0 mgd by 2023. The 2023 treatment capacity is based on buildout of the land uses identified in the Hollister general plan, and *San Benito County 2035 General Plan* for areas within the Hollister Urban Area, including the project site, and is sufficient to serve all of the growth contemplated within the Hollister Urban Area (pp. 4-15). Treated water is reused at the Hollister Municipal Airport, a future park site, and via 11 on-site percolation/storage ponds (HDR 2008).

The San Benito County 2035 General Plan EIR reports that the city's wastewater infrastructure includes over 19 miles of wastewater pipeline, and three lift stations that are able to provide

approximately 5,564 connections for collection, conveyance, treatment, and disposal service. Additionally, the EIR notes that the city's wastewater treatment plan capacity is 5 mgd, 0.5 mgd greater than the 2023 wastewater flow projection of 4.5 mgd identified in the Hollister Urban Area Water and Wastewater Management Plan (HDR 2008). On average the plant treats approximately 2.7 mgd of dry flows (San Benito County 2015b, pp.20-7 – 20-8). As reported in the 2015 Hollister Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan average dry weather flow is expected to increase 3.8 mgd by 2030(Todd Groundwater 2016, p. ES 2).

Project Site

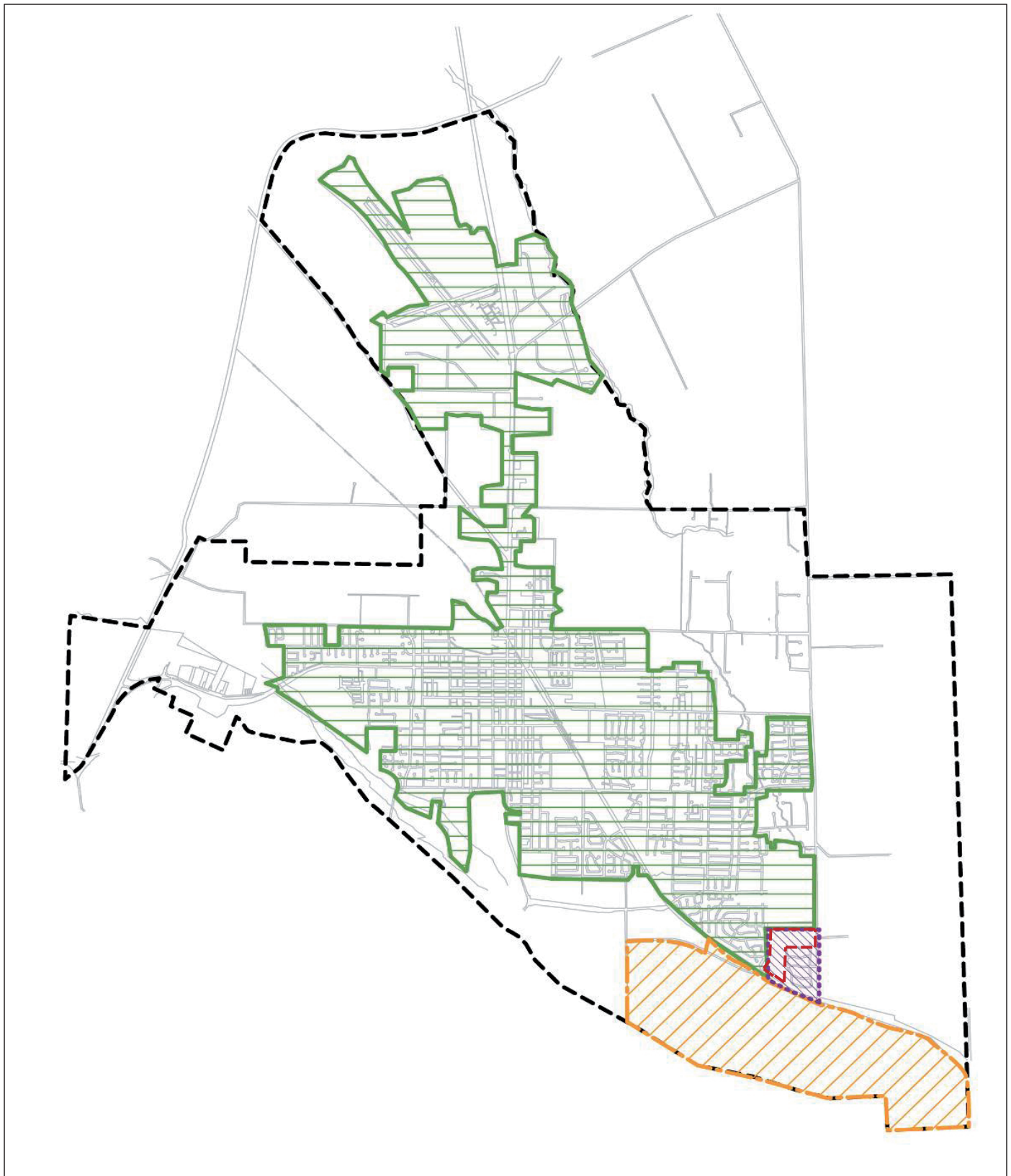
As noted, the project site is located within the Hollister Urban Area boundary studied in the water and wastewater master plan. In addition to the sewer mains located within the adjoining Cielo Vista neighborhood, City of Hollister sewer mains are present on Enterprise Road, near Glenview Drive and Mimosa Street west of the project site.

Regulatory Setting

Regional

Hollister Urban Area Water and Wastewater Master Plan (2008). The plan was developed primarily to identify water and wastewater service development as defined by both the City of Hollister and San Benito County general plans. The city's water and wastewater master plan provides a long-term vision to guide water and wastewater improvements in the Hollister Urban Area, and designates the city's domestic wastewater treatment plant as the regional wastewater treatment provider. The water and wastewater master plan addresses water quality, water supply reliability, and water and wastewater system improvements within the Hollister Urban Area, which includes all of Hollister and portions of San Benito County. Several wastewater system improvements identified in this plan would expand the domestic wastewater treatment plant capacity from 2.7 mgd to 5 mgd, or 0.5 mgd greater than the 2023 wastewater flow projection of 4.5 mgd. However, as population increases, major infrastructure improvements identified in the plan would need to be implemented, including further increases for treatment and disposal capacity and reductions in effluent concentrations.

City of Hollister Long Term Wastewater Management Program (2005). This program identifies major components and actions required under the regional water quality board's permit for each of the city's wastewater treatment facilities. It also describes the city's plan for wastewater treatment and effluent management of current and future wastewater flows. The program assumes the domestic wastewater treatment plant will treat wastewater from the Sunnyslope County Waste District in the future.



Not to scale



Project Site
Hollister
Urban Area



City of Hollister Wastewater Service Area
SSCWD Wastewater Service Area
San Benito County Wastewater Service Area
Cielo Vista Estates

Source: HDR 2008

Figure 18

Wastewater Service Areas

Roberts Ranch Subdivision EIR



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City of Hollister Sanitary Sewer Collection System Master Plan (2010). This plan prioritizes existing and future wastewater collection system needs through repair, rehabilitation, replacement, and new facility installation through the year 2023. The master planning process will also tie the wastewater capacity assessment, both existing and future, to the infrastructure budgeting process. Overall, the city's gravity sewer collection system is in good condition relative to hydraulic capacity. Modeling conducted as part of this plan determined that in general, the majority of the city's existing sewers are of sufficient capacity to serve the City's general plan build-out population. The plan includes performance standards and design criteria for sewer infrastructure improvements.

City of Hollister

City of Hollister General Plan. The following City of Hollister general plan goals and policies are relevant to the proposed project regarding wastewater service impacts:

Policy CSF1.1: Adequate Capabilities and Capacity of Local Public Services. Ensure that future growth does not exceed the capabilities and capacity of local public services such as wastewater collection and treatment, local water supply systems, fire and police protection, maintenance of streets and roads, local school systems, parks and recreational facilities, and landfill capacity, and ensure that public services meet Federal and State standards and are available in a timely fashion.

Policy CSF1.7: Development Review Criteria for Public Services. Prior to granting approval, evaluate each new development in terms of the following criteria:

1. Would the proposed development share a common border with a property that has already been developed?
2. Would the proposed development be adequately served by infrastructure (water, sewer, streets, schools, parks, etc.), which is already in place or mitigated?
3. Would the proposed development be located within the existing service areas of local service providers (fire protection, police protection, solid waste disposal, schools, etc.), and not result in a reduction in their current capabilities?

Policy CSF2.1: Sewer and Water Facilities. Coordinate with responsible districts and agencies to assure that sewer and water facility expansion and/or improvements meet Federal and State standards and occur in a timely manner.

Policy CSF2.5: Costs of New Development. Ensure that the cost of providing sewer and water service to new development proposed outside existing service areas should be borne solely by those proposing the development, thus eliminating any financial burden to existing customers for any required expansion of the sewer and water system network to serve such development.

Standards of Significance

According to the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, a project may result in a significant impact if it would:

- Require or result in the construction of new wastewater facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects; or
- Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider, which serves or may serve the project that it has inadequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments.

Analysis, Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Environmental Topics Eliminated from Further Analysis

Section 21002.1.e of the CEQA statute requires an EIR discussion to focus on those potential effects on the environment of a proposed project which the lead agency has determined are or may be significant. Lead agencies may limit discussion on other effects to a brief explanation as to why those effects are not potentially significant.

Construction of New Wastewater Conveyance and Treatment Facilities. Wastewater generated by the proposed project would require collection and treatment. The proposed project would require construction of wastewater collection infrastructure on and off the site, immediately adjacent to the project site. The proposed project would connect to the city's existing sanitary sewer main that is located under Enterprise Road west of the project site (refer to Sheet 3 and Sheet 4 of the vesting tentative map, Appendix C). On-site sewer mains would be located within public street rights-of way and some construction off the site within Enterprise Road would be necessary to connect to the site infrastructure to the existing sewer main. The

project developer would be responsible for funding the installment of sewer lines to connect the project site, in compliance with general plan policy CSF2.5. The proposed project is subject to compliance with design criteria and performance standards outlined in the city's sanitary sewer system master plan. The city requires the provision of site-specific utilities plans when improvement plans are submitted for review and approval to ensure that the city's standards are met.

According to the water and wastewater master plan Table 4-2 and Table 4-4, the wastewater generation rate for the Hollister Urban Area is approximately 80 gallons per person per day. Based on an average household size of 3.47 persons per household (California Department of Finance 2016b), the proposed project would generate an estimated 788 new residents (227 homes multiplied by 3.47 persons per household), which equates to an estimated 63,400 gallons per day (0.0634 mgd) of wastewater. As discussed above, the city's domestic wastewater treatment plan has a capacity of 5.0 mgd and treats on average approximately 2.7 mgd. The existing plant can accommodate 1.3 mgd of wastewater, which is sufficient to accommodate the wastewater treatment needs of the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not require additional wastewater facilities or construction that could result in direct significant environmental effects, and no further review is required.

However, when considered in light of past, present and reasonably foreseeable future projects, the proposed project would contribute to an cumulative increase in demand for wastewater treatment facilities, the construction of which may result in significant environmental impacts. A discussion of cumulative impacts is found in Section 4.1, Cumulative Impacts.

Generation of Wastewater that Exceeds Wastewater Treatment Capacity. Wastewater generated by the proposed project can be accommodated by the city's existing plant capacity of 4.0 mgd. Therefore the proposed project would not exceed the wastewater treatment facility existing capacity. However; as reported above, the proposed project would contribute to an increase in demand for wastewater treatment that is identified in the water and wastewater master plan through 2023. However, as population increases within the Hollister Urban Area, major infrastructure improvements identified in the water and wastewater master plan would need to be implemented, including further increases for treatment and disposal capacity and reductions in effluent concentrations. Therefore, the proposed project would contribute to cumulative demand for wastewater treatment that may exceed capacity in the future if planned facility improvements are not undertaken. This would be a potentially significant cumulative impact to wastewater facility capacity, which is discussed in Section 4.1, Cumulative Impacts.

3.18 WATER SUPPLIES AND FACILITIES

This section of the Draft EIR addresses the project's environmental impacts associated with groundwater, surface water deliveries, potable water supplies, and storage and distribution facilities. Unless otherwise noted, the discussion in this section is based on information found in the *City of Hollister General Plan* (2005), the *Hollister Urban Area Water and Wastewater Master Plan* (HDR 2008) (hereinafter referred to as the “water and wastewater master plan”), the *2015 Hollister Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan*, (Todd Groundwater 2016) (hereinafter referred to as the “urban water management plan”), information obtained from Sunnyslope County Water District, and project application materials.

San Benito County LAFCO comments on the county NOP inquired about the provision of public services for the former project, given its location in unincorporated San Benito County. Comments on the city and county NOPs were received from residents of the adjacent Cielo Vista subdivision and Valley View neighborhood regarding impacts to water supply under drought conditions, groundwater depletion, and effects to water quality. Comment letters on the Hollister NOP are included in [Appendix A](#). Comments on the county's NOP for the former project are included in [Appendix B](#).

Environmental Setting

Water used for agriculture on the project site is supplied by the San Benito County Water District through a connection at Fairview Road and is distributed on the site via underground pipe. The project site is located within the Sunnyslope County Water District service boundary.

Water Supply

The city's potable water supply comes from several sources: local groundwater, and surface water purchased from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Central Valley Project (hereinafter “central valley project”) and a small volume of recycled water for limited landscape irrigation. The San Benito County Water District manages groundwater basins in much of San Benito County and administers contracted water supply from the central valley project, and is the imported water wholesaler for the Hollister Urban Area (Todd 2016, ES-2). The Hollister Urban Area is an approximately 20 square mile area comprising all of the incorporated, and some unincorporated county lands surrounding the City of Hollister, and is the same land area that was used in the urban water management plan and in the water and wastewater master plan.

San Benito County Water District is the water wholesaler of central valley project water imports and has a 40-year contract with the United States Bureau of Reclamation. The volume of contracted water for municipal and industrial supply within the Hollister Urban Area exceeds the current treatment capacity of the Lessalt water treatment plant. The City of Hollister and

Sunnyslope County Water District are in the process of constructing a second treatment facility (discussed more fully later in this section), which, when fully operational will have a combined capacity capable of treating the entire volume of the municipal and industrial water central valley water project allocations under the current contract.

The City of Hollister and the Sunnyslope County Water District are the two municipal water purveyors within the Hollister Urban Area. The service boundaries of the respective municipal water districts are presented in [Figure 19, Water Service Areas](#). The project site is located within the Sunnyslope County Water District service area and this district will be the municipal water provider for development on the project site. Sunnyslope County Water District purchases central valley project water directly from the San Benito County Water District. The urban water management plan reports that Sunnyslope County Water District in 2015 provided approximately 2,031 acre-feet of domestic water to its customers (Todd Groundwater 2016, Table 6-8).

Future water supply for the city and Sunnyslope County Water District are estimated and reported in total by the urban water management plan due to their shared storage and delivery infrastructure and the locations of storage and pipelines across pressure zones within the two systems, and also because each entity receives central valley project water that is treated in total at the Lessalt Water Treatment Plant. The relationship of the two districts and their shared storage and distribution infrastructure is described more fully later in this section. As reported in the urban water management plan, water supply for retail municipal and industrial uses within the Hollister Urban Area is estimated to be approximately 17,629 acre-feet per year through the year 2035 including the safe groundwater yield of 9,263 acre feet for the City of Hollister and Sunnyslope County Water District identified in the urban water management plan (Todd Groundwater 2016, Table 6-9 Retail: water Supplies – Projected) and discussed more fully later in this section (see groundwater discussion).

Imported Surface Water. The central valley project is one of the nation's major water systems, covering California's entire central valley and portions of California's mountain ranges. Central valley project water deliveries to San Benito County are stored in San Justo Reservoir and managed by the San Benito County Water District. The urban water management plan reports that the San Benito County Water District has a 40-year contract through 2026 for imported water up to 8,250 acre-feet per year of municipal and industrial water and up to 35,550 acre-feet per year of agricultural water. In times of full allocation, the San Benito County Water District is able to purchase additional water to keep as a reserve for future dry years. The San Benito County Water District banks surplus water in Semitropic Water Storage District located in Kern County; this banking provides additional reserve during severe droughts. Currently, 4,500 acre-feet per year is stored with the Semitropic Water Storage District (p. 6-16). The urban water management plan notes that the direct use of central valley project water for municipal uses is limited by the available treatment capacity of the Lessalt Water Treatment Plant and by drought conditions. In water year 2015, the allocations for municipal and industrial users were 25 percent

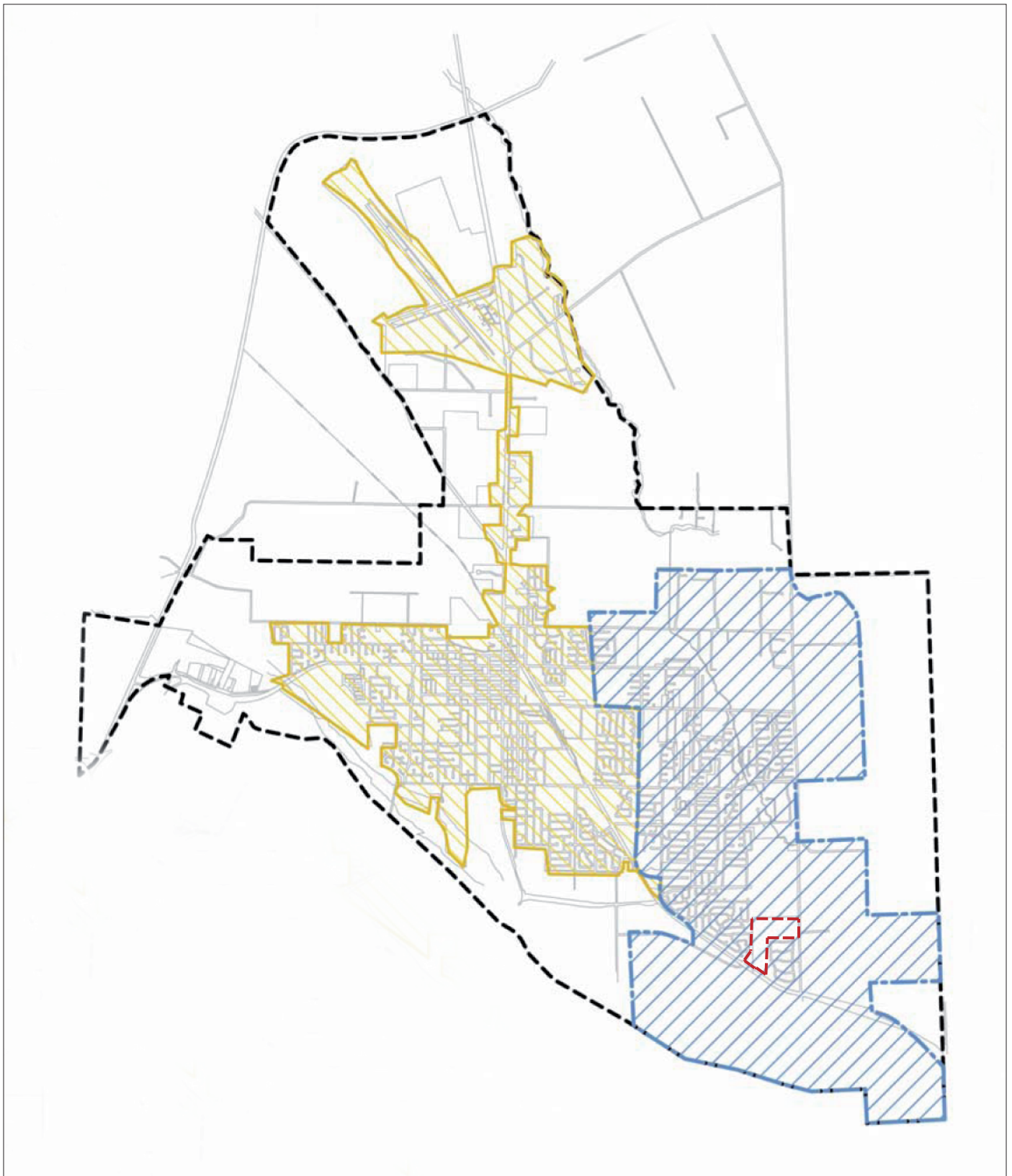
of historical use and agricultural users did not receive any contracted amounts (p. 6-1), due to the drought and state-mandated conservation and delivery cutbacks. The San Benito County Water District plans to reserve sufficient water to provide up to an additional 500 acre-feet for a limited time during the most severe droughts for up to two years (p. 7-8).

The Hernandez Reservoir and Paicines Reservoir, owned and operated by the San Benito County Water District, are used to supplement groundwater recharge (HDR 2008, pp. 2-6 - 2-7). Hernandez Reservoir has a capacity of 17,200 acre-feet and is located on the San Benito River, 43 miles southeast of Hollister, and stores runoff from the upper San Benito River watershed. The Hernandez Reservoir is designed and operated to supplement the groundwater supply in northern San Benito County. Paicines Reservoir, with a capacity of 2,870 acre-feet, is an off-stream reservoir between the San Benito River and Tres Pinos Creek approximately five miles south of Tres Pinos. It is filled by water diverted from the San Benito River, with some of the diversions consisting of natural runoff and some consisting of stored water released from Hernandez Reservoir. The water from the Paicines Reservoir is released for percolation to Tres Pinos Creek and the San Benito River to provide additional groundwater recharge during the dry season. Due to ongoing drought conditions, both Paicines and Hernandez were dry during 2014 and 2015 (Todd Groundwater 2016, p. 6-11).

Groundwater. Groundwater is a major source of supply for the Hollister Urban Area, particularly during times of drought. The Hollister Urban Area is located within the Gilroy-Hollister groundwater basin and overlies the Hollister East, Hollister West, and Tres Pinos subbasins. The three subbasins are hydrologically connected and water pumped from one subbasin affects groundwater levels in the other subbasins (Todd Groundwater 2016, p. 6-4). According to the California Department of Water Resources, recent information is available on the total volume of water in storage in the subbasins. However, the storage capacity of the larger Gilroy-Hollister Valley Groundwater basin is estimated at 932,000 acre feet (Bader 1969, as cited by California Department of Water Resources 2004).

During the recent drought, groundwater levels have declined over much of the basin, most notably in agricultural areas of the basin that rely on groundwater. The three subbasins have now sustained four successive years of drought with limited central valley project water imports. Since 2012, groundwater elevations have declined slightly or remained steady in areas of municipal pumping including the Hollister East and Tres Pinos subbasins. (Todd Groundwater 2016, p. 6-10). Groundwater supply and sustainable yields are described in the urban water management plan (pp. 6-7 – 6-8). The plan notes that in the past five years (2011 through 2015) groundwater has accounted for approximately 73 percent of the total water supplied by both the City of Hollister and Sunnyslope County Water District.

Sources of inflow to groundwater aquifers include percolation and recharge from rainfall, return flow from urban and agricultural uses, recharge of reclaimed water, stream percolation (both natural and managed through reservoir storage and central valley project releases, and



Not to scale



Project Site



Study Area



City of Hollister Current Water Service Area



SSCWD Current Water Service Area



Hollister Urban Area

Source: HDR 2008

Figure 19

Water Service Areas

Roberts Ranch Subdivision EIR



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subsurface inflow from adjacent groundwater basins. Groundwater extractions occur from agricultural, domestic, municipal, and industrial pumping. The urban water management plan identifies 16,000 acre-feet per year as the sustainable groundwater yield within the three subbasins. In 2015, non-agricultural pumping further decreased in response to an executive order for mandatory statewide conservation (refer also to Regulatory Setting). With conservation efforts in place, groundwater pumped from the three subbasins in 2015 totaled 14,908 acre-feet with Sunnyslope County Water District pumping 1,348 acre-feet and the City of Hollister pumping 1,960 acre-feet for a combined total of 3,308 acre-feet over the same period (p. 6-8). The portion of the sustainable groundwater yield available to the City of Hollister and Sunnyslope County Water District is 9,263 acre-feet per year (p. 6-17).

