Final Initial Study

Meridian Village Subdivision and Multifamily Development

December 17, 2025

Prepared by

EMC Planning Group

FINAL INITIAL STUDY

MERIDIAN VILLAGE SUBDIVISION AND MULTIFAMILY DEVELOPMENT

PREPARED FOR

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A. BACKGROUND

Project Title	Meridian Village Subdivision and Multifamily Development
Lead Agency Contact Person and Phone Number	Magda Gonzalez, Contract Senior Planner 925-789-7160
Date Prepared	December 17, 2025
Study Prepared by	EMC Planning Group Inc. 601 Abrego Street Monterey, CA 93940
Project Location	West of State Route 25 and south of Meridian Street within City of Hollister
Project Sponsor Name and Address	Colette Fahmy 331 Santa Rosa Drive Los Gatos, CA 95032
General Plan Designation	Mixed-Use
Zoning	Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMU)

Setting

The approximately 12.75-acre property (APN 054-600-005) is located within the City of Hollister on the southside of Meridian Street and west of State Route 25. The property is located approximately seven miles from the San Andreas Fault, and approximately 0.40 miles northeast of the Calaveras Fault. The Hollister Municipal Airport is located 2.33 miles northwest of the project site. According to the Hollister Municipal Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (2012), the project site is located within the Airport Influence Area and the Airspace Protection Zone.

The site is undeveloped and operating as agricultural cropland with wheat crops and contains two trees. The site is surrounded by commercial and residential uses to the west; an undeveloped agricultural parcel cultivated with wheat crops, Meridian Street, and residential uses to the north; an undeveloped agricultural parcel cultivated with wheat crops, State Route 25, and residential uses to the east; and an undeveloped agricultural parcel cultivated with wheat crops, and industrial and commercial uses to the south. The project site is designated by the City General Plan for Mixed-Use and is zoned Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMU).

Figure, 1, Location Map, identifies the project site's regional location. Figure 2, Aerial Photograph, illustrates the uses on, and surrounding, the project site. Figure 3, Site Photographs, provides a visual of the project site from a pedestrian's viewpoint.

Background

An initial study and mitigated negative declaration were previously prepared in 2006 for the Guerra Pre-zoning, Zone Change, and C-District Review project on the project site. The previous project proposed mixed uses, including up to 250,000 square feet of commercial uses and 120 multi-family (condominium) residential units. This previous project involved a larger area than the currently proposed project site. Since preparation of the 2006 initial study, the project was significantly revised and is now known as the Meridian Village project. The parcel has since been annexed.

Proposed Project

The full tentative map, dated January 2024, is included as Appendix A. The site plan overlaying an aerial photograph of the project site can be found in Figure 4, Site Plan.

Subdivision

The Meridian Village project includes subdividing the 12.75-acre parcel into five lots, with a total of 219 residential units (90 apartments and 129 condominiums), and five parcels for public and private streets. The proposed square footage and use on each lot are provided below:

- Lot 1 - 89,104 square feet with five apartment buildings, each building consisting of 18 units for a total of 90 apartment units, as well as a 16,170 square foot recreation center and private park area; and
- Lots 2 through 5 would be developed with 3-, 4-, 5-, and 6-unit townhome-style buildings for a total of 129 condominium units. The square footages on each lot are as follows:
    - Lot 2 - 40,058 square feet;
    - Lot 3 - 85,861 square feet;
    - Lot 4 - 89,205 square feet; and
    - Lot 5 - 50,163 square feet.

Access and Parking

The project site will involve two access points. The primary access point (proposed Vintage Way) will be from Meridian Street to the north, and the secondary access point will be an extension of the existing Athena Way from the west. The proposed Vintage Way will be a public street for the first 40 feet and a private street the remaining 26 feet. The proposed extension of Athena Way will be public along with the propose Colette Way. The following proposed internal streets will be private: Sarwat Way, Baltz Way, and Soneya Way.

The public street portion of the proposed Vintage Way will consist of a 30-foot emergency vehicle access easement, which will also be used as an ingress/egress and public utilities easement.

The proposed project will provide a total of 665 parking spaces (149 spaces for the apartments and 516 spaces for the condominiums) and 16 bicycle parking spaces.

Tree Removal and Replacement

There are two existing trees on the project site that will be removed and replaced with more than 30 native trees (plan set, Sheet L-2).

Utilities

The project will connect into the existing water, sanitary sewer system, and storm drain system located on Meridian Street. Street lighting will also be placed throughout the project site. Stormwater will be treated within the four drainage management areas and direct stormwater towards each management area's stormwater control measure located along the western side of the project site.

Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required

- San Benito County Airport Land Use Commission
- Regional Water Quality Control Board

Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?

The City sent out tribal letters of confirmation on March 19, 2024. The Amah Mutsun Tribal Band responded and provided recommendations to be implemented if any cultural or historic sensitivity were found within one mile of the project site (refer to Section 5.0, Cultural Resources). No consultation has been requested pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1 (Magda Gonzalez, email message, May 17, 2024).

Note: Conducting consultation early in the CEQA process allows tribal governments, lead agencies, and project proponents to discuss the level of environmental review, identify and address potential adverse impacts to tribal cultural resources, and reduce the potential for delay and conflict in the environmental review process. (See Public Resources Code section 21080.3.2.) Information may also be available from the California Native American Heritage Commission's Sacred Lands File per Public Resources Code section 5097.96 and the California Historical Resources Information System administered by the California Office of Historic Preservation. Please also note that Public Resources Code section 21082.3(c) contains provisions specific to confidentiality.

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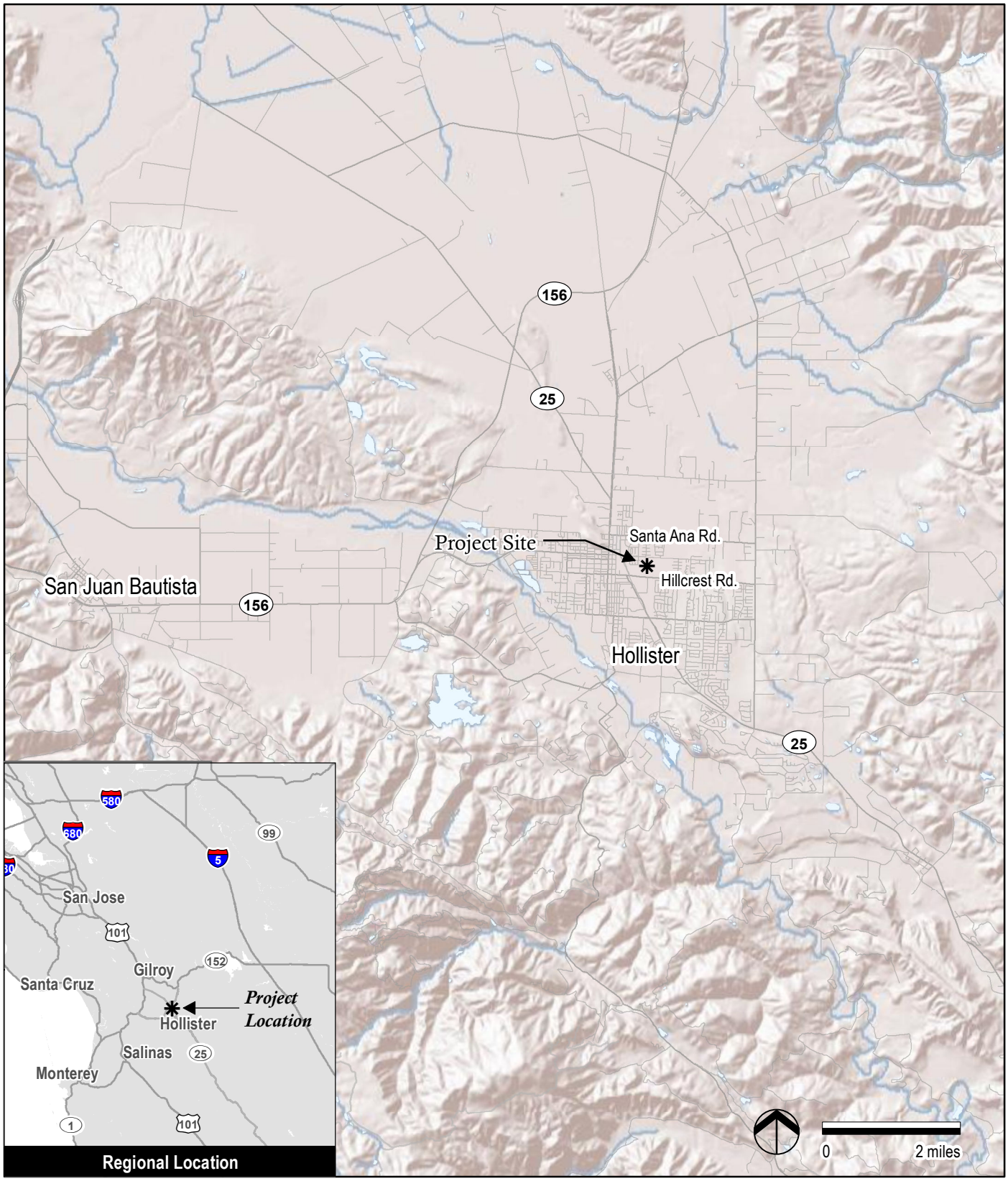

Source: ESRI 2024

Figure 1

Location Map

Meridian Village Subdivision and Multifamily Development

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0 350 feet

Project Site

Source: San Benito County 2025, Google Earth 2025

Figure 2

Aerial Photograph

Meridian Village Subdivision and Multifamily Development

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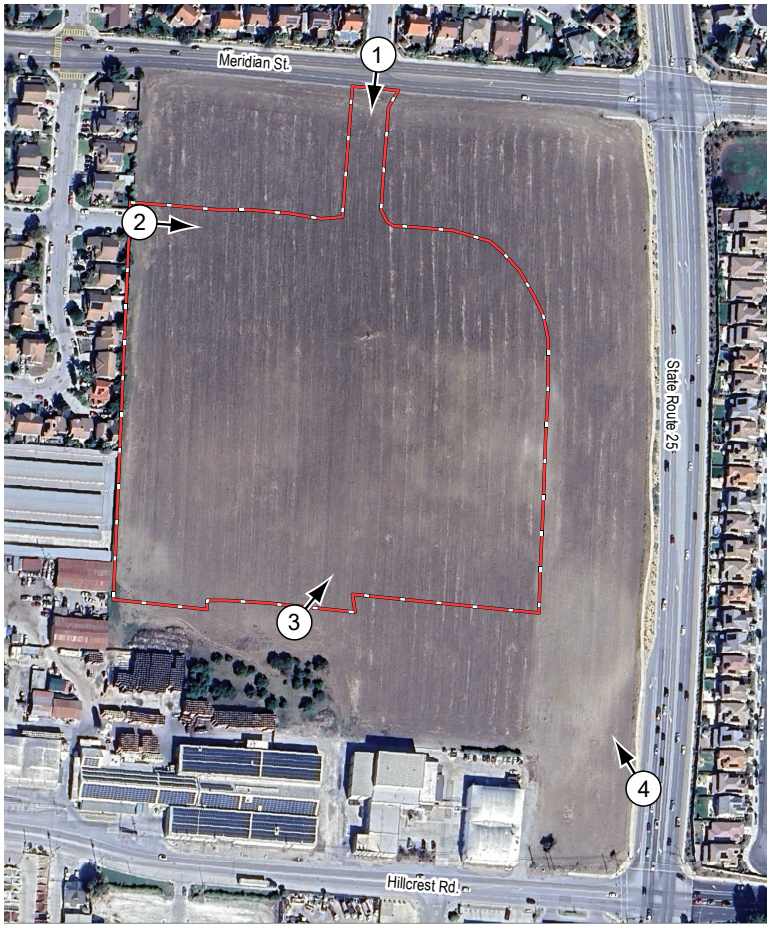
1 On Meridian Street facing south at the project site.

2 On west side of the project site facing east.



Project Site

Source: Google Earth 2025
Photographs: EMC Planning Group 2024

3 On south side of the project site facing northeast.

4 On State Route 25 facing northwest across the project site.

Figure 3
Site Photographs

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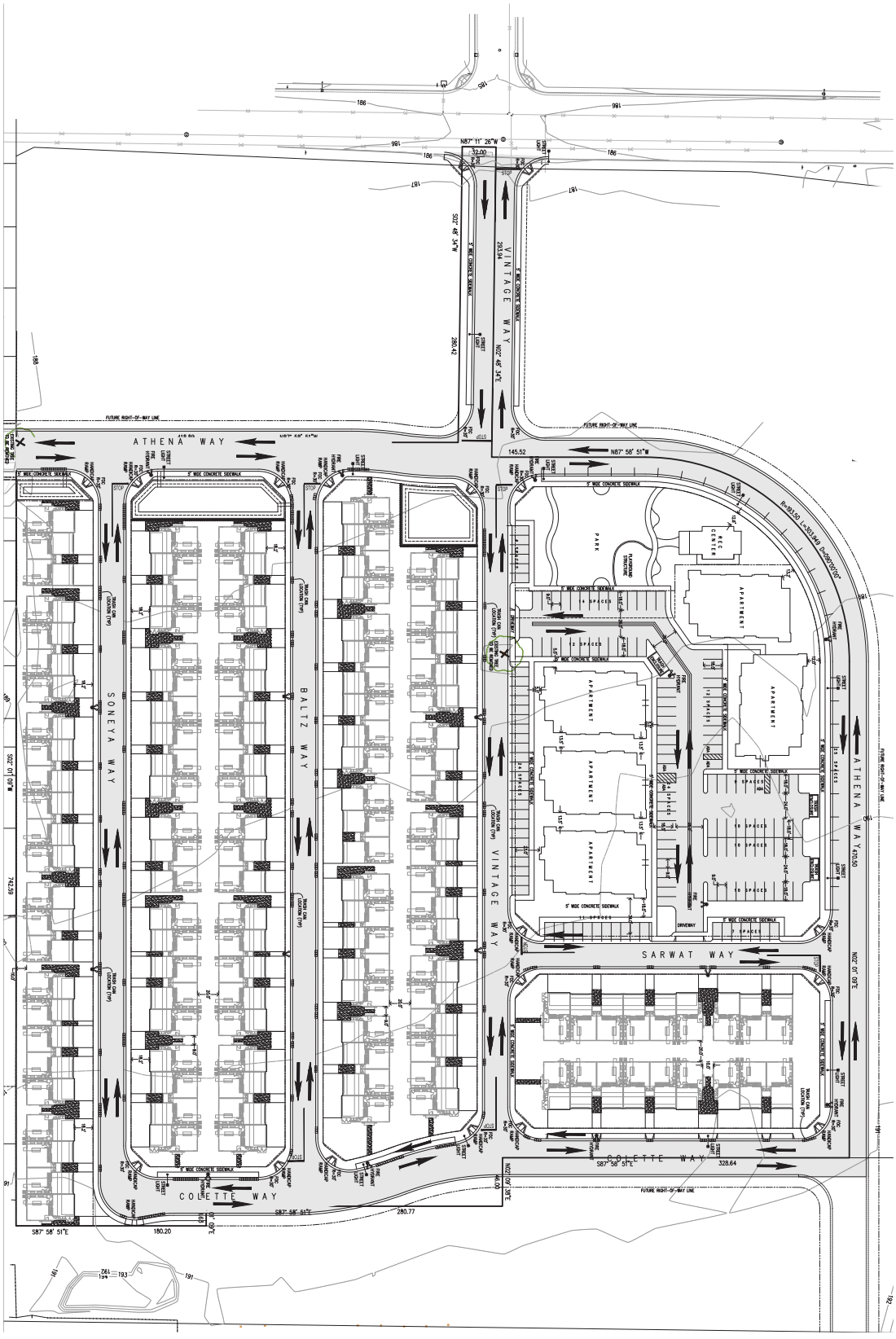

