HOLLISTER GENERAL PLAN 2040

Climate Action Plan and Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Public Draft | May 2023

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City of HOLLISTER CALIFORNIA

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CITY OF HOLLISTER

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In addition to the technical appendices, all documents cited in this report and used in its preparation are hereby incorporated by reference into this Draft EIR. Copies of documents referenced herein are available for review online at *www.hollister2040.org*.

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1. Introduction

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Chapter 14, *California Code of Regulations*, Section 15378(a), the proposed City of Hollister 2040 General Plan (2040 General Plan), 2023 Climate Action Plan (2023 CAP), and Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP), are considered a "project" subject to environmental review. Their implementation is "an action [undertaken by a public agency], which has the potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment."[1] This Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) provides an assessment of the potential environmental consequences of adoption and implementation of the Hollister 2040 General Plan, 2023 CAP, and ALPP, herein referred to separately, or together referred to as the "proposed project."

This Draft EIR identifies mitigation measures and alternatives to the proposed project that would avoid or reduce potentially significant impacts. This Draft EIR compares the development potential of the proposed project with the existing baseline condition that is described in detail in each section of Chapter 4, *Environmental Analysis*, and each subchapter, 4.1 through 4.18. The City of Hollister (City) is the lead agency for the proposed project. This assessment is intended to inform the City's decision makers, other responsible agencies, and the public at large of the nature of the proposed project and its potential effect on the environment.

1.1 PROPOSED ACTION

If approved by the Hollister City Council, the proposed project would replace the City's existing 2005 General Plan, which has a buildout horizon to 2023, with an updated 2040 General Plan; would adopt the City's first CAP; and would approve the ALPP. The proposed project would build off the existing 2005 General Plan to provide a framework for land use, transportation, and conservation decisions through the horizon year of 2040. The CAP will serve as the City's qualified greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction plan and will include a blueprint for how the City can reduce their emissions through 2045 to meet state targets. The proposed ALPP would amend the Hollister Municipal Code to ensure the benefits of agricultural activities are maintained by requiring that activities that convert existing agricultural lands to urban uses directly address that loss through a program that funds agricultural conservation easements.

Adoption and implementation of the proposed project is projected to result in 6,455 new housing units, 21,635 new residents, and 5,755 new jobs by 2040. See Chapter 3, *Project Description*, of this Draft EIR for additional details on the proposed project. See the No Project Alternative in Chapter 5, *Alternatives to the Proposed Project*, for a comparison of the existing 2005 General Plan and the proposed 2040 General Plan.

[1] California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15378(a).

1.2 EIR SCOPE

This Draft EIR is a program EIR that analyzes the adoption and implementation of the proposed project. This is in contrast to a project-level EIR, which is used to identify and analyze the potential impacts of site-specific construction and operation. CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines allow lead agencies to prepare a number of types of EIRs. Different types of EIRs are used for varying situations and intended uses. Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines states that program EIRs are appropriate when a project consists of a series of actions related to the issuance of rules, regulations, and other planning criteria.

In this case, the proposed project that is the subject of this Draft EIR consists of a long-term plan and set of regulatory changes that would be implemented over time as policy documents and regulations guiding future development activities and City actions. No specific development projects are proposed as part of the proposed project. Therefore, this EIR is a program-level EIR that analyzes the potential environmental effects of the adoption and implementation of the proposed project. As a program EIR, it does not evaluate the impacts of individual projects that may be proposed in the future under the proposed project. However, if the program EIR addresses the program's effects as specifically and comprehensively as is reasonably possible, and later activities are within the scope of the effects examined in the program EIR, then additional environmental review may not be required for those future projects.[2]

When a program EIR is relied on for a subsequent activity, the lead agency must incorporate feasible mitigation measures and alternatives developed in the program EIR into the subsequent activities (CEQA Guidelines Section 15168[c][3]). If a subsequent activity would have effects that are not within the scope of the program EIR, the lead agency must prepare a new Initial Study leading to a Negative Declaration, a Mitigated Negative Declaration, or an EIR, unless the activity qualifies for an exemption. For these subsequent environmental review documents, this program EIR will serve as the first-tier environmental analysis. The program EIR can also serve to streamline future environmental review of subsequent projects.

1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

1.3.1 DRAFT EIR

Pursuant to CEQA Section 21080(d) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15063, the City determined that the proposed project could result in potentially significant environmental impacts and that a program EIR would be required. In compliance with CEQA Section 21080.4, the City circulated the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR for the proposed project to the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) State Clearinghouse (SCH) and interested agencies and persons on April 9, 2021, for a 30-day review period. A public scoping meeting was held on April 22, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. via the Zoom platform due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The NOP and scoping process solicited comments regarding the scope of the Draft EIR from

[2] CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(c) and CEQA streamlining provisions.

responsible agencies and interested parties. Appendix A, *Notice of Preparation and Scoping Comments*, of this Draft EIR contains the NOP and the comments received by the City in response to the NOP.

This Draft EIR will be available for review by the public and interested parties, agencies, and organizations for a 45-day comment period starting Wednesday, May 17, 2023, and ending Friday, June 30, 2023. During the comment period, the public is invited to provide written comments on the Draft EIR via mail or email to the City of Hollister Planning Division by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, June 30, 2023. Comments should be submitted as follows:

- Written: Development Service Department-Planning Division
  City of Hollister
  339 Fifth Street
  Hollister, California 95023
- Email: generalplan@hollister.ca.gov with "*Hollister GP 2040, CAP, and ALPP EIR"* as the subject line.

1.3.2 FINAL EIR

Upon completion of the 45-day review period for the Draft EIR, the City will review all written comments received and prepare written responses to each comment on the adequacy of the Draft EIR. A Final EIR will then be prepared, which contains all of the comments received, responses to comments raising environmental issues, and any changes to the Draft EIR. The Final EIR will then be presented to the Hollister Planning Commission where a public hearing will allow for public comment on the Final EIR and to consider recommendation for certification of the Final EIR. Following the public hearing, the Final EIR will be presented to City Council for consideration of the certification as the environmental document for the proposed project. All persons who commented on the Draft EIR will be notified of the availability of the Final EIR and the date of the public hearing, which is tentatively scheduled for fall 2023.

All responses to comments submitted on the Draft EIR by agencies will be provided to those agencies at least 10 days prior to certification of the EIR. The City Council will make findings regarding the extent and nature of the impacts as presented in the EIR. The EIR will need to be certified as having been prepared in compliance with CEQA by the City prior to making a decision to approve or deny the proposed project. Public input is encouraged at all public hearings before the City.

If the City Council certifies the EIR, it may then consider action on the proposed project. If approved, the City Council would adopt and incorporate all feasible mitigation measures identified in the EIR and may also require other feasible mitigation measures.

In some cases, the City Council may find that certain mitigation measures are outside the jurisdiction of the City to implement, or that no feasible mitigation measures have been identified for a given significant impact. In that case, the City Council would have to adopt a statement of overriding considerations that determines that economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of the proposed project outweigh the unavoidable, significant effects on the environment.

1.3.3 MITIGATION MONITORING

CEQA Section 21081.6 requires that the lead agency adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for any project for which it has made findings pursuant to CEQA Section 21081. Such a program is intended to ensure the implementation of all mitigation measures adopted through the preparation of an EIR. If mitigation measures are required, the MMRP for the proposed project will be completed congruently as part of the Final EIR process.

1.4 USE OF GENERAL PLAN EIR

1.4.1 TIERING PROCESS

CEQA includes several provisions to streamline the environmental review of qualified projects based on several factors. These include where environmental review has already occurred (e.g., a program-level EIR), which could apply to future development in the EIR Study Area.[3]

The CEQA concept of "tiering" refers to the evaluation of general environmental matters in a broad program-level EIR, with subsequent focused environmental documents for individual projects. CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines encourage the use of tiered environmental documents to reduce delays and excessive paperwork in the environmental review process. This is accomplished in tiered documents by eliminating repetitive analyses of issues that were adequately addressed in the program EIR and by incorporating those analyses by reference.

Section 15168(d) of the CEQA Guidelines provides for simplifying the preparation of environmental documents by incorporating by reference analyses and discussions. Where an EIR has been prepared or certified for a program or plan, the environmental review for a later activity consistent with the program or plan should be limited to effects that were not analyzed as significant in the prior EIR or that are susceptible to substantial reduction or avoidance (CEQA Guidelines Section 15152[d]).

By tiering from the program EIR, the environmental analysis for a future project would rely on the program EIR for the following:

1. A discussion of general background and setting information for environmental topic areas;
2. Overall growth-related issues;
3. Issues that were evaluated in sufficient detail in the program EIR for which there is no significant new information or change in circumstances that would require further analysis;
4. Assessment of cumulative impacts; and
5. Mitigation measures adopted and incorporated into the proposed project.

[3] Section 3.3.3, *EIR Study Area*, in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, of this Draft EIR, provided a detailed description of the area evaluated in this EIR.

1.4.1.1 BASE RESOURCE FOR GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

As a program EIR, this document and the mitigation measures presented herein will be used as a guide for implementing the 2040 General Plan policies and actions, as well as adopting changes in City codes, regulations, and practices.

This program EIR will also be used as a base resource for reviewing future development projects. This document will assist in guiding the assessment of projects and provide environmental review tiering, where appropriate. Currently, the City completes the following steps in reviewing development projects, which will be carried forward under the 2040 General Plan if adopted.

- Project Consistency with the General Plan and City Codes. When a new development project is filed with the City, it is reviewed for completeness and consistency with the General Plan goals, policies, and actions, and City codes and practices. Because City policies, actions, and codes presented in this program EIR will minimize impacts, development projects will inherently implement these measures to: (a) mitigate environmental impacts and (b) achieve consistency with the General Plan and compliance with City codes.
- Projects Subject to Environmental Review. For future development projects subject to environmental review, the resources contained within this EIR and carried forward in the 2040 General Plan will guide the scope of this review. For project-level environmental review, many of the topic areas studied in this program EIR will adequately cover and provide environmental clearance for the project. However, the preparation of site-specific studies and reports may be necessary based on the location and nature of the development project. The resources presented in this program EIR will assist in determining when and where a special, site-specific study is warranted.
- Projects Exempt from Environmental Review. CEQA includes a long list of environmental review exemptions. Some of the future development projects may be exempt from environmental review as the project impacts will be adequately covered by this program EIR. However, many of the CEQA exemptions require compliance with specific criteria for the development project to qualify for the exemption. The resources contained within this EIR and carried forward in the 2040 General Plan will be used to determine if the CEQA-prescribed criteria have been met to qualify for the exemption. One example of a CEQA exemption is for projects that are infill development and consistent with the General Plan land use designation and zoning district. CEQA provides for these types of projects to conduct streamlined review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15332, *Infill Development Projects*, and CEQA Guidelines Section 15138.3, *Streamlining for Infill Projects*, where the project meets certain criteria.

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2. Executive Summary

This chapter presents an overview of the proposed City of Hollister 2040 General Plan (2040 General Plan), 2023 Climate Action Plan (2023 CAP), and Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP), herein referred to separately or together as the "proposed project." This executive summary also provides a summary of the alternatives to the proposed project, identifies issues to be resolved, areas of controversy, and conclusions of the analysis in Chapters 4.1 through 4.18 of this Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). For a complete description of the proposed project, see Chapter 3, *Project Description*, of this Draft EIR. For a discussion of alternatives to the proposed project, see Chapter 5, *Alternatives to the Proposed Project*, of this Draft EIR.

This Draft EIR addresses the environmental effects associated with adoption and implementation of the proposed project. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that local government agencies, prior to taking action on projects over which they have discretionary approval authority, consider the environmental consequences of such projects. An EIR is a public document designed to provide the public, local, and state government decision makers with an analysis of potential environmental consequences to support informed decision making.

This Draft EIR has been prepared pursuant to the requirements of CEQA[1] and the CEQA Guidelines[2] to determine if approval of the identified discretionary actions and related subsequent development could have a significant impact on the environment. The City of Hollister (City), as the lead agency, has reviewed and revised as necessary all submitted drafts, technical studies, and reports to reflect its own independent judgment, including reliance on applicable City technical personnel and review of all technical reports. Information for this Draft EIR was obtained from on-site field observations; discussions with public service agencies; analysis of adopted plans and policies; review of available studies, reports, data, and similar literature in the public domain; and specialized environmental assessments (e.g., air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, and transportation).

2.1 ENVIRONMENTAL PROCEDURES

This Draft EIR has been prepared to assess the environmental effects associated with implementation of the proposed project. The main objectives of this document as established by CEQA are:

- To disclose to decision makers and the public the significant environmental effects of proposed activities.
- To identify ways to avoid or reduce environmental damage.

[1] The CEQA Statute is found at California Public Resources Code, Division 13, Sections 21000–21177.

[2] The CEQA Guidelines are found at California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 15000–15387.

- To prevent environmental damage by requiring implementation of feasible alternatives or mitigation measures.
- To disclose to the public reasons for agency approval of projects with significant environmental effects.
- To foster interagency coordination in the review of projects.
- To enhance public participation in the planning process.

An EIR is the most comprehensive form of environmental documentation identified in the CEQA statute and in the CEQA Guidelines. It provides the information needed to assess the environmental consequences of a proposed project, to the extent feasible. EIRs are intended to provide an objective, factually supported, full-disclosure analysis of the environmental consequences associated with a proposed project that has the potential to result in significant, adverse environmental impacts. An EIR is also one of various decision-making tools used by a lead agency to consider the merits and disadvantages of a project that is subject to its discretionary authority. Prior to approving a proposed project, the lead agency must consider the information contained in the EIR, determine whether the EIR was properly prepared in accordance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, determine that it reflects the independent judgment of the lead agency, adopt findings concerning the project's significant environmental impacts and alternatives, and adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations[3] if the proposed project would result in significant impacts that cannot be avoided.

2.2 REPORT ORGANIZATION

This Draft EIR is organized into the following chapters:

- Chapter 1: *Introduction.* Provides an overview describing the Draft EIR document.
- Chapter 2: *Executive Summary.* Summarizes environmental consequences that would result from implementation of the proposed project, describes recommended mitigation measures, and indicates the level of significance of environmental impacts with and without mitigation.
- Chapter 3: *Project Description.* Describes the proposed project in detail, including the characteristics, objectives, and the structural and technical elements of the proposed action.
- Chapter 4: *Environmental Analysis.* Organized into 18 subchapters corresponding to the environmental resource categories identified in CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, *Environmental Checklist*, this chapter provides a description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the proposed project as they existed at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) was published and by referencing historic conditions that are supported with substantial evidence, from both a local and regional perspective. Additionally, this chapter provides an analysis of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project and recommended mitigation measures, if required, to reduce the impacts to less than significant where possible, and to reduce their magnitude or significance when impacts cannot be reduced to a less-than-significant level. The environmental setting included in each subchapter provides baseline physical conditions, which provide a context, which the lead agency

[3] CEQA Guidelines Section 15093.

uses to determine the significance of environmental impacts resulting from the proposed project. Each subchapter also includes a description of the thresholds used to determine if a significant impact would occur, the methodology to identify and evaluate the potential impacts of the proposed project, and the potential cumulative impacts associated with the proposed project.

- Chapter 5: *Alternatives to the Proposed Project*. Considers alternatives to the proposed project, including the CEQA-required "No Project Alternative" and "environmentally superior alternative."
- Chapter 6: *CEQA Required Conclusions and Findings.* Discusses growth inducement, cumulative impacts, unavoidable significant effects, and significant irreversible changes as a result of the proposed project.
- Chapter 7: *Organizations and Persons Consulted.* Lists the people and organizations that were contacted during the preparation of this EIR for the proposed project.
- Chapter 8: *Common Acronyms and Abbreviations.* Lists the common acronyms and abbreviations found in this Draft EIR.
- Appendices: The appendices for this document contain the following supporting documents:
  - Appendix A: Notice of Preparation and Scoping Comments
  - Appendix B: Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data
  - Appendix C: Biological Resources Data
  - Appendix D: Cultural Resources Data
  - Appendix E: Noise Data
  - Appendix F: Transportation Data

2.3 TYPES AND PURPOSE OF THIS DRAFT EIR

According to Section 15121(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, the purpose of an EIR is to inform public agency decision makers and the public generally of the significant environmental effects of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project.

As described in the CEQA Guidelines, different types of EIRs are used for varying situations and intended uses. Because of the long-term planning horizon of the proposed project and the permitting, planning, and development actions that are related both geographically and as logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions for implementation, this Draft EIR has been prepared as a program EIR for the proposed project, pursuant to Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines.

Once a program EIR has been certified, subsequent activities within the program must be evaluated to determine whether additional CEQA review needs to be prepared. However, if the program EIR addresses the program's effects as specifically and comprehensively as possible, subsequent activities could be found to be within the program EIR scope, and additional environmental review may not be required (CEQA Guidelines Section 15168[c]). When a program EIR is relied on for a subsequent activity, the lead agency must incorporate feasible mitigation measures and alternatives developed in the program EIR into the subsequent actions (CEQA Guidelines Section 15168[c][3]). If a subsequent activity would have effects that are not within the scope of a program EIR, the lead agency must prepare a new Initial Study leading

to a Negative Declaration, a Mitigated Negative Declaration, or an EIR. For these subsequent environmental review documents, this Program EIR will serve as the first-tier environmental analysis.

2.4 SUMMARY OF PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed project would replace the City's existing General Plan with an updated General Plan, the new 2023 CAP, and the ALPP. The existing General Plan was prepared in 2005 and included a horizon year of 2023. Because this horizon year has been met and the conditions inside and outside of Hollister have changed between 2005 and 2023, including the economic recovery from the Great Recession, a worsening housing crisis in California, and the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, the City embarked on a community-based General Plan update. The update addresses a number of state and federal laws guiding General Plan policies that have been updated during this time and focuses on meeting current community requirements and future needs.

The City determined that the current General Plan provided a good foundation for the proposed 2040 General Plan. The current General Plan included a comprehensive review process, resulting in a broad range of community goals and policies. Many of the community issues vetted in the current General Plan are still relevant, well addressed, and do not require major change. Therefore, the approach to the proposed 2040 General Plan is not a comprehensive update, rather, it builds off of the current General Plan by incorporating the topics that are now required by State mandate and revises relevant policies and programs to meet those requirements. It also incorporates regional forecasts for 2040, thus moving the planning horizon forward by 20 years. Chapter 3, *Project Description*, of this Draft EIR includes a detailed description of the proposed project.

2.5 SUMMARY OF PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

This Draft EIR analyzes alternatives to the proposed project that are designed to reduce the significant environmental impacts of the proposed project and feasibly attain most of the proposed project objectives. There is no set methodology for comparing the alternatives or determining the environmentally superior alternative under CEQA. Identification of the environmentally superior alternative involves weighing and balancing all of the environmental resource areas by the City. The following alternatives to the proposed project were considered and analyzed in detail.

- Alternative A: No Project. Consistent with Section 15126.6(e)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines, Alternative A presents the No Project scenario. This alternative assumes the current 2005 General Plan remains in effect and is not replaced by the proposed 2040 General Plan and that the 2023 Climate Action Plan (CAP) would not be adopted and the Zoning Ordinance would not be amended to include the Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP).
- Alternative B: Focused Growth. Alternative B assumes the same amount of households, residential units, population, and jobs would occur as under the proposed project, but would allow for more dense housing in parcels within the Medium-Density Residential, High-Density Residential, Mixed-Use Commercial and Residential, and Downtown Commercial and Mixed Use land use designations and

also increase the maximum floor-area ratios (FAR)[4] in the Mixed-Use Commercial and Residential and Downtown Commercial and Mixed Use land use designations when compared to the proposed project. In addition, Alternative B would maintain the currently adopted Sphere of Influence (SOI) thus encouraging more development and redevelopment in the City Limits and less growth on undeveloped land.

Chapter 5, *Alternatives to the Proposed Project*, of this Draft EIR, includes a complete discussion of these alternatives. As discussed in Chapter 5, Alternative B is the Environmentally Superior Alternative pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6.

2.6 ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

Section 15123(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR identify issues to be resolved, including the choice among alternatives and whether or how to mitigate significant impacts. With regard to the proposed project, the major issues to be resolved include decisions by the City of Hollister, as lead agency, related to:

- Whether this Draft EIR adequately describes the environmental impacts of the proposed project.
- Whether the benefits of the proposed project override environmental impacts that cannot be feasibly avoided or mitigated to a level of insignificance.
- Whether the proposed land use changes are compatible with the character of the existing area.
- Whether the identified goals, policies, or mitigation measures should be adopted or modified.
- Whether there are other mitigation measures that should be applied to the proposed project besides those goals, policies, or mitigation measures identified in the Draft EIR.
- Whether there are any alternatives to the proposed project that would substantially lessen any of the significant impacts of the proposed project and achieve most of the basic objectives.

2.7 AREAS OF CONTROVERSY

The City issued an NOP on April 9, 2021. The CEQA-mandated scoping period for this EIR was between April 9, 2021, and May 10, 2021, during which interested agencies and the public could submit comments about the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project. During this time, the City received comment letters from a variety of state and local agencies as well as several organizations and members of the public. Appendix A, *Notice of Preparation and Scoping Comments*, of this Draft EIR contains the NOP as well as the comments received by the City in response to the NOP.

The following is a discussion of issues that are likely to be of particular concern to agencies and interested members of the public during the environmental review process. Though every concern applicable to the CEQA process is addressed in this Draft EIR, this list is not necessarily exhaustive, but rather attempts to

[4] FAR is a ratio of the building square footage permitted on a lot to the net square footage of the lot. For example, on a site with 10,000 square feet of net land area, a FAR of 1.0 will allow 10,000 square feet of building floor area to be built.

capture concerns that are likely to generate the greatest interest based on the input received during the scoping process.

- Protection of cultural resources and tribal cultural resources
- Protection of biological resources, including special-status species and habitat
- Adequacy of existing water supply and increased water demand, and groundwater conservation
- Loss of prime farmland and soils, and protection of farmland
- Adequate public services and infrastructure to accommodate new growth

2.8 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Table 2-1, *Summary of Significant Impacts, Mitigating Policies, and Mitigation Measures*, summarizes the conclusions of the environmental analysis in this Draft EIR and presents a summary of the identified significant impacts and the proposed 2040 General Plan policies and actions and the CEQA-required mitigation measures that reduce impacts. As summarized in Table 2-1, and as required by CEQA, some impacts remain significant and unavoidable after implementation of 2040 General Plan policies and actions and consideration of feasible mitigation. Table 2-1 is organized to correspond with the environmental issues in Chapter 4, *Environmental Analysis*, and its subchapters, Sections 4.1 through 4.18. Table 2-1 is arranged in four columns: (1) environmental impact, (2) significance without mitigation, (3) General Plan policies and actions and CEQA-required mitigation measures, and (4) significance with mitigation. All environmental topics not listed in this table were found to have less-than-significant impacts without mitigation. For a complete description of potential impacts, please refer to the specific discussions in Chapter 4, *Environmental Analysis*, and Sections 4.1 through 4.18.

TABLE 2-1 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS, MITIGATING POLICIES, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Environmental Impact	Significance without Mitigation	General Plan Policies and Actions and CEQA-Required Mitigation Measures	Significance with Mitigation
4.2 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES (AG)			
AG-1: Implementation of the proposed project would result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland land to nonagricultural land uses.	Significant	**Open Space and Agriculture (OS):** Policies OS-2.1, OS-2.2, OS-2.3, OS-2.4, OS-2.5 and Actions OS-2.1, OS-2.2, OS-2.3, OS-2.4 In compliance with CEQA, "each public agency shall mitigate or avoid the significant effects on the environment of the project it carries out or approves whenever it is feasible to do so."[5] The term "feasible" is defined in CEQA to mean, "capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, social, and technological factors."[6] CEQA Guidelines Section 15370 defines "mitigation" as: (1) avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action; (2) minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of an action and its implementation; (3) rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the impacted environment; (4) reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; and (5) compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments. The following is a brief discussion of the mitigation measures considered for mitigating or avoiding the impact of the conversion of agricultural lands to other uses and their infeasibility. However, as shown, no feasible mitigation measures are available that would reduce the agricultural resource impact to less-than-significant levels. ▪ **Replacement of Agricultural Resources.** This measure would replace the existing agricultural use with the same use on other property that is not currently used for agriculture. From a statewide perspective, the replacement of farmland means that there will be no net loss of farmland in the state. However, farmlands of concern would still be developed. There is limited undeveloped land within the proposed SOI (EIR Study Area) that is not currently designated as agricultural, restricting the amount of agricultural land that would be able to be replaced elsewhere in the area, and thus conversion of these lands would be insufficient to achieve no net loss. Moreover, even if adequate land could be identified to achieve no net loss, the challenges of creating the soil, irrigation, climatic, and economic conditions that are required for productive farmland (i.e., that achieves the same Important Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland status) are significant and there would be no guarantee that replacement land could be successfully farmed. In addition, replacing existing undeveloped areas with active agriculture could trigger a range of negative	Significant and Unavoidable

[5] Public Resources Code, Section 21002.1(b).
[6] Public Resources Code, Section 21061.1

TABLE 2-1 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS, MITIGATING POLICIES, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Environmental Impact	Significance without Mitigation	General Plan Policies and Actions and CEQA-Required Mitigation Measures	Significance with Mitigation
		environmental impacts, including increased groundwater consumption, habitat destruction, erosion, air quality impacts, and herbicide and pesticide application. As such, the replacement of the existing agricultural uses on other properties within the proposed SOI is infeasible. ▪ **Transfer of Development Rights.** Transferring development rights would involve the purchasing of the right to develop land from a currently undeveloped piece of land and transferring those rights to farmland within the city. Thus, this option is also infeasible because there would still be a net loss of farmland (i.e., the farmland preserved would still likely be preserved anyhow). Even if farmland would be preserved elsewhere in San Benito County, the Important Farmland in the city would be developed, resulting in a net loss of Farmland. Therefore, for the reasons outlined previously, and in this paragraph, it would not prevent significant impacts from occurring in the city and it would not be an effective CEQA mitigation measure, nor is this mitigation measure feasible from an economic perspective within this region. ▪ **Relocation of Prime Farmland Topsoil.** This measure would remove the top 12 to 18 inches of topsoil from affected areas and haul this soil to a farm site or several farm sites that have lower-quality soils. The Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland soils may assist in increasing crop yield at the relocated site. This measure would have its own environmental impacts, including increased truck traffic on local roadways from both hauling soil off-site and replacement of soil on-site, increased diesel truck emissions, construction noise, and increased duration of construction. The relocation of prime farmland soils on another active farm would increase other environmental impacts and is therefore considered infeasible. As described, these measures were considered and found to be infeasible for mitigating or avoiding the impact of the conversion of agricultural lands to other uses pursuant to the definition of CEQA in that there is no guarantee that measures would result in successfully establishing Important Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland, if doing so could happen within a reasonable period of time, that their implementation would not potentially cause greater environmental impacts, and that acquiring additional lands to be established as Important Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland would be economically possible As discussed previously, implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan would designate Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland land as nonagricultural land uses. Through the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions, and the proposed ALPP, impacts related to the conversion of qualifying agricultural lands would be reduced, but not to a less-than-significant level. The proposed 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions to reduce the	

TABLE 2-1 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS, MITIGATING POLICIES, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Environmental Impact	Significance without Mitigation	General Plan Policies and Actions and CEQA-Required Mitigation Measures	Significance with Mitigation
		conversion of qualifying agricultural lands, such as Policy OS-2.1, *Offsets for Loss of Agricultural Land*, and Action OS-2.1, *Offsets for Agricultural Land Conversion*, requiring all new developments that convert agricultural land to urban uses provide for the preservation of twice as much agricultural land, which are being implemented via the proposed ALPP; Policy OS-2.3, *San Benito County Future Development Areas*, encouraging San Benito County to focus future development within the areas identified for development; Policy OS-2.4, *Coordination with San Benito County to Preserve Important Farmlands*, requiring coordination with the County of San Benito in efforts to maintain prime farmlands, unique farmlands, and farmlands of statewide significance in active agricultural use; and Action OS-2.3, *Urban Growth Boundary*, to establish and maintain an Urban Growth Boundary that delineates future urbanization areas from areas in which urbanization will not occur. These goals, policies, and actions, and the proposed ALPP, would not reduce the amount of acreage converted under buildout of the proposed 2040 General Plan; however, they would forestall development of the best agricultural land within the EIR Study Area. While these efforts and other mitigation measures were considered, such as preserving agricultural uses in the EIR Study Area, replacement of agricultural resources by replacing lost agricultural uses to other areas of the city, and relocation of Prime Farmland topsoil to other areas, these mitigations are not feasible. While these efforts and other mitigating efforts, such as right-to-farm ordinances, work to mitigate impacts, the only way to fully avoid the agricultural impact from implementation of the proposed project is to not allow the conversion of state-designated Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland to nonagricultural land uses, thereby eliminating the agricultural impact. However, doing so is not feasible or practical as the City has a responsibility to meet other conflicting obligations, including increases in the number and type of jobs available in Hollister and to reduce the need for residents to commute to high-quality jobs. These measures are critical to reducing single-occupant vehicle travel to and from Hollister and meeting State targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction. The City needs to promote both economic development and corresponding residential development, as required by State housing law, within its City Limits. While possible forms of mitigation for, or avoidance of, conservation of agricultural lands in the EIR Study Area would be implemented by the City through the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions, and the proposed ALPP, doing so to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level would be infeasible and inconsistent with City planning goals and objectives. Therefore, impacts would remain *significant and unavoidable.*	
Impact AG-2: Implementation of the proposed project would result in the loss of agricultural land under the Williamson Act.	Significant	**Open Space and Agriculture (OS):** Policies OS-2.1, OS-2.2, OS-2.3, OS-2.4, OS-2.5 and Actions OS-2.1, OS-2.2, OS-2.3, OS-2.4 As described under Impact Discussion AG-1, pursuant to CEQA, the City has considered mitigation to reduce impacts from implementation of the proposed project that could conflict with lands under a	Significant and Unavoidable

TABLE 2-1 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS, MITIGATING POLICIES, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Environmental Impact	Significance without Mitigation	General Plan Policies and Actions and CEQA-Required Mitigation Measures	Significance with Mitigation
		Williamson Act contract. However, as shown, no feasible mitigation measures are available that would reduce the agricultural resource impact to less-than-significant levels. Specifically, the City considered a measure that would result in the replacement of Williamson Act contract farmland that would place other farmland under Williamson Act contract. Even if feasible, the placing of alternative farmland under Williamson Act contract would establish a commitment to retain that alternative farmland for agricultural use. The length of time that the alternative land will remain in agricultural use would depend on the terms of the Williamson Act contract. However, the Williamson Act contract will only reduce the potential that the alternative land will convert to nonagricultural use. The individual and cumulative loss of agricultural land caused by the proposed project would still occur. Therefore, this mitigation measure will not reduce impacts on agriculture to below the level of significance. For these reasons, placing alternative privately held land under permanent restriction through Williamson Act contracts is considered infeasible. As described under Impact Discussion AG-1, the proposed 2040 General Plan includes goals, policies, and actions, and the proposed ALPP, to minimize impacts to agricultural lands. Those same General Plan goals, policies, and actions and the proposed ALPP would also minimize impacts from conflicts with Williamson Act lands and reduce the likelihood of premature contract cancellations by the property owners of the Williamson Act parcels in the EIR Study Area. Mitigation for this impact was considered, including the placement of other farmland under Williamson Act contract. However, the individual and cumulative loss of agricultural land under the Williamson Act caused by the proposed project would still occur. Given that CEQA does not require that the project be changed to avoid an impact, and no additional mitigation is available, this would result in a *significant and unavoidable* impact.	
Impact AG-4: The proposed project, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, could result in a significant cumulative impact with respect to the conversion of farmland of concern under CEQA and Williamson Act properties to nonagricultural uses.	Significant	As described previously, implementation of the proposed project would result in significant impacts related to the conversion of farmland of concern under CEQA and Williamson Act properties to nonagricultural uses. As such, the proposed project would contribute to the cumulative impact described in the San Benito County General Plan Update EIR. Although the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would reduce and partially offset regional agricultural impacts, as well as consideration of mitigation measures to avoid, the only way to fully avoid the agricultural impact of the proposed project is to not allow development on state-designated farmland. However, this would be infeasible and inconsistent with City planning goals and objectives. Further, the amount of growth foreseen in the region and the decisions of San Benito County and other surrounding counties regarding conversion of agricultural land are outside the control of the City of Hollister. Therefore, this impact would be *significant and unavoidable.*	Significant and Unavoidable

TABLE 2-1 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS, MITIGATING POLICIES, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Environmental Impact	Significance without Mitigation	General Plan Policies and Actions and CEQA-Required Mitigation Measures	Significance with Mitigation
4.3 AIR QUALITY (AIR)			
AIR-1: Implementation of the proposed project would result in the generation of substantial operational (long-term) criteria air pollutant emissions that would exceed Monterey Bay Air Resources District's regional significance threshold for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) and would; therefore, not be considered consistent with the existing Air Quality Management Plan.	Significant	**Natural Resource and Conservation (NRC):** Policies NRC-3.2, NRC-3.6, NRC-3.12, NRC-3.14, and Action NRC-3.1 The various goals, policies, and actions of the proposed 2040 General Plan identified under Impact Discussions AIR-1 and AIR-2, in addition to applicable MBARD rules and regulations, would reduce operational (long-term) criteria air pollutant emissions to the extent feasible. Specifically, proposed 2040 General Plan Policy NRC-3.14 requires project applicants to prepare technical assessments evaluating potential project construction and operation phase-related air quality impacts to the City of Hollister for review and approval. Pursuant to this policy, the evaluations must be prepared in conformance with MBARD criteria and methodology in assessing air quality impacts. Where the technical assessment finds that air pollutants have the potential to exceed the MBARD-adopted thresholds of significance, the technical assessment must identify mitigation measures are incorporated to reduce air pollutant emissions during construction or operational activities. Examples of types of project-specific mitigation measures that are available to future projects in Hollister are listed in Impact Discussion AIR-2. However, because of the magnitude and intensity of development accommodated by the proposed 2040 General Plan, as well as regional air quality influences beyond the control of Hollister, impacts associated with consistency with the MBARD would remain *significant and unavoidable.* No additional feasible mitigation measures at the program level would ensure consistency of the proposed project with the MBARD's AQMP. The identification of this program-level impact does not preclude the finding of less-than-significant impacts for subsequent individual projects that meet applicable project-level thresholds of significance.	Significant and Unavoidable
AIR-2a: Operation of development projects that could occur from implementation of the project would generate emissions that would exceed Monterey Bay Air Resources District's (MBARD's) regional significance thresholds for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), and Carbon Monoxide (CO).	Significant	**Circulation (C):** Policies C-3.1, C-3.3, C-3.5, C-3.6, C-4.6 and Actions C-3.1, C-3.3, C-3.5 **Natural Resource and Conservation (NRC):** Policies NRC-3.1, NRC-3.4, NRC-3.5, NRC-3.7, NRC-3.8, NRC-3.10, NRC-3.11, NRC-3.12, NRC-3.14, and Action NRC-3.1 Long-term emissions for VOC that could occur over the buildout horizon of the proposed 2040 General Plan would exceed MBARD's regional significance thresholds and cumulatively contribute to the nonattainment designation of the NCCAB. The goals, policies, and actions of the proposed 2040 General Plan, and implementation of MBARD 207 (*Review of New or Modified Sources*), would reduce air pollutant emissions to the extent feasible. Specifically, proposed 2040 General Plan Policy NRC-3.14 requires project applicants to prepare technical assessments evaluating potential project construction and operation phase-related air quality impacts to the City of Hollister for review and approval. Pursuant to this policy, the evaluations must be prepared in conformance with MBARD criteria and methodology in assessing air quality impacts. Where the technical assessment finds that air pollutants have the potential	Significant and Unavoidable

TABLE 2-1 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS, MITIGATING POLICIES, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Environmental Impact	Significance without Mitigation	General Plan Policies and Actions and CEQA-Required Mitigation Measures	Significance with Mitigation

		to exceed the MBARD-adopted thresholds of significance, the technical assessment must identify mitigation measures are incorporated to reduce air pollutant emissions during construction or operational activities. Possible mitigation measures for potential future project-specific developments to reduce operational (long-term) emissions can include, but are not limited to the following:
		▪ Provide preferential carpool/vanpool parking spaces
		▪ Implement a parking surcharge for single occupant vehicles
		▪ Provide for shuttle/mini-bus service
		▪ Provide bicycle storage/parking facilities and bicycle paths within major subdivisions that link to an external network
		▪ Provide shower/locker facilities
		▪ Provide onsite child care centers
		▪ Provide transit design features within the development
		▪ Develop park-and-ride lots
		▪ Off-site mitigation
		  ▪ Employ a transportation/rideshare coordinator
		  ▪ Implement a rideshare program
		  ▪ Provide incentives to employees to rideshare or take public transportation
		  ▪ Implement flexible work schedules that do not reduce transit ridership
		  ▪ Implement compressed work schedules
		  ▪ Implement telecommuting program
		  ▪ Provide pedestrian facilities within major subdivisions
		The measures and policies covering topics such as expansion of the pedestrian and bicycle networks, promotion of public and active transit, and support to increase building energy efficiency and energy conservation would also reduce criteria air pollutants within the city. In summary, implementation of the proposed project would generate emissions that would exceed MBARD's regional significance thresholds for VOC, NO_X, and CO. The proposed 2040 General Plan includes goals, policies, and actions to reduce these long-term regional criteria air pollutant emissions. In addition, proposed 2040 General Plan Policy NCR-3.14 requires potential future development in Hollister to prepare and submit a technical assessment evaluating potential project operation phase-related air quality impacts to the City of Hollister for review and approval prior to project approval by the City. Where the technical assessment	

TABLE 2-1 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS, MITIGATING POLICIES, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Environmental Impact	Significance without Mitigation	General Plan Policies and Actions and CEQA-Required Mitigation Measures	Significance with Mitigation
		determines the MBARD-adopted thresholds are exceeded, the applicants for new development projects would be required to incorporate mitigation measures to reduce air pollutant emissions during operational activities. Due to the programmatic nature of this EIR, the impact is found to be significant and unavoidable. The identification of this program-level impact does not preclude the finding of less-than-significant impacts for subsequent individual projects that meet applicable thresholds of significance. Due to the programmatic nature of the proposed project, no additional mitigating policies are available, and the impact is considered *significant and unavoidable*.	
AIR-2b: Construction activities that could occur over the buildout horizon of the proposed 2040 General Plan would generate substantial short-term criteria air pollutant emissions that would exceed Monterey Bay Air Resources District's (MBARD's) regional significance thresholds and cumulative contribute to the nonattainment designations of the North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB).	Significant	**Natural Resource and Conservation (NRC):** Policies NRC-3.7, NRC-3.11, and NRC-3.14 Implementation of the proposed project would occur over a period of 20 years or longer. Construction activities associated with development that could occur under the proposed project could generate short-term emissions that exceed the MBARD's significance thresholds during this time and cumulatively contribute to the nonattainment designations of the NCCAB. Implementation of applicable regulatory measures (e.g., MBARD Rules 400, 402, and 426) and the proposed 2040 General Plan goals and policies listed above would reduce criteria air pollutant emissions from construction-related activities to the extent feasible and may result in reducing construction-related regional air quality impacts of subsequent individual projects to less than significant. Specifically, proposed 2040 General Plan Policy NRC-3.14 requires project applicants to prepare technical assessments evaluating potential project construction and operation phase-related air quality impacts to the City of Hollister for review and approval. Pursuant to this policy, the evaluations must be prepared in conformance with MBARD criteria and methodology in assessing air quality impacts. Where the technical assessment finds that air pollutants have the potential to exceed the MBARD-adopted thresholds of significance, the technical assessment must identify mitigation measures are incorporated to reduce air pollutant emissions during construction or operational activities. Future project-specific mitigation measures to reduce construction-related emissions could include, but are not limited to: ▪ Using construction equipment rated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency as having Tier 4 interim (model year 2008 or newer) or higher emission limits, applicable for engines between 50 and 750 horsepower. A list of construction equipment by type and model year shall be maintained by the construction contractor on-site, which shall be available for City review upon request. ▪ Ensuring construction equipment is properly serviced and maintained to the manufacturer's standards. ▪ Use of alternative-fueled or catalyst-equipped diesel construction equipment, if available and feasible. ▪ Clearly posted signs that require operators of trucks and construction equipment to minimize idling time (e.g., five-minute maximum).	Significant and Unavoidable

TABLE 2-1 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS, MITIGATING POLICIES, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Environmental Impact	Significance without Mitigation	General Plan Policies and Actions and CEQA-Required Mitigation Measures	Significance with Mitigation
		▪ Preparation and implementation of a fugitive dust control plan that may include the following measures: ▪ Water all active construction areas at least twice daily. Frequency should be based on the type of operation, soil, and wind exposure. ▪ Prohibit all grading activities during periods of high wind (over 15 miles per hour). ▪ Apply chemical soil stabilizers on inactive construction areas (disturbed lands within construction projects that are unused for at least four consecutive days). ▪ Apply non-toxic binders (e.g., latex acrylic copolymer) to exposed areas after cut and fill operations and hydro seed area. ▪ Haul trucks shall maintain at least two feet and zero inches of freeboard. ▪ Cover all trucks hauling dirt, sand, or loose materials. ▪ Plant tree windbreaks on the windward perimeter of construction projects, if adjacent to open land. ▪ Plant vegetative ground cover in disturbed areas as soon as possible. ▪ Cover inactive storage piles. ▪ Install wheel washers at the entrance to construction sites for all exiting trucks. ▪ Pave all roads on construction sites. ▪ Sweep streets if visible soil material is carried out from the construction site. ▪ Post a publicly visible sign which specifies the telephone number and person to contact regarding dust complaints. This person shall respond to complaints and take corrective action within 48 hours. The phone number of the MBARD shall be visible to ensure compliance with Rule 402 (Nuisance). ▪ Limit the area under construction at any one time. However, due to the programmatic nature of the proposed project, construction time frames and equipment for individual site-specific projects are not available and there is a potential for multiple developments to be constructed at any one time, resulting in significant construction-related emissions. Therefore, despite adherence to proposed 2040 General Plan Policy NRC-3.14, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable. The identification of this program-level impact does not preclude the finding of less-than-significant impacts for subsequent individual projects that meet applicable thresholds of	

TABLE 2-1 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS, MITIGATING POLICIES, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Environmental Impact	Significance without Mitigation	General Plan Policies and Actions and CEQA-Required Mitigation Measures	Significance with Mitigation
		significance. Due to the programmatic nature of the proposed project, no additional mitigating policies are available, and the impact is considered *significant and unavoidable*.	
AIR-3a: Implementation of the proposed project could expose air quality sensitive receptors to substantial toxic air contaminant concentrations from non-permitted sources during operation.	Significant	**Environmental Justice (EJ):** Policy EJ-8.1 **Natural Resource and Conservation (NRC):** Policies NRC-3.6, NRC-3.7, NRC-3.8, NRC-3.9, NRC-3.10, NRC-3.15, and Action NRC-3.1 **Health and Safety (HS):** Policy HS-7.2 Potential future development from implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan could result in a substantial increase in DPM near existing or planned air quality sensitive receptors (e.g., children, the elderly, the acutely ill, and the chronically ill, especially those with cardiorespiratory diseases, disadvantaged communities). Proposed General Plan Policy NRC-3.15 requires that applicants of industrial or warehousing land uses in addition to commercial land uses that would generate substantial diesel truck travel (i.e., 100 diesel trucks per day or 40 or more trucks with diesel-powered transport refrigeration units per day based on the California Air Resources Board recommendations for siting new sensitive land uses) to prepare and submit an operational health risk assessment (HRA) to the City of Hollister for review and approval. If the operational HRA determines the new development poses health hazards that increase the incremental cancer risk above the threshold established by the MBARD, project specific mitigation measures shall be integrated to reduce cancer and acute risk below the MBARD threshold. The operational HRA is required to be prepared in accordance with policies and procedures of the State Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment and the MBARD. If the operational HRA shows that the incremental cancer risk exceeds 10 in a million, the appropriate noncancer hazard index exceeds 1.0; or the thresholds as determined by the MBARD at the time a project is considered, the project applicant would be required to identify and demonstrate that measures can reduce potential cancer and noncancer risks to an acceptable level, including appropriate enforcement mechanisms. Examples of project-specific mitigation measures that future projects in Hollister can apply to reduce risk impacts may include but are not limited to: ▪ Restricting idling onsite beyond Air Toxic Control Measures idling restrictions, as feasible. ▪ Electrifying warehousing docks. ▪ Requiring use of newer equipment and/or vehicles. ▪ Restricting offsite truck travel through the creation of truck routes. Implementation of proposed General Plan Policy NRC-3.15 would ensure mobile sources of emissions not covered under MBARD permits are considered during subsequent project-level environmental review by	Significant and Unavoidable