In its discussion of groundwater conditions, the urban water management plan also notes that groundwater elevation declines during drought do not necessarily constitute overdraft conditions; however, a continued reduction in imported water supply combined with increased groundwater demands are a warning of the potential for groundwater overdraft. The plan further states that sufficient storage remains in the basin to accommodate additional dry conditions with limited imported water availability; however, if drought conditions persist, alternative supplies to sensitive areas or more rigorous water demand management may be necessary (p. 6-7).

The volume of groundwater used in the Hollister Urban Area is dependent on the central valley project allocation. Groundwater quality in the area is relatively poor and water users prefer the higher quality central valley project water that is treated at the Lessalt Water Treatment Plant. The urban water management plan assumes that all of the central valley project allocation is expected to be used by the City of Hollister and Sunnyslope County Water District, and groundwater is expected to be used as a supplemental source (Todd Groundwater 2016, p. 7-8).

The urban water management plan concluded that the city will have a surplus of water supply between 2020 through 2035 during normal rain year scenario for both retail and wholesale suppliers. Tables 7-3 and 7-4 in the urban water management plan indicate that regional water sources will be managed through water conservation measures during single dry year and multiple dry year scenarios between 2020 through 2035 for both retail and wholesale suppliers in order to avoid groundwater overdraft and the need for additional imported water supplies. The conclusions take into account the need to blend groundwater with central valley project water to provide higher quality water. As noted in the urban water management plan, groundwater must be less than 50 percent of supply for regulatory requirements but it is preferred to be less than 35 percent of supply to achieve water quality goals (pp. ES 1-2).

Water Quality

The urban water management plan describes the quality of groundwater in the Hollister Urban Area is highly mineralized and of marginal quality for drinking and agricultural purposes.

Groundwater contains high levels of Chromium VI and groundwater pumping for domestic supply is restricted to no more than 50 percent. Chromium VI is a hard bluish white metallic element. Because of this less-than-desirable water quality, groundwater is blended with central valley project imports. It is possible that studies currently being performed to update the water and wastewater master plan may recommend that groundwater pumping provide less than a third of supply in order to achieve higher water quality for both supply and wastewater treatment (recycling). The blending requirement may be adjusted in the future if the concentration of Chromium VI in groundwater increases (Todd Groundwater 2016, pp. ES 3-4).

The three water districts participate in the Hollister Urban Area Water Project to deliver high-quality water, ensure economic stability and contribute to a better quality of life for the entire community. The Hollister Urban Area Water Project builds on previous efforts to create a sustainable and reliable water supply for the greater Hollister area while meeting wastewater discharge requirements and protecting the groundwater basin. The Hollister Urban Area Water Project is one of a series of water projects to improve the Hollister area's water quality and supply through treatment of water imports and groundwater (Sunnyslope County Water District 2016a).

The Lessalt Water Treatment Plant, a jointly-owned facility between the city and the Sunnyslope County Water District was put into operation in January 2003. The plant was designed to treat imported central valley project water using microfiltration and chlorine disinfection. The treated water is distributed to both city and Sunnyslope County Water District customers. The plant has a design capacity of 3.0 million gallons per a day capable of treating 2,240 acre-feet of imported central valley project water annually (Todd Groundwater 2016, pp.6-2 and 7-6).

The urban water management plan reports that the Hollister Urban Area agencies are currently moving forward with a second surface water treatment plant to treat central valley project imports for delivery to urban areas not served by the Lessalt plant. The planned new plant, the West Hills Water Treatment Plant, has a treatment design capacity of 2.25 million gallons per a day, with a peak monthly treatment capacity of 4.5 million gallons per a day. This will increase the treated municipal and industrial central valley project water available to the Hollister Urban Area by 2,520 acre-feet per year. Construction of the West Hills Water Treatment Plant has begun and the plant is expected to be online by the end of 2017. With the West Hills and Lessalt water treatment plants, the Hollister Urban Area will have the capability to treat up to 4,760 acre-feet per year. In addition, the West Hills Water Treatment Plant design includes the potential for future expansion to treat an additional 5,040 acre-feet per year by 2035. If all West Hills Water Treatment Plant improvements are implemented, by 2035, the West Hills Water treatment plant would increase treatment capacity to 9,800 acre-feet per year (p. 6-17).

Hollister Urban Area Water Supply and Water Demand

The urban water management plan anticipates that central valley project imports will continue to be the most desirable water source for the Hollister Urban Area in the future and that demand

will be met with local groundwater blended with imported supplies with a preferred distribution of two thirds imported water and one third groundwater (Todd Groundwater 2016, p. 6-17). By utilizing different types of water supply, the Hollister Urban Area water agencies will reduce the effects of water shortages to each source (p. 6-18). The urban water management plan also discusses water conservation and responses to water shortages over multiple drought years. In the event that allocation of central valley project import water are reduced under prolonged drought conditions, the three water districts, the county and City of Hollister will implement their respective water shortage response plans that call for voluntary and mandatory rationing to reduce water demand. In addition, the Hollister Urban Area water agencies may consider delivery of alternative water supplies to sensitive areas if drought conditions persist (p. 8-1).

The urban water management plan identifies a water demand target of 126 gallons per day per capita (p. 5-3) consistent with the water conservation targets and efficiency improvements required by the Water Conservation Act of 2009 (or SBX7-7) for urban and agricultural water suppliers. [Table 32, Sunnyslope County Water District Existing and Projected Water Demand \(Acre-Feet per Year\)](#), summarizes Sunnyslope County Water District's existing and projected water demand to 2035 based on growth anticipated in the city and county general plans, and for the seven water use categories as identified in the city's urban water management plan.

Table 32 Sunnyslope County Water District Existing and Projected Water Demand (Acre-Feet per Year)

Water Use Category	Existing (2015)	Projected Water Demand			
		2020	2025	2030	2035
Single Family	1,598	2,322	2,727	3,219	3,818
Multi-Family	195	285	337	399	476
Commercial	22	63	98	134	170
Industrial	0	0	0	0	0
Landscape	88	108	108	108	108
Other	39	47	47	47	47
Losses	66	110	143	179	227
Total	1,941	2,935	3,460	4,087	4,845

Source: Todd Groundwater 2016, Tables 4-1 and 4-2 Sunnyslope Retail: Water Demand – Actual and Projected

Water Conservation and Recycled Water

Conservation. The Water Resources Association of San Benito County webpage acknowledges that California is entering a fifth year of severe drought, and local groundwater is not being naturally replenished by rainfall during the drought. In addition, imported water has been cut back due to the lack of rainfall and snowpack (Water Resources Association of San Benito County 2016). The three water districts are member agencies of this association and have implemented water conservation measures consistent with the State Water Resource Control Board recently adopted expanded emergency regulations (refer to related discussion in the Regulatory Setting below). Conservation measures include restrictions on outdoor watering, use of potable water to wash cars, clean sidewalks and for construction activities.

As noted in the urban water management plan, water conservation is encouraged in the Hollister Urban Area through a variety of programs and demand management measures required by the City of Hollister and Sunnyslope County Water District. The demand management measures provide opportunities for water savings and are based on experiences during the recent drought. These measures include compliance with state's Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance, Title 20 standards for water-efficient appliances, and compliance with the California Green Building Code. The demand management measures are outlined in the Regulatory Setting discussion later in this section.

Recycled Water. As reported in the urban water management plan (Todd Groundwater 2016), existing average dry weather flow at the city's wastewater treatment plant is approximately 2.1 million gallons per day (mgd) and is expected to increase to 2.7 mgd by 2020 and 3.8 mgd by 2030. In addition the Sunnyslope County Water District's existing treatment at its Ridgemark water reclamation facility is approximately 0.18 mgd, and is expected to increase to 0.20 mgd by 2020 and 0.24 mgd by 2030. The increase in influent flows to the respective water treatment and reclamation facilities will also increase the production of recycled water. Currently, only the city's plant produces Title 22 recycled water, estimated at approximately 2,500 acre feet per year. Based on the projected increase in wastewater flow, the production of recycled water at the city's water recycling facility is expected to increase to approximately 3,000 AFY in 2020 and to 4,300 AFY by 2030.

Recycled water is currently being used for irrigation at Riverside Park; plans for increased use are ongoing. As reported in the urban water management plan, there are no current plans to increase recycled water use in the Hollister Urban Area. San Benito County Water District plans to distribute the recycled water produced by the city's wastewater treatment plant to agricultural users outside of the Hollister Urban Area (p. 6-15). In the past, Sunnyslope County Water District had planned to provide recycled water for Ridgemark Golf Course but has since postponed this project as it would require additional upgrades to its wastewater treatment facility in the Ridgemark neighborhood south of the project site. Sunnyslope County Water District is

pursuing recycled water in the future but does not have plans to provide recycled water for irrigation within the next five years (p. 6-13).

As reported in the urban water management plan, although there are no detailed plans to increase recycled water use within in the Hollister Urban Area in the near term, there are coordinated efforts to supply recycled water to agricultural users outside the Hollister Urban Area for agricultural irrigation based on the premise that using recycled water for irrigation would reduce demand for and pumping of groundwater, which would increase available groundwater supplies for other non-agricultural users (Todd Groundwater 2016, p. 6-11). Despite these efforts, the urban water management plan does not identify recycled water use as near-term augmentation for supply due to water quality concerns. As efforts to improve the water quality of treated wastewater become more effective, recycled water quality will also improve and its availability and use in the area is expected to increase.

Water Distribution Infrastructure

The Sunnyslope County Water District water storage and distribution facilities include four groundwater wells and three reservoirs for a total capacity of 2.5 million gallons. According to the Hollister Area Water and Wastewater Master Plan Table 2-8 (HDR 2008) (water and wastewater master plan), Sunnyslope County Water District operates and maintains storage tanks on Fairview Road and in the Ridgemark residential community south of State Route 25. The Fairview Road tanks have a total capacity of two million gallons, with one million gallons allocated to the city (p. 2-22). Pressure reducing pressure sustaining stations are used to maintain water pressure for supplemental flows during periods of peak demand. Together the city and Sunnyslope County Water District have over 128 miles of water mains for transmission and distribution. Most of these pipelines were installed in the 1960s.

The city and Sunnyslope County Water District coordinate water deliveries due to service area proximity and configuration of pressure zones within their respective water storage and distribution systems. The Sunnyslope County Water District system connects to the city's water distribution system in three locations to allow transfer of metered water flows between the two systems. Two of the connection points allow flows into the city's municipal water mains. Water can flow either direction at a connection located near the intersection of Hillcrest Road and Memorial Drive (HDR 2008, pp. 2-19 and 2-21).

Sunnyslope County Water District would be responsible for supplying domestic water to the project site, as the project is located within the water district's service area boundary for existing potable water and potentially future recycled water once the needed upgrades to the Ridgemark wastewater treatment facility are made and the district constructs distribution pipeline along Fairview Road. Sunnyslope County Water District potable water mains are present on Fairview Road, Airline Highway, and Enterprise Road.

Regulatory Setting

State

California Urban Water Management Planning Act. The Urban Water Management Planning Act (1983 and Amendments) (Cal. Water Code §§ 10610-10656) requires that all urban water suppliers with at least 3,000 customers prepare urban water management plans and update them every five years. The Act requires that urban water management plans include a description of water management tools and options used by that entity that will maximize resources and minimize the need to import water from other regions.

Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (2009). The Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance prepared by the state Department of Water Resources requires local agencies to implement water efficiency measures as part of its review of landscaping plans. Local agencies can either adopt the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance or incorporate provisions of the ordinance into code requirements for landscaping. For new landscaping projects of 2,500 square feet or more that require a discretionary or ministerial approval, the applicant is required to submit a detailed “Landscape Documentation Package” that discusses water efficiency, soil management, and landscape design elements. The revised ordinance is projected to reduce typical residential landscape demands by about 20 percent from demands estimated using the prior ordinance provisions. Commercial landscapes may reduce water demands by about 35 percent over the prior ordinance.

California Energy Commission Title 20. Title 20 sets forth appliance standards for toilets, urinals, faucets, and showerheads. The appliance standards determine what can be sold in California and therefore, will affect both new construction and replacement fixtures in existing homes.

California Green Building Code. The California Green Building Code requires residential and non-residential water efficiency and conservation measures for new buildings and structures that will reduce the overall potable water use inside each building and structure by 20 percent. The 20 percent water savings can be achieved in one of the following ways: (1) installation of plumbing fixtures and fittings that meet the 20 percent reduced flow rate specified in the California Green Code, or (2) by demonstrating a 20 percent reduction in water use from the building “water use baseline.” The practical representation of the savings in unit water demands from this code would be to reduce indoor baseline unit demands for recently constructed residential units downward by 2 to 5 percent, although this may be redundant with any reduction already represented by the Title 20 appliance standards.

Senate Bill SB X7-7 2009. The Water Conservation Act of 2009 (or SBX7-7) mandates water conservation targets and efficiency improvements for urban and agricultural water suppliers,

with a goal of 20 percent reductions by 2020. The law requires the development of agricultural water management plans, and modifies the requirements for urban water management plans. New water conserving provisions in the California Green Building Standards Code are intended to achieve this goal in new construction.

Sustainable Groundwater Act. The Sustainable Groundwater Act of 2014 provides a framework for sustainable management of groundwater supplies by local authorities, with a limited role for state intervention if necessary to protect the resource. The act requires the formation of local groundwater sustainability agencies that must assess conditions in their local water basins and adopt locally-based management plans. The act provides a 20-year timeframe for achievement of long-term groundwater sustainability. The Department of Water Resources is currently taking the initial steps in developing implementation guidance. Local groundwater sustainability agencies must be established by June 2017.

Executive Orders. Executive Order B-29-15 was issued on April 1, 2015, requiring temporary statewide conservation measures to reduce urban water use statewide by 25 percent compared to 2013 use through February 2016. On May 9, 2016, Governor Brown issued Executive Order B-37-16 calling on the State Water Board to adjust emergency water conservation regulations through the end of January 2017 in recognition of differing water supply conditions across the state. Directive one of the Governor's May 9, 2016 Executive Order Directs the California State Water Board to adjust emergency water conservation regulations through the end of January 2017 in recognition of differing water supply conditions across the state.

Regional

2015 Hollister Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan. The 2015 urban water management plan provides guidance for water management efforts to the year 2035 for San Benito County Water District, Sunnyslope County Water District, and the City of Hollister in accordance with the Urban Water Management Planning Act and guidelines prepared by the state Department of Water Resources. The plan builds on and updates the 2010 urban water management plan, accounting for changes in the California Water Code and local planning and water management efforts. Specifically, Senate Bill 7 (Statewide Water Conservation), water loss data, and new water conservation programs are included in the 2015 plan.

Hollister Urban Area Water and Wastewater Master Plan. The plan was developed primarily to identify water and wastewater service development as defined by both the City of Hollister and San Benito County general plans. The city's water and wastewater master plan provides a long-term vision to guide water and wastewater improvements in the Hollister Urban Area, and designates the city's domestic wastewater treatment plant as the regional wastewater treatment provider. The water and wastewater master plan addresses water quality, water supply reliability, and water and wastewater system improvements within the Hollister Urban Area, which includes all of Hollister and portions of San Benito County.

Water Resources Association of San Benito County. This regional agency provides an ongoing means for agency coordination and public participation, focused on water conservation. The association serves water customers of the following agencies: City of Hollister, City of San Juan Bautista, Sunnyslope County Water District, and San Benito County Water District. The association coordinates and conducts water conservation programs for its participating member agencies and maintains an active website.

Sunnyslope County Water District Ordinance Number 45 (1990). This ordinance promotes water conservation within the service area by prohibiting a variety of water waste and non-essential uses of potable water including washing cars, buildings, or exterior surfaces without the use of a shut-off nozzle; exterior uses (filling pools and irrigation of turf, lawns, gardens, or ornamental landscaping); washing sidewalks or roadways; leak intervention, and using water for construction purposes.

Local

City of Hollister General Plan. The following City of Hollister general plan goals and policies are relevant to the proposed project regarding water service impacts:

Policy LU6.2: Phasing Strategy. Limit future development in accordance with the phasing concept to allow the logical extension of water services and other infrastructure improvements.

Policy H1.4: Timing of Housing and Infrastructure. Continue to support the timing of new housing with needed infrastructure improvements.

Policy H2.4: Resource Conservation. Promote development and construction standards that provide resource conservation by encouraging housing types and designs that use cost effective energy conservation measures and fewer resources (water, electricity, etc.) and therefore cost less to operate over time, supporting long term housing affordability.

Policy CSF1.1: Adequate Capabilities and Capacity of Local Public Services. Ensure that future growth does not exceed the capabilities and capacity of local public services such as wastewater collection and treatment, local water supply systems, fire and police protection, maintenance of streets and roads, local school systems, parks and recreational facilities, and landfill capacity, and ensure that public services meet Federal and State standards and are available in a timely fashion.

Policy CSF1.7: Development Review Criteria for Public Services.

Prior to granting approval, evaluate each new development in terms of the following criteria:

1. Would the proposed development share a common border with a property that has already been developed?
2. Would the proposed development be adequately served by infrastructure (water, sewer, streets, schools, parks, etc.), which is already in place or mitigated?
3. Would the proposed development be located within the existing service areas of local service providers (fire protection, police protection, solid waste disposal, schools, etc.), and not result in a reduction in their current capabilities?

Policy CSF2.1: Sewer and Water Facilities. Coordinate with responsible districts and agencies to assure that sewer and water facility expansion and/or improvements meet Federal and State standards and occur in a timely manner.

Policy CSF2.4: Local Water Supply System. Encourage development in those portions of the Hollister Planning Area which are already served by the local water supply systems or to which water supply systems can reasonably be extended.

Policy CSF2.5: Costs of New Development. Ensure that the cost of providing sewer and water service to new development proposed outside existing service areas should be borne solely by those proposing the development, thus eliminating any financial burden to existing customers for any required expansion of the sewer and water system network to serve such development.

Policy CSF2.6: Provision of Water Service to New Development. Require developers who will require water service for their project to apply to the City of Hollister, the Sunnyslope County Water District and the San Benito County Water District, in that order, for service. Only if the proposed development is denied service by all three agencies can it then be allowed to use groundwater as a source of water.

Policy CSF2.7: Water Conservation Measures. Encourage water-conserving practices and features in the design of structures and landscaping, and in the operation of businesses, homes and institutions, and increase the use of recycled water.

Hollister Municipal Code. The City of Hollister municipal code contains several provisions for efficient water use and water conservation measures. Municipal Code Section 15.22.120 requires that a project have a grading design plan to minimize soil erosion, runoff, and water waste. Grading plan design elements should include configuration and elevations of the landscaped area, storm water retention improvements (if applicable), grading to promote onsite drainage of all irrigation and rainfall water within the property lines, and measures to avoid soil compaction in landscaped areas, and disruption of natural drainage patterns and undisturbed soil. Municipal Codes 15.22.160, 15.22.170, 15.22.230 and 15.22.240 address irrigation efficiency and requirements for irrigation audits to prevent water waste, consistent with the 2009 Model Efficient Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance. Municipal Code 15.22.180 contains provisions for use of recycled water in irrigation systems.

Standards of Significance

The CEQA Guidelines Appendix G indicates that a project may result in a significant environmental impact if it would:

- Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level;
- Require or result in the construction of new water facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects; or
- Not have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources including groundwater, and would require new or expanded entitlements.

Analysis, Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Environmental Topics Eliminated from Further Analysis

Section 21002.1.e of the CEQA statute requires an EIR discussion to focus on those potential effects on the environment of a proposed project which the lead agency has determined are or may be significant. Lead agencies may limit discussion on other effects to a brief explanation as to why those effects are not potentially significant.

Construction of New Water Treatment, Storage and Distribution Facilities. New or expanded distribution or treatment facilities would not be required to serve the proposed project. The proposed project would connect to the Sunnyslope County Water District existing water mains present in the public rights-of-way of Enterprise Road, Fairview Road, Tierra del Sol, and State Route 25 immediately adjacent to the site.

The proposed project would obtain domestic water service from the Sunnyslope County Water District, which currently operates five groundwater municipal wells with a combined capacity of approximately 1.7 million gallons per day. The Sunnyslope County Water District also co-operates the Lessalt Water Treatment Plant with the City of Hollister, which treats water imported from the central valley project for domestic use. The Lessalt design capacity is approximately 3.0 million gallons per day. Sunnyslope County Water District operates four above ground water storage reservoirs with an approximate capacity of 8.2 million gallons in order to pressurize the system and provide emergency and operational storage.

The proposed project would increase water demand on the project site and contribute to water demand that would result from buildout of the general plan that was identified and addressed in the general plan EIR; however, the proposed project is consistent with the general plan Low-density Residential land designation and would not require water greater than that identified in the general plan EIR, for which a number of treatment, storage and distribution improvements are already being undertaken (discussed later in this section). Although the proposed project would increase water demand on the project site, no new or expanded facilities, the construction of which could result in environmental impacts, would be required to meet that demand. No impacts would occur associated with construction of new water treatment, storage and Distribution Facilities and no further discussion of this topic is required.

Less than Significant Impact: Increased Demand for Water

The site currently receives irrigation water from San Benito Water District, but would connect to the Sunnyslope County Water District water mains on Fairview Road, State Route 25, and Enterprise Road. An additional redundant water line would connect to the district's main in the Cielo Vista residential neighborhood near proposed lots 190 and 191. Existing on-site water pipes would be removed and capped at the source.

The proposed project intends to connect to the Sunnyslope County Water District recycled water infrastructure when it is constructed by either Sunnyslope County Water District (along Fairview Road) and/or by the adjacent as-yet-to-be constructed residential development to the north (Mimosa Street). Recycled water distribution lines are proposed for providing landscape water to the park, and would be installed to enable future connection to Sunnyslope's planned recycled water mains on Mimosa Street north of the project site or a future main in Fairview Road, once it is constructed by Sunnyslope, and dependent on the pace of construction on parcels to the north. This discussion assumes that recycled water would not be available in the near term due to water quality concerns identified previously. Therefore, for the purposes of this analysis it is presumed that water for the proposed residential and park uses would be supplied by Sunnyslope County Water District's groundwater and central valley project allocations.

Table 33, *Project Water Demand*, present the potable water demand necessary to serve the project. Based on the urban water management plan per capita water demand factor of 126 gallons per day per person for residential development, the residential project would demand approximately 111 acre feet per year. The urban water management plan does not identify a water demand factor for park uses; however, the plan identifies a water consumption factor of 2.99 acre feet per year per connection for landscaping, which is used in this analysis as a de facto demand factor for the future irrigation needs of the land dedicated for future park use. The total water demand for the proposed project would be 114 acre feet per year.

Water supply and demand for existing and future growth within the Hollister Urban Area to the year 2035 is evaluated in the city's 2015 urban water management plan. According to the urban water management plan demand for Sunnyslope County Water District municipal water is anticipated to increase from 1,941 acre-feet per year in 2015 to 4,845 acre-feet per year in 2035 (refer to Table 32 presented earlier in this section). The 114 acre-feet per year required for the proposed project when completed, comprises approximately 3.4 percent of the Sunnyslope County Water District demand by 2026 and approximately 2.4 percent of the projected year 2035 demand for Sunnyslope County Water District. Predicted water demand for the City of Hollister is 5,325 acre feet per year in 2035 (Todd Groundwater 2016, Table 4-2).