0 150 feet

Source: Hanna Brunetti Engineers 2024

Figure 4

Site Plan

Meridian Village Subdivision and Multifamily Development

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B. Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- ☐ Aesthetics
- ☐ Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- ☐ Air Quality
- ☐ Biological Resources
- ☐ Cultural Resources
- ☐ Energy
- ☐ Geology/Soils
- ☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- ☐ Hazards & Hazardous Materials
- ☐ Hydrology/Water Quality
- ☐ Land Use/Planning
- ☐ Mineral Resources
- ☐ Noise
- ☐ Population/Housing
- ☐ Public Services
- ☐ Recreation
- ☒ Transportation
- ☐ Tribal Cultural Resources
- ☐ Utilities/Service Systems
- ☐ Wildfire
- ☐ Mandatory Findings of Significance

C. DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☒ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect (1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and (2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (1) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (2) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Magda Gonzalez

Magda Gonzalez, Contract Senior Planner

December 22, 2025

Date

D. EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors, as well as general standards (e.g., the project would not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as onsite, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
4. "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level.
5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
    a) Earlier Analyses Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
    b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
    c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
7. Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.

8. This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
9. The explanation of each issue should identify:
    a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
    b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance

1. AESTHETICS

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099 (Modernization of Transportation Analysis for Transit-Oriented Infill Projects), would the project:

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b.	Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c.	In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage points.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d.	Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Comments:

a. Scenic vistas are views that possesses visual and aesthetic qualities of high value to the community. The *Final Environmental Impact Report City of Hollister General Plan (March 2005 Public Review Draft)* ("General Plan EIR"), does not identify or discuss scenic vistas. However, the City is surrounded by the Gabilan Mountains to the south and west and the Diablo Range to the east as well as various hillsides, which is commonly considered a scenic background to the general public. Additionally, the *City of Hollister General Plan* ("General Plan") states that the hillsides surrounding the City are considered scenic (p. 2-17). Therefore, for the purpose of this discussion, the surrounding mountain ranges and hillsides are considered scenic vistas.

Figure 3, Site Photographs, shows that views of the Gabilan Mountains are present from Meridian Street (image 1) and southbound travelers on State Route 25 (image 4). There are also views of the Diablo Range as shown in image 2 of Figure 3; the existing tree in this image is proposed for removal. The current views of the Gabilan Mountains and the Diablo Range may be obscured to travelers on Meridian Street and southbound travelers on State Route 25 as a result of the proposed project. However, this change would not be considered significant for several reasons.

Development within the City is largely expected to occur in existing urban areas, which typically have less of an impact on scenic views than those on the outer edges of the city limits. The project is proposed on an infill site that is surrounded by existing development and, therefore, its impact on scenic vistas would not be significant.

The height restriction for this zoning district is 50 feet. The proposed apartment buildings are 40 feet and 7.5 inches (three stories) and are located in the eastern portion of the project site, which is not adjacent to any residential development. The proposed condominiums are 30 feet and 6 inches (two stories) and would be located on the western half of the site, adjacent to the residential neighborhood to the west, as well as the southeastern portion of the site. In addition to the project's compliance with the height restrictions of the zoning district, the residences immediately west of and adjacent to the project site, as well as the residences to the north across Meridian Street and east across State Route 25, are two stories (two story homes range from 18-30 feet in height). Therefore, the proposed project would be compatible in height to the surrounding residential uses.

According to the General Plan, any project requiring a building permit within any zoning district, except R-1, is required to undergo site and architectural review (p. A.60). Therefore, the project will be required to undergo site and architectural review as part of the permitting process. City Municipal Code Section 17.24.190, Site and Architectural Review, also requires that the project undergo review with the City, which would ensure that the project is in compliance with the regulations outlined in the Neighborhood Mixed-Use zoning district and that the project has architectural compatibility with the surrounding area.

Given these reasons listed above, the project's impact on scenic vistas would be less than significant.

b. The site is currently undeveloped and covered in grasses and two trees. The site is surrounded by commercial and residential uses to the west; a vacant parcel, Meridian Street, and residential uses to the north; a vacant parcel, State Route 25, and residential uses to the east; and a vacant parcel, and industrial and commercial uses to the south. Because the project site is an infill site generally surrounded by urban uses, the project site is not considered a scenic resource. 276 feet

State Route 25 is located approximately 276 feet east of the project site and is designated as an eligible scenic highway from State Route 198 in Monterey County to State Route 156 north of Hollister. Urban development is located along both sides of State Route 25 through the City of Hollister (California Department of Transportation 2024).

The project site is currently visible from State Route 25 and the project would remove two trees, as well as the grasses. There are no rock outcroppings or historic buildings on the site. The removal of the two trees and grasses would not result in a significant visual impact. Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.

c. The project site is located within an urbanized area and is designated by the General Plan as Mixed-Use and zoned Neighborhood Mixed-Use. The proposed project is required to undergo site and architectural review by the City, as discussed previously, which would illustrate the project's compliance with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. The project also complies with the height restrictions of the Neighborhood Mixed-Use Zoning District, as discussed in the response to "a" above. For these reasons, the proposed project would not conflict with regulations governing scenic quality.

d. Existing light sources in the area include street lights, exterior lighting from nearby residences, commercial and industrial uses, and vehicle headlights from motorists driving along local roadways. Development of the proposed project would introduce a new source of light and glare to the site, which is currently undeveloped.

Although the proposed project would introduce new light to the site, its proposed use is similar to adjacent uses and would be consistent with the lighting discussed in Section 17.08.030.H and I, Commercial and Mixed-Use Zone general development standards. The proposed project would be required to include street lighting that would be similar to those existing throughout the City of Hollister. The project's exterior surfaces on the residences would also be required to include architectural elements that reduce the potential to introduce glare. Consistency with the City's light and glare standards would be reviewed through the project's design review process.

Compliance with the standards for light and glare in the City's Municipal Code and the project's required approval through the City's design review process would ensure that the proposed project creates a less than significant impact associated with a new source of light or glare.

Aesthetic impacts are less than significant and, therefore, will not be addressed in the EIR.

2. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES

In determining whether impacts on agricultural resources are significant environmental effects and in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b.	Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c.	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))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d.	Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e.	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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Comments:

a. The project site has historically been cultivated with row crop and orchards () and is classified as Grazing Land by the California Department of Conservation (2024). Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not 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.

b. According to the San Benito County WebGIS, the project site is not within a Williamson Act contract (San Benito County 2024) and the site is zoned Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMU). Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.

c-d. Based upon site investigations by the consultant team on March 14, 2024 and April 11, 2024, there is no forest land or timberland on the project site or in the vicinity. Therefore, the proposed project would not 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)) nor would the project result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

e. The project site is not active farmland, is zoned Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMU), and is generally surrounded by urban development. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not 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.

There are no agriculture and forest resource impacts and, therefore, they will not be addressed in the EIR.

3. AIR QUALITY

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b.	Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c.	Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☒	☐	☐
d.	Result in other emissions, such as those leading to odors adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Comments:

The City of Hollister is within the North Central Coast Air Basin (air basin), which is under the jurisdiction of the Monterey Bay Air Resources District (air district). This section is based primarily on the air district's *CEQA Air Quality Guidelines* (2008) (CEQA guidelines) guidance, the air district's *2012 – 2015 Air Quality Management Plan* (2017) (air quality management plan), and the results of emissions modeling using the California Emission Estimation Model (CalEEMod) version 2022.1. CalEEMod results are included in Appendix B.

a. 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; population-related projects that are consistent with these forecasts are consistent with the plan. The air district uses consistency with the air quality management plan to determine a project's cumulative impact on regional air quality under CEQA. The air district has established a consistency determination procedure tied to population growth – a project that does not result in an increase in population beyond that projected by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments is considered not to conflict with the air quality management plan.

The most recent growth projections for the City of Hollister are in the 2022 Regional Growth Forecast (AMBAG 2022), based on the City's own growth projections outlined in the General Plan. The proposed project is a residential project on a site that has a General Plan land use designation of Mixed-Use. The proposed project includes 219

residential units (90 apartments and 129 condominium) providing housing for an estimated 734 persons (219 multi-family homes x 3.35 persons per household) (refer to the discussion in Section 14.0, Population and Housing). The population housed by the proposed project is consistent with General Plan residential land use and would not exceed the population projections upon which the air quality management emissions forecasts are based. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct the air quality management plan.

It should be noted that as of 2020, the air district is no longer in non-attainment for ozone emissions. The 2017 air quality management plan was designed to bring the air district into attainment for this pollutant. Consequently, the air district is no longer required to prepare an air quality management plan. The air district will be addressing this change in its in-progress update to its CEQA guidelines.

b. The six most common and widespread air pollutants of concern, or "criteria pollutants," are ground-level ozone, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and lead. In addition, reactive organic gases (ROG) also referred to as volatile organic gases (VOC) are a key contributor to the criteria air pollutants because they react with other substances to form ground-level ozone. Health effects from prolonged exposures to criteria air pollutants include asthma, bronchitis, chest pain, coughing, and heart diseases.

The air district is the agency with the primary responsibility for ensuring that national and state ambient air quality standards are attained and maintained in the air basin. The air district is responsible for monitoring air quality in the air basin, which is designated under state criteria as a nonattainment area for ozone and suspended particulate matter (PM_{10}). Under federal criteria, the air basin is at attainment (8-hour standard) for ozone and particulates. The air district has developed criteria pollutant emissions thresholds which are used to determine whether or not a proposed project would violate an air quality standard or contribute to an existing violation during operations and/or construction.

State standards are promulgated by the California Air Resources Board, as mandated by the California Clean Air Act. The air district has developed criteria pollutant emissions thresholds, which are used to determine whether or not the proposed project would violate an air quality standard or contribute to an existing violation during operations and/or construction. Based on the air district's CEQA guidelines, a project would have a significant air quality impact if it would:

- 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 (result in a significant localized source of emission of carbon monoxide);

- 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; or
- Emit 82 pounds per day or more of suspended particulate matter from vehicle travel on unpaved roads.

Operational Emissions

The proposed project would result in new sources of operational mobile, energy, and area source emissions. According to air district CEQA guidelines Table 5-4, the proposed project is well below the 810-unit screening size for residential development that could potentially generate significant operational and construction criteria air pollutant emissions. Emissions generated by operations of a 219-unit residential development would not be expected to exceed air district criteria air pollutant thresholds. Emissions modeling undertaken to quantify greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions volumes also shows criteria air pollutant emissions volume data. A comparison of the model results with the air district standards is shown in Table 1, Unmitigated Operational Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions. Detailed emissions modeling results are presented in Appendix B.

Table 1 Unmitigated Operational Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions

Emissions	Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)[1,2,3]	Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x)[1,2,3]	Suspended Particulate Matter (PM_{10})[1,2,4]	Carbon Monoxide (CO)[1,2,3]
Air District Thresholds	137	137	82	550
Project	13.6	9.89	10.3	52.2
Exceeds Thresholds?	No	No	No	No

SOURCE: EMC Planning Group 2024
NOTES:
1. Results may vary due to rounding.
2. Expressed in pounds per day.
3. Maximum daily summer values used for reporting VOC, NO_x and PM_{10} emissions.
4. Maximum daily winter values used for reporting CO emissions.

The model results confirm that the proposed project emissions would not exceed the air district's criteria air pollutants emissions thresholds for ambient air quality. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in significant air quality impacts and the project's contribution to regional air quality would be less than significant.

Construction Emissions

Construction activities are temporary sources of potential air quality impacts that, depending on the size and type of the project, commonly occur in limited time periods. Construction emissions have the potential to impact local air quality and/or pose localized health risks. Localized health risks are discussed under checklist question "c" of

this section. Construction emissions include equipment exhaust and fugitive dust emissions generated during grading, and ozone precursor emissions generated during the application of architectural coatings and asphalt paving material.

The air district's CEQA guidelines report that construction projects using typical construction equipment such as dump trucks, scrappers, bulldozers, compactors and front-end loaders that temporarily emit ozone precursors such as volatile organic compounds (VOC) or oxides of nitrogen (NOx), are accommodated in the emission inventories of State- and federally-required air plans and would not have a significant impact on the attainment and maintenance of ozone thresholds.

Air district CEQA guidelines Table 5-2, Construction Activity with Potentially Significant Impacts, identifies the level of construction activity that could result in significant temporary fugitive dust impacts if not mitigated. Construction activities with grading and excavation that disturb more than 2.2 acres per day and construction activities with minimal earthmoving that disturb more than 8.1 acres per day are assumed to generate more than 82 pounds of particulate matter per day, which would exceed the threshold of significance. Construction activities for the proposed project would occur across the 12.75-acre project site. Projects with activity levels that exceed the air districts screening level thresholds may have a significant impact on air quality. However, additional analysis is necessary to confirm this assumption.

Criteria air pollutant emissions generated during construction are included in the CalEEMod results in Appendix B. Table 2, Unmitigated Construction Criteria Pollutant Emissions, summarizes unmitigated criteria air pollutant emissions resulting from project construction.

Table 2 Unmitigated Construction Criteria Pollutant Emissions

Emissions Source	Suspended Particulates (PM_{10})
Construction	9.40

SOURCE: EMC Planning Group 2024
NOTES:
1. Results may vary due to rounding.
2. Expressed in pounds per day.
3. Maximum daily values used for reporting PM_{10} emissions.