TABLE 2-1 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS, MITIGATING POLICIES, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Environmental Impact	Significance without Mitigation	General Plan Policies and Actions and CEQA-Required Mitigation Measures	Significance with Mitigation
		the City of Hollister. Potential future development projects in the city that have the potential to generate potentially significant risks associated with the release of TACs are required to undergo an analysis of their potential health risks associated with TACs based upon the specific details of each individual project. Though individual projects would be required to have less than significant impacts, cumulative development in the City would result in an increase in DPM concentrations and could increase the environmental burden on sensitive populations, including environmental justice communities, in the NCCAB. Overall, because there are no specific development projects identified or approved under the proposed 2040 General Plan and the location and exact nature of future development projects are unknown, determining health risk at this time is considered speculative pursuant to Section 15145 of the CEQA Guidelines. Health risk impacts from development of industrial and commercial land uses are considered a *significant and unavoidable* project and cumulative impact. However, the identification of this program-level impact does not preclude the finding of less-than-significant impacts for subsequent individual projects that meet applicable thresholds of significance.	
AIR-3b: Construction activities associated with potential future development could expose nearby air quality sensitive receptors to substantial concentrations of toxic air contaminants during construction.	Significant	**Natural Resource and Conservation (NRC):** Policy NRC-3.6 and NRC-3.14 Implementation of the proposed project would occur over a period of 20 years or longer. Construction activities associated with development allowed under the proposed project could generate short-term emissions that could expose air quality sensitive receptors to construction emissions. Implementation of proposed 2040 General Plan Policy NRC-3.14, which requires project applicants to prepare technical assessments evaluating potential project construction and operation phase-related air quality impacts to the City of Hollister for review and approval and identify project specific mitigation measures to reduce air pollutant emissions during construction or operational activities, in addition to applicable regulatory measures, would reduce criteria air pollutant emissions from construction-related activities to the extent feasible and may result in reducing construction-related regional air quality impacts of subsequent individual projects to less than significant. However, due to the programmatic nature of the proposed project, construction time frames and equipment for individual site-specific projects are not available and there is a potential for multiple developments to be constructed at any one time, resulting in significant construction-related emissions. Therefore, despite adherence to proposed 2040 General Plan Policy NRC-3.14, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable. The identification of this program-level impact does not preclude the finding of less-than-significant impacts for subsequent individual projects that meet applicable thresholds of significance. Due to the programmatic nature of the proposed project, no additional mitigating policies are available, and the impact is considered *significant and unavoidable*.	Significant and Unavoidable

TABLE 2-1 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS, MITIGATING POLICIES, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Environmental Impact	Significance without Mitigation	General Plan Policies and Actions and CEQA-Required Mitigation Measures	Significance with Mitigation
AIR-5: The emissions that could occur over the buildout horizon of the proposed 2040 General Plan could generate a substantial increase in emissions that exceeds the Monterey Bay Air Resources District's (MBARD's) significance thresholds and cumulatively contribute to the nonattainment designations and health risk in the North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB).	Significant	**Natural Resource and Conservation (NRC):** Policies NRC-3.14 and NRC-3.15 Criteria air pollutant emissions generated by land uses within the proposed project could exceed the MBARD regional thresholds (see Impact Discussions AIR-2 and AIR-3). Air quality impacts identified in the discussion under Impact AIR-2a, AIR-2b, AIR-3a, and AIR-3b constitute the proposed project's contribution to cumulative air quality impacts in the NCCAB. Proposed 2040 General Plan Policies NRC-3.14 and NRC-3.15, identified previously to reduce project-related emissions, would reduce impacts to the extent feasible. Due to the programmatic nature of the project, no additional mitigation measures are available. Air pollutant emissions associated with the project would result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to air quality impacts and remain significant and unavoidable at the program level.	Significant and Unavoidable
4.13 NOISE (NOI)			
NOI-1.1: Construction activities associated with potential future development could expose sensitive receptors in close proximity to a construction site to excessive noise from construction equipment.	Significant	**Health and Safety (HS):** Policy HS-8.3 and Actions HS-8.1, HS-8.6, HS-8.8, HS-8.9 In most cases, construction of individual developments associated with implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan would temporarily increase the ambient noise environment in the vicinity of each individual project, potentially affecting existing and future nearby sensitive uses. Because construction activities associated with any individual development may occur near noise-sensitive receptors and because—depending on the project type, equipment list, time of day, phasing and overall construction durations—noise disturbances may occur for prolonged periods of time, during the more sensitive nighttime hours, or may exceed 80 dBA $L_{eq(8hr)}$ even with future project-level mitigation, construction noise impacts associated with implementation of the proposed project are considered *significant and unavoidable*. Due to the programmatic nature of this EIR, project-level conclusions of construction noise would be speculative; however, the identification of this program-level impact does not preclude the finding of less-than-significant impacts for subsequent projects analyzed at the project level that do not exceed the noise thresholds.	Significant and Unavoidable
NOI-1.2: Operational vehicle traffic noise increases would exceed the City's significance threshold with implementation of the proposed project.	Significant	**Health and Safety (HS):** Policies HS-8.4, HS-8.5, HS-8.7 and Action HS-8.5 Implementation of proposed 2040 General Plan Policy HS-8.7—use roadway design, which could include installing and maintaining noise barriers and/or rubberized or special asphalt paving such as open grade asphalt concrete along roadway segments with significant noise increases that are adjacent to sensitive	Significant and Unavoidable

TABLE 2-1 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS, MITIGATING POLICIES, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Environmental Impact	Significance without Mitigation	General Plan Policies and Actions and CEQA-Required Mitigation Measures	Significance with Mitigation
		receptors, and work with the State to address noise impacts from highway traffic—would reduce traffic noise. As described, notable reductions in tire noise have been achieved via the implementation of special paving materials, such as rubberized asphalt or open-grade asphalt concrete overlays.[7] These quieter pavement types can be used alone or in combination with noise barriers, which are common throughout the city. However, barriers may not be feasible in all cases if they would prevent access to driveways or properties. Since noise barriers and/or quieter pavement technologies may not be feasible or reduce vehicle traffic noise below significance thresholds in all cases, this impact is conservatively considered *significant and unavoidable*. The identification of this program-level impact does not preclude the finding of less-than-significant impacts for subsequent projects analyzed at the project level that do not exceed the noise thresholds.	
4.16 TRANSPORTATION (TRANS)			
TRANS-2: Implementation of the proposed project would result in a significant VMT impact for VMT per Capita (Residential), VMT per Employee (Office), VMT per Employee (Other), and Retail VMT over 50,000 square feet, due to forecasted land use growth through 2040, based on a comparison of the VMT rate increment for VMT to the corresponding average baseline rates for the San Benito County region.	Significant	**Circulation (C):** Policies C-1.4, C-4.6 and Actions C-1.1, C-1.2 Implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would ensure that VMT are reduced to the degree feasible. Policy C-1.4 requires the City to reduce single-occupant vehicle usage using TDM strategies. Action C-1.1 requires the City to monitor mode split progress on reducing VMT, and reducing GHG emissions from VMT, as data is available. Action C-1.2 requires the City to establish a VMT Mitigation Banking Fee Program to fund the construction of facilities that support active transportation and transit ridership to mitigate VMT impacts from new development. Policy C-4.6 requires new or existing developments that meet specific size, capacity, and/or context conditions to implement TDM strategies and other single-occupancy vehicle reduction methodologies. Compliance with tiered trip reduction and VMT reduction targets and monitoring that are consistent with the targets of the City's VMT CEQA thresholds is also required. In addition, as listed under Impact Discussion TRANS-1, the City has numerous policies to promote safe and user-friendly transit and improve the bicycle and pedestrian network in Hollister, all which would serve to promote alternative forms of transportation and reduce VMT. Furthermore, as previously described, given the lack of specifics that are available for this program-level EIR, it is not possible to fully account for the effect of specific design principles, policies, and	Significant and Unavoidable

[7] California Department of Transportation, May 13, 2011, *I-80 Davis OGAC Pavement Noise Study: Traffic Noise Levels Associated With Aging Open Grade Asphalt Concrete Overlay*.

TABLE 2-1 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS, MITIGATING POLICIES, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Environmental Impact	Significance without Mitigation	General Plan Policies and Actions and CEQA-Required Mitigation Measures	Significance with Mitigation
		improvements that will reduce VMT as part of this analysis. Although many of the VMT-reducing design principles, policies, and improvements that are described in the prior section may ultimately mitigate and/or potentially reduce the VMT impacts outlined in this evaluation, necessary details to ensure implementation and appropriately evaluate their effect are not yet available. While some of the approaches to VMT reduction described in the prior section are supportive of existing City policies and guidelines, the VMT-reducing approaches cited would require further planning and development as well as committed funding sources, including those from participants in the development community (many of which may not be identified yet as large areas of land may be further subdivided into specific projects and developments). As such, it is reasonable to conclude that the findings of this analysis reflect a worst-case scenario for this program EIR. This program-level land use impact for VMT does not preclude the finding of less-than-significant impacts for subsequent development projects that achieve applicable VMT thresholds of significance. However, due to the programmatic nature of the proposed project, no additional mitigation measures are available, and the impact is considered *significant and unavoidable*.	
TRANS-5: Implementation of the proposed project would cumulatively contribute to regional VMT.	Significant	Even with the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions described under Impact Discussion TRANS-2, the effectiveness of VMT-reduction strategies is not certain. As such, the cumulative impact on VMT is considered *significant and unavoidable.*	Significant and Unavoidable

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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3. *Project Description*

This chapter of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) describes the proposed City of Hollister 2040 General Plan (2040 General Plan), 2023 Climate Action Plan (2023 CAP), and Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP), herein referred to separately or together as the "proposed project." This Draft EIR has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines.[1] CEQA requires that state and local public agencies analyze proposed projects to determine potential impacts on the environment and disclose any such impacts.[2] As described in Chapter 1, *Introduction*, of this Draft EIR, consistent with CEQA Guidelines, Section 15168, this Draft EIR provides a programmatic analysis of the environmental impacts associated with implementation of the proposed project, including the projected buildout of the 2040 General Plan. The potential buildout of the City of Hollister is discussed in Section 3.8, *Development Projections*, of this chapter. This Draft EIR is also intended to be used for purposes of tiering, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15152, and other tiering and streamlining provisions of CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines. The City of Hollister (City) is the lead agency for the environmental review of the proposed project.

This chapter provides a detailed description of the proposed project, including the location, setting, and characteristics of the General Plan Planning Area; as well as the project objectives; the principal report components; and required permits and approvals.

3.1 BACKGROUND

Every city and county in California is required to have an adopted comprehensive long-range general plan for the physical development of the county or city and, in some cases, land outside the city or county boundaries.[3] It is the community's overarching policy document that defines a vision for future change and sets the "ground rules" for: locating and designing new projects that enhance the character of the community, expanding the local economy, conserving and preserving environmental resources, improving public services and safety, minimizing hazards, and fostering community health. The General Plan, which includes a vision, goals, policies, and actions, functions as the City's primary land use regulatory tool. It provides a basis for judging whether specific development proposals and public projects are in harmony with General Plan policies. It is the constitution for future change in Hollister.

Pursuant to California law, a general plan must contain 8 mandated elements: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, environmental justice, and safety. Typically, general plans cover a time frame or forecast of 15 to 20 years. However, general plan housing elements are required to be

[1] CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.
[2] CEQA Guidelines, Section 15002(a).
[3] California Government Code Section 65300.

updated every eight years to comply with the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). State legislation also requires consideration of general plan policies on issues such as climate change and air quality. The Governor's Office of Planning and Research updated the General Plan Guidelines in 2017 and released additional guidance for Environmental Justice Elements in 2020.

The City's adopted General Plan Land Use Map is integrated with the City's Zoning Map, which shows the parcel-specific delineation of the zoning districts throughout the city and depicts permitted and conditionally permitted uses. A parcel's zoning district stems directly from its General Plan Land Use designation, with the zoning district acting to implement the General Plan by refining the specific uses and development standards for that parcel.

All specific plans, master plans, and zoning in the city must be consistent with the adopted General Plan. Similarly, the adopted General Plan must be used as the basis for all planning-related decisions made by City staff, the Planning Commission, and the City Council. Other decision-making bodies that rely on the General Plan to guide future decisions include the Airport Advisory Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Arts and Cultural Commission, Historic Resources Commission, and the Public Works Department. The adopted General Plan itself, however, does not approve or entitle any development project. Future project applicants have control over when they wish to propose a project, and final development approval decisions are made on a project-by-project basis by City staff, the Planning Commission, and/or the City Council.

3.2 OVERVIEW

The existing 2005 General Plan was comprehensively adopted in 2005 and includes a horizon year of 2023. A number of state and federal laws guiding general plan policies have also been updated during this time. As such, there is a need to take stock of the existing situation and plan for sustainable development in line with an updated vision for Hollister. The proposed 2040 General Plan focuses on meeting current community requirements and future needs. Accordingly, the City is undertaking a comprehensive update to the 2005 General Plan. The proposed 2040 General Plan guides the city's economic and physical growth as well as preservation of natural and agricultural resources over a 20-year buildout horizon and replaces the City's existing 2005 General Plan, with the exception of the Housing Element. The City's Housing Element (2015 to 2023) was adopted in 2016 and is incorporated into the proposed 2040 General Plan by reference. The current Housing Element has already undergone separate environmental review as part of its adoption process; however, the residential development that could occur under the Housing Element is incorporated into the residential development analyzed as part of this EIR. The proposed 2040 General Plan, including the goals, policies, and actions, would require map and text amendments to the General Plan Land Use Map. The proposed 2040 General Plan also includes proposed amendments to the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI) to plan for projected growth and to improve City services. In conjunction with these General Plan amendments, Title 17, *Zoning*, of the Hollister Municipal Code (HMC), would be amended for consistency with the proposed 2040 General Plan. While most of the amendments to the HMC would occur in the future through a separate process, the proposed project includes an amendment to adopt the proposed ALPP as HMC Chapter 17.13.

Concurrent with the proposed 2040 General Plan, the City is preparing the City's first CAP. The 2023 CAP is a strategic planning document that would provide policies and actions that would help the City and the community at large to reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and improve community resilience to hazardous conditions associated with climate change. The proposed 2040 General Plan, 2023 CAP, and ALPP, are discussed in more detail in Section 3.7.1, *2040 General Plan*, Section 3.7.2, *Climate Action Plan*, and Section 3.7.3, *Agricultural Lands Preservation Program*, respectively.

3.3 LOCATION AND SETTING

Figure 3-1, *Regional and Vicinity Map*, shows Hollister's regional setting. Hollister lies in north central California at the northern end of the San Benito Valley, approximately 40 miles east of Monterey, 100 miles southeast of San Francisco, and 300 miles north of Los Angeles. State Routes (SR) 25 and 156, which diagonally transect the city in the northwest to southeast and southwest to northeast directions, define the principal transportation corridors connecting the city to the subregion. United States (US) Highway 101 to the west serves as a major transportation corridor for the state, providing connections to the San Francisco Bay Area to the north, and the Salinas Valley and Central Coast regions to the south. SR 156 connects to the Monterey Peninsula area to the west and the Central Valley region to the east, while SR 25 connects south to Pinnacles National Park.

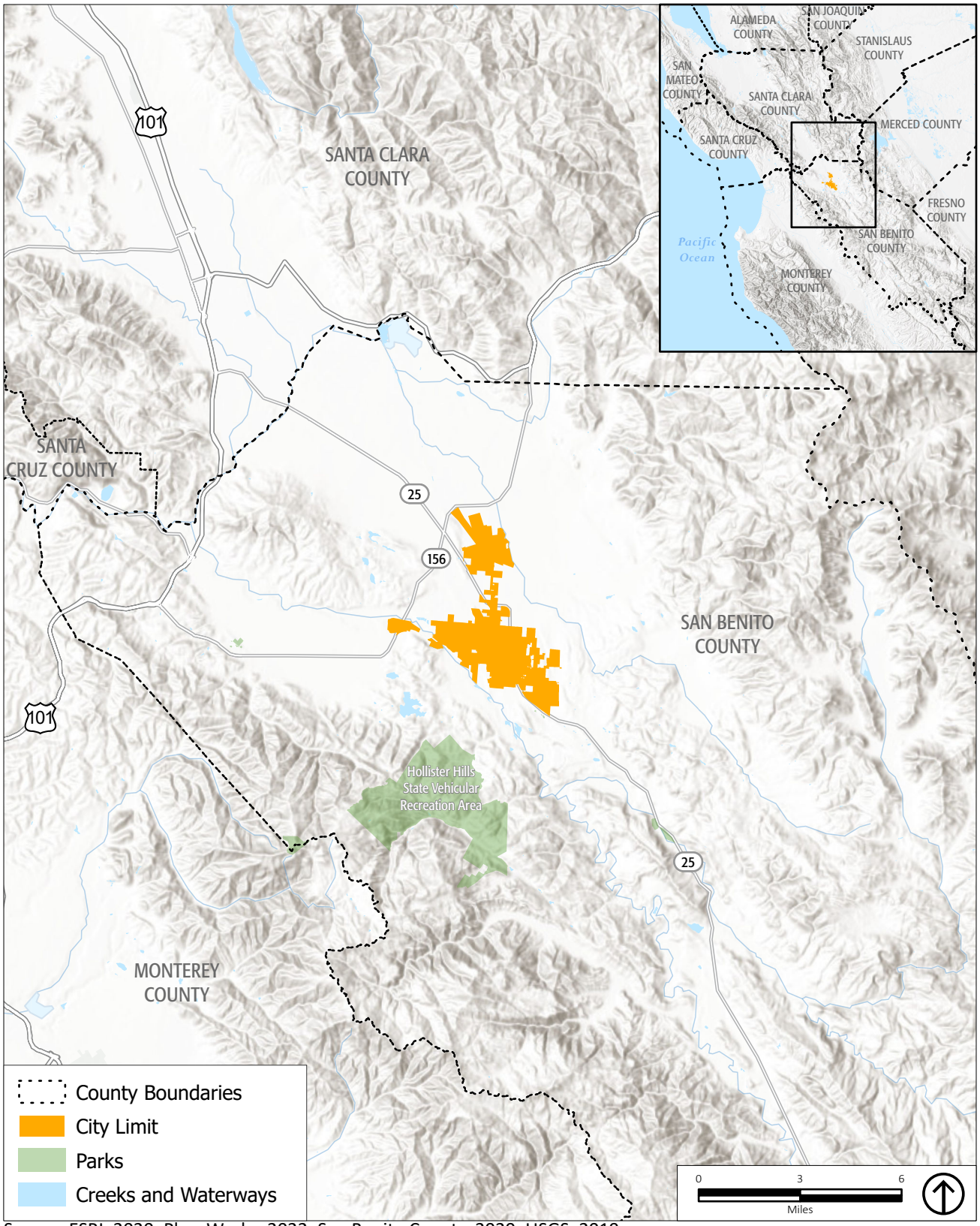
3.4 PLANNING BOUNDARIES AND EIR STUDY AREA

3.4.1 PLANNING BOUNDARIES

This section explains the planning boundaries referenced in the proposed 2040 General Plan and their relationship to the EIR Study Area. The State of California encourages cities to look beyond their borders when undertaking the sort of comprehensive planning required of a general plan. The planning boundaries described in the current and proposed 2040 General Plan include the lands within the Hollister City Limits, Hollister Urban Service Area (HUA), SOI, and Planning Area. A description of these planning boundaries as proposed for the 2040 General Plan is provided in the following sections and shown on Figure 3-2, *2040 General Plan Planning Boundaries.*

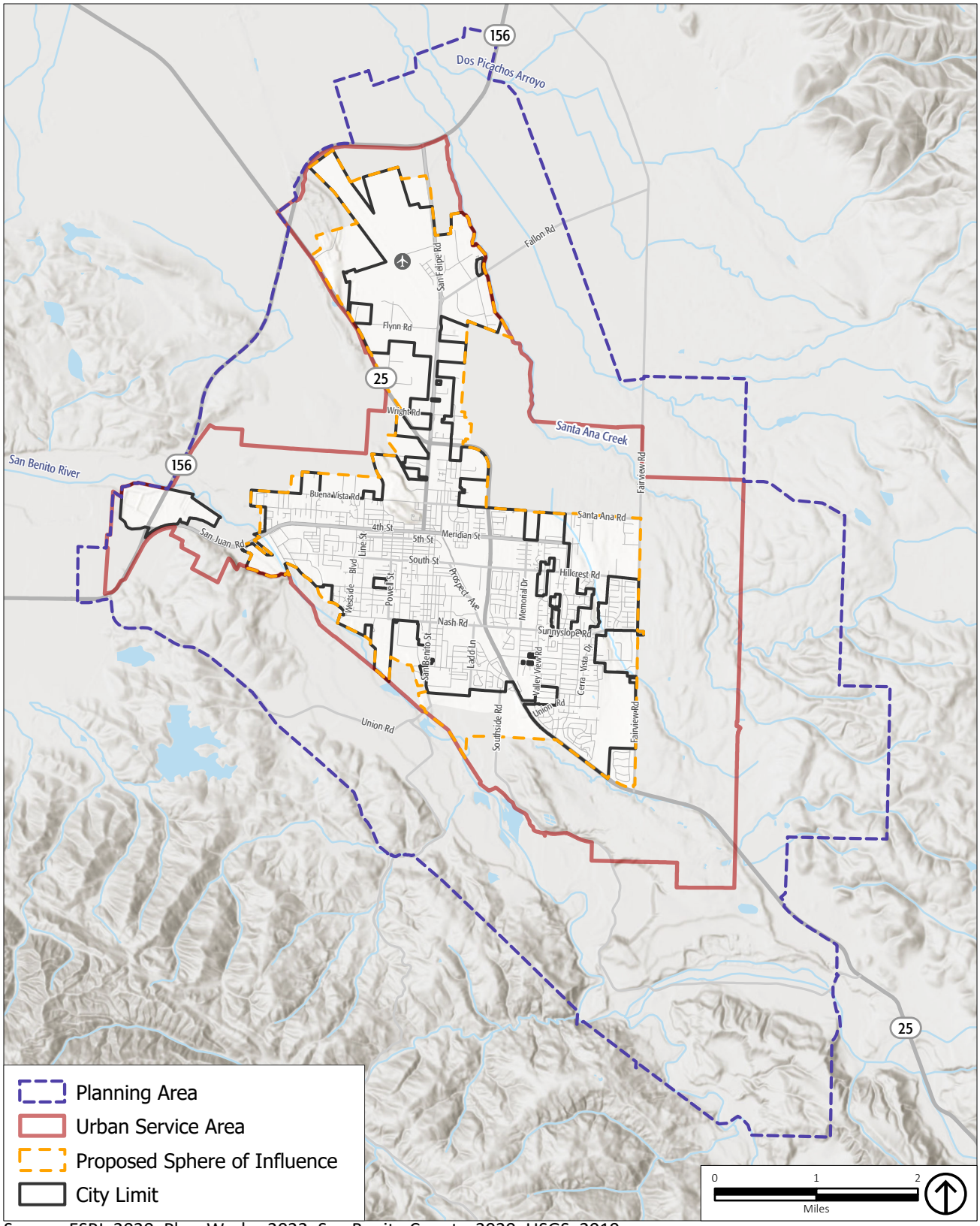
3.4.1.1 CITY LIMITS

The boundary for the City Limits encloses the incorporated territory where the City currently has jurisdictional authority. Parts of the City Limits follow along the San Benito River and Santa Ana Creek, while the remaining City Limits are more arbitrary. The total land area of the City Limits is approximately 5,220 acres (roughly 8.2 square miles). Hollister is in the north central part of San Benito County and surrounded by rural land on all sides that are in unincorporated San Benito County. Changes to the City Limits are made when the City annexes new land that is currently part of San Benito County. Annexations must go through a specific legal process that requires input from residents or property owners and are subject to the San Benito Local Agency Formation Commission (San Benito LAFCO) review and approval. No changes to the City Limits are proposed as part of this project.



Source: ESRI, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2022; San Benito County, 2020; USGS, 2019

Figure 3-1
Regional and Vicinity Map



Source: ESRI, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2022; San Benito County, 2020; USGS, 2019

Figure 3-2
2040 General Plan Planning Boundaries

3.4.1.2 SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

The Hollister SOI, totaling approximately 1,817 acres (about 2.8 square miles), is the area surrounding the City Limits designated by the San Benito LAFCO to indicate land that that has the potential to be annexed into the city during the 2040 General Plan buildout horizon. Outside the City Limits, the SOI currently includes small pockets of primarily agricultural or low-density residential land north, east, south, and west of the limits. If land within the City's SOI is annexed by the City in the future, it would then be within the City Limits and under the jurisdiction of Hollister at that time. Changes to the SOI are proposed as part of this project and discussed in more detail in Section 3.7.1.5, *Proposed Sphere of Influence,* however, no lands are proposed for annexation into the City Limits as part of the proposed project.

3.4.1.3 HOLLISTER URBAN SERVICE AREA

The City also designates its own HUA, which, as shown on Figure 3-2, is an area larger than the SOI. The HUA is a result of a Memorandum of Understanding between the City, San Benito County, and utilities service providers that serve Hollister and the surrounding area. The HUA was never formally adopted by San Benito LAFCO. The San Benito River and Santa Ana Creek form portions of the southern and eastern boundaries of the HUA, while the remainder of the HUA loosely follows major transportation corridors. The HUA totals approximately 13,264 acres (roughly 20.7 square miles).

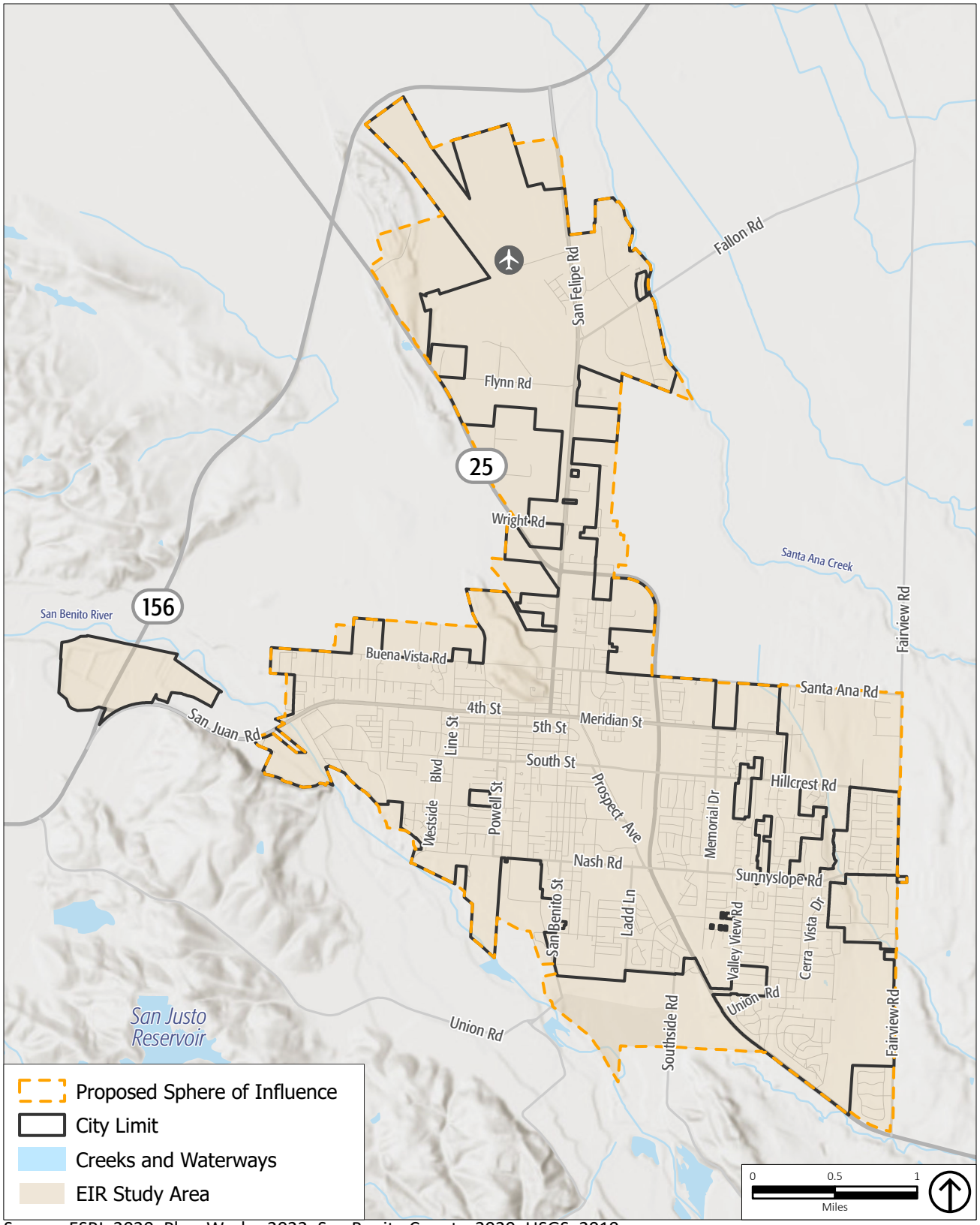
3.4.1.4 PLANNING AREA

State law refers to the Planning Area as "any land outside [the City] boundaries which in the [City's] judgment bears relation to its planning."[4] The Hollister Planning Area encompasses incorporated and unincorporated territory and identifies the area where the City has an interest in land use. This boundary does not give the City any regulatory power, but it signals to San Benito County and other nearby local and regional authorities that Hollister recognizes that development within this area may have an impact on the city. Hollister City staff will review development proposals submitted to San Benito County for parcels inside the Planning Area for consistency with land use policies in the proposed 2040 General Plan. The Planning Area lands outside of the SOI are not considered for urban development or annexation by the City within the 20-year planning horizon of the proposed 2040 General Plan.

3.4.2 EIR STUDY AREA

As shown on Figure 3-3, *EIR Study Area*, the EIR Study Area includes all land within the Hollister City Limits and the existing and proposed SOI. The Planning Area lands between the Planning Area boundary and the SOI are not in the EIR Study Area because, as stated, the City does not foresee future annexations of these unincorporated areas.

[4] Government Code, Title 7, *Planning and Land Use*, Division 1, *Planning and Zoning*, Chapter 3, *Local Planning*, Article 5, *Authority for and Scope of General Plans*, Section 65300.



Source: ESRI, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2022; San Benito County, 2020; USGS, 2019

Figure 3-3
EIR Study Area

3.5 PLANNING PROCESS SUMMARY

The process to update the existing 2005 General Plan began in 2019 and is scheduled to be completed with the adoption of the proposed 2040 General Plan by the City Council in fall 2023. A General Plan Advisory Committee provided overall direction, with assistance from citizen representatives, who worked closely with the consultant team and City staff to guide the public process for updating the existing General Plan. The public process included existing conditions data gathering, community engagement, and recommendations for General Plan revisions to respond to legislative requirements enacted since 2005. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which began in early 2020, the City collected community input through virtual workshops and online activities. Throughout each of these steps, the City sought feedback from the community, property owners, business owners, and Planning Commissioners and City Councilmembers. Public feedback from community events and City Council and Planning Commission meetings has been incorporated into the planning process and helped shape the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions. The working draft 2040 General Plan was subsequently reviewed in public discussion and hearings by the Planning Commission and City Council. The City created a General Plan website at *www.hollister2040.org* to enhance and inform the public process. The website provides all of the documents, maps, and meeting agendas, which are available for public download. The website offers information in both English and Spanish and provides the contact information for City staff so that members of the public can send their thoughts and questions about Hollister and the 2040 General Plan throughout the process.

3.6 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan is guided by the Vision and Values of Hollister, whereas the Vision describes the future of Hollister as the community would like it to be in 2040 and the Values provide direction for decision making as the General Plan is implemented over time. The primary purpose of the proposed project is to plan for the growth and conservation of Hollister over a 20-year time horizon while meeting the Vision and achieving the Values for a more equitable, diverse, innovative, and sustainable future for all residents. The project objectives to meet the Vision and Values are related specifically to growth and include focusing growth in the downtown, capitalizing on existing infrastructure, and streamlining future development that is consistent with the proposed 2040 General Plan. This requires extending the buildout horizon to year 2040 and updating goals, policies, and actions so that they meet current state requirements and community priorities. Many issues not covered in earlier plans are addressed in the proposed project. These include how to enhance the downtown as a vibrant center, build a diversified job base, provide sites for housing and mixed-use development, improve environmental justice and community health, and prepare for adaptation and resilience to a changing climate. As part of this process, the City has identified the following objectives, which build on the framework of the Vision and Values and reflect the community's desires for the future of Hollister and will serve as the project objectives for the EIR.

- Provide for balanced and sustainable growth. Create and maintain a cohesive development pattern amidst the agriculture landscape, with clearly defined urban edges. The General Plan land use map focuses urban development within the SOI and protects Hollister's surrounding lands from sprawl,

reduce the cost of extending costly infrastructure, and enhance the visual character of the city's edge. Land use policies are enacted to reduce incompatible land uses and ensure developments pay for their share of infrastructure, public facilities, and any environmental costs they might impose.

- **Create new jobs to develop the local economy.** Strive for more local, high-quality jobs and an improved jobs/housing ratio.
- **Integrate neighborhoods and neighborhood centers.** Build quality neighborhoods and maintain a quality urban environment. Balanced neighborhoods include a mix of residential types and intensities at all levels of affordability and include activities and facilities that are used on a frequent basis—such as schools, stores, and parks. Land uses are designated to ensure balanced neighborhood development with a mix of uses and housing types, provision of parks and schools, and easy access to commercial activity centers.
- **Create a network of parks and open space.** In addition to neighborhood and community parks, create a network of trails.
- **Create a safe, efficient, and equitable circulation system for all users.** Establish a well-integrated and coordinated transit network and safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle circulation.
- **Provide ample retail and shopping opportunities.** Create quality retail sites to ensure jobs and sales tax revenue that serve both local residents and a regional population.
- **Plan for environmental justice.** Senate Bill (SB) 1000, the Planning for Healthy Communities Act, was passed in 2016 and requires that General Plans address environmental justice for disadvantaged communities that exist within the planning area of the General Plan. California law defines "environmental justice" as the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.
- **Respond to State law requirements.** As previously described, the proposed 2040 General Plan builds off the current General Plan by incorporating similar topics and revising or adding new goals, policies, and actions that are required by State law. Table 3-1, *2040 General Plan Required by State Law*, provides a list of the key State laws that are addressed in the 2040 General Plan, a summary of the purpose of the law, and the element that addresses the law.

TABLE 3-1 2040 GENERAL PLAN REQUIRED BY STATE LAW

Law	Purpose	2040 General Plan Element
SB 743	Changes the standard method of measuring transportation impacts from level of service to vehicle miles traveled, encourages transit-oriented development, and reduces greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.	Circulation
SB 18 and Assembly Bill (AB) 52	Require consultation with Native American tribes as part of a general plan update and for any subsequent project that could have the potential to impact Native American resources.	Natural Resources
SB 1000	Requires General Plans to include an element with environmental justice policies.	Environmental Justice
AB 1358	Requires "complete streets" be addressed in a general plan, which considers the needs of all modes of travel.	Circulation

TABLE 3-1 2040 GENERAL PLAN REQUIRED BY STATE LAW

Law	Purpose	2040 General Plan Element
AB 32 and SB 375	Addresses GHG reduction largely implemented on the state and regional levels.	Circulation, Natural Resources
SB 379	Requires a general plan to address climate resiliency.	Health and Safety
AB 2140	Requires a link between a city's local hazard mitigation plan and the general plan.	Health and Safety
SB 1241	Requires all jurisdictions to develop policies and implementation actions based on the most recent Fire Hazard Planning Guide from the State.	Health and Safety
AB 1739	Requires that general plans consider impacts on groundwater and plans for groundwater basins.	Community Services and Facilities
AB 162	Requires general plans to identify areas subject to flooding using the latest flood hazard information, and to prohibit new housing in areas that are not adequately protected from flooding.	Health and Safety

Notes: SB = Senate Bill; AB = Assembly Bill; GHG = greenhouse gas
Source: PlaceWorks, 2023.

3.7 PROJECT COMPONENTS

3.7.1 2040 GENERAL PLAN

The proposed project updates the current General Plan goals, policies, and actions to reflect current conditions, issues, resources, and community perspectives. For example, changes are needed to address the evolving state of the city and region and to cover global issues such as climate change and emerging transportation technologies. The update also incorporates regional forecasts for 2040 that extend the planning horizon forward by 20 years. This section provides a summary of the major components of the proposed 2040 General Plan.

3.7.1.1 GENERAL PLAN CONTENTS AND ORGANIZATION

The proposed 2040 General Plan includes an introductory chapter and vision chapter, as well as an individual chapter for each of the 10 General Plan elements that establish goals, policies, and actions for implementing the General Plan. The 10 elements include the eight-mandated topics required by California Government Code Section 65302 as well as two additional topics of particular interest to Hollister. A brief explanation of the proposed 2040 General Plan elements is provided herein.

- Chapter 3, *Land Use and Community Design Element*. This element establishes the type, location, density and intensity of development activity in Hollister. It describes the goals and policies that will guide Hollister's future growth patterns and development standards. It also strengthens and protects the unique aspects that make Hollister a great place to live while enhancing the character of the city by improving the quality of design and amenities. As described in this element, the City actively encourages infill development to develop before development extends to the surrounding areas where environmental impacts related to aesthetics and agricultural and biological resources can be

greater when compared to infill development. The City encourages new residential and job-generating uses to be focused in the downtown, residential and mixed-use infill sites, and the Special Planning Areas. The City does not support new urban development outside the SOI and will work with the County to focus future development in already urbanized areas.

- Chapter 4, *Circulation Element*. This element describes the services, facilities, and capital improvements needed to facilitate vehicle, pedestrian, transit, bicycle, and emergency circulation. The element also identifies future distribution, location, level of service, and extent of public and private transportation facilities to support the prescribed land uses in the proposed 2040 General Plan.
- Chapter 5, *Community Services and Facilities Element*. This element describes the community facilities that are necessary in the provision of Hollister's essential public services. These services include schools, fire and police services, childcare, civic services, and park and recreation services. Hollister's objective is to provide high-quality public services throughout the city, now and in the future. Infrastructure serves as the foundation for all development in Hollister. This element establishes goals, policies, and actions for the following systems: water supply, wastewater collection, storm drainage and flood control, and solid waste collection and disposal. Infrastructure improvements should preserve economic vitality, accommodate new housing, increase Hollister's revenue base, and correct existing deficiencies.
- Chapter 6, *Economic Development Element*. This element establishes policy guidance to support and maintain an economically viable community. The Economic Development Element responds to Hollister's goal to be known as an innovation hub that attracts businesses to the city's downtown, industrial park, and airport area. This element includes policies that support efforts to improve local retail options, increase the quality and quantity of local jobs, decrease the need for commuting outside of the city, and enhance Hollister's appeal as a tourist destination.
- Chapter 7, *Natural Resources and Conservation Element*. This element outlines City policy for the preservation of natural resources and provision of outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Chapter 8, *Health and Safety Element*. This element covers two of the 8 State-mandated elements: safety and noise. The safety section of this element identifies and assesses hazards in the community and establishes the goals, policies, and actions necessary to ensure community safety. Additionally, the Health and Safety Element addresses hazards associated with climate change, seismic and geologic activity, flooding, wildland and urban fires, emergency preparedness and emergency operations, and hazardous materials. In addition, the noise section of this element is meant to provide a means for protecting the community from harmful effects of noise exposure.
- Chapter 9, *Open Space and Agriculture Element*. This element outlines City policy for the preservation of open space and agricultural areas. This element responds to Hollister's desire to maintain productive and viable agricultural land while providing for economic development, growth, and expansion.
- Chapter 10, *Housing Element*. This element identifies the housing needs of the city for all income levels and strategies and policies for providing housing to meet those needs. Since the Housing Element is updated more frequently than the other elements, as required by State law, it exists as its own document outside of the proposed 2040 General Plan and is therefore not part of the proposed

project. The current Housing Element addresses housing needs in Hollister for the 2015 to 2023 housing cycle and is currently being updated by the City through a separate process.

- Chapter 11, *Arts and Culture Element*. This element outlines City policy for creating a lively arts scene that encourages self-expression and ensures the representation of Hollister's arts and cultural communities. This element includes policy direction to expand arts programming, support funding efforts, and develop a distinct identity for Hollister as a regional destination for arts, culture, and creative enterprises.
- Chapter 12, *Environmental Justice Element*. This element identifies impacted communities and sets policy direction to minimize effects of environmental hazards on these communities, with an emphasis on pollution exposure, food access, and safe and sanitary homes. This element also establishes policy guidance to promote physical activity and ensure adequate access to public facilities and services.

3.7.1.2 GENERAL PLAN GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

Each element of the proposed 2040 General Plan contains background information and a series of goals, policies, and actions. Policies and actions are at the same level of importance and are both intended to support goals. In most cases, goals have both policies and actions. However, it is also possible for a goal to be supported exclusively by policies or actions. The following provides a description of goals, policies, and actions and explains the relationship between them:

- A *goal* is a description of the general desired result that the City seeks to create through the implementation of its General Plan.
- A *policy* is a specific statement that regulates activities in the city, guides decision making, and directs ongoing efforts as the City works to achieve a goal. A policy is ongoing and requires no further implementation. The General Plan's policies set out the standards that will be used by City staff and the other decision makers in their review of land development projects and in decision making about City actions.
- An *action* is a measure, procedure, or technique intended to help reach a specified goal. The City must take additional steps to implement each action in the General Plan. An action is something that can and will be completed.

3.7.1.3 GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

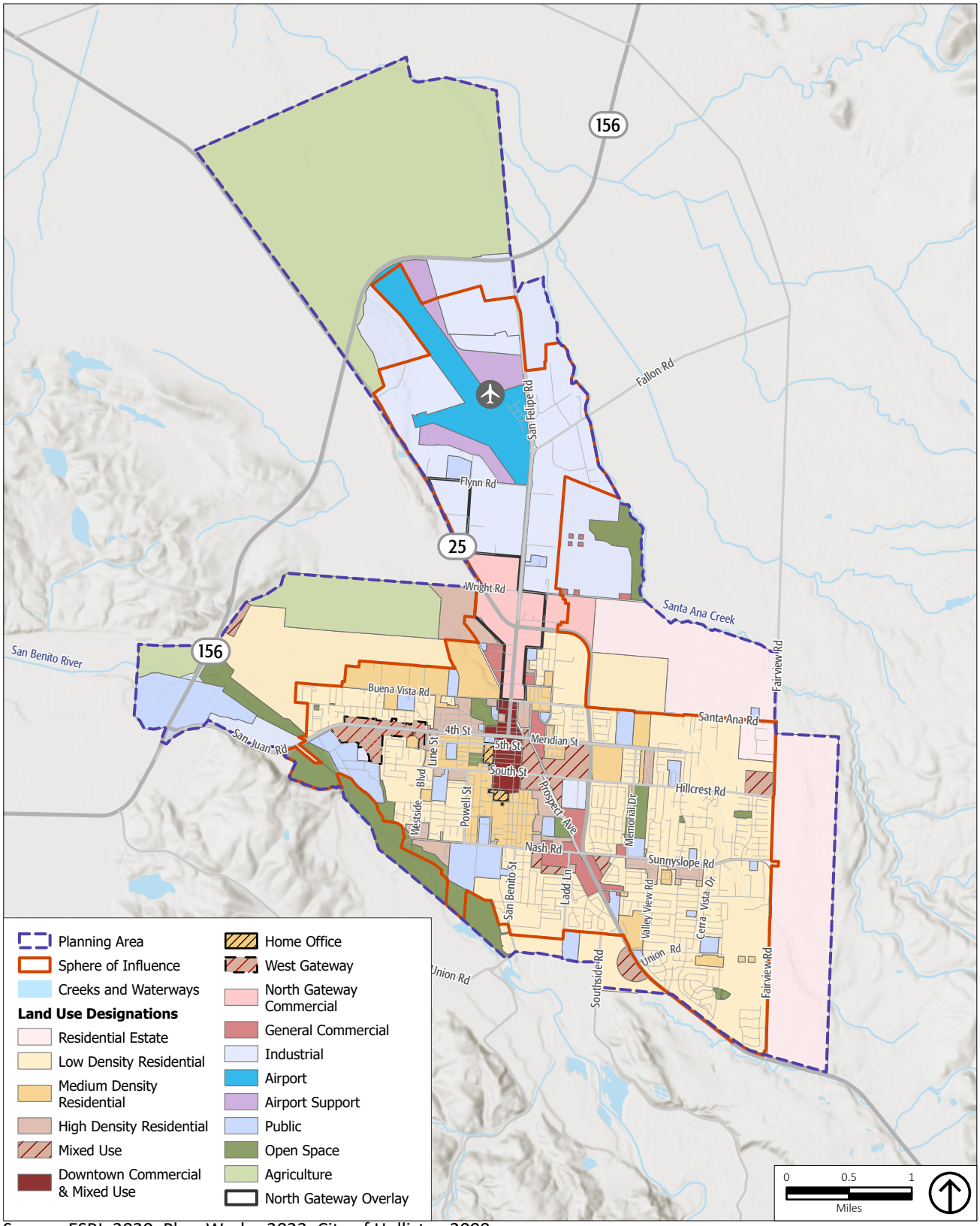
As part of the proposed project, the City is proposing changes to the currently adopted General Plan land use map. The current 2005 General Plan land use map and the proposed 2040 General Plan land use map are shown on Figure 3-4, *2005 General Plan Land Use Map*, and Figure 3-5, *2040 General Plan Land Use Map,* respectively. The General Plan land use designations would establish the uses, density ranges, and development intensities allowed on each parcel of land. In general, standards of building intensity for residential uses are stated as the allowable range of dwelling units per gross acre and standards for nonresidential uses are stated as maximum floor-area ratios (FAR) based on net acreage.