Table 33 Project Water Demand

Land Use	Units	Population	Water Demand Factor	Water Demand
Residential	227 units	788	126 gallons per day	111.0 afy
Park	3.33 acres	n/a	n/a	3.0 afy
Total	N/a	788	n/a	114.0 afy

Source: EMC Planning Group

Note: 3.47 persons per household
1 acre foot equals 325,851 gallons
AFY (acre feet per year)
GPD (gallons per day)

The proposed project does not include groundwater extraction wells. Groundwater levels and flow are monitored by the San Benito County Water District over 100 years. Water levels over time have varied in response to precipitation, groundwater pumping, and artificial recharge conditions. The urban water management plan reports that groundwater levels declined more than 150 feet from estimated highs in some areas during the drought conditions of the late 1970s (Creegan & D'Angelo 1990, as cited by Todd Groundwater 2016, p. 6-10). However, the urban water management plan also reports that by 1998, groundwater levels in nearly all monitored locations had "recovered close to the historical highs as a result of decreased pumping" due to importation of central valley water, increased rainfall, and artificial recharge (Jones & Stokes

1999, as cited by Todd Groundwater 2016, p. 6-10). As noted earlier in the environmental setting of this section, the three sub basins underlying the Hollister Urban Area since 2012 have undergone four successive years of drought and limited central valley water imports, with only slight declines in areas of municipal pumping. Groundwater in the Hollister Urban Area appears to be relatively stable even during multiple year drought conditions, due to management of water supplies that balance imports with groundwater and demand management measures.

The volume of groundwater used within the Hollister Urban Area is contingent upon drought conditions and central valley project allocations, and the capacity of water treatment facilities; however, as noted previously the urban water management plan identifies a groundwater safe yield of 9,263 acre-feet for both City of Hollister and Sunnyslope County Water District customers and a total water supply of 17,629 acre feet per year through the year 2035. The urban water management plan Table 7-2 illustrates anticipated water supply between 2020 through 2035 during normal rain year scenario for both retail providers. For each five year period, the urban water management plan concludes that water supply is sufficient to meet demand and the City of Hollister and Sunnyslope County Water District are expected to experience water surpluses from 4,603 acre feet per year in 2020 to 1,253 acre feet per year in 2035.

For single and multiple dry years the urban water management plan calls for demand management to reduce the need to pump groundwater during dry periods through continued water conservation measures. Supply and demand comparisons for these scenarios are found in the urban water management plan Tables 7-3 and 7-4. No deficits between supply and demand are expected to occur, as demonstrated by the urban water management plan Tables 7-3, and 7-4. All of the central valley project allocation is expected to be used by the City of Hollister and Sunnyslope County Water District, and groundwater is expected to be used as a supplemental source due to water quality concerns. Surplus central valley project imported water stored at San Justo reservoir and Semitropic Water Storage District may also be released from the San Benito County Water District reserve to augment supply during dry years (p. 7-9). In the event that allocation of central valley project import water are reduced under drought conditions, the Hollister Urban Area water agencies would implement their respective water shortage response plans with voluntary and mandatory rationing to reduce water demand (Todd Groundwater 2016, p. 8-1).

The proposed project is subject to compliance with the City of Hollister municipal code requirements for water conservation and efficient landscapes, and includes the installation of “purple pipe” infrastructure to enable future connection to recycled water facilities when they become available, which further reduce the demand for domestic water on the site. The proposed project would not require water that would exceed available supplies or interfere with the San Benito County Water District groundwater recharge programs for the Hollister Urban Area. These programs are already in place to serve existing and planned growth within the

Hollister Urban Area, which includes the project site. The proposed project would contribute to the demand for groundwater identified in the urban water management plan, but would not cause water levels to drop below sustainable levels. Therefore, the proposed project would result in a less-than-significant impact on water supplies. No mitigation is required.

4.0

OTHER CEQA CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

CEQA Requirements

CEQA requires that an EIR contain an assessment of the cumulative impacts associated with a proposed project. This assessment involves examining project-related effects on the environment in the context of similar effects that have been caused by past projects, existing projects, and the anticipated effects of future projects. Although a project's individual impacts can be minor, the significance of its contribution to the cumulative effects other projects must be evaluated. CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 requires a discussion of cumulative impacts when a project has possible environmental effects that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable. The definition of cumulatively considerable found in Section 15065(a) (3) states:

Cumulatively considerable means that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.

Where a lead agency is examining a project with an incremental effect that is not "cumulatively considerable," the lead agency need not consider that effect significant, but must briefly describe its basis for concluding that the incremental effect is not cumulatively considerable. Incremental effects which are not considered cumulatively considerable need not be discussed in detail in an EIR. A lead agency must identify facts and analysis supporting its conclusion that the cumulative impact is less than significant.

Where a lead agency concludes that a cumulative effect of a project, taken together with the impacts of past, present, and probable future projects is significant, the lead agency then must determine whether the project's incremental contribution to such significant cumulative impact is "cumulatively considerable."

A lead agency may determine that a project's contribution to a significant cumulative impact will be rendered less than cumulatively considerable and therefore, is not significant if the project is required to implement or fund its fair share of a mitigation measure or measures designed to alleviate the cumulative impact. The lead agency is required to identify facts and analysis supporting its conclusion that the contribution will be rendered less than cumulatively considerable.

The discussion of cumulative impacts is required to reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, but the discussion need not provide as great detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone. The discussion should be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness and should focus on the cumulative impact to which the other identified projects contribute rather than the attributes of other projects which do not contribute to the cumulative impact.

An EIR must examine reasonable, feasible options for mitigating or avoiding a project's contribution to any significant cumulative effects.

Cumulative Development Scenario

CEQA requires a cumulative development scenario to consist of either:

- a list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency, or,
- a summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document, or in a prior environmental document which has been adopted or certified, which described or evaluated regional or area-wide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact.

For this EIR, the evaluation of cumulative impacts is based on implementation of the proposed project when considered in conjunction with development forecasts based on the buildout of City of Hollister General Plan ("general plan" or "Hollister general plan").

The Hollister general plan land use element defines land use categories within three planning boundaries: the planning area boundary, the sphere of influence, and the city limits. These three areas allow the general plan to address development within the city and in surrounding areas that directly influence development planning and decisionmaking in Hollister. The Hollister

planning area boundary encompasses incorporated and unincorporated territory bearing a relation to the city's planning. The Hollister planning area is generally bounded by Shore Road (north), Santa Ana Creek and parcels east of Fairview Road (east), Bolsa Road and the San Benito River (west), and State Route 25 (Airline Highway) and Enterprise Road to the south. (City of Hollister 2005a, Map 1).

Unless otherwise noted, the geographic area most relevant to this cumulative analysis is the land in northern San Benito County including unincorporated areas of the City of Hollister General Plan Planning Area. San Benito County has updated its general plan, which addresses future development with a buildout horizon of 2035. A similar horizon is expected as the City of Hollister implements its general plan. Although the City of Hollister adopted its 2005 general plan with a buildout horizon of 2025, the city has only recently experienced an influx of development applications consistent with its general plan Infill Development Strategy (City of Hollister 2005a), and as a result, the city is considering extending its general plan buildout horizon and not update their general plan (Avera, pers. com. with Consultant, June 8, 2016).

Both general plans have designated lands west and east of Fairview Road in northern San Benito County for urban uses (see also San Benito County 2015a, Figure 3-1, Land Use Diagram (Countywide)). The county's general plan land use element policies focus and encourage growth within or adjacent to the cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista, or "existing unincorporated communities, new communities, or clustered residential developments in order to preserve prime farmland and rangeland, protect natural habitats, and reduce the financial, social, and environmental impacts of urban sprawl" (San Benito County 2015a, p. 3-1). In the vicinity of Hollister, the San Benito County general plan focuses urban growth in areas adjacent to the city, primarily to areas that are located within the Hollister general plan planning area or immediately adjacent to it along State Route 25 to the southeast. As illustrated by the San Benito County general plan land use diagram, the county's 2035 general plan focuses most of its residential growth within or adjacent to the City of Hollister general plan planning area boundary east and south of the city. In the vicinity of the project site the county applies a land use designation of "Rural Mixed" (RM) (20 dwelling units per acre) for areas immediately west and east of Fairview Road and south of Airline Highway. Further to the east, the San Benito County general plan land use designation on the north side of Airline Highway is "Rural Residential" (RR) (two dwelling units per acre). The county's RM land use designation also requires 30 percent of new residential dwelling units with available public sewer and water to include mixed residential types with an average development density of eight units per acre. The city's general plan land use designations within its planning area and sphere of influence along both sides of Fairview Road and along Airline highway are "Low Density Residential" or "Medium Density Residential" with maximum residential densities of eight and 12 dwelling units per acre, respectively. As a result, reasonably foreseeable future actions that could result in cumulative impacts can be expected to occur under the buildout conditions of each general plan.

However, it is noted that cumulative impacts may occur over different geographic areas depending on the type of impact being evaluated, and the cumulative scenario is not always the same for every environmental topics being analyzed. For example, in assessing cumulative air quality impacts, all development within the air basin contributes to regional emissions of criteria pollutants. Therefore, the cumulative scenario would be a project's contribution to air emissions within the North Central Coast Air Basin. Similarly, in evaluating cumulative transportation impacts, the appropriate cumulative scenario would be the project's contribution to impacts within the area addressed in the regional transportation plan. Additionally, when evaluating cumulative water supply and wastewater services impacts, the appropriate cumulative scenario would be the project's contributions to impacts identified within the urban water and wastewater master plan (HDR 2008) and the urban water master plan (Todd Groundwater 2016) for existing and future growth within the Hollister Urban Area. The Hollister Urban Area encompasses the City of Hollister general plan planning area boundary and includes portions of unincorporated San Benito County,

The analysis of cumulative impacts for individual topic areas provided below generally assumes, unless otherwise noted, that the cumulative development scenario is existing and probable future development associated with buildout of the Hollister general plan. The city's general plan growth projections are presented in [Table 34, City of Hollister Growth Projections through 2023](#), below.

The city's general plan used the city's employment, housing units and population counts as of the 2000 Census and projected values for each category for years 2010, 2020 and 2023. By the end of the general plan's planning horizon (2023), the general plan anticipated that the city's population will increase from 34,413 to a projected 55,192 residents.

Table 34 City of Hollister Growth Projections through 2023

Projection Type	2000 (actual)	2010	2020	2023
Population	34,413	44,790	53,330	55,192
Housing Units	9,924	12,797	15,237	15,769
Employment	13,234	16,355	21,034	22,204

Source: City of Hollister 2005 General Plan

[Table 35, Land Use Calculations](#), presented below, identifies the amount of land designated for each use on the general plan land use map. In addition to calling out land use quantities, the table highlights the range of acceptable land use densities with a given designation where applicable.

As described above, a project's contribution to a cumulative effect is less than cumulatively considerable if the project is required to implement or fund its fair share of a mitigation measure or measures designed to alleviate the cumulative impact. For example, if a program or plan exists to alleviate cumulative impacts to which an individual project contributes (e.g. a regional transportation improvement program) and the program requires individual project applicants to pay their fair share for regional traffic improvements, payment of the fees would serve to mitigate a project's contribution to its incremental cumulative traffic effects.

Table 35 Land Use Calculations

Land Use Designations		Designated Acres	Percent of Total	Maximum Permitted Intensity
RR	Residential Estate	1,419.0	14.7	1 du / 5 ac
LDR	Low Density Residential	3,235.0	33.6	1 to 8 du/ac
MDR	Medium Density Residential	326.3	3.4	8 to 12 du/ac
HDR	High Density Residential	375.5	3.9	12 to 35 du/ac
MU	Mixed-Use Commercial and Residential	137.0	1.4	25 to 40 du/ac
D-MU	Downtown Commercial and Mixed-Use	53.0	0.6	25 to 45 du/ac
HO	Home Office	39.0	0.4	8 to 12 du/ac
WG	West Gateway Commercial and Mixed-Use	57.0	0.6	20 to 35 du/ac
NG	North Gateway Commercial	250.0	2.6	2.0 FAR
GC	General Commercial	145.0	1.5	2.0 FAR
I/AS	Industrial/Airport Support	1,664.0	17.3	1.0 FAR
A	Airport	319.0	3.3	N/A
P	Public	457.0	4.7	1.0 FAR
OS	Open Space	586.0	6.1	0.01 FAR
AG	Agriculture	562.0	5.8	N/A
Total Acres		9,625.0	100.0	

Source: City of Hollister 2005 General Plan

Cumulative Development Analysis

Aesthetic Resources

Cumulative Context. The cumulative context for aesthetics impacts is areas of existing and potential future development within the city limit and in areas of unincorporated San Benito County that are located within or adjacent to the Hollister general plan planning area boundary as defined in the cumulative scenario.

Cumulative Impact. The city's general plan EIR concluded that buildout of the general plan would result in significant impacts to the visual setting and character of the city, but the impact would be reduced to less than significant with implementation of the applicable goals, policies, and actions in the general plan (City of Hollister 2005b, p. 2-13). The general plan EIR also determined that buildout of the general plan would not result in significant impacts due to nighttime lighting and glare with implementation of the applicable goals, policies, and actions in the general plan and additional mitigation measures requiring the development of guidelines for the preparation of lighting plans that include specific guidelines for reducing light and glare (City of Hollister 2005b, p. 2-13 through 2-19). The San Benito County general plan EIR did not identify any significant impacts that could not be reduced to a less than significant level through compliance with general plan policies and programs that limit development on hillside areas, reduce the effects of night lighting and require design standards for development (San Benito County 2015b, Table 2-1).

Project Contribution. Development of the project site consistent with the proposed vesting tentative map would contribute to the impacts to aesthetic resources identified in the general plan EIR. The proposed project would replace the rural agricultural character of the site with residential development and urban visual forms such as buildings, streets, parks and lighting. However, compliance with general plan policies, actions and code provisions for Planned Unit Development identified in Section 3.1, Aesthetics, would ensure that new development on the project site is consistent with the visual character of existing and planned residential development in adjacent R-1 zone districts. Compliance with general plan policies will further ensure that the overall design of the project would be of high quality and blend into the existing environment. The proposed project is subject to compliance with these general plan policies and code provisions, which would ensure that the proposed project would comply with general plan policies and programs.

Conclusion. Therefore, the proposed project's contribution to the cumulative change from rural visual character to urban visual character would not be cumulatively considerable and no further analysis is required.

Agricultural Resources

Cumulative Context. The California Department of Conservation monitors the conversion of important farmland through its Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. According to the Department of Conservation's most recent farmland conversion reports (2014), 115 acres of important farmland were converted to non-agricultural use within San Benito County between 2010 and 2012. Further, the Department of Conservation also reported that of the approximately 889,389 acres mapped for the county in 2012 under the mapping program, approximately 56,211 acres were classified as important farmland and approximately 615,859 acres were classified as grazing land (California Department of Conservation 2014).

The cumulative context for agricultural resources impacts consists of existing and future development within Hollister and unincorporated areas of San Benito County that are located within the city's general plan planning area, and taking into account future urban development of these and adjacent areas that could occur within the north county consistent with the growth projections of the Hollister general plan and the San Benito County 2035 General Plan. Although agricultural resource data (crop reports, farmland conversion reports, etc) are amassed at the county level and regional land use decisions typically have the most effect on agricultural resources, the Hollister general plan planning area boundary is an appropriate area for consideration of cumulative impacts on agricultural resources given the level of anticipated growth for these areas identified in the Hollister general plan and San Benito County general plan.

Cumulative Impact. Past and present projects in the City of Hollister and lands in unincorporated San Benito County within the city's general plan planning area boundary have contributed to the cumulative loss of Prime Farmland in the county over time. Future development that could occur through implementation of the Hollister and San Benito County general plans will contribute substantially to the loss. Conversion of important farmland to non-agricultural use is considered a significant environmental impact.

The city's general plan EIR identified the loss of Prime Farmland due to buildout of the general plan as a significant cumulative impact to agricultural activity within the county. According to the city's general plan, the planning area includes 9,625 acres: 562 of these acres are designated Agriculture (p. 2.6, Table LU2); the remaining acreage is designated for non-agricultural land uses. The city's general plan EIR indicates that about 50 percent of the city's general plan planning area is designated Prime Farmland (p. 4.11-1). Therefore, for the purposes of this discussion it is inferred that build-out of the Hollister general plan would result in the loss of approximately 4,250 acres of Prime Farmland (9,625 acres minus 562 acres of agriculturally-designated land divided by two). As noted in the cumulative scenario, the San Benito County general plan focuses urban growth in areas adjacent to the city, primarily to areas that are located within the Hollister general plan planning area or immediately adjacent to it along State

Route 25 to the southeast. Prime Farmland that is located within the city's general plan planning boundary is included in the discussion above. Lands containing Prime Farmland in unincorporated San Benito County outside of the city's general plan planning area is designated for agricultural land uses by the San Benito County general plan (San Benito County 2015a, Figure 3-1). The loss of Prime Farmland resulting from its conversion to non-agricultural uses is a significant and unavoidable cumulative effect.

Project Contribution. The proposed project would contribute to the significant cumulative impacts to agricultural resources identified in the general plan EIR by converting 26.30 acres of Prime Farmland (less than one percent of the total amount of Prime Farmland within the Hollister general plan planning area) and 27.05 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural uses. As reported in Section 3.2, Agricultural Resources, the LESA prepared for the proposed project found that the overall score for the entire 54.9-acre project site is 52.7 points with a Land Evaluation subscore of 34.13 points and a Site Assessment subscore of 18.61 points. As reported previously, the loss of agricultural land with a LESA score of between 40 and 59 is considered significant if both the Land Evaluation and the Site Assessment subcategories have scores of 20 or better. Since only one score exceeds the LESA threshold of 20 points, the loss of farmland on the project site is not cumulatively considerable.

Conclusion: For the reasons described above, the proposed project's contribution to the cumulative loss of Prime Farmland (resulting from its conversion) in San Benito County is a less-than-cumulatively-considerable impact.

Air Quality

Cumulative Context. The cumulative context for this topic is the effect of existing and future growth of the Hollister general plan on the air quality of the North Central Coast Air Basin (air basin). As discussed in Section 3.3, Air Quality, the air basin is in non-attainment with state mandated thresholds for ozone and suspended particulate matter (PM₁₀).

Cumulative Impact. The Hollister general plan EIR identified significant cumulative impacts on regional air quality resulting from buildout of the general plan. Impacts on regional air quality can also be considered a cumulative impact. Under cumulative conditions, there could be an increase in short-term construction emissions, including reactive organic gases (ROG), nitrogen oxides (NOx), particulate matter (PM₁₀), and localized carbon monoxide (CO) (City of Hollister 2005b, p.5-6). However, these cumulative impacts were determined to be less than significant with implementation of the general plan policies (identified in Section 3.3, Air Quality), and with compliance with air district requirements. For cumulative impacts, the Monterey Bay Air Resources District (air district) recommends that projects be assessed for consistency with the air quality management plan.

Project Contribution. The proposed project would generate construction and operational emissions of ozone precursors and particulate matter that that would contribute to cumulative air quality impacts. As reported in Section 3.3, Air Quality, the proposed project is consistent with the air district's air quality management plan at 2026 and later time periods. Development of the project site would result in criteria pollutant emissions of ozone precursors and PM₁₀ that exceed air district standards and for which the air basin is in nonattainment. According to the CalEEMod air quality modeling, the proposed project would generate operational PM₁₀ and ROG emissions that would exceed the air district's thresholds (refer to Section 3.3, Table 9, CalEEMod Operational Modeling Results Winter Emissions (Pounds per Day)). Therefore, project-related PM₁₀ and ROG emissions would be cumulatively considerable.

Conclusion. Implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-1 – AQ-5 (Section 3.3 Air Quality) would reduce the project contribution to regional air quality impacts to less than cumulatively considerable. These measures include requirements for dust control measures during construction, restrictions on solid fuel heating appliances during operations, construction fleet performance standards for nitrogen oxide emissions and particulate matter reductions, and diesel equipment idling restrictions. The proposed project is also consistent with the city's general plan land use designations that were analyzed in the general plan EIR. The proposed project would not contribute emissions that would result in cumulative impacts greater than those identified and addressed by the general plan EIR. For these reasons the proposed project's contribution to cumulative air quality impacts would be less than cumulatively considerable.

Biological Resources

Cumulative Context. Future urban development consistent with the growth projections of the Hollister general plan will occur largely on cultivated agricultural land. The habitat value of agricultural land within the Hollister general plan planning area and in unincorporated San Benito County is generally diminished due to cropping and agricultural practices that reduce habitat diversity, use of fertilizer and other agricultural chemicals, and human presence. The cumulative context for impacts on biological resources varies with the type of resource being considered, as the range of any particular type of plant or wildlife resource varies in size and species concentration.

Cumulative Impact. In general, cumulative urban development in Hollister and in unincorporated areas of northern San Benito County within the Hollister general plan area boundary has resulted in significant decline of many special-status plant and animal species. The cumulative impact of this loss will be significant and unavoidable. The cumulative effects to biological resources from site-specific development within northern San Benito County as described in the cumulative scenario are the incremental losses or fragmentation of wildlife habitat in the form of natural plant communities. Habitat degradation can also occur by

introducing development in wetland areas, vegetation removal, or introducing humans or other species that encroach and disrupt migratory patterns or degrade the value of adjacent habitat. Construction activities can potentially increase erosion and waterway sedimentation, and urban runoff contaminated with urban pollutants can reduce water quality beyond political borders. The loss or degradation of habitat can lead to impacts to special-status plant and animal species. As urbanization continues, the additional loss of important biological resources, including direct loss of special-status plant and wildlife species and loss of their habitat, will occur. Cumulative development that has already occurred within this geographic area has led to the designation of the Santa Ana Critical Habit Unit for California tiger salamander by the United States Fish and Wildlife Services and a similar loss of habitat for San Joaquin kit fox. Much of the land east of Fairview Road is within the Critical Habitat Unit for the California tiger salamander. Lands west of Fairview Road are not within the Unit, but are still within the range of California tiger salamander.

Project Contribution. As reported in Section, 3.4, Biological Resources, within the project site, the wetlands area near the southwest corner of the site is the primary habitat of significance, within which most impacts would be expected to occur. Development of the 54.9-acre site would occur on disturbed agricultural land and the wetland area that are within the range of protected species such as California tiger salamander, California red-legged frog, western spadefoot, San Joaquin kit fox, nesting birds, and burrowing owls. The proposed project would eliminate habitat for these species. As such the proposed project would result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to the cumulative loss of important biological resources identified above, including the direct losses of special-status plant and wildlife species and their habitat.

Conclusion. Implementation of the mitigation measures BIO-1 – BIO-8 identified in Section 3.4, Biological Resources, would reduce the project's contribution to the cumulative impact on biological resources to less than cumulatively considerable. These measures include pre-construction surveys, establishment of buffer zones when protected species are observed, monitoring during construction by qualified biologist, construction personnel training, off-site compensatory habitat for California red-legged frog and California tiger salamander and the provision of compensatory wetland preservation.

Cultural Resources

Cumulative Context. The cumulative context for this analysis consists of impacts to historic, paleontological and/or archaeological resources and tribal cultural resources that have occurred as a result of existing development or could occur as a result of future development associated with buildout of the Hollister general plan, and other development in unincorporated northern San Benito County, that is located within or adjacent to the Hollister general plan area boundary.

Cumulative Impact. Past grading and construction activities associated with existing development within north San Benito County and Hollister may have resulted in the loss and/or degradation of historic resources, archaeological resources, paleontological resources, including tribal cultural resources and/or human remains, in the past. Future development permitted under the City of Hollister and San Benito County general plans could result in potentially significant cumulative impacts to cultural resources. These impacts could occur through increased intensity of urban uses, and/or destruction or disturbance of undiscovered archaeological, paleontological and tribal cultural resources. Over time, federal, state, and local regulations have been developed that are designed to avoid or reduce the potential for significant impacts on these resources from site preparation (i.e. grading and trenching), construction and other activities.