The model results confirm that the proposed project's construction emissions (fugitive dust and equipment exhaust) would not exceed the air district's criteria air pollutants emissions thresholds for ambient air quality. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in significant impacts to air quality during construction and the project's contribution to regional air quality would be less than cumulatively considerable. The CalEEMod results are included in Appendix B.

c. Operations of residential uses are not sources of toxic air contaminants that would increase health risks. However, project construction activities would generate temporary

and limited localized emissions diesel equipment exhaust. The proposed project has the potential to exposure sensitive receptors to localized health risks associated with toxic air contaminant (TAC) emissions from construction equipment exhaust. TACs are pollutants that may be expected to result in an increase in mortality or serious illness or may pose a present or potential hazard to human health. Health effects include cancer, birth defects, neurological damage, damage to the body's natural defense system, and diseases that lead to death. TACs are found in ambient air, especially in urban areas, and are caused by industry, agriculture, fuels combustion, and commercial operations (e.g., dry cleaners). Diesel exhaust is the predominant TAC in urban air and is estimated to represent about two-thirds of the cancer risk from TACs. Diesel particulate matter (DPM) is the primary TAC of concern within diesel exhaust. The primary community risk impact issues associated with construction exhaust emissions are cancer risk (DPM exposures) and exposure to $PM_{2.5}$.

According to the air district's CEQA guidelines, a sensitive receptor is generally defined as a location where human populations, especially children, seniors, and sick persons, are located where there is reasonable expectation of continuous human exposure. These typically include residences, hospitals, and schools. The sensitive receptors nearest to the project site are residences immediately west of the project site.

Exposure to construction emissions from the project site is a potentially significant health risk impact. The air district recommends the use of best management practices during construction to reduce construction fugitive dust emissions by up to 50 percent (Monterey Bay Air Resources District 2008). Additionally, emissions from engines used in construction that are diesel powered are subject to control under regulations adopted by both California Air Resources Board and U.S. EPA. U.S. EPA promulgated new emission standards for off-road engines in 1998, with CARB adopting parallel standards in 2000. In 2004, Tier 4 emission standards were adopted and were phased in for new engines between 2011 and 2014. In 2007, the California Air Resources Board adopted an off-road equipment regulation to accelerate reductions of NOx and diesel PM from existing off-road engines. Beginning in 2012 and through 2023, the off-road regulation requires operators of older equipment to either install abatement devices, upgrade to Tier 3 and eventually Tier 4 engines, or to retire older equipment.

Implementation of the following mitigation measure, which reflect the air district's best management practices, would ensure that health risks from potential exposures to construction TAC emissions exposures would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

AQ-1 The developer shall prepare a construction management plan to reduce the potential exposure of sensitive receptors to temporary construction toxic air contaminants. The construction management plan language shall be included in all bid documents, grading, and construction plans to be implemented by the project contractor during construction. The following measures shall be included in the Construction Management Plan:

a. Heavy-duty diesel vehicles will have 2010 or newer model year engines, in compliance with the California Air Resources Board's Truck and Bus Regulation, and will not be staged within 500 feet of occupied residences; and

b. Idling of construction equipment and heavy-duty diesel trucks will be avoided where feasible, and if idling is necessary, it will not exceed three minutes.

c. All construction equipment will be maintained and properly tuned in accordance with manufacturer's specifications and will be checked by a certified visible emissions evaluator.

d. All non-road diesel construction equipment will, at a minimum, meet Tier 3 emission standards listed in the Code of Federal Regulations Title 40, Part 89, Subpart B, §89.112. Further, where feasible, construction equipment will use alternative fuels such as compressed natural gas, propane, electricity or biodiesel.

The construction management plan shall be subject to the review and approval of the Community Development Department prior to issuance of a grading permit.

d. According to the air district CEQA guidelines, odors are objectionable emissions of one or more pollutants that are a nuisance to healthy persons and may trigger asthma episodes in people with sensitive airways. Nuisance odors are commonly associated with refineries, landfills, sewage treatment, agriculture, etc. The proposed project is not anticipated to be a source of odors that would affect a substantial number of people. Therefore, the project's impact would be less than significant.

Air quality impacts are less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures and, therefore, will not be addressed in the EIR.

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b.	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 California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c.	Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.), through direct removal, filing, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d.	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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e.	Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f.	Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Comments:

A reconnaissance-level biological field survey of the project site was conducted by EMC Planning Group biologist Rose Ashbach on April 11, 2024 to document existing plant communities/wildlife habitats and assess the suitability of the site to support special-status species. Biological resources were documented in field notes, including plant and wildlife species observed, dominant plant communities, wildlife habitat quality, disturbance levels, and aquatic resources.

Prior to conducting the survey, EMC biologists reviewed site plans, aerial photographs, natural resource database accounts, and other relevant scientific literature. This included searching the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) *Endangered Species Database* (USFWS 2024a), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) *California Natural Diversity Database* (CDFW 2024a, CDFW 2024b), and California Native Plant Society (CNPS) *Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants* (CNPS 2024) to identify special-status plants, wildlife, and habitats known to occur in the vicinity of the project. A review of the USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) database was also conducted to identify jurisdictional aquatic features (wetlands, drainages, and/or riparian areas) on or adjacent to the project site (USFWS 2024b).

Existing Conditions

The approximately 12.75-acre property is located within the City of Hollister. The subject property is located to the south of Meridian Street and west of State Route 25 (APN 054-600-005), and is currently operating as agricultural cropland with wheat crops. Residential development exists immediately west of the field. The property is buffered by continuous agricultural parcels (cultivated wheat crops) to the north, east, and south; however, residential development (north and east) and commercial developments (south) surround the agricultural buffer. There are no previously recorded aquatic features within or adjacent to the subject property.

Plant and Wildlife Habitats

Vegetation within the project site is dominated by cultivated wheat. Weedy, non-native wild oats (*Avena* sp.) and mustard (*Brassica* sp.) have invaded the planted wheat field with minimal amounts of other non-native weeds including field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*), rip gut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), bur clover (*Meticago polymorpha*), and occasionally native fiddleneck (*Amsinkia* sp.). The buffer between the cultivated field and residential development to the west is entirely ruderal and dominated by non-native annual grasses, including rip gut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), Mediterranean barley (*Hordeum murinum*), wild oats, and other weedy species such as mustard, willow herb (*Epilobium brachycarpum*), milk thistle (*Silybum marianum*), Italian thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*), Cheeseweed (*Malva parviflora*), prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*), and escaped ornamentals, including geranium (*Geranium* sp.), prickly pear (*Opuntia* sp.), almond (*Prunus amygdalus*), olive (*Olea europaea*), and blackberry (*Rubus* sp.).

The cultivated field was not assessed in detail due to the potential to disturb nesting birds and/or crops. The field was assessed from the west and south sides. Approximately 30 red-winged blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) were observed flying in and out of the field. The field may provide habitat for other nesting birds not visible at the time of the survey.

No ground squirrel burrows were observed. There are likely small rodents that live within the wheat field. The soil appears to be tilled annually with planting. The only two onsite trees are non-native escaped ornamental or cultivated trees. There were no observed wetlands or riparian vegetation.

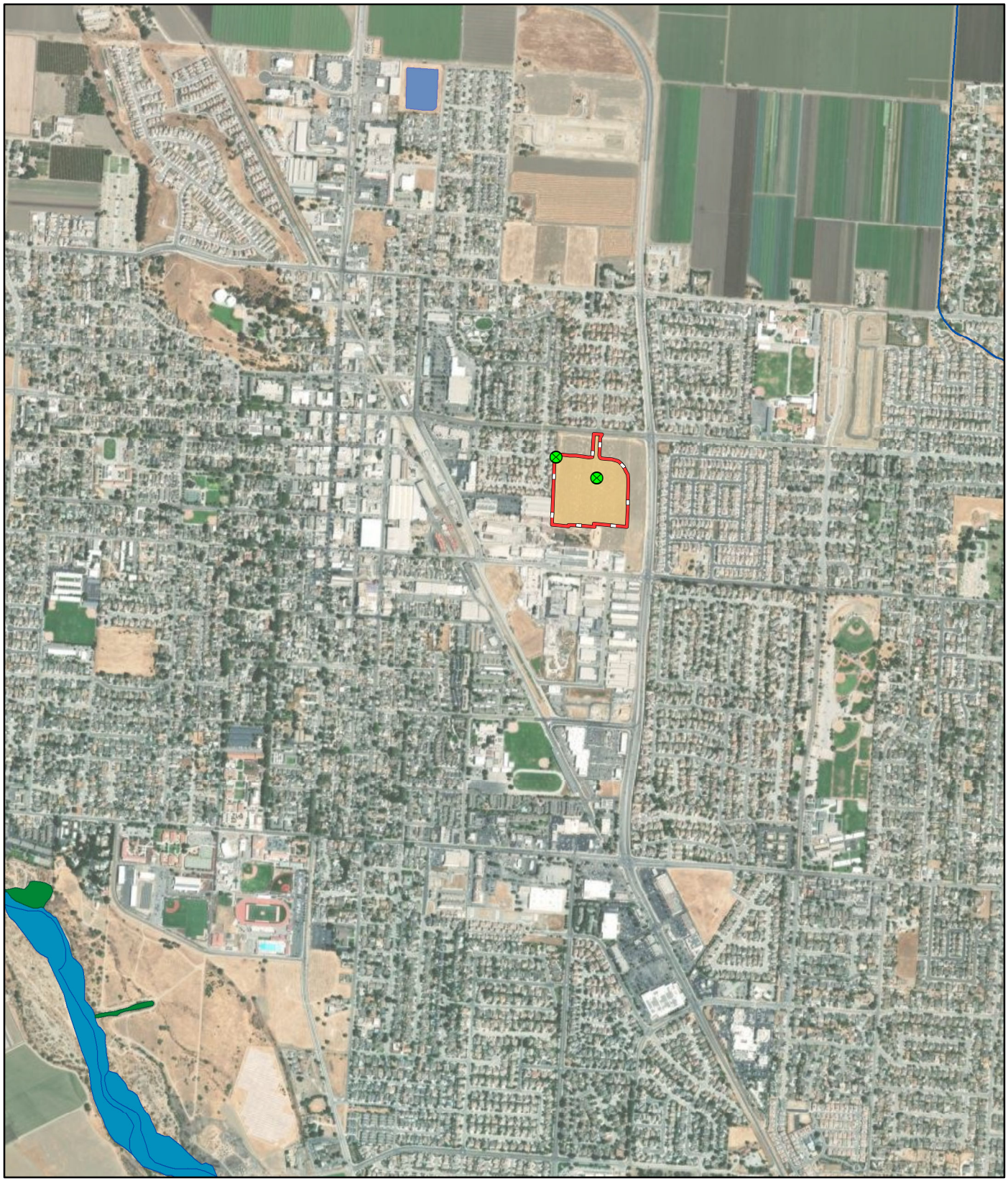
Wildlife observed while on the project site included birds: red-winged black bird, house finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*), mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*), black phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*); as well as garden spiders (*Argiope* sp.); and ladybugs (*Coccinellidae*).

Aquatic/Wetland. There were no wetland or aquatic features on the project site. The intermittent San Benito River runs north west approximately 1.66 miles southwest of the project parcel and an artificial freshwater pond (City of Hollister Rustic Street Pond storm water basin) is mapped in the National Wetland Inventory 0.73 miles northwest of the parcel. See Figure 5, Habitat Map.

a. **Special-Status Species**. A search of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife *California Natural Diversity Database* (CNDDB) was conducted for the site and the surrounding eight U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangles in order to generate a list of potentially occurring special-status species for the project vicinity. Records of occurrences for special-status plants were reviewed for those quadrangles in the CNPS *Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California* (CNPS 2024). A USFWS *Endangered Species Program* threatened and endangered species list was also generated for San Benito County, and the USFWS *Critical Habitat for Threatened & Endangered Species* online mapper was reviewed (USFWS 2024a & USFWS 2024b). Special-status species in this report are those listed as Endangered, Threatened, or Rare or as candidates for listing by the USFWS and/or CDFW; as Species of Special Concern or Fully Protected species by the CDFW; or as Rare Plant Rank 1B or 2B species by CNPS. Appendix C, Special-Status Species with Potential to Occur in the Project Vicinity, presents tables with special-status species search results, which lists the special-status species documented within the project vicinity, their listing status, suitable habitat description, and their potential to occur on the project site. Figure 6, Special-Status Species in the Project Vicinity, presents a map of the CNDDB results.

   Special-Status Plant Species. No special-status plants were observed during the biological survey. Suitable habitat for special-status plant species recorded as occurring in the vicinity of the project site was not found at the project site.

   Special-Status Wildlife Species. Special status species within the project vicinity but not expected to occur onsite include San Joaquin Kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*), California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*), California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*), American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), and burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*). Special-status wildlife species with low potential to occur on the project site include California horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris ac*tia), western red bat (*Lasiurus blossevillii*), and nesting birds.