Gross density is the total number of units per acre in a given area that includes the internal streets, easements, common open spaces, and undevelopable areas. Net density is the total number of units per acre on a given site on which buildings may be constructed and excludes streets, easements, common open spaces, and other undevelopable areas. Using net density for calculating residential density is appropriate for cities that are largely built out. Using gross density as a measurement for residential density is appropriate for Hollister because it is not largely built out and can accommodate large single-family subdivision tracts that construct new roads and set aside land for public parks, schools, and amenities. The number of units permitted will be further modified by the corresponding zoning district.

FAR is a ratio of the building square footage permitted on a lot to the net square footage of the lot. For example, on a site with 10,000 square feet of net land area, a FAR of 1.0 will allow 10,000 square feet of building floor area to be built. This could take the form of a two-story building with 50 percent lot coverage, or a one-story building with 100 percent lot coverage. A FAR of 0.4 would allow 4,000 square feet of floor area.

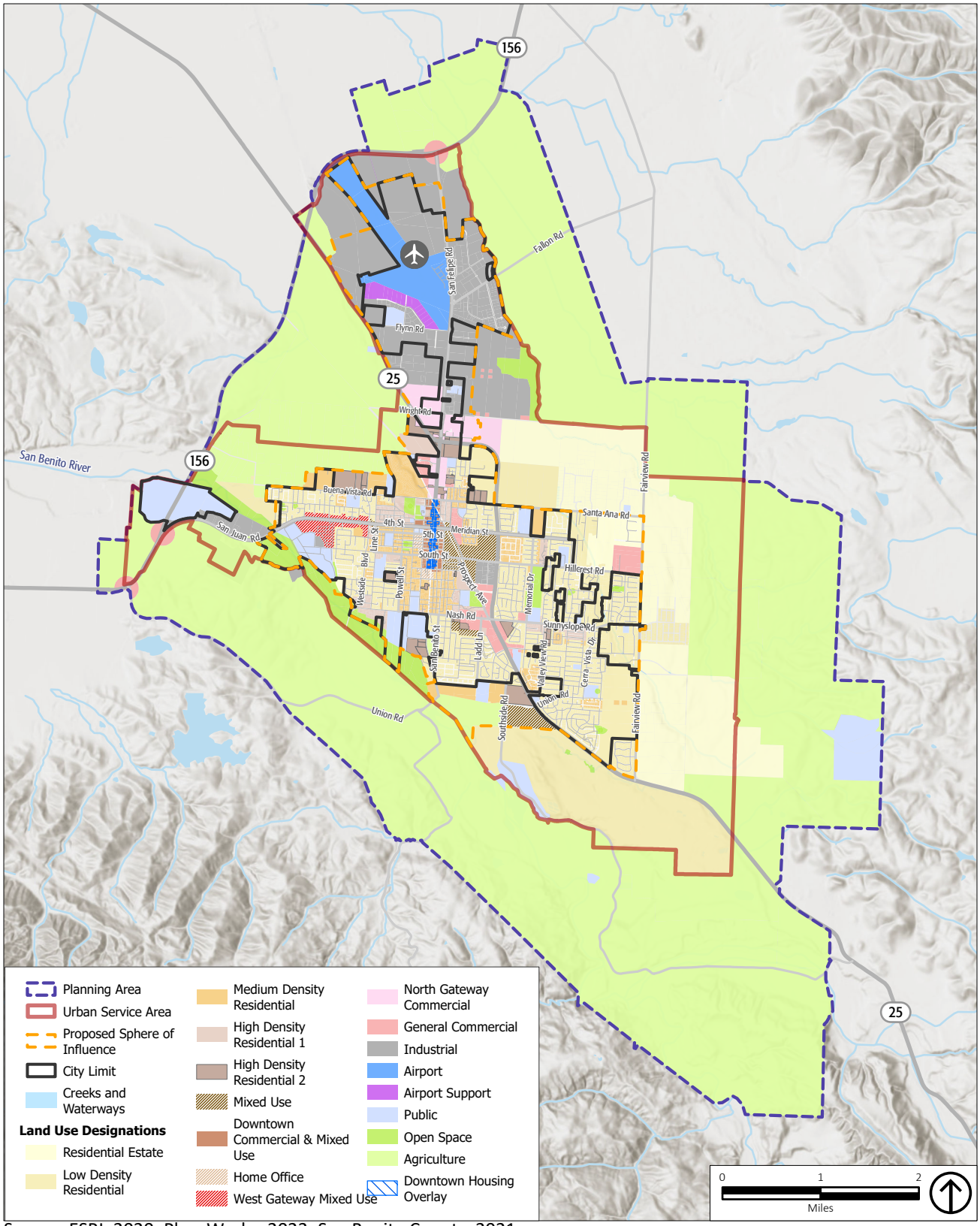
The following land use designations are included in the proposed 2040 General Plan.

- Residential Estate (0.2 to 1 unit/gross acre). This land use designation is intended for single-family, residential units on large lots. The Residential Estate land use designation only occurs in long-range phased areas outside of Hollister's City Limits and SOI (but is within the Planning Area). Residential Estate land uses are intended to provide sites for larger, distinctive residences in areas that the City does not provide public infrastructure.
- Low-Density Residential (6 to 10 units/gross acre). This land use designation is intended to promote and protect single-family neighborhoods. Low-Density Residential land uses are intended to provide sites for single-family detached and attached units, zero lot-line single-family units, duplexes, and Planned Unit Development units.
- Medium-Density Residential (11 to 19 units/gross acre). This land use designation accommodates more intensive forms of residential development. Medium-Density Residential land uses provide greater housing choices in the city for different family sizes and incomes (examples include duplexes and triplexes). In the Medium Density Residential land use designation, new single-family detached residential development is not a permitted use. Existing Medium-Density Residential land uses are close to the community and retail services downtown, and future Medium-Density Residential uses are intended to be located near other services, such as neighborhood shopping centers, parks and open spaces areas, and near minor and major collector streets where sufficient access can be provided.
- High-Density Residential (30 to 65 units/gross acre). This land use designation is applied to parcels that have access to existing services and infrastructure to meet the California Department of Housing and Community Development's default density standard of 30 units/gross acre for "metropolitan jurisdictions." These sites shall have a minimum density of 30 units/gross acre and maximum density of 65 units/gross acre.



Source: ESRI, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2023; City of Hollister, 2009

Figure 3-4
2005 General Plan Land Use Map



Source: ESRI, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2023; San Benito County, 2021

Figure 3-5
2040 General Plan Land Use Map

- Mixed-Use Commercial and Residential (30 to 65 units/gross acre; 3.0 FAR). This land use designation is intended to promote a vertical or horizontal combination of residential and commercial uses within a single building or site. Vertical mixed use is intended to encourage retail sales, service, office, and public uses on the ground floor with upper floors of office and residential uses. Horizontal mixed use in this designation shall orient commercial uses near key intersections, and ensure that they are easily accessible, pedestrian oriented, and serve the surrounding residential uses. The Mixed-Use Commercial and Residential land use designation applies to commercial activity that includes government and professional offices, neighborhood-oriented retail, community shopping centers, specialty stores, arts and crafts, woodworking, and assembly processes.
- Downtown Commercial and Mixed Use (30 to 125 units/gross acre; 3.0 FAR). This land use designation is intended primarily for all types of commercial uses and secondarily for residential uses or a combination of the two. Special attention should be given to pedestrian circulation within the area to provide access to adjacent facilities and uses. This land use designation is intended to encourage ground floor, pedestrian friendly, retail sales, and service uses with upper floors of office and residential uses. The Downtown Commercial land use designation applies to commercial activity including neighborhood convenience stores, restaurants, regionally-oriented specialty stores, medical and dental offices, and residential units. Commercial uses that require drive-through windows or open-air car, truck, and boar lots, automotive repair, and body shops are prohibited Downtown. Smaller vehicle sales are permitted within enclosed buildings.
- Home Office (11 to 29 units/gross acre; 1.0 FAR). This land use designation is intended to allow for residential and small-scale businesses, which include specialty, administrative, and professional offices. Nonresidential buildings that share street frontage with residentially developed properties should maintain a residential character. This designation does not require office development; rather, it creates the option for offices in what is otherwise a Medium-Density Residential district. The Home Office designation is located near the Downtown Area and serves as a transitional zone between the higher intensity downtown area and surrounding established residential.
- West Gateway Mixed Use (30 to 65 units/gross acre; 3.0 FAR). This land use designation is intended to foster an attractive entry to the city by featuring community shopping, retail, offices, and residential uses. This land use designation requires that projects include a commercial component if within the radius of the West Gateway commercial nodes identified on Figure LU-3 in the proposed 2040 General Plan. The guidelines described in the “Special Planning Areas” section of the proposed Land Use and Community Design Element stipulates additional criteria that development within the West Gateway Special Planning Area must meet.
- North Gateway Commercial (2.0 FAR). This land use designation is intended to foster an attractive entry to the city by featuring commercial and service-oriented businesses along with high-employment uses such as office parks. The guidelines described in the “Special Planning Areas” section of the proposed Land Use and Community Design Element stipulates additional criteria that development within the North Gateway Special Planning Area must meet.
- General Commercial (2.0 FAR). This land use designation allows for a variety of commercial uses and service-oriented businesses at scales ranging from large retail stores serving the community and region to smaller businesses oriented towards neighborhood activity. Uses are encouraged to develop in clusters, serving areas with access to major arterials. Independent small businesses, such as beauty

salons, small offices, and restaurants are also permitted. Other examples of uses are department stores, supermarkets, hardware stores, and convenience stores.

- Industrial (1.0 FAR). This land use designation provides for a range of uses, including research and development; manufacturing, processing, and assembly facilities; warehousing; and vehicle repair and trucking facilities. Outdoor activities are limited to accessory storage and loading areas. Other permitted uses include limited commercial uses that serve industrial and employment centers.
- Airport. This land use designation is applied to publicly owned lands of the Hollister Municipal Airport. Uses include airport operations and support facilities as well as limited commercial and industrial uses incidental to and in support of the airport.
- Airport Support (1.0 FAR). This land use designation allows industrial or commercial development on those areas that are adjacent to and have direct access to the Hollister Municipal Airport. Development may include industrial, commercial, or recreational uses that provide support to the airport and are compatible with both airport operations and adjacent uses.
- Public. This land use designation is applied to publicly and privately owned lands used for activities such as utilities, schools, and other City of Hollister, county, state, or federal facilities.
- Open Space. This land use designation is applied to publicly and privately owned lands used for low-intensity, open space activities, such as hiking, walking, or picnicking. The Open Space land use designation also highlights environmentally sensitive areas, such as rivers, creeks, and habitat preservation areas.
- Agriculture. This land use designation encompasses lands with continuing commercial agriculture potential. The intent of the Agricultural land use designation is to retain primary agricultural use to the greatest extent practical. These areas should be kept free of any urban-type development and annexations. Allowed uses include orchards, row crops, plant nurseries, grazing lands, open space, and farm services.

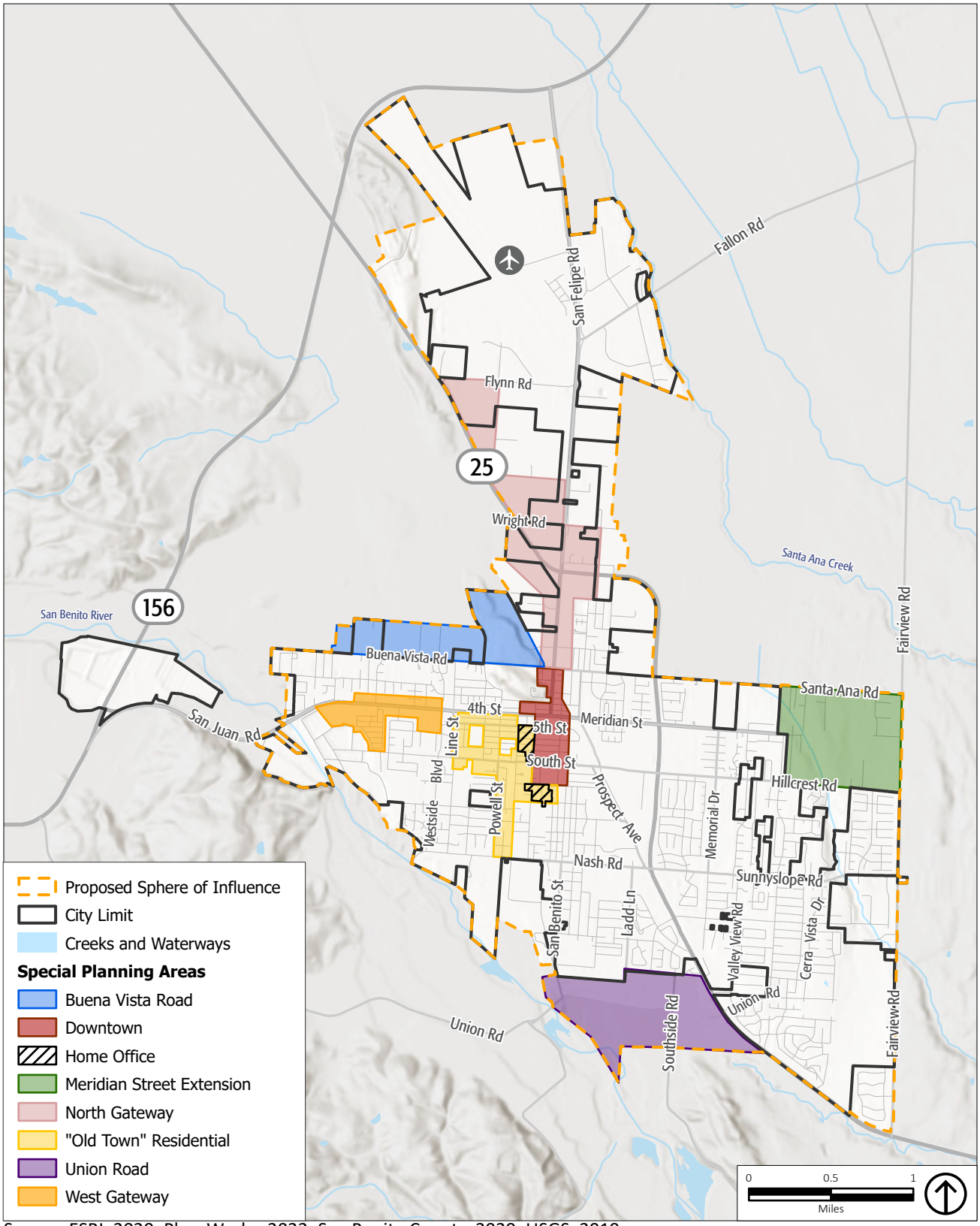
3.7.1.4 GENERAL PLAN SPECIAL PLANNING AREAS

In addition to the General Plan land use designations, the proposed 2040 General Plan includes eight Special Planning Areas. These areas have additional policy direction to guide development that are in addition to the requirements of the underlying General Plan land use designation.

Special Planning Areas

The Special Planning Areas are shown on Figure 3-6, *Special Planning Areas*. Each of these areas is at least partially developed and therefore, the proposed 2040 General Plan additional policy direction would be to guide additional development, redevelopment, and property improvements in these areas. The Special Planning Areas are designated as such for the following reasons:

- They are in highly visible locations that characterize Hollister, in and around downtown or as people approach and leave the city.
- They contain potential economic development opportunities if developed appropriately.
- They would benefit from a unified design approach and take advantage of unique elements of the city.



Source: ESRI, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2022; San Benito County, 2020; USGS, 2019

Figure 3-6
Special Planning Areas

The following provides a brief summary of the eight Special Planning Areas:

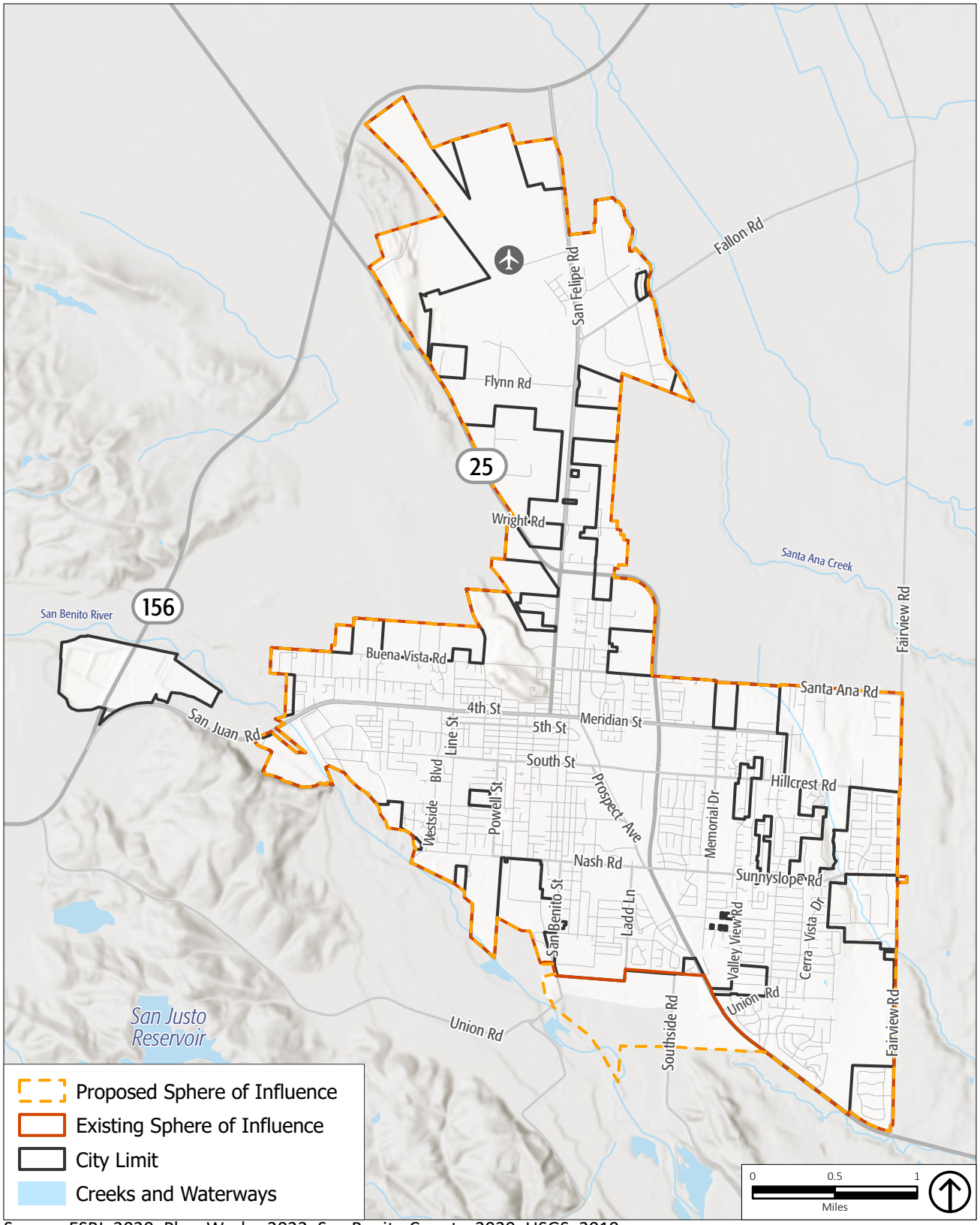
- North Gateway. This Special Planning Area is intended to create an entry boulevard for motorists arriving in Hollister from the north along SR 25. The area is important because it provides the opportunity for large retail uses that cater to commuters and other motorists without duplicating services found the downtown. This area is envisioned for automobile dealerships and continuing the commercial boulevard along San Felipe Road leading into the heart of downtown. Guidelines for development in this Special Planning Area include, but are not limited to, adding bicycle lanes, limiting entry and exit points to main roads, encouraging internal circulations between buildings, encouraging one- to two-story building heights, and improving the pedestrian experience with more street lighting and landscaping.
- West Gateway. This area is intended to create an entry feature on San Juan Road as it bridges the San Benito River. After the entry feature, the West Gateway area continues east to Westside Boulevard, including a number of currently underutilized parcels. This Special Planning Area provides the opportunity to develop a new mixed-use area with medium- to high-density housing and a neighborhood-serving retail component complimented by a public plaza. Guidelines for development in this Special Planning Area include, but are not limited to, limiting entry and exit points to main roads, encouraging internal circulations between buildings, encouraging three-story building heights, designing public spaces that are conducive to retail sales and community gatherings, and implementing a unified design theme for building architecture that is different from Downtown Hollister.
- Buena Vista Road. This Special Planning Area is bounded to the north and east by the SOI, to the south by Santa Ana Road, and to the west by SR 156. This area is mainly made up of undeveloped land and existing residential and commercial uses. The purpose of this Special Planning Area is to encourage residential uses along Buena Vista Road. Guidelines for development in this Special Planning Area include, but are not limited to, adding bicycle lanes, encouraging internal circulations between buildings, and encouraging a mix of residential unit types.
- Downtown. This Special Planning Area extends along San Felipe Road from Santa Ana Road to Hawkins Street, and has a number of businesses and amenities, most of which are located in early-twentieth century buildings that reflect the small-town agricultural character and history of Hollister. New development and redevelopment that occurs Downtown must occur in context of the existing buildings. Amenities that encourage a safe and comfortable pedestrian experience in Downtown are also crucial elements to promote. Guidelines for development in this Special Planning Area include, but are not limited to, clustering parking in structures or behind buildings, encouraging minimal setbacks, encouraging three- to four-story buildings, and maintaining 12- to 15-foot-wide sidewalks to encourage pedestrian activity.
- "Old Town" Residential. This area contains some of Hollister's most diverse architecture distributed through a neighborhood of historical homes. Located east and south of the downtown, the "Old Town" residential area extends roughly from Fourth Street to Nash Road. Preservation efforts should be employed to reinforce the distinct attributes of the existing structures for any development or redevelopment that occurs in the district. New construction should blend well with structures in existing neighborhoods. Guidelines for development in this Special Planning Area include, but are not

limited to, encouraging parking alleys and side-lot access points, continuing existing setback patterns, and ensuring the scale of new buildings is compatible with existing buildings.

- Home Office. This Special Planning Area is an older residential area surrounding the downtown that has changed over time to include professional offices. Users such as accountants, architects, engineers, graphic designers, lawyers, etc., contribute to an economically viable area that is relatively free of high-volume automobile and pedestrian traffic. The major design goal is to preserve the residential look and feel of the neighborhood while continuing to allow specific office uses to adjoin residences. Guidelines for development in this Special Planning Area include, but are not limited to, accommodating parking on-site behind or to the side of structures, keeping buildings setback 20 feet from the street, limiting building heights to 35 feet, and installing pedestrian-scale lighting at building entrances.
- Meridian Street Extension. This Special Planning Area is along the eastern edge of the City Limits, generally bounded by Santa Ana Road to the north, Fairview Road to the east, Hillcrest Road to the south, and El Toro Drive and Clearview Drive to the west. This area is made up of existing rural residential homes and undeveloped land. The purpose of this Special Planning Area is to foster a complete neighborhood that includes a mix of residential and commercial uses. Guidelines for development in this Special Planning Area include, but are not limited to, extending Meridian Street with a vehicular bridge crossing over the existing creek and extending Prater Street to Hillcrest Road, adding traffic calming measures at Prater Street and Meridian Street to maintain the rural character of the Meridian Street Special Planning Area and limit traffic speeds, limiting entry and exit points to main roads, encouraging internal circulations between buildings, and ensuring the scale of new buildings is compatible with existing buildings.
- Union Road. This Special Planning Area includes lands to the south of the City Limits, bounded to the north by Union Road, the east by SR 25, to the south by the Ridgemark Golf Club and Resort, and to the west by Cienega Road. This area includes vacant land, large agricultural fields, and several developed parcels, including a few homes. The goal of this Special Planning Area is to create a mix of residential units and new job-generating uses. The SOI would be expanded to incorporate vacant land with residential and mixed-use General Plan land use designations. Guidelines for development in this Special Planning Area include, but are not limited to, requiring the creation of a Specific Plan for proposed projects within this Special Planning Area, preserving elements of the existing orchards, and aggregate resources of known value to the region, limiting entry and exit points to main roads, encouraging internal circulations between buildings, clustering parking to the side and behind new development, and avoiding siting parking lots fronting Union Road.

3.7.1.5 PROPOSED SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

As previously described in Section 3.4.1.2, *Sphere of Influence,* the SOI is defined and determined by San Benito LAFCO, although the City can propose the area that it would like its SOI to include. As described in the proposed General Plan 2040 Land Use and Community Design Element as part of updates to the Union Road Special Area, the City is proposing changes to the currently approved SOI as shown on Figure 3-7, *Existing and Proposed Sphere of Influence*.



Source: ESRI, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2022; San Benito County, 2020; USGS, 2019

Figure 3-7
Existing and Proposed Sphere of Influence

The current SOI is roughly 1,817 acres or about 2.8 square miles. The proposed SOI expansion would add about 289 acres (about 0.5 square miles) to increase to approximately 2,106 acres and 3.2 square miles. The proposed SOI would extend further south of the existing SOI, but would remain contiguous with the existing SOI border to the east and west. The proposed SOI would expand to Union Road between San Benito Street and Southside Road and to Enterprise Road between Southside Road and SR 25. As described in the Union Road Special Planning Area, development in this expansion area would be subject to specific guidelines for development, including the creation of a Specific Plan for proposed projects within the Union Road Special Planning Area.

3.7.2 CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

As previously stated in Section 3.2, *Overview*, concurrent with the proposed 2040 General Plan, the City is preparing the first Hollister CAP, referred to as the "2023 CAP," to serve as the strategic plan for how the City will reduce GHG emissions and foster a sustainable community through 2050 and beyond. The proposed 2023 CAP describes climate change, provides an analysis of the community's existing GHG emissions and projected future emissions in different scenarios, and provides a framework for reducing GHG emissions through recommended communitywide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. The 2023 CAP includes an introductory chapter and four individual chapters. A brief explanation of the contents of the 2023 CAP is provided herein.

- Chapter 1, *Introduction*. The introduction provides the purpose of the CAP, applicable federal, state, regional, and local regulations, and the process of how the CAP was developed. This chapter includes a description of climate action planning and climate mitigation/GHG reduction and a summary of Hollister's history of addressing climate change. A discussion of CEQA and the role of the 2023 CAP as a "qualified" GHG reduction strategy consistent with CEQA Guidelines is also provided.
- Chapter 2, *Climate Change in Hollister*. This chapter describes climate science and impacts of climate change in Hollister including those associated with agriculture, flooding, drought, extreme heat, and wildfire.
- Chapter 3, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Hollister*. This chapter presents the methods used to prepare and update the Hollister community-wide GHG inventories, the draft results of the 2005 and 2019 community-wide inventories, and results from the community-wide forecast.
- Chapter 4, *Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Strategy*. This chapter describes Hollister's GHG reduction targets and the community's path to reducing GHG emissions to meet or exceed its targets, including existing/planned efforts led by state, regional, and local agencies, and new strategies in the proposed 2023 CAP. This chapter includes 32 reduction strategies and recommended implementation actions that are consistent with the proposed 2040 General Plan goals and policies relating to climate, energy, and natural resource conservation. These reduction strategies include a mix of education and outreach programs to encourage GHG reduction activities, rebates, and other enticements to incentivize GHG reductions, and mandates to require GHG efforts. The reduction strategies also support broader sustainability initiatives. The reduction strategies are organized into eight categories: Sustainable Energy, Carbon-Free Energy, Transportation, Off-road Equipment, Solid Waste, Water and Wastewater, Natural Resources and Agriculture, and Governance and Leadership. Each reduction strategy entry includes a description, the anticipated 2030, 2040, and 2050 GHG reductions achieved

by the reduction strategy at the projected performance level, and the recommended actions necessary to implement it. For each reduction strategy, more details on performance metrics, assumptions, and quantification methods are provided in Appendix A of the 2023 CAP. Recommended actions represent the City's current understanding of best practices in achieving GHG emissions reductions and community equity, availability of technology, and local regulations, as well as the current state and federal regulatory environment.

- Chapter 5, *CAP Implementation Strategy*. This chapter discusses the implementation of the CAP and the 6 implementation strategies and associate actions designed to support the City's GHG reduction efforts. The implementation strategies and associated actions are different from the reduction strategies and actions in Chapter 4, and are designed to guide Hollister in successfully implementing the CAP.

3.7.3 AGRICULTURAL LANDS PRESERVATION PROGRAM

The proposed project includes a new addition to the HMC Title 17, *Zoning*. The proposed addition would be adopted and codified as new HMC Chapter 17.13, *Agricultural Lands Preservation Program*. The purpose of the proposed Agricultural Lands Preservation Program is to ensure the benefits of agricultural activities are maintained by requiring that activities that convert existing agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses (i.e., urban uses) directly address that loss through a program that funds agricultural conservation easements. The proposed chapter is as follows.

Chapter 17.13, *Agricultural Lands Preservation Program*.

- Section 17.13.010, *Chapter Title*. The ordinance codified in this chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Agricultural Lands Preservation Program" of the City of Hollister.
- Section 17.13.020, *Purpose*. Due to favorable soil and topographical and climatic conditions, the City of Hollister contains large areas of local, State and Federal classified agricultural lands. These lands are environmental and economic assets that contribute to local quality of life. The purpose of this Agricultural Lands Preservation Program is to ensure the benefits of agricultural activities are maintained by requiring that activities that convert existing agricultural lands to urban uses directly address that loss through a program that funds agricultural conservation easements.
- Section 17.13.030, *Definitions*.
  - *Agricultural Conservation Easement*. An Agricultural Conservation Easement is a legally binding deed limitation which has been executed voluntarily by the owner of the land subject to the easement, the purpose of which is to retain the land in its agricultural condition. The terms of the easement remain binding even when the land is sold or passed to heirs.
  - *Agricultural Lands.* Agricultural Lands subject to this Program are defined as:
    1. All lands defined as Prime Agricultural Land per California Government Code 51201. These include the following:
       a. All land that qualifies for rating as class I or class II in the Natural Resource Conservation Service land use capability classifications.
       b. Land which qualifies for rating 80 through 100 in the Storie Index Rating.

c. Land which supports livestock used for the production of food and fiber and which has an annual carrying capacity equivalent to at least one animal unit per acre as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture.
d. Land planted with fruit- or nut-bearing trees, vines, bushes, or crops which have a nonbearing period of less than five years and which will normally return during the commercial bearing period on an annual basis from the production of unprocessed agricultural plant production not less than two hundred dollars ($200) per acre.
e. Land which has returned from the production of unprocessed agricultural plant products an annual gross value of not less than two hundred dollars ($200) per acre for three of the previous five years.

2. All lands currently used for an Agricultural Use per California Government Code 51201. This means use of the land, including for greenhouses, for the purpose of producing an agricultural commodity for commercial purposes.
3. All lands classified as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland or Farmland of Local Importance by the California Department of Conservation (DOC) on the most recently published map of the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP). Agricultural Lands developed for non-agricultural use prior to the adoption of this Program are not included in this definition. The four (4) classifications of farmland referenced above are defined by the DOC as follows:
   a. *Prime Farmland*. Prime Farmland has the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long-term agricultural production. Prime Farmland has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture needed to produce sustained high yields. In order to qualify as Prime Farmland, land must meet the specific soil criteria required by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Service (NRCS.)
   b. *Farmland of Statewide Importance*. Farmland of Statewide Importance is similar to Prime Farmland, but with minor shortcomings, such as steeper slopes or less ability to store soil moisture. To qualify as Farmland of Statewide Importance, land must meet the specific soil criteria required USDA NRCS.
   c. *Unique Farmland*. Unique Farmland consists of lesser quality soils used for the production of the State's leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated but may include non-irrigated orchards or vineyards as found in some climatic zones in California.
   d. *Farmland of Local Importance*. Farmland of Local Importance is land of importance to the local economy, as defined by each county's local advisory committee and adopted by its Board of Supervisors. Farmland of Local Importance is either currently producing or has the capability of production; but does not meet the criteria of Prime, Statewide or Unique Farmland. For the purposes of this ordinance and as adopted by the San Benito County Board of Supervisors, Farmland of Local Importance is defined as land cultivated as dry cropland for wheat, barley, oats, safflower and grain hay, as well as orchards affected by boron within the area specified in San Benito County Resolution Number 84-3. If the County of San Benito expands the definition of Farmland of Local Importance to include more lands, such lands shall also be considered to be Farmland of Local Importance under this ordinance.

4. All lands which in the reasonable judgment of the City of Hollister have the physical characteristics and yield potential to qualify as one of the classifications in Section 17.13.030.B.2 above. Whether or not the land under consideration is currently used for agricultural production shall not be a criterion in this determination.

- ***Agricultural Lands Preservation Program Administration Fee.*** The Agricultural Lands Preservation Program Administration Fee (also referred to as the Administration Fee) refers to a fee paid to the City of Hollister which will be credited to a City fund and used by the City and/or transferred to the Program Manager for the purpose of administering the Agricultural Lands Preservation Program and/or to cover ongoing management and monitoring of the Agricultural Conservation Easements.
- ***Agricultural Use.*** Agricultural Use means the use of land, including for greenhouses, for the purpose of producing an agricultural commodity for commercial purposes, per California Government Code 51201.
- ***Arm's Length Transaction.*** An Arm's Length Transaction is a business deal in which buyers and sellers act independently without one party influencing the other.
- ***Developer.*** A Developer is a person or entity who files an application to develop land under the jurisdiction of the City of Hollister.
- ***Development Project.*** A Development Project is a project to convert the use of land that is subject to an application under the jurisdiction of the City of Hollister.
- ***Easement Holder.*** An Easement Holder is a government entity or 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit corporation that takes ownership of, or authority over, real property and/or Agricultural Conservation Easements at the behest of an owner. The City will consider the following criteria when selecting an Easement Holder:
  1. Whether the entity is based locally, is statewide, or is a regional branch of a national organization, with preference given to a locally-based organization;
  2. Whether the entity has an established record of holding easements for the purposes of conserving Agricultural Land;
  3. Whether the entity has a history of holding easements in San Benito County;
  4. Whether the entity is operating in compliance with the most recent version of the Land Trust Alliance's "Standards and Practices" available at the Land Trust Alliance Resource Center.

  An Easement Holder may also serve as the Program Manager. The City of Hollister may also serve as an Easement Holder.
- ***Highest and Best Use.*** Highest and Best Use refers to the legal use of vacant or improved land that is physically possible and financially feasible, and that results in the highest value.
- ***Legal Parcel.*** A Legal Parcel is a portion of land separated from another parcel or portion of land in accordance with the Subdivision Map Act. A separate Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) alone shall not constitute a legal parcel.
- ***Program Manager.*** The Program Manager is a government entity or Section 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization selected by and accountable to the City of Hollister to serve as the manager of the Agricultural Lands Preservation Program. The City will consider the following criteria when selecting the Program Manager:
  1. Whether the entity is based locally, is statewide, or is a regional branch of a national organization, with a preference given to a locally-based organization;

2. Whether the entity has an established record of managing Agricultural Land;
3. Whether the entity has a history of managing easements in San Benito County;
4. Whether the entity is operating in compliance with the most recent version of the Land Trust Alliance's "Standards and Practices" available at the Land Trust Alliance Resource Center.

The Program Manager may also serve as an Easement Holder. The City of Hollister may also serve as the Program Manager.

- Section 17.13.040, *Applicability*. The regulations and provisions of this chapter shall apply to all public and private Development Projects under the jurisdiction of the City of Hollister, which would result in the conversion of at least one (1) acre of Agricultural Land for uses other than Agricultural Uses.
- Section 17.13.050, *Overall Requirement*. Before any Development Project that involves conversion of one (1) acre or more of Agricultural Land to uses other than Agricultural Uses may occur, Agricultural Conservation Easements on other Agricultural Lands that comply with criteria established in Section 17.13.090 shall be dedicated to the City of Hollister or to an Easement Holder selected by the City of Hollister, at a rate of at least two (2) acres of Agricultural Land for each one (1) acre of Agricultural Land to be converted [2:1 ratio].

  The total acreage for which Agricultural Conservation Easements are dedicated shall be calculated based on the total acreage subject to conversion, not the total size of the Legal Parcel(s) on which the development is to be located, unless the total size of the area of the subject Legal Parcel(s) not subject to conversion is ten (10) acres or less, in which case the total acreage for which Agricultural Conservation Easements are dedicated shall be calculated based on the total size of the subject Legal Parcel(s).
- Section 17.13.060, *Timing*. Agricultural Conservation Easements shall be dedicated to the City of Hollister or to an Easement Holder specified by the City of Hollister prior to the issuance of grading permits or building permits that would result in the conversion of Agricultural Land.
- Section 17.13.070, *Program Mechanism*. The requirements of this Agricultural Lands Preservation Program may be satisfied in one of the following two ways:
  - *Dedication of Agricultural Conservation Easement(s).* The Developer shall dedicate Agricultural Conservation Easement(s) to either the City of Hollister or to an Easement Holder specified by the City of Hollister, subject to the following provisions:
    1. The location and characteristics of all lands acquired for Agricultural Conservation Easements shall comply with the eligibility requirements established in Section 17.13.090 and Section 17.13.100.
    2. A Developer dedicating the Agricultural Conservation Easement(s) shall pay the Agricultural Lands Preservation Program Administration Fee as described in Section 17.13.110.A.
    3. Water rights deemed essential to the conservation of the agricultural purpose and ongoing support of the Agricultural Use of the land shall be conditioned in the Agricultural Conservation Easement.
    4. The City Council and Program Manager shall review each potential Agricultural Conservation Easement prior to contribution by the Developer for consistency with the purpose and mechanisms established in this ordinance.

If the Agricultural Conservation Easement is dedicated to an Easement Holder other than the City of Hollister, the dedication shall include the stipulation that the Agricultural Conservation Easement shall revert to the City of Hollister if the Easement Holder ceases to operate or fulfill the terms of this Agricultural Lands Preservation Program.

- *Payment of In-Lieu Fees.* The payment of an Agricultural Conservation Easement in-lieu fee is subject to the following provisions:
  1. Rather than dedicating an Agricultural Conservation Easement(s), the Developer may pay a fee to the City of Hollister calculated to be equal to the cost of acquiring required Agricultural Conservation Easement(s).
  2. The dollar amount of the in-lieu fee shall be determined by the City Council following review of a study prepared by the Developer, peer reviewed by the Program Manager and/or a consultant selected by the City, and recommended by the Planning Commission. The peer review shall be paid for by the Developer.
  3. The in-lieu fee shall be calculated based on the actual value of the required Agricultural Conservation Easement(s) and on transaction costs associated with transactions to acquire such easements.
  4. The Planning Commission shall review the in-lieu fee proposal for consistency with these guidelines prior to submitting it for approval by the City Council. The Commission shall make a formal recommendation to the Council for consideration.
  5. The City Council shall approve by resolution the amount and other terms of the in-lieu fee.
  6. A Developer paying an in-lieu fee instead of dedicating Agricultural Conservation Easement(s) shall also pay the Agricultural Lands Preservation Program Administration Fee as described in Section 17.13.110.A.

- Section 17.13.080, *Administration of the Overall Program and In-Lieu Fees*.
  - *Program Administration.*
    1. Agricultural Conservation Easements generated by this Program shall be dedicated to the City of Hollister or an Easement Holder approved by the City under the terms of this ordinance, and shall be recorded in San Benito County.
    2. If an Agricultural Conservation Easement is held by an Easement Holder other than the City of Hollister, the Easement Holder may be compensated for costs incurred related to holding the easement, as may be agreed among the City, the Program Manager and the Easement Holder, based on the character and acreage of the Agricultural Conservation Easement, using funds collected through the Agricultural Lands Preservation Program Administration Fee.

  - *In-Lieu Fee Administration.*
    1. Within sixty (60) days after collection by the City, in-lieu fees shall be transferred to a fund administered by the Program Manager.
    2. In-lieu fees shall be used to acquire Agricultural Conservation Easements on eligible Agricultural Lands, which shall be dedicated to the City of Hollister or an Easement Holder approved by the City of Hollister under the terms of this ordinance, and shall be recorded in San Benito County.

- Section 17.13.090, *Eligible Lands*. To achieve the purpose of this chapter, lands proposed for acquisition of Agricultural Conservation Easements shall share the characteristics of Agricultural Land and meet the following criteria:
  - The lands shall be located in the City of Hollister Planning Area, as defined in the City of Hollister General Plan.
  - The farmland classification shall be equal to or better than the classification of the land converted.
  - The lands shall support an active Agriculture Use at the time that easements are acquired or shall be capable of supporting an Agricultural Use within one (1) year as determined by the Program Manager. Lands not actively supporting an Agricultural Use shall be brought into Agricultural Use by the Program Manager, using funds paid for by the Developer, in excess of other funds required by this Program, within one (1) year of dedication. The amount of funds to be paid to bring the land into Agricultural Use shall be agreed upon by the Developer, Program Manager and City in advance of the acceptance of the easement and approval of the Development Project.
  - Where a dedication of twenty (20) or more acres is required, lands shall be composed of legal parcel(s) of twenty (20) net acres or more in size. Parcels less than twenty (20) net acres in size shall only be allowed for dedication if merged to meet the minimum size requirement prior to execution of the Agricultural Conservation Easement.
  - Where a dedication of less than 20 acres is required, lands shall be composed of a single legal parcel. In this case, multiple parcels shall only be allowed for dedication if merged to meet the minimum size requirement prior to execution of the Agricultural Conservation Easement.
  - The lands shall be served by a water supply adequate to support Agricultural Use of the land, and the water rights on the lands proposed for acquisition of Agricultural Conservation Easements shall be protected in the Agricultural Conservation Easement in accordance with State water rights law.
  - The dedication shall be consistent with a plan for overall acquisition of Agricultural Conservation Easements in the City of Hollister Planning Area if such a plan is adopted by the City of Hollister.
- Section 17.13.100, *Ineligible lands*. A property is ineligible for acquisition of Agricultural Conservation Easements if it does not meet the requirements of Section 17.13.090 or if any of the circumstances below apply:
  - The property is currently encumbered by any conservation, flood or other easement that cannot be subordinated to the Agricultural Conservation Easement.
  - The property is under public ownership at the time of the proposed acquisition of the Agricultural Conservation Easement.
  - The property is subject to conditions that practicably prevent utilizing the property for a viable Agricultural Use.
- Section 17.13.110, *Agricultural Lands Preservation Program Administration Fee*. The Developer shall pay a one-time Agricultural Lands Preservation Program Administration Fee to cover the cost of stewardship and administration of the Agricultural Lands Preservation Program by the City and Program Manager, which shall be calculated as follows:
  - *Dedicated lands.* If the Developer dedicates existing Agricultural Conservation Easement(s), the fee shall be ten percent (10%) of the value of the easements dedicated.

1. If the easements were acquired through an Arm's Length Transaction in the one-year period prior to dedication to the City of Hollister, the value of the easements on which the Administration Fee shall be based will be the acquisition cost of the easements.
2. If the easements were not acquired through an Arm's Length Transaction and/or were acquired more than one-year prior to dedication to the City of Hollister, the value of the easements on which the Administration Fee shall be based will be determined by the City Council after review of a report prepared by a real estate appraiser certified in agricultural conservation easement appraisals and licensed in California, and paid for by the Developer, which shall be peer reviewed by a consultant selected by the City and Program Manager and reviewed by the Planning Commission. The appraisal and peer review shall both be paid for by the Developer.

- *In-lieu fees.* If the Developer pays an in-lieu fee, the Administration Fee shall be ten percent (10%) of the in-lieu fee.

- Section 17.13.120, *Monitoring, Enforcing and Reporting*. Easements acquired in accordance with this Chapter shall be monitored and enforced in compliance with the following provisions:
  - *Monitoring*. The Program Manager shall annually monitor all easements acquired in accordance with these regulations and shall review and monitor the implementation of all management and maintenance plans for these lands and easement areas.
  - *Enforcing.* The Program Manager shall enforce compliance with the terms of the Agricultural Conservation Easement. Any costs incurred in enforcing the terms of the Agricultural Conservation Easement, including costs of suit and reasonable attorney's fees, and any costs of restoration necessitated by the Developer's violation of the terms of the Agricultural Conservation Easement (including costs of routine monitoring compliance) from such time as the violation was first identified through completion, to the satisfaction of the Program Manager, of any required restoration, shall be borne by the Developer.
  - *Reporting*. The Program Manager shall provide to the City Development Services Director an annual report delineating the activities undertaken pursuant to the requirements of these guidelines and assessment of these activities. The report shall describe the status of all lands and easements acquired in accordance with this Chapter, including a summary of all enforcement actions (if any), a detailed statement of financial activities, and the status of all easements acquired via the provisions of this ordinance.