Project Contribution. As reported in Section 3.5, Cultural Resources, the Phase I site assessment did not indicate the presence of any structures from past use that would be considered historic resources on the project site. Despite established protections, construction of the proposed project could contribute to the cumulative impacts associated with future development in the City of Hollister and north San Benito County, which include activities that could destroy, damage, or disturb archaeological resources, including undiscovered human remains and tribal cultural resources. Section 3.5, Cultural Resources, discussed the proposed project's contribution to this impact. If the proposed project affects a significant cultural resource, its contribution would be cumulatively considerable. However, developers of the project site would be subject to compliance with existing standard conditions of approval, Hollister general plan policies and programs, municipal code requirements and mitigation measures CR-1 and CR-2, in addition to federal and state regulations, which would avoid or lessen site-specific impacts on these resources.

Conclusion. Mitigation measures CR-1 and CR-2 ensure that unknown cultural resources that may be present below ground are protected should they inadvertently be disturbed during excavation and grading activities on the site. Implementation of these measures in addition to compliance with Hollister general plan policies and programs in combination with federal, state, and local regulations for the preservation of cultural resources, would reduce the proposed project's contribution to cumulative impacts on cultural resources to a less-than-cumulatively-considerable level.

Fire Protection Facilities

Cumulative Context. The cumulative context for fire protection facilities is existing development and future growth within the service areas of the Hollister Fire Department, the San Benito County Fire Department (northern San Benito County), and the San Benito – Monterey Unit of CalFire. Service areas are identified in Section 3.6, Fire Services. The Hollister

Fire Department currently provides fire protection services within northern San Benito County and the City of San Juan Bautista. The San Benito County 2035 General Plan land use designations for unincorporated northern San Benito County are primarily for agricultural and low density residential development. As such, future growth within the unincorporated areas of northern San Benito County and within the Hollister general plan area boundary as described in the cumulative scenario would not substantially increase population within the CalFire Unit and San Benito County Fire Department to the extent that a substantial increase in service would be required (San Benito County 2015b). At buildout of the Hollister general plan (2025) this analysis assumes that the Hollister Fire Department would still provide services to the City of San Juan Bautista.

Cumulative Impact. The Hollister general plan EIR identified several general plan policies and programs that would reduce potential impacts related to additional fire staffing and facilities needed as a result of general plan buildout to a less-than-significant level (City of Hollister, 2005b, p. 4.5-10). The location of any other new fire services facilities that may be required cannot be known at present. It is assumed that site-specific impacts and the contribution to cumulative impacts resulting from construction of public facilities would be similar to other types of development that would occur within the Hollister general plan planning area; however, the site- and project-specific impacts of new facilities would be identified and determined when such facilities are proposed. These impacts are generally reduced to a less than significant level through the implementation of regulations, standards, general plan policies, and/or project-specific or standard mitigation measures identified through the CEQA process conducted by local agencies within which these public facilities would be constructed.

Project Contribution. An increase in population on the project site, when considered in combination with past, present and future projects would contribute to an increase in the cumulative demand for fire protection services which will require additional facilities to serve the Hollister general plan buildout conditions. As reported in Section 3.6, fire protection services to the site are provided by the Hollister Fire Department. Although fire protection services would continue to be provided by San Benito County as part of its mutual aid agreement with the City of Hollister, but the project site would continue to be served by the Hollister Fire Department. Compliance with general plan policies requires the payment of development impact fees by new development. Payment of impact fees would mitigate the project's contribution to cumulative impacts to fire facilities resulting from build-out of the general plan, and payment of these fees by the applicant would offset the costs of additional equipment and facilities necessary to maintain adequate fire response across the City.

Conclusion: The proposed project's contribution to the cumulative need for fire protection services would be met through compliance with Hollister general plan policies and programs and would be less than cumulatively considerable.

Geologic Hazards

Cumulative Context. The cumulative context for the analysis of impacts resulting from geologic hazards generally is site-specific rather than cumulative in nature because each project site has a different set of geologic considerations that would be subject to uniform site development and construction standards. As such, the potential for cumulative impacts generally would not combine with similar effects elsewhere and the likelihood of their occurrence is limited. In this case, the site-specific conditions are those that exist within the proposed project site.

Cumulative Impact. Development in general involves excavation and trenching, mass grading, and cut-and-fill and other construction methods needed to create building pads, roadways, and infrastructure. Development projects are subject to compliance with local and state laws and regulations including the seismic safety standards contained in the Uniform Building Code, Hollister general plan policies, municipal code provisions and other building and engineering standards designed to reduce risks from grading and seismic hazards. As a result, cumulative exposures to seismic and soils hazards are a less than significant cumulative impact.

Project Contribution. There are no faults on the project site and the topography of the project site is relatively flat; the potential for erosion and/or slope instability is low. Development of the project site would involve excavation and trenching, mass grading, and cut-and-fill and other construction methods needed to create building pads, roadways, and infrastructure. Due to the topography of the site, the potential for erosion and/or slope instability is low. However, alterations to topography are proposed near the boundary of the Cielo Vista neighborhood, which is at a slightly higher elevation than the project site, and excavation activities associated with the proposed project are subject to compliance with local and state laws and regulations, including the seismic safety standards contained in the Uniform Building Code, Hollister general plan policies, municipal code provisions, and other building and engineering standards designed to reduce geological risks from grading and seismic hazards.

Conclusion. The proposed project is subject to compliance with local and state laws and regulations, including the seismic safety standards contained in the Uniform Building Code, Hollister general plan policies, municipal code provisions, and other building and engineering standards designed to reduce geological risks from grading and seismic hazards. As a result, seismic and soils hazards would be less-than-cumulatively considerable.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Global climate change is, as the name implies, a global phenomenon. Greenhouse gas emissions released to the atmosphere from a variety of human activities and natural processes that occur across the globe are contributing to global warming. While the U.S. emits the largest per capita

volume of GHGs of any country in the world, other major countries contribute substantial volumes of emissions that continue to grow on a per capita basis. Because climate change is a global phenomenon, it is highly unlikely that any one development project located anywhere in the world would have a significant individual impact on climate change. It is the sum total of contributions of development around the world that contribute to the problem. Hence, global climate change is inherently a cumulative effect.

The individual contribution of a project to GHGs in the atmosphere can generally be quantified in terms of volume of greenhouse gas emissions that it generates. However, the precise indirect effects of that contribution are difficult if not impossible to identify due to the complexity of local, regional, and global atmospheric dynamics and to the broad scale at which global warming impacts such as sea level rise, increase in weather intensity, decrease in snowpack, etc. are known to occur.

As noted in Section 3.8, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, the proposed project as mitigated, would generate approximately 3,460.49 metric tons CO₂e annually that contribute to climate change. Because the potential impacts of the proposed project are inherently considered in a cumulative context, the analysis in Section 3.8, Climate Change, is a cumulative impact assessment. The estimated project GHG emissions resulting from the proposed project, taking into account the legislative/regulatory reductions identified in Section 3.8, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, would be 4.10 MT CO₂e/service population in 2020 and below the 2020 threshold of significance of 4.88 MT CO₂e/service population. However, estimated GHG emissions of the proposed project would exceed the 2027 threshold of significance by approximately 0.04 MT CO₂e/year in 2027. As such, project GHG emissions in 2027 would be cumulatively considerable. Implementation of mitigation measure GHG-1 would ensure that the project's 2027 GHG emissions fall below the threshold of significance and are less than cumulatively considerable and less than significant.

Conclusion. Mitigation Measure GHG-1 requires the applicant to demonstrate that emissions reductions construction and design elements have been incorporated into the project, through preparation of a GHG Emissions Reduction Plan. Applicable reduction measures include, but are not limited to, installation of vehicle chargers in garages, design residences to Title 24 standards in effect at the time that building permits are issued, provide on-site renewable energy features (e.g. solar photovoltaic cells) in a sufficient number of residences, or other measures demonstrated by the applicant to the satisfaction of the Planning Director that achieve measurable, validated GHG emissions reductions. With implementation of mitigation measure GHG-1, the project's contribution to cumulative GHG emissions is less than cumulatively considerable.

Hazardous Materials

Cumulative Context. The cumulative context for impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials is existing development and future growth in north San Benito County including Hollister and San Juan Bautista. Local, state, and federal regulations apply to siting new stationary source emitters of toxic air contaminants and also to industrial uses that routinely handle hazardous materials and waste. The use and handling of hazardous materials, including hazardous waste as part of commercial, industrial, and residential use activities within this geographic area has been regulated over time by a range of federal, state and local regulations. As new development occurs in these areas, the same regulations will apply with the end result that related cumulative impacts would be less than cumulatively significant.

Cumulative Impact. Cumulative development consistent with the Hollister, San Juan Bautista, and San Benito County general plan land use designations in north San Benito County allow construction, manufacturing, and other service and household practices involving hazardous materials and waste. As reported in Section 3.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, activities associated with the routine use and transport of hazardous materials are subject to federal, state, and county regulations. Potential future development in the region also would include similar activities; however, much of the future development is focused toward residential growth or continued rural uses with very limited industrialization. Impacts resulting from these activities are generally site-specific and are typically further reduced through compliance with the respective Hollister, San Juan Bautista, and San Benito County general plan policies, conditions of approval and standard mitigation measures. Therefore, impacts related to hazardous materials resulting from cumulative development activity within the region would not be cumulatively considerable.

Project Contribution. Construction of the proposed project would contribute to the cumulative impact described above; however, as noted in Section 3.9, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, construction activities are subject to compliance with numerous federal state and local regulations regarding the handling and disposal of hazardous materials. Development of the project site with residential uses is subject to compliance with general plan policies and other state and local regulations for the treatment of hazardous materials and would not create or result in a significant threat of upset and/or accidental release of such materials that would be hazardous to the public or the environment.

Conclusion. The proposed project's contribution to the cumulative impact of an increased risk of hazardous materials releases would be less than cumulatively considerable.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Cumulative Context. The cumulative context for hydrology and water quality impacts is existing development and future growth within the general plan Planning Area in the city's 2005 general plan, and also identified as the Hollister Urban Area boundary identified in the 2008 storm water master plan and 2011 storm drain master plan. The overall drainage pattern within the Hollister Urban Area is relatively flat with elevation differences of 500 feet at Fairview Road to about 210 feet to the north of the municipal airport. San Benito River and Santa Ana Creek watersheds collect rainwater that has historically been used as the primary source of groundwater recharge. The San Benito River currently handles only runoff from the area west of the southern pacific railroad tracks and from the Sunnyslope area of Hollister.

In addition, when discussing local pollutants of concern, it is important to note that the San Benito River has been identified as an impaired water body per Section 303 (d) of the Clean Water Act due to high levels of fecal coliform and sediments. The City of Hollister general plan policies and municipal code requirements identified in Section 3.10, Hydrology and Water Quality, and requirements contained in the 2008 storm water master plan address the city's storm water and related pollutant contributions to the impaired San Benito River.

Cumulative Impact. Impacts to water quality and drainage resulting from cumulative development of Hollister general plan land use designations were addressed in the Hollister general plan EIR Chapter 4.10 (City of Hollister 2005b). The EIR determined that development of general plan land uses would have a significant impact on water quality due to an increase in the loading of petrochemical contaminants, heavy metals and pesticide, and herbicide residues to natural and artificial drainage-ways and could contribute to groundwater quality degradation and/or contamination within the planning area (p. 4.10-20). The general plan EIR concluded that compliance with state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to water quality, mitigation measures addressed in project-specific analysis, active city participation in countywide programs, and implementation of general plan policies, as well as required mitigation for refinement of city Program CSF.F related to water and wastewater master planning would ensure that cumulative water quality impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level (p. 4-10-21). The San Benito County General Plan EIR also identified cumulative impacts to water quality resulting from buildout of the county general plan, and similarly concluded that these impacts would be less than significant through compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, implementation of general plan policies and countywide programs, and continued water and wastewater master planning (San Benito County 2015b, Table 13-2).

Project Contribution. The proposed project would generate a cumulatively considerable increase in storm water and potentially polluted urban runoff that would contribute to the

cumulative environmental impacts identified in the general plan EIR. As determined in Section 3.10, Hydrology and Water Quality, the project is subject to compliance with general plan policies and municipal code requirements, required NPDES permit requirements, Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan implementation of BMPs to minimize runoff during construction, and with the regional water quality control board's post-construction storm water management requirements.

Conclusion. Mitigation measure HYD-1 requires preparation of a drainage plan that demonstrates project consistency with these policies, programs and regulations and minimizes the volume of storm water and transport of sediments and other project-related pollutants to off-site or "downstream" areas, including the San Benito River. Compliance with the policies and regulations identified above, in addition to implementation of mitigation measure HYD-1, reduce the project's contribution to cumulative water quality impacts to less than cumulatively considerable.

Noise

Cumulative Context. The cumulative context for noise-related impacts is existing development and future growth within the general plan planning area. Noise and vibration levels decrease with distance and noise impacts are typically site-specific; however, the noise report (Illingworth and Rodkin 2016) utilizes the cumulative scenario identified in the traffic report for the project prepared by Hexagon Traffic Consultants (2016), which also accounts for planned, but not yet approved and approved but not yet constructed projects. The noise report identifies the primary source of noise in the region as vehicle traffic on area roadways. Vibration that can result in significant cumulative impacts is most common with construction equipment, trains, or large trucks and rail activity. There are no sources of vibration noise in the vicinity of the project site.

Cumulative Impact. The general plan EIR identified that with buildout of the general plan, existing noise sensitive land uses would be exposed to minor increases in ambient noise levels from traffic, roadway improvement projects, stationary noise sources and construction. The general plan EIR concluded that compliance with city regulations and general plan policies and programs would reduce these noise impacts to a less-than-significant level (p. 4.4-7 – 4.4-9). General plan policy HS3.1 requires mitigation for perceptible increases in noise levels where the existing ambient noise levels are greater than 60 dBA in residential areas. Therefore, it can be inferred that cumulative impacts of buildout of noise in residential areas with an ambient noise level of 60 dBA are potentially significant. Similar determinations were made in the San Benito County general plan EIR; however, within unincorporated San Benito County, the day-night community noise level is 65 dBA.

Table 36, *Cumulative Noise Levels*, presents the predicted cumulative noise environment at noise measurement locations utilized by the noise report with and without the project (Illingworth and Rodkin 2016) and noise increases the project's contribution to cumulative ambient noise.

Table 36 Cumulative Noise Levels

Existing Residences	Measured and Modeled Noise Levels ¹			Noise Increases	
	Existing	Cumulative	Cumulative plus Project	Cumulative	Cumulative plus Project
Along Airline Highway/State Route 25	60-61	61-63	61-63	1-2 dBA	0 dBA
Along Fairview Road	58-59	60-61	60-61	2 dBA	0 dBA
Along Enterprise Road, Airline Highway/State Route 25 to Glenview Drive	55-57	56-58	57-59	1 dBA	1 dBA
Along Enterprise Road, Glenview Drive to Mimosa Street	54-55	55-56	58	1 dBA	2-3 dBA

Source: Illingworth and Rodkin 2016, Table 8.

Note: 1. Measured and modeled levels expressed in dBA L_{dn}

A cumulative noise impact is significant if the cumulative traffic noise level increase is 3 dBA L_{dn} or greater for existing levels exceeding 60 dBA L_{dn} or is 5 dBA L_{dn} or greater for existing levels at or below 60 dBA L_{dn}. As shown in the table above, the noise report found that under cumulative conditions (without the project) ambient noise levels would increase by 1-2 dBA near residential uses along Enterprise Road, Fairview Road and State Route 25; however, significant cumulative noise impacts have the potential (based on the modeling forecasts) to occur only in backyards adjoining State Route 25 and Fairview Road where ambient noise levels under cumulative conditions without the project are greater than 60 dBA. Therefore, the cumulative impact along these two roadways is potentially significant.

Project Contribution. A “cumulatively considerable” contribution to cumulative traffic noise levels as an increase of 1 dBA L_{dn} or more attributable solely to the proposed project. As

illustrated in the preceding table, the proposed project would not generate noise of 1 dBA or greater along State Route 25 or Fairview Road. However, the proposed project's contribution to traffic noise along Enterprise Road, between Airline Highway/State Route 25 and Glenview Drive and between Glenview Drive and Mimosa Street are 1-3 dBA, which would be a cumulatively considerable contribution.

Conclusion. The proposed project is consistent with the general plan Low Density Residential land use designation and would not result in noise impacts greater than those identified and addressed in the general plan EIR for low-density residential uses; however, as noted above, the proposed project would contribute to site-specific mobile-source cumulative noise impacts. Mitigation measure N-1 (refer to Section 3.11, noise) provides a number of options for reducing project's contribution to the cumulative ambient noise levels along Enterprise Road. Implementation of mitigation measure N-1 would reduce the project's contribution to a less than cumulatively considerable level by reducing roadway noise exposures along Enterprise Road. No additional mitigation is required.

Parks and Recreation Facilities

Cumulative Context. The cumulative context for parks and recreational facilities are the federal, state, regional and local parks in San Benito County (refer to Section 3.12, Parks and Recreation). New cumulative development must be supported by a range of parks and recreational services and related park facilities.

Cumulative Impact. Cumulative impacts to regional park facilities resulting from increased demand associated with buildout of the city's general plan, including the project site, were addressed in the general plan EIR. The EIR found that implementation of the Park Facility Master Plan, policies and programs contained in the Hollister general plan, and the maintenance of adequate staffing levels consistent with population growth would reduce cumulative impacts to city parks to a less-than-significant level. Cumulative impacts that would require construction of such park facilities are generally similar to those for other types of cumulative development that would occur in the vicinity.

Already-constructed and planned park facility improvements and expansions should compensate for the additional demand to federal, state, and regional parks. The cumulative impacts to these types of parks are generally reduced to a less than cumulatively considerable level through the implementation of regulations, standards, general plan policies, and/or project-specific or standard mitigation measures identified through the CEQA process conducted by the public agency within which the facilities would be constructed. Therefore, the cumulative impact resulting from buildout of the Hollister general plan to federal, state, and/or regional parks would be less than cumulatively considerable and less than cumulatively significant.

Project Contribution. The proposed project would contribute to an increase in demand for parks and the cumulative impacts to area parks identified in the general plan EIR. As such the project would also contribute to the need for future construction and maintenance activities in area parks that may result in significant environmental effects. The project's contribution to the cumulative demand for city parks would be addressed through the provision of land for expansion of Valley View Park, and by the provision of a linear public park and other open-space on the site. Future construction of improvements to the park would contribute to the cumulative impacts identified in this EIR analysis of the proposed project. The project's contribution to federal, state and regional parks would be addressed by already-constructed and planned park facility improvements and expansions that would compensate for project-related additional demand to federal, state, and regional parks.

Conclusion. Therefore, the project's contribution to cumulative impacts from constructing new federal, state or regional developed parks or modified park facilities needed to support the population growth resulting from development within the City of Hollister would be less than cumulatively considerable and less than cumulatively significant.

Police Protection Facilities

Cumulative Context. The cumulative context for law enforcement facilities are the respective service areas of the Hollister Police Department within the City of Hollister and the San Benito County Sheriff Department in unincorporated areas of San Benito County.

Cumulative Impact. Similar to the cumulative impacts to fire protection facilities, cumulative environmental impacts from constructing new law enforcement facilities necessary to serve the growth projections of the city's general plan can be expected to be similar to those for other types of cumulative development that would occur in the vicinity. Likewise, while the precise location of new facilities needed to serve the city's general plan buildout population and service area is not known. However, site-specific impacts are generally reduced to a less-than-significant level through the implementation of regulations, standards, general plan policies, and/or project-specific or standard mitigation measures identified through the CEQA process that would be conducted by Hollister when new facilities are proposed.

Project Contribution. The proposed project is consistent with the Hollister general plan land use designations and would contribute to the need for new and expanded law enforcement facilities identified in the Hollister general plan and general plan EIR. These effects would be reduced to less than cumulatively considerable by the payment of development impact fees and in addition, would be incremental relative to those from cumulative development.

Conclusion. For these reasons the proposed project's contribution to the cumulative need for police services would be met through compliance with Hollister general plan policies and

programs, including the payment of development impact fees. Therefore, the proposed project's contribution to the cumulative impacts from constructing new police protection facilities would be less than cumulatively considerable and less than cumulatively significant.

School Facilities

Cumulative Context. Cumulative development must be supported by a range of educational services and related school facilities. The cumulative context for impacts related to the construction of new or expanded school facilities are the service boundaries of the Hollister School District and San Benito High School District.

Cumulative Impact. Comments on the NOP made by Hollister School District indicate new school sites are needed to serve the number of students that will be generated by cumulative development within the district's service boundary. Both the city and county general plan EIRs conclude that new school facilities, the construction of which could result in significant environmental effects, would be needed to accommodate population growth anticipated by the city's and county's respective general plans. The Hollister School District is currently considering construction of a new K-8 school within the Santana Ranch Specific Plan boundary in unincorporated San Benito County east of Fairview Road. The San Benito High School District is in the process of implementing facility upgrades and modernization funded by the 2014 voter-approved Measure G. Additional facility improvements and expansions are identified in the San Benito High School Facilities Masterplan, which will be implemented as funds are obtained.

Although the locations of other future school facilities are currently unknown, as with the construction of other public facilities, the cumulative environmental impacts associated with their development would be expected to be similar to the impacts of other cumulative development within the each of the districts' respective service boundaries. Specific improvements as a result of the construction of a new school project, however, have not been identified; therefore, environmental analysis of specific potential impacts associated with development of any future facilities would be speculative at this time. It is anticipated that a range of project- and site-specific environmental impacts, including those typically associated with the construction and operation of school facilities, would be required to be analyzed by the district within which future site-specific school projects are proposed and constructed.

Project Contribution. Development of the proposed project would generate 261 school-aged children: 130 kindergarten through sixth grade students, 65 seventh through eighth grade students, and 66 high school students (refer to Section 3.14, School Facilities), and would contribute to increased demand for school facilities identified in the general plan EIR. As reported earlier in Section 3.14, the increase in schoolchildren that would contribute to a

cumulative need for new or modified school facilities and the potentially significant environmental impacts of constructing them to serve past, present and reasonably foreseeable development within the each districts' service areas is a cumulatively considerable contribution.

Conclusion. With the exception of the proposed K-8 facility within the Santana Ranch Specific Plan boundary, the location of new schools or modifications to existing school facilities cannot be known at present. The impacts of constructing the facilities would be similar to other types of development that would occur within the Hollister and San Benito High School district boundaries. The proposed project's contribution to these effects would be reduced to less than significant by the payment of state-mandated school impact fees, and in addition, would be incremental relative to those from cumulative development. Therefore, the project's contribution to cumulative impacts from constructing new or modified school facilities needed under buildout conditions would be less than cumulatively considerable.

Solid Waste Facilities

Cumulative Context. The cumulative context for solid waste is the service area for Recology San Benito County, which includes the City of Hollister, City of San Juan Bautista, and unincorporated San Benito County.

Cumulative Impact. The John Smith Road Landfill is operated by Waste Connections through a contract administered by San Benito County Integrated Waste Management agency (San Benito County 2015b). As reported in Section 3.15, Solid Waste, the projected remaining capacity of the John Smith Road Landfill as of November 30, 2012, was 4.6 million cubic yards with a daily permitted capacity at the land fill of a maximum 1,000 tons per day (CalRecycle 2016). Buildout of the Hollister, San Juan Bautista, and San Benito County general plans will generate additional waste disposal needs. Cumulative waste disposal needs will ultimately require expansion of available landfills, which is a significant cumulative impact. In addition, Waste Connections Inc. under an Operating Agreement with the County will be constructing a new landfill in the near future with an estimated capacity of 45 years at 850 tons per day (San Benito County 2015b, p. 20-16).