Source: ESRI 2024, EMC 2024, USFWS 2024

0 1,500 feet

Project Site
On-Site Trees
Cultivated Field
Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
Freshwater Pond
Riverine

Figure 5

Habitat Map

Meridian Village Subdivision and Multifamily Development

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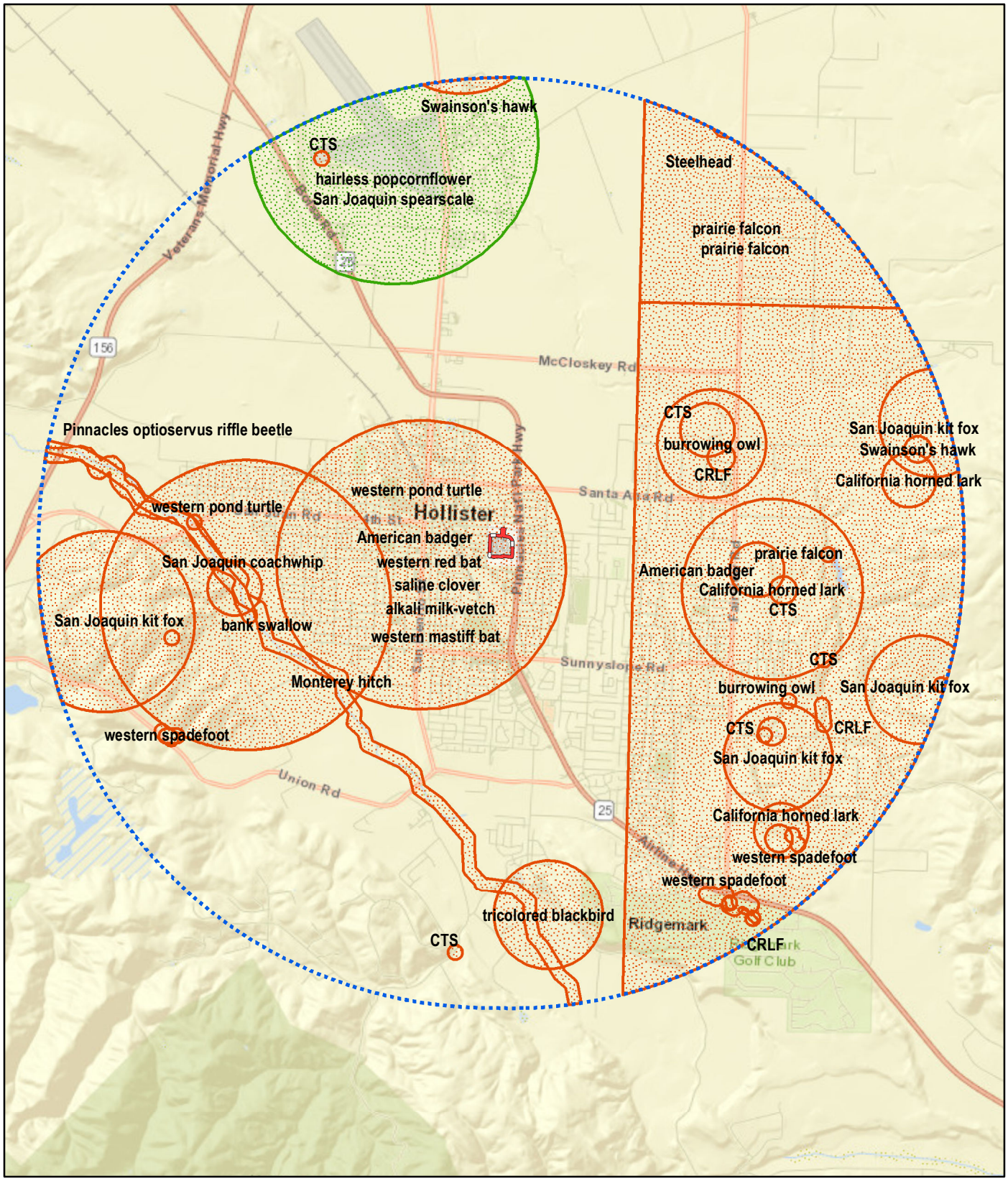

Source: CNDDB 2024, ESRI 2024, EMC 2024

CTS: California tiger salamander - central California DPS

CRLF: California red-legged frog

Steelhead - south-central California coast DPS

0 5,000 feet

3 mile buffer

Project Site

Special-Status Plants

Special-Status Wildlife

Figure 6

Special-Status Species Map

Meridian Village Subdivision and Multifamily Development

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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 provide suitable habitat for San Joaquin kit fox due to soil disturbance (tilling and cultivation), no observed ground squirrel burrows, lack of a prey base, and development surrounding the site. The San Joaquin kit fox is not expected to occur within the project area.

Special-Status Amphibians. California tiger salamander and California red-legged frog require seasonal wetlands or ponds for breeding and then migrate to suitable upland habitat for aestivation. Commercial and residential development between the project site and suitable breeding habitat create barriers that make it extremely unlikely that either species reside within the project area.

Burrowing Owl. The Burrowing owl is a California Species of Special Concern. Burrowing owls live and breed in burrows in the ground, especially in abandoned California 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. The project site does not provide suitable habitat for burrowing owls due to soil disturbance (tilling and cultivation), no observed ground squirrel burrows, and tall dense cultivated vegetation. Burrowing owls are not expected to occur within the project area.

American Badger. The American badger is a CDFW Species of Special Concern and requires a large area of undisturbed habitat (shrub, forest, herbaceous vegetation). The project site is too small and disturbed to provide adequate habitat for this species.

Special-Status Nesting Birds and Raptors. Special-status birds California horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris actia*), and other nesting bird and raptor species protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code have the potential to nest in buildings or structures, on open ground, or in any type of vegetation, including trees, during the nesting bird season (January 15 through September 15). The project site contains open cultivated field areas suitable for open ground nesting, as well as trees. Construction activities, including ground disturbance, can impact protected bird species, should nesting birds be present during construction. If protected bird species are nesting adjacent to the project site during the bird nesting season, then noise-generating construction activities could result in the loss of fertile eggs, nestlings, or otherwise lead to the abandonment of nests. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce the potential impact to nesting birds and raptors to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure

BIO-1 To avoid impacts to nesting birds during the nesting season (January 15 through September 15), construction activities shall be conducted between September 16 and January 14, which is outside of the bird nesting season. If construction or project-related work is scheduled during the nesting season (February 15 to August 30 for small bird species such as passerines; January 15 to September 15 for owls; and February 15 to September 15 for other raptors), a qualified biologist shall conduct nesting bird surveys.

a. Two surveys for active bird nests will occur within 14 days prior to start of construction, with the final survey conducted within 48 hours prior to construction. Appropriate minimum survey radii surrounding each work area are typically 250 feet for passerines, 500 feet for smaller raptors, and 1,000 feet for larger raptors. Surveys will be conducted at the appropriate times of day to observe nesting activities. Locations off the site to which access is not available may be surveyed from within the site or from public areas. If no nesting birds are found, a letter report confirming absence will be prepared and submitted to the USFWS, CDFWS, and the City of Hollister and no further mitigation is required.

b. If the qualified biologist documents active nests within the project site or in nearby surrounding areas, an appropriate buffer between each nest and active construction shall be established. The buffer shall be clearly marked and maintained until the young have fledged and are foraging independently. Prior to construction, the qualified biologist shall conduct baseline monitoring of each nest to characterize "normal" bird behavior and establish a buffer distance, which allows the birds to exhibit normal behavior. The qualified biologist shall monitor the nesting birds daily during construction activities and increase the buffer if birds show signs of unusual or distressed behavior (e.g., defensive flights and vocalizations, standing up from a brooding position, and/or flying away from the nest). If buffer establishment is not possible, the qualified biologist or construction foreman shall have the authority to cease all construction work in the area until the young have fledged and the nest is no longer active. Once the absence of nesting birds has been confirmed, a letter report will be prepared and submitted to the USFWS, CDFWS, and the City of Hollister.

Special-Status Bats. Bats were not observed during the reconnaissance-level biological field survey. However, trees in the project area and/or buildings or structures adjacent to the project site could provide roosting habitat for special-status bat species known to occur in the vicinity of the project site, including the California Species of Special Concern western red bat (*Lasiurus blossevillii*).

Bat species inhabit a wide variety of habitats including grasslands, woodlands, and forests. Project development and construction activities at the project site could result in the disturbance of roost and/or natal sites occupied by special-status bats on or adjacent to

the project site, if present. Loss or harm to special-status bats is considered a significant adverse impact. Implementation of the following mitigation measure will reduce the potential impact to special-status bats to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure

BIO-2 The following measures shall be implemented to avoid loss of or harm to special-status bat species:

a. Approximately 14 days prior to construction activities, a qualified biologist shall conduct a habitat assessment for bats and potential roosting sites in trees or buildings within 50 feet of the construction easement. These surveys shall include a visual inspection of potential roosting features (bats need not be present) and a search for presence of guano within the project site, construction access routes, and 50 feet around these areas. Cavities, crevices, exfoliating bark, and bark fissures that could provide suitable potential nest or roost habitat for bats shall be surveyed. Assumptions can be made on what species is present due to observed visual characteristics along with habitat use, or the bats can be identified to the species level with the use of a bat echolocation detector such as an "Anabat" unit. Potential roosting features found during the survey shall be flagged or marked.

b. If no roosting sites or bats are found, a letter report will be prepared by the biologist and submitted to California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the City of Hollister, and no further measures are required.

c. If bats or roosting sites are found, bats shall not be disturbed without specific notice to and consultation with California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

d. The bat nursery season is generally considered May 1 to October 1. If bats are found roosting outside of the nursery season, California Department of Fish and Wildlife shall be consulted prior to any eviction or other action. If avoidance or postponement is not feasible, a Bat Eviction Plan will be submitted to California Department of Fish and Wildlife for written approval prior to project implementation. A request to evict bats from a roost includes details for excluding bats from the roost site and monitoring to ensure that all bats have exited the roost prior to the start of activity and are unable to re-enter the roost until activity is completed. Any bat eviction shall be timed to avoid lactation and young-rearing. If bats are found roosting during the nursery season, they shall be monitored to determine if the roost site is a maternal roost. This could occur by either visual inspection of the roost bat pups, if possible, or by monitoring the roost after the adults leave for the night to listen for bat pups. Because bat pups cannot leave the roost until they are mature enough, eviction of a maternal roost cannot occur during the nursery season. Therefore, if a maternal roost is present, a 50-foot buffer zone (or different size if determined in consultation with the California Department

of Fish and Wildlife) shall be established around the roosting site within which no construction activities including tree removal or structure disturbance shall occur until after the nursery season.

b. **Riparian Habitat or Sensitive Natural Communities.** There are no riparian habitats or sensitive natural communities within the project site.

c. **Waters of the United States.** A review of the *National Wetlands Inventory* (NWI) online database was conducted to identify potential jurisdictional aquatic features on or adjacent to the project site (USFWS 2024b). The results showed no wetland features within or adjacent to the project site.

d. **Wildlife Movement.** Wildlife movement corridors provide connectivity between habitat areas, enhancing processes like nutrient flow, gene flow, seasonal migration, pollination, and predator-prey relationships. Increasing connectivity is a critical strategy for addressing habitat loss and fragmentation, a top threat to biodiversity.

The parcel is not located within any previously defined essential habitat connectivity areas as mapped by the *California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project* (CDFW 2024d). However, Critical habitat for the California tiger salamander is located 1.5 miles west of the project site (USFWS 2024c). However, dispersal from outside populations of amphibians to the project site is unlikely due to extensive barriers located between breeding habitat and the upland habitat provided by the project site.

Movement of medium to large mammals between the project site and regional open space lands is likely highly restricted due to the lack of natural habitat linkages and the presence of existing barriers (e.g., roads, developed areas) around the parcel. Dispersal to and from the project site by small mammals, amphibians, and reptiles is unlikely, due to the existing barriers. Therefore, the project site does not act as a major wildlife corridor, movement pathway, or linkage between larger habitat areas for terrestrial wildlife and the proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact on wildlife movement.

e. **Local Biological Resource Policies/Ordinances.**

City of Hollister. The City of Hollister General Plan has goals in place for dealing with natural resources and conservation.

> **Goal: NRC1.** Assure enhanced habitat for native plants and animals, and protection for culturally significant and special-status species.
>
> **Policy: NRC 1.1 Protection of Environmental Resources.** Protect or enhance environmental resources, such as wetlands, creeks and drainageways, sensitive natural communities, and habitat for special-status species.
>
> **Policy: NRC 1.2 Protection of Endangered Species Habitat.** Identify and protect the habitats of endangered species which may found within the Hollister Planning Area, in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game, through the review all development proposals for compliance with regulations established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game as they apply to the protection of endangered species and their habitats.

Policy: NRC 1.7 Specialized Surveys for Special-Status Species. Require specialized surveys for special-status species for those projects that have been proposed in areas that contain suitable habitat for such species. All surveys should take place during appropriate seasons to determine nesting or breeding occurrences and shall be conducted by a qualified biologist prior to development related vegetation removal.

Hollister Local Ordinances:

12.24.050 - Written authority to plant, cut, trim etc. No person shall plant, root-trim, cut, prune, trim, brace, spray, remove or replace any street tree without prior written authority therefor issued by the director, which written authority may be subject to reasonable conditions and which shall be valid for a period of 30 days from and after the date of issuance; provided, however, without such written authority, a person may prune or trim the limbs of a street tree, not in excess of one inch in diameter, if such street tree has been planted for more than five years. All requests for authority to plant, root-trim, cut, prune, trim, brace, spray, remove or replace street trees shall be in writing, describe the work to be done and set forth the reason or reasons therefor. In the event the director shall determine that the planting, root-trimming, cutting, pruning, trimming, bracing, spraying, removal or replacement of any street tree is solely due to the request of, or solely for the benefit of, the property owner abutting the park, public place or street in which such street tree is to be, or is, located, the same shall be accomplished and done under the direction or supervision of the director, at the expense of such property owner and the director may require such owner to pay the estimated cost thereof in advance.

17.16.080 - Landscaping design and standards. C. Removal of Landscaping. Replacement of approved landscape area with nonporous or impervious surfaces shall be prohibited without the approval of an Administrative Permit from the Planning and Engineering Departments to assure compliance with landscape standards for the applicable land use and compliance with the city of Hollister Stormwater Permit.

There are two existing trees on the project site that will be removed and replaced with more than 30 native trees (Project Plans, Sheet L-2). The City of Hollister Municipal Code does not include ordinances regarding non-native tree removal beyond measures to protect street trees. With the implementation of the mitigation measures above, the proposed project would not conflict with the Hollister Municipal Code, nor would it conflict with any of the policies described in the Hollister General Plan that protect biological resources.

f. There are no critical habitat boundaries, habitat conservation plans, natural community conservation plans, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plans applicable to the proposed project site (CDFW 2024d, USFWS 2024a).

Biological resource impacts are less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures and, therefore, will not be addressed in the EIR.

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a *historical resource* pursuant to section 15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b.	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a *unique archaeological resource* pursuant to section 15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c.	Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Comments:

Archaeological Resource Management prepared the *Cultural Resource Evaluation of the Proposed Meridian Village Project in the City of Hollister* ("cultural resource evaluation") for the proposed project in December 2021. Much of the information provided in this section is from this source unless otherwise noted.

a, b. The cultural resource evaluation conducted archival research on the project site and surrounding area. The research revealed that no previously recorded resources, prehistoric or historic, are located within the proposed project area. Four previously recorded historic resources are located within a one-quarter mile radius of the project site; all of which are historic structures. No significant cultural materials, prehistoric or historic, were noted within the proposed project boundaries during the surface reconnaissance conducted as part of the cultural resource evaluation. Therefore, the cultural resource evaluation concludes that the proposed project will have no impact on cultural resources (Archaeological Resource Management 2021).