3.8 DEVELOPMENT PROJECTIONS

This EIR analyzes the potential for growth to 2040, which represents a 20-year buildout horizon. Under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6(3)(A), when a project consists of the revision of a plan or policy, the project's impacts are assessed against existing conditions, and future conditions under the existing plan are treated as the "No Project" alternative.

Under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064(d), "In evaluating the significance of the environmental effect of a project, the lead agency shall consider direct physical changes in the environment which may be caused by the project and reasonably foreseeable indirect physical changes in the environment which may be

caused by the project." The projections represent the City's estimation of "reasonably foreseeable" development that could occur over the next 20 years under the General Plan and are used as the basis for those topics in the EIR's environmental assessment that rely on quantitative analysis. See Chapter 4, *Environmental Analysis*, of this Draft EIR, for a description of environmental analysis scenarios for this EIR. The projections do not presume that every parcel is developed to the maximum level allowed under the General Plan. Rather, they recognize regional demographic and economic forecasts, and the probable share of regional growth that would be captured by Hollister given its policies and land use regulations. Horizon year (2040) projections within the EIR Study Area are shown in Table 3-3, *Proposed 2040 Buildout Projections in the EIR Study Area*.

TABLE 3-3 PROPOSED 2040 BUILDOUT PROJECTIONS IN THE EIR STUDY AREA

Category	Existing Conditions 2019 [a]	Projected Growth 2019-2040 (Proposed Project)	Buildout Estimates 2040
Population	38,900	21,635	60,535
Housing Units	11,185	6,455	17,640
Households [b]	10,770	6,215	16,985
Jobs	14,270	5,755 [c]	20,025

Notes: Numbers are rounded from original sources. EIR Study Area = City Limits + Proposed Sphere of Influence.
a. 2019 demographic numbers are from US Census, the Department of Finance, and the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG)
b. 2019 households assume a 3.66 housing vacancy rate.
c. Jobs are calculated by applying a rate of 800 square feet (sf) per industrial job; 2,300 sf per warehouse job; 500 sf per retail job; and 250 sf per office job.
Sources: City of Hollister, 2022; Kimley Horn and Associates, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2022.

3.9 INTENDED USES OF THE EIR

This EIR is intended to review potential environmental impacts associated with the adoption and implementation of the proposed project and determine corresponding mitigation measures, as necessary. This EIR is a program-level EIR and does not evaluate the impacts of specific, individual developments that may be allowed under the proposed General Plan. Each specific future project will conduct separate approval and environmental review processes pursuant to City procedures and CEQA, if required, to secure the necessary discretionary development permits. Therefore, while subsequent environmental review may be tiered off this EIR, this EIR is not intended to address impacts of individual projects. Subsequent projects will be reviewed by the City for consistency with the proposed 2040 General Plan and this EIR. Projects successive to this EIR include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Approval and funding of major public projects and capital improvements.
- Updates to utility infrastructure master plans, such as the water, wastewater, and stormwater master plans.
- Updates or amendments to the City's Zoning Code.
- Issuance of permits and other approvals necessary for implementation of the proposed project.
- Annexation of land into the City Limits.
- Property rezoning consistent with the proposed 2040 General Plan.
- Development plan approvals, such as tentative maps, variances, conditional use permits, and other land use permits.
- Permit issuance and other approvals necessary for public and private development projects.

- Development agreement processes and approvals.
- Required Permits and Approvals

The proposed project would require adoption by the Hollister City Council. The Planning Commission and other decision-making bodies will review the proposed project and make recommendations to the City Council. While other agencies may be consulted during the 2040 General Plan process, their approval is not required for 2040 General Plan adoption. However, subsequent development under the 2040 General Plan may require approval of state, federal, responsible, and trustee agencies that may rely on the programmatic EIR for decisions in their areas of permitting. The SOI proposed in the 2040 General Plan must be reviewed and approved by the San Benito County LAFCO.

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4. Environmental Analysis

This chapter describes the organization of the environmental analysis section of this Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and the assumptions and methodology of the impact analysis and the cumulative impact setting.

CHAPTER ORGANIZATION

The Draft EIR is made up of 18 subchapters that evaluate the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts of the proposed project. In accordance with Appendix F, *Energy Conservation*, and Appendix G, *Environmental Checklist Form*, of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the potential environmental effects of the proposed project are analyzed for potential significant impacts in the following 18 environmental issue areas, which are organized with the listed abbreviations:

4.1	Aesthetics (AES)	4.10	Hydrology and Water Quality (HYD)
4.2	Agricultural Resources (AG)	4.11	Land Use and Planning (LU)
4.3	Air Quality (AIR)	4.12	Mineral Resources (MIN)
4.4	Biological Resources (BIO)	4.13	Noise (NOI)
4.5	Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources (CUL)	4.14	Population and Housing (POP)
4.6	Energy (ENE)	4.15	Public Services and Recreation (PS)
4.7	Geology and Soils (GEO)	4.16	Transportation (TRANS)
4.8	Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG)	4.17	Utilities and Service Systems (UTIL)
4.9	Hazards and Hazardous Materials (HAZ)	4.18	Wildfire (FIRE)

Each subchapter is organized into the following sections:

- Environmental Setting offers a description of the existing environmental conditions, providing a baseline against which the impacts of the proposed project can be compared, and an overview of federal, state, regional, and local laws and regulations relevant to each environmental issue.
- Standards of Significance refer to the quantitative or qualitative standards, performance levels, or criteria used to evaluate the existing setting with and without the proposed project to determine whether the impact is significant. These thresholds are based primarily on the CEQA Guidelines, and also may reflect established health standards, ecological tolerance standards, public service capacity standards, or guidelines established by agencies or experts.
- Impact Discussion gives an overview of the potential impacts of the proposed project and explains why impacts are found to be significant or less than significant prior to mitigation. This section also includes a discussion of cumulative impacts related to the proposed project. Impacts and mitigation measures are numbered consecutively within each topical analysis and begin with an acronym or abbreviated reference to the impact section.

STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

As stated, significance criteria are identified before the impact discussion subsection, under the subsection, "Standards of Significance." For each impact identified, a level of significance is determined using the following classifications:

- Significant. A significant impact includes a description of the circumstances where an established or defined threshold would be exceeded.
- Less than Significant. A less-than-significant impact includes effects that are noticeable, but do not exceed established or defined thresholds, or can be mitigated below such thresholds.
- No Impact. A no impact conclusion describes circumstances where there is no adverse effect on the environment.
- Significant and Unavoidable. For each impact identified as being significant, the EIR identifies mitigation measures to reduce, eliminate, or avoid the adverse effect. If one or more mitigation measure would reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level successfully, this is stated in the EIR. Significant and unavoidable impacts are described where mitigation measures would not diminish these effects to less-than-significant levels. The identification of a program-level significant and unavoidable impact does not preclude the finding of less-than-significant impacts for subsequent projects that comply with the applicable regulations and meet applicable thresholds of significance.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Under CEQA, the decision as to whether an environmental effect should be considered significant is reserved to the discretion of the City of Hollister, acting as the lead agency, based on substantial evidence in the record as a whole, including views held by members of the public. An ironclad definition of significant effect is not always possible because the significance of an activity may vary based on the setting. The analysis in the Draft EIR is based on scientific and factual data that has been reviewed by the lead agency and represents the lead agency's independent judgment and conclusions.[1] This section describes the methodology for the program-level evaluation in Chapters 4.1 through 4.18 with respect to the horizon year, the baseline, the application of the proposed City of Hollister 2040 General Plan (2040 General Plan) policies, the GHG emissions-reduction strategies and actions in the proposed 2023 Climate Action Plan (2023 CAP), effects of the environment on the project, parking impacts, and cumulative impacts.

4.1.1 2040 HORIZON DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The environmental analysis in this EIR discusses the potential for adverse impacts to occur from extending the buildout potential in the EIR Study Area to horizon year 2040; increasing the buildout potential in the EIR Study Area; new and modified 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions; implementation of the proposed 2023 CAP, and the new Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP).

[1] California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Section 15064(b).

The 2040 horizon development potential under the proposed project includes the net increase of realistic development potential for the city. As shown in Table 3-3, *Proposed 2040 Buildout Projections in the EIR Study Area*, in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, of this Draft EIR, this combined projected new growth in the entire EIR Study Area for the 2040 horizon year includes approximately 6,215 new households; 6,455 new residential units; 21,635 new residents; and 5,755 new jobs.

Because the proposed project consists of three long-term policy documents (i.e., the 2040 General Plan, 2023 CAP, and ALPP) that are intended to guide future development activities and City actions, and because no specific development projects are proposed as part of the project, it is reasonable to assume that future development would occur incrementally or gradually over the buildout horizon. However, while this assumption describes the long-range nature of the proposed project, it does not prohibit or restrict when development can occur over the horizon period.

4.1.2 BASELINE

As discussed in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, although many of the goals, policies, and actions of the existing General Plan are being affirmed and incorporated into the proposed project, this EIR does not evaluate the proposed project compared to the full potential buildout allowed by the existing General Plan, but rather evaluates the impacts of the proposed project compared to existing conditions, as required by CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.2. As shown in Table 3-3, *Proposed 2040 Buildout Projections in the EIR Study Area*, in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, of this Draft EIR, the baseline (on the ground) conditions in 2019 included approximately 10,770 existing households; 11,185 existing residential units; 38,900 existing residents; and 14,270 existing jobs.

4.1.3 2040 GENERAL PLAN POLICIES

As discussed in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, the proposed goals, policies, and actions aim to reduce loss of prime agricultural lands, vehicle miles traveled, GHG emissions, air and water pollutants, energy consumption, water demand, and solid waste generation by promoting infill development; increase opportunities for alternative modes of transportation, pedestrian and bicycle access and connectivity, and local jobs; protect open space; conserve natural resources; and require adherence to green building practices. General Plan policies aim to avoid hazardous conditions and facilitate a healthy and safe environment for residents and visitors to Hollister. In addition, General Plan policies aim to protect cultural resources, including historic buildings, and ensure new development and redevelopment is compatible with neighboring land uses.

Substantive General Plan policy and action changes include the addition, removal, or functional revisions (i.e., not purely semantic) to the text in ways that have the potential to result in a physical impact on the environment. Discussions of how substantive policy changes may result in adverse physical changes are included in the analyses under each impact criterion in the “Impact Discussion” section in Chapters 4.1 through 4.18 of the Draft EIR. Amended and new policies collectively reflect the changes to the current 2005 General Plan. The proposed goals, policies, and actions have been carefully reviewed for their adequacy in reducing and/or avoiding impacts to the environment that could occur from future development in the EIR Study Area. The proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions are listed

in the impact discussions of Chapters 4.1 through 4.18 to illustrate where they would reduce impacts from potential future development in Hollister.

The content of the 2040 General Plan policies are directly integrated with and reflective of the proposed project as a whole. Therefore, impact discussions for the effects of the proposed project necessarily encompass analysis of the effects of these policies as a whole, and policies with relevance to CEQA topics are discussed in the appropriate chapters. Nonsubstantive changes include the renumbering of policies or minor text revisions, which do not have the potential to result in a physical change to the environment.

4.1.4 CLIMATE ACTION PLAN REDUCTION STRATEGIES

As described in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, the proposed 2023 CAP serves as the strategic plan for how the City will reduce GHG emissions and foster a sustainable community through 2050 and beyond. This comprehensive planning document includes the community's existing GHG emissions and provides a framework for reducing GHG emissions through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies. The CAP provides a clear roadmap to meeting the 2030, 2040, and 2050 per-capita GHG emissions target consistent with State guidance as well as demonstrate progress toward the State's goal of carbon neutrality by 2045 mandated by Executive Order (EO) B-55-18.

Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5, *Tiering and Streamlining the Analysis of Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, CAPs and other local strategic plans to reduce GHG emissions can help with the environmental review process for new development projects defined as projects under CEQA. Plans that may be used this way are referred to as Qualified GHG Reduction Strategies or Plans and must satisfy the following criteria:

- Quantify emissions, both existing and projected over a specified period, resulting from activities within a designed geographic area.
- Establish a level, based on substantial evidence, below which the contribution to GHG emissions from an activity covered by the plan would not be cumulatively considerable.
- Identify and analyze the emissions resulting from specific actions or categories of actions anticipated within the geographic area.
- Specify GHG reduction strategies or a group of strategies, including performance standards that, if implemented on a project-by-project basis, substantial evidence demonstrates they would collectively achieve the specified emissions level.
- Establish a mechanism to monitor the plan's progress toward achieving specific levels and to require amendment if the plan is not achieving those levels.
- Include an environmental review of the plan.

If these plans meet the State criteria as determined by the City as the lead agency, projects that are consistent with the local qualified reduction strategy would not result in a cumulatively considerable GHG emissions impact, reducing the need for additional analyses or mitigation measures. Additionally, the CAP must identify measures and performance standards that can be clearly shown to achieve this determination. As a result, a CAP seeking to be a Qualified GHG Reduction Strategy must have a GHG

emission-reduction target or targets that substantially reduce GHG emissions, can also be feasibly achieved, and reasonably tracked and reported over time.

As a component of the proposed project, the proposed 2023 CAP will be analyzed at a programmatic level as part of this EIR. Following certification of this EIR, this would allow the proposed 2023 CAP to support and streamline environmental review of GHG emissions for future development projects in the city pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15183.5.

Chapter 4, *Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Strategy,* of the proposed 2023 CAP, includes the strategies that are required to reduce GHG emissions. Like the proposed 2040 General Plan policies, the proposed 2023 CAP aims to reduce community-wide GHG emissions. The GHG emission-reduction strategies include a mix of education and outreach programs to encourage GHG emission-reduction activities, rebates, and other enticements to incentivize GHG emissions reductions, and mandates to require GHG emissions-reduction efforts. The GHG emission-reduction strategies also support broader sustainability initiatives.

Additionally, the proposed CAP implementation would not result in changes to the land use plan under the proposed 2040 General Plan. Thus, because there is no specific land use component associated with the proposed 2023 CAP, its implementation would not directly result in the generation of GHG emissions and associated CAP strategies would have no potential to result in additional physical impacts on the environment. The proposed 2040 General Plan will reference the proposed 2023 CAP, recognizing that the City's climate action planning efforts must be updated more regularly to be responsive to the changing regulations, guidance, technology, best practices, and science. These proposed 2023 CAP GHG emissions strategies are much more limited in scope to compliance with existing regulations (e.g., Cal Green Tier 2), updating City standards to ensure they account for energy-efficient design (e.g., Strategies 1 through 9), and reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) (e.g., Strategies 10 and 11) to decrease long-term operation-related emissions from the city's transportation sector.

4.1.5 POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT ON THE PROJECT

The California Supreme Court concluded in the *California Building Industry Association vs. Bay Area Air Quality Management District* (CBIA vs. BAAQMD) case that "CEQA generally does not require an analysis of how existing environmental conditions will impact a project's future users or residents." The CBIA vs. BAAQMD ruling provided for several exceptions to the general rule where an analysis of the project on the environment is warranted: (1) if the project would exacerbate existing environmental hazards (such as exposing hazardous waste that is currently buried); (2) if the project qualifies for certain specific specified exemptions (certain housing projects and transportation priority projects per Public Resources Code (PRC) Sections 21159.21 (f)(h), 21159.22 (a),(b)(3), 21159.23 (a)(2)(A), 21159.24 (a)(1),(3), or 21155.1 (a)(4),(6)); (3) if the project is exposed to potential noise and safety impacts on projects due to proximity to an airport (per PRC Section 21096); and (4) school projects require specific assessment of certain environmental hazards (per PRC Section 21151.8). Therefore, the evaluation of the significance of project impacts under CEQA focuses on the potential impacts of the proposed project on the environment, including whether the proposed project may exacerbate any existing environmental hazards. Existing potential environmental hazards in Hollister include seismic hazards, flooding, and wildfire. Therefore, while the effects of these hazards on the proposed project are not subject to CEQA review following the

CBIA vs. BAAQMD case,[2] the City recognizes that seismic, flooding, and wildfire hazards are issues of local concern. Therefore, a discussion of the project's potential to exacerbate these hazardous conditions is provided in Chapter 4.7, *Geology and Soils*; Chapter 4.8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions;* Chapter 4.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality;* and Chapter 4.18, *Wildfire,* of this Draft EIR.

4.1.6 PARKING IMPACTS

Effective in 2010, parking inadequacy as a significant environmental impact was eliminated from the CEQA Guidelines by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, which is the entity charged with drafting guidelines to help agencies implement CEQA. Accordingly, parking adequacy in the EIR Study Area is not discussed further in this EIR.

4.1.7 CUMULATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS

A cumulative impact consists of an impact created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR, together with other reasonably foreseeable projects causing related impacts. Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines requires an EIR to discuss cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is "cumulatively considerable." Used in this context, cumulatively considerable means that the incremental effects of an individual 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. In the case of a long-range plan such as the proposed 2040 General Plan, cumulative effects occur when future development under the long-range plan is combined with development in the surrounding areas, or in some instances, in the entire region.

Where the incremental effect of a project is not "cumulatively considerable," a lead agency need not consider that effect significant but must briefly describe its basis for concluding that the incremental effect is not cumulatively considerable. The CEQA Guidelines state that a lead agency has discretion to determine if a project's contribution to a significant cumulative impact is cumulatively considerable.

The cumulative discussions in Chapters 4.1 through 4.18 of this Draft EIR explain the geographic scope of the area affected by each cumulative effect (e.g., immediate project vicinity, county, watershed, or air basin). The geographic area considered for each cumulative impact depends on the impact that is being analyzed. For example, in assessing macro-scale air quality impacts, all development within the air basin contributes to regional emissions of criteria pollutants, and basinwide projections of emissions are the best tool for determining the cumulative impact. In assessing aesthetic impacts, on the other hand, only development within the local area of change would contribute to a cumulative visual effect since the area of change is only visible in its vicinity.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 permits two different methodologies for the cumulative impact analysis:

[2] *California Building Industry Association v. Bay Area Air Quality Management District* (2015) 62 Cal.4th 369.

- The "list" approach permits the use of a list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including projects both within and outside the city.
- The "projections" approach allows the use of a summary of projections in an adopted plan or related planning document, such as a regional transportation plan, or in an EIR prepared for such a plan. The projections may be supplemented with additional information such as regional modeling.

The cumulative impact analysis in this Draft EIR relies on a projections approach and takes into account growth from the proposed project within the EIR Study Area in combination with impacts from projected growth in the rest of San Benito County and the surrounding region, as forecast by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Government's (AMBAG's) *2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan & the Sustainable Communities Strategy* (2045 AMBAG MTP/SCS).[3] The following provides a summary of the cumulative impact setting for each impact area:

- Aesthetics: The cumulative setting for visual/aesthetic impacts includes potential future development under the proposed project combined with effects of development on lands adjacent to the city in unincorporated San Benito County.
- Agricultural Resources: The geographic scope of the cumulative analysis for agricultural resources considers those agriculture resources deemed to be resources of statewide importance in the surrounding incorporated and unincorporated lands, the region, and the state.
- Air Quality: Cumulative air quality impacts could occur from a combination of the proposed project with regional growth within the North Central Coast Air Basin.
- Biological Resources: The geographic scope of the cumulative analysis for biological resources considers the surrounding incorporated and unincorporated lands and the region.
- Cultural and Tribal Resources: Cumulative impacts to cultural and tribal resources could occur from projected growth in the surrounding region.
- Energy: Cumulative impacts to energy resources could occur from the estimated growth in the energy provider's (i.e., Central Coast Community Energy and Pacific Gas and Electric Company) service area.
- Geology and Soils: Potentially cumulative geological impacts could arise from future growth in the immediate vicinity of San Benito County.
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions: The cumulative impact analyses for GHG emissions are related to the entire region. Because GHG emissions are not confined to a particular air basin but are dispersed worldwide, the cumulative impact analysis focuses on the global impacts and thus, is by nature cumulative.
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials: The cumulative analysis considers the effects of growth in the rest of San Benito County and surrounding region.

[3] Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), 2022. 2045 M*etropolitan Transportation Plan & the Sustainable Communities Strategy* (MTP/SCS). https://www.ambag.org/plans/2045-metropolitan-transportation-plan-sustainable-communities-strategy, accessed November 28, 2022.

- Hydrology and Water Quality: The geographic context used for the cumulative assessment of hydrology and water quality impacts, including the potential to exacerbate the potential for flooding, considers the watersheds that encompass Hollister.
- Land Use and Planning: The geographic context for the cumulative land use and planning effects considers impacts from projected growth in the rest of San Benito County and the surrounding region, as forecast in the 2045 AMBAG MTP/SCS.
- Noise: The vehicle traffic noise levels are based on cumulative traffic conditions that consider cumulative development in the San Benito County region.
- Population and Housing: Impacts from cumulative growth are considered in the context of their consistency with regional planning efforts in the San Benito County region.
- Public Services and Recreation: Cumulative impacts are considered in the context of projected growth in the rest of San Benito County and the surrounding region, as forecast by the 2045 AMBAG MTP/SCS, and contiguous with the service area boundaries of the service providers evaluated in this section.
- Transportation: The analysis of the proposed project addresses cumulative impacts to the transportation network in the surrounding area.
- Utilities and Service Systems: Cumulative impacts are considered in the context of the estimated growth in each utility's service area.
- Wildfire: The analysis of the proposed project includes a discussion of how cumulative development in the region may exacerbate wildfire risk in Hollister and the surrounding area.

4.1 AESTHETICS

This chapter describes the potential aesthetics impacts associated with the approval and implementation of the proposed project. This chapter describes the regulatory framework and existing conditions, identifies criteria used to determine impact significance, provides an analysis of the potential aesthetics impacts, and identifies policies that could minimize any potentially significant impacts.

4.1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.1.1.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

State Regulations

California State Scenic Highway Program

California's Scenic Highway Program was created by the State legislature in 1963. Its purpose is to protect and enhance the natural scenic beauty of California highways and adjacent corridors through special conservation treatment. The State laws governing the Scenic Highways Program are found in the Streets and Highways Code, Sections 260 through 263. The California Scenic Highway Program is maintained by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

California Building Code

The State of California provides a minimum standard for building design through Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations, commonly referred to as the California Building Code (CBC). The CBC is in Part 2 of Title 24. The CBC is updated on a three-year cycle. It is effective statewide, but a local jurisdiction may adopt more restrictive standards based on local conditions under specific amendment rules prescribed by the State Building Standards Commission. The City of Hollister regularly adopts each new CBC update under the Hollister Municipal Code (HMC) Chapter 15.04, *Hollister Building Code*. The CBC includes standards for outdoor lighting that are intended to reduce light pollution and glare by regulating light power and brightness, shielding, and sensor controls.

California Building Code: CALGreen

The California Building Standards Commission adopted the California Green Building Standards Code, also known as CALGreen. As part of the CBC, CALGreen is in Part 11 of Title 24. CALGreen establishes building standards aimed at enhancing the design and construction of buildings through the use of building concepts that reduce negative impacts and increase positive environmental impacts by encouraging sustainable construction practices. Specifically, Section 5.106.8, *Light Pollution Reduction*, establishes backlight, uplight, and glare ratings to minimize the effects of light pollution for nonresidential development. The local building permit process enforces the mandatory provisions of CALGreen. The City of Hollister regularly adopts each new CALGreen update under HMC Chapter 15.04, *Hollister Building Code.*

AESTHETICS

Regional Regulations

Wayfinding System Master Plan

San Benito County drafted and adopted the 2016 Multi-Governmental Wayfinding System Wayfinding Master Plan (Wayfinding Master Plan) to implement the City of Hollister's 2013 comprehensive branding study, which called for a civic wayfinding system that would assist travelers in identifying known areas and navigating the greater San Benito County. The Wayfinding Master Plan directs users to existing destinations and intends to create experiences along the route. Guidelines and general design characteristics have been developed to ensure the success of the wayfinding signage system, and design criteria include location, orientation, consistency, user-friendliness, minimalism, aesthetics, and sustainability.

Local Regulations

Hollister Municipal Code

The HMC includes various directives to minimize adverse impacts to visual resources in Hollister. The HMC is organized by title, chapter, and section. Most provisions related to aesthetics impacts are included in Title 15, *Buildings and Construction*; Title 16, *Subdivisions*; and Title 17, *Zoning* as follows:

- Chapter 16.20, ***Design Standards***. This chapter regulates design standards for subdivisions, specifically regulating residential lots to be designed to preserve the maximum number of trees and natural amenities. On larger lots, setbacks are extended to preserve trees and to prevent unnecessary interference with views from other lots. This chapter ensures residential lots contain adequate building sites for a structure of reasonably expected size and type. In addition, Section 16.20.030, *Blocks*, regulates walkways to include adequate lighting for pedestrians.
- Title 17, ***Zoning***. In addition to the General Plan, the Zoning Ordinance is the primary tool that shapes the form and character of physical development in Hollister. The Zoning Ordinance contains all the zoning districts, and identifies land use standards, site development regulations, and other general provisions that ensure consistency between the General Plan and proposed development projects. Section 17.02.010, *Purpose*, states that the Hollister Zoning Ordinance is, among other things, intended to provide standards for orderly growth and development that will maintain a high quality of life without causing unduly costs for development or restrictions on private enterprise, initiative, or innovation in design; conserve and protect natural resources; provide a diversity of areas characterized by differing land use activities, scale, and intensity while maintaining community identity and quality development; and maintain the unique, distinctive, and secure environment. The Zoning Ordinance sets forth the development standards related to visual resources as follows:
  - Chapter 17.16, ***Performance Standards***. This chapter defines the performance standards for specific land uses, land use activities, and site-specific conditions. Section 17.16.050, *Fencing*, screening, and walls, protects the economic and aesthetic values, and ensures safe travel and vision clearance by regulating the development of fences, walls, and screening. Section 17.16.080, *Landscaping design and standards*, provides landscaping regulations intended to visually enhance the appearance of developments, reduce heat and glare, screen incompatible land uses, preserve

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

- Chapter 17.20, *Signs*. Section 17.20.010, *Purpose*, states that this chapter is intended to regulate the design, character, location, number, type, quality of materials, size, illumination, and maintenance of signs in the city. These regulations help to preserve the visual character of the city and its interest in maintaining and enhancing its visual appeal for tourists and other visitors by preventing the degradation of visual quality, which can result from excess signage. Section 17.20.0500, *Design Standards*, outlines specific design criteria and restrictions for defined sign types. These standards include design continuity that requires all signs comply with building theme and placement, use common materials, colors, and illumination. Section 17.20.140, *Signs on agricultural lands*, further restricts the type of signs that may be permitted. This section established the type of signs permitted in agricultural zoning districts. Section 17.20.130, *Public facility/institutional and open space regulations*, establishes the types of signs permitted for public and quasi-public uses in other zoning districts to preserve the visual character of the community. Section 17.20.100, *Signs in residential zoning districts*, establishes stricter sign regulations in residential zones to be compliant with building design with specified exemptions. These regulations defend the visual peace and tranquility of Hollister neighborhoods.
- Chapter 17.22, *Requirements for Special Land Uses*. This chapter establishes regulations governing the location, maximum height, size, and design requirements for certain land uses that are allowed within zoning districts. Development standards are applied to uses ranging from accessory agricultural structures to bed and breakfast inns to swimming pools, orienting views to and from the uses through preservation, screening, or other measures. Article II of the chapter regulates telecommunication facilities including the design, placement, permitting, and monitoring of facilities consistent with applicable federal standards. These regulations are in part intended to preserve the visual appearance of the city.
- Chapter 17.24, *Administration and Enforcement*. This chapter provides procedures and requirements for the preparation, filing and initial processing of applications for permits, variances, and land use entitlements required by this Zoning Ordinance. Section 17.24.190, *Site and Architectural Review*, requires review and approval prior to development as to the height, width, shape, proportions, and exterior construction design of buildings and other structures to ensure architectural compatibility with surrounding areas. Section 17.24.240(E), *Design Review Procedures,* emphasizes the importance of review of projects for architectural and site plan design. Section 17.24.240, *Planned Development Permits*, defines the permitting of planned developments to provide maximum flexibility in site planning/property development, design, and

density/intensity, while protecting the integrity and character of the residential areas of the city; encourage innovation and development of affordable housing; and ensure consistency with the General Plan.

Hollister Downtown Design Guidelines

In 2008, the City prepared the Hollister Downtown Plan for Downtown Hollister, a revitalization plan with a series of visions to help the City's downtown area evolve over time with specific projects that was not formally adopted by City Council. Section 7, *Design Guidelines*, of the Hollister Downtown Plan, herein referred to as the Downtown Design Guidelines, is however used by the City for redevelopment and new development. The Downtown Design Guidelines are used to coordinate and orchestrate the overall development of the downtown area so that each development project exudes quality and contributes to a better, more livable, and vital downtown. The Downtown Design Guidelines are applied to new development projects as well as downtown projects that involve the rehabilitation of historic buildings. The Downtown Design Guidelines address site planning, building form, roofs, building façades, projecting façade elements, landscaping, fences and walls, lighting, service areas and mechanical equipment, and business signage for four types of buildings in downtown:

- Main Street Commercial Buildings. The design guidelines for main street commercial buildings, which should be located primarily along San Benito Street and Fifth Street, promote thoughtfully designed commercial areas with aesthetic features to make them dynamic, community-focused, historic, and safe.
- Apartment Flat Buildings. The design guidelines for apartment buildings are focused in several areas east of East Street and south of Sixth Street. The guidelines for these areas encourage muted colors, simple windows, shade trees, and other design elements to conform with overall community character. These guidelines also encourage rehabilitation of existing cannery facilities that are no longer viable to reflect the historic cannery use of this district.
- Townhouse Buildings. The design guidelines for townhouse buildings are focused in areas east of East Street and south of Sixth Street. Entrances should be provided to different units at one entrance per unit on the front façade, and each unit should be differentiated from adjacent units with different designs, materials, or colors while remaining compatible to adjacent units. The Downtown Design Guidelines encourage visual diversity across buildings while retaining cohesive community character.
- Detached House Buildings. Downtown Hollister has several existing neighborhoods with detached houses as the primary building type, but these guidelines apply to detached houses in a small area along South Street between Sally Street and Prospect Avenue. These guidelines help the area serve as a visual transition between the higher-density apartment community and the existing neighborhood south of South Street. Some existing detached houses may function as offices within the Home Office overlay zone, and have additional guidelines to accommodate the office use while maintaining the residential character.

Hollister Park Facility Master Plan

Hollister's 2018 Park Facility Master Plan (PFMP) assesses existing City parks and recreation facilities and recommends future priority projects and potential funding mechanisms. Chapter 5, *Best Practices*, of the

PFMP, includes Park Design Guidelines for each park type (e.g., pocket parks, neighborhood park). These guidelines allow for flexibility and creativity to respond to the unique needs and demographic of the residents within the focus area for construction of each park. The guidelines encourage best practices in park design, custom tailored to Hollister.

4.1.1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

State Scenic Highways

Caltrans has not designated any highway within Hollister or the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Study Area as a State Scenic Highway. The nearest officially designated State Scenic Highway is in Merced County to the northeast and Monterey County to the southwest, neither of which are visible from the EIR Study Area due to the natural topography and distance.[1]

Regional Character

The City of Hollister is within the San Benito Valley, southeast of Gilroy, and east of San Juan Bautista. The city is surrounded by rolling foothills (as part of greater mountain ranges) on three sides: the Gabilan Mountains to the south and west and the Diablo Range to the east. In addition, the Coastal Mountains in the distant west also ring the valley. These mountain ranges provide a natural backdrop to the city's developed landscape and serve as visually significant attributes to San Benito County scenic character. The City Limits have been largely defined by Hollister's immediate agricultural surroundings. The visual character within the EIR Study Area has transformed over the past four decades from a rural, agricultural community to a suburban community consisting of residential areas and commercial strips, sprawling into farmlands on the boundary of the Sphere of Influence and into outer edges of the Hollister Urban Service Area and Hollister's Planning Area.

Visual Character and Built Form

Hollister has evolved over the past 150 years from the downtown outwards and the urban areas are connected through a series of highways and roadway corridors. Most edges of the city quickly transition into agricultural or open space, further supporting a sense of entrance into the urban environment.

The physical form of Hollister's neighborhoods has been heavily influenced by the city's growth pattern over the past century and a half. Hollister began with the establishment of the downtown area, which served as a commerce center for the surrounding agricultural region. The city developed from this central core through a series of commercial corridors and suburban neighborhoods. Residential neighborhoods are mostly single-family one- and two-story homes built in a variety of architectural styles. Commercial areas include large setbacks and significant amounts of parking and the buildings integrate few architectural adornments.

[1] California Department of Transportation, 2022, California Scenic Highway Mapping System, https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aacaa, accessed on January 30, 2022.

AESTHETICS

Over time, Hollister has grown and evolved into a suburban community that serves as the commercial, economic, civic, cultural, and educational center of San Benito County. Most of the development in Hollister is residential. Single-family, one- and two-story homes represent the majority of residential development. Some multifamily housing is dispersed throughout the city, mainly along arterial and collector streets. The visual character of Hollister is defined by a lack of visually cohesive community design elements, as demonstrated by a variety of competing land uses, building scales, and building types. The following is a summary of the urban form characteristics and unique community character elements for each of the city's eight Special Planning Areas:

- North Gateway. This area includes primarily commercial uses along the San Felipe Road corridor. One-story commercial buildings with few architectural details, large parking lots, and deep setbacks from the roadways dominate the corridor. Businesses include car dealerships, hotels, and fast-food restaurants. San Felipe Road includes decorative landscaping and is the northern gateway to the downtown.
- West Gateway. This area covers the area surrounding the San Juan Road corridor from Westside Boulevard to Graf Road. As its name implies, this Special Planning Area is the western entrance to the city. The corridor includes mostly vacant parcels. However, a few single-family neighborhoods, a mobile home park, and limited single-story, strip-commercial uses are found along the corridor.
- Downtown Special Planning Area. This area includes a mix of one- to four-story early-twentieth century buildings that reflect the small-town agricultural character and history of Hollister. Downtown has a walkable, gridded street network. Historic civic and commercial buildings front most streets with little or no building setback. This dense and compact development pattern provides an ideal pedestrian environment, with sidewalks, occasional street trees, and pedestrian crosswalks at major intersections. The structure of the downtown was shaped significantly by the 1989 earthquake and the decentralization of commercial services due to auto-oriented development. During the 1989 earthquake along the Calaveras Fault, buildings along the 400 block of west side of San Benito Street were largely destroyed. This area remains largely vacant today.
- "Old Town" Special Planning Area. This area contains some of Hollister's most diverse architecture distributed through a neighborhood of historical homes, and new development is required to blend with existing structures. The buildings in the area include a variety of architectural styles and range of sizes but the neighborhood is generally characterized by wide, shaded streets with single-family residences. They also reflect an integration of income levels and social classes within the neighborhoods. Some of the homes interspersed in the area were constructed after World War II and have a contemporary style.
- Home Office Special Planning Area. This area is within the "Old Town" Residential area. It allows professionals to use an economically viable area free of high-volume automobile and pedestrian traffic for business. This area preserves the residential façade of buildings and front yard landscaping while allowing special office uses adjoining residences.
- Buena Vista Road Special Planning Area. This area includes the corridor between State Route (SR) 156 and San Benito Street. The area is largely undeveloped and includes active farmsteads, mostly row crops and a few orchards, attached with older, ranch-style single-family homes on large agricultural parcels. Buena Vista Road is a highly trafficked corridor in Hollister that at the time of this Draft EIR is undergoing a Complete Streets project, which will improve road conditions, safety, and amenities to

include bicycle lanes, safe pedestrian crossings, shade trees, and placemaking elements to address overall safety.

- Union Road Special Planning Area. This area includes the corridor between San Benito Street and Airline Highway. Union Road is a two-lane corridor that serves as an east-west connection across the southern edge of the city. Primarily surrounded by agricultural land, this rural area is facing urbanization as the community spreads and the surrounding development intensifies. The City anticipates improving traffic conditions and safety on Union Road through road and infrastructure improvement projects while preserving views to the surrounding natural environment.
- Meridian Street Planning Area. This is the area between Santa Ana Road, Santa Ana Creek, Hillcrest Road, and Fairview Road. Although this area is largely undeveloped and intersected by a creek, there are several ranchettes in the area and a newer large-lot, single-family neighborhood with one- and two-story ranch-style homes.

Scenic Corridors and Vistas

Scenic corridors can be defined as an enclosed area of landscape, viewed as a single entity that includes the total field of vision visible from a specific point, or a series of points along a linear transportation route. Public view corridors are areas in which short-range, medium-range, and long-range views are available from publicly accessible viewpoints, such as from county roads or public plazas or sidewalks. A scenic road is defined as a highway, road, drive, or street that, in addition to its transportation function, provides opportunities for the enjoyment of natural and human-made scenic resources. Scenic roads direct views to areas of exceptional beauty, natural resources, landmarks, or features of historic or cultural interest. While there are no designated scenic roads or corridors in the EIR Study Area, pursuant to the California Scenic Highway Mapping System, SR 25 and SR 156 are eligible state scenic highways. SR 25, a four-lane highway, intersects the northern City Limits and travels through the eastern edge of the City Limits. SR 156 is a mostly two-lane highway and travels along the northwest and west side of the EIR Study Area.

Scenic vistas are generally interpreted as long-range views of a specific scenic feature (e.g., open space lands, mountain ridges, bay, or ocean views). Public views are those that can be seen from vantage points that are publicly accessible, such as streets, freeways, parks, and vista points. These views are generally available to a greater number of people than private views. Private views are those views that can be seen from vantage points on private property.

Hollister has a primarily flat topography with low foothills near the San Benito River, on the east side of the EIR Study Area, that does not facilitate short-range views. However, the EIR Study Area is in a basin that is surrounded on three sides by mountainous terrain; the Gabilan Mountains are to the south and west and the Quien Sabe Range (part of the greater Diablo Range) are to the east. These mountains form a natural background to an agricultural and suburban landscape that has been highly modified over the past few decades. These views provide physical orientation and are integral to the community's sense of place. While there are no designated scenic vistas in Hollister, due to the primarily flat topography of the EIR Study Area, the mountainous terrain of the Gabilan Mountains to the south and west and the Quien Sabe Range (part of the greater Diablo Range) to the east offer long-range views to a scenic background.

Unobstructed views of these surrounding hills are encountered throughout the EIR Study Area when existing development does not limit the public vantage point.

As Hollister has developed in recent decades, new development has constrained views of the natural surroundings. Building heights are limited by zoning district, as designated in the HMC, where residential zones never exceed 40 feet in building height, and commercial, mixed-use, and industrial zones reach a maximum of 75 feet in building height in some zones. Other than general screening measures required for development in some zoning districts, the City does not have scenic view corridor or vista protection requirements.

Light and Glare

Light pollution refers to all forms of unwanted light in the night sky, including glare, light trespass, sky glow, and over-lighting. Views of the night sky are an important part of the natural environment. Excessive light and glare can be visually disruptive to humans and nocturnal animal species. Light pollution in Hollister is restricted primarily to street lighting along local streets, private property, and to nighttime illumination of shopping centers.

4.1.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

As previously stated in Section 4.1.1.2, *Existing Conditions*, there are no State-designated scenic highways in the EIR Study Area.[2] Consequently, the proposed project would not result in significant environmental impacts related to substantial damage to scenic resources within a State scenic highway or within the viewshed of a State scenic highway, and the following standard is not discussed further in this EIR.

- Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

Implementation of the proposed project would result in a significant aesthetic impact if it would:

1. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
2. In nonurbanized 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 point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.
3. Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.
4. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect aesthetics.

[2] California Department of Transportation, 2022, California Scenic Highway Mapping System, https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aacaa, accessed on January 30, 2022.

4.1.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

This section analyzes the proposed project's potential impacts to aesthetics. The evaluation of aesthetics and aesthetic impacts is highly subjective. It requires the application of a process that objectively identifies the visual features of the environment and their importance. Aesthetic description involves identifying existing visual character, including visual resources and scenic vistas unique to Hollister (see Section 4.1.1.2, *Existing Conditions*). Changes to aesthetic resources due to implementation of the proposed project are identified and qualitatively evaluated based on the proposed modifications to the existing setting and the viewer's sensitivity. Project-related aesthetic impacts are determined using the threshold criteria discussed in Section 4.1.2, *Standards of Significance*.

AES-1 Implementation of the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

2040 General Plan

Future development under the proposed 2040 General Plan would have the potential to affect scenic vistas if new or intensified development blocked views of areas that provide or contribute to such vistas. Potential effects could include blocking views of a scenic vista from specific publicly accessible vantage points or the alteration of the overall scenic vista itself. Such alterations could be positive or negative depending on the characteristics of individual future developments and the subjective perception of observers.

As discussed previously in Section 4.1.1.2, *Existing Conditions,* scenic vistas in terms of this analysis are limited to those accessible by the general public. While there are no designated scenic vistas in Hollister, due to the primarily flat topography of the EIR Study Area, there are unobstructed views of the mountainous terrain of the Gabilan Mountains to the south and west and the Quien Sabe Range (part of the greater Diablo Range) throughout the EIR Study Area when existing development does not limit the public vantage point.

Potential future development under the proposed 2040 General Plan is largely expected to occur in existing urban areas, primarily in the form of infill/intensification on sites either already developed and/or underutilized or in close proximity to existing development. This type of future development would have a lesser impact on scenic vistas than an undeveloped area or isolated parcel away from existing development. The proposed 2040 General Plan includes the potential for development of buildings that are taller than those that currently exist, which in some locations may have the potential to impact the scenic views of the hillsides.

The proposed Land Use and Community Design (LU) and Open Space and Agriculture (OS) Elements of the 2040 General Plan contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to scenic vistas and resources. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts on scenic vistas:

AESTHETICS

Goal LU-16: Maintain and enhance Hollister's small-town charm and identity. Ensure orderly development with attractive and high-quality design. (Goal LU1)

- Policy LU-16.4: Design Review. Require design review of all new development, redevelopment, and exterior modifications to multi-family, commercial, office, and industrial buildings. (new)

Goal OS-1: Preserve and protect open space and the natural environment for all to enjoy. (Goal OS1)

- Policy OS-1.1: Open Space Preservation. Retain and protect open space areas through the protection of prime farmlands, the prevention of new development in areas subject to natural and human-caused hazards, that serve as wildlife habitat or as visual assets for the community, and where the development of additional parks and trails is possible. Open space areas can also function as connections between neighborhoods, for example with the creation of pedestrian pathways in environmentally appropriate areas. (Policy OS1.1)
- Policy OS-1.2: Access to Open Space. Encourage access to open space areas in the design of adjacent development. Secure access paths as part of subdivision approvals and design access paths to avoid or minimize neighborhood and user conflicts with sensitive wildlife habitat areas. (Policy OS1.8)
- Policy OS-1.3: Cluster Development. Wherever feasible, encourage those proposing development to cluster planned residential development, leaving open space buffers in proposed site plans, particularly on the borders of development facing agricultural uses and State Routes 25 and 156. This will diminish the potential for land use conflicts and improve opportunities for visual harmonization between agricultural and urban activities. (Policy OS1.2)
- Policy OS-1.4: Utilities in Open Space. Discourage utilities in open space areas. Necessary utilities in open space should be located and designed to minimize harm to the area's environmental and visual quality. (Policy OS1.6)
- Action OS-1.1: Open Space Management Plan(s). Prepare one or more Open Space Management Plan(s) and zoning amendments that address the following:
  - Use and ongoing maintenance of open space areas.
  - Appropriate access points, parking areas, public information signage, and trail extensions.
  - Restoration of erosion and other degraded areas.
  - Guidelines for the location of amenities such as picnic tables and benches.
  - Activities harmful to the open space environment, including illegal camping and campfires and disease control, urban/wildlife interface, recreation, and other uses.
  - Vegetation management and protection issues.

  This work should be accomplished with guidance by a committee with representatives from neighborhood associations, environmental organizations, user groups, and other stakeholders. (Implementation Measure OS.B)

The proposed 2040 General Plan reinforces existing uses, heights, and densities in most locations, with allowances for greater intensity only in a limited number of locations. As shown on Figure 3-5, *2040 General Plan Land Use Map*, in Chapter 3, *Project Description,* of this Draft EIR, land uses that could

generate denser and potentially taller buildings are primarily limited to the existing built environment where buildings of a variety of heights partially obstruct views from the public viewing locations that are at the pedestrian-level. Furthermore, all potential future development that is subject to discretionary approval would be required to undergo site and architectural review and design review prior to project approval pursuant to HMC Section 17.24.190 and Section 17.24.240(E), as necessary. HMC Section 17.24.190 requires review and approval prior to development as to the height, width, shape, proportions, and exterior construction design of buildings and other structures to ensure architectural compatibility with surrounding areas. HMC Section 17.24.240(E) emphasizes the importance of review of projects for architectural and site plan design. Each Planned Development Permit application shall be reviewed to ensure that the application is consistent with development standards, zoning regulations, and adopted design guidelines/policies as applicable. Furthermore, for development in the downtown, the Downtown Design Guidelines would address site planning, building form, roofs, building façades, projecting façade elements, landscaping, fences and walls, lighting, service areas and mechanical equipment, and business signage.