The city's general plan EIR identified that development consistent with the general plan would result in a significant impact to landfill capacity unless mitigated (4.5-17). Policies and programs contained in the general plan and mitigation measures in the general plan EIR call for coordination with San Benito County to reduce long-term impacts on landfill capacity by assuring appropriate planning for and construction of adequate solid waste facilities, and also by encouraging waste reduction and recycling. The San Benito County general plan EIR reports that a Resource Recovery Park project was approved in March of 2014 that will operate in partnership with the John Smith Road Landfill to offset the need for additional landfill capacity

and provide recyclable materials and energy for businesses also located in the Resource Recovery Park (San Benito County 2015b, p. 21). The proposed recycling facilities and expanded landfill footprint would be used to limit the need to permit additional landfill capacity in the County. In addition, the county Compliance with the above general plan policies in conjunction with other state and local waste reduction programs and policies will facilitate Hollister's continued downward trend in solid waste disposal rates and subsequent reduced demands on landfill facilities. The general plan EIR determined that implementation of these policies programs and mitigation would reduce the cumulative impact to a less-than-significant level.

Project Contribution. The proposed project would contribute approximately 1.6 tons of solid waste per day (788 residents x 4.1 pounds of solid waste per person per day) to be disposed of in area landfills. Currently, the land fill receives a weekly average of approximately 760 tons of solid waste per day, which would increase to 761.6 tons per day with the proposed project's contribution and would not exceed the land fill's current daily permitted capacity limit of 1,000 tons per day. Although the proposed project would contribute to increased demand for landfill availability, the proposed project would not result in a significant contribution that would accelerate closure earlier than anticipated. Compliance with general plan policies requiring waste reduction and recycling and coordination with San Benito County programs in addition to other state waste reduction programs and policies will facilitate the county's continued downward trend in solid waste disposal rates and resultant demands on landfill facilities. The proposed project is consistent with general plan land use designations and would not generate solid waste at a rate greater than that studied and addressed in the general plan EIR, which has since reduced county-wide through continued compliance with waste diversion policies and programs.

Conclusion. The proposed project's contribution to an increased demand for landfill disposal is less than cumulatively considerable.

Traffic

Cumulative Context. The cumulative context for traffic is the existing and future growth that would occur within San Benito County that would affect the study intersections and roadway and highway segments identified in Section 3.16, Traffic and Circulation. The traffic report (Hexagon Transportation Consultants 2016) assessed the cumulative traffic environment under two scenarios: background conditions and cumulative conditions, with cumulative conditions including background conditions. The assumptions for future baseline traffic volumes under background conditions include buildout of currently approved, but not yet constructed projects in the City of Hollister and northern San Benito County. The assumptions for future baseline traffic volumes in the cumulative condition scenario include buildout of pending, but not yet approved projects in City of Hollister and northern San Benito County. In addition to the

proposed improvements to Enterprise Road that would be constructed as part of the project, the traffic report also identifies improvements to Union Road, which will be extended from its current termination point, east of Airline Highway, eastward to Fairview Road. The future intersection of Fairview Road and Union Road will be signalized. These improvements are assumed to be in place in the cumulative context.

Cumulative Impact. Both the Hollister and San Benito County general plan EIRs identified significant cumulative traffic impacts in the region that would result from buildout of their respective general plans. The Hollister general plan EIR states that buildout of the general plan will contribute to significant cumulative traffic impacts in the region (City of Hollister 2005b, p. 4.2-10). The San Benito County General Plan EIR (San Benito County 2015b, p. 22-15), concluded that implementation of the county's 2035 general plan also identified significant cumulative impacts from additional traffic on roads and state highways in San Benito County and the region, that would create traffic operations that would exceed level of service standards. Both general plans called for the implementation of general plan policies and programs to reduce their respective contributions to the significant cumulative traffic impacts, such as those that call for participation in the regional traffic impact fee program and others that promote alternative modes of transportation. The county's general plan EIR also concludes that the cumulative impact would be significant and unavoidable because the cost of construction of improvements and rights of way needed to accommodate buildout improvements would require the combined efforts of the County, AMBAG, Caltrans, the City of Hollister and other adjacent counties and cities, and there is no guarantee that other jurisdictions will elect to participate in the cost of identified improvements or that the improvements are constructed in a timely manner, i.e., by the county's 2035 general plan buildout date (p. 22-15). For these reasons cumulative traffic impacts are potentially significant and unavoidable.

Project Contribution. The traffic report determined that the proposed project would contribute to cumulative traffic impacts on certain signalized and unsignalized intersections and along study highway segments under both background and cumulative conditions. The project's contribution to cumulative level of service impacts to signalized intersections are presented in [Table 37, Project Contributions to Cumulative Level of Service Impacts \(Signalized Intersections\)](#). The project's contribution to cumulative level of service impacts to unsignalized intersections are presented in [Table 38, Project Contributions to Cumulative Level of Service Impacts \(Unsignalized Intersections\)](#).

Table 37 Project Contribution to Cumulative Traffic Impacts (Signalized Intersections)

Intersection	Peak Hour	Background		Background Plus Project			Cumulative				
		Delay ¹	LOS	Delay ¹	LOS	Delay ¹ Change	Without Project		With Project		
							Delay ¹	LOS	Delay ¹	LOS	Delay ¹ Change
State Route 25 and Santa Ana Road	AM	25.0	C	26.0	C	1.0	31.1	C	32.7	C	1.6
	PM	20.6	C	21.3	C	0.7	35.4	D	37.2	D	1.8
State Route 25 and Hillcrest Road	AM	26.7	C	28.8	C	2.1	31.0	C	32.6	C	1.6
	PM	46.4	D	58.0	E	11.6	68.2	E	71.7	E	3.5
State Route 25 and Union Road	AM	99.3	F	108.0	F	8.7	132.9	F	137.8	F	4.9
	PM	116.2	F	142.4	F	26.2	162.0	F	191.1	F	29.1
Union Road/Mitchell Road and State Route 156	AM	50.8	D	53.3	D	2.5	75.4	E	80.7	F	5.3
	PM	39.5	D	40.6	D	1.1	79.0	E	84.5	F	5.5

Source: Hexagon Transportation Consultants 2016, Table 9 and Table 14.

Note: 1. The reported delay and corresponding level of service for signalized intersections represents the average delay for all approaches at the intersection. Reported in seconds.

Table 38 Project Contribution to Cumulative Impacts (Unsignalized Intersections)

Intersection	Control Type	Peak Hour	Background		Background Plus Project			Cumulative				
			Delay ¹	LOS	Delay ¹	LOS	Delay Change ¹	Without Project		With Project		
								Delay ¹	LOS	Delay ¹	LOS	Delay Change ¹
Fairview Road and Hillcrest Road ²	OWSC ³	AM	226.1	F	244.5	F	18.4	275.9	F	292.6	F	16.7
		PM	487.3	F	512.6	F	25.3	571.0	F	613.1	F	42.1
Enterprise Road and State Route 25 ⁴	TWSC ⁵	AM	17.7	C	22.8	C	5.1	19.5	C	26.1	D	6.6
		PM	27.2	D	47.8	E	20.6	33.3	D	66.2	F	32.9

Source: Hexagon Transportation Consultants 2016, Table 9 and Table 14.

Note:

1. The reported delay and corresponding level of service for signalized intersections represents the average delay for all approaches at the intersection. Reported in seconds.
2. County facility.
3. One-way stop control.
4. Caltrans facility.
5. Two-way stop control.

Less than Cumulatively Significant With Mitigation: Increased Traffic that Contributes to Cumulative Unacceptable Level Of Service at the Signalized Intersections of State Route 25 and Union Road, and Union Road/Mitchell Road and State Route 156

State Route 25 and Union Road. Under background plus project conditions and under cumulative conditions, the intersection of State Route 25 and Union Road is projected to operate at unacceptable LOS F during all peak hours. Under background plus project conditions the proposed project would generate traffic that would increase delays at the intersection of State Route 25 and Union Road by 8.7 seconds during AM peak hours and 26.2 seconds during the PM peak hour. Under cumulative conditions, the proposed project would contribute traffic that would increase delays by 4.9 seconds during the AM peak hour and by 29.1 seconds during the PM peak hour. These are cumulatively considerable traffic volume contributions that exceed the Caltrans level of service for intersections that are operating at unacceptable LOS D or worse.

As reported in Section 3.16, the widening of Union Road to four lanes between San Benito Street and State Route 25 to reduce unacceptable levels of service is identified in the regional transportation plan and included in the regional transportation impact fee program. Implementation of the widening project would include modification to the intersection of State

Route 25 and Union Road, which would mitigate the project impact. Implementation of mitigation measure T-1 (refer to Section 3.16) would reduce the project's contribution to cumulative impacts at the State Route 25 and Union Road (Caltrans) intersection to less than cumulatively considerable.

Union Road/Mitchell Road and State Route 156. This intersection is projected to operate at unacceptable levels of service during background and cumulative conditions. The intersection would operate at LOS D under background conditions during the peak hours, with or without the project. The proposed project would contribute traffic that would increase average delays by 2.5 seconds in the AM peak hour and by 1.1 seconds during the PM peak hour under background conditions. This is a significant impact according to Caltrans standards for signalized intersections already operating at unacceptable LOS D or worse. Under cumulative conditions the intersection would operate at LOS E without the project and at LOS F with the project during both peak hours. The proposed project would contribute traffic volumes that would increase average delays by 5.3 seconds during that AM peak hour and by 5.5 seconds during the PM peak hour under cumulative conditions. This is also a significant impact under Caltrans standards for signalized intersections already operating at unacceptable LOS D or worse.

Changes or alterations to the intersection that would address cumulative service level deficiencies are within the responsibility of Caltrans, and are included in planned widening of

Union Road to four lanes between State Route 156 and San Benito Street. The widening project, which includes construction of intersection modifications to meet acceptable service thresholds, is identified in the regional transportation impact program. The project developer is required to pay for the project's proportionate fair share toward the costs of the improvement. Participation in the regional traffic impact fee program would mitigate the proposed project's contribution to cumulative impacts to the intersection. Implementation of the mitigation measure T-2 (refer to Section 3.16) would reduce the proposed project's contribution to cumulative impacts at this intersection to less than cumulatively considerable.

Significant and Unavoidable Cumulative Impact: Contribution to Intersection Levels of Service that Exceed Standards at the Signalized Intersections of State Route 25 and Hillcrest Road, and State Route 25 and Santa Ana Road

State Route 25 and Hillcrest Road. Under background plus project conditions, the proposed project would generate traffic that would cause operations at the intersection of State Route 25 and Hillcrest Road to drop from an unacceptable LOS D to unacceptable LOS E and cause an 11.6 second increase in average delay during the PM peak hour. This is a cumulatively considerable contribution based on Caltrans significance thresholds for signalized intersections that already operate at an unacceptable LOS D.

The improvements necessary to improve the intersection level of service standards to an acceptable level consist of constructing a dedicated eastbound right-turn lane. This would require acquisition of 12 feet of right-of-way along the south side of Hillcrest Road for approximately 150 feet. Improvements already planned for this intersection include a second westbound through-lane as part of an approved development at the northwest corner of the intersection. Construction of the dedicated eastbound right-turn lane in addition to these planned improvements would reduce the project's contribution to the cumulative impact under background plus project conditions to less than cumulatively considerable.

Under cumulative conditions this intersection would operate at unacceptable LOS E with or without the project. The project traffic would cause a 3.5-second increase in average delay during the PM peak hour, which also exceeds Caltrans standards for already impacted intersections. Construction of the improvements identified above would improve intersection operations to the extent that the project contribution under the cumulative conditions scenario would be less than cumulatively significant.

However, the intersection is not currently included in the regional traffic impact fee program and is not within the jurisdiction or responsibility of the city. Responsible agencies include Caltrans (for effects on transportation facilities along State Route 25) and the San Benito Council of Governments (council of governments) for effects related to projects identified in the regional transportation plan and/or the county traffic impact fee program.

The following mitigation measure suggests that the respective agencies create new or amend existing programs designed to alleviate cumulative impacts on specific transportation network facilities, to include the circulation improvement described in mitigation measure CUM T-1, below. If the recommended improvements are implemented by the respective agencies, CEQA Guidelines section 15130(a)(3) states that the contribution of fair share fees to the respective programs by the proposed project applicants and/or developer would ensure that project impacts are mitigated. Accordingly, the project's contribution would be less than cumulatively considerable. However, if the responsible agencies do not implement the improvements or programs, the impact would be cumulatively considerable. Because implementation of the improvements in mitigation measure CUM T-1 is the responsibility of Caltrans and creation of a new program or modification to the current regional traffic impact fee program is dependent on the council of governments and others, it is uncertain whether the mitigation measure will be implemented by those agencies. Therefore, the project's contribution to the cumulative impact is significant and potentially unavoidable.

Mitigation Measure

CUM T-1. Prior to issuance of a building permit in any phase, provided there is a funding mechanism established by San Benito County and in place at the time of building permit issuance, and if requested by Caltrans, the project developer, or developers, shall contribute fair share funds for the improvements to the intersection of State Route 25 and Hillcrest Road. These required improvements consist of the acquisition of 12 feet of right-of-way along the south side of Hillcrest Road for approximately 150 feet and the construction of a dedicated eastbound right-turn lane.

State Route 25 and Santa Ana Road. Under cumulative conditions, traffic generated by the proposed project would increase average delays by 1.8 seconds during the PM peak hour at the Caltrans intersection of State Route 25 and Santa Ana Road. Although the intersection would operate at LOS D with or without the project during the PM peak hour, the 1.8 second increase in delay is a cumulatively considerable contribution based on Caltrans significance criteria for signalized intersections (refer to Section 3.16).

The traffic report identifies intersection improvements that are necessary to improve the intersection level of service to acceptable levels consist of adding a separate southbound right-turn lane on State Route 25. The traffic report notes that area may be available within the Caltrans right-of-way that is sufficient to accommodate construction of the southbound right-turn lane. Construction of this improvement would reduce the project's contribution at this intersection to less than cumulatively considerable.

Improvements to this intersection are not included in the regional traffic impact fee program and the intersection is not within the jurisdiction or responsibility of the city. Responsible agencies

include Caltrans (for effects on transportation facilities along State Route 25) and the council of governments (for effects related to projects identified in the regional transportation plan and/or the county traffic impact fee program). Implementation of Mitigation Measure CUM T-2, below would reduce the project's contribution to the cumulative impact. However, the mitigation measure suggests that the respective agencies create new or amend the existing impact fee program designed to alleviate cumulative impacts on specific transportation network facilities, to include the circulation improvement described in mitigation measure CUM T-2, below. As previously noted, CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(a)(3), states the contribution of fair share fees by the proposed project applicants and/or developer to the respective programs that include the recommended improvements would ensure that project impacts are mitigated. Accordingly, the project's contribution to the cumulative impact would be reduced to less than cumulatively considerable and the cumulative impact would be less than significant. However, if the responsible agencies do not implement the improvements or programs, the impact would be cumulatively considerable.

Because implementation of the improvements in mitigation measure CUM T-2, is the responsibility of Caltrans and creation of a new program or modification to the current regional traffic impact fee program is the responsibility of the council of governments, it is uncertain whether the mitigation measure will be implemented by those agencies. Therefore, the project's contribution to the cumulative impact at the intersection of State Route 25 and Santa Ana Road is significant and potentially unavoidable.

Mitigation Measure

CUM T-2. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant and/or project site developers shall be responsible for the payment of a fair-share transportation impact fee toward the cost of constructing a separate southbound right-turn lane at the intersection of State Route 25 and Santa Ana Road, if requested by the Caltrans and a county program is in place to determine the fair share amount.

Less than Cumulatively Significant With Mitigation: Increased Traffic that Contributes to Cumulative Unacceptable Level Of Service at the Unsignalized Intersections of Fairview Road and Hillcrest Road, and Enterprise Road and State Route 25

As shown in [Table 38, Project Contributions to Cumulative Level of Service Impacts \(Unsignalized Intersections\)](#) presented earlier in this section, the proposed project would contribute traffic volumes that would exceed San Benito County and Caltrans acceptable level of service standards under background plus project and cumulative conditions.

Fairview Road and Hillcrest Road. The intersection is projected to operate at LOS F during both peak hours and average delays meet signal warrant criteria under the background plus

project and cumulative conditions whether or not the project is constructed. Installation of a traffic signal at the intersection is identified in the regional transportation impact fee program. The traffic report projections indicate that the proposed project's traffic contribution would increase in average delay by 18.4 seconds during the AM peak hour and by 25.3 seconds during the PM peak hour under background plus project conditions and would increase delays by 16.7 seconds during the AM peak hour and by 42.1 seconds during the PM peak hour under the cumulative condition. This is a cumulatively considerable project contribution based on the San Benito County standards for unsignalized intersections with LOS D or worse.

Development of the proposed project is subject to participation in the regional transportation impact fee program to mitigate the project's contribution to the cumulative impacts to this intersection. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce the project's contribution to the cumulative impact to the intersection of Fairview Road and Hillcrest Road to less than cumulatively considerable.

Mitigation Measure

CUM T-3. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall be responsible for its proportionate and fair share contribution to in the form of payment of the applicable traffic impact fee for the installation of a signal at the county-controlled intersection of Fairview Road and Hillcrest Road, the construction of which will mitigate the project's contribution to the cumulative impacts at this intersection.

Enterprise Road and State Route 25. Average delay at this intersection already meets signal warrant thresholds during existing and future conditions and signalization of this intersection is included in the regional transportation impact fee program. The traffic report analysis indicates that the proposed project would contribute traffic volume that would cause intersection operations to degrade from LOS D to LOS E during the PM peak hour under background conditions, and under cumulative conditions would cause the operations to drop from LOS D to LOS F during the PM peak hour. Under cumulative conditions, traffic volumes generated by the project would also cause intersection operations to drop from LOS C to unacceptable LOS D during the AM peak hour. These are significant impacts based on Caltrans significance criteria for unsignalized intersections. The project is subject to participation in the regional transportation impact fee program, which would reduce the cumulative impact and mitigate the project's contribution to that impact. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce the project's contribution to the cumulative impact at the intersection of Enterprise Road and State Route 25 to a less-than-cumulatively-considerable level.

Mitigation Measure

CUM T-4. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall be responsible for its proportionate and fair share contribution in the form of payment of the applicable traffic impact fee for the installation of a signal at the state-controlled intersection of Enterprise Road and State Route 25, the construction of which will mitigate the project's contribution to the cumulative impacts at this intersection.

Significant and Unavoidable Cumulative Impact: Increased Traffic Contributing to Levels of Service Below Standard on the Following Highway Segments: State Route 25 Between San Felipe Road and State Route 156; State Route 25 Between State Route 156 and U.S. Highway 101; and State Route 156 Between The Alameda in San Juan Bautista and Union Road in Hollister

The traffic report found that all highway segments studied will continue to operate at unacceptable level LOS E or worse during peak hours with or without the project under the background plus project and cumulative condition scenarios. The proposed project would generate vehicle trips that would contribute to the unacceptable LOS on these segments, which is a cumulatively considerable contribution. Although the proposed project would not cause levels of service to decline further, the addition of project traffic on State Route 25 between San Felipe Road and State Route 156, State Route 25 between State Route 156 and U.S. Highway 101, and State Route 156 between The Alameda in San Juan Bautista and Union Road in Hollister will increase the percent time-spent-following on these roadways (Hexagon Transportation Consultants 2016, Table 12 and Table 15). The addition of project trips to highway segments that already operate at unacceptable levels at any peak hour without the project is a significant impact based on Caltrans standards.

The widening of State Route 156 and State Route 25 is included in the list of improvement projects identified in the regional transportation plan for which traffic impact fees are collected from development to fund the improvements and mitigate project impacts to these roadways. The planned road-widening project includes State Route 156 from two to four lanes between The Alameda in San Juan Bautista and Union Road in Hollister. Planned highway widening along State Route 25 would occur from San Felipe Road in Hollister north to the Santa Clara County line. Implementation of these widening improvements on the affected highway segments would reduce the project's contribution to the cumulative LOS impacts to less than cumulatively considerable.

The cost of construction of improvements and rights of way needed to accommodate buildout improvements would require the combined efforts of the County, AMBAG, Caltrans, the City of Hollister and other adjacent counties and cities, and there is no guarantee that other jurisdictions will elect to participate in the cost of identified improvements or that the improvements are

constructed in a timely manner. Despite this, the widening improvements are included in the county-wide traffic impact fee program and the proposed project is subject to participation in the program. Refer to Section 4.1, Cumulative Impacts, for additional discussion of the project's contribution to cumulative impacts to these highway segments.

Given the regional significance of these improvements, their length and associated pre-planning, facility design, and acquisition of adjacent lands by Caltrans, as well as the substantial costs associated with their construction, requiring any one applicant to construct the improvements may be infeasible. Implementation of Mitigation Measure T-3 (refer to section 3.16, Traffic and Circulation) requires the payment of traffic impact fees to reduce the project's impact; However, because the necessary improvements to these intersections may not receive funding from other agencies and may not be implemented in a timely manner by Caltrans, the project's impact is significant and potentially unavoidable.

Less than Cumulatively Considerable Contributions of Traffic on Cerra Vista Drive South of Union Road, Glenview Drive, between Brighton Drive and Valley Road, Glenview Drive Between Valley View Road and Yarrow Street, and on Mimosa Street Between Valley View Road and Yarrow Street

The traffic report determined that the addition of project traffic to neighborhood streets immediately adjacent to the project site would represent no more than a 16 percent increase in daily traffic on each of following study roadways:

1. Cerra Vista Drive, south of Union Road;
2. Glenview Drive, between Brighton Drive and Valley Road;
3. Glenview Drive, between Valley View Road and Yarrow Street; and,
4. Mimosa Street, between Valley View Road and Yarrow Street.

As reported in Section 3.16, Traffic and Circulation, the traffic report concluded that operational traffic generated by the proposed project would not have a significant effect on neighborhood streets. Although the proposed project would contribute to an increase in use of these roadways, based on the findings of the traffic report, the proposed project's contribution would not affect daily traffic volumes to the extent that the acceptable daily volume thresholds identified in the City of Hollister General plan would be exceeded. Therefore, the project's contribution to cumulative traffic on neighborhood streets is less than cumulatively considerable.

Conclusion. The proposed project would contribute to cumulative traffic impacts. The project's contribution to the cumulative impacts at the Caltrans intersection facilities of State Route 25 and Hillcrest Road, and State Route 25 and Santa Ana Road would be reduced to less than cumulatively considerable with implementation of mitigation measures CUM T-1 and

CUM T-2; however, both intersections are not currently included in the regional traffic impact fee program and are not within the jurisdiction or responsibility of the city. As noted in the discussion above, because implementation of the improvements in the mitigation measures CUM T-1 and CUM T-2 are the responsibility of Caltrans and creation of a new program or modification to the current regional traffic impact fee program is dependent on the council of governments, it is uncertain whether these mitigation measures will be implemented by those agencies. Therefore, the project's contribution to the cumulative impacts at the intersections of State Route 25 and Hillcrest Road, and State Route 25 and Santa Ana Road are cumulatively significant and potentially unavoidable.

Addition of project traffic on State Route 25 between San Felipe Road and State Route 156, State Route 25 between State Route 156 and U.S. Highway 101, and State Route 156 between The Alameda in San Juan Bautista and Union Road in Hollister. These segments already operate at unacceptable levels during at least one peak hour (Hexagon Transportation Consultants 2016, Table 12 and Table 15) and the addition of project trips is a significant impact based on Caltrans standards. Implementation of Mitigation Measure T-3 would reduce the project's impact and contribution to cumulative traffic impacts along these regional highway segments. However, as reported above, the cost of construction of improvements and rights of way needed to accommodate buildout improvements would require the combined efforts of the County, AMBAG, Caltrans, the City of Hollister and other adjacent counties and cities, and there is no guarantee that other jurisdictions will elect to participate in the cost of identified improvements or that the improvements are constructed in a timely manner. Given the regional significance of these improvements, their length and associated pre-planning, facility design, and acquisition of adjacent lands by Caltrans, as well as the substantial costs associated with their construction, requiring any one applicant to construct the improvements may be infeasible. Implementation of Mitigation Measure T-3 (refer to section 3.16, Traffic and Circulation) requires the payment of traffic impact fees to reduce the project's impact; However, because the necessary improvements to these intersections may not receive funding from other agencies and may not be implemented in a timely manner by Caltrans, the project's impact is significant and potentially unavoidable.