However, unknown buried significant historic or unique archaeological resources could be present at the project site. Such resources, if present, could be damaged or destroyed by ground disturbing construction activities associated with the project. This would be a significant impact. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would ensure that potential impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

CUL-1 The following language shall be incorporated into any plans associated with tree removal, grading, and construction, "In the event that archaeological resources are encountered during ground disturbing activities, contractor shall temporarily halt or divert excavations within a 50 meter (165 feet) of the find until it can be evaluated. All potentially significant archaeological deposits shall be evaluated to demonstrate whether the resource is eligible for inclusion on the California

Register of Historic Resources, even if discovered during construction. If archaeological deposits are encountered, they will be evaluated and mitigated simultaneously in the timeliest manner practicable, allowing for recovery of materials and data by standard archaeological procedures. For prehistoric archaeological sites, this data recovery involves the hand-excavated recovery and non-destructive analysis of a small sample of the deposit. Historic resources shall also be sampled through hand excavation, though architectural features may require careful mechanical exposure and hand excavation.

Any previously undiscovered resources found during construction activities shall be recorded on appropriate California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) forms and evaluated for significance by a qualified Archaeologist. Significant cultural resources consist of but are not limited to stone, bone, glass, ceramics, fossils, wood, or shell artifacts, or features including hearths, structural remains, or historic dumpsites."

c. The cultural resource evaluation found no evidence of prehistoric or historic sites associated with Native Americans within the project area; therefore, the likelihood of the project disturbing Native American human remains is low. However, there remains the possibility that ground disturbing activities associated with the proposed project could damage or destroy previously undiscovered Native American human remains. Disturbance of Native American human remains would be a significant impact. The following mitigation would reduce this potential impact to a less-than significant level.

Mitigation Measure

CUL-2 The following language shall be incorporated into any plans associated with tree removal, grading, and construction, "In the event that human remains (or remains that may be human) are discovered at the project site, Public Resource Code Section 5097.98 must be followed. All grading or earthmoving activities shall immediately stop within 50 meters (165 feet) of the find. The San Benito County Coroner will be notified immediately, and the coroner shall be permitted to examine the remains as required by California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5(b).

Section 7050.5 requires that excavation be stopped in the vicinity of discovered human remains until the coroner can determine whether the remains are those of a Native American. If human remains are determined as those of Native American origin, the project proponent shall comply with the state relating to the disposition of Native American burials that fall within the jurisdiction of the NAHC (Public Resource Code [PRC] § 5097). The coroner shall contact the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) to determine the most likely descendant(s) (MLD). The MLD shall complete his or her inspection and make recommendations or preferences for treatment within 48 hours of being granted access to the site. The MLD will determine the most appropriate means of treating the human remains and associated grave artifacts, and shall oversee the

disposition of the remains. In the event the NAHC is unable to identify an MLD or the MLD fails to make a recommendation within 48 hours after being granted access to the site, the landowner or his/her authorized representative shall rebury the Native American human remains and associated grave goods with appropriate dignity within the project area in a location not subject to further subsurface disturbance if: a) the Native American Heritage Commission is unable to identify the MLD or the MLD failed to make a recommendation within 48 hours after being allowed access to the site; b) the descendent identified fails to make a recommendation; or c) the landowner or his 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."

Cultural resource impacts are less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures and, therefore, will not be addressed in the EIR

6. ENERGY

Would the project:

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	Result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b.	Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Comments:

a. Energy impacts are assessed based on the proposed project energy demand profile and on its relationship to the state's energy efficiency regulations and the City's land use planning regulations. Both are summarized below.

Projected Energy Use

A summary of projected energy demand is provided below.

Electricity. According to the California Energy Commission Energy Consumption Data Management System, the total electricity consumption in San Benito County in 2022 was 398,843,582 kilowatt-hours (kWh). Table 5.11, Operational Energy Consumption – Electricity, in the project CalEEMod results included in Appendix B show that projected electricity demand would be 969,166 kWh. The project's energy consumption accounts for only a minute faction of the County's 2022 total energy demand.

Natural Gas. According to the California Energy Commission Energy Consumption Data Management System, the total natural gas consumption in total natural gas consumption in San Benito County in 2022 was 15,124,439 therms. Table 5.11, Operational Energy Consumption – Natural Gas, in the project CalEEMod results included in Appendix B show that projected natural gas demand would be about 760,114,400 BTU per year or approximately 7,603 therms per year. This is less than one-tenth of one percent of countywide demand in 2022.

Transportation Fuel. The California Air Resources Board 2021 Emissions Factor model (EMFAC), version 1.0.2, estimates the official emissions inventories of on road mobile sources in California. The EMFAC model was developed by the California Air Resources Board to assess emissions from on-road vehicles including cars, trucks, and buses in California, and to support related state regulatory and air quality planning efforts to meet the Federal Highway Administration's transportation planning requirements. As detailed in the EMFAC results, Appendix D, total annual fuel demand is projected to be approximately 117,468 gallons.

Regulatory Requirements

A multitude of state regulations and legislative acts are aimed at improving vehicle fuel efficiency, energy efficiency, and enhancing energy conservation. For example, the Pavley I standards focus on transportation fuel efficiency. The gradual increased use of electric cars powered with cleaner electricity will reduce consumption of fossil fuel. Vehicle miles traveled are expected to decline with the continuing implementation of Senate Bill 743, resulting in less vehicle travel and less fuel consumption. In the renewable energy use sector, representative legislation for the use of renewable energy includes, but is not limited to, Senate Bill 350 and Executive Order B-16-12. In the building energy use sector, representative legislation and standards for reducing natural gas and electricity consumption include, but are not limited to, Assembly Bill 2021, CALGreen, and the California Building Standards Code.

The California Building Standards Code is enforceable at the project level. The California Energy Code (California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 6), which is incorporated into the California Building Standards Code, was first established in 1978 in response to a legislative mandate to reduce California's energy consumption. The California Energy Code is updated every three years by the California Energy Commission as the Building Energy Efficiency Standards to allow consideration and possible incorporation of new energy efficiency technologies and construction methods. California's energy code is specifically designed to reduce wasteful and unnecessary energy consumption in newly constructed and existing buildings, including residential buildings. For residential uses of the type proposed, the standards require a suite of building energy efficiency requirements, combined with on-site renewable energy production, that ensure such uses have net zero electricity energy demand.

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, was most recently updated in July 2022. These comprehensive regulations are intended to achieve major reductions in interior and exterior building energy consumption.

A project could be considered to result in significant environmental effects due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy if its energy demand is extraordinary relative to common land use types, its gross energy demand is excessive relative to total demand in San Benito County, and/or it fails to comply with energy efficiency/conservation regulations that are within the applicant's control. The project is a common land use type that is consistent with the General Plan and is planned for an infill site. From a land use perspective, infill development can result in lower VMT and lower transportation fuel demand – which is the case for the proposed project. The project energy demand would not be excessive relative to total demand and residential development is not an inherent source of wasteful energy demand. The project applicant would be required to comply with the primary state regulatory requirements for reducing building energy demand found in Title 24 of the current California Building Code, and with CALGreen requirements as described above. The proposed project would consume energy, but it would not be inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

b. At this time, there are no regulations at the state or local level that would mandate that the proposed project must include on-site renewable energy sources. The California Building Standards Code require the proposed project be built to the Building Energy Efficiency Standards in effect at the time building permits are issued. By incorporating energy efficiency and renewable energy measures per the Building Energy Efficiency Standards, and incorporating green building features per the CALGreen standards, the project would comply with existing state and local energy standards and would not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for energy efficiency.

Energy impacts are less than significant and, therefore, will not be addressed in the EIR.

7. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
	(1) 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 Publication 42?	☐	☐	☐	☒
	(2) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
	(3) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☐	☒
	(4) Landslides?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b.	Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c.	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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d.	Be located on expansive soil, creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	☐	☒	☐	☐
e.	Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f.	Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Comments:

ENGEO Incorporated prepared the *Lowes Hollister Hollister, California Preliminary Geotechnical Exploration* ("geotechnical report") for the proposed project in June 2021. Much of the information provided in this section is from this source. The full geotechnical report can be found in Appendix E.

a. **Fault Rupture**. The Hollister area is situated within a region that is characterized by numerous splays of active fault traces and relatively high seismicity. However, the project site is not mapped within a designated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. Since there are no known active faults that traverse the site, and the site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Study Zone, the geotechnical report concludes that the risk of ground rupture is low (ENGEO Incorporated 2021). Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not directly or indirectly cause 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.

Seismic Ground Shaking. Numerous small earthquakes occur every year in the region, and large earthquakes (greater than Moment Magnitude 7) earthquakes have been recorded and can be expected to occur in the future. Table 2.5-1 in the geotechnical report shows nearby known active faults capable of producing significant ground shaking at the site (ENGEO Incorporated 2021, p. 3). According to this table, three of the four nearest known active faults would produce a Moment Magnitude of 7 or higher. Therefore, an earthquake of moderate to high magnitude generated within the Bay Region could cause considerable ground shaking at the project site (ENGEO Incorporated 2021).

As a result, the project's proposed structures should be able to: (1) resist minor earthquakes without damage, (2) resist moderate earthquakes without structural damage but with some nonstructural damage, and (3) resist major earthquakes without collapse, but with some structural as well as nonstructural damage (ENGEO Incorporated 2021, p. 5). According to the geotechnical report, the project's conformance to the current building code regulations associated with seismic design would reduce the likelihood that the proposed structures would collapse or cause loss of life in a major earthquake. Compliance with the current seismic design standards in the California Building Code would ensure that impacts associated with seismic ground shaking at the project site remain less than significant.

Liquefaction. According to the geotechnical report, for liquefaction-induced ground failure to occur, the pore water pressure generated within the liquefied strata must exert a force sufficient to break through the overlying soil and vent to the surface, resulting in sand boils or fissures. Based on the preliminary findings of the geotechnical report, it is determined that the risk of surface venting during a seismic event would be low to negligible. Due to the depth to groundwater, the geotechnical report also determined that liquefaction-induced settlement at the project site should be considered negligible (ENGEO Incorporated 2021, p. 5). Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving liquefaction.

Landslides. Based on topographic and lithologic data, the risk of regional subsidence or uplift, lurching, or landslides is considered low to negligible at the site (ENGEO Incorporated 2021, p. 5). Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving landslides.

b. The grading activities required for construction of the proposed project could result in soil erosion or the loss of topsoil as soils are particularly susceptible during the grading phases of development.

The California Building Code provides regulations for construction to provide grading, drainage, and erosion and sediment control. The City Municipal Code Chapter 15.24, Grading and Stormwater Best Management Practices Control, also requires that erosion and sediment be controlled. Municipal Code Section 15.24.120 lists the requirements for all development projects, which includes, but is not limited to, the preparation of a grading plan and stormwater control plans; both of which have been prepared by the project developer.

In addition to the requirements set forth in the City's Municipal Code, the proposed project is required to comply with the Construction General Permit Water Quality Order 2009-0009-DWQ, which includes the preparation and implementation of a stormwater pollution prevention plan. Although the stormwater pollution prevention plan is primarily aimed at water quality, it is another mechanism routinely applied by the City of Hollister that helps minimize the risk of erosion, in part because it requires an erosion control plan with the incorporation of best management practices to control erosion during construction (City of Hollister 2023).

Adherence to the abovementioned existing regulatory requirements would ensure that the potential for soil erosion during construction would be less than significant.

c. As discussed previously, the risk of regional subsidence, landslides, and liquefaction are considered negligible. Additionally, the geotechnical report states that based on the depth to groundwater, relatively flat topography, and distance to an open face, the potential for lateral spreading is negligible (p. 5). Therefore, the project would have no impacts associated with soil that is unstable, or would become unstable as a result of the project, resulting in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse.

d. The geotechnical report determined that the near-surface soil may exhibit high expansive behavior. Potential damage caused by volume changes associated with expansive soil may be reduced by incorporating a rigid foundation that can tolerate differential settlement beneath the foundation or by constructing a building pad with non- to low-expansive soil to reduce volume change beneath interior slab-on-grade elements (ENGEO Incorporated 2021, p. 5 and 6). Therefore, the following mitigation, recommended by the geotechnical report, is required to be implemented in order to reduce potential expansion potential in the site soils to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure

GEO-1 Prior to issuance of a grading permit, the project developer shall prepare a design-level geotechnical report, which involves, but is not limited to, additional soil samples to determine the expansion potential of near-surface soil to develop post-tensioned foundation design criteria. The design-level geotechnical report shall further refine the allowable bearing capacity for the post-tensioned mat system. The design-level geotechnical report shall discuss the topics and update the recommendations presented in the *Lowes Hollister Hollister, California Primary Geotechnical Exploration* prepared by ENGEO Incorporated in June 2021.

After City approval of the design-level geotechnical report, the developer shall implement the recommendations provided within the report and these recommendations shall be incorporated into grading and building plans, as appropriate.

e. The project proposes to connect to the City's existing sanitary sewer system located in Meridian Street. Therefore, no impacts would occur associated with the capability of the site soils to support the use of septic tanks.

f. No known paleontological resources are within the project boundary; however, it is possible that paleontological resources could be accidentally discovered during construction activities associated with development of the project site. Directly or indirectly destroying a unique paleontological site is considered a significant, adverse environmental impact. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would ensure this potential impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

GEO-2 The following language shall be included on all grading permits: "If paleontological resources are discovered during demolition and earthmoving activities, work shall stop within 100 feet of the find until a qualified paleontologist can assess if the find is unique and, if necessary, develop appropriate treatment measures in consultation with the City of Hollister Planning Division."

Geology and soils impact are less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures and, therefore, will not be addressed in the EIR

8. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b.	Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Comments:

a. The City of Hollister has not adopted a plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) or a threshold of significance for GHGs, nor has the air district developed or adopted a threshold of significance for GHGs from land use development projects, such as the proposed project. In the absence of a local qualified plan, lead agencies may defer to plans and thresholds of other agencies. In lieu of an available qualified plan, the San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District (SLOAPCD) CEQA Greenhouse Gas Thresholds & Guidance was utilized for evaluating project impacts.

The SLOAPCD released its *CEQA Greenhouse Gas Thresholds & Guidance for the San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District's 2012 CEQA Air Quality Handbook and Related Guidance on Use of Screening Tool, CalEEMod, and Local Reductions/Sequestration Projects & Offset Mix Calculator* in 2023. That guidance includes substantial evidence for establishing both efficiency-based and bright-line thresholds of significance for the year 2027 and for subsequent individual years to the year 2045. The threshold year of 2045 correlates to the most recently adopted statewide GHG emissions reduction target identified in Assembly Bill 1279. That bill sets a net zero GHG emissions reduction target for 2045. Table 2 in the SLOAPCD guidance identifies a service population threshold of significance of 3.6 MT CO_2e per service population per year for the year of 2027. Projects anticipated to build out in the year 2027 and whose annual GHG emission are forecast to be below the service population threshold are assumed to have a less-than-significant GHG impact.