While future developments under the proposed project could potentially impact scenic vistas, such developments would be required to adhere to the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions and HMC regulations discussed previously. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality and the impact would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 Climate Action Plan (CAP) is a strategic plan focused on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any visual resources or land use changes that would affect aesthetics, implementation of the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP) is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any visual resources or land use changes that would affect aesthetics, implementation of the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

AES-2 Implementation of the proposed project would not, in nonurbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings.

2040 General Plan

An "urbanized area," as defined by California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Section 21071, is an incorporated city that either has a population of at least 100,000 persons, or a population of 100,000 persons if the population of that city and not more than two contiguous incorporated cities combined equals at least 100,000 persons. As described in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, of the Draft EIR, the population of Hollister was approximately 38,900 as of 2019, and it is not adjacent to another incorporated city. Therefore, this impact analysis addresses whether, for a nonurbanized area, the proposed project would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings.

The proposed 2040 General Plan designates land for urban uses in areas that are or are near existing agricultural or open space areas, architectural styles, building heights, and new parking and landscaping on parcels throughout the EIR Study Area where new development or redevelopment would affect the overall visual character of the EIR Study Area as a whole and of areas around development sites. This is particularly true for individual neighborhoods in Hollister, which each have distinct characters and needs. With the expected growth of the city by 2040 and expansion of urban uses, including residential, to accommodate the projected growth, new development could substantially alter the existing rural and agricultural appearance of undeveloped areas. To some people, this change in appearance from agricultural or rural residential landscapes to land developed with neighborhoods, parks, and schools could be considered a deterioration of the visual character, while others may consider it an improvement. However, a change in land use does not necessarily mean degradation of visual character.

Given the flat topography and rural setting of Hollister, vistas are limited to the surrounding agricultural lands or open spaces within the EIR Study Area or the surrounding Gabilan Mountains to the south and west and the Quien Sabe Range to the west. The proposed 2040 General Plan recognizes that natural resources from agricultural lands or open spaces within and surrounding the EIR Study Area provide aesthetic value along with other benefits.

As new development allowed by the proposed 2040 General Plan is built, the relationship between new development and existing nearby land uses could degrade the visual character if new development is not designed to be sensitive to its setting.

As described in Section 4.1.1.1, *Regulatory Framework,* all potential future development that is subject to discretionary approval would be required to undergo site and architectural review and design review prior to project approval pursuant to HMC Section 17.24.190 and Section 17.24.240(E), as necessary. HMC Section 17.24.190 requires review and approval prior to development as to the height, width, shape, proportions, and exterior construction design of buildings and other structures to ensure architectural compatibility with surrounding areas. HMC Section 17.24.240(E) emphasizes the importance of review of projects for architectural and site plan design. Each Planned Development Permit application shall be reviewed to ensure that the application is consistent with development standards, zoning regulations, and

adopted design guidelines/policies as applicable. Furthermore, for development in the downtown area, the Downtown Design Guidelines would address site planning, building form, roofs, building façades, projecting façade elements, landscaping, fences and walls, lighting, service areas and mechanical equipment, and business signage.

In addition, the proposed Land Use and Community Design (LU) Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals and policies that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts that development could have on scenic quality. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions, in addition to those listed under Impact Discussion AES-1, would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts on scenic quality.

Goal LU-16: Maintain and enhance Hollister's small-town charm and identity. Ensure orderly development with attractive and high-quality design. (Goal LU1)

- Policy LU-16.2: Neighborhood Scale. Preserve and enhance the character of existing residential neighborhoods by limiting encroachment of new buildings and activities that are out of scale and character with surrounding uses. (Policy LU8.4)
- Policy LU-16.3: Design Compatibility. Ensure that exterior modifications of commercial, office, and industrial uses are compatible with the surrounding area. (new)
- Policy LU-16.10: Signs and Billboards. Require signs and billboards to be designed and located to minimize any negative impact on the visual environment and to fit within the scale and character of buildings. (Policy LU1.8)
- Policy LU-16.11: Underground Utility Lines. When approving new development, require the undergrounding of utility lines that serve the property. (Policy LU1.5)
- Action LU-16.1: Design Guidelines. Develop city-wide design guidelines and/or objective design standards to cover residential, commercial, and industrial uses. The design guidelines should also include standards for streetscape improvements to make the right-of-ways more attractive and pedestrian friendly. The streetscape standards should show how the selected streets can be improved with decorative lighting, crosswalks, gateways, and additional landscaping. (new)
- Action LU-16.2: City Entrances. Conduct a study to design and finance improvements to the major entrances into the city with landmark entry features, signs and gateways. The study should cover the west and north gateways along Fourth Street, Highway 25, and San Felipe Road. The study could be conducted with or consider funding from civic organizations and/or local businesses. (Policy LU1.6 and Implementation Measure LU.I)

Goal LU-18: Develop and maintain attractive landscaping on public and private properties, open space, and public gathering spaces. (Goal LU3)

- Policy LU-18.1: Landscaping on Public and Private Sites. Require landscaping on new public and private sites, including entry areas, street medians, parks, schools, parking lots, plazas, courtyards and recreational areas. (Policy LU3.6)
- Policy LU-18.11: On-going Landscape Maintenance. Require on-going maintenance of landscaping on multi-family, commercial, office, and industrial properties, including maintenance of street trees and replacing trees and other planting materials which become damaged or are dying. (new)

AESTHETICS

As previously stated, all potential future development that is subject to design review would be required to adhere to the standards and guidelines of the HMC and the Downtown Design Guidelines, which set minimum standards for architectural features and details, site planning and design, neighborhood and streetscapes, and landscaping to enhance and preserve the visual integrity of Hollister. While development resulting from implementation of the 2040 General Plan could potentially impact visual character or quality of public views in the EIR Study Area, such development would be required to adhere to the proposed goals, policies, and actions, with adopted zoning regulations, and with additional adopted standards. These regulations would ensure that new development is designed to be compatible with existing development and uses high-quality building materials and design techniques. Accordingly, impacts would be *less than significant* and no mitigation measures are required.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any visual resources or land use changes that would affect aesthetics, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any visual resources or land use changes that would affect aesthetics, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

AES-3 Implementation of the proposed project would not create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

2040 General Plan

Nighttime illumination and glare impacts are the effects of a development's exterior lighting on adjoining uses and areas. Future development under the proposed 2040 General Plan would intensify related lighting sources. In addition to new building, security, and lighting for parking areas, future development would also include lighting that would illuminate development locations. Because the proposed project

anticipates an increase in development throughout the EIR Study Area, its implementation would introduce more exterior glazing (i.e., windows and doors) that could result in new sources of glare.

Currently, the EIR Study Area contains many existing sources of nighttime illumination. These include street and parking area lights, building-mounted lights, illuminated signage, security lighting, and exterior lighting on existing residential, commercial, and institutional buildings. Glare is primarily from building materials and parked cars. Additional on-site light and glare is caused by surrounding land uses and traffic on SR 25 and SR 156.

Implementation of the 2040 General Plan would result in potential future development, which would intensify related lighting sources. Future lighting would involve uses similar to the existing downtown, suburban, and rural uses in the EIR Study Area and sources of light and glare associated with these uses would be similar in intensity and nature to the existing source of light and glare. In addition to new building, security, and lighting for parking areas, buildout of the EIR Study Area would also include lighting that would illuminate future development locations. In addition to lighting and glare associated with potential future buildings and lighting infrastructure (e.g., streetlights, commercial signage), the proposed project encourages the use of solar photovoltaic panels, pursuant to the following policies in the Natural Resources and Conservation (NRC) Element:

- Policy NRC-5.1: Development Practices to Conserve Resources. Promote development practices, which will result in the conservation of energy, water, minerals, and other natural resources, and promote the use of renewable energy technologies, such as solar and wind, when possible. (Policy NRC3.1)
- Policy NRC-5-3: Resource-Efficient Building Design. Promote and encourage residences and businesses to be resource, energy, and water efficient by creating incentives and removing obstacles to promote their use. Require those proposing new development to incorporate energy conservation measures in the design and construction of all proposed residential, commercial, industrial, and public buildings. This would include:
  - Shading of parking lots and summertime shading of south-facing windows
  - Requiring those proposing new development to design all proposed commercial, office, and industrial structures with high-efficiency heating-ventilation-air conditioning (HVAC) systems for maximum energy efficiency
  - Requiring those proposing new development to design all window systems to reduce thermal gain during warm weather and heat loss during cool weather
  - Encouraging the use of domestic solar energy. (Policy NRC3.4 & Implementation Measures NRC.S)
- Policy NRC-5-6: Title 24 Requirements. Require new development projects to meet or exceed Title 24 energy conservation requirements, and, where possible, require structural and landscaping design to make use of natural heating and cooling. Encourage the use of solar and alternative energy technologies to meet or exceed Title 24 requirements. (Implementation Measures NRC.J)
- Policy NRC-5-8: Solar Design. Promote the use of solar energy and develop design standards relating to solar orientation, including landscaping, and appropriate impervious surfaces. (Implementation Measures NRC.P)

AESTHETICS

The potential for glare impacts as a result of photovoltaic panels would depend on the placement and angle of the panels, and the materials with which the panels are composed.

Nighttime uses associated with potential future development may increase light intensity levels in development areas and may have the potential to affect existing and future nearby sensitive receptors. If lighting in new development is not designed to reduce upwardly directed light, nighttime lighting could obscure views of the night sky or intrude into neighboring properties. Potential future development would also incrementally increase glare due to the new building surfaces, parked cars, and solar panel if exterior glazing (i.e., windows and doors), and site planning (i.e., landscaping and solar panel placement) are not carefully considered.

The proposed Land Use and Community Design (LU) Element of the 2040 General Plan contains a goal and policy that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts related to an increase in light and glare. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goal and policy would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts as a result of new sources of light and glare:

Goal LU-16: Maintain and enhance Hollister's small-town charm and identity. Ensure orderly development with attractive and high-quality design. (Goal LU1)

- Policy LU-16.2: Neighborhood Scale. Preserve and enhance the character of existing residential neighborhoods by limiting encroachment of new buildings and activities that are out of scale and character with surrounding uses. (Policy LU8.4)
- Policy LU-16.3: Design Compatibility. Ensure that exterior modifications of commercial, office, and industrial uses are compatible with the surrounding area. (new)
- Policy LU-16.10: Signs and Billboards. Require signs and billboards to be designed and located to minimize any negative impact on the visual environment and to fit within the scale and character of buildings. (Policy LU1.8)

Furthermore, the City minimizes light intrusion and pollution through its Zoning Ordinance. To minimize light trespass and greater overall light levels in the city, new development and projects making major parking lot improvements or proposing new lighting are required to prepare a lighting plan for review by the city. These plans must meet design guidelines to include the following:

- All light sources are fully shielded from off-site view.
- All light is downcast except where it can be proved to not adversely affect other parcels.
- Escape of light to the atmosphere is minimized.
- Low-intensity, indirect light sources are encouraged, except where other types of lighting is warranted for public safety reasons.
- On-demand lighting systems are encouraged.
- Mercury, metal halide, and similar intense and bright lights are not permitted except where their need is specifically approved and their light source is restricted.

Negative impacts of outdoor lighting, such as light pollution, light trespass, glare, sky glow impacts, and offensive light sources, on public, quasi-public, and private property are further controlled throughout the EIR Study Area with regulations in Title 17 of the HMC. Outdoor lighting features are limited to 14 feet in

height in or adjacent to residential neighborhoods and 24 feet, or the height of the nearest building (whichever is less), in other areas. Outdoor lighting must also use energy-efficient fixtures/lamps. Lighting throughout the city is generally required to be shielded or recessed to reduce light bleed to adjoining properties, public rights-of-way, and the night sky. Lights are also limited to hours of operation, and controls such as motion sensors are required during post-curfew hours.

Lighting on signage is also controlled by Title 17 of the HMC. Escape of light to the atmosphere from illuminated signs in the city must be minimized. Furthermore, upward directed sign lighting is prohibited, and external illumination for signs must be fully shielded so that all light is projected below the horizontal plan.

As described in Section 4.1.1.1, *Regulatory Framework,* besides general best management practices that require lighting that is context sensitive in style and intensity required under CALGreen, potential future development, including the installation of solar panels, would have to comply with the City's lighting standards in the HMC, as described. Potential projects that are subject to design review would be reviewed for consistency with the lighting standards regarding the appropriate use of lighting and avoidance of glare from lighting and other sources. Compliance with these standards to reduce light spill and glare combined with the proposed 2040 General Plan goal and policy would ensure potential future development does not generate excessive light levels or glare. Therefore, the lighting and glare from implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan would not substantially increase nighttime light or glare within the EIR Study Area or its surroundings. Impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. While, like the General Plan, the proposed 2023 CAP includes Strategy 5 that encourages the use of solar photovoltaic panels, any installation of the solar panels as a result of implementing the CAP would be subject to the same regulatory setting as described under the 2040 General Plan discussion to ensure the solar panels would not generate excessive glare. No other implementation strategies of the proposed 2023 CAP involve any land use changes that would create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area and as such impacts from adoption of the proposed 2023 CAP would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any visual resources or land use changes that would affect aesthetics, implementation of the proposed project would not create a

new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

AES-4 Implementation of the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to aesthetic resources.

2040 General Plan

As discussed in Section 4.1.7, *Cumulative Impact Analysis*, in Chapter 4, *Environmental Analysis*, of this Draft EIR, the cumulative setting includes growth within the EIR Study Area in combination with projected growth in the rest of San Benito County and the surrounding region. The cumulative setting for visual impacts includes potential future development under the proposed 2040 General Plan, combined with effects of development on lands adjacent to the EIR Study Area. Significant impacts, including those associated with scenic resources, visual character, and increased light and glare, would generally be site-specific and would not contribute to cumulative impacts after implementation of the 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions.

There are no designated scenic vistas within the EIR Study Area. Therefore, the proposed 2040 General Plan would not have the potential to affect scenic vistas or contribute to cumulative impacts to scenic vistas.

Some potential future development from implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan would have the potential to change the visual character where currently undeveloped or agricultural lands would be designated for urban uses. However, the proposed General Plan 2040 includes goals, policies, and actions to protect visual character.

Individual developments allowed under the proposed project would continue to be subject to General Plan goals, policies, and actions and the HMC and Downtown Design Guidelines provisions related to aesthetics, including potential project-level design review requirements. Additionally, as part of the approval process, potential new development would be subject to design review, as applicable, to ensure that the development is aesthetically pleasing and compatible with adjoining land uses. With the development review mechanisms in place, approved future development under the proposed project would not create substantial impacts to visual resources in Hollister or the surrounding communities. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to aesthetic resources and cumulative impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any visual resources or land use changes beyond encouraging solar panels that would

affect aesthetics, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to aesthetics.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any visual resources or land use changes that would affect aesthetics, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to aesthetics.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

AESTHETICS

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4.2 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

This chapter describes the potential agricultural resource impacts associated with the approval and implementation of the proposed project. This chapter also describes the regulatory framework and existing conditions, identifies criteria used to determine impact significance, provides an analysis of the potential agricultural resource impacts, and identifies policies and feasible mitigation measures, if required, that could minimize any potentially significant impacts.

4.2.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.2.1.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

State Regulations

Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

The California Natural Resources Agency is charged with restoring, protecting, and maintaining the state's natural, cultural, and historical resources. Within it, the State Department of Conservation provides technical services and information to promote informed land use decisions and sound management of the state's natural resources. The Department of Conservation manages the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), which supports agriculture throughout California by developing maps and statistical data for analyzing land use impacts to farmland. Every two years, the FMMP publishes a field report for each county in the state. The most recent field report for San Benito County was published in 2016. The San Benito County Important Farmland 2016 report categorizes land by agricultural production potential, according to the following classifications:[1]

- Prime Farmland has the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long-term agricultural production. Prime Farmland has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. Land must have been used for irrigated agriculture production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.
- Farmland of Statewide Importance is similar to Prime Farmland, but with minor shortcomings, such as steeper slopes or less ability to store soil moisture. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.
- Unique Farmland consists of lesser-quality soils used for the production of the state's leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated but may include non-irrigated orchards or vineyards as found in some climatic zones in California. Land must have been farmed at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.
- Farmland of Local Importance includes land that is not irrigated but is cultivated or has the potential for cultivation.

[1] State of California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, San Benito County, https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/SanBenito.aspx, accessed August 17, 2020.

- Grazing Land is the land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock.
- Urban and Built-Up Land is occupied by structures with a building density of at least 1 unit per 1.5 acres, or approximately 6 structures to a 10-acre parcel. Common examples include residential structures, industrial structures, commercial structures, institutional facilities, cemeteries, airports, golf courses, sanitary landfills, sewage treatment structures, and water-control structures.
- Other Land is land not included in any other mapping category. Common examples include low-density rural developments, brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing, confined livestock, poultry, or aquaculture facilities, strip mines, borrow pits, and water bodies smaller than 40 acres. Vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as other land.
- Water is used to describe perennial water bodies with an extent of at least 40 acres.

Williamson Act

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, better known as the Williamson Act, conserves agricultural and open space lands through property tax incentives and voluntary restrictive land use contracts administered by local governments under State regulations. Private landowners voluntarily restrict their land to agricultural and compatible open space uses under minimum 10-year rolling-term contracts, with counties and cities also acting voluntarily. In return, restricted parcels are assessed for property tax purposes at a rate consistent with their actual use, rather than potential market value. Nonrenewal status is applied to Williamson Act contracts that are within the nine-year termination process, during which, the annual tax assessment for the property gradually increases.

Regional Regulations

San Benito County General Plan

The San Benito County 2035 General Plan goals and policies related to agricultural resources are in the Land Use (LU), Economic Development (ED), Public Facilities and Services (PFS), Natural and Cultural Resources (NCR), and Health and Safety (HS) Elements. The San Benito County General Plan is the overarching planning document for unincorporated land within San Benito County, which includes agricultural lands adjacent to and within the unincorporated portions of the EIR Study Area. Guiding principles and supporting polices in the San Benito County General Plan relevant to agricultural resources include:

- Establishing naturally defined boundaries that separate cities and unincorporated communities from prime agricultural land using agricultural buffers, greenbelts, open space, and parks (Policies LU-3.8, 4.8; NCR-4.13).
- Ensuring agriculture remains a major economic sector in the county by protecting important agricultural lands and industries and supporting their success (Policies LU-1.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.6, 3.10, 3.12, 3.13, 4.6, 5.6, 6.3, 9.2, 9.5; C-6.1, 6.2; NCR-1.1, 1.3, 5.15; HS-1.16).
- Encouraging locally produced and profitable agricultural-related businesses (Policies LU-3.5, 3.14; ED-1.6, 4.6, 6.4, 7.3).

- Supporting programs that educate the local workforce on sustainable agricultural concepts, water conservation, and alternative energy production (LU-3.3, 3.4; ED-1.3, 6.1; PFS-4.1, 4.5, 8.4, 13.10; NCR-6.3, 6.4).

San Benito County Code of Ordinances

Besides the County General Plan, the San Benito County Code (SBCC) of Ordinances is the primary tool that regulates agricultural protection in the county. Like the General Plan, the SBCC covers only unincorporated land in San Benito County, which includes land immediately adjacent to and within the unincorporated portions of the EIR Study Area. The SBCC is organized by title, chapter, and section. SBCC provisions concerning agricultural lands are primarily in Title 19, *Land Use and Environmental Regulations*, and Title 25, *Zoning*.

Title 19 of the SBCC determines that it is in the public's interest for the County to assist in preserving the agricultural economy in the county by avoiding the conversion of land from agricultural uses. This is done through the adoption of agreements between the County and owners of agricultural land to create agricultural preserves as authorized by the California Land Conservation Act of 1965. The California Conservation Act authorizes counties to establish procedures for initiating, filing, and processing requests to establish preserves. SBCC Section 19.01.020(C), *Board approval required,* states that no person shall alter the physical boundaries of an existing agricultural preserve, nor cancel an existing contract, nor use an agricultural preserve for activities incompatible with approved agricultural activities, without the approval of the County Board of Supervisors.

Title 25 of the SBCC establishes permitted and conditional uses for the Agricultural Rangeland and Agricultural Productive Districts. These adopted permitted and conditional uses restrict the types of activities that may occur in these districts to ensure lands zoned for agricultural activities remain as agricultural uses. Permitted uses in both districts include the following:

- Crowing fowl
- Grazing
- Agriculture
- Accessory buildings and uses
- Use for the Future Farmers of America 4-H program
- Raising or breeding of small animals
- Single-family residential dwellings and one additional dwelling
- Seasonal stands selling produce grown on the premises the stand is located
- Hobby kennels

Local Regulations

Hollister Municipal Code

The Hollister Municipal Code (HMC) includes various directives to regulate agricultural land in Hollister. The HMC is organized by title, chapter, and section. All provisions related to agriculture impacts are included in Title 17, *Zoning*, as follows:

- Section 17.20.140, ***Signs on Agricultural Lands.*** This section restricts the size, location, and content of signs on agricultural lands. Signs must not exceed 32 square feet, must strictly advertise only products grown on the land the sign is placed, and must not have more than one freeway-oriented sign.

- Section 17.22.020, *Accessory Agricultural Structures.* This section limits structures allowed on agricultural lands to those that process agricultural products produced on the same site and outlines limitations to roadside stands that sell agricultural products. Roadside stands must only sell products grown on the land it is located on, shall not exceed 400 square feet in floor area, shall not exceed 15 feet in height, and shall comply with Section 17.20.140 regarding signs.
- Section 17.22.060, *Agricultural Employee Dwellings.* This section ensures compatibility between agricultural employee dwellings and any adjoining residential or commercial uses is maintained. The dwelling shall not exceed four employees engaged in full-time labor on that land.

4.2.1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The most prevalent type of farmland in San Benito County is vegetable and irrigated row crops, largely consisting of spinach, lettuce, wine grapes, broccoli, celery, and tomatoes, which are arranged in rows. Common orchard crops in San Benito County include apples, walnuts, cherries, and apricot trees. The most prevalent and profitable orchard crop is wine grapes.[2] Standard field crops include grains, hay, nursery plants, and seeds that cover the entire field in which the crops are planted. These crops are an important source of local farm-fresh food within San Benito County and are even transported to several other countries on most continents, including South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia.

Although the economy in the EIR Study Area once thrived on the cultivation of fruits, nuts, and row crops, the area has since become increasingly urban and diversified. Nevertheless, agriculture is still an important asset to the region, as evidenced by the surrounding vineyards, orchards, and vegetable crops, which boost the region's economy and tourism industry. There are three primary types of farmland within the EIR Study Area: orchards, field crops and pastures, and vegetable and row crops.[3]

Important Agricultural Land

The San Benito Valley, which includes Hollister, is considered a prime agricultural area due to its favorable soil types and climate.[4] As such, there is a significant amount of agricultural land both inside and outside of the EIR Study Area.

The EIR Study Area includes Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland, as classified by the State Department of Conservation and as protected by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The EIR Study Area also includes Farmland of Local Importance and Grazing Land; however, these are not considered "farmlands of concern" under CEQA.

As shown in Table 4.2-1, *Farmland Acreage in the EIR Study Area*, cultivated agricultural lands in the EIR Study Area are largely designated Prime Farmland, followed in descending acreage by Farmland of Local Importance, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland. As shown on Figure 4.2-1, *Important Farmland and Williamson Act Contracts*, all categories of farmland within the EIR Study Area

[2] San Benito County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, 2018, *San Benito County Crop & Livestock Report*, https://www.cosb.us/Home/ShowDocument?id=632, accessed September 23, 2020.

[3] City of Hollister, 2005, *General Plan Final Program EIR*, page 4.11-1.

[4] City of Hollister, 2005, *General Plan Final Program EIR*, page 4.11-1.

are adjacent to urbanized areas. Prime Farmland is on the north, west, and south sides of the EIR Study Area. Farmland and grazing lands border the entirety of the EIR Study Area.

TABLE 4.2-1 FARMLAND ACREAGE IN THE EIR STUDY AREA

	Acres [b]				
Farmland Classification	City Limits	+	Proposed Sphere of Influence	=	Total
Prime Farmland [a]	632		682		1,314
Farmland of Local Importance	332		75		407
Farmland of Statewide Importance [a]	64		248		312
Unique Farmland [a]	21		19		40
Grazing Land	310		254		564
Total	**1,359**		**1,278**		**2,637**

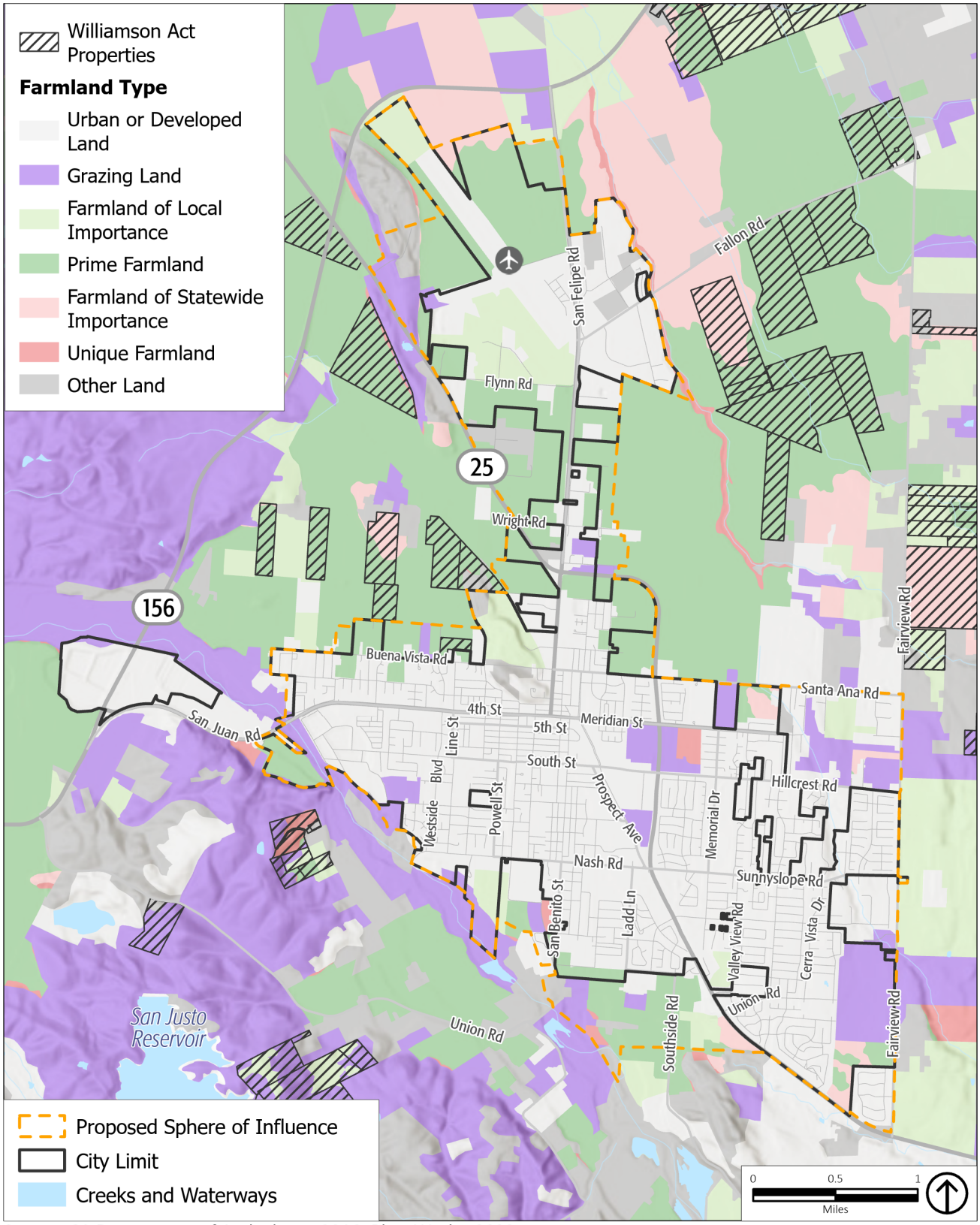
Notes:
a. Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland as classified by the State Department of Conservation and are protected by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
b. The Department of Conservation's data reflects conditions as of 2016. Since the time the department published the data, some limited pieces of land may have been developed or may now be under development review. Nevertheless, the data provide a broad picture of the agricultural resources within and surrounding Hollister today.
Sources: ESRI, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2023; San Benito County, 2020; USGS, 2019; CA Department of Agriculture, 2016.

San Benito Agricultural Land Trust

The San Benito Agricultural Land Trust (Land Trust) is a nonprofit organization formed to preserve regionally significant agricultural lands and open space. The Land Trust enters into voluntary conservation easements with landowners in exchange for the landowner receiving tax advantages while also maintaining private ownership of the land. Land designated under an agricultural conservation easement is prohibited from being used for land use activities not related to agriculture and preservation of open space. The Land Trust currently holds seven agricultural conservation easements, totaling 6,749 acres. These easements include Soap Lake, three farms, and three ranches used for grazing and protection of open space.

Agricultural Conservation

Retention of important agricultural farmland has many benefits, which include availability of crop growing land that supports local economies, preserving open space, and controlling urban sprawl. As such, many federal, state, and local governments adopt mechanisms to safeguard the availability of agricultural lands, largely through conservation easements and mitigation. This section describes existing Williamson Act Contracts within the EIR Study Area, recent trends in the conversion of agricultural land to urban uses, and strategies jurisdictions can employ to mitigate impacts to agricultural land.



Source: CA Department of Agriculture, 2016; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.2-1
Important Farmland and Williamson Act Contracts

Williamson Act Contracts

The Williamson Act allows agricultural landowners to enter into a contract with the County to commit to preservation of the agricultural uses for a 10-year term. The contract gives property tax relief to the landowner in exchange for maintaining their land with agricultural production activities. Williamson Act Contracts are automatically renewed unless a landowner files a Notice of Nonrenewal. After the filing of a Notice of Nonrenewal, the property owner must not convert the land to nonagricultural uses for a period of 10 years.[5] The County of San Benito is the only entity in the region that enters into Williamson Act Contracts with landowners. In 2009, the County Board of Supervisors placed a moratorium on the creation of new Williamson Act lands due to the lack of grant payments from the State of California. The moratorium has remained in place since its adoption, which has resulted in a declining number of acres protected under Williamson Act Contracts. Since the 2008 to 2009 fiscal year, there has been a decrease in 16,200 acres of land protected by a Williamson Act Contract. An additional 440 acres were under a status of nonrenewal as of the 2019 to 2020 fiscal year.[6] Figure 4.2-1 shows the active Williamson Act Contracts that account for approximately 10 acres of farmland in the EIR Study Area, which are all within the Sphere of Influence (SOI).

Agricultural Conversion

The growing population in the EIR Study Area and in greater San Benito County has increased the rate of agricultural land conversion since the 1980s. As indicated in Table 4.2-2, *San Benito County Agricultural Land Conversion 1984 to 2016*, the acreages for Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Farmland of Local Importance have decreased by 30, 58, and 50 percent, respectively. The majority of Prime Farmland developed since 1984 was in the City Limits, which was primarily converted to Urban Development. In 1984, the City Limits also included Farmland of Statewide and Local Importance, which has since been developed with urban uses. In addition, land outside the City Limits, but within the EIR Study Area, experienced the conversion of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Farmland of Local Importance to grazing, urban, and other uses since 1984.

TABLE 4.2-2 SAN BENITO COUNTY AGRICULTURAL LAND CONVERSION 1984 TO 2016

Land Use Category	1984 Acreage	2016 Acreage	1984 to 2016 Net Acreage Changed	Percentage Change
Prime Farmland [a]	38,743	26,833	-11,910	-30%
Farmland of Statewide Importance [a]	16,871	7,107	-9,764	-58%
Unique Farmland [a]	1,668	2,412	744	45%
Farmland of Local Importance	34,037	17,157	-16,880	-50%
Grazing Land	569,180	618,326	22,146	9%

Note:
a. Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland, as classified by the State Department of Conservation and protected by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
Source: California Department of Conservation Historic Land Use Conversion Table.

[5] City of Hollister, 2005, *City of Hollister 2005 General Plan*, Chapter 6, *Open Space and Agricultural Element*, page 6.2.

[6] San Benito County Office of the Assessor, 2019, *2019 Annual Report San Benito County*, http://www.cosb.us/wp-content/uploads/2019-ANNUAL-REPORT-1.pdf, page 10, accessed April 30, 2020.

Agricultural Mitigation

Agricultural mitigation is a method to offset the conversion of important agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Agricultural mitigation is typically used for projects that would require the conversion of large amounts of agricultural land to nonagricultural uses, such as road construction and expansions, utilities infrastructure improvements, or construction of large housing and commercial developments. In such cases, the developer can be required to compensate for the conversion of agricultural land to nonagricultural uses to receive project approval.[7] The compensation does not create new farmland but rather preserves existing farmland such that it is protected from conversion to nonagricultural uses; thus, the loss of agricultural land still occurs.

The San Benito County General Plan includes Policies LU-3.10 and NCR-5.15, which recommend that the loss of prime agricultural lands be mitigated at a ratio of 1:1 by direct purchases of conservation easements on lands of equal agricultural value. Applicants may opt to negotiate an in-lieu fee with the County in place of a direct purchase. The fees collected are to be used for agricultural protection or affiliated programs within San Benito County.[8] For new development that permanently converts Prime Farmland in Class 1 soil to nonagricultural uses, the County requires the developer to mitigate the conversion of agricultural land at a 1:1 ratio either on- or off-site as part of the environmental review process for individual projects. In instances where a developer opts to pay in-lieu fees, those fees are calculated based on the appraised value of the property. The San Benito Agricultural Land Trust collects the fees to purchase and designate agricultural open space easements of the same acreage as the property for which the in-lieu fees were collected.[9] The City of Hollister does not currently have an agricultural mitigation policy in place.

4.2.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The HMC does not contain a zoning district for forest land or timberland production. Further, there are no State or national forest lands in the EIR Study Area. Consequently, there would be no impacts to forestry resources, and the following standards are not discussed further in this EIR:

- The project would conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forestland (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)).
- The project would not involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

Implementation of the proposed project would result in a significant impact to agricultural resources if it would:

[7] San Benito Agricultural Land Trust, 2018, What is mitigation?, https://www.sanbenitolandtrust.org/protected-lands-1, accessed April 23, 2020.

[8] San Benito County, July 21, 2015, *San Benito County 2035 General Plan*, page 3-21 and 8-10.

[9] Goodspeed, Arielle. Senior Planner, San Benito County Resource Management Agency. Personal email communication with Torina Wilson, Project Planner at PlaceWorks. September 28, 2020.

1. 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.
2. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract.
3. Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use.
4. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to agricultural resources.

4.2.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

AG-1	**Implementation of the proposed project would convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to nonagricultural use.**

2040 General Plan

As described in Section 4.2.1.2, *Existing Conditions*, and shown in Table 4.2-1, *Farmland Acreage in the EIR Study Area*, the EIR Study Area contains 1,314 acres of Prime Farmland, 312 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance, and 40 acres of Unique Farmland, for a total of 1,666 acres. These types of farmland, as classified by the State Department of Conservation, are protected by CEQA and are herein referred to as "qualified farmland."

The proposed 2040 General Plan would retain approximately 386 acres of land designated for agricultural use near Southside Road within the proposed SOI. This land consists of 73 acres of Prime Farmland and Unique Farmland that would not be developed under the proposed 2040 General Plan. Therefore, for the purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that the 1,593 acres of qualified farmland within the EIR Study Area could be converted to nonagricultural uses by 2040.[10] From a statewide perspective, the replacement of farmland means that there will be no net loss of farmland in the state. Therefore, the CEQA standard of significance is the loss of any qualified farmlands (Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance) and any conversion of the 1,593 acres of qualified farmlands to nonagricultural uses would constitute a significant impact under CEQA.

The proposed Open Space and Agriculture (OS) Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to agricultural resources. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts on agricultural resources:

[10] 1,666 acres – 73 acres of land = 1,593 acres.

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Goal OS-2: Preserve viable agricultural activities and lands. (Goal OS2)

- Policy OS-2.1: Offsets for Loss of Agricultural Land. Require that all new developments that convert agricultural land to urban uses provide for preservation of twice as much agricultural land in perpetuity. (new)
- Policy OS-2.2: Agricultural Buffers. Require that developers of all new developments adjoining agricultural land provide a 200-foot buffer to ensure that agricultural practices will not be adversely affected, and that developers also pay a fee adequate to allow the City to maintain this buffer land. (new)
- Policy OS-2.3: San Benito County Future Development Areas. Encourage the County of San Benito to focus future development within the areas identified for development in this City of Hollister General Plan, so as to help protect agricultural lands and preserve open space areas within the other portions of the Hollister Planning Area. (Part of Policy OS2.2)
- Policy OS-2.4: Coordination with San Benito County to Preserve Important Farmlands. Coordinate with the County of San Benito in efforts to maintain prime farmlands, unique farmlands, and farmlands of statewide significance in active agricultural use and in all efforts to maintain the continued economic viability of agriculture within the Hollister Planning Area. (Part of Policy OS2.2)
- Policy OS-2.5: Residential Development Near Agricultural Areas. Require developers to inform potential buyers of homes near agricultural areas of the possible hazards associated with the application of pesticides/herbicides and nuisances from other cultivation practices. In those cases where the County of San Benito's Right-to-Farm Ordinance applies to the City review of projects, homeowners shall also be informed of this ordinance by developers. (Policy OS2.4)
- Action OS-2.1: Offsets for Agricultural Land Conversion. Create and adopt an agricultural preservation program to address the conversion of land classified as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance within the City Limits and Sphere of Influence to nonagricultural uses. (new)
- Action OS-2.2: Agricultural Buffer Ordinance. Adopt a zoning program that requires developers of new projects adjoining agricultural land to provide, fund, and maintain a 200-foot buffer to ensure that agricultural practices will not be adversely affected. (new)

  (1) The ordinance shall include agricultural buffer guidelines, including, but are not limited to, the following:

  - Buffers shall be located on the parcel for which a permit is sought and shall protect the maximum amount of farmable land.
  - Buffers shall be physically and biologically designed to avoid conflicts between agriculture and nonagricultural uses.
  - Appropriate types of land use for buffers include compatible agriculture, open space, landscaping, and recreational uses, such as parks, industrial uses, and cemeteries.
  - The buffer may include spatial separations (e.g., greenbelts, open space setbacks), fencing, and/or berming.

- The City or County will condition the approval of a project on the ongoing maintenance of buffers.
- A homeowner's association, agricultural land trusts, or other appropriate entity shall be required to maintain buffers to control litter, fire hazards, pests, and other maintenance problems.
- Buffer restrictions may be removed if agricultural uses on all adjacent parcels have permanently ceased.

- Action OS-2.3: Urban Growth Boundary. Work with the County of San Benito and the City of San Juan Bautista to establish and maintain an Urban Growth Boundary that delineates future urbanization areas from areas in which urbanization will not occur, so as to protect agricultural and open space uses. Lands outside of the Urban Growth Boundary shall only be designated for agriculture, park, open space, public facility, and utility uses. When establishing the Urban Growth Boundary, the following qualities should be taken into consideration: access to infrastructure, public services, transit, healthcare, and commercial uses; preserving farmland; and establishing a buffer between urban and rural uses. (new)
- Action OS-2.4: Agricultural community disclosure ordinance. Develop, adopt, and enforce an Agricultural Community Disclosure Ordinance (similar to the County of San Benito's Right to Farm Ordinance No. 577) that applies to all future subdivisions adjacent to or incorporating agricultural operations. (Implementation Measure OS.A)

As described in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, in addition to the proposed 2040 General Plan, the proposed project includes a new addition to the HMC Title 17, *Zoning.* The proposed addition would be adopted and codified as new HMC Chapter 17.13, *Agricultural Lands Preservation Program*. The purpose of the proposed Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP) is to ensure the benefits of agricultural activities are maintained by requiring that activities that convert existing agricultural lands to nonagricultural uses (i.e., urban uses) directly address that loss through a program that funds agricultural conservation easements. The proposed ALLP would serve to be beneficial to agricultural resources by minimizing the negative effects of the agricultural land conversion. The proposed ALPP would apply to all public and private development projects under the jurisdiction of the City that would result in the conversion of at least one acre of agricultural land for uses other than agricultural uses. Prior to the issuance of grading permits or building permits for such development projects, eligible agricultural conservation easements on other agricultural lands shall be dedicated to the City of Hollister or to an easement holder selected by the City, at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio).

As previously stated, the CEQA standard of significance is the loss of any qualified farmlands, which would result in a significant impact. Therefore, the only way to fully avoid the agricultural impact from implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan is to not allow the conversion of state-designated Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland to a nonagricultural use, thereby eliminating the agricultural impact. Accordingly, while these proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions and the proposed ALPP would reduce potential impacts related to the conversion of farmland, they would not reduce the amount of acreage converted under buildout of the proposed 2040 General

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Plan since it would designate 1,593 acres of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural uses; therefore, a *significant* impact would result.

Impact AG-1: Implementation of the proposed project would result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland land to nonagricultural land uses.

Mitigation Measures Considered. In compliance with CEQA, "each public agency shall mitigate or avoid the significant effects on the environment of the project it carries out or approves whenever it is feasible to do so."[11] The term "feasible" is defined in CEQA to mean, "capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, social, and technological factors."[12] CEQA Guidelines Section 15370 defines "mitigation" as: (1) avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action; (2) minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of an action and its implementation; (3) rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the impacted environment; (4) reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; and (5) compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments. The following is a brief discussion of the mitigation measures considered for mitigating or avoiding the impact of the conversion of agricultural lands to other uses and their infeasibility. However, as shown, no feasible mitigation measures are available that would reduce the agricultural resource impact to less-than-significant levels.

- Replacement of Agricultural Resources. This measure would replace the existing agricultural use with the same use on other property that is not currently used for agriculture. From a statewide perspective, the replacement of farmland means that there will be no net loss of farmland in the state. However, farmlands of concern would still be developed. There is limited undeveloped land within the proposed SOI (EIR Study Area) that is not currently designated as agricultural, restricting the amount of agricultural land that would be able to be replaced elsewhere in the area, and thus conversion of these lands would be insufficient to achieve no net loss. Moreover, even if adequate land could be identified to achieve no net loss, the challenges of creating the soil, irrigation, climatic, and economic conditions that are required for productive farmland (i.e., that achieves the same Important Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland status) are significant and there would be no guarantee that replacement land could be successfully farmed. In addition, replacing existing undeveloped areas with active agriculture could trigger a range of negative environmental impacts, including increased groundwater consumption, habitat destruction, erosion, air quality impacts, and herbicide and pesticide application. As such, the replacement of the existing agricultural uses on other properties within the proposed SOI is infeasible.
- Transfer of Development Rights. Transferring development rights would involve the purchasing of the right to develop land from a currently undeveloped piece of land and transferring those rights to farmland within the city. Thus, this option is also infeasible because there would still be a net loss of farmland (i.e., the farmland preserved would still likely be preserved anyhow). Even if

[11] Public Resources Code, Section 21002.1(b).
[12] Public Resources Code, Section 21061.1

farmland would be preserved elsewhere in San Benito County, the Important Farmland in the city would be developed, resulting in a net loss of Farmland. Therefore, for the reasons outlined previously, and in this paragraph, it would not prevent significant impacts from occurring in the city and it would not be an effective CEQA mitigation measure, nor is this mitigation measure feasible from an economic perspective within this region.

- Relocation of Prime Farmland Topsoil. This measure would remove the top 12 to 18 inches of topsoil from affected areas and haul this soil to a farm site or several farm sites that have lower-quality soils. The Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland soils may assist in increasing crop yield at the relocated site. This measure would have its own environmental impacts, including increased truck traffic on local roadways from both hauling soil off-site and replacement of soil on-site, increased diesel truck emissions, construction noise, and increased duration of construction. The relocation of prime farmland soils on another active farm would increase other environmental impacts and is therefore considered infeasible.

As described, these measures were considered and found to be infeasible for mitigating or avoiding the impact of the conversion of agricultural lands to other uses pursuant to the definition of CEQA in that there is no guarantee that measures would result in successfully establishing Important Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland, if doing so could happen within a reasonable period of time, that their implementation would not potentially cause greater environmental impacts, and that acquiring additional lands to be established as Important Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland would be economically possible.