Regarding the project's contributions to cumulative traffic impacts to the remaining intersections and roadway segments identified and discussed in this section, implementation of mitigation measures T-1 through T-3, and CUM T-3 and CUM T-4, would reduce the project's contribution to less than cumulatively considerable.

Wastewater Service

Cumulative Context. The cumulative context for wastewater treatment services is the Hollister Urban Area identified in the Hollister Urban Area Water and Wastewater Master Plan (HDR 2008) (water and wastewater master plan). The Hollister Urban Area includes the entire

incorporated city and some parcels outside the city limits that are designated for urban development that are located within the Hollister general plan planning boundary. Other unincorporated areas of the county designated for urban development that are included in the Hollister Urban Area are parcels located east of Fairview Road, parcels south of Airline Road, and several small parcels west of State Route 156 (San Benito County 2015b Figure 3-1)). The project site is located within the San Benito County Water District Cielo Vista Community Service Area (No. 22), which is included in the Hollister Urban Area. Although the project site is also located within this service area, as noted in Section 3.17, Wastewater Services, San Benito County has in the past considered decommissioning the Cielo Vista Estates treatment facility and conveying raw wastewater to the domestic wastewater treatment plant in Hollister. Additionally, the Hollister Urban Area includes the county approved, but not yet constructed Fairview Corners Residential Specific Plan subdivision and the Gavilan Joint Community College District San Benito Campus projects east of Fairview Road. The proposed project includes pedestrian and utility easements between the project site and the adjoining Cielo Vista neighborhood, which could be used in the future as utility easements for the two approved projects and also for the Cielo Vista neighborhood should the county decommission the Cielo Vista batch treatment plant (refer to Section 3.17, Wastewater Services), and require the Cielo Vista users to connect to the Hollister municipal sanitary sewer system via the project site.

Cumulative Impact. Increased population and other urban growth within the Hollister Urban Area would result in an increase in demand for wastewater treatment that could affect existing collection and treatment systems. Both the Hollister general plan EIR and the San Benito County general plan EIR found that growth within the Hollister Urban Area would lead to increased demand to collect and treat wastewater from urban development, which could be significant. However, each EIR also noted that for municipal treatment demands within the Hollister Urban Area, the planned treatment capacity of the City of Hollister wastewater treatment plant would be consistent with the development projections under each general plan, and therefore adequate capacity would be provided as the city develops. Implementation of Hollister and San Benito County general plan policies and programs, including timing the locations and phasing of planned growth and development, payment of development impact fees, and treatment/disposal capacity monitoring, would reduce the cumulative effects of increased wastewater generation a less than significant. Therefore, the cumulative impact is less than significant.

Project Contribution. The proposed project would generate 0.0634 mgd of wastewater, which would contribute to cumulative impacts of expanded and new wastewater collection and treatment facilities resulting from anticipated growth within the Hollister Urban Area.

Conclusion. The proposed project is located within the Hollister Urban Area and is consistent with the Hollister general plan Low Density Residential land use designation. As reported in Section 3.17, Wastewater, wastewater generated by the proposed project would not exceed

capacity of the city's wastewater treatment facility. The proposed project is subject to compliance with the City of Hollister Sanitary Collection System Master Plan (City of Hollister 2010) which provides infrastructure design criteria and performance thresholds based on the city's population estimates through the year 2023, and with the urban water and wastewater master plan, which provides further standards for treatment and collection systems based on anticipated growth within the Hollister Urban Area to the year 2035. Compliance with the infrastructure design standards take into account future flows within the Hollister Urban Area, including potential flows from the Cielo Vista neighborhood and areas east of Fairview Road and south of State Route 25 (Airline Highway). The proposed project would contribute to cumulative impacts of increased wastewater generation, that would require expansion of wastewater collection and treatment facilities as identified in the water and urban wastewater master plan and reported in Section 3.17, Wastewater. With the timely implementation of these improvements, the project's contribution is less than cumulatively considerable.

Water Service

Cumulative Context. The cumulative context for impacts to water supply and distribution is existing development and future growth in Hollister and unincorporated San Benito County that is located within the Hollister Urban Area identified in the urban water master plan (Todd Groundwater 2016) and the water and wastewater master plan (HDR 2008). The Hollister Urban Area includes the entire incorporated city and some parcels outside the city limits that are designated for urban development, but are within the Hollister general plan planning boundary. The unincorporated area designated for urban development includes parcels located east of Fairview Road, parcels south of Airline Road, and small parcels west of State Route 156 (San Benito County 2015).

Cumulative Impact. The city's general plan EIR identified significant impacts to water supply due to an increase in demand resulting from buildout of general plan land use designations within the planning area (p. 4.10-18). The general plan EIR concluded that implementation of general plan policies and programs related to water supply and required master planning with the San Benito County Water District and the Sunnyslope County Water District for wastewater and water supplies would reduce the city's impact to regional water supply to a less-than-significant level.

More recently, water supply and demand for existing and future growth within the Hollister Urban Area to the year 2035 is evaluated in the urban water management plan (Todd Groundwater 2016). The water demand anticipated in the city's general plan (11,465 acre-feet per year in year 2023) is consistent with the urban water management plan (Todd Groundwater 2016) water demand estimate of 11,583 acre-feet per year for buildout of the Hollister Urban Area (which is similar to the general plan planning area boundary within which the project site is located) in 2030. The estimated underlying sustainable yield of the aquifers is 16,000 acre-feet

per year with 9,950 acre-feet per year available to the City of Hollister and Sunnyslope County Water District. The urban water management plan concludes that sufficient water supplies are available to meet demand for water within the Hollister Urban Area provided that each district and jurisdiction continues to implement demand management measures and programs during periods of prolonged drought (refer to Section 3.18, Water Service) to the year 2035 within the Hollister Urban Area. Therefore, the cumulative impact is less than significant.

Project Contribution. The proposed project would contribute to the water demand anticipated by the city's general plan and accounted for in the urban water management plan. As reported in Section 3.18, Water Service, according to the urban water management plan demand for Sunnyslope County Water District, municipal water demand is anticipated to increase from 1,941 acre-feet per year in 2015 to 4,845 acre-feet per year in 2035. The 114 acre-feet per year required for the proposed project when completed, comprises approximately 3.4 percent of the Sunnyslope County Water District demand by 2026 and approximately 2.4 percent of the projected year 2035 demand. Predicted water demand for the City of Hollister is 5,325 acre feet per year in 2035 (Todd Groundwater 2016, Table 4-2).

Buildout of the Hollister Urban Area was evaluated in the urban water management plan and includes development of the project site with residential densities consistent with the city's general plan Low Density Residential land use designation. The proposed project would result in fewer residences and correspondingly less water demand than could otherwise occur if the site were developed to the maximum density allowed by the general plan Low Density Residential land use designation. As such future development of the site would require less water than anticipated by buildout of the general plan, and studied in the general plan EIR and the urban water management plan, and for which a number of treatment, storage and distribution improvements are already being undertaken (discussed in Section 3.18, water Service). Although the proposed project would increase water demand on the project site, no new or expanded facilities, the construction of which could result in environmental impacts, would be required to meet that demand.

Conclusion. Although the proposed project would increase water demand on the project site, no new or expanded facilities, the construction of which could result in or contribute to environmental impacts, would be required to meet that demand. No new cumulative impacts would occur associated with construction of new water treatment, storage and distribution facilities already in progress or planned to meet demand in the Hollister Urban Area. The proposed project's contribution to a cumulative increase in water demand would not result in impacts that are greater than those studied and addressed by the general plan EIR and the recently updated urban water master plan. Therefore, the proposed project's contribution to cumulative impacts to water supply is less than cumulatively considerable and less than significant.

4.2 ENERGY DEMAND

CEQA Requirements

CEQA section 21100 (b)(3) states, “The environmental impact report shall include a detailed statement setting forth ...mitigation measures proposed to minimize significant effects on the environment, including, but not limited to, measures to reduce the wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary consumption of energy.”

State CEQA Guidelines Appendix F describes the types of information and analyses related to energy conservation to be included in an EIR. Energy conservation is described in terms of decreased per capita energy consumption, decreased reliance on natural gas and oil, and increased reliance on renewable energy sources. To assure that energy implications are considered in project decisions, EIRs must include a discussion of the potentially significant energy impacts of proposed projects, with particular emphasis on avoiding or reducing inefficient, wasteful, and unnecessary consumption of energy.

Energy Setting

Energy production and energy use both result in the depletion of nonrenewable resources (e.g., oil, natural gas, coal, etc.) and emission of pollutants. Energy usage is typically quantified using the British Thermal Unit (BTU). The BTU is the amount of energy that is required to raise the temperature of one pound of water by one degree Fahrenheit. As points of reference, the approximate amount of energy contained in a gallon of gasoline, 100 cubic feet (one therm) of natural gas, and a kilowatt hour of electricity are 123,000 BTUs, 100,000 BTUs, and 3,400 BTUs, respectively.

Pacific Gas and Electric, one of the five largest utilities in the state, is the purveyor of electricity and natural gas in the city. Through Pacific Gas & Electric, the city receives electricity through the statewide grid. The state’s power grid also has interties to other western states, so some electricity used within California is generated outside the state. Electrical energy is generated by a number of means, including thermal power plants using natural gas, coal, fuel oil, and/or used tires as fuel; wind turbines; hydroelectric facilities; biomass plants; and large- and small-scale solar installations. Natural gas used in California originates from basins in California, other western states, and Canada. According to the California Energy Commission’s Energy Almanac (California Energy Commission 2014), California imports 90 percent of its natural gas from outside the state.

Population growth is a key driver for increasing residential and commercial energy demands and for water pumping and other energy-intensive services, and the city’s population and energy

demand will continue to grow. In order to minimize the need for additional electricity generation facilities, both the state and regional energy purveyors have focused investments on energy conservation and efficiency over the past decades. Further, as required under the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard, Pacific Gas and Electric is well on its way to obtaining a minimum of 33 percent of its retail power from renewable sources by 2020 based on data from the California Public Utilities Commission (http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/rps_homepage/). The state has recently passed legislation requiring that by 2030, 50 percent of the power supply provided by retail power providers, including Pacific Gas and Electric, must be obtained from renewable sources.

As the project site is in agricultural use, it does not contain developed uses that are sources of electrical power demand. Farm equipment is the only known source of energy (fuel) demand under existing conditions and that demand is considered to be negligible.

Regulatory Energy Setting

Energy conservation is embodied in many federal, state, and local statutes and policies. At the federal level, energy standards apply to numerous products (e.g., the EnergyStar™ program) and transportation (e.g., vehicle fuel efficiency standards). At the state level, Title 24 of the California Administrative Code sets energy standards for buildings, rebates/tax credits are provided for installation of renewable energy systems, and the Flex Your Power program promotes conservation in multiple areas. Refer also to Section 3.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is an independent agency that regulates the interstate transmission of electricity, natural gas, and oil. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission reviews proposals to build liquefied natural gas terminals and interstate natural gas pipelines; it also licenses hydropower projects. Licensing of hydroelectric under the authority of Federal Energy Regulatory Commission includes input from state and federal energy, environmental protection, fish and wildlife, and water quality agencies.

National Energy Policy

The National Energy Policy, established in 2001 by the National Energy Policy Development Group, is designed to help the private sector and state and local governments promote dependable, affordable, and environmentally sound production and distribution of energy for the future (National Energy Policy Development Group 2001). Key issues addressed by the energy policy are energy conservation, repair, and expansion of energy infrastructure, and ways of increasing energy supplies while protecting the environment.

California Energy Commission

The California Energy Commission is California's primary energy policy and energy planning agency. Created by the California Legislature in 1974, the California Energy Commission has five major responsibilities: 1) forecasting future energy needs and keeping historical energy data; 2) licensing thermal power plants 50 megawatts or larger; 3) promoting energy efficiency through appliance and building standards; 4) developing energy technologies and supporting renewable energy; and 5) planning for and directing state response to energy emergencies. Under the requirements of the California Public Resources Code, the California Energy Commission, in conjunction with the Department of Commerce's Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources, is required to assess electricity and natural gas resources on an annual basis or as necessary. The Systems Assessment and Facilities Siting Division of the California Energy Commission provides coordination to ensure that needed energy facilities are authorized in an expeditious, safe, and environmentally acceptable manner.

California Public Utilities Commission

The California Public Utilities Commission is a state agency created by constitutional amendment to regulate privately owned telecommunications, electric, natural gas, water, railroad, rail transit, passenger transportation, and in-state moving companies. The California Public Utilities Commission is responsible for assuring California utility customers have safe, reliable utility services at reasonable rates while protecting utility customers from fraud. The California Public Utilities Commission regulates the planning and approval for the physical construction of electric generation, transmission, or distribution facilities; and local distribution pipelines of natural gas (California Public Utilities Commission Decision 95-08-038).

California 2008 Energy Action Plan Update

The state adopted the *California Energy Action Plan* in 2003, followed by the *Energy Action Plan II* in 2005. The current plan, the *California 2008 Energy Action Plan Update*, is California's principal energy planning and policy document. The updated document examines the state's ongoing actions in the context of global climate change, describes a coordinated implementation plan for state energy policies, and identifies specific action areas to ensure that California's energy resources are adequate, affordable, technologically advanced, and environmentally sound. The *California 2008 Energy Action Plan Update* establishes energy efficiency and demand response (i.e., reduction of customer energy usage during peak periods) as the first-priority actions to address California's increasing energy demands. Additional priorities include the use of renewable sources of power and distributed generation (i.e., the use of relatively small power plants near or at centers of high demand). To the extent that these actions are unable to satisfy the increasing

energy demand and transmission capacity needs, clean and efficient fossil-fired generation is supported. The *California 2008 Energy Action Plan Update* examines policy changes in the areas of energy efficiency, demand response, renewable energy, electricity reliability and infrastructure, electricity market structure, natural gas supply and infrastructure, research and development, and climate change (California Energy Commission 2008).

California Building Codes

California's *Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential Buildings* (California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 6) were first established in 1978 to reduce California's energy consumption. The standards were most recently updated in January 2013. Energy efficient buildings require less electricity, natural gas, and other fuels, the use of which creates GHG emissions. Since initial adoption in 1978, California's per capita building energy use has increased about nine percent, while the national per capita building energy use has increased by more than 50 percent (California Energy Commission 2008, 2012).

The *Green Building Standards Code* (also known as CALGreen), which requires all new buildings in the state to be more energy efficient and environmentally responsible, took effect in January 2011 and was most recently updated in January 2013. These comprehensive regulations are intended to achieve major reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, energy consumption, and water use (California Building Standards Commission 2014).

Energy Efficiency Act of 2006 (AB 2021)

This bill encourages all investor-owned and municipal utilities to aggressively invest in achievable, cost-effective, energy efficiency programs in their service territories. The results of this bill are expected to reduce forecasted electricity demand by 10 percent over 10 years from 2006 through 2016, offsetting the projected need to build 11 new major power plants.

Hollister General Plan

Implementation of Hollister general plan policies that serve to reduce vehicle trips and vehicle trip length, and reduce energy consumption in the form of natural gas and electricity, would facilitate energy conservation. Representative applicable policies and implementation measures are as follows:

LU 4.1, Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities. Ensure that business areas have adequate pedestrian and bicycle facilities and universal accessibility and that easy connections to transit are available whenever possible. Secure funding to implement the Hollister Bicycle Master Plan.

LU 4.2, Alternatives to Automobiles. To the extent possible, encourage alternatives to the use of private automobiles. Encourage a range of transportation options, including driving, walking, biking and transit, without allowing any one to preclude the others.

LU 4.4, Streets, Paths and Bikeways. Ensure that streets, paths and bikeways contribute to the system of a fully connected transportation network.

LU 5.1, Local Jobs and Housing Balance. Strive to maintain balance between the number of local jobs and the number of available housing units within the planning area.

LU 5.2, Mixed-Use. Encourage mixed-use development types that enhance the viability of Downtown Hollister in order to preserve its social, cultural, historical and governmental significance.

LU 6.1, Infill Development. Facilitate infill development opportunities by establishing an annexation policy in cooperation with the County of San Benito and the Local Agency Formation Commission to annex unincorporated county areas surrounded by the city.

LU 9.1, Natural Design Elements. Ensure that building design takes into consideration air circulation, natural lighting, views, solar orientation, and shading areas to interior and exterior spaces.

LU 9.2, Energy Efficiency. Integrate good design with the use of energy efficient techniques and equipment and with materials and construction practices that minimize adverse environmental effects.

C 2.1, Bicycle Facilities. Cooperatively work with COG, Caltrans, and San Benito County to develop, implement and maintain bicycle facilities providing direct access to major public facilities, schools and employment centers as described in the San Benito County Bicycle Master Plan.

C 2.3, Pedestrian Connections. Work with local businesses, private developers, and public agencies to ensure provision of safe pedestrian pathways to major public facilities, schools and employment centers. Require new developments to provide internal pedestrian connections and linkages to adjacent neighborhoods and community facilities.

C 4.2, Public Transit. Cooperatively work with COG, Caltrans, and San Benito County to develop, implement and maintain public transit services.

NRC 3.1, Development Practices to Conserve Resources. Promote development practices, which will result in the conservation of energy, water, minerals and other natural resources, and promote the use of renewable energy technologies (such as solar and wind) when possible.

NRC 2.3, Air Quality Planning and Coordination. Integrate air quality considerations with the land use and transportation processes by mitigating air quality impacts through land use design measures, such as encouraging project design that will foster walking and biking.

NRC 2.5, Circulation Alternatives to Reduce Impacts on Air Quality. Promote circulation alternatives that reduce air pollution.

NRC.J, Apply Title 24 requirements. Meet or exceed Title 24 energy conservation requirements, and, where possible, require structural and landscaping design to make use of natural heating and cooling. Encourage the use of solar and alternative energy technologies to meet or exceed Title 24 requirements.

NRC.N, Identify opportunities for transit-oriented development. Assist in educating developers and the public on the benefits of pedestrian and transit-oriented development.

NRC 3.2, Resource-Efficient Organizations and Businesses. Encourage businesses, commercial property owners, apartment building owners and non-profit organizations to be resource, energy and water efficient.

NRC 3.3, Resource Efficiency in Site Development. Encourage site planning and development practices that reduce energy demand, support transportation alternatives and incorporate resource- and energy-efficient infrastructure.

NRC 3.4, Resource-Efficient Building Design. Promote and encourage residences to be resource, energy and water efficient by creating incentives and removing obstacles to promote their use. Require those proposing new development to incorporate energy conservation measures in the design and construction of all proposed residential, commercial, industrial and public buildings. This would include: 1. High-efficiency

heating-ventilation-air conditioning systems for maximum energy efficiency; 2. Design window systems to reduce thermal gain during warm weather and heat loss during cool weather; and, 3. Install high-efficiency sodium lamps for all street and parking lot lighting.

NRC 3.5, Efficiency in Government. Promote and serve as an effective leader in implementing conservation practices and incorporating resource-efficient alternatives in government facilities and services.

Impact Analysis

The three primary sources of energy consumption from the proposed project will be fuel use in vehicles traveling to and from the project site, on-site use of natural gas, and on-site use of electricity in buildings and for other ancillary uses such as lighting. Energy demand from these sources at buildout of the proposed project was modeled in CalEEMod. Unmitigated annual CalEEMod results are contained in [Appendix F](#).

In accordance with Public Resources Code section 21100, this analysis considers impacts to be significant if implementation of a proposed project would directly or indirectly result in inefficient, wasteful, and unnecessary consumption of energy.

Transportation Fuel Use

Table 4.2, Trip Summary, of the CalEEMod results shows that at buildout, project residents and those using the proposed park would travel approximately 16,422 miles daily and 5,994,364 miles annually. This total is a composite based on total weekday, Saturday, and Sunday vehicle trips. The proposed project would result in a substantial increase in vehicle trips and a substantial increase in the volume of transportation fuel that would be consumed by trucks, light-duty vehicles, passenger cars, relative to existing conditions. The increase will add to the cumulative demand for transportation fuel locally and regionally.

Vehicle miles traveled can be used as a general proxy for transportation fuel use. A projection of total vehicle miles traveled in the County in the year 2035 was made as part of the greenhouse gas inventory included in Appendix D of the county's general plan EIR (San Benito County 2015b). Total daily VMT is projected at 3,522,410 miles. At 16,285 daily VMT, the proposed project would represent about 0.46 percent of the county daily VMT in 2035.

Natural Gas Use

Energy usage is typically quantified using the British Thermal Unit (BTU). The BTU is the amount of energy that is required to raise the temperature of one pound of water by one degree

Fahrenheit. As points of reference, the approximate amount of energy contained in a gallon of gasoline, 100 cubic feet (one therm) of natural gas, and a kilowatt hour of electricity are 123,000 BTUs, 100,000 BTUs, and 3,400 BTUs, respectively.

Table 5.2 Energy by Land Use – Natural Gas, in the CalEEMod results shows that at buildout, future uses within the site would demand approximately the equivalent of 6,774,330 BTU (67.74 therms) of energy from natural gas use per year from space heating and other internal building uses. One therm is equivalent to 100,000 BTU. According to Energy Consumption Data Management System information maintained by the California Energy Commission, in 2013, total natural gas consumption in San Benito County was approximately 12,168,478 therms (<http://www.ecdms.energy.ca.gov/gasbycounty.aspx>). The project consumption at buildout would represent approximately 0.0005 percent of 2014 county consumption and a smaller percentage of total county consumption in the project buildout year of about 2027 as natural gas consumption in the county continues to grow over time.

Electricity Use

Section 5.3, Energy by Land Use - Electricity, in the CalEEMod results shows that at buildout, future uses within the site would demand approximately 1,486,860 kWh of electricity. Energy Consumption Data Management System information maintained by the California Energy Commission shows that in 2014, total electricity consumption in the county was 355,405,076 kWh (<http://www.ecdms.energy.ca.gov/elecbycounty.aspx>). The project electricity consumption at buildout would represent about 0.4 percent of total 2014 county consumption and likely a smaller percentage of total county consumption in the project buildout year of 2027 as electricity consumption in the county grows over time.

Reduction of Energy Use - Regulatory Requirements

As described in the Regulatory Setting above, a number of federal and particularly state regulatory programs are being implemented to improve the efficiency of transportation fuel, natural gas, and electricity use. New development at the project site must comply with the regulations, many of which are beyond the implementation control of future project developers. For example, in the transportation sector, the Pavley I and II standards and the Advanced Clean Car standards will result in improved transportation fuel efficiency. In the building energy use sector, implementation of CALGreen and Title 24 building standards will reduce natural gas and electricity consumption.

Reduction of Energy Use – Project Design

The proposed project includes three features that will help to reduce energy demand. First, the project includes multi-family residential uses with a lower trip rate than single-family homes, which will serve to reduce transportation fuel demand relative to a project solely composed of single-family uses; the average project density of 6.3 dwelling units per acre is at the higher range of the permitted density of 1.0 to 8.0 dwelling units per acre. Second, bike and pedestrian connectivity is provided to adjacent properties to promote non-vehicular travel; this too would incrementally reduce demand for transportation fuel. Similarly, the inclusion of a land for Valley View Park will help to meet recreational/open space demands of residents new residents and existing residents in adjacent neighborhoods, thereby reducing use of vehicles to access such facilities/uses.

Conclusion

With required conformance to applicable energy conservation/efficiency regulations and standards, and with inclusion of the above-noted project design features, the proposed project would not result directly or indirectly result in inefficient, wasteful, and unnecessary consumption of energy.

4.3 GROWTH INDUCEMENT

CEQA Requirements

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.2(d) requires an EIR to include a discussion of the growth-inducing impacts of a project. Growth inducement refers to the likelihood that a proposed project will foster growth in the surrounding area, either directly or indirectly. Growth inducement can be the direct result of development proposals, or indirect, such as through the provision of services infrastructure or removal of growth barriers. The most common factor in fostering growth is the removal of obstacles to population or economic growth. Potential growth-inducing impacts must be discussed in relation to both the potential impacts on existing community service facilities (police or fire stations, utility infrastructure, etc.) and the way a project may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment. It must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental or of little significance to the environment.