GHG emissions from construction and operation of the proposed project were estimated using CalEEMod version 2022.1. Projected emissions from these sources are summarized in Table 3, Projected Annual GHG Emissions. The detailed CalEEMod modeling results are included as Appendix B.

Table 3 Projected Annual GHG Emissions

Emissions Sources	GHG Emissions (MT CO_2e)
Mobile	2,011.00
Area	3.78
Energy	404.00
Water	17.10
Waste	50.60
Refrigerants	0.27
Amortized Construction	23.60
Total	2,510.35

SOURCE: EMC Planning Group 2024

Construction activity, including operation of off-road construction equipment, would generate approximately 708 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MT CO_2e) per year. To account for the contribution of construction emissions to the project's annual emissions profile, construction emissions are amortized over an assumed 30-year operational timeframe; amortized annual emissions equal 23.60 MT CO_2e per year. The total annual operational GHG emissions are forecast at 2,487 MT CO_2e. Transportation (mobile) sources dominate the project emissions inventory at 2,011 MT CO_2e per year, followed by energy at 404 MT CO_2e. Area sources, solid waste sources, water, and refrigerants contain the remaining 72 MT CO_2e balance of emissions. The combined amortized construction and operational emissions account for a total of 2,510.35 MT CO_2e per year.

A service population of 734 persons was calculated based on the anticipated development of 219 residential units (90 apartments and 129 condominium) and a persons per household average of 3.35 (219 residential units x 3.35 persons per household).

With projected annual operational GHG emissions at 2,510.35 MT CO_2e and a service population of 734, total project emissions would equal 3.42 MT CO2e per service population per year. Since the annual project GHG emissions are less than the SLOAPCD 2027 service population threshold of 3.6 MT CO2e per service population per year, the project would have a less-than-significant GHG emissions impact.

b. As describe in item "a" above, neither the City nor air district have adopted plans for reducing GHG emissions. Consequently, the significance of mobile source GHG impacts is evaluated in the context of state legislation embodied in SB 743, and the non-mobile source GHGs are evaluated in the context of scaled quantified thresholds of significance that had been adopted by adjacent air districts as part of their respective plans for reducing GHG emissions. Because the project impacts are less than significant based, the project would have no impact from conflict with regulations or plans for reducing GHG emissions.

Greenhouse gas emissions impacts are less than significant and, therefore, would not be addressed in the EIR.

9. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b.	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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c.	Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d.	Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code section 65962.5 and, as a result, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e.	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 a public-use airport, result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f.	Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g.	Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Comments:

ENGEO Incorporated prepared both the *Lowe's Hollister Hollister, California Modified Phase I Environmental Site Assessment* (June 2021) ("phase I ESA") and the *Lowe's Hollister Meridian Street and Airport Highway Hollister, California Phase II Environmental Site Assessment* (July 2021) ("phase II ESA") for the proposed project. Much of the information provided in this section is from these sources, unless otherwise noted. Both of these assessments can be found in Appendix F.

a. The proposed project is a residential subdivision that would not involve the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Therefore, the project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.

b. According to the phase I ESA, the project site has historically been cultivated with row crop and orchards resulting in elevated levels of arsenic found in the soil of the northern portion of the project site, which was considered a recognized environmental concern. Therefore, a phase II ESA was prepared to conduct additional soil sampling and testing to assess the vertical and lateral extent of the arsenic impact. The phase I ESA also identified a potential environmental concern associated with a former railroad spur that appeared to have been demolished around 1950, which the phase II ESA also evaluated.

The phase II ESA concluded that the former presence of a railroad spur has not impacted the soil and no further action is required. However, two remedial alternatives were suggested in the phase II ESA to address the arsenic levels in the soil: excavation and proper off-site disposal or encapsulation. ENGEO Incorporated discusses the opportunity for the project developer to engage with a regulatory agency to determine a site-specific arsenic remedial action objective. This engagement could result in an increase in the numeric allowable arsenic concentration thereby decreasing the volume of soil requiring remediation, which would decrease remediation-related project costs.

The phase II ESA concludes that preparation of a site management plan prior to redevelopment activities is recommended. A site management plan is a document that outlines how the health and safety risks of a construction project will be managed. Implementation of this mitigation measure would ensure that the project's impact associated with creating 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 would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

HAZ-1 Prior to issuance of a grading permit, the project developer shall prepare a Site Management Plan, outlining how the health and safety risks will be managed during construction, for review and approval by the City of Hollister Building Division. The plan, once approved by the Building Division, shall be incorporated into the grading and building plans, and implemented, as appropriate.

c. The proposed project is a residential project that would not handle or emit hazardous waste. The project site is also not located within one-quarter mile of a school; the nearest schools are Marguerite Maze Middle and Gabilan Hills Elementary, both approximately 0.30 miles northeast of the site. Therefore, the proposed project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances or waste within one-quarter mile of a school.

d. The following lists were reviewed:

- Hazardous Materials Waste and Substances Sites from the Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor Database (Department of Toxic Substances Control 2024;
- Leaking Underground Storage Tank Sites from the State Water Board's GeoTracker Database (State Water Resources Board 2024);
- Solid Waste Disposal Sites Identified by Water Board with Waste Constituents Above Hazardous Waste Levels Outside the Waste Management Unit (California Environmental Protection Agency 2024a);
- "Active" Cease and Desist Order and Cleanup and Abatement Orders from Water Board (California Environmental Protection Agency 2024b); and
- List of hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action pursuant to Section 25187.5 of the Health and Safety Code, identified by the Department of Toxic Substances Control (California Environmental Protection Agency 2024c).

The project site is not located on any of these lists. There are two leaking underground storage tank clean-up sites located approximately 0.18 miles southwest and 0.22 miles southeast of the project site; however, both cases are completed and closed. Therefore, the proposed project is not located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code section 65962.5 and, as a result, would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.

e. The project site is located approximately 2.3 miles south of the Hollister Municipal Airport and located within the *Hollister Municipal Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan* airport influence area (Map 1) (San Benito County Airport Land Use Commission 2012). The project site is also located within the FAA Height Notification Surface and 579 MSL conical surface airspace protection zone (Map 4) as well as the airport influence area of the Overflight Zone (Map 5). The airspace protection zone is where height and other certain land use characteristics need to be restricted in order to prevent creation of physical visual, or electronic hazards to flight within the airspace. The project site is not, however, located within any of the airport noise contours and, as concluded in Section 13.0, Noise, checklist question "c," the project would not result in excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area.

The applicant has submitted an application to the airport land use commission providing elevations, among other documentation, about the proposed project. The condominiums would be 31 feet high and the apartments would be 40 feet and 7.5 inches high. The commission will review the project application and the heights of the proposed structures and make a determination as to their height sufficiency. Given the project site's location within the airport influence area, approval is required from the airport land use commission prior to issuance of a grading permit.

The proposed project is consistent with the City's anticipated use of the site with residences and meets the height restrictions of its zoning district (Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMU)). The City prepares its General Plan land use map, as well as its zoning map, in coordination, compliance, and compatibility with the *Hollister Municipal Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan*. Therefore, with review and approval of the project by the airport land use commission and the project's consistency with its General Plan designation and zoning district, the project would not result in a significant safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area.

f. The San Benito County Office of Emergency Services is responsible for coordinating agency response to disasters or other large-scale emergencies in Hollister with assistance from the Hollister Police Department and the Hollister Fire Department. San Benito County adopted an emergency operations plan that addresses the County's response to extraordinary emergencies and describes methods for carrying out emergency operations (San Benito County 2023). The proposed project is an infill residential development and would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

g. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Fire Hazard Severity Zones in State Responsibility Area mapping, the project site is not located within any state responsibility areas or any lands classified as a fire hazard severity zone (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection 2024). The project site is an infill project surrounded by existing development, which reduces the likelihood for the project to expose people or structures to wildland fire hazards. For these reasons, the project would not expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.

Hazards and hazardous materials impacts are less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures and, therefore, will not be addressed in the EIR.

10. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
(1) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;	☐	☐	☒	☐
(2) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;	☐	☐	☒	☐
(3) Create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	☐	☐	☒	☐
(4) Impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Comments:

a. **Construction Water Quality**. Development of the proposed project would involve soil disturbance, such as grading and construction activities, that could impact water quality through soil erosion and increasing the amount of pollutants carried in runoff. In order to reduce this potential impact, the proposed project would be required to comply with the Construction General Permit Water Quality Order 2022-0057-DWQ because it would disturb more than one acre of soil, which includes the preparation and implementation of a stormwater pollution prevention plan. Stormwater pollution prevention plans require

the incorporation of best management practices to control sediment, erosion, and pollutants contaminating runoff during construction and prevents contaminants from reaching receiving water bodies. Additionally, the project would be required to comply with the regulations outlined in City Municipal Code Chapter 15.24, Grading and Stormwater Best Management Practices Control; this chapter describes the City's regulations to minimize land disturbance during construction, discusses erosion and sediment control, and discusses construction stormwater control plans.

Compliance with the Construction General Permit and implementation of best management practices during construction of the project, as well as compliance with City Municipal Code regulations, would ensure less than significant impacts associated with water quality standards or waste discharge requirements during construction.

Operational Water Quality. During the operational phase of the proposed project, urban pollutants can mix with the stormwater runoff from the project site potentially affecting the receiving waters. The proposed project would create more than 2,500 square feet of impervious surfaces; therefore, the project would be subject to the requirements of the Phase II Small MS4 permit (Order No. 2013-0001-DWQ), which requires implementation of site design measures to reduce stormwater runoff. Stormwater treatment best management practices are also required by the project because they provide water quality benefits by removing pollutants from stormwater runoff prior to discharge to the storm drain system.

The proposed project includes a Stormwater Control Plan (Sheet C7 of the tentative map), as required, which illustrates the project's four drainage management areas that use bioretention and stormtech chambers to treat the stormwater collected on the site and direct stormwater to the proposed storm drainage facilities within the proposed on-site roadways all connecting into the existing City storm drain system within Meridian Street. This Stormwater Control Plan must comply with the City Municipal Code Section 17.16.140, Stormwater Management, the requirements of the Phase II Small MS4 permit, and the City's MS4 Guidance Document; review and approval shall be obtained by the City's Engineering Department prior to issuance of a grading permit.

Given the project's required compliance with the City's Municipal Code, Phase II Small MS4 permit, and MS4 Guidance Document, potential impacts associated with water quality standards or waste discharge requirements would be less than significant.

b. The proposed project as a residential subdivision would increase the use of the groundwater basin compared to existing conditions, which is currently undeveloped land. Additionally, the project would replace currently pervious land with impervious features and, therefore, could reduce groundwater recharge.

The City uses both imported water from the Central Valley Project and groundwater from the San Benito Groundwater Basin for its public water supply. The project site is designated as Mixed-Use; therefore, the City has anticipated water use at the project site. The proposed project would demand approximately 46 acre-feet of water per year using

the water demand factor for multi-family units provided within the San Benito County Water District's *2020 Urban Water Management Plan* (219 multi-family units x 0.21 acre-feet per year). According to the *2020 Urban Water Management Plan*, the projected water supplies through 2040 can meet demands. Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies.

The project's Stormwater Control Plan is required to include source control measures that would help increase the potential for groundwater recharge by including pervious pavements and drainage to landscaped areas and retention/detention areas in new development projects. Therefore, the project would not interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin.

c. **Erosion**. Refer to the discussion in Section 7.0, Geology and Soils, checklist question "b."

Flooding. The proposed project would alter the existing drainage pattern of the site as it would replace the current condition of the site, which is entirely pervious, with impervious surfaces. Increases in impervious surfaces on a site can result in an increase in stormwater runoff that could result in the potential for flooding on- or off-site. However, the proposed project is required to comply with the requirements of the Phase II MS4 Permit, and the City's MS4 Guidance Document. The project will be required to implement best management practices, including low impact development best management practices and site design best management practices, which would reduce imperviousness, retain or detain stormwater on-site, decrease surface water flows, and/or slow stormwater runoff rates. Because the project would create and/or replace more than one acre of impervious surfaces, it must implement hydromodification management, which requires that post-project runoff flow rates do not exceed the pre-project flow rates. Compliance with these regulatory requirements would ensure that the potential impacts associated with flooding on- or off-site would be less than significant.

Runoff. As previously indicated, an increase in impervious surfaces with implementation of the proposed project could result in an increase in stormwater runoff, which could result in higher peak discharges that may potentially exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems. The proposed project would involve the creation of at least 2,500 square feet of impervious surfaces thereby requiring the implementation of site design measures to reduce stormwater runoff, pursuant to the City's MS4 Guidance Document and the Phase II MS4 Permit requirements. City Municipal Code Section 15.24.120 requires that the project submit an application for a post-construction stormwater control plan for review and approval by the City prior to issuance of grading permits to ensure that these requirements are met. Additionally, because the project creates or replaces 5,000 square feet or more of impervious surface, it is required to temporarily detain site runoff (City of Hollister 2023, p. 4.10-32). As previously indicated, the project must also implement hydromodification management requirements and demonstrate that post-project runoff does not exceed pre-project runoff.

City Municipal Code Chapter 13.16, Storm Drainage Fees, requires payment of storm drainage fees prior to the issuance of a building permit or the filing of a parcel or final map, whichever occurs first, which helps finance improvements to the City's storm drain system to accommodate increases in stormwater flows.

Implementation of these stormwater control measures will minimize the potential for the project to create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. Impacts would therefore be less than significant.

Flood Flows. The project site is not located within any flood hazard zone (FEMA 2024) and the proposed project would adhere to the regulations and requirements identified above (refer back to the discussion under Flooding). Therefore, the project would have less than significant impact associated with its potential to impede or redirect flood flows.

d. There are no large bodies of water within Hollister that could trigger a seiche, Hollister is far from the ocean resulting in no risk for tsunamis, and the project site is not located within a flood hazard zone (FEMA 2024). Therefore, the project would not risk release of pollutants due to project inundation.

e. The *North San Benito County Groundwater Sustainability Plan* was adopted by the San Benito County Water District's Board of Directors in November 2021 and was approved by the Department of Water Resources in July 2023. The proposed project would not conflict with this plan because it is required via the General Construction Permit to prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan that would illustrate the project's implementation of onsite treatment control measures that would detain storm water runoff onsite and ultimately drain to nearby water bodies, thereby allowing for groundwater recharge. The project would also implement the City Municipal Code discussed under checklist question "a" in order to reduce adverse impacts to groundwater recharge. As concluded in the discussion under checklist question "b," the proposed project would not contribute to a substantial depletion of groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge, and, therefore, would not conflict with the sustainable groundwater management plan.

Hydrology and Water Quality impacts are less than significant and, therefore, will not be addressed in the EIR.

11. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b.	Cause any significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Comments:

a. The project is an infill project and therefore, would not physically divide an established community.

b. The various environmental topics in this initial study address applicable land use plans, policies, and regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. This initial study shows that for those environmental topics (e.g., air quality, biological resources, greenhouse gas emissions, etc.), there are either no impacts, less than significant impacts, or significant impacts that can be mitigated to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the project would not create any significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

There are no land use and planning impacts and, therefore, the topic will not be addressed in the EIR.

12. MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	Result in loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b.	Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated in a local general plan, specific plan, or other land-use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Comments:

a, b. According to the U.S. Geological Survey Mineral Resources Online Spatial Data Interactive Mapping, the project site is not located within an area of a known mineral resource. The nearest area of known mineral resources is approximately one mile southwest of the project site. Therefore, the project would not result in loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state or a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated in a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan.

There are no mineral resource impacts and, therefore, this topic will not be addressed in the EIR.

13. NOISE

Would the project result in:

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or in applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b.	Generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground borne noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c.	For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or 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, expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Comments:

WJV Acoustics prepared an *Environmental Noise Assessment* ("noise assessment") for the proposed project to determine if significant noise impacts will be produced by the project. Most of the information in this section is sourced from the noise assessment, which can be found in Appendix G.

a. The General Plan establishes land use compatibility criteria in terms of the Day-Night Average Level (DNL or L_{dn}). The L_{dn} is the time-weighted energy average noise level for a 24-hour day, with a 10 dB penalty added to noise levels occurring during the nighttime hours (10:00 p.m.-7:00 a.m.). The exterior noise exposure criterion of the General Plan Health and Safety Element is 60 dB L_{dn} within outdoor activity areas of residential land uses. The General Plan Health and Safety Element also requires that interior noise levels attributable to exterior sources not exceed 45 dB L_{dn}. This standard is consistent with interior noise level criteria applied by the State of California and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Temporary Noise

Construction would occur at various locations on the project site. Existing sensitive receptors could be located as close as 50 to 100 feet from construction activities. Construction noise could result in a short-term, significant increase in ambient noise levels at nearby noise sensitive land uses. However, construction noise is not generally considered to be a significant impact if construction is limited to the daytime hours.

General Plan Policy HS3.3 states, "regulate construction activity to reduce noise between 7:00 pm and 7:00 am." Compliance with this General Plan policy will ensure that temporary construction noise levels are less than significant.

Permanent Noise

Traffic Noise Exposure to Offsite Receptors. The noise assessment measured the traffic noise exposure levels for existing conditions, as well as with the project, at eight different sensitive receptor locations within the vicinity of the site. It was concluded that the project's contribution to existing and cumulative traffic noise exposure levels would not result in traffic noise exposure levels exceeding the City's exterior threshold of 60 dB L_{dn} in residential areas. Additionally, the project would not result in an increase of 3 dB or more at any location where traffic noise exposure would already be expected to exceed 60 dB L_{dn} without the project. The noise assessment uses the assumption that a significant impact would occur if traffic noise levels increase by 3 dB at sensitive receptor locations where noise levels already exceed the City's applicable noise level standards without the project; 3 dB generally represents the threshold of perception in change for the human ear.

Therefore, the project would not result in a traffic noise impact at any existing sensitive receptor location in the vicinity of the project.

Project Site Traffic Noise Exposure. The project includes sensitive receptors (residences) that could be impacted by traffic noise exposure, including the proposed project's traffic, on Meridian Street and State Route 25. The noise assessment determined that a significant traffic noise impact would be expected to occur if outdoor activity areas were to be located within approximately 148 feet from the centerline of Meridian Street or within approximately 242 feet from the centerline of State Route 25. The closest proposed residences, with associated outdoor activity areas, would be located at setback distances from Meridian Street and State Route 25 of approximately 350 feet and 300 feet, respectively. Therefore, a significant traffic noise impact on the proposed residences from Meridian Street and State Route 25 would not be expected to occur.

Nut Shelling Facility Noise Exposure. The Guerra Nut Shelling facility is located 100 feet south of the closest proposed residence. The noise assessment concluded that 24-hour noise exposure levels at this location were measured to be approximately 55 db L_{dn}, which does not exceed the City's 60 dB L_{dn} compatibility noise level standard for new residential land uses. Noise levels during peak production months would be higher than what was measured for the noise assessment, but would not be expected to exceed 60 dB L_{dn}.

Interior Noise Exposure. The noise assessment states that the proposed residential construction must be capable of providing a minimum outdoor-to-indoor noise level reduction of approximately 14 dB. The noise assessment assumes that residential construction methods complying with current building code requirements will reduce exterior noise levels by approximately 25 dB if windows and doors are closed, which will

be sufficient for compliance with the City's 45 dB L_{dn} interior standard at all proposed lots. However, this requires the use of air conditioning or mechanical ventilation because windows and doors must remain closed for sound insulation. Therefore, implementation of the following mitigation measure would ensure that windows and doors can remain closed for sound insulation purposes and the project's interior noise level would not exceed the City's 45 dB L_{dn} standard.

Mitigation Measure

N-1 Prior to issuance of an occupancy permit, the developer shall provide evidence to the Community Development Department that mechanical ventilation or air conditioning is installed for all project residences.

b. The dominant sources of man-made vibration are from activities that are not anticipated to occur with construction or operation of the proposed project. Typical vibration levels from multiple distances are provided within the noise assessment (Table VIII); none of these levels are expected to exceed any significant threshold levels for damage (WJV Acoustics 2024, p. 14). Therefore, the project would not generate excessive ground-borne vibration or ground borne noise levels.

c. The project site is located within the Hollister Municipal Airport's airport influence area (San Benito County Airport Land Use Commission 2012, Map 1). However, the project site is not located within any of the airport noise contours and, therefore, would be considered wholly compatible from an airport noise perspective (WJV Acoustics 2024, p. 12). The project would not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels.

Noise impacts are less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures and, therefore, will not be addressed in the EIR.

14. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (e.g., by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (e.g., through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b.	Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Comments:

a. According to the California Department of Finance, the population of Hollister was 42,891 as of May 2023 (California Department of Finance 2023). The proposed project involves the development of 219 multi-family residential units, which would result in the addition of approximately 734 people to the City of Hollister (219 multi-family homes x 3.35 persons per household) (California Department of Finance 2023). However, the project site is designated Mixed-Use by the General Plan; therefore, the site has been anticipated by the City for the project's proposed uses.

The increase in 734 residents represent a minor increase in the City of Hollister's overall population and the site has been anticipated for the proposed uses by the City's General Plan. Therefore, the proposed project would not induce population growth that is not already planned for by the City of Hollister.

b. The project site is currently undeveloped and, therefore, the proposed project would not displace any number of people or housing and not necessitate the construction of replacement housing.

There are no population and housing impacts and, therefore, this topic will not be discussed in the EIR.

15. PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of or need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the following public services:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Fire protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c. Schools?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Parks?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e. Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Comments:

a. Fire services at the project site are provided by the Hollister Fire Department from their headquarters fire station at 110 5th Street, located approximately 0.35 miles west of the project site. The project's increase in 734 people to the City of Hollister would increase the existing fire protection needs in the City.

The project would be required to comply with City Municipal Code Chapter 3.16, Police and Fire Protection Impact Fees, which requires the payment of police and fire protection impact fees prior to the issuance of a building permit or the filing of a parcel or final map to offset the costs of additional manpower and equipment demands due to the development and growth of new residential areas. The project would also be required to comply with City Municipal Chapter 3.20, Public Safety Tax, which collects revenue through the public safety tax on each parcel of real property or building to be used only for the purposes of obtaining, furnishing, providing, operating, and maintaining fire protection, prevention, or suppression services and police protection services.

Additionally, the City of Hollister Fire Marshal stated that due to the project site's location to the nearby fire station, the Hollister Fire Department can accommodate the fire protection needs of the proposed project without the need to construct or expand the existing fire facilities nor would the department require the need for more staff (Charlie Bedolla, call with consultant, May 2, 2024).

Compliance with the abovementioned Municipal Code chapter, in addition to confirmation from the Hollister Fire Department that it can accommodate the fire protection needs of the project, would ensure that the proposed project would not impact fire protection services requiring the construction of new or physically altered facilities.

b. Police protection services at the project site are provided by the Hollister Police Department at their station located at 395 Apollo Way, located approximately 2.8 miles north of the project site. The project's increase in 734 people to the City of Hollister would increase the existing police protection needs in the City.

The Hollister Police Department began construction on the expansion of its station to the adjacent lot in March 2020 with the intention that this expansion would serve for the next 50 years as the City grows (Kadee Brosseau 2020). Another component of the long-term plan to expand the Hollister Police Department is to include a Dispatch Center and a Real Time Crime Center; the City is planning to hire a project manager in the next couple months to work on the architectural plans and prepare the application to the state to open its own Dispatch Center. According to the Hollister Police Chief, the proposed project's increase in police protection demand may result in the need to hire additional police officers; however, it would not result in the need for constructing new facilities (Carlos Reynoso, email message, May 17, 2024).

The proposed project would be required to comply with City Municipal Code Chapter 3.16, Police and Fire Protection Impact Fees, which requires the payment of police and fire protection impact fees prior to the issuance of a building permit or the filing of a parcel or final map to offset the costs of additional manpower and equipment demands due to the development and growth of new residential areas. The project would also be required to comply with City Municipal Chapter 3.20, Public Safety Tax, which collects revenue through the public safety tax on each parcel of real property or building to be used only for the purposes of obtaining, furnishing, providing, operating, and maintaining fire protection, prevention, or suppression services and police protection services.

Given that the Hollister Police Chief states there is no need for construction of new facilities as a result of the project's increased demand, as well as the project's required compliance with the abovementioned Municipal Code chapter, the proposed project would not significantly impact police protection services requiring the construction of new or remodeled facilities

c. The project site is located within the Hollister School District boundary, which serves students from transitional kindergarten through 8th grade, and the San Benito High School District, which serves students from 9-12th grade. The students generated by the project would attend Sunnyslope Elementary School (Hollister School District 2024) and Hollister High School.

Table 4, Student Generation, provides the number of students that may be generated by the proposed project and which school district would serve these students.

Table 4 Student Generation

School District	Student Generation Rates	Proposed Project	Student Generation
Hollister School District	0.528	219 multi-family units	116
San Benito High School District	0.35		77
		Total	193

SOURCE: (Hollister School District 2022), (Carol Heiderich, email message, 2024)

The proposed project may generate a total of 193 students, 116 of which would attend Sunnyslope Elementary School, and 77 of which would attend Hollister High School or the new high school currently in the planning phase.

The Hollister School District Superintendent was unavailable during preparation of the initial study and, therefore, a methodology was used that combined the July 2023 *Environmental Initial Study San Juan Apartments Project* prepared by Kimley Horn as well as individual research about the district.

The Hollister School District had a 2022-23 school year enrollment of 6,209 (California Department of Education 2024), 640 of which were enrolled at Sunnyslope Elementary School (Sunnyslope Elementary School 2024). In 2017, the Hollister School District prepared a master plan for Sunnyslope Elementary School, which plans for the relocation and building of new classrooms. The first phase of the master plan would add 13 classrooms to the existing 47 classrooms, for a total of 60 classrooms, and the second phase would consist of the demolition of 24 classrooms and new playfields resulting in a total 36 classrooms (CEQAnet 2017). Based on Google Earth images, it appears that at least phase one in the master plan has been implemented (Google Earth 2024).

The proposed project would involve the addition of approximately 116 students at Sunnyslope Elementary School. Implementation of the Sunnyslope Elementary School's master plan (phase one) allowed for the school's ability to serve more students. However, implementation of phase two (demolition of classrooms and an overall reduction of the number of classrooms at the school) would minimize the ability for the school to adequately serve an addition of students. At this time, it is unknown when phase two of the master plan would be implemented, if it has not already been.

While the project would increase the student population in the City, which in turn could affect the capacity of the existing Hollister Elementary School District facilities, Section 65995(h) of the California Government Code has been adopted by the state to mitigate any school facilities impacts. This section states that the payment of statutory fees is deemed to be full and complete mitigation of the impacts. It is for this reason that the proposed project would have a less than significant impact related to school facilities. New facilities, if and when required by the Hollister School District, would be developed and analyzed independent of this project review.

The San Benito High School District has only one comprehensive high school, Hollister High School. Therefore, its ability to accommodate new students is limited. According to the San Benito High School District's *Facilities Master Plan* adopted in August 2023, Hollister High School's current capacity is 3,437 students and the 2023 school enrollment was 3,465 resulting in the high school currently operating over capacity by 28 students. Based on the 2024 school year enrollment projections, the high school will be over capacity by 159 students (San Benito High School District 2023). The *Facilities Master Plan* concludes that new facilities will be needed to accommodate the additional students anticipated over the next four years. The San Benito High School District's *Facilities Master Plan* discusses the need to construct a new high school that would be designed to serve 1,200-1,400 students and the ability to expand to up to 2,400 students. As indicated previously, Section 65995(h) of the California Government Code has been adopted by the state to mitigate any school facilities impacts. It is for this reason that the proposed project would have a less than significant impact related to school facilities. The San Benito High School District is required to comply with CEQA for the new high school, which is currently in the planning phase.

d. Due to the proposed project's increase in population, an increase in the use of nearby parks may occur. According to the City's *Park Facility Master Plan*, the recommended park service per population standard is four acres of park space per 1,000 residents. Using this standard, the proposed project would be required to provide approximately 2.9 acres of parkland (734 new residents x (4 acres/1,000 residents)).

   The project proposes to provide 16,170 square feet (or 0.37 acres) on the northeast corner of the site for a park and recreation center; however, this does not meet the project's required parkland dedication of 2.9 acres. The project will be required to comply with City Municipal Section 16.55.030.A., which requires that every residential subdivider shall, as a condition to filing a final subdivision map or parcel map, dedicate land, pay parkland acquisition fees in lieu of dedication, or a combination of both, for park or recreational purposes, including open space. Further, Chapter 3.12, Park Development Fees, requires the payment of park development fees prior to issuance of a building permit. The project's compliance with the City Municipal Code sections listed above would ensure that the project would not have a significant impact on the City's parks and recreational facilities.

e. Due to the proposed project's increase in population, an increased demand for library services may occur. The San Benito County Free Library is the only public library in San Benito County and is located at 470 5th Street in Hollister, which is approximately 0.60 miles west of the project site.

   Although the proposed project may result in the increase in use of the current library, this type of development was anticipated by the General Plan and evaluated in the General Plan EIR. Therefore, the proposed project is not anticipated to result in significant impacts to the City's existing library facilities.