Significance without Mitigation: As discussed previously, implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan would designate Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland land as nonagricultural land uses. Through the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions, and the proposed ALPP, impacts related to the conversion of qualifying agricultural lands would be reduced, but not to a less-than-significant level. The proposed 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions to reduce the conversion of qualifying agricultural lands, such as Policy OS-2.1, *Offsets for Loss of Agricultural Land*, and Action OS-2.1, *Offsets for Agricultural Land Conversion*, requiring all new developments that convert agricultural land to urban uses provide for the preservation of twice as much agricultural land, which are being implemented via the proposed ALPP; Policy OS-2.3, *San Benito County Future Development Areas*, encouraging San Benito County to focus future development within the areas identified for development; Policy OS-2.4, *Coordination with San Benito County to Preserve Important Farmlands*, requiring coordination with the County of San Benito in efforts to maintain prime farmlands, unique farmlands, and farmlands of statewide significance in active agricultural use; and Action OS-2.3, *Urban Growth Boundary*, to establish and maintain an Urban Growth Boundary that delineates future urbanization areas from areas in which urbanization will not occur. These goals, policies, and actions, and the proposed ALPP, would not reduce the amount of acreage converted under buildout of the proposed 2040 General Plan; however, they would forestall development of the best agricultural land within the EIR Study Area. While these efforts and other mitigation measures were considered, such as preserving agricultural uses in the EIR Study Area, replacement of agricultural resources by replacing lost agricultural uses to other areas of the city, and relocation of Prime Farmland topsoil to other areas, these mitigations are not feasible. While these efforts and other mitigating efforts, such as right-to-farm ordinances, work to mitigate

impacts, the only way to fully avoid the agricultural impact from implementation of the proposed project is to not allow the conversion of state-designated Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland to nonagricultural land uses, thereby eliminating the agricultural impact. However, doing so is not feasible or practical as the City has a responsibility to meet other conflicting obligations, including increases in the number and type of jobs available in Hollister and to reduce the need for residents to commute to high-quality jobs. These measures are critical to reducing single-occupant vehicle travel to and from Hollister and meeting State targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction. The City needs to promote both economic development and corresponding residential development, as required by State housing law, within its City Limits. While possible forms of mitigation for, or avoidance of, conservation of agricultural lands in the EIR Study Area would be implemented by the City through the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions, and the proposed ALPP, doing so to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level would be infeasible and inconsistent with City planning goals and objectives. Therefore, impacts would remain *significant and unavoidable.*

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 Climate Action Plan (2023 CAP) is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect agricultural resources, implementation of the proposed project would not convert qualified farmland to nonagricultural use, and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

As described in the impact discussion for the proposed 2040 General Plan, the purpose of the proposed ALPP is to ensure the benefits of agricultural activities are maintained by requiring that activities that convert existing agricultural lands to urban uses directly address that loss through a program that funds agricultural conservation easements. The proposed ALPP would serve to be beneficial to agricultural resources by mitigating the negative effects of the agricultural land conversion. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not convert farmland to nonagricultural use, and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

AG-2 Implementation of the proposed project would conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or with a Williamson Act contract.

2040 General Plan

There are a total of 10 acres of farmland that are under active Williamson Act contracts within the EIR Study Area, although none are within the City Limits. As described under Impact Discussion AG-1,

conversion of agricultural land uses under the proposed 2040 General Plan would affect the majority of agricultural lands within the EIR Study Area. The proposed project would potentially convert all of the Williamson Act lands within the EIR Study Area to nonagricultural uses. As listed under Impact Discussion AG-1, the proposed 2040 General Plan includes goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts that development could have on existing agricultural land.

While these proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would reduce potential impacts related to the conversion of land under the Williamson Act, since the proposed 2040 General Plan would designate a majority of these lands to nonagricultural uses, a *significant* impact would result.

Impact AG-2: Implementation of the proposed project would result in the loss of agricultural land under the Williamson Act.

Mitigation Measures Considered. As described under Impact Discussion AG-1, pursuant to CEQA, the City has considered mitigation to reduce impacts from implementation of the proposed project that could conflict with lands under a Williamson Act contract. However, as shown, no feasible mitigation measures are available that would reduce the agricultural resource impact to less-than-significant levels. Specifically, the City considered a measure that would result in the replacement of Williamson Act contract farmland that would place other farmland under Williamson Act contract. Even if feasible, the placing of alternative farmland under Williamson Act contract would establish a commitment to retain that alternative farmland for agricultural use. The length of time that the alternative land will remain in agricultural use would depend on the terms of the Williamson Act contract. However, the Williamson Act contract will only reduce the potential that the alternative land will convert to nonagricultural use. The individual and cumulative loss of agricultural land caused by the proposed project would still occur. Therefore, this mitigation measure will not reduce impacts on agriculture to below the level of significance. For these reasons, placing alternative privately held land under permanent restriction through Williamson Act contracts is considered infeasible.

Significance without Mitigation: As described under Impact Discussion AG-1, the proposed 2040 General Plan includes goals, policies, and actions, and the proposed ALPP, to minimize impacts to agricultural lands. Those same General Plan goals, policies, and actions and the proposed ALPP would also minimize impacts from conflicts with Williamson Act lands and reduce the likelihood of premature contract cancellations by the property owners of the Williamson Act parcels in the EIR Study Area. Mitigation for this impact was considered, including the placement of other farmland under Williamson Act contract. However, the individual and cumulative loss of agricultural land under the Williamson Act caused by the proposed project would still occur. Given that CEQA does not require that the project be changed to avoid an impact, and no additional mitigation is available, this would result in a *significant and unavoidable* impact.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect agricultural resources, implementation of the

proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or with a Williamson Act contract and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

As described under Impact Discussion AG-1, the proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. The proposed ALLP would serve to be beneficial to agricultural resources by mitigating the negative effects of the agricultural land conversion. Since the proposed ALLP does not involve any land use changes that would negatively affect agricultural resources, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or with a Williamson Act contract and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

AG-3	**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.**

2040 General Plan

The proposed project would allow development that could result in potentially incompatible urban uses next to farms or ranches, creating circumstances that impair the productivity and profitability of agricultural operation, and could eventually lead farmers to take their land out of production. For example, this could manifest as complaints from new residents about noise, dust, and chemical use from agricultural operations. Concerns of farmers and ranchers about increased vandalism, traffic, access difficulties, and the introduction of domestic animals can lower productivity. Adjacent urban development may also increase land values, increasing the property tax burden for farmland not protected by Williamson Act contracts or permanent agricultural conservation easements.

The proposed project recognizes that the agricultural history of Hollister contributes to its sense of place and seeks to preserve active agricultural lands. As such, the proposed 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts that development could have on existing agricultural land. The same goals, policies, and actions listed under Impact Discussion AG-1, and the proposed ALPP would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts of adjacent land uses on farmland. Thus, a *less-than-significant* impact would result.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect agricultural resources, 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, and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

As described under Impact Discussion AG-1, the proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. The proposed ALPP would serve to be beneficial to agricultural resources by mitigating the negative effects of agricultural land conversion. Since the proposed ALLP does not involve any land use changes that would negatively affect agricultural resources, 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 and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

AG-4 Implementation of the proposed project would result in a cumulatively considerable impact to agricultural resources.

2040 General Plan

As described in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, and throughout this Draft EIR, the proposed 2040 General Plan includes a buildout projection and population growth that would increase the urbanization of the city. To accommodate anticipated growth and achieve City goals, the proposed 2040 General Plan plans for the conversion of agricultural land to various types of residential and job-generating development. Moreover, the 2035 San Benito County General Plan Update EIR found that a significant cumulative impact would result with respect to the conversion of agricultural lands elsewhere in San Benito County.[13] With implementation of the proposed project, in combination with agricultural impacts identified throughout San Benito County, the proposed project would contribute to cumulative impacts to agricultural resources.

[13] San Benito County, March 16, 2015, *2035 San Benito County General Plan Update Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report*, page 22-8.

AGRICULTURE RESOURCES

As described under Impact Discussions AG-1 and AG-2, implementation of the proposed project would result in significant impacts related to the conversion of farmland of concern under CEQA and of farmland under Williamson Act contracts. As such, the proposed project would contribute to the cumulative impacts of overall conversion of these lands in the region. Although the goals, policies, and actions in the proposed 2040 General Plan would reduce and partially offset regional agricultural impacts, the proposed project would contribute to cumulatively significant agricultural impacts in the region and a cumulative *significant* impact would occur.

Impact AG-4: The proposed project, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, could result in a significant cumulative impact with respect to the conversion of farmland of concern under CEQA and Williamson Act properties to nonagricultural uses.

Significance without Mitigation: As described previously, implementation of the proposed project would result in significant impacts related to the conversion of farmland of concern under CEQA and Williamson Act properties to nonagricultural uses. As such, the proposed project would contribute to the cumulative impact described in the San Benito County General Plan Update EIR. Although the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would reduce and partially offset regional agricultural impacts, as well as consideration of mitigation measures to avoid, the only way to fully avoid the agricultural impact of the proposed project is to not allow development on state-designated farmland. However, this would be infeasible and inconsistent with City planning goals and objectives. Further, the amount of growth foreseen in the region and the decisions of San Benito County and other surrounding counties regarding conversion of agricultural land are outside the control of the City of Hollister. Therefore, this impact would be *significant and unavoidable.*

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would negatively affect agricultural resources, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to agricultural resources.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

As described under Impact Discussion AG-1, the proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. The proposed ALPP would serve to be beneficial to agricultural resources by mitigating the negative effects of the agricultural land conversion. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would negatively affect agricultural resources, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to agricultural resources.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

4.3 AIR QUALITY

This chapter describes the potential air quality impacts associated with the approval and implementation of the proposed project. This chapter describes the regulatory framework and existing conditions, identifies criteria used to determine impact significance, provides an analysis of the potential air quality impacts, and identifies policies that could minimize any potentially significant impacts.

This evaluation is based on the methodology recommended by the Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD). The analysis focuses on air pollution from regional emissions and localized pollutant concentrations. Criteria air pollutant emissions modeling is included in Appendix B, *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data*, of this Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Transportation-sector impacts are based on trip generation and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) provided by Kimley-Horn and Associates. Cumulative impacts related to air quality are based on the regional boundaries of the North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB).

4.3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.3.2.1 TERMINOLOGY

The following are definitions for terms used throughout this section.

- AAQS. Ambient Air Quality Standards.
- CES. CalEnviroScreen is a mapping tool that helps identify the California communities most affected by sources of pollution and where people are often especially vulnerable to pollution's effects.
- Concentrations. Refers to the amount of pollutant material per volumetric unit of air. Concentrations are measured in parts per million (ppm), parts per billion (ppb), or micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu g/m^3$).
- Criteria Air Pollutants. Those air pollutants specifically identified for control under the federal Clean Air Act (currently seven—carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, lead, sulfur oxides, ozone, and coarse and fine particulates).
- DPM. Diesel particulate matter.
- Emissions. Refers to the actual quantity of pollutant, measured in tons per year.
- ppm. Parts per million.
- Sensitive receptor. Land uses that are considered more sensitive to air pollution than others due to the types of population groups or activities involved. These land uses include residential, retirement facilities, hospitals, and schools.
- TAC. Toxic air contaminant.
- $\mu g/m^3$. Micrograms per cubic meter.
- VMT. Vehicle miles traveled.

4.3.2.2 AIR POLLUTANTS OF CONCERN

Criteria Air Pollutants

The pollutants emitted into the ambient air by stationary and mobile sources are categorized as primary and/or secondary pollutants. Primary air pollutants are emitted directly from sources. Carbon monoxide (CO), volatile organic compounds (VOC), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), coarse inhalable particulate matter (PM_{10}), fine inhalable particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$), and lead (Pb) are primary air pollutants. Of these, CO, SO_2, nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), coarse inhalable particulate matter (PM_{10}), and fine inhalable particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) are "criteria air pollutants," which means that ambient air quality standards (AAQS) have been established for them. VOC and NO_x are criteria pollutant precursors that form secondary criteria air pollutants through chemical and photochemical reactions in the atmosphere. Ozone (O_3) and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) are the principal secondary pollutants. Table 4.3-1, *Criteria Air Pollutant Health Effects Summary*, summarizes the potential health effects associated with the criteria air pollutants.

TABLE 4.3-1 CRITERIA AIR POLLUTANT HEALTH EFFECTS SUMMARY

Pollutant	Health Effects	Examples of Sources
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	▪ Chest pain in heart patients ▪ Headaches, nausea ▪ Reduced mental alertness ▪ Death at very high levels	▪ Any source that burns fuel such as cars, trucks, construction and farming equipment, and residential heaters and stoves
Ozone (O_3)	▪ Cough, chest tightness ▪ Difficulty taking a deep breath ▪ Worsened asthma symptoms ▪ Lung inflammation	▪ Atmospheric reaction of organic gases with nitrogen oxides in sunlight
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)	▪ Increased response to allergens ▪ Aggravation of respiratory illness	▪ Same as carbon monoxide sources
Particulate Matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$)	▪ Hospitalizations for worsened heart diseases ▪ Emergency room visits for asthma ▪ Premature death	▪ Cars and trucks (particularly diesels) ▪ Fireplaces and woodstoves ▪ Windblown dust from overlays, agriculture, and construction
Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2)	▪ Aggravation of respiratory disease (e.g., asthma and emphysema) ▪ Reduced lung function	▪ Combustion of sulfur-containing fossil fuels, smelting of sulfur-bearing metal ores, and industrial processes
Lead (Pb)	▪ Behavioral and learning disabilities in children ▪ Nervous system impairment	▪ Contaminated soil

Sources: CARB, 2022, Common Air Pollutants: Air Pollution and Health, https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/common-air-pollutants, accessed January 31, 2022. South Coast Air Quality Management District, 2005, Guidance Document for Addressing Air Quality Issues in General Plans and Local Planning, http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/planning/air-quality-guidance/complete-guidance-document.pdf, accessed March 2, 2022.

A description of each of the primary and secondary criteria air pollutants and its known health effects is presented herein.

- **Carbon Monoxide (CO)** is a colorless, odorless gas produced by incomplete combustion of carbon substances, such as gasoline or diesel fuel. CO is a primary criteria air pollutant. CO concentrations tend to be the highest during winter mornings with little to no wind, when surface-based inversions trap the pollutant at ground levels. The highest ambient CO concentrations are generally found near traffic-congested corridors and intersections. The primary adverse health effect associated with CO is interference with normal oxygen transfer to the blood, which may result in tissue oxygen deprivation.[1]
- **Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)** are compounds composed primarily of atoms of hydrogen and carbon. Internal combustion associated with motor vehicle usage is the major source of VOCs. Other sources of VOCs include evaporative emissions associated with the use of paints and solvents, the application of asphalt paving, and the use of household consumer products such as aerosols. There are no ambient air quality standards established for VOCs.
- **Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x)** are a by-product of fuel combustion and contribute to the formation of ground-level O_3, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$. The two major forms of NO_x are nitric oxide (NO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2). NO is a colorless, odorless gas formed from atmospheric nitrogen and oxygen when combustion takes place under high temperature and/or high pressure. The principal form of NO_2 produced by combustion is NO, but NO reacts with oxygen quickly to form NO_2, creating the mixture of NO and NO_2 commonly called NO_x. NO_2 acts as an acute irritant and is more injurious than NO in equal concentrations. At atmospheric concentrations, however, NO_2 is only potentially irritating. NO_2 absorbs blue light; the result is a brownish-red cast to the atmosphere and reduced visibility. NO_2 exposure concentrations near roadways are of particular concern for susceptible individuals, including people with asthma, children, and the elderly. Current scientific evidence links short-term NO_2 exposures, ranging from 30 minutes to 24 hours, with adverse respiratory effects, including airway inflammation in healthy people and increased respiratory symptoms in people with asthma. Also, studies show a connection between breathing elevated short-term NO_2 concentrations and increased visits to emergency departments and hospital admissions for respiratory issues, especially asthma.[2]
- **Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2)** is a colorless, pungent, irritating gas formed by the combustion of sulfurous fossil fuels. It enters the atmosphere as a result of burning high-sulfur-content fuel oils and coal and from chemical processes at chemical plants and refineries. Gasoline and natural gas have very low sulfur content and do not release significant quantities of SO_2. When sulfur dioxide forms sulfates (SO_4) in the atmosphere, together these pollutants are referred to as sulfur oxides (SO_X). Thus, SO_2 is both a primary and secondary criteria air pollutant. At sufficiently high concentrations, SO_2 may irritate the upper respiratory tract. Current scientific evidence links short-term exposures to SO_2, ranging from 5 minutes to 24 hours, with an array of adverse respiratory effects including bronchoconstriction and increased asthma symptoms. These effects are particularly important for asthmatics at elevated ventilation rates (e.g., while exercising or playing.) At lower concentrations and when combined with particulates, SO_2 may do greater harm by injuring lung tissue. Studies also show a connection between short-term exposure and increased visits to emergency departments and hospital

[1] EPA. Criteria Air Pollutants, https://www.epa.gov/criteria-air-pollutants, accessed December 6, 2022.
[2] EPA. Criteria Air Pollutants, https://www.epa.gov/criteria-air-pollutants, accessed December 6, 2022.

admissions for respiratory illnesses, particularly in at-risk populations including children, the elderly, and asthmatics.[3]

- **Suspended Particulate Matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$)** consists of finely divided solids or liquids such as soot, dust, aerosols, fumes, and mists. Two forms of fine particulates are now recognized and regulated. Inhalable coarse particles, or PM_{10}, include particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 10 microns (i.e., 10 millionths of a meter or 0.0004 inch) or less. Inhalable fine particles, or $PM_{2.5}$, have an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5 microns (i.e., 2.5 millionths of a meter or 0.0001 inch) or less. Particulate discharge into the atmosphere results primarily from industrial, agricultural, construction, and transportation activities. Both PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ may adversely affect the human respiratory system, especially in people who are naturally sensitive or susceptible to breathing problems. EPA scientific review concluded that $PM_{2.5}$, which penetrates deeply into the lungs, is more likely than PM_{10} to contribute to health effects and at concentrations that extend well below those allowed by the current PM_{10} standards. These health effects include premature death in people with heart or lung disease, nonfatal heart attacks, irregular heartbeat, aggravated asthma, decreased lung function, and increased respiratory symptoms (e.g., irritation of the airways, coughing, or difficulty breathing).
- **Diesel particulate matter (DPM)** is classified by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) as a carcinogen. Particulate matter can also cause environmental effects such as visibility impairment,[4] environmental damage,[5] and aesthetic damage.[6,7]
- **Ozone (O_3)** is commonly referred to as "smog" and is a gas that is formed when VOCs and NO_x, both by-products of internal combustion engine exhaust, undergo photochemical reactions in the presence of sunlight. O_3 is a secondary criteria air pollutant. O_3 concentrations are generally highest during the summer months when direct sunlight, light winds, and warm temperatures create favorable conditions for its formation. O_3 poses a health threat to those who already suffer from respiratory diseases as well as to healthy people. Breathing O_3 can trigger a variety of health problems, including chest pain, coughing, throat irritation, and congestion. It can worsen bronchitis, emphysema, and asthma. Ground-level O_3 also can reduce lung function and inflame the linings of the lungs. Repeated exposure may permanently scar lung tissue. O_3 also affects sensitive vegetation and ecosystems, including forests, parks, wildlife refuges, and wilderness areas. In particular, O_3 harms sensitive vegetation, including forest trees and plants during the growing season.[8]
- **Lead (Pb)** is a metal found naturally in the environment as well as in manufactured products. The major sources of lead emissions have historically been mobile and industrial sources. As a result of the EPA's regulatory efforts to remove lead from on-road motor vehicle gasoline, emissions of lead from the transportation sector dramatically declined by 95 percent between 1980 and 1999, and levels of

[3] EPA. Criteria Air Pollutants, https://www.epa.gov/criteria-air-pollutants, accessed December 6, 2022.

[4] $PM_{2.5}$ is the main cause of reduced visibility (haze) in parts of the United States.

[5] Particulate matter can be carried over long distances by wind and then settle on ground or water. The effects of this settling include: making lakes and streams acidic; changing the nutrient balance in coastal waters and large river basins; depleting the nutrients in soil; damaging sensitive forests and farm crops; and affecting the diversity of ecosystems.

[6] Particulate matter can stain and damage stone and other materials, including culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

[7] EPA. Criteria Air Pollutants, https://www.epa.gov/criteria-air-pollutants, accessed April 18, 2022.

[8] EPA. Criteria Air Pollutants, https://www.epa.gov/criteria-air-pollutants, accessed April 18, 2022.

lead in the air decreased by 94 percent between 1980 and 1999. Today, the highest levels of lead in air are usually found near lead smelters. The major sources of lead emissions to the air today are ore and metals processing and piston-engine aircraft operating on leaded aviation gasoline. Once taken into the body, lead distributes throughout the body in the blood and is accumulated in the bones. Depending on the level of exposure, lead can adversely affect the nervous system, kidney function, immune system, reproductive and developmental systems, and the cardiovascular system. Lead exposure also affects the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood. The lead effects most commonly encountered in current populations are neurological effects in children and cardiovascular effects (e.g., high blood pressure and heart disease) in adults. Infants and young children are especially sensitive to even low levels of lead, which may contribute to behavioral problems, learning deficits, and lowered IQ.[9]

Toxic Air Contaminants

People exposed to TACs at sufficient concentrations and durations may have an increased chance of getting cancer or experiencing other serious health effects. These health effects can include damage to the immune system, as well as neurological, reproductive (e.g., reduced fertility), developmental, respiratory, and other health problems.[10] At the time of the last update to the TAC list in December 1999, CARB had designated 244 compounds as TACs.[11] Additionally, CARB has implemented control measures for a number of compounds that pose high risks and show potential for effective control. There are no air quality standards for TACs. Instead, TAC impacts are evaluated by calculating the health risks associated with a given exposure. The majority of the estimated health risks from TACs can be attributed to relatively few compounds, the most relevant to the proposed project being particulate matter from diesel-fueled engines.

Diesel Particulate Matter

In 1998, CARB identified DPM as a TAC. Previously, the individual chemical compounds in diesel exhaust were considered TACs. Almost all diesel exhaust particles are 10 microns or less in diameter. Because of their extremely small size, these particles can be inhaled and eventually trapped in the bronchial and alveolar regions of the lungs. Long-term (chronic) inhalation of DPM is likely a lung cancer risk. Short-term (i.e., acute) exposure can cause irritation and inflammatory symptoms and may exacerbate existing allergies and asthma symptoms.[12]

Placement of New Sensitive Receptors

Because placement of sensitive land uses falls outside CARB's jurisdiction, CARB developed and approved the *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective* (2005) to address the siting of

[9] EPA. Criteria Air Pollutants, https://www.epa.gov/criteria-air-pollutants, accessed April 18, 2022.

[10] EPA. 2019. Health and Environmental Effects of Hazardous Air Pollutants. https://www.epa.gov/haps/health-and-environmental-effects-hazardous-air-pollutants

[11] CARB, 1999. Final Staff Report: Update to the Toxic Air Contaminant List.

[12] EPA. 2002, May. Health Assessment Document for Diesel Engine Exhaust. Prepared by the National Center for Environmental Assessment, Washington, DC, for the Office of Transportation and Air Quality. EPA/600/8-90/057F.

sensitive land uses in the vicinity of freeways, distribution centers, rail yards, ports, refineries, chrome-plating facilities, dry cleaners, and gasoline-dispensing facilities. This guidance document was developed to assess compatibility and associated health risks when placing sensitive receptors near existing pollution sources.

CARB's recommendations on the siting of new sensitive land uses identified in Table 4.3-2, *CARB Recommendations for Siting New Sensitive Land Uses*, were based on a compilation of recent studies that evaluated data on the adverse health effects from proximity to air pollution sources.

TABLE 4.3-2 CARB RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SITING NEW SENSITIVE LAND USES

Source/Category	Advisory Recommendations
Freeways and High-Traffic Roads	Avoid siting new sensitive land uses within 500 feet of a freeway, urban roads with 100,000 vehicles per day, or rural roads with 50,000 vehicles per day.
Distribution Centers	Avoid siting new sensitive land uses within 1,000 feet of a distribution center (that accommodates more than 100 trucks per day, more than 40 trucks with operating transport refrigeration units [TRUs] per day, or where TRU unit operations exceed 300 hours per week). Take into account the configuration of existing distribution centers and avoid locating residences and other sensitive land uses near entry and exit points.
Rail Yards	Avoid siting new sensitive land uses within 1,000 feet of a major service and maintenance rail yard. Within one mile of a rail yard, consider possible siting limitations and mitigation approaches.
Ports	Avoid siting of new sensitive land uses immediately downwind of ports in the most heavily impacted zones. Consult local air districts or CARB on the status of pending analyses of health risks.
Refineries	Avoid siting new sensitive land uses immediately downwind of petroleum refineries. Consult with local air districts and other local agencies to determine an appropriate separation.
Chrome Platers	Avoid siting new sensitive land uses within 1,000 feet of a chrome plater.
Dry Cleaners Using Perchloroethylene	Avoid siting new sensitive land uses within 300 feet of any dry cleaning operation. For operations with two or more machines, provide 500 feet. For operations with three or more machines, consult with the local air district. Do not site new sensitive land uses in the same building with perchloroethylene dry cleaning operations.
Gasoline Dispensing Facilities	Avoid siting new sensitive land uses within 300 feet of a large gas station (defined as a facility with a throughput of 3.6 million gallons per year or greater). A 50-foot separation is recommended for typical gas dispensing facilities.

Source: CARB, May 2005, Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective.

The key observation in these studies is that proximity to air pollution sources substantially increases both exposure and the potential for adverse health effects. There are three carcinogenic TACs that constitute the majority of the known health risks from motor vehicle traffic: DPM from trucks and benzene and 1,3-butadiene from passenger vehicles.

In 2017, CARB provided a supplemental technical advisory to the handbook for near-roadway air pollution exposure, *Strategies to Reduce Air Pollution Exposure Near High-Volume Roadways.* Strategies include practices and technologies that reduce traffic emissions, increase dispersion of traffic pollution (or the dilution of pollution in the air), or remove pollution from the air.[13]

[13] CARB. 2017, April. Strategies to Reduce Air Pollution Exposure Near High-Volume Roadways https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2017-10/rd_technical_advisory_final.pdf

4.3.2.3 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Federal, state, and local air districts have passed laws and regulations intended to control and enhance air quality. Land use in the EIR Study Area is subject to the rules and regulations imposed by MBARD, CARB, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The regulatory framework potentially applicable to the proposed project is summarized here.

Federal and State Regulations

Ambient air quality standards (AAQS) have been adopted at federal and state levels for criteria air pollutants. In addition, both the federal and state governments regulate the release of TACs. The City of Hollister is in the NCCAB and is subject to the rules and regulations imposed by the MBARD, the national AAQS adopted by the USEPA, and the California AAQS adopted by CARB.

Ambient Air Quality Standards for Criteria Air Pollutants

The Clean Air Act (CAA) was passed in 1963 by the US Congress and has been amended several times. The 1970 CAA amendments strengthened previous legislation and laid the foundation for the regulatory scheme of the 1970s and 1980s. In 1977, Congress again added several provisions, including nonattainment requirements for areas not meeting National AAQS and the Prevention of Significant Deterioration program. The 1990 amendments represent the latest in a series of federal efforts to regulate the protection of air quality in the United States. The CAA allows states to adopt more stringent standards or to include other pollutants. The California CAA, signed into law in 1988, requires all areas of the state to achieve and maintain the California AAQS by the earliest practical date. The California AAQS tend to be more restrictive than the National AAQS.

The National and California AAQS are the levels of air quality considered to provide a margin of safety in the protection of the public health and welfare. They are designed to protect "sensitive receptors" most susceptible to further respiratory distress, such as asthmatics, the elderly, very young children, people already weakened by other disease or illness, and people engaged in strenuous work or exercise. Healthy adults can tolerate occasional exposure to air pollutant concentrations considerably above these minimum standards before adverse effects are observed.

Both California and the federal government have established health-based AAQS for seven air pollutants, which are shown in Table 4.3-3, *Ambient Air Quality Standards for Criteria Pollutants*. These pollutants are ozone (O_3), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), coarse inhalable particulate matter (PM_{10}), fine inhalable particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$), and lead (Pb). In addition, the State has set standards for sulfates, hydrogen sulfide, vinyl chloride, and visibility-reducing particles. These standards are designed to protect the health and welfare of the populace with a reasonable margin of safety.

TABLE 4.3-3 AMBIENT AIR QUALITY STANDARDS FOR CRITERIA POLLUTANTS

Pollutant	Averaging Time	California Standard [a]	Federal Primary Standard [b]	Major Pollutant Sources
Ozone (O_3) [c]	1 hour	0.09 ppm	*	Motor vehicles, paints, coatings, and solvents.
	8 hours	0.070 ppm	0.070 ppm	
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	1 hour	20.0 ppm	35.0 ppm	Internal combustion engines, primarily gasoline-powered motor vehicles.
	8 hours	9.0 ppm	9.0 ppm	
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)	Annual Average	0.030 ppm	0.053 ppm	Motor vehicles, petroleum-refining operations, industrial sources, aircraft, ships, and railroads.
	1 hour	0.18 ppm	0.100 ppm	
Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2)	Annual Arithmetic Mean	*	0.030 ppm	Fuel combustion, chemical plants, sulfur recovery plants, and metal processing.
	1 hour	0.25 ppm	0.075 ppm	
	24 hours	0.04 ppm	0.14 ppm	
Respirable Particulate Matter (PM_{10}) [d]	Annual Arithmetic Mean	20.0 µg/m^3	*	Dust and fume-producing construction, industrial, and agricultural operations, combustion, atmospheric photochemical reactions, and natural activities (e.g., wind-raised dust and ocean sprays).
	24 hours	50.0 µg/m^3	150.0 µg/m^3	
Respirable Particulate Matter ($PM_{2.5}$)	Annual Arithmetic Mean	12.0 µg/m^3	12.0 µg/m^3	Dust and fume-producing construction, industrial, and agricultural operations, combustion, atmospheric photochemical reactions, and natural activities (e.g., wind-raised dust and ocean sprays).
	24 hours	*	35.0 µg/m^3	
Lead (Pb)	30-Day Average	1.5 µg/m^3	*	Present source: lead smelters, battery manufacturing & recycling facilities. Past source: combustion of leaded gasoline.
	Calendar Quarterly	*	1.5 µg/m^3	
	Rolling 3-Month Average	*	0.15 µg/m^3	
Sulfates (SO_4) [e]	24 hours	25 µg/m^3	*	Industrial processes.
Visibility Reducing Particles	8 hours	ExCo[f] =0.23/km visibility of 10≥ miles	No Federal Standard	Visibility-reducing particles consist of suspended particulate matter, which is a complex mixture of tiny particles that consists of dry solid fragments, solid cores with liquid coatings, and small droplets of liquid. These particles vary greatly in shape, size, and chemical composition, and can be made up of many different materials such as metals, soot, soil, dust, and salt.
Hydrogen Sulfide	1 hour	0.03 ppm	No Federal Standard	Hydrogen sulfide (H_2S) is a colorless gas with the odor of rotten eggs. It is formed during bacterial decomposition of sulfur-containing organic

TABLE 4.3-3 AMBIENT AIR QUALITY STANDARDS FOR CRITERIA POLLUTANTS

Pollutant	Averaging Time	California Standard [a]	Federal Primary Standard [b]	Major Pollutant Sources
				substances. Also, it can be present in sewer gas and some natural gas, and can be emitted as the result of geothermal energy exploitation.
Vinyl Chloride	24 hour	0.01 ppm	No Federal Standard	Vinyl chloride (chloroethene), a chlorinated hydro-carbon, is a colorless gas with a mild, sweet odor. Most vinyl chloride is used to make polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastic and vinyl products. Vinyl chloride has been detected near landfills, sewage plants, and hazardous waste sites, due to microbial breakdown of chlorinated solvents.

Notes: ppm: parts per million; $\mu g/m^3$: micrograms per cubic meter
* Standard has not been established for this pollutant/duration by this entity.
a. California standards for O_3, CO (except 8-hour Lake Tahoe), SO_2 (1 and 24 hour), NO_2, and particulate matter (PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$, and visibility reducing particles), are values that are not to be exceeded. All others are not to be equaled or exceeded. California ambient air quality standards are listed in the Table of Standards in Section 70200 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations.
b. National standards (other than O_3, PM, and those based on annual arithmetic mean) are not to be exceeded more than once a year. The O_3 standard is attained when the fourth highest 8-hour concentration measured at each site in a year, averaged over three years, is equal to or less than the standard. For PM_{10}, the 24-hour standard is attained when the expected number of days per calendar year with a 24-hour average concentration above 150 $\mu g/m^3$ is equal to or less than one. For $PM_{2.5}$, the 24-hour standard is attained when 98 percent of the daily concentrations, averaged over three years, are equal to or less than the standard.
c. On October 1, 2015, the national 8-hour ozone primary and secondary standards were lowered from 0.075 to 0.070 ppm.
d. On December 14, 2012, the national annual $PM_{2.5}$ primary standard was lowered from 15 $\mu g/m^3$ to 12.0 $\mu g/m^3$. The existing national 24-hour $PM_{2.5}$ standards (primary and secondary) were retained at 35 $\mu g/m^3$, as was the annual secondary standard of 15 $\mu g/m^3$. The existing 24-hour PM_{10} standards (primary and secondary) of 150 $\mu g/m^3$ also were retained. The form of the annual primary and secondary standards is the annual mean, averaged over 3 years.
e. On June 2, 2010, a new 1-hour SO_2 standard was established, and the existing 24-hour and annual arithmetic mean standards were revoked.
Source: CARB, 2016, Ambient Air Quality Standards, https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/documents/ambient-air-quality-standards-0, accessed March 2, 2022.

California has also adopted a host of other regulations that reduce criteria pollutant emissions, including:

- Assembly Bill (AB) 1493: Pavley Fuel Efficiency Standards. Pavley I is a clean-car standard that reduces emissions from new passenger vehicles (light-duty auto to medium-duty vehicles) from 2009 through 2016. In January 2012, CARB approved the Advanced Clean Cars program (formerly known as Pavley II) for model years 2017 through 2025.
- Heavy-Duty (Tractor-Trailer) Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Regulation. The tractors and trailers subject to this regulation must either use USEPA SmartWay-certified tractors and trailers or retrofit their existing fleet with SmartWay-verified technologies. The regulation applies primarily to owners of 53-foot or longer box-type trailers, including both dry-van and refrigerated-van trailers, and owners of the heavy-duty tractors that pull them on California highways. These owners are responsible for replacing or retrofitting their affected vehicles with compliant aerodynamic technologies and low-rolling-resistance tires. Sleeper-cab tractors model year 2011 and later must be SmartWay certified. All other tractors must use SmartWay-verified low-rolling-resistance tires. This rule has criteria air pollutant co-benefits.
- Senate Bill (SB) 1078 and SB 107: Renewables Portfolio Standards. A major component of California's Renewable Energy Program is the renewables portfolio standard established under SBs 1078 (Sher) and 107 (Simitian). Under this standard, certain retail sellers of electricity were required to increase

the amount of renewable energy each year by at least 1 percent to reach at least 20 percent by December 30, 2010.

- California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 20: Appliance Energy Efficiency Standards. The 2006 Appliance Efficiency Regulations (20 CCR 1601–1608) were adopted by the California Energy Commission on October 11, 2006, and approved by the California Office of Administrative Law on December 14, 2006. The regulations include standards for both federally regulated appliances and non–federally regulated appliances. This code reduces natural gas use from appliances.
- 24 CCR, Part 6: Building and Energy Efficiency Standards. Energy conservation standards for new residential and nonresidential buildings adopted by the California Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission (now the California Energy Commission) in June 1977. This code reduces natural gas use from buildings.
- 24 CCR, Part 11: Green Building Standards Code. Establishes planning and design standards for sustainable site development, energy efficiency (in excess of the California Energy Code requirements), water conservation, material conservation, and internal air contaminants. This code reduces natural gas use from buildings.

Tanner Air Toxics Act and Air Toxics "Hot Spot" Information and Assessment Act

Public exposure to TACs is a significant environmental health issue in California. In 1983, the California Legislature enacted a program to identify the health effects of TACs and to reduce exposure to these contaminants to protect the public health. The California Health and Safety Code defines a TAC as "an air pollutant which may cause or contribute to an increase in mortality or in serious illness, or which may pose a present or potential hazard to human health." A substance that is listed as a hazardous air pollutant pursuant to Section 112(b) of the federal CAA (42 US Code Section 7412[b]) is a TAC. Under State law, the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), acting through CARB, is authorized to identify a substance as a TAC if it is an air pollutant that may cause or contribute to an increase in mortality or serious illness, or may pose a present or potential hazard to human health.

California regulates TACs primarily through AB 1807 (Tanner Air Toxics Act) and AB 2588 (Air Toxics "Hot Spot" Information and Assessment Act of 1987). The Tanner Air Toxics Act sets up a formal procedure for CARB to designate substances as TACs. Once a TAC is identified, CARB adopts an "airborne toxics control measure" for sources that emit designated TACs. If there is a safe threshold for a substance (i.e., a point below which there is no toxic effect), the control measure must reduce exposure to below that threshold. If there is no safe threshold, the measure must incorporate toxics best available control technology to minimize emissions. To date, CARB has established formal control measures for 11 TACs that are identified as having no safe threshold.

Under AB 2588, TAC emissions from individual facilities are quantified and prioritized by the air quality management district or air pollution control district. High-priority facilities are required to perform a health risk assessment, and if specific thresholds are exceeded, are required to communicate the results to the public through notices and public meetings.

CARB has promulgated the following specific rules to limit TAC emissions:

- 13 CCR Chapter 10 Section 2485: Airborne Toxic Control Measure to Limit Diesel-Fueled Commercial Motor Vehicle Idling. Generally restricts on-road diesel-powered commercial motor vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating of greater than 10,000 pounds from idling more than five minutes.
- 13 CCR Chapter 10 Section 2480: Airborne Toxic Control Measure to Limit School Bus Idling and Idling at Schools. Generally restricts a school bus or transit bus from idling for more than five minutes when within 100 feet of a school.
- 13 CCR Section 2477 and Article 8: Airborne Toxic Control Measure for In-Use Diesel-Fueled Transport Refrigeration Units (TRU) and TRU Generator Sets and Facilities Where TRUs Operate. Regulations established to control emissions associated with diesel-powered TRUs.

Regional Regulations

Monterey Bay Air Resources District

MBARD is the local air district responsible for local air quality regulation in the NCCAB which is comprised of Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito counties. MBARD shares responsibility with CARB for ensuring that State and national AAQS are achieved and maintained within the NCCAB. The mission of MBARD is to protect public and environmental health while balancing economic and air quality considerations. MBARD is responsible for air monitoring, enforcement, long-range air quality planning, regulatory development, education and public information activities related to air pollution. MBARD is the primary enforcement mechanism for air pollution control, and must have rules for enforcement for the attainment and maintenance of federal and state ambient air standards.[14]

2012-2015 Air Quality Management Plan

The California CAA (Health and Safety Code Section 40910 et seq.) requires air districts to adopt air quality attainment plans and to review and revise their plans to address deficiencies in interim measures of progress once every three years. The *2012-2015 Air Quality Management Plan* (2012-2015 AQMP) was created by MBARD and is the seventh update to the 1991 AQMP.[15] Elements updated from the 2012 AQMP include air quality trends, emission inventory, and mobile source programs. Mobile source emissions continue to dominate MBARD's NO_X emissions inventory and therefore the 2012-2015 AQMP includes more regulations on lowering vehicle miles traveled aid in this issue. The purpose of the 2012-2015 AQMP is to continue to focus on achieving the 8-hour component of the California ozone standard.

2005 Particulate Matter Plan

2005 Particulate Matter Plan SB 656 (2003) required that the CARB adopt a list of the most readily available, feasible, and cost-effective control measures that could be implemented by the air pollution control districts to reduce ambient levels of particulate matter in the air basin. The *2005 Report on*

[14] Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD), 2022, About Us: What is the Monterey Bay Area Resources District?, https://www.mbard.org/about-us, accessed November 11, 2022.

[15] Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD), 2017, 2012-2015 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP), https://www.mbard.org/files/6632732f5/2012-2015-AQMP_FINAL.pdf, accessed November 11, 2022.

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Attainment of the California Particulate Matter Standards in the Monterey Bay Region is the MBARD's implementation plan for reducing particulate matter in the NCCAB, which includes Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito Counties.[16]

Measures in the *2005 Report on Attainment of the California Particulate Matter Standards in the Monterey Bay Region* include:

- Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce fugitive dust from agricultural tilling and unpaved roads.
- Incentive programs and demonstration projects to control fugitive dust for various conditions of the NCCAB.
- Mineral processing BMPs and contingency measures for cement manufacturing if mineral processing BMPs do not achieve desired results.
- Air Toxics Control Measures (ATCM) for naturally occurring asbestos.
- ATCMs for agricultural pumps as a control measure.[17]

2007 Federal Maintenance Plan

The 2007 Federal Maintenance Plan for Maintaining the National Ozone Standard in the Monterey Bay Region provides a strategy for maintaining National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone in the NCCAB and was approved by MBARD and AMBAG in 2007.[18] This plan was prepared according to USEPA's "Maintenance Plan Guidance Document for Certain 8-Hour Ozone Areas Under Section 110(a)(1) of Clean Air Act" and established the planning requirements to maintain attainment status for the 8-hour NAAQS.

2014 Plug-In Electric Vehicle (PEV) Readiness Plan

The Monterey Bay Plug-in Electric Vehicle (PEV) Readiness Plan for Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties was prepared by MBARD Board for California Energy Commission (CEC) in 2014.[19] This plan was funded by CEC to allow BAAQMD coordinate with MBARD to develop this plan to promote rapid adoption of PEVs in the region by developing PEV charging infrastructure and PEV-friendly policies throughout the diverse communities of the Monterey Bay region.

[16] Monterey Bay Air Resource District (MBARD), 2005, December. 2005 Report on Attainment of the California Particulate Matter Standards in the Monterey Bay Region, https://www.mbard.org/files/b0f496297/358+%281%29.pdf, accessed December 6, 2022.

[17] Monterey Bay Air Resource District (MBARD), 2005, December. 2005 Report on Attainment of the California Particulate Matter Standards in the Monterey Bay Region, https://www.mbard.org/files/b0f496297/358+%281%29.pdf, accessed December 6, 2022.

[18] Monterey Bay Air Resource District (MBARD), 2007, March. 2007 Federal Maintenance Plan for Maintaining the National Ozone Standard in the Monterey Bay, https://www.mbard.org/files/2793382b3/451.pdf, accessed December 6, 2022.

[19] Monterey Bay Air Resource District (MBARD), 2014, July. The Monterey Bay Plug-in Electric Vehicle (PEV) Readiness Plan for Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties, https://www.mbard.org/files/e577d6ffb/Plug-In+Electric+Vehicle++Readiness+Plan_2014.pdf, accessed December 6, 2022.

The overarching goals of the *Monterey Bay PEV Plan* include:

- To promote mass adoption of PEVs via individual and feel deployment, including rental, car share, corporate, and government fleets.
- To develop a public charging network enabling all-electric travel throughout the region.
- To streamline EV charger installation and promote rapid charge station deployment.
- To provide consumer and leadership education and outreach on the benefits of PEVs.
- To reduce GHG emissions and criteria air pollutants from light-duty vehicles.[20]

MBARD Rules

The following MBARD rules limit emissions of air pollutants from construction and operation from development projects:

- **Rule 400 – Visible Emissions**. Discharge of visible air pollutant emissions into the atmosphere from any emission source for a period or periods aggregating more than three minutes in any one hour, as observed using an appropriate test method, is prohibited.
- **Rule 402 – Nuisances**. No person shall discharge from any source whatsoever such quantities of air contaminants or other materials which cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or to the public; or which endanger the comfort, repose, health, or safety of any such persons or the public; or which cause, or have a natural tendency to cause, injury or damage to business or property.
- **Rule 426 – Architectural Coatings**. This rule limits the emissions of ROGs from the use of architectural coatings.

Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments

The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) is the transportation planning, coordinating, and financing agency for the Monterey Bay Area, which includes Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties. AMBAG is a federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and is required to produce certain documents that maintain the region's eligibility for federal transportation assistance. Among AMBAG's many functions, it also authors the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS) with Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPA), transit providers, MBARD, state and federal governments, and organizations involved in transportation planning. The Council of San Benito County Governments (SBCOG) is the RTPA for San Benito County and is responsible for the county-wide regional transportation plan (RTP) which includes the city of Hollister.

[20] Monterey Bay Air Resource District (MBARD), 2014, July. The Monterey Bay Plug-in Electric Vehicle (PEV) Readiness Plan for Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties, https://www.mbard.org/files/e577d6ffb/Plug-In+Electric+Vehicle++Readiness+Plan_2014.pdf, accessed December 6, 2022.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainability Communities Strategy

AMBAG adopted the 2045 MTP/SCS in June 2022 with a framework of goals and policy objectives to address the mobility and accessibility needs of the region.[21] As the MPO, AMBAG updates the MTP/SCS every four years through a bottom-up process involving numerous stakeholders to develop a new growth and an updated multimodal transportation network with the available revenues. Additionally, the 2045 MTP/SCS complies with the Clean Air Act and the region is in attainment for air quality conformity.