Precedent for Future Development

The approval of the proposed project would not represent a new commitment of land for urban development. Urban development of the project site has been envisioned by the city for at least ten years, with the city's adoption of City of Hollister general plan (City of Hollister 2005a). As identified in the general plan, the project site is within the city's general plan planning area, and is designated for physical development with low density residential uses (1-8 dwelling units per acre) as shown on Map 2, Land Use Plan (p. 2.5). As illustrated by the general plan Map 5, Infill Development Strategy (p.2.19), the project site is located adjacent to the city's city limit line within the city's sphere of influence and is located within the city's identified priority infill area. Priority infill areas are areas where the city would like to see development occur in advance of areas that are outside the sphere of influence. Therefore, approval of the project would not represent the first decision to plan for extending urban development on to the project site. Development of the project site represents a logical expansion of city growth consistent with the phasing strategy for infill development identified in the general plan. Development of the site would not induce growth in areas not already anticipated for residential development in the city's general plan. Development of the site would not be a precedent for future growth of adjacent areas as it is adjacent to existing and planned development already approved by the city within the city limit and with existing and planned development already approved by San Benito County along Fairview Road to the east of the site.

Growth Induced By Increased Infrastructure Capacity and Extension of Infrastructure (Water)

As discussed in Section 3.18, Water Supplies and Facilities, the project would connect to the municipal potable water system. The proposed project would not require an expansion of the Lessalt Water Treatment Plant or require any new facilities other than West Hills Water Treatment Plant already being planned for by Hollister Urban Area agencies. The project site is located within the city's sphere of influence and is within the Hollister Urban Area identified in the city's water and wastewater master plan for water service. Domestic water infrastructure would be sized to serve the project only and would provide connections to the existing domestic water mains on Enterprise, State Route 25, Fairview Road, and the future Mimosa Street within the adjacent approved-but-not-yet-constructed Award Homes residential subdivision that adjoins the north boundary of the project site. The proposed project includes the installation of "purple pipe" recycled water mains on the project site that would provide an opportunity for connection with Sunnyslope County Water District recycled water infrastructure, when it becomes available. The proposed project does not extend water infrastructure beyond the project site nor does it size the water mains beyond what is needed to serve the project. Therefore, the proposed project would not induce growth through the provision of water infrastructure to areas not currently connected or planned for connection.

Growth Induced By Increased Infrastructure Capacity and Extension of Infrastructure (Wastewater)

As discussed in Section 3.17 of this EIR, the proposed project would not require an expansion of the city's domestic wastewater treatment plant beyond current planned improvements. The project site is located within the city's sphere of influence and is within the Hollister Urban Area identified in the city's wastewater master plan for wastewater service from the domestic wastewater treatment plant. A sewer impact fee would be assessed at the time of building permit issuance for the use in future sanitary sewer capital improvement projects. Therefore, the payment of this fee would mitigate the project's contribution to the future development and expansion of sanitary sewer treatment facilities when needed.

The proposed project would require the construction of a new sewer line to connect the project site to the nearest point of connection with adequate conveyance capacity (existing sewer main on Enterprise Road) immediately adjacent to the site. On-site sewer lines would be sized to provide connection opportunities for existing and approved but-not-yet-constructed development on parcels adjacent to the site within unincorporated San Benito County. The adjacent Cielo Vista residential neighborhood is currently served by an on-site batch wastewater treatment plant (refer to Figure 2). The approved, but not yet constructed, Fairview Corners Residential Subdivision and Gavilan Joint Community College District San Benito Campus projects located east of Fairview Road have also identified the project site as a potential location through which connection to the sanitary sewer system could be made. As illustrated by the Utility Plan (Appendix C, Vesting Tentative Map Sheet 3), the proposed project provides bicycle and pedestrian easements that also provide connection opportunities for the adjacent Cielo Vista Subdivision or development within the Hollister Urban Area east of Fairview Road, should these developments choose, or be required by San Benito County in the future, to connect to the city's sanitary sewer infrastructure through the project site. The proposed project does not propose pipe sizes on the project site beyond what is needed to serve the project and these identified existing or approved developments. The provision of easements to enable future wastewater infrastructure connections would not induce growth since infrastructure is not extended beyond the project site to areas that are not already developed or approved for development accounted for in the *Hollister Urban Area Water and Wastewater Master Plan*.

Growth Induced By Increased Infrastructure Capacity and Extension of Infrastructure (Roads)

The project includes internal neighborhood streets and access to the site would be provided from the Enterprise Road and through an extension of Mimosa Street from the approved Award Homes site to Enterprise Road. The proposed project would not extend roadway infrastructure off the project site.

Stimulus for Economic Growth

The proposed project is a residential project. When compared with industrial or commercial development, residential development is generally considered a product rather than a cause of economic growth. During the construction phases of the proposed project, temporary jobs would be created and others supported through the purchase of materials. Residents would increase consumer demand for goods and services and would spend money in the city and region, which would contribute to economic growth by indirectly leading to new permanent employment opportunities.

Population and Housing Growth

According to the Monterey Bay Area 2014 Regional Forecast (AMBAG 2014), the city's population was 34,928 in 2010. The estimated population for 2020 is anticipated to be 39,975 people, and for 2025 is 41,704. The 2014 AMBAG population projections are based upon an anticipated 1.05 percent annual growth rate. The AMBAG forecast reported that the housing unit requirements for the city in 2010 were 10,401. Projected housing units requirements were expected to be 11,176 in 2020, and the anticipated number of housing units necessary to accommodate expected population growth in 2025 is 11,534.

More recent demographic data is available from the California Department of Finance, which maintains general inventories of housing stock and population data based upon U.S. Census data. The Department of Finance Table E-1 reports that in January 2016, the population of the City of Hollister was 36,484 persons, a 0.5 percent increase from the 2015 population of 36,291 (California Department of Finance 2016a). According to the Department of Finance Table E-5, as of January 1, 2016, the city's existing housing stock consists of 10,827 total housing units with 10,454 units occupied and an average of 3.47 persons per household (California Department of Finance 2016b). Both the most recent growth rate and the 2016 population reported by the Department of Finance are below the AMBAG projections for the year 2025.

The city's general plan population and housing projections are based on AMBAG projections as well as policies included in the general plan to address the city's regional housing needs. As identified in the general plan, population estimate for the city in 2010 was 44,790 persons, the estimated population for 2020 is 53,330 people, and for 2023 is 55,192 people. Projected housing units requirements were expected to be 12,797 in 2010 (base year), and the anticipated number of housing units to accommodate expected population growth in 2020 is 15,237. The general plan anticipates that 15,769 housing units will be necessary to accommodate the city's forecasted population in 2023.

The proposed project would not result in population growth that exceeds regional population forecasts for the city. Future development of the project site consistent with the vesting tentative map includes 227 housing units and a population increase of up to approximately 788 persons (based on 3.47 persons per household, California Department of Finance 2016b). Assuming similar growth conditions at buildout of the proposed project, the city's total population would increase to 36,034 persons with the proposed project. However, this increase would be less than the population projections identified by AMBAG and city's general plan. Therefore, the proposed project's individual and cumulative contribution to population growth is consistent with the regional forecasts.

4.4 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE EFFECTS

CEQA Requirements

A significant adverse unavoidable environmental impact is a significant adverse impact that cannot be reduced to a less than significant level through the implementation of mitigation measures. In some cases, adequate mitigation for a significant unavoidable impact cannot be assured because implementation of that mitigation is outside the jurisdiction of the lead agency. CEQA Guidelines section 15093 requires that a lead agency make findings of overriding considerations for unavoidable significant adverse environmental impacts before approving a project.

CEQA Guidelines section 15093(a) requires the decision-making agency to balance, as applicable, the economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of a project against its unavoidable environmental risks when determining whether to approve the project. If the specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of a project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, the adverse environmental effects may be considered "acceptable." CEQA Guidelines section 15093(b) states that when the lead agency approves a project which will result in the occurrence of significant effects which are identified in the final EIR but are not avoided or substantially lessened, the agency shall state in writing the specific reasons to support its action based on the final EIR and/or other information in the record. The statement of overriding considerations shall be supported by substantial evidence in the record.

This EIR has identified several significant unavoidable environmental impacts, as listed and summarized below. A statement of overriding considerations would need to be adopted for all significant unavoidable impacts prior to project approval.

Summary of Significant Unavoidable Impacts

Based on the environmental analysis provided in Chapter 3.0 and in Section 4.1 of this EIR, most of the impacts associated with the proposed project reduced to a level of insignificance through the implementation of mitigation measures. However, the project would result in significant unavoidable impacts to regional traffic levels of service as summarized below.

Traffic and Circulation

A number of intersections and three highway segments in the vicinity of Hollister would be affected by the proposed project. Most of these intersections and the three highway segments are included in the regional transportation impact fee program and most project impacts would be mitigated by the collection of traffic impact fees from the project. However, as noted in Section 4.1, Cumulative Impacts, the proposed project would contribute to cumulative traffic impacts at the two intersections of State Route 25 and Hillcrest Road, and State Route 25 and Santa Ana Road. Additionally, the proposed project would increase traffic on the highway segments of State Route 25, between San Felipe Road and State Route 156, the segment of State Route 25 between State Route 156 and U.S. 101, and the segment of State Route 156 between the Alameda in San Juan Bautista and Union Road in Hollister.

Intersections. As noted in Section 4.1, Cumulative Impacts, responsible agencies for the two intersections at State Route 25 and Hillcrest Road, and State Route 25 and Santa Ana Road include Caltrans, San Benito County, and the council of governments. Improvements that would mitigate the cumulative impacts to the two intersections are not within the city's authority and also are not included in the regional transportation impact fee program. Implementation of Mitigation Measures CUM T-1 and CUM T-2 require the payment of traffic impact fees to reduce the project's contribution to the cumulative impact; however, because the necessary improvements to these intersections may not be identified and added to the existing regional transportation impact fee program by the council of governments and other agencies, the improvements may not be implemented by Caltrans or the county to mitigate cumulative impacts to these intersections. Therefore, the project's contribution to cumulative impacts is significant and potentially unavoidable. Refer to Section 4.1, Cumulative Impacts, for additional discussion of the impacts to the intersections located at State Route 25 and Hillcrest Road, and State Route 25 and Santa Ana Road.

Highway Segments. Improvements that would mitigate the direct and cumulative impacts to the highway segments of State Route 25, between San Felipe Road and State Route 156, State Route 25 between State Route 156 and U.S. 101, and State Route 156 between the Alameda in San Juan Bautista and Union Road in Hollister, also are not under the city's authority.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure T-3 (refer to Section 3.16, Traffic and circulation) requires the payment of traffic impact fees to reduce the project's contribution to the regional and cumulative impact; however, the necessary improvements to these intersections may not be funded by other affected agencies and implemented in a timely manner by Caltrans to mitigate the project's impact and contribution to cumulative impacts to these state highway facilities. Therefore, the impacts are significant and potentially unavoidable. Discussion of the project's contribution to cumulative traffic conditions on these roadway sections is found in Section 4.1, Cumulative Impacts.

4.5 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

CEQA Requirements

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.2(c) requires a discussion of significant and irreversible changes that would be caused by the project if implemented. The use of non-renewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project may be irreversible, since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse in the future unlikely. Primary impacts and, particularly, secondary impacts (such as highway improvement that provides access to a previously inaccessible area) generally commit future generations to similar uses. Also, irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the project. Irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified. Public Resources Code Section 21100(b)(2)(B) requires an EIR to include a detailed statement setting forth any significant effects on the environment that would be irreversible if a proposed project is implemented. Examples of irreversible environmental changes, as set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c), include the following:

- The proposed project would involve a large commitment of nonrenewable resources such that removal or nonuse thereafter is unlikely;
- The primary and secondary impacts of a proposed project would generally commit future generations to similar uses (e.g., a highway providing access to a previously inaccessible area); or
- The proposed project involves uses in which irreversible damage could result from any potential environmental accidents associated with the proposed project.

Irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified.

Proposed Project Effects

The proposed project would include the consumption of non-renewable building materials and energy resources during the construction phase, as well as the ongoing consumption of energy for lighting, air conditioning, space and water heating, and travel to and from the site during the life of the project. The consumption of such resources is typical of this type of development and would result in an irreversible commitment of natural resources for construction and operations of the proposed project.

Development of the proposed project would commit the use of existing agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses. Once developed, agricultural uses would not return to the site in the foreseeable future. The proposed project, as a typical residential development, does not involve uses in which irreversible damage could result from any potential environmental accidents associated with the project.

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5.0 ALTERNATIVES

5.1 CEQA REQUIREMENTS

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(a) requires a description of reasonable alternatives to the proposed project which could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project. It also requires an evaluation of the comparative merits of the alternatives. An EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project, but must consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives that will foster informed decision-making and public participation. CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(b) further requires that the discussion of alternatives focus on those alternatives capable of eliminating any significant adverse environmental impacts or reducing them to a level of insignificance, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives or would be more costly. CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(e) stipulates that a no project alternative be evaluated along with its impacts.

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(d) requires the EIR to present enough information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis and comparison with the proposed project. If an alternative would cause one or more significant effects in addition to those that would be caused by the project as proposed, the significant effects of the alternative shall be discussed, but in less detail than the significant effects of the project as proposed. CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(e) requires the identification of an environmentally superior alternative. If the "No Project" alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, then the environmentally superior alternative among the remaining alternatives must be identified.

5.2 SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6 (e) requires the “no project” alternative be evaluated along with its impacts. The “no project” alternative analysis must discuss the existing conditions, as well as what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services. If disapproval would result in predictable actions by others, such as the proposal of some other project, the “no project” consequence should be discussed. In certain instances, the no project alternative means “no build” wherein the existing environmental setting is maintained. However, where failure to proceed with the proposed project would not result in preservation of existing environmental conditions, the analysis should identify the practical result of the project’s non-approval.

No Project Alternative

The No Project alternative assumes that the project site would remain vacant. The prezone, vesting tentative map, annexation, and planned unit development application would not be approved and no new development would occur on the project site.

The proposed project is consistent with the general plan and failure to proceed with the project would not preclude other similar development consistent with the general plan. If the proposed project is not approved, the environmental consequences of another project consistent with the general plan could occur, which would be expected to result in environmental impacts similar to the impacts that would result from the proposed project. Therefore, an analysis of a no project alternative with future development of the site consistent with the Hollister general plan Low Density Residential land use designation would not avoid or reduce the significant impacts and is not included in this analysis.

Reduced Density Alternative

This alternative assumes that the project site would be developed with 25 percent fewer dwellings, which would consist of 11 duplex units, 16 triplex units, and 144 single family residential uses only, with a net density of 4.8 dwelling units per acre. Like the proposed project this alternative also would be consistent with the general plan Low-Density Residential land use designation.

5.3 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED

Several alternatives to the proposed project or alternatives to the project site were considered but not selected for further analysis. The alternatives considered, but not selected consist of an increased density alternative, and two alternative locations. These alternatives are identified below. None of the project alternatives considered would avoid or eliminate the significant impacts that would result from the proposed project.

Increased Density Alternative

An alternative that assumed the eventual development of the site with approximately 286 small-lot single-family and multi-family residential uses was considered but rejected from further discussion. Under this alternative, all street, open space, drainage improvement infrastructure and recreation improvements and land dedications would be the same or similar to the proposed project. This alternative increased the number of duplex and triplex units from 35 to 44 dwelling units, and increased the number of single-family dwelling units from 192 units to 240 dwelling units, for a total of 284 dwelling units, which would be consistent with the maximum permitted eight (8) dwelling units per net acre permitted by the Hollister general plan Low Density Residential land use designation, and would also be consistent with the San Benito County general plan target average density of eight (8) dwelling units per acre for development within the county's "Residential Mixed" (RM) land use designation. Using an average of 3.47 persons per household (Department of Finance 2016b), this alternative would provide housing for approximately 986 persons. Similar to the proposed project a prezone, vesting tentative map and annexation would be required.

The Increased Density Alternative would provide more housing opportunities for a greater number of people and would provide a variety of housing types and classes as would the proposed project. This alternative would result in similar impacts to biological resources, air quality and water quality during and post-construction, and, despite an increase in service demand, would not result in new environmental impacts from facility expansions for water and wastewater service, and police and fire services, that are not already considered and planned for under the Hollister general plan and Hollister Urban Area Water and Wastewater Master Plan. This alternative would not eliminate or avoid the significant and unavoidable individual and cumulative impacts to traffic facilities that would result from the proposed project, and may result in new or increase the severity of traffic impacts from a greater number of vehicle trips resulting from this alternative. The increased population on the site would increase emissions that also could result in new or greater impacts from operational air and GHG emissions, and noise. Because the Increased Density Alternative would not avoid or reduce the proposed project's significant impacts, and may result in new or greater impacts than those of the proposed project this alternative is eliminated from further consideration.

Alternative Locations

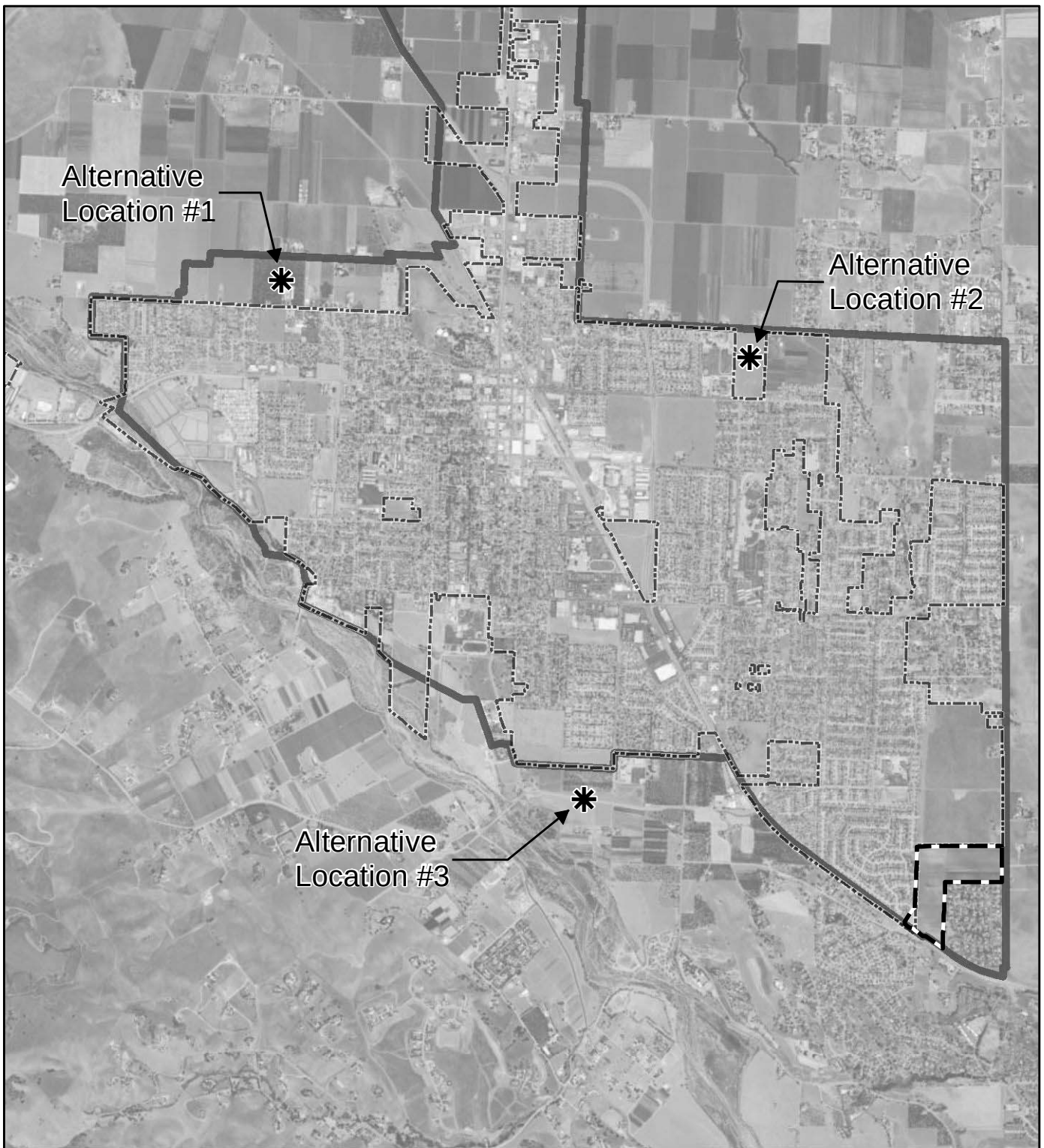
Several alternative locations within the city's planning area were identified but eliminated from further consideration. Alternative sites that are currently vacant but for which development applications are pending or approved with the City of Hollister were considered but rejected from further analysis. Three potential sites of comparable size for which development applications have not been received by the City were identified. The three potential alternatives are presented in [Figure 20, Alternative Locations](#).

Location I

This location is an approximately 50-acre site north of Buena Vista Road and west of San Felipe Street. This potential site is located outside the city limit but within the sphere of influence and is designated by the Hollister general plan as Medium Density Residential (8-12 dwelling units per acre). Adjacent land uses include low-density residential uses to the south, agriculture to the west and north, and a cemetery and the proposed North Street Residential Subdivision project site to the east. Also identified as a priority infill area within the general plan, this site is currently being used for agriculture and consists primarily of Prime Farmland (Department of Conservation 2010).

Development of this site as an alternative to the proposed project was considered, but rejected for several reasons: the site is designated by the Department of Conservation as Prime Farmland and Grazing Land (Department of Conservation 2010), and its development would result in significant impacts to agriculture. Development on this site would result in the conversion of a greater amount of Prime Farmland than would the proposed project and could lead to other land conversions as it is located adjacent to other agricultural uses that are also designated Prime Farmland. This project site is located within the viewshed of Vista Hill Park, and its conversion from rural to urban uses would contribute to significant cumulative impacts to the aesthetic value of rural visual character of the city when viewed from Vista Hill Park.

This alternative may eliminate some traffic-related impacts that would otherwise result from the proposed project but due to its location could cause impacts to other intersection levels of service which, due to timing of any necessary improvements also may result in significant and unavoidable traffic-related impacts. Development of this alternative would avoid impacts to California tiger salamander, California red-legged frog, and San Joaquin kit fox habitats on the project site, but could result in impacts to biological resources that may be present on this site. Development of the project in this location would result in similar GHG emissions impacts, and impacts to air and water quality as would the proposed project.



Source: City of Hollister GIS 2016



0 4000 feet



Project Site

Hollister City Limit

Sphere of Influence

Alternative Location #1: MDR

Alternative Location #2: MDR

Alternative Location #3: LDR

Figure 20

Alternative Locations

Roberts Ranch Subdivision EIR



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Development of this site with low density residential uses would require a general plan amendment to change the land use designation from Medium Density Residential to Low Density Residential, and would reduce the housing opportunities available for the city to meet its regional housing needs. This site is currently under active agricultural production and is not under the control of the project applicants and this alternative location would not meet the objectives of providing parkland to expand Valley View Park.

Location 2

This location is an approximately 20-acre site located east of the Highway 25 Bypass, south of Santa Ana Road and north of within the Hollister general plan Medium Density Residential land use designation. This site is within the city limit, and is designated as Farmland of Local Importance (Department of Conservation 2010). Development of the site with low-density residential uses at a residential density of less than eight (8) dwelling units per acre) would require a general plan amendment.