   Public services impacts are less than significant and, therefore, will not be addressed in the EIR.

16. RECREATION

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	Would the project 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b.	Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Comments:

a. All parks and recreational facilities within Hollister, including City-owned recreation facilities, school district-owned recreational areas with joint-use agreements, and all of County-owned Veterans Memorial Park, total at 168.93 acres. Parkland owned exclusively by the City of Hollister totals at only 84 acres (City of Hollister 2019). According to the City's *Park Facility Master Plan*, the recommended park service per population standard is four acres of park space per 1,000 residents.

The project's increase to the Hollister population would likely increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities. Using the City's *Park Facility Master Plan* standard, the proposed project would be required to provide approximately 2.9 acres of parkland (734 new residents x (4 acres/1,000 residents)). The project's proposed park and recreation center would not meet the 2.9 acres standard.

The project will be required to comply with City Municipal Section 16.55.030.A., which requires that every residential subdivider shall, as a condition to filing a final subdivision map or parcel map, dedicate land, pay parkland acquisition fees in lieu of dedication, or a combination of both, for park or recreational purposes, including open space. Further, Chapter 3.12, Park Development Fees, requires the payment of park development fees prior to issuance of a building permit.

Compliance with the City Municipal Code would ensure less than significant impacts associated with the project's impact on 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.

b. The project proposes a park and recreation center at the northeast corner of the site. The potential adverse physical effects on the environment from construction of this park and recreation center would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by implementing the mitigations identified throughout this initial study, with exception to VMT, which is determined to be significant and unavoidable (refer to Section 17.0, Transportation).

Recreation impacts are less than significant and, therefore, will not be addressed in the EIR.

17. TRANSPORTATION

Would the project:

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b.	Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c.	Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d.	Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Comments:

Hexagon Transportation Consultants prepared the *Meridian Village Residential Development Transportation Analysis* ("transportation analysis") in May 2024 to evaluate the project's effects on vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as well as weekday AM and PM peak hour operations at selected intersections for the purpose of identifying operational issues at intersections in the general vicinity of the project site. Most of the information provided within this section is sourced from the transportation analysis. The full analysis can be found in Appendix H.

a. **Roadway System (Intersection Operations)**. The transportation analysis evaluated several intersections within the vicinity of the project site. All study intersections are projected to operate at acceptable levels of service during both the AM and PM peak hours under both Background Plus Project Conditions and the Year 2045 Plus Project Conditions scenarios (p. ii and iii). However, under both scenarios, the San Benito Street/Fourth Street intersection would have peak-hour traffic volumes that exceed the thresholds that warrant signalization.

Transit System. The project site is served by the San Benito County Express bus routes with two stops within 0.3 and 0.5 miles west of the project site. The transportation analysis concludes that the project could increase the demand for transit services in the vicinity of the site; however, the transit demand would be minimal due to the lack of an extensive transit network within the City (p. iv).

Bicycle Facilities. According to the transportation analysis, the project could increase the demand for bicycle facilities in the vicinity of the project site. The existing schools and commercial/retail uses in the project area could potentially attract some bicyclists.

Implementation of the planned bicycle facilities identified in the San Benito County Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plan would ensure that the site would be directly served by bike lanes along Meridian Street, providing a continuous bicycle network. However, the above-planned bicycle facilities are not fully funded and, therefore, project-related bicycle traffic would need to share the roadway with auto traffic until these facilities are built out.

The transportation analysis recommends that the project contribute towards future implementation of planned bike lanes along Meridian Street, but acknowledges that the construction of new bike lanes may not be currently feasible due to right-of-way constraints between Rech Street and State Route 25. Implementation of these improvements would be dependent upon future development of the currently vacant properties located south of Meridian Street and north of the project site (p. iv).

General Plan Policy C3.1, Regional Transportation Measures, discusses the City's collection of traffic impact fees and requires other site related transportation improvements from private developers to ensure implementation of transportation system improvements to local and regional facilities attributable to proposed development. Compliance with General Plan Policy C3.1 would ensure that the project's contribution to impacts associated with bicycle facilities would be less than significant.

Pedestrian Facilities. Pedestrian traffic would be generated by the proposed project. Existing pedestrian generators in the project area include commercial/retail uses within the downtown area to the west and nearby schools. The existing schools and commercial/retail uses in the project area could attract some pedestrians. The project's proposed extension of Athena Way could be constructed with a five-foot wide sidewalk on both sides of the roadway. However, the transportation analysis states that these sidewalks would not provide a continuous pedestrian route due to missing sidewalks along the south side of Meridian Street (between Rech Street and State Route 25) and no marked crossing across Meridian Street at Vintage Way. Therefore, pedestrian access to areas east of the project site (such as Marguerite Maze Middle School and Hollister Dual Language Academy) would be constrained. Pedestrians would need to utilize a circuitous route along Athena Way and Recht Street to reach continuous sidewalks along the north side of Meridian Street.

The transportation analysis recommends that the project developers work with the City to contribute to the implementation of any improvements that would enhance circulation and safety of pedestrians in the project area. The transportation analysis concludes that the project should contribute towards the implementation of crosswalks and curb ramps at the intersection of Vintage Way and Meridian Street, which would provide an alternative and more direct route between the project site and destinations to the east of the site. The transportation analysis also recommends that the project developer should contribute towards future implementation of missing sidewalks along Meridian Street. However, it is acknowledged that implementation of new sidewalks may not be currently feasible due to right-of-way constraints between Rech Street and State Route 25.

Implementation of these improvements would be dependent upon future development of the currently vacant properties located south of Meridian Street and north of the project site.

General Plan Policy C2.3, Pedestrian Connections, requires that new developments provide internal pedestrian connections and linkages to adjacent neighborhoods and community facilities. Compliance with General Plan Policy C2.3 would ensure that the project's contribution to impacts associated with pedestrian facilities would be less than significant.

b. The transportation analysis concluded that the project's impact to VMT would be significant and unavoidable with no mitigation measures found to reduce impacts to less than significant. This topic will be addressed in the EIR.

c. The residential uses proposed at the site are not incompatible to the surrounding uses as the site is surrounded by residences to the north, east, and west. The project proposes an internal roadway system that provides connection to the apartment buildings surface parking lot and between each condominium to the project site's access points. According to the transportation analysis, the proposed internal roadways would be sufficient to serve two-way traffic throughout the project site. No sharp curves or dangerous intersections are involved with the proposed project. Therefore, the project would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible uses.

d. The transportation analysis indicates that the project site should be designed to follow the City's design standards and provide adequate width and turn-radii along all drive/parking aisles to allow for two-way circulation and adequate circulation of larger vehicles (e.g., emergency trucks) throughout the project site. Adhering to the City's standards and requirements would ensure that the proposed site access points and layout of the surface parking areas would be adequate to accommodate the circulation of both passenger and emergency vehicles.

18. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, or cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
(1)	Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources code section 5020.1(k), or	☐	☐	☐	☒
(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 Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	☐	☐	☐	☒

Comments:

a. On March 19, 2024, the City sent out letters offering consultation to California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the project site. The Amah Mutsun Tribal Band responded and provided recommendations to be implemented if any positive cultural or historic sensitivity was identified within one mile of the project site (Magda Gonzalez, email message, May 17, 2024).

As discussed in Section 5.0, Cultural Resources, four historic structures were identified within one-quarter mile of the site. They are southern Pacific Railroad structures, an industrial structure on Hillcrest Road, and two residences on Hillcrest Road. None of these historic resources are considered sensitive Native American cultural or historic resources. Therefore, no mitigation measures are necessary.

There are no tribal cultural resource impacts and, therefore, this topic will not be addressed in the EIR.

19. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b.	Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, single-dry and multiple- dry years?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c.	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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
d.	Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e.	Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Comments:

a. The proposed project involves the construction of 219 multi-family residential units on a site that is currently undeveloped. Therefore, the project would require the construction of new water, wastewater, and storm drain facilities as well as electric power, natural gas, and telecommunications facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects. However, the environmental impacts that could occur are mitigated to a less-than-significant level through the implementation of the mitigation measures identified throughout this initial study.

The project would be required to comply with City Municipal Code Sections 13.04.350 and 13.04.360, which require that every application for a permit to connect to a sanitary sewer for discharge shall be accompanied by a sanitary sewer treatment and collection connection fee. City Municipal Code Chapter 13.16, Storm Drainage Fees, requires payment of storm drainage fees prior to the issuance of a building permit or the filing of a

parcel or final map, whichever occurs first, which helps finance improvements to the City's storm drain system to accommodate increases in stormwater flows. Additionally, Chapter 13.08, Water Service System, requires that each applicant pay a deposit for water service as well as for installation of water meters.

Implementation of the applicable mitigation measures identified throughout this initial study, as well as compliance with the abovementioned requirements of the City Municipal Code, would ensure that impacts associated with the construction of new utility services would be less than significant.

b. The City uses both imported water from the Central Valley Project and groundwater from the San Benito Groundwater Basin for its public water supply. The project site is designed Mixed-Use in the General Plan; therefore, the City has anticipated water use at the project site. The proposed project would demand approximately 46 acre-feet of water per year using the water demand factor for multi-family units provided within the San Benito County Water District's *2020 Urban Water Management Plan* (219 multi-family units x 0.21 acre-feet per year). According to the *2020 Urban Water Management Plan* Tables 7-2a, 7-3 and 7-4, the water demand for the City of Hollister can be served by the water supply through the year 2040 in normal, single-dry, and multiple-dry years. Further, the project will be required to comply with City Municipal Section 16.24.030.B, which states that a subdivider shall present to the City written evidence from the proposed supplier of water as to availability and quality, as to the provision of required services, and as to satisfactory agreements which have been made for such service.

   Therefore, the proposed project would have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, single-dry and multiple- dry years.

c. Wastewater generated by the proposed project would be collected by the City's sanitary sewer system and conveyed to the City's Water Reclamation Facility for treatment. The Water Reclamation Facility has a capacity of 4.03 million gallons per day and a total of 958.65 million gallons of wastewater was treated by the facility in 2023 (William Via, email message, May 9, 2024). Therefore, a residual capacity of approximately 512.30 million gallons was present by the end of last year at the Water Reclamation Facility.

   Using the flow factor provided in the *City of Hollister Sanitary Sewer Collection System Master Plan Update*, the proposed project could generate approximately 30,660 gallons of wastewater per day (219 dwelling units x 40 gallons per day per dwelling unit), or 0.009 million gallons per day. This total makes up less than one percent of the daily capacity of the City's Water Reclamation Facility.

   The City's Public Works Director states that the City is working on a study to determine the available capacity of the facility and any required upgrades to increase it pursuant to requests from the regional water board. The Public Works Director concludes that the estimated flow for the proposed project is not high, but other projects and connections are coming online in the near future and, therefore, he cannot say with certainty that the facility will have the available capacity (William Via, email message, May 9, 2024).

Given that it is unknown whether the Water Reclamation Facility can serve the project's projected demand, implementation of the following mitigation measure will be required.

Mitigation Measure

UTIL-1 Prior to project approval, the City's Public Works Director shall make a determination as to whether there is sufficient capacity to serve the project. The project shall not be approved until sufficient capacity exists within the Water Reclamation Facility.

d-e. The San Benito County Integrated Waste Management Agency coordinates recycling and garbage services for all of San Benito County, with Recology providing the waste collection services. The John Smith Road Landfill will serve the solid waste needs of the project. The landfill has a remaining capacity of 1,921,000 cubic yards as of April 2021 and a maximum permitted throughput of 1,000 tons per day (CalRecycle 2024a). The landfill is planning an expansion to increase the disposal capacity, extend the landfill footprint, and increase the maximum daily tonnage that can be accepted to 2,300 tons per day (San Benito County 2024).

The San Benito Integrated Waste Management Regional Agency reports annual solid waste disposal rates for San Benito County to CalRecycle and serves the solid waste needs of San Benito County. The 2019 disposal rate for the San Benito Integrated Waste Management Regional Agency was 88,184 tons (CalRecycle 2024b). There are no disposal rates provided for years more recent than 2019; therefore, the 2019 disposal rate was used. San Benito County's population in 2019 was 61,437 and the City of Hollister's population was 39,967 (California Department of Finance 2021). The City's population is approximately 65 percent of the County's population. Therefore, for this analysis, it is assumed that the percentage of solid waste generated by the City of Hollister is 65 percent of the total 2019 disposal rate for the San Benito Integrated Waste Management Regional Agency (i.e., 57,320 tons per year). This total solid waste generated by the City is equivalent to 1.43 tons per year per person.

Using this solid waste generation rate, the proposed project could generate up to approximately 1,050 tons of solid waste per year (734 persons x 1.43 tons per year per person), or approximately 2.9 tons per day. This total represents only 0.13 percent of the amount of solid waste that the landfill can accept each day and an even smaller percentage when comparing to the landfill's remaining capacity.

Given that the landfill has plans for expansion and that the project's solid waste generation represents such a small amount of what the landfill accepts each day and its remaining capacity, the project would not generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals, and the project would comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

Utilities and Service Systems impacts are less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures and, therefore, will not be addressed in the EIR.

20. WILDFIRE

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b.	Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of wildfire?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c.	Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d.	Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Comments:

a-d. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Fire Hazard Severity Zones in State Responsibility Area mapping, the project site is not located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones. The nearest land classified as very high fire hazard severity zone is over two miles southwest from the project site (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection 2024). Therefore, no further discussion is necessary.

There are no wildfire impacts and, therefore, this topic will not be addressed in the EIR.

21. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment; substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species; cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels; threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community; substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species; or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b.	Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)	☐	☐	☐	☒
c.	Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Comments:

a. The proposed project has a potential to have an effect on special-status nesting birds and raptors as well as special-status bats. Mitigation measures presented in Section 4.0, Biological Resources, would ensure that the proposed project would not have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment; substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species; cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels; threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community; substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species.

The proposed project has the potential to result in adverse effects to unknown, buried historic resources or unique archaeological resources. Mitigation measures presented in Section 5.0, Cultural Resources, would ensure that such an impact, if it were to occur, would not be significant and would not eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory.

b. Proposed project impacts that contribute to cumulative project impacts are required to be lessened per the mitigation measures presented in this initial study. With implementation of the mitigation measures, standards, and policies identified herein, the project's contribution to cumulative project impacts would not be considerable.

c. Based on the analysis provided in this initial study, the proposed project could indirectly cause substantial adverse effects to human beings through hazardous materials in the site soils, soil expansivity, temporary construction toxic air contaminants, and temporary construction noise. However, as discussed throughout this initial study, the impacts would not be significant. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in significant environmental effects that would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly.

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