The 2045 MTP/SCS must comply with specific state and federal mandates, including the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (generally known by its legislative bill number "SB 375"). SB 375 directs AMBAG to implement the State's GHG emissions reduction goals for cars and light trucks set by CARB. Promotion of non-motorized modes of transportation is essential to reduce GHG emissions, reduce roadway congestion, and improve public health and air quality. Overall, the investments identified in the 2045 MTP/SCS are expected to result in significant benefits to the region, not only with respect to transportation and mobility, but also economic activity, air quality, safety, and social equity.

AB 617, Community Air Protection Program

AB 617 requires local air districts to monitor and implement air pollution control strategies that reduce localized air pollution in communities that bear the greatest burdens. In response to AB 617, CARB has established the Community Air Protection Program.

Air districts are required to host workshops to help identify communities that are disproportionately affected by poor air quality. Once the criteria have been set for identifying the highest priority locations and the communities have been selected, new community monitoring systems will be installed to track and monitor community-specific air pollution goals. In 2018 CARB prepared an air monitoring plan (Community Air Protection Blueprint) that evaluates the availability and effectiveness of air monitoring technologies and existing community air monitoring networks. Under AB 617, the Blueprint is required to be updated every five years.

Under AB 617, CARB is also required to prepare a statewide strategy to reduce TACs and criteria pollutants in impacted communities; provide a statewide clearinghouse for best available retrofit control technology; adopt new rules requiring the latest best available retrofit control technology for all criteria pollutants for which an area has not achieved attainment of California AAQS; and provide uniform, statewide reporting of emissions inventories. Air districts are required to adopt a community emissions reduction program to achieve reductions for the communities impacted by air pollution that CARB identifies.

Local Regulations

The Hollister Municipal Code (HMC) includes various directives to minimize adverse impacts to visual resources in Hollister. The HMC is organized by Title, Chapter, and Section. Most provisions related to air

[21] Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), 2022. 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan & the Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS). https://www.ambag.org/plans/2045-metropolitan-transportation-plan-sustainable-communities-strategy, accessed November 28, 2022.

quality impacts are included in Title 8, *Health and Safety*, Title 12, *Streets, Sidewalks, and Public Spaces,* and Title 17, *Zoning*, as follows:

- Chapter 8.12, *Solid Waste Collection and Disposal.* This chapter requires prohibition of burning of solid waste, unless regulated by Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District.
- Chapter 12.24, *Protection of Street Trees Required.* This chapter requires protection (barriers, guards, or other protectors) to prevent injury to street trees during construction, erection or repair of any structures.
- Chapter 17.12, *Special Purpose Zones.* This chapter assures land use compatibility with the Hollister Municipal Airport, in which land use shall not generate or cause any visible dust, gasses, heat, odor, or smoke that would disturb aircraft, and operation of motor vehicles on the site.
- Chapter 17.16, *Performance Standards.* This chapter ensures that all land use activities shall be conducted to minimize dust or dirt emissions. Appropriate grading procedures must include the following:
  - Erosion and control plan per city engineering standards;
  - Disturb as little native vegetation that has been determined to be significant to prevent erosion;
  - Water graded areas as often as necessary or hydro seed and install a temporary irrigation system, subject to the approval of the Director; and
  - Revegetate graded areas as soon as possible to minimize dust and erosion.
- Chapter 17.10, *Industrial Zoning District Performance Standards.* This chapter ensures that all land uses proposed in industrial zoning districts shall be operated and maintained to not cause harm to public health, safety or welfare. In particular, the Industrial Districts located near the Airport Safety Overlay Zone for the Hollister Municipal Airport hold supplemental standards, Section 17.14.020, *Airport Safety Overlay*, related to air emissions.
- Chapter 17.08, *Commercial and Mixed Use Zone General Development Standards.* This chapter is intended to retain Hollister's small-town character, and foster attractive pedestrian-friendly commercial uses and natural surveillance. Specifically, restaurant and drive-through business shall be located to avoid odor emissions to existing and undeveloped residential properties.

4.3.2.4 EXISTING CONDITIONS

North Central Coast Air Basin

The NCCAB comprises all of Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito Counties. Air quality in the NCCAB is determined by such natural factors as topography, meteorology, and climate in addition to the presence of existing air pollution sources and ambient conditions, as described below:[22]

- Meteorology: The NCCAB lies along the central coast of California, where the Santa Cruz Mountains dominate the northwest sector of the basin, the Diablo Range marks the northeastern boundary, and

[22] Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD). 2008, February. CEQA Air Quality Guidelines, https://www.mbard.org/files/0ce48fe68/CEQA+Guidelines.pdf, accessed November 12, 2022.

together with the south extent of the Santa Cruz Mountains forms the Santa Clara Valley in the northeastern tip of the basin. Farther south, the Santa Clara Valley evolves into the San Benito Valley which runs northwest-southeast and has the Gabilan Range as its western boundary. To the west of the Gabilan Range is the Salinas Valley, which extends from Salinas at its northwestern end to King City at its southeastern end.[23]

The semi-permanent high pressure cell in the eastern Pacific is the main controlling factor in the climate of the air basin. During the summer, the high pressure cell causes persistent west and northwest winds over the entire California coast. Air descends in the Pacific High forming a stable temperature inversion of hot air over a cool coastal layer. The onshore air currents pass over cool ocean waters to bring fog and relatively cool air into the coastal valleys. The warmer air aloft acts as a lid to inhibit vertical air movement. The northwest-southeast orientation of mountainous ridges tends to restrict and channel the summer onshore air currents.

Monterey Bay is a 25-mile wide inlet, which allows marine air at low levels to penetrate the interior. The Salinas Valley is a steep-sloped coastal valley that opens out on Monterey Bay and extends southeastward. The broad area of the valley floor near the mouth is 25 miles wide, narrowing to about six miles at Soledad.

- Wind Patterns: Hollister, at the northern end of the San Benito Valley, experiences west winds nearly one-third of the time. The prevailing air flow during the summer months probably originates in the Monterey Bay area and enters the northern end of the San Benito Valley through the air gap through the Gabilan Range occupied by the Pajaro River. In addition, a northwesterly air flow frequently transports pollutants into the San Benito Valley from the Santa Clara Valley.[24]

  During the summer, the high pressure cell causes persistent west and northwest winds over the entire California coast. In the fall, the surface winds become weak, and the marine layer grows shallow. The air flow is occasionally reversed, and the relatively stationary air mass is held in place by the Pacific High pressure cell, which allows pollutants to build up over a period of a few days. It is most often during this season that the north or east winds develop to transport pollutants from either the San Francisco Bay area or the Central Valley into the NCCAB. During the winter, the Pacific High migrates southward and has less influence on the air basin. Air frequently flows in a southeasterly direction. The general absence of deep, persistent inversions and the occasional storm systems usually result in good air quality for the basin during this season.

- Wind Circulation: Low wind speed contributes to the buildup of air pollution because it allows more pollutants to be emitted into the air mass per unit of time. Light winds occur most frequently during periods of low sun (fall and winter, and early morning) and at night. These are also periods when air pollutant emissions from some sources are at their peak—namely, commuter traffic (early morning) and wood-burning appliances (nighttime). The problem can be compounded in valleys, when weak flows carry the pollutants up-valley during the day, and cold air drainage flows move the air mass

[23] Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD). 2008, February. CEQA Air Quality Guidelines, https://www.mbard.org/files/0ce48fe68/CEQA+Guidelines.pdf, accessed November 12, 2022.

[24] Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD). 2008, February. CEQA Air Quality Guidelines, https://www.mbard.org/files/0ce48fe68/CEQA+Guidelines.pdf, accessed November 12, 2022.

down-valley at night. Such restricted movement of trapped air provides little opportunity for ventilation and leads to buildup of pollutants to potentially unhealthful levels.

- Inversions: An inversion is a layer of warmer air over a layer of cooler air. Inversions affect air quality conditions significantly because they influence the mixing depth (i.e., the vertical depth in the atmosphere available for diluting air contaminants near the ground). There are two types of inversions that occur regularly. Elevation inversions[25] are more common in the summer and fall, and radiation inversions[26] are more common during the winter. The highest air pollutant concentrations generally occur during inversions. As mentioned prior, air descends in the Pacific High forming a stable temperature inversion of hot air over a cool coastal layer of air.
- Temperature: Solar radiation and temperature are particularly important in the chemistry of ozone formation. Photochemical air pollution (primarily ozone) is produced by the atmospheric reaction of organic substances (such as volatile organic compounds) and nitrogen dioxide under the influence of sunlight. Ozone concentrations are very dependent on the amount of solar radiation, especially during late spring, summer, and early fall. Ozone levels typically peak in the afternoon. After the sun goes down, the chemical reaction between nitrous oxide and ozone begins to dominate. This reaction tends to scavenge and remove the ozone in the metropolitan areas through the early morning hours, resulting in the lowest ozone levels, possibly reaching zero at sunrise in areas with high nitrogen oxides emissions. At sunrise, nitrogen oxides tend to peak, partly due to low levels of ozone at this time and also due to the morning commuter vehicle emissions of nitrogen oxides.

  Generally, the higher the temperature, the more ozone formed, since reaction rates increase with temperature. However, extremely hot temperatures can "lift" or "break" the inversion layer. Air descends in the Pacific High forming a stable temperature inversion of hot air over a cool coastal layer of air.
- Precipitation, Humidity, and Fog: Precipitation and fog may reduce or limit some pollutant concentrations. Ozone needs sunlight for its formation, and clouds and fog can block the required solar radiation. Wet fogs can cleanse the air during winter as moisture collects on particles and deposits them on the ground. Atmospheric moisture can also increase pollution levels. In fogs with less water content, the moisture acts to form secondary ammonium nitrate particulate matter. This ammonium nitrate is part of the valley's $PM_{2.5}$ and PM_{10} problem. The onshore air currents pass over cool ocean waters to bring fog and relatively cool air into the coastal valleys. In the fall, the surface winds become weak and the marine layer grows shallow to allow pollutants to build up in the relatively stationary air mass over a few days. [27]

[25] When the air blows over elevated areas, it is heated as it is compressed into the side of the hill/mountain. When that warm air comes over the top, it is warmer than the cooler air of the valley.

[26] During the night, the ground cools off, radiating the heat to the sky.

[27] Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD). 2008, February. CEQA Air Quality Guidelines, https://www.mbard.org/files/0ce48fe68/CEQA+Guidelines.pdf, accessed November 12, 2022.

AIR QUALITY

Attainment Status

The USEPA requires states that have areas that do not meet the National AAQS to prepare and submit air quality plans showing how the National AAQS will be met. If the states cannot show how the National AAQS will be met, then the states must show progress toward meeting the National AAQS. These plans are referred to as State Implementation Plans (SIP). The 2012-2015 AQMP prepared by MBARD provides the framework for NCCAB to achieve attainment of the State and federal AAQS through the SIP. Areas are classified as attainment or nonattainment areas for particular pollutants, depending on whether they meet the AAQS. Severity classifications for ozone nonattainment range in magnitude from marginal, moderate, and serious to severe and extreme.

- Unclassified. A pollutant is designated unclassified if the data are incomplete and do not support a designation of attainment or nonattainment.
- Attainment. A pollutant is in attainment if the AAQS for that pollutant was not violated at any site in the area during a three-year period.
- Nonattainment. A pollutant is in nonattainment if there was at least one violation of an AAQS for that pollutant in the area.
- Nonattainment/Transitional. A subcategory of the nonattainment designation. An area is designated nonattainment/transitional to signify that the area is close to attaining the AAQS for that pollutant.

The attainment status for the NCCAB is shown in Table 4.3-4, *Attainment Status of Criteria Pollutants in the NCCAB.*

TABLE 4.3-4 ATTAINMENT STATUS OF CRITERIA POLLUTANTS IN THE NCCAB

Pollutant	State	Federal
Ozone	Nonattainment	Attainment
PM_{10}	Nonattainment	Attainment
$PM_{2.5}$	Attainment	Attainment
CO	Unclassified [a]	Attainment
NO_2	Attainment	Attainment
SO_2	Attainment	Attainment
Lead	Attainment	Attainment

Notes:
a. State designation for San Benito County.
Source: Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD). Table 3-2: Attainment Status for the North Central Coast Air Basin. https://www.mbard.org/files/6632732f5/2012-2015-AQMP_FINAL.pdf.

Existing Ambient Air Quality

Existing levels of ambient air quality and historical trends and projections in the vicinity of the EIR Study Area are best documented by measurements taken by the MBARD. The air quality monitoring station closest to the City is the Hollister-Fairview Road Monitoring Station. This station monitors O_3, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$. The most current five years of data monitored at this monitoring station is included in Table 4.3-5, *Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Summary*. The data show recurring violations of the federal $PM_{2.5}$ standards and rare violations of the State and federal O_3 standards in the past five years.

TABLE 4.3-5 AMBIENT AIR QUALITY MONITORING SUMMARY

Pollutant/Standard	Number of Days Threshold Were Exceeded and Maximum Levels during Such Violations				
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Ozone (O_3)					
State 1-Hour ≥ 0.09 ppm (days exceed threshold)	0	0	0	0	0
State & Federal 8-hour ≥ 0.070 ppm (days exceed threshold)	0	0	0	2	0
Max. 1-Hour Conc. (ppm)	0.078	0.077	0.079	0.090	0.077
Max. 8-Hour Conc. (ppm)	0.072	0.063	0.067	0.074	0.068
Coarse Particulates (PM_{10})					
State 24-Hour > 50 µg/m^3 (days exceed threshold)	*	*	*	*	5
Federal 24-Hour > 150 µg/m^3 (days exceed threshold)	0	0	0	1	0
Max. 24-Hour Conc. (µg/m^3)	80.9	95.9	130.7	159.0	128.8
Fine Particulates ($PM_{2.5}$)					
Federal 24-Hour > 35 µg/m^3 (days exceed threshold)	1	10	0	14	0
Max. 24-Hour Conc. (µg/m^3)	42.0	52.7	19.2	89.0	27.2

Notes: ppm: parts per million; parts per billion, µg/m^3: micrograms per cubic meter, * = insufficient data/not available.
a. Data obtained from the Hollister-Fairview Road Monitoring Station for O_3, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$.
Source: CARB, 2022, Air Pollution Data Monitoring Cards (2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021), https://www.arb.ca.gov/adam/topfour/topfour1.php, accessed on November 10, 2022.

Existing Emissions

Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions Inventory

Table 4.3-6, *Existing EIR Study Area Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions Inventory*, identifies the existing criteria air pollutant emissions inventory using emission rates for year 2019 (baseline conditions). The inventories are based on existing land uses in the city and SOI. The Year 2019 inventory represents the projected emissions currently generated by existing land uses using the baseline year 2019 emission factors for on-road vehicles.

TABLE 4.3-6 EXISTING EIR STUDY AREA CRITERIA AIR POLLUTANT EMISSIONS INVENTORY

Pollutant/Standard	2019 EIR Study Area Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions (lbs/day)					
	VOC	NO_X	CO	SO_2	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
Transportation	65	899	1,406	6	57	30
Energy	9	169	94	2	13	13
Off-road Equipment	142	367	2,724	1	18	16
Consumer Products	466	—	—	—	—	—
Total	**682**	**1,435**	**4,224**	**8**	**87**	**58**

Source: See Appendix B, *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data*.

Table 4.3-6 excludes stationary sources of emissions. Stationary sources of air pollution—including complex sources such as metal smelting, wastewater treatment plants, and refineries as well as smaller facilities such as diesel generators, gasoline dispensing facilities, and boilers—are regulated and subject to permit conditions established by the MBARD.

AIR QUALITY

Odors

The City of Hollister has a wastewater reclamation facility that treats domestic, commercial, and industrial wastewater, which has the potential to generate odors.[28] Odors are also associated with certain manufacturing processes and with some commercial operations (restaurants, etc.) that may be located near residential uses. Nuisance odors are regulated by under MBARD's Rules and Regulation Rule 402, *Public Nuisance*, establishes the definition of public nuisance based on the Health and Safety Code Section 41700. Rule 402 prohibits the discharge from any source whatsoever such quantities of air contaminants or other materials. If MBARD receives a compost odor complaint, then the organization is required within 24 hours or by the next working day to refer the complaint to the enforcement agency.

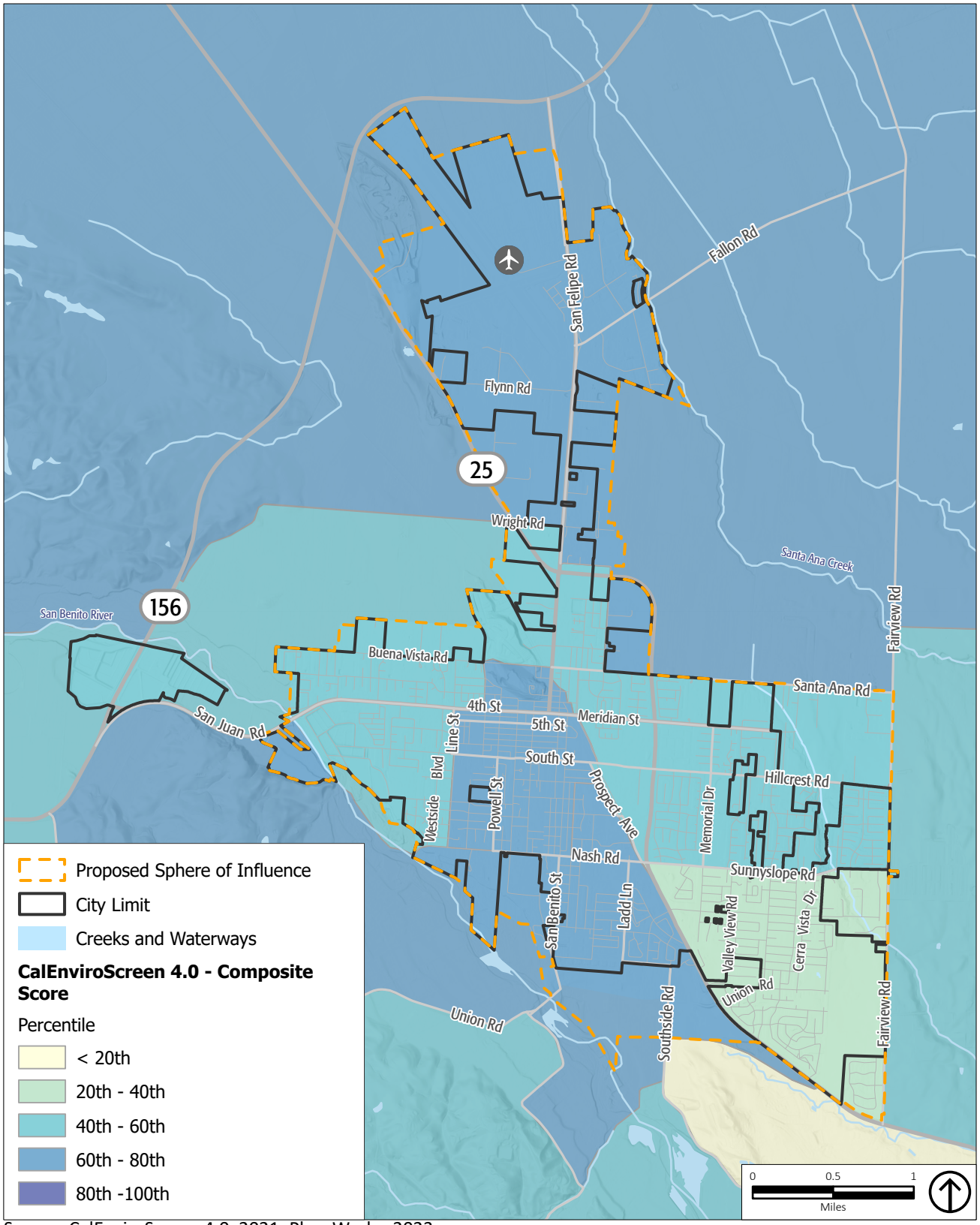
Sensitive Receptors

Some land uses are considered more sensitive to air pollution than others due to the types of population groups or activities involved. Sensitive population groups include children, the elderly, the acutely ill, and the chronically ill, especially those with cardio-respiratory diseases. Disadvantaged communities identified by CalEnviroScreen 4.0 (i.e., environmental justice communities) may be disproportionately affected by and vulnerable to poor air quality.[29] Figure 4.3-1, *CalEnviroScreen 4.0 – Cumulative Score*, shows the communities that may be disproportionately affected by poor air quality in the city. The CalEnviroScreen cumulative score is a cumulative measure of overall environmental justice burden based on 24 indicators, including pollution, social, and health indicators, four of which are specifically related to air quality or air pollution.

Residential areas are also considered sensitive receptors to air pollution because residents (including children and the elderly) tend to be at home for extended periods of time, resulting in sustained exposure to any pollutants present. Other sensitive receptors include retirement facilities, hospitals, and schools. Recreational land uses are considered moderately sensitive to air pollution. Although exposure periods are generally short, exercise places a high demand on respiratory functions, which can be impaired by air pollution. In addition, noticeable air pollution can detract from the enjoyment of recreation. Industrial, commercial, retail, and office areas are considered the least sensitive to air pollution. Exposure periods are relatively short and intermittent, as the majority of the workers tend to stay indoors most of the time. In addition, the working population is generally the healthiest segment of the public.

[28] City of Hollister, California, 2022, Utilities – Sewer, https://hollister.ca.gov/government/city-departments/community-services/utilities-sewer/#:~:text=Wastewater%20Treatment&text=The%20Water%20Reclamation%20Facility%20treats,greenery%20and%20ground%20water%20recharge., accessed November 14, 2022.

[29] Under Senate Bill 535, disadvantaged communities are defined as the top 25% scoring areas from CalEnviroScreen along with other areas with high amounts of pollution and low populations.



Source: CalEnviroScreen 4.0, 2021; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.3-1
CalEnviroScreen 4.0 - Cumulative Score

CalEnviroScreen Air Quality Indicators

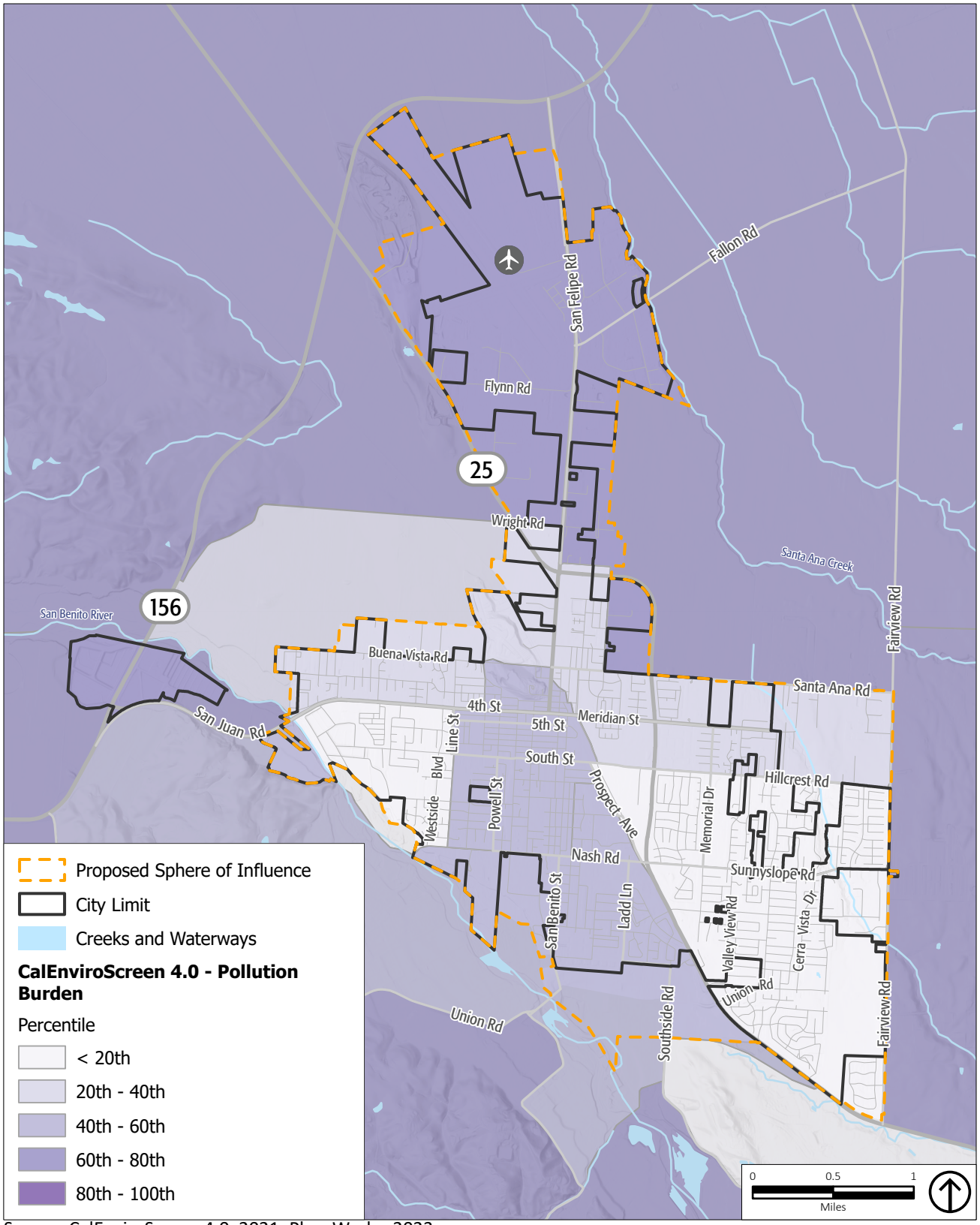
CalEnviroScreen (CES) is a mapping tool the helps identify the California communities most affected by sources of pollution, and where people are especially vulnerable to pollution's effects. People in environmental justice areas identified by CES4 may be disproportionately affected by and vulnerable to poor air quality. CES's "pollution burden" map identifies communities that are exposed to pollution from human activities, such as air pollution (ozone, $PM_{2.5}$, DPM), water pollution (drinking water contaminants), hazardous materials (pesticide use, children's lead exposure, toxic releases), and traffic density. Figure 4.3-2, *CalEnviroScreen 4.0 – Pollution Burden*, shows the pollution burden for Hollister relative to California. In CalEnviroScreen, the pollution burden scope considers the disproportionate effect of pollution on environmental justice communities, because the score weighs socioeconomic factors (e.g., educational attainment, poverty) and sensitivity of the population (e.g., asthma rates, cardiovascular disease). Additionally, the Figure 4.3-3, *CalEnviroScreen 4.0 – Diesel Particulate Matter*, shows the DPM percentile for Hollister and Figure 4.3-4, *CalEnviroScreen 4.0 – Ozone*, shows the ozone percentile for Hollister compared to the rest of California.

Though the causes of asthma are poorly understood, it is well established that exposure to traffic and outdoor air pollutants can trigger asthma attacks. Children, the elderly, racial and ethnic minorities, and low-income Californians suffer disproportionately from asthma.[30] Most census tracts in Hollister rank in the 60 to 80th percentiles for asthma, meaning the asthma rate is higher than 60 percent of the census tracks in California (see Figure 4.3-5, *CalEnviroScreen 4.0 – Asthma*).

Environmental Justice Communities

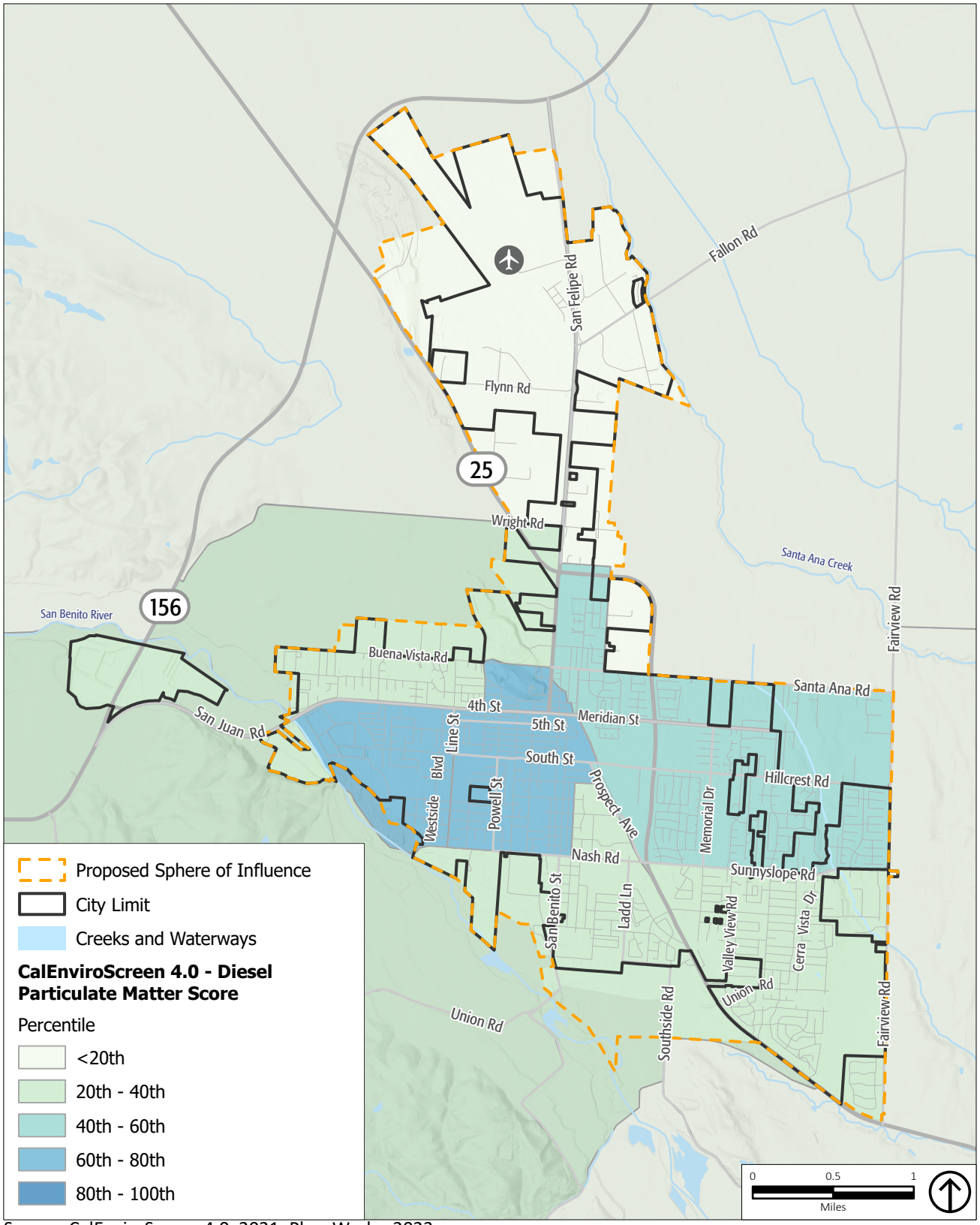
Figure 4.3-6, *Environmental Justice Communities,* shows the census tracts and associated neighborhoods in Hollister that have been identified as environmental justice (EJ) communities through the SB 1000 process.

[30] California Air Resources Board (CARB), 2013, October. Higher 'asthma burden' among minorities, low-income groups tied to increased exposure to air pollution, https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/news/higher-asthma-burden-among-minorities-low-income-groups-tied-increased-exposure-air-pollution, accessed December 7, 2022.



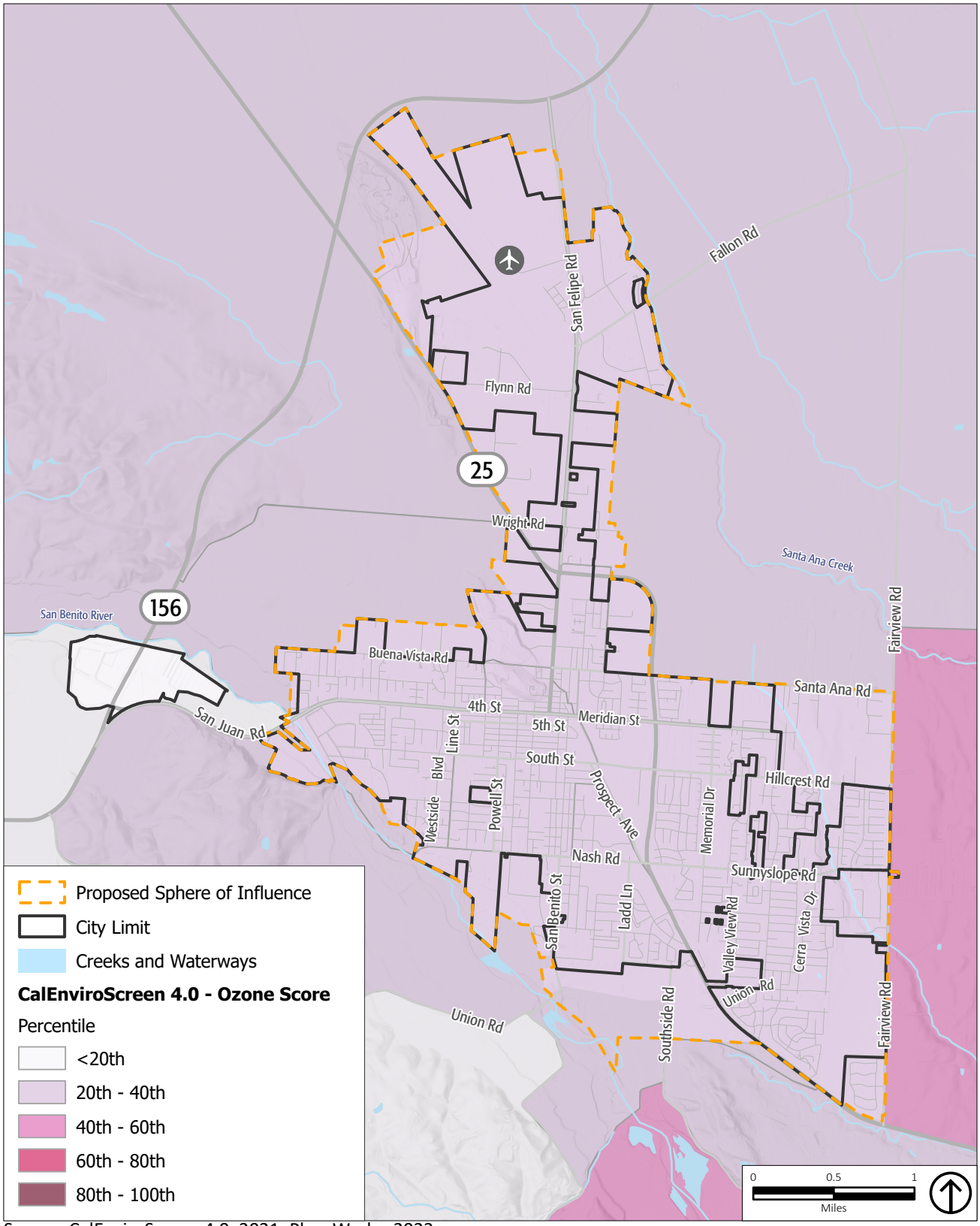
Source: CalEnviroScreen 4.0, 2021; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.3-2
CalEnviroScreen 4.0 - Pollution Burden



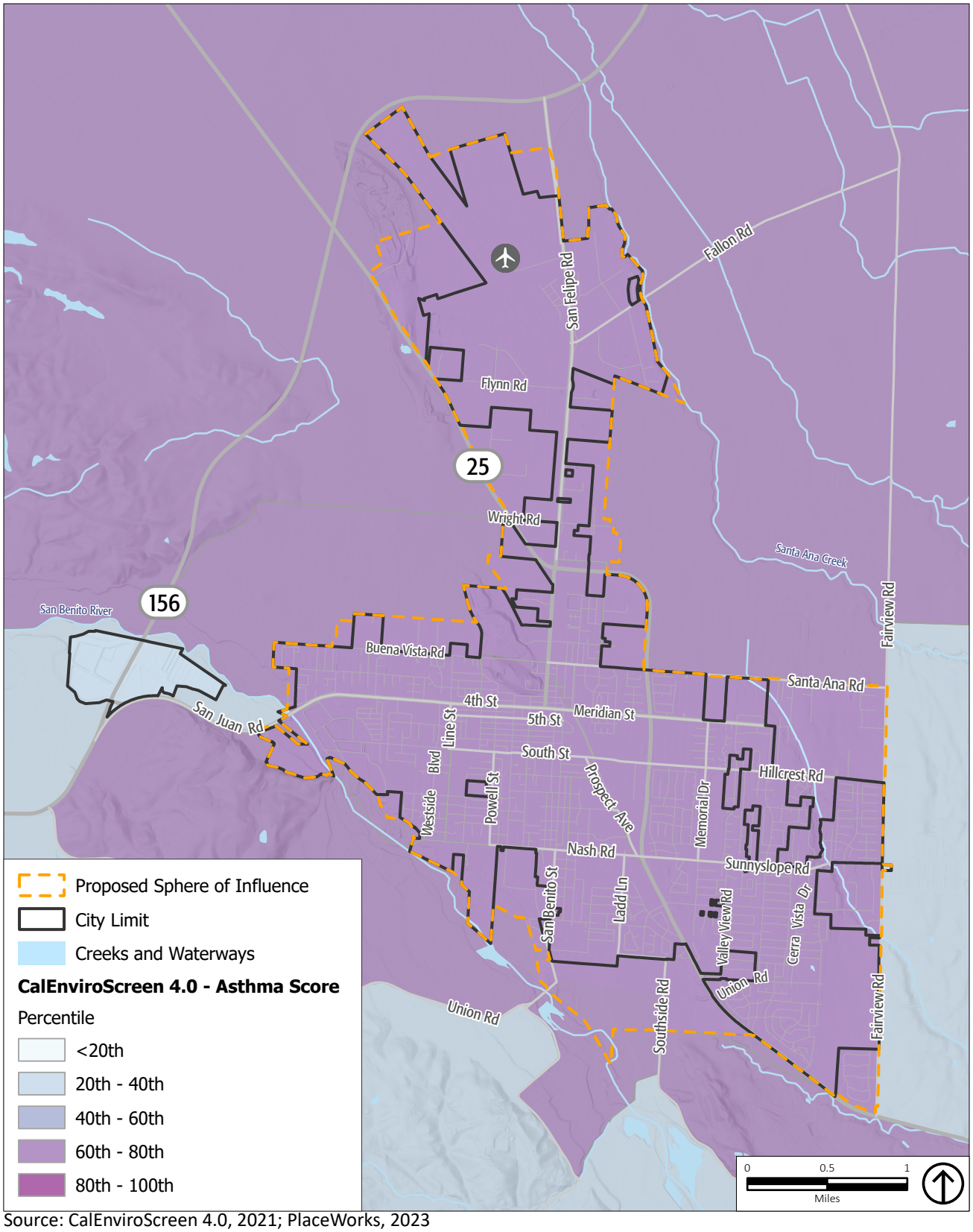
Source: CalEnviroScreen 4.0, 2021; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.3-3
CalEnviroScreen 4.0 - Diesel Particulate Matter



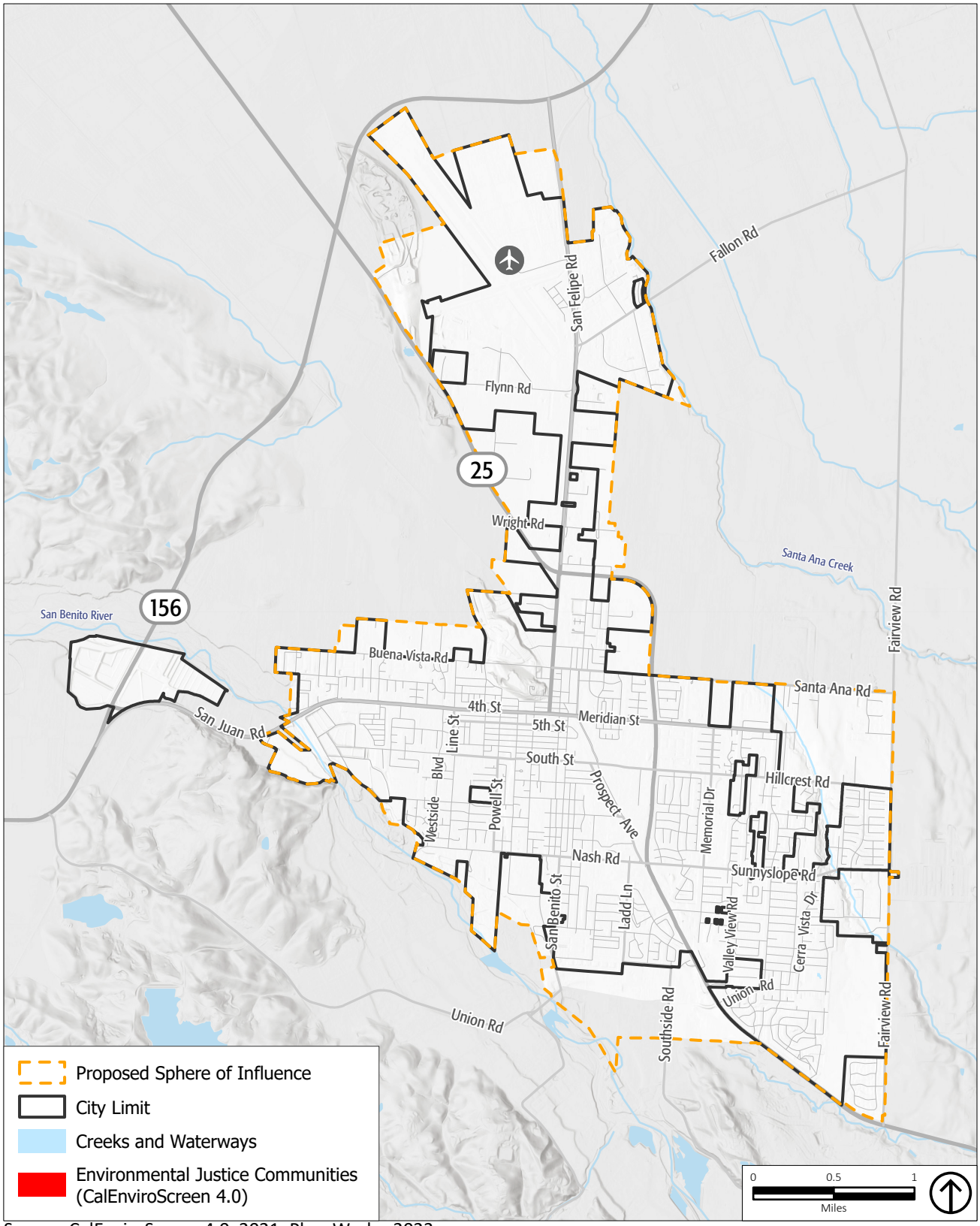
Source: CalEnviroScreen 4.0, 2021; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.3-4
CalEnviroScreen 4.0 - Ozone



Source: CalEnviroScreen 4.0, 2021; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.3-5
CalEnviroScreen 4.0 - Asthma



Source: CalEnviroScreen 4.0, 2021; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.3-6
Environmental Justice Communities

4.3.3 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the proposed project would result in significant impacts to air quality if it would:

1. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan.
2. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard.
3. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.
4. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people.
5. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to air quality.

4.3.3.1 MBARD THRESHOLDS

As stated in Appendix G, *Environmental Checklist Form,* of the CEQA Guidelines, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district (e.g., MBARD) may be relied on to make the above determinations. Thus, this analysis also evaluates the project's air quality impacts pursuant to MBARD's recommended guidelines and thresholds of significance, as discussed further herein.

MBARD has developed the CEQA Air Quality Guidelines (MBARD CEQA Guidelines), which were adopted in October 1995, and last updated February 2008.[31]

The 2008 MBARD CEQA Guidelines represents the latest guidance for addressing air quality impacts and preparing air quality section of environmental documents in the NCCAB. MBARD will periodically update the adopted MBARD CEQA Guidelines to accommodate new information, technical data, legislation, and legal changes as appropriate. The following thresholds of significance from the MBARD's CEQA Guidelines are used to determine whether a proposed project would result in a significant air quality impact.

Regional Significance Thresholds

MBARD has identified regional construction and operational emissions thresholds to determine a project's cumulative impact on air quality in the NCCAB. Specifically, these thresholds gauge whether a project would significantly contribute to a nonattainment designation based on the mass emissions generated. Mass emissions from a project are not correlated with concentrations of air pollutants. Table 4.3-7, *MBARD Regional Criteria Air Pollutants Significance Thresholds*, lists MBARD's regional operational significance thresholds.

[31] Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD). 2008, February. CEQA Air Quality Guidelines, https://www.mbard.org/files/0ce48fe68/CEQA+Guidelines.pdf, accessed November 12, 2022.