This alternative was considered, but rejected for several reasons. Although the site does not contain Prime Farmland, the site contains Farmland of Local Importance and development would result in a significant impact. Development of this alternative would eliminate some traffic-related impacts near the proposed project site but due to its location could cause impacts to other intersection levels of service which, due to timing of any necessary improvements also may result in significant and unavoidable traffic-related impacts; development of this alternative would result in the same GHG and air quality impacts as would the proposed project. This site is substantially smaller than the project site, is not under the control of the project applicants and development of the project in this alternative location would not meet the project objectives of providing parkland to expand Valley View Park consistent with the Hollister Park Facility Master Plan standards for neighborhood parks.

Location 3

This location consists of 65 acres designated as Low Density Residential (1-8 dwelling units per acre) in the general plan that are located outside the sphere of influence, south of the city limit, north of Union Road and east of Cienega Road. However, according to the Department of Conservation, this location consists of Prime Farmland and Grazing land (Department of Conservation 2010), and is currently being used for agriculture. Adjacent land uses include low-density residential uses to the west and north, a school to the north, and agricultural land in unincorporated San Benito County to the south. A portion of the site adjacent to State Route 25 is identified as a potential specific plan area. This alternative was considered, but rejected for several reasons: the site contains Prime Farmland (Department of Conservation 2010), and its development would result in significant impacts to agriculture; this alternative may eliminate

some traffic-related impacts but due to its location could cause impacts to other intersection levels of service which, due to timing of any necessary improvements also may result in significant and unavoidable traffic-related impacts; development of this alternative would result in similar impacts to biological resources, GHG and air quality impacts as would the proposed project. Further, unlike the proposed project, a general plan amendment, and LAFCO approval of a sphere of influence amendment and annexation would be required for this site; this site is not under the control of the project applicants; this alternative location would not meet the objectives of providing parkland to expand Valley View Park.

5.4 ALTERNATIVE I, NO PROJECT

Project Description

The No Project alternative assumes that the project site would remain vacant. The prezone, vesting tentative map, annexation, and planned unit development application would not be approved and no new development would occur on the project site. For the analysis of this alternative the existing land use on the site is assumed to continue unchanged. Development within Hollister would continue within the existing city limit and other areas within the sphere of influence, or potentially within new additions to the sphere of influence in other parts of the city, resulting in various and potentially significant environmental impacts in those locations. However, this analysis focuses on the environmental effects within the project site under a no build scenario. The No Project alternative does not achieve project objectives.

Environmental Analysis

The environmental effects of the No Project alternative are presented by topic area below.

Aesthetics

Compared with the proposed project, implementation of this alternative would not result in a change in visual character. Therefore, the No Project alternative would be superior to the proposed project.

Agricultural Resources and Forest Resources

The No Project alternative would not permanently convert the 26.30 acres of Prime Farmland on the project site to urban uses, and would not result in a significant and unavoidable impact resulting from the loss of Prime Farmland. The No Project alternative would be superior to the proposed project.

Air Quality

New air pollutant emissions from construction, operations of wood burning appliances and vehicle trips originating on the project site would not occur. This alternative would not contribute emissions that would affect regional air quality. The No Project alternative would be superior to the proposed project.

Biological Resources

Under this alternative agricultural activities on the project site may continue. The No Project alternative would not affect biological resources within the project site to an extent greater than under the existing condition and no impacts resulting from habitat loss would occur. The No Project alternative would be superior to the proposed project.

Cultural Resources

The No Project alternative does not require excavation and grading and would not have potentially significant effects to undiscovered cultural or paleontological resources within the project site. The No Project alternative would be superior to the proposed project.

Fire Services

The No Project alternative would not increase demand for fire protection services. Therefore, the No Project would be similar to the proposed project for fire protection services.

Geology and Soils

The No Project alternative would not increase risks of harm or property damage from seismic hazards or expose persons and structures to hazards associated with construction on expansive soils. The No Project alternative would be superior to the proposed project.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The No Project alternative would not result in new GHG emissions associated with construction and operations resulting from development of the project site. The No Project alternative would be superior to the proposed project.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Under the No Project alternative existing agricultural operations on the site would continue, as would the potential for pesticide drift and exposures to existing receptors adjacent to the site. The No Project alternative would not be superior to the proposed project.

Surface Hydrology and Water Quality

The No Project alternative would not change on-site drainage patterns that could result in erosion, siltation, or runoff that exceeds existing storm water infrastructure capacity. No changes in the volume or type of runoff would occur that would affect the water quality of downstream areas, including the impaired San Benito River. The No Project alternative would not require the development of new storm drainage facilities and would not result in environmental effects related to provision of those facilities. The No Project alternative would be superior to the proposed project.

Noise

The No Project alternative would not create new sources of noise would increase ambient noise levels or expose receptors to new stationary or mobile sources of unacceptable noise. The No Project alternative would be superior to the proposed project.

Parks and Recreation

The No Project alternative would not result in environmental effects related to the provision of park land or its future development on the project site. No parkland dedications would be required or in-lieu fees paid. Under this alternative, Valley View Park would not be expanded as identified in the city's Park Facility Master Plan. On balance, the No Project alternative would be superior to the proposed project.

Police Services

The No Project alternative would not increase demand for police services that would require the development of police department facilities or expansion of police services to meet increased demands. Therefore, the No Project would be superior to the proposed project.

Schools

The No Project alternative would not add more students to the local schools, nor require the expansion of existing schools or the provision of new schools, the construction of which could result in environmental effects. The No Project alternative would be superior to the proposed project.

Solid Waste

The No Project alternative would not increase the rate for solid waste disposal in landfills. The No Project alternative would be superior to the proposed project.

Transportation and Traffic

The No Project alternative would not generate new vehicular trips that would result in or contribute to unacceptable levels of service at intersections and highway segments near the project site. No significant impacts resulting from increased vehicle trips and congestion would occur. The No Project alternative would be superior to the proposed project.

Water Service

Under this alternative, irrigation water would continue to be provided by the San Benito County Water District, and the site would not connect to the Sunnyslope County Water District infrastructure adjacent to the site. As with the proposed project, the No Project alternative would not require the development of new water treatment facilities, and would not result in environmental effects related to provision of those facilities. The No Project alternative would be superior to the proposed project.

Wastewater Service

Under this alternative, no connections to the Hollister municipal sanitary sewer mains would occur. As with the proposed project, the No Project alternative would not require the development of new wastewater treatment facilities or result in environmental effects related to provision of those facilities. The No Project alternative would be superior to the proposed project.

5.5 ALTERNATIVE 2, REDUCED DENSITY***Alternative Description***

This alternative assumes that the project site would be developed with 25 percent fewer dwellings, which would consist of 11 duplex units, 16 triplex units, and 144 single family residential uses only, with a net density of 4.8 dwelling units per acre. Like the proposed project this alternative also would be consistent with the general plan Low-Density Residential land use designation. All street, open space, drainage improvement infrastructure and recreation improvements and land dedications would be the same or similar to the proposed project.

Development of this alternative would provide housing for approximately 594 people using the most recent Department of Finance estimates of 3.47 persons per household in Hollister (2016b). Similar to the proposed project a prezone, vesting tentative map, and annexation would be required.

Under this alternative, it is presumed that 25 percent fewer dwelling units would generate 25 percent fewer students, vehicle trips and sources of traffic noise, as well as reduced demand for water and wastewater services, reduced GHG and air pollutant emissions, and solid waste. Despite these reductions, the Reduced Density Alternative would result in similar impacts as the proposed project to air quality and water quality during construction and to biological resources. This alternative also would not avoid significant impacts to Prime Farmland as would occur with the proposed project. A reduction in vehicle trips by 25 percent would reduce the project's contribution to cumulatively considerable delays and declines in levels of service at the intersection of State Route 25 and Santa Ana Road, and the intersection of Fairview Road and Hillcrest Avenue. However, since these intersections would operate at unacceptable levels of service under background plus project and cumulative conditions (refer to Section 4.1, Cumulative Impacts), and the facilities are under the jurisdictions of other agencies including Caltrans, San Benito County, and the San Benito County Council of Governments, this alternative would also result in significant and unavoidable impacts to these intersections. This alternative would not meet the project objective to meet the city's targeted average residential density of six dwelling units per acre for low-density residential land uses.

Environmental Analysis

The environmental effects of the Reduced Density alternative are presented by topic area below.

Aesthetics

The Reduced Density alternative would result in development of residential uses on the site, similar to the proposed project. The proposed project would result in less than significant impacts to the visual character of the site and less than significant impacts resulting from the introduction of new sources of light and glare. As with the proposed project, this alternative would also permanently convert the site from agricultural use to urban uses, which would result in less than significant impacts. The Reduced Density alternative would result in similar aesthetic impacts and would be similar to the proposed project.

Agricultural Resources

The Reduced Density alternative also would result in the conversion of 26.30 acres of Prime Farmland to non-agricultural use, which is a significant and unavoidable impact. This alternative would result in the same impact to agricultural resources as would the proposed project and would not be environmentally superior to the proposed project.

Air Quality-Construction

The Reduced Density alternative would be consistent with the air district's Air Quality Management Plan and the growth projections for Hollister compiled by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments. This alternative would reduce vehicle trips and the number of units on the site. Therefore, compared to the proposed project the Reduced Density alternative would generate fewer emissions during operations. Development of this alternative may reduce the duration of construction, but as with the proposed project, construction would occur on the entire site, which would generate dust and construction equipment exhaust emissions adjacent to sensitive receptors in the Cielo Vista neighborhood east of the project site, in the Valley View Neighborhood west of Enterprise Road, and other adjacent residences north of Valley View Park. However, development of this alternative would be subject to the same conditions of approval and mitigation measures to reduce operational area source emissions from wood-burning appliances, and to reduce emissions associated with construction. On balance, this alternative has the potential to result in fewer exposures to construction emissions and fewer operational emissions due to a reduced number of residences, than would the proposed project. Therefore, the Reduced Density alternative would be environmentally superior to the proposed project.

Biological Resources

This alternative would include grading and site disturbance that would, as with the proposed project, result in potential impacts to special-status species including California tiger salamander, California red-legged frogs, Western spade foot, San Joaquin kit fox, burrowing owl, and nesting birds and their habitat (wetlands and grassland). Therefore, the impacts of the Reduced Density alternative on biological resources would be similar to those identified for the proposed project and would require the same mitigation. The Reduced Density alternative would not be environmentally superior to the proposed project.

Cultural Resources

Similar to the proposed project, the Reduced Density alternative has the potential to result in impacts to unknown buried cultural and/or paleontological resources. The proposed project and the Reduced Density alternative have the same potential for impacts to cultural resources and would require the same mitigation. The Reduced Density alternative would result in similar potential impacts to cultural resources and would not be environmentally superior to the proposed project.

Fire Services

Compared to the proposed project the Reduced Density alternative would provide approximately 25 percent fewer dwelling units than the proposed project, which may equate to less service calls for fire protection services. Similar to the proposed project, developers of the Reduced Density alternative would be responsible for the payment of development impact fees, which would mitigate the costs of new equipment needed to maintain acceptable response times. As with the proposed project, the Reduced Density alternative would not affect the Hollister Fire Department's performance standards or infrastructure to the extent that new or expanded facilities would be required. However, demand for services is slightly reduced under this alternative. Therefore, the Reduced Density alternative would be environmentally superior to the proposed project.

Geology and Soils

The Reduced Density alternative would establish fewer residential units and fewer residents on the site than would the proposed project. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would result in the exposure of people and structures to potential geologic and soils impacts. Although fewer people would be exposed under this alternative, the same conditions of approval (seismic design and building construction standards) would be applicable to development under this alternative as with the proposed project to ensure that risks of geologic and seismic hazards exposures are reduced. The Reduced Density alternative would be environmentally similar to the proposed project.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Reduced Density alternative would generate similar GHG emissions during construction activities on the 54.9-acre site as the proposed project. This alternative would construct fewer homes and generate fewer vehicle trips and as a result fewer overall GHG emissions during its operations phase than the proposed project. The net density of this alternative is lower than that of the proposed project, and despite the reduction in dwelling units, the project GHG emissions per capita may be slightly greater than those resulting from the proposed project. Therefore the amount of GHG emissions per service population are expected to be similar to the proposed project with this alternative. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative could result in potentially significant impacts related to GHG emissions, which would require the same mitigation measure as required for the proposed project. For this reason, the Reduced Density alternative would result in potentially similar GHG emissions impacts and would not be environmentally superior to the proposed project.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The Reduced Density alternative would have similar risks of exposures to hazardous materials during operations or construction as would the proposed project. This alternative is also subject to compliance with federal, state and local regulations for the handling of construction materials and waste. Thus, the Reduced Density alternative would be environmentally similar to the proposed project.

Surface Hydrology and Water Quality

Construction of the Reduced Density alternative would disturb soils, increase erosion potential, and lead to an increase in post-construction runoff from paved surfaces and other impermeable areas on the site, which would be similar to the effects generated by the proposed project. Although the number of dwelling units is reduced under this alternative, development would occur on the entire site in a manner similar to the proposed project. The Reduced Density alternative would be subject to the same storm water retention, percolation, treatment, and discharge requirements as the proposed project. Development under this alternative would be subject to compliance with City of Hollister and the Regional Water Quality Control Board's Best Management Practices and standards established for compliance with non-point discharge emissions for storm water, the provision of adequately-sized drainage facilities, and compliance with post-construction storm water reduction strategies. Like the proposed project, storm water detention facilities would need to be constructed under this alternative, and consequently the impacts to hydrology and water quality resulting from this alternative would be similar to the proposed project and require the same kind of mitigation as the proposed project. Therefore, the Reduced Density alternative would be environmentally similar to the proposed project.

Noise

The Reduced Density alternative would increase the noise levels along Enterprise Road. When compared to the proposed project, the Reduced Density alternative would generate approximately 25 percent fewer vehicle trips, which would correspond with fewer mobile-sources of noise on Enterprise Road and adjacent streets. Access to the site would still be provided along Enterprise Road and it is unlikely that the road noise generated by this alternative would be reduced to the extent that the 60 dBA community noise level would not be exceeded along Enterprise Road. Due to the reduced density on the project site there would be more opportunities available for the provision of greater setback distances between the roadway and new residences adjacent to Enterprise Road, that may reduce the likelihood of exposure to noise levels that exceed the 60 dBA community noise level on Enterprise Road. As would the proposed project, this alternative would also generate traffic noise that would contribute to

cumulative ambient noise levels on Enterprise Road that exceed the 60 dBA noise threshold, although to a lesser extent. Temporary noise impacts due to construction activities would be similar to the proposed project. Overall, noise generated by the Reduced Density alternative would be lesser in magnitude than that of the proposed project. Therefore, the Reduced Density alternative would be environmentally superior to the proposed project.

Parks and Recreation

The Reduced Density alternative would generate fewer residents than the proposed project and, therefore, would result in a lesser demand for park and recreation services. Development under this alternative would require approximately 2.4 acres of parkland per Hollister Municipal Code Chapter 16.55, which is less than the 3.3 acres that would be provided on site as part of the project and this alternative (including the 2.54-acre land dedication for Valley View Park). As with the proposed project, developers of the Reduced Density alternative would be subject to compliance with the city's parkland provision requirements and may also be responsible for the payment of in-lieu fees to satisfy this requirement. The Reduced Density alternative would generate fewer new users of existing city, county, state, or federal parks. Therefore, although this alternative would have a reduced demand for parks and recreational services, based on the smaller project population, a smaller amount of parkland would be required. Overall, the Reduced Density alternative would be environmentally superior to the proposed project, because this alternative would generate fewer new users of city, county, state, or federal parks.

Police Services

Compared to the proposed project, the Reduced Density alternative would generate fewer residents than the proposed project and; therefore, would result in a lesser demand for police services, which, similar to the proposed project would require additional personnel to meet service thresholds. The Reduced Density alternative would require one additional officer to maintain acceptable service ratios. As with the proposed project, development under this alternative would not require the construction of new facilities. Similar to the proposed project, developers of the Reduced Density alternative would be responsible for the payment of development impact fees, which would mitigate the costs of new equipment and or infrastructure needs to maintain acceptable response times. No impacts from facilities construction would result from either the proposed project or the Reduced Density alternative, although the potential impacts are slightly reduced under this alternative,. Overall, the Reduced Density alternative would be environmentally superior to the proposed project.

Schools

Environmental impacts associated with the provision of school services for the proposed project were determined to be less than significant, with the payment of applicable school impact fees. The Reduced Density alternative would provide fewer housing units and generate fewer school-age children, which corresponds with a reduction in demand for schools. Development of the site with 26 multi-family residences and 144 single-family residences would generate 130 school-aged children: 65 kindergarten through sixth grade students, 32 seventh through eighth grade students, and 33 high school students. Existing school capacity is available to accommodate the students generated by the Reduced Density alternative or the proposed project. This alternative is also subject to the payment of applicable school impact fees. Although the impacts to schools are slightly reduced under this alternative, both the proposed project and the Reduced Density alternative would contribute to potential impacts resulting from future planned construction of school facilities for both the Hollister Unified School District and the San Benito High School District to serve cumulative demand. This alternative is environmentally superior to the proposed project.

Solid Waste

The Reduced Density alternative would result in fewer residents and less individual and cumulative demand for landfill disposal of solid waste. The Reduced Density alternative would be subject to the same waste diversion and solid waste recycling policies as would the proposed project. Neither the proposed project or the Reduced Density alternative would exceed landfill capacity under existing or cumulative conditions and therefore, the Reduced Density alternative would be environmentally superior to the proposed project.

Traffic and Circulation

Utilizing the trip rates identified in the traffic report for the proposed project (Hexagon Transportation Consultants 2016) the Reduced Density alternative would generate approximately 1,623 daily vehicle trips, which is 408 fewer daily trips than the proposed project. The proposed project would result in less than significant impacts to a number of study intersections and highway segments (refer to Section 3.16), but with only two exceptions, these impacts would be mitigated by the payment of traffic impact fees. With fewer vehicles and a lesser traffic volume on area roadways, traffic and circulation impacts under this alternative would be lesser in magnitude than the proposed project and a lower share of required traffic impact fees would be paid into the regional transportation impact fee program.

However, traffic generated by this alternative would have the potential to result in similar significant and unavoidable cumulative impacts as would the proposed project at the Caltrans intersection of State Route 25 and Santa Ana Road, and the county intersection of Fairview Road and Hillcrest Road. Five percent of traffic generated by development of the project site (refer to Figure 17) and likewise, under this alternative, would be expected to utilize these unsignalized intersections. These intersections are projected to operate at unacceptable levels of service during at least one peak hour with or without the project traffic (refer to Section 4.1, Cumulative Impacts), and traffic generated by this alternative also would contribute to the unacceptable levels of service at these intersections under cumulative conditions..

As is the case with the proposed project, improvements to these intersections that would address the Reduced Density alternative's contribution to the cumulative impacts are not within the responsibility of the City of Hollister, and would require the San Benito County Council of Governments and participating agencies to identify necessary improvements, include them in the regional transportation impact fee program, and would require the improvements to be implemented by Caltrans and San Benito County. Although the Reduced Density alternative would contribute fewer vehicles to the transportation network, implementation of this alternative could also result in potentially significant and unavoidable impacts to these intersections. However, the Reduced Density alternative would be environmentally superior to the proposed project, due to the generation of fewer vehicle trips and traffic volumes that add to area congestion.

Wastewater Service

The Reduced Density alternative would connect to existing wastewater infrastructure similar to the proposed project. Under the Reduced Density alternative the site would be developed with 170 dwelling units, 57 fewer units than the proposed project. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would not result in impacts to wastewater service capacity, which is sufficient to accommodate and treat wastewater generated by fewer residential units. Although the demand for wastewater collection and treatment would be reduced under this alternative, no impacts from facilities construction would directly result from either the proposed project or the Reduced Density alternative. Due to the reduced demand; however, the Reduced Density alternative would be environmentally superior to the proposed project.

Water Supplies and Facilities

The Reduced Density alternative would connect to existing water supply infrastructure similar to the proposed project. Under the Reduced Density alternative the site would be developed with 57 fewer dwelling units than the proposed project, which would not require additional domestic

water treatment facilities than already planned for by the San Benito County Water District, Sunnyslope County Water District and City of Hollister. Similar to the proposed project, implementation of this alternative would contribute to the need for these facilities but would not exceed supply. Although the demand for water would be reduced under this alternative, no impacts from facilities construction would result from either the proposed project or the Reduced Density alternative. Due to the reduced demand; however, the Reduced Density alternative would be environmentally superior to the proposed project

5.6 COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

The No Project alternative would avoid significant and unavoidable cumulative impacts to intersection and highway segment levels of service and impacts resulting from increases in unacceptable noise. The No Project alternative would not create new sources of air or GHG emissions, would not require construction that could affect sensitive receptors, would not result in impacts to biological resources and would not generate new demand for public services such as water, wastewater, police, fire, parks and recreation, or school services. The No Project alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, because it avoids all impacts that would otherwise occur with the proposed project. However, the No Project alternative also does not provide parkland for expansion of the Valley View park, and does not meet any of the project objectives (refer to Section 2.4, Statement of Objectives).

The Reduced Density alternative would reduce the magnitude of environmental impacts that would otherwise result from the proposed project. This alternative would create new sources of emissions that affect air quality, new sources of GHG emissions, new sources of noise that affect sensitive receptors during construction and operations (road noise), and new sources of traffic that would result in impacts to roadway and intersection levels of service. These impacts would be reduced in magnitude due to fewer new residents on the site that would generate emissions, traffic and new sources of noise. Compared to the proposed project the Reduced Density alternative would generate fewer service demands for public services such as police and fire services, domestic water supply and wastewater treatment, schools and parks. Despite the reduced magnitude of impacts to these resources, this alternative would not result in less than cumulatively considerable contributions to significant cumulative noise or traffic impacts than would the proposed project.

A comparison of each alternative to the proposed project is presented in Table 39, Project Alternatives Summary. The extent of the environmental effects of each alternative are considered to be worse, similar, or better when compared to the effects of the proposed project.

Table 39 Project Alternatives Summary

Environmental Topic	Proposed Project	No Project Alternative	Reduced Density Alternative
Aesthetics	LTS	Better	Similar
Agricultural Resources	LTS	Better	Same
Air Quality	LTS,M	Better	Better
Biological Resources	LTS,MM	Better	Similar
Cultural Resources	LTS,M	Better	Similar
Fire Services	LTS	Better	Better
Geology and Soils	LTS, M	Better	Similar
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	LTS,M	Better	Similar
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	LTS	Better	Similar
Surface Hydrology and Water Quality	LTS,M	Better	Similar
Noise	LTS,M	Better	Better
Parks and Recreation	LTS	Better	Better
Police Services	LTS	Better	Better
Schools	LTS	Better	Better
Solid Waste	LTS	Better	Better
Transportation and Traffic	SU,M	Better	Better
Wastewater Service	LTS	Better	Better
Water Supply and Facilities	LTS	Better	Better

Source: EMC Planning Group 2016

Note: SU =Significant and Unavoidable, LTS = Less than Significant, M = Mitigation

Environmentally Superior Alternative

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(e) requires the identification of an environmentally superior alternative. If the "No Project" alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, then the environmentally superior alternative amongst the remaining alternatives must be identified. Although the alternatives analysis has found that the No Project alternative would have no adverse environmental impacts, for the purposes of CEQA, the environmentally superior alternative would be the Reduced Density alternative.

The Reduced Density alternative would meet some, but not all of the project objectives. Similar to the proposed project this alternative would provide residential infill development of the site consistent with the Hollister 2005 General Plan policies for a “Phase I Priority Infill Area”. However, unlike the proposed project, the Reduced Density alternative would provide a net residential density of 4.8 dwelling units per acre, which would not meet the average six-(6) unit per acre target density identified in the city’s general plan (Hollister 2005, Table A23) that is necessary to meet the city’s regional housing needs. Although the Reduced Density alternative also would provide a mix of housing types to increase the city’s available housing opportunities, fewer housing units would be provided that would meet the needs of, and be affordable to, a variety of household sizes, types and income levels.

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