TABLE 4.3-7 MBARD REGIONAL CRITERIA AIR POLLUTANTS SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLDS

Pollutant	Operation Phase Threshold of Significance (lbs/day) [a]	Construction Phase Threshold of Significance (lbs/day)
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	550[c]	NA
Nitrous Oxide (NO_X)	137	NA
Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)	137	NA
Sulfur Oxides (SO_X)	150 [b]	NA
Coarse Particulate Matter (PM_{10})	82 [b]	82 [d]

Notes: NA = not applicable
a. Projects that emit other criteria pollutant emissions would have a significant impact if emissions would cause or substantially contribute to the violation of State or national AAQS. Criteria pollutant emissions could also have a significant impact if they would alter air movement, moisture, temperature, climate, or create objectionable odors in substantial concentrations. When estimating project emissions, local or project-specific conditions should be considered.
b. MBARD's 82 lb/day operational phase threshold of significance applies only to onsite emissions and project-related exceedances along unpaved roads. These impacts are generally less than significant. On large development projects, almost all travel is on paved roads (0%) unpaved), and entrained road dust from vehicular travel can exceed the significance threshold. Please contact the Air District to discuss estimating emissions from vehicular travel on paved roads. District approved dispersion modeling can be used to refute (or validate) a determination of significance if modeling shows that emissions would not cause or substantially contribute to an exceedance of State and national AAQS.
c. Modeling should be undertaken to determine if the project would cause or substantially contribute (550 lb/day) to exceedance of CO AAQS. If not, the project would not have a significant impact.
d. Threshold of significance for construction impacts. However, District-approved dispersion modeling can be used to refute (or validate) this determination of significance if direct emissions would not cause an exceedance of State PM_{10} AAQS.
Source: Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD). 2008, February. CEQA Air Quality Guidelines, https://www.mbard.org/files/0ce48fe68/CEQA+Guidelines.pdf, accessed November 12, 2022.

The MBARD CEQA Guidelines also note that construction projects using typical construction equipment, such as dump trucks and front-end loaders, that temporarily emit precursors of ozone (O_3, VOC, NO_x) 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 AAQS.

If projects exceed the emissions thresholds in Table 4.3-7, that project would cumulatively contribute to the nonattainment status of the NCCAB. The attainment designations are based on the AAQS, which are set at levels of exposure that are determined to not result in adverse health effects. Known health effects related to ozone include worsening of bronchitis, asthma, and emphysema and a decrease in lung function. Health effects associated with particulate matter include premature death of people with heart or lung disease, nonfatal heart attacks, irregular heartbeat, decreased lung function, and increased respiratory symptoms. Reducing emissions would further contribute to reducing possible health effects related to criteria air pollutants. However, for projects that exceed the emissions in Table 4.3-7, it is speculative to determine how this would affect the number of days the region is in nonattainment—since mass emissions are not correlated with concentrations of emissions—or how many additional individuals in the NCCAB would be affected.

Mass emissions in Table 4.3-7 are not correlated with concentrations of air pollutants but contribute to the cumulative air quality impacts in the NCCAB. The thresholds are based on the trigger levels for the federal New Source Review Program, which was created to ensure projects are consistent with attainment of health-based federal AAQS. Regional emissions from a single project do not single-handedly trigger a regional health impact, and it is speculative to identify how many more individuals' health in the NCCAB would be negatively affected. Projects that do not exceed the NCCAB regional significance thresholds in

Table 4.3-7 would not violate any air quality standards or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation.

As previously stated, MBARD is the primary agency responsible for ensuring the health and welfare of sensitive individuals to elevated concentrations of air quality in the NCCAB and at the present time. MBARD has not provided methodology to assess the specific correlation between mass emissions generated and the effect on health in order to address the issue raised in *Sierra Club v. County of Fresno (Friant Ranch, L.P.) (2018) 6 Cal.5th 502, Case No. S21978* (Friant Ranch). Ozone concentrations depend on a variety of complex factors, including the presence of sunlight and precursor pollutants, natural topography, atmospheric stability, and wind patterns. Because of the complexities of predicting ground-level ozone concentrations in relation to the National AAQS and California AAQS, it is not possible to link health risks to the magnitude of emissions exceeding the significance thresholds. However, if a project in the NCCAB exceeds the regional significance thresholds, the project could contribute to an increase in health effects in the basin until the attainment standard is met in the NCCAB.

Ambient Air Quality Analysis

The need to perform air quality dispersion modeling for typical urban development projects is determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on project size. MBARD applies the following guidance in determining whether an ambient air quality analysis should be conducted for development projects. For construction activity, MBARD recommends that an ambient air quality analysis should be performed for PM_{10} when the construction activities would exceed the threshold of significance for this criteria air pollutant (82 lbs/day) or exceed the screening level thresholds based on level of construction activity (8.1 acres/day for construction site with minimal earthmoving and 2.2 acres/day for construction site with earthmoving (i.e., grading, excavation)). MBARD also recommends that an ambient air quality analysis be performed for all criteria pollutants when emissions of any criteria pollutant resulting from project operational activities exceed the thresholds stated in Table 4.3-7. For estimating localized carbon monoxide impacts, if the screening thresholds in Chapter 5, *Initial Study/Determining Significance,* of the MBARD CEQA Guidelines are met under project or cumulative conditions, further analysis should be taken. The predicted 1-hour and 8-hour concentrations should be compared to the AAQS to determine if the project's CO concentration impacts would be significant.

However, air dispersion modeling is not applicable at a program level. Consequently, for the purpose of this program-level Draft EIR, emissions of any criteria air pollutant that would exceed the applicable threshold of significance identified in Table 4.3-7 is considered to result in elevated concentrations of air pollutants that have the potential to exceed the AAQS.

Consistency with the Applicable Air Quality Plan

As of 2022, the NCCAB has attained federal AAQS and has prepared plans to acquire State AAQS. The significance thresholds in Table 4.3-7 are based on MBARD's New Source Review Offset Requirements, national AAQS, and conformity with the SIP. Thus, projects with emissions below the thresholds of significance for criteria pollutants would be determined to not have a significant impact on local or regional air quality. Because air dispersion modeling is not applicable for a program EIR level, emissions of any criteria air pollutant that would exceed the applicable threshold of significance identified in Table 4.3-

7 is considered to result in elevated concentrations of air pollutants that have the potential to exceed the AAQS.

Odor Impacts

Odor impacts associated with a proposed project would be considered significant if the project has the potential to frequently expose members of the public to objectionable odors (including sulfur compounds and methane) and should be assessed on existing or reasonably foreseeable sensitive receptors. Due to the subjective nature of odor impacts, the number of variables that can influence the potential for an odor impact, and the variety of odor sources, there are no quantitative or formulaic methodologies to determine if potential odors would have a significant impact. The American Society of Testing Materials has developed procedures to assess odor impacts (Standard Methods E679 and E1432) to establish a sensory threshold of detection or recognition of odors.[32] Once a sensory threshold is established, it should then be compared to average or typical concentrations of odor-causing pollutants at existing or reasonably foreseeable sensitive receptors. A protocol for assessing odor impacts should be determined with the MBARD.

Air Toxics

MBARD regulates TACs under Rule 1000 and MBARD Board approved protocol, which applies to any source which requires a permit to construct or operate pursuant to MBARD Regulation II (Permits) and has the potential to emit carcinogenic or noncarcinogenic TACs.

MBARD's TAC incremental risk threshold for construction and operation is a cancer risk of less than one incident per 100,000 population (10 in a million). Additionally, projects located adjacent to a source of TACs unregulated by Rule 1000 may result in significant impacts to air quality and human health and require modeling. For sources not subject to Rule 1000, the MBARD suggests that a protocol be submitted to the MBARD for approval before an analysis is undertaken.

Projects that do not generate emissions that exceed the cancer risk threshold would not substantially contribute to cumulative air quality hazards or exacerbate an existing environmental hazard. Residential, commercial, office, and institutional uses (such as the hospital land uses) do not use substantial quantities of TACs and typically do not exacerbate existing hazards.

4.3.3.2 METHODOLOGY

This air quality evaluation was prepared in accordance with the requirements of CEQA to determine if significant air quality impacts are likely to occur in conjunction with future development that would be accommodated by the proposed project. MBARD has published the Guidelines that provides local governments with guidance for analyzing and mitigating air quality impacts and was used in this analysis. The EIR Study Area's criteria air pollutant emissions inventory includes the following sectors:

[32] Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD). 2008, February. CEQA Air Quality Guidelines, https://www.mbard.org/files/0ce48fe68/CEQA+Guidelines.pdf, accessed November 12, 2022.

- Transportation: Transportation emissions forecasts were modeled using emission rates from CARB's EMFAC2021, version 1.0.2 web database. Model runs were based on daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT) data provided by Kimley-Horn (see Appendix F, *Transportation Data*) adjusted for the population and employment in the EIR Study Area in year 2019. The VMT provided includes the full trip length for land uses in the City. Consistent with CARB's methodology within the Climate Change Scoping Plan Measure Documentation Supplement, daily VMT was multiplied by 347 days per year to account for reduced traffic on weekends and holidays to determine annual emissions.
- Energy: Energy use for residential and nonresidential land uses in the EIR Study Area were modeled using natural gas data provided by PG&E. Residential energy and non-residential energy usage was provided by PG&E and Central Coast Community Energy (CCCE) and were adjusted for increases in housing units and employment, respectively.
- Off-Road Equipment: Emission rates from CARB's OFFROAD2021, version 1.0.2, web database was used to estimate criteria air pollutant emissions from light commercial and construction equipment in the EIR Study Area. OFFROAD2021 is a database of equipment use and associated emissions for each county compiled by CARB. Emissions were compiled using OFFROAD2021 for the County of San Benito for year 2019. In order to determine the percentage of emissions attributable to the City, light commercial equipment is estimated based on employment for the City of Hollister as a percentage of San Benito County. Agricultural equipment is based on the percentage of farmland in the City compared to the County of San Benito. Construction equipment use is estimated based on building permit data for the City of Hollister and County of San Benito from data compiled by the US Census. The light commercial equipment emissions forecast is adjusted for changes in employment in the City. It is assumed that construction emissions for the forecast year would be similar to historical levels. Annual emissions are derived by multiplying daily emissions by 365 days.
- Area Sources: Area sources are based on the emission factors from the latest CalEEMod Users Guide for emissions generated from use of consumer products and cleaning supplies.

4.3.3.3 POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT ON A PROJECT

In 2016, the California Legislature passed the Planning for Healthy Communities Act (formally referred to as SB 1000) to incorporate Environmental Justice (EJ) into the local land use planning process. The Act requires local governments to address pollution and other hazards that disproportionately impact low-income communities and communities of color in their jurisdictions. The Act mandates that general plans address environmental justice but does not require CEQA analyses to address EJ issues. The proposed 2040 General Plan addresses air quality and health risk impacts to sensitive land uses.

Buildout of the proposed land use plan under the proposed project could result in siting sensitive uses (e.g., residential) near sources of emissions (e.g., freeways, industrial uses). Developing new sensitive land uses near sources of emissions could expose persons that inhabit these sensitive land uses to potential air quality-related impacts. However, as described in Section 4.1.5, *Potential Effects of the Environment on the Project*, of Chapter 4, *Environmental Analysis*, the purpose of this environmental evaluation is to identify the significant effects of the proposed project on the environment, not the significant effects of the environment on the proposed project. *California Building Industry Association v. Bay Area Air Quality Management District* (2015) 62 Cal.4th 369 (Case No. S213478). Thus, CEQA does not require analysis of

the potential environmental effects from siting sensitive receptors near existing sources, and this type of analysis is not provided in Section 4.3.4, *Impact Discussion*. However, the proposed Natural Resources and Conservation (NRC) and Environmental Justice (EJ) Elements of the 2040 General Plan, contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider air quality impacts and require design features to minimize air quality impacts and to achieve appropriate health standards. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would minimize potential adverse air quality impacts:

Goal NRC-3: Protect clean air resources. (Goal NRC2)

- Policy NRC-3.3: Air Quality Consideration in Land Use Planning. Promote land use compatibility for new development by using buffering techniques, such as landscaping, setbacks, and screening in areas where different land uses abut one another to help ensure excellent air quality and land use compatibility. (Policy NRC2.2)
- Policy NRC-3.4: Air Quality Planning and Coordination. Integrate air quality considerations with the land use and transportation processes by mitigating air quality impacts through land use design measures, such as encouraging project design that will foster walking and biking. (Policy NRC2.3)
- Policy NRC-3.5: Circulation Projects to Reduce Impacts on Air Quality. Promote circulation projects that reduce air pollution. (Policy NRC2.5)
- Policy NRC-3.6: Health Risk Assessment. Require new sources of air pollution that will generate significant new and unmitigable air quality impacts or expose sensitive receptors to substantial increases in harmful emissions of toxic air pollutants to prepare a Health Risk Assessment that identifies appropriate mitigation consistent with Monterey Bay Air Resources District California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Air Quality Guidelines, based on the findings of the Health Risk Assessment. (new)
- Policy NRC-3.7: Air Quality Standards in Development Review. Require developers to implement strategies for air quality improvement through the development review process. Ensure that any proposed new sources of particulate matter use latest control technology (such as enclosures, paving unpaved areas, parking lot sweeping and landscaping) and provide adequate buffer setbacks to protect existing or future sensitive receptors. (Implementation Measures NRC.H)
- Policy NRC-3.9: Acute Air Quality Pollution Impact. Require projects or businesses that create acute air quality pollution impacts to implement mitigation measures to protect the health of the community in the affected area. (new)
- Policy NRC-3.10: Idling of Diesel Engines. Prohibit idling of diesel engines citywide. Prohibit non-diesel truck, construction vehicle, and transit vehicle idling within 100 feet of sensitive receptors, such as homes, schools, playgrounds, sports fields, childcare centers, senior centers, and long-term health care facilities. (new)
- Action NRC-3.1: Idling Ordinance. Adopt an ordinance that matches or is more stringent than the State's maximum idling law, and coordinate with California Air Resources Board, Monterey Bay Air Resources District, and law enforcement to achieve compliance. (new)

Goal EJ-8: Ensure access to healthy air quality for all communities so that no community bears the disproportionate burden of environmental hazards and health risks.

- Policy EJ-8.1: Health Impact Assessment. Require a Health Impact Assessment, including consideration of truck traffic impacts, for any project that could potentially affect health conditions for sensitive receptors and/or in impacted communities, and require appropriate mitigation based on the findings of the assessment.

4.3.4 IMPACT DISCUSSION

AIR-1	Implementation of the proposed project would conflict with or obstruct implementation of the MBARD air quality plans.

2040 General Plan

A consistency determination plays an important role in local agency project review by linking local planning and individual projects to the AQMPs. It fulfills the CEQA goal of informing decision makers of the environmental effects of a project under consideration at a stage early enough to ensure that air quality concerns are fully addressed. It also provides the local agency (City of Hollister) with ongoing information as to whether they are contributing to the clean air goals of the AQMPs.

The proposed Natural Resources and Conservation (NRC) Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider consistency with AQMPs. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would minimize conflict with MBARD regulations:

Goal NRC-3: Protect clean air resources. (Goal NRC2)

- Policy NRC-3.2: Consistency with Air Quality Management Plan. Review all development proposals for consistency with the current Air Quality Management Plan of the Monterey Bay Air Resources District. (Policy NRC2.1)
- Policy NRC-3.6: Health Risk Assessment. Require new sources of air pollution that will generate significant new and unmitigable air quality impacts or expose sensitive receptors to substantial increases in harmful emissions of toxic air pollutants to prepare a Health Risk Assessment that identifies appropriate mitigation consistent with Monterey Bay Air Resources District California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Air Quality Guidelines, based on the findings of the Health Risk Assessment. (new)
- Policy NRC-3.12: Air Quality Planning Coordination. Cooperate with the Monterey Bay Air Resources District and other agencies in their efforts to ensure compliance with existing air quality regulations. (Implementation Measure NRC.L)
- Policy NRC-3.14: Technical Assessments. Require project applicants to prepare technical assessments evaluating potential project construction and operation phase-related air quality impacts to the City of Hollister for review and approval. Such evaluations shall be prepared in conformance with Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD) criteria and methodology in assessing air quality

impacts. If air pollutants are found to have the potential to exceed the MBARD-adopted thresholds of significance, ensure mitigation measures, such as those listed in the General Plan EIR, are incorporated to reduce air pollutant emissions during construction or operational activities. (new)

- Action NRC-3.1: Idling Ordinance. Adopt an ordinance that matches or is more stringent than the State's maximum idling law, and coordinate with California Air Resources Board, Monterey Bay Air Resources District, and law enforcement to achieve compliance. (new)

The regional emissions inventory for the NCCAB is compiled by MBARD. Regional population, housing, and employment projections are developed by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG). The regional transportation planning agency, Council of San Benito County Governments (COG), developed the 2040 San Benito Regional Transportation Plan that guides the development of the transportation system in the San Benito region.[33] Growth forecasts are based, in part, on a local jurisdictions' general plan land use designations. These projections form the foundation for the emissions inventory of the AQMP. Potential future development projects that are consistent with the local general plan are considered consistent with the air quality–related regional plans.

Typically, only new or amended general plan elements, specific plans, and major projects that have the potential to affect the regional population and employment forecasts need to undergo a consistency review. Table 4.3-8, *Comparison of Population and Employment Forecast*, compares the population and employment growth forecast under proposed 2040 General Plan to the existing EIR Study Area conditions. Table 4.3-8 shows that proposed project would result in more VMT per day as a result of an increase in population and the proposed project would result in an increase in VMT per service population compared to existing conditions.

TABLE 4.3-8 COMPARISON OF POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT FORECAST

Scenario	Existing [a]	Proposed 2040 General Plan	Change from Existing	Percent Change
EIR Study Area				
Population	38,900	60,535	21,635	56%
Employment [b]	14,270	20,025	5,755	40%
Service Population (SP) [c]	53,170	80,560	27,390	52%
VMT per Day	475,655	785,594	309,939	65%
VMT/SP	8.95	9.75	0.81	9%

Note: Numbers may not add up due to rounding. EIR Study Area = City Limits + Proposed Sphere of Influence.
[a] 2019 demographic numbers are from US Census, the Department of Finance, and the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG).
[b] Jobs are calculated by applying a rate of 800 square feet (sf) per industrial job; 2,300 sf per warehouse job; 500 sf per retail job; and 250 sf per office job.
[c] Service population (SP) consists of the aggregate of total employees and population within the study area.
Source: City of Hollister, 2022; Kimley Horn and Associates, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2022. (See Appendix B, *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data*)

As discussed in Chapter 4.14, *Population and Housing*, the expected buildout under the proposed 2040 General Plan would exceed the regional growth projections for 2040 for population, housing, and jobs.

[33] Council of San Benito County Governments (COG). 2040 San Benito Regional Transportation Plan, http://sanbenitocog.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Final-2040-San-Benito-RTP.pdf, accessed August 8, 2022.

Therefore, growth accommodated by the proposed 2040 General Plan has the potential to generate emissions that could exceed the emissions forecasts in MBARD's AQMP.

MBARD has prepared several plans to attain the California AAQS. Emission reductions achieved through implementation of MBARD's New Source Review Offset requirements are a major component of MBARD's air quality plans. The established thresholds of significance for criteria pollutant emissions are based on MBARD offset requirements for stationary sources, AAQS, and conformity with SIP. Therefore, projects with emissions below the thresholds of significance for criteria pollutants would be determined to not have a significant impact on local or regional air quality. As identified under Impact Discussion AIR-2, implementation of the proposed project would generate a substantial increase in operational (long-term) criteria air pollutants that would exceed the MBARD's significance thresholds for VOC.

A wide variety of control measures are included in the regional air quality plans, such as reducing or offsetting emissions from construction and operations associated with land use developments. Potential future development projects that would occur in the buildout horizon of the proposed 2040 General Plan would be required to adhere to the MBARD control measures, as outlined in the air quality plans and implemented through MBARD rules and regulations.

Summary

Potential future buildout would result in a substantial increase in operational (long-term) criteria pollutant emissions compared to existing conditions that would exceed the MBARD's significance criteria (see Impact Discussion AIR-2). In addition, the proposed project would result in an increase in VMT per service population compared to existing conditions in the City.[34] As a result, implementation of the proposed project has the potential to exceed the emissions forecasts of the MBARD's AQMPs and result in *potentially significant* impacts.

Impact AIR-1: Implementation of the proposed project would result in the generation of substantial operational (long-term) criteria air pollutant emissions that would exceed Monterey Bay Air Resources District's regional significance threshold for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) and would; therefore, not be considered consistent with the existing Air Quality Management Plan.

> Significance without Mitigation: Significant and unavoidable. The various goals, policies, and actions of the proposed 2040 General Plan identified under Impact Discussions AIR-1 and AIR-2, in addition to applicable MBARD rules and regulations, would reduce operational (long-term) criteria air pollutant emissions to the extent feasible. Specifically, proposed 2040 General Plan Policy NRC-3.14 requires project applicants to prepare technical assessments evaluating potential project construction and operation phase-related air quality impacts to the City of Hollister for review and approval. Pursuant to this policy, the evaluations must be prepared in conformance with MBARD criteria and methodology in assessing air quality impacts. Where the technical assessment finds that air pollutants have the potential to exceed the MBARD-adopted thresholds of significance, the technical assessment must identify mitigation measures are incorporated to reduce air pollutant emissions during

[34] The analysis in Chapter4.16, *Transportation*, is based on the City's VMT thresholds, which are compared to the San Benito County average.

construction or operational activities. Examples of types of project-specific mitigation measures that are available to future projects in Hollister are listed in Impact Discussion AIR-2. However, because of the magnitude and intensity of development accommodated by the proposed 2040 General Plan, as well as regional air quality influences beyond the control of Hollister, impacts associated with consistency with the MBARD would remain *significant and unavoidable.* No additional feasible mitigation measures at the program level would ensure consistency of the proposed project with the MBARD's AQMP. The identification of this program-level impact does not preclude the finding of less-than-significant impacts for subsequent individual projects that meet applicable project-level thresholds of significance.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 Climate Action Plan (2023 CAP) is strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. The proposed 2023 CAP includes Strategy 10, which directs the City to decrease community-wide vehicle miles traveled and associated transportation related emissions through implementing certain actions. The proposed Strategy 10 Actions would encourage use of alternative modes of transportation and overall reduce trips and associated VMT. Thus, implementation of the proposed 2023 CAP would result in beneficial impacts to air quality. Because the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land uses changes that would result in indirect growth or change in building density and intensity, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the MBARD air quality plans and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP) is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion to non-agricultural uses through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALLP does not involve any land use changes that would affect air quality, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the MBARD air quality plans and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

AIR-2 **Implementation of the proposed project would result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of a criteria pollutant for which the project region is in nonattainment under applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard.**

2040 General Plan

The proposed 2040 General Plan guides growth within the EIR Study Area by designating land uses in the proposed land use map and through implementation of its goals, policies, and actions. New development would increase air pollutant emissions in the EIR Study Area and contribute to the overall emissions inventory in the NCCAB. A discussion of health effects associated with air pollutant emissions generated by operational activities is included in Section 4.3.1.2, *Air Pollutants of Concern*.

Operation (Long-Term Emissions)

Operational (long-term) activities associated with potential future development that could occur over the buildout horizon of the proposed 2040 General Plan could generate a substantial increase in long-term criteria air pollutant emissions from existing conditions that would exceed MBARD's regional significance thresholds and cumulatively contribute to the nonattainment designations of the NCCAB.

Implementation of the proposed project would result in direct and indirect criteria air pollutant emissions from transportation, energy (e.g., natural gas use), and area sources (e.g., aerosols and landscaping equipment). Mobile-source criteria air pollutant emissions are based on the traffic analysis conducted by Kimley-Horn (see Appendix F, *Transportation Data*). The emissions forecast for the EIR Study Area from implementation of the proposed project compared to existing conditions (with 2040 emissions rates) is shown in Table 4.3-9, *EIR Study Area Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions Forecast*. As shown in Table 4.3-9, implementation of the proposed project would result in an increase in criteria air pollutant emissions from existing conditions. This increase is based on the difference between existing land uses and land uses associated with development that could occur over the buildout horizon of the proposed 2040 General Plan, as well as an estimate of population and employment in the EIR Study Area in the 2040 horizon year.

TABLE 4.3-9 EIR STUDY AREA CRITERIA AIR POLLUTANT EMISSIONS FORECAST

	Criteria Air Pollutants (lbs/day)					
Year	VOC	NO_x	CO	SO_2	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
Existing Land Uses – Year 2040						
Transportation	9	217	469	4	40	15
Energy	9	169	94	2	13	13
Offroad Equipment	142	367	2,724	1	18	16
Consumer Products	466	–	–	–	–	–
Existing Land Uses Total	**626**	**754**	**3,287**	**6**	**70**	**44**

TABLE 4.3-9 EIR STUDY AREA CRITERIA AIR POLLUTANT EMISSIONS FORECAST

	Criteria Air Pollutants (lbs/day)					
Year	VOC	NO_x	CO	SO_2	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
Proposed Land Use Plan – Year 2040						
Transportation	14	362	781	6	66	26
Energy	14	257	140	3	19	19
Offroad Equipment	199	391	3,848	1	19	17
Consumer Products	827	–	–	–	–	–
Proposed Land Uses Total	**1,055**	**1,010**	**4,769**	**10**	**104**	**62**
Change in Emissions (from 2040 No Project Baseline)						
Transportation	6	144	312	3	26	10
Energy	5	88	46	1	7	7
Offroad Equipment	57	24	1,124	<1	1	1
Consumer Products	361	–	–	–	–	–
Net Change from Existing	**429**	**257**	**1,482**	**4**	**32**	**18**
MBARD Threshold	137	137	550	150	82	55
Exceeds MBARD Threshold?	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	No	No	No

Note: Numbers may not add up due to rounding.
Source: See Appendix B, *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data*.

As shown in the Table 4.3-9, potential future development that could occur over the buildout horizon of the proposed 2040 General Plan would generate operational (long-term) air pollutant emissions that exceed MBARD's regional significance thresholds for VOC, NO_X, and CO in 2040. Emissions of VOC and NO_X that exceed the MBARD regional threshold would cumulatively contribute to the O_3 nonattainment designation of the NCCAB. Emissions of CO that exceed MBARD's regional significance thresholds would cumulatively contribute to the O_3 and particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$) nonattainment designations of the NCCAB.

While growth within the EIR Study Area would cumulatively contribute to operational (long-term) regional criteria air pollutant emissions impacts, the proposed Circulation (C) and Natural Resources and Conservation (NRC) Elements of the 2040 General Plan contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts from emissions and to reduce those emissions. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would minimize potential adverse impacts related to operational phase (long-term) regional criteria air pollutant emissions:

Goal C-3: Build and maintain a safe, connected, and equitable pedestrian, bicycle and micromobility network that provides access to community destinations such as employment centers, transit, schools, shopping, and recreation. (new)

- Policy C-3.1: Pedestrian and Bicycle Network. Create and maintain a pedestrian- and bike-friendly environment in Hollister and increase the number of people who choose to walk and bike. (new)
- Policy C-3.3: Pedestrian Right-of-Way Improvements. Require new developments to construct or contribute to improvements that enhance the pedestrian experience including human-scale lighting,

streetscaping, crosswalk striping, crossing lights, wayfinding signage, and accessible sidewalks adjacent to the site. (new)

- Policy C-3.5: Bicycle Improvements. Require new developments to construct or contribute to improvements that enhance the cyclist experience, including bike lanes and bicycle parking. (new)
- Policy C-3.6: Bicycle Facilities. Cooperatively work with Council of San Benito County Governments, Caltrans, and San Benito County to develop, implement and maintain bicycle facilities providing direct access to major public facilities, schools and employment centers as described in the San Benito County Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plan. (Policy C2.1)
- Action C-3.1: Pedestrian Master Plan. Prepare and adopt a Pedestrian Master Plan that identifies citywide pedestrian network improvements. (new)
- Action C-3.3: Bicycle Master Plan. Prepare and adopt a Bicycle Master Plan that identifies citywide bicycle network improvements. (new)
- Action C-3.5: Pedestrian and Bicycle Trails and Routes Awareness. Increase awareness of existing pedestrian and bicycle trails and routes by working with outside agencies and developers to promote these amenities to residents. Collaborate with the County on development of the trail network. (new)

Goal C-4: Implement a uniform set of standards for Hollister's transportation system including standard rights-of-way and typical sections. These standards may be amended as necessary in response to changes in technology and industry design standards. (Goal C-4)

- Policy C-4.6: TDM Requirements. Require new or existing developments that meet specific size, capacity, and/or context conditions to implement Transportation Demand Management strategies and other single vehicle occupancy reduction methodologies. Comply with tiered trip reduction and VMT reduction targets and monitoring that are consistent with the targets of the City's VMT CEQA thresholds. (new)

Goal NRC-3: Protect clean air resources. (Goal NRC2)

- Policy NRC-3.1. State and Federal Standards for Air Quality. Continue to comply with and strive to exceed state and federal standards for air quality. (Policy NRC2.1)
- Policy NRC-3.4: Air Quality Planning and Coordination. Integrate air quality considerations with the land use and transportation processes by mitigating air quality impacts through land use design measures, such as encouraging project design that will foster walking and biking. (Policy NRC2.3)
- Policy NRC-3.5: Circulation Projects to Reduce Impacts on Air Quality. Promote circulation projects that reduce air pollution. (Policy NRC2.5)
- Policy NRC-3.7: Air Quality Standards in Development Review. Require developers to implement strategies for air quality improvement through the development review process. Ensure that any proposed new sources of particulate matter use latest control technology (such as enclosures, paving unpaved areas, parking lot sweeping and landscaping) and provide adequate buffer setbacks to protect existing or future sensitive receptors. (Implementation Measures NRC.H)
- Policy NRC-3.8: Commercial and Industrial Projects Exceeding 10,000 Square Feet. Require new or expanded commercial and industrial projects exceeding 10,000 square feet of gross floor area, such as

big-box stores, warehouses, distribution centers, and similar uses, to be zero-emissions operations, including the facilities themselves and the associated fleets. Require all necessary measures, such as the following, to achieve zero emissions:

- Provide adequate on-site parking for all anticipated truck traffic to prevent idling and off-site queuing.
- Provide electrified loading docks with receptacles allowing plug-in of refrigerated and other types of trailers that otherwise would receive power from the tractor unit.
- Utilize heavy-duty trucks that are model year 2014 or later.
- Utilize zero-emission or "clean fleet" for delivery vehicles.
- Utilize zero-emission forklifts, pallet trucks and jacks, stackers, and other yard equipment.
- Implement practices to control road dust, tire wear, brake dust, and other contaminants in paved areas. (new)

- Policy NRC-3.10: Idling of Diesel Engines. Prohibit idling of diesel engines citywide. Prohibit non-diesel truck, construction vehicle, and transit vehicle idling within 100 feet of sensitive receptors, such as homes, schools, playgrounds, sports fields, childcare centers, senior centers, and long-term health care facilities. (new)
- Policy NRC-3.11: Particulate Matter Pollution Reduction. Promote the reduction of particulate matter pollution from roads, parking lots, construction sites, agricultural lands, and other activities. This would include: (1) requiring the watering of exposed earth surfaces during excavation, grading, and construction activities; (2) requiring the daily (or as needed based on actual circumstances) cleanup of mud and dust carried onto street surfaces by construction vehicles; and (3) requiring that appropriate measures to be taken to reduce wind erosion during construction, such as watering of soil, replanting, and repaving. (Policy NRC2.4)
- Policy NRC-3.12: Air Quality Planning and Coordination. Cooperate with the Monterey Bay Air Resources District and other agencies in their efforts to ensure compliance with existing air quality regulations. (Implementation Measure NRC.L)
- Policy NRC-3.14: Technical Assessments. Require project applicants to prepare technical assessments evaluating potential project construction and operation phase-related air quality impacts to the City of Hollister for review and approval. Such evaluations shall be prepared in conformance with Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD) criteria and methodology in assessing air quality impacts. If air pollutants are found to have the potential to exceed the MBARD-adopted thresholds of significance, ensure mitigation measures, such as those listed in the General Plan EIR, are incorporated to reduce air pollutant emissions during construction or operational activities. (new)
- Action NRC-3.1: Idling Ordinance. Adopt an ordinance that matches or is more stringent than the State's maximum idling law, and coordinate with California Air Resources Board, Monterey Bay Air Resources District, and law enforcement to achieve compliance. (new)

While MBARD rules and proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions may reduce operation-related (long-term) regional air quality impacts of individual projects that could occur over the buildout horizon of the proposed 2040 General Plan to a less-than-significant level, due to the magnitude of

development allowed, the projected cumulative emissions associated with future development projects would exceed the threshold. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would significantly contribute to the nonattainment designations of the NCCAB, resulting in a *potentially significant* impact.

Impact AIR-2a: Operation of development projects that could occur from implementation of the project would generate emissions that would exceed Monterey Bay Air Resources District's (MBARD's) regional significance thresholds for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC), nitrogen oxides (NOx), and Carbon Monoxide (CO).

Significance without Mitigation: Significant and unavoidable. Long-term emissions for VOC that could occur over the buildout horizon of the proposed 2040 General Plan would exceed MBARD's regional significance thresholds and cumulatively contribute to the nonattainment designation of the NCCAB. The goals, policies, and actions of the proposed 2040 General Plan, and implementation of MBARD 207 (*Review of New or Modified Sources*), would reduce air pollutant emissions to the extent feasible. Specifically, proposed 2040 General Plan Policy NRC-3.14 requires project applicants to prepare technical assessments evaluating potential project construction and operation phase-related air quality impacts to the City of Hollister for review and approval. Pursuant to this policy, the evaluations must be prepared in conformance with MBARD criteria and methodology in assessing air quality impacts. Where the technical assessment finds that air pollutants have the potential to exceed the MBARD-adopted thresholds of significance, the technical assessment must identify mitigation measures are incorporated to reduce air pollutant emissions during construction or operational activities. Possible mitigation measures for potential future project-specific developments to reduce operational (long-term) emissions can include, but are not limited to the following:

- Provide preferential carpool/vanpool parking spaces
- Implement a parking surcharge for single occupant vehicles
- Provide for shuttle/mini-bus service
- Provide bicycle storage/parking facilities and bicycle paths within major subdivisions that link to an external network
- Provide shower/locker facilities
- Provide onsite child care centers
- Provide transit design features within the development
- Develop park-and-ride lots
- Off-site mitigation
- Employ a transportation/rideshare coordinator
- Implement a rideshare program
- Provide incentives to employees to rideshare or take public transportation
- Implement flexible work schedules that do not reduce transit ridership
- Implement compressed work schedules
- Implement telecommuting program
- Provide pedestrian facilities within major subdivisions

The measures and policies covering topics such as expansion of the pedestrian and bicycle networks, promotion of public and active transit, and support to increase building energy efficiency and energy conservation would also reduce criteria air pollutants within the city. However, operational (long-

term) emissions would remain *significant and unavoidable* due to the increase in VOCs from residential development and increase in NOx and CO from mobile sources associated with the project.

This EIR quantifies the increase in criteria air pollutants emissions in the city. However, at a programmatic level analysis, it is not feasible to quantify the increase in TACs from stationary sources associated with the proposed project or meaningfully correlate how regional criteria air pollutant emissions above the MBARD's significance thresholds correlate with basin wide health impacts.

To determine cancer and noncancer health risk, the location, velocity of emissions, meteorology and topography of the area, and locations of receptors are equally important as model parameters as the quantity of TAC emissions. The white paper prepared by the Association of Environmental Professionals' Climate Change Committee, *We Can Model Regional Emissions, But Are the Results Meaningful for CEQA,* describes several of the challenges of quantifying local effects—particularly health risks—for large-scale, regional projects, and these are applicable to both criteria air pollutants and TACs.

Similarly, the two amicus briefs filed by the air districts on the Friant Ranch case describe two positions regarding CEQA requirements, modeling feasibility, variables, and reliability of results for determining specific health risks associated with criteria air pollutants. The discussions also include the distinction between criteria air pollutant emissions and TACs with respect to health risks. Additionally, the MBARD's *CEQA Air Quality Guidelines* demonstrate the infeasibility based on the current guidance/methodologies. The following summarizes major points about the infeasibility of assessing health risks of criteria air pollutant emissions and TACs associated with implementation of a general plan. The white paper and amicus briefs are provide in Appendix B, *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data*.

To achieve and maintain air quality standards, the MBARD has established numerical emission indicators of significance for regional and localized air quality impacts for both construction and operational phases of a local plan or project. MBARD has established criteria for Negative Declarations, Mitigated Negative Declarations, and EIRs which can be used by lead agencies as a checklist to determine a project's significance on air quality.[35] The numerical emission indicators are based on the recognition that the NCCAB is a distinct geographic area with a critical air pollution problem for which ambient air quality standards have been promulgated to protect public health. The thresholds represent the maximum emissions from a plan or project that are expected not to cause or contribute to an exceedance of the most stringent applicable national or state ambient air quality standard. By analyzing the plan's emissions against the thresholds, an EIR assesses whether these emissions directly contribute to any regional or local exceedances of the applicable ambient air quality standards and exposure levels.

MBARD currently does not have methodologies that would provide the city with a consistent, reliable, and meaningful analysis to correlate specific health impacts that may result from a proposed project's

[35] The criteria for Negative Declarations are equivalent to those for a NEPA Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) while the criteria for an EIR are equivalent to those for a NEPA Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

mass emissions. For criteria air pollutants, exceedance of the regional significance thresholds cannot be used to correlate a project to quantifiable health impacts unless emissions are sufficiently high to use a regional model. MBARD has not provided methodology to assess the specific correlation between mass emissions generated and their effect on health (note Appendix B, *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data*, provides the SJVAPCD's amicus brief and South Coast Air Quality Management District's amicus brief).

Ozone concentrations depend on a variety of complex factors, including the presence of sunlight and precursor pollutants, natural topography, nearby structures that cause building downwash, atmospheric stability, and wind patterns. Secondary formation of particulate matter (PM) and ozone can occur far from sources as a result of regional transport due to wind and topography (e.g., low-level jet stream). Photochemical modeling depends on all emission sources in the entire domain (i.e., modeling grid). Low resolution and spatial averaging produce "noise" and modeling errors that usually exceed individual source contributions. Because of the complexities of predicting ground-level ozone concentrations in relation to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (AAQS) and California AAQS, it is not possible to link health risks to the magnitude of emissions exceeding the significance thresholds.

Current models used in CEQA air quality analyses are designed to estimate potential project construction and operation emissions for defined projects. The estimated emissions are compared to significance thresholds, which are keyed to reducing emissions to levels that will not interfere with the region's ability to attain the health-based standards. This serves to protect public health in the overall region, but there is currently no CEQA methodology to determine the impact of emissions (e.g., pounds per day) on future concentration levels (e.g., parts per million or micrograms per cubic meter) in specific geographic areas. CEQA thresholds, therefore, are not specifically tied to potential health outcomes in the region.

Further, as shown in Table 4.3-10, *Net Change in Regional Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions from Existing Baseline*, compared to existing baseline year conditions, emissions of NO_X are projected to decrease from current levels and emissions of NO_x and CO would be below MBARD's regional significance threshold despite growth associated with the proposed 2040 General Plan. Meaning, that the finding that the project would cumulatively contribute to health effects is conservative in light of reductions in emissions as a result of improvements in technology. However, because cumulative development within the city would exceed the regional significance thresholds compared to the no project conditions, this EIR identifies that the proposed project could contribute to an increase in health effects in the NCCAB until the attainment standards are met.

TABLE 4.3-10 NET CHANGE IN REGIONAL CRITERIA AIR POLLUTANT EMISSIONS FROM EXISTING BASELINE

	Criteria Air Pollutants (lbs/day)					
Year	VOC	NO_x	CO	SO_2	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
Existing Land Uses – Existing Baseline						
Transportation	65	899	1,406	6	57	30
Energy	9	169	94	2	13	13
Offroad Equipment	142	367	2,724	1	18	16
Consumer Products	466	–	–	–	–	–
Existing Land Uses Total	**682**	**1,435**	**4,224**	**8**	**87**	**58**
Proposed Land Use Plan – Year 2040						
Transportation	14	362	781	6	66	26
Energy	14	257	140	3	19	19
Offroad Equipment	199	391	3,848	1	19	17
Consumer Products	827	–	–	–	–	–
Proposed Land Uses Total	**1,055**	**1,010**	**4,769**	**10**	**104**	**62**
Change in Emissions (from Existing)						
Transportation	-51	-537	-625	1	9	-4
Energy	5	88	46	1	7	7
Offroad Equipment	57	24	1,124	<1	1	1
Consumer Products	361	–	–	–	–	–
Net Change from Existing	**373**	**-425**	**544**	**2**	**16**	**3**
MBARD Threshold	137	137	550	150	82	55
Exceeds MBARD Threshold?	**Yes**	No	No	No	No	No

Note: Numbers may not add up due to rounding.
Source: See Appendix B, *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data*.

The EIR must provide an analysis that is understandable for decision making and public disclosure. Regional-scale modeling may provide a technical method for this type of analysis, but it does not necessarily provide a meaningful way to connect the magnitude of a project's criteria pollutant emissions to health effects without speculation. Additionally, this type of analysis is not feasible at a general plan level because the location of emissions sources and quantity of emissions are not known.

In summary, as described above, implementation of the proposed project would generate emissions that would exceed MBARD's regional significance thresholds for VOC, NO_X, and CO. The proposed 2040 General Plan includes goals, policies, and actions to reduce these long-term regional criteria air pollutant emissions. In addition, proposed 2040 General Plan Policy NCR-3.14 requires potential future development in Hollister to prepare and submit a technical assessment evaluating potential project operation phase-related air quality impacts to the City of Hollister for review and approval prior to project approval by the City. Where the technical assessment determines the MBARD-adopted thresholds are exceeded, the applicants for new development projects would be required to incorporate mitigation measures to reduce air pollutant emissions during operational activities. Due

to the programmatic nature of this EIR, the impact is found to be significant and unavoidable. The identification of this program-level impact does not preclude the finding of less-than-significant impacts for subsequent individual projects that meet applicable thresholds of significance. Due to the programmatic nature of the proposed project, no additional mitigating policies are available, and the impact is considered *significant and unavoidable*.

Construction (Short-Term Emissions)

Construction activities associated with potential future development that could occur over the buildout horizon of the proposed 2040 General Plan could generate construction phase (short-term) emissions that would exceed MBARD's regional or localized threshold criteria and cumulatively contribute to the nonattainment designations of the NCCAB.

Construction activities would temporarily increase PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$, VOC, NO_X, SO_X, and CO regional emissions within the NCCAB. The primary source of NO_X, CO, and SO_X emissions is from the use of construction equipment. The primary sources of particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$) emissions are activities that disturb the soil, such as grading and excavation, road construction, and building demolition and construction. The primary sources of VOC emissions are the application of architectural coating and off-gas emissions associated with asphalt paving. A discussion of health effects associated with air pollutant emissions generated by construction activities is included under Section 4.3.1.2, *Air Pollutants of Concern*.

Construction activities that could occur under the proposed project would occur over the buildout horizon of the proposed 2040 General Plan, causing short-term emissions of criteria air pollutants. However, information regarding specific development projects, soil types, and the locations of receptors would be needed in order to quantify the level of impact associated with construction activity from potential future development. Due to the scale of development activity associated with buildout through 2040, emissions would likely exceed the MBARD regional significance thresholds. In accordance with the MBARD methodology, emissions that exceed the regional significance thresholds would cumulatively contribute to the nonattainment designations of the NCCAB. The NCCAB is designated as nonattainment for the O_3 and PM_{10}. Emissions of VOC and NO_X are precursors to the formation of O_3. In addition, NO_X is a precursor to the formation of particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$). Therefore, the proposed project would cumulatively contribute to the nonattainment designations of the NCCAB for O_3 and particulate matter (PM_{10}).

Air quality emissions related to construction must be addressed on a project-by-project basis. For the proposed 2040 General Plan, which is a broad-based policy document, it is not possible to determine whether the scale and phasing of individual projects would exceed the localized construction emissions thresholds. In addition to regulatory measures, mitigation imposed at the project level may include extension of construction schedules and/or use of special equipment.

While growth within the EIR Study Area would cumulatively contribute to construction (short-term) regional criteria air pollutant emissions impacts, the proposed Natural Resources and Conservation (NRC) Element of the 2040 General Plan includes policies that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts from emissions and to reduce those emissions. As stated previously, Policy NRC-3.7 requires development projects to implement strategies to reduce air pollutants and Policy NRC-3.11 would promote the reduction of particulate matter from construction activities.

The air quality analysis should conclude whether each impact is considered significant or less than significant based on the criteria in Chapter 5 of the MBARD CEQA *Air Quality Guidelines*. At a minimum, the analysis should address the nonattainment pollutants for NCCAB (PM_{10} and ozone precursors VOC and NO_X) and estimate net emission impacts to the existing environment. The Guidelines recommend computer models to estimate emissions from short-term construction operations generating fugitive dust. However, calculating VOC and NOx emissions from typical construction equipment is not necessary because temporary emissions of these ozone precursors have been accommodated in State and federally required air plans. The purpose quantifying short-term construction emissions is to confirm a development's construction exhaust emissions, and therefore be able to identify appropriate mitigation, either through implementation of specific mitigation measures (e.g., use of construction equipment with USEPA Tier 4-rated or higher engines) or payment of applicable off-site fees.

Nevertheless, while adherence to existing and proposed regulations may reduce construction phase (short-term) emissions, the likely scale and extent of construction activities associated with the proposed project would likely continue to exceed the MBARD thresholds for some projects. Therefore, construction-related regional air quality impacts associated with implementation of the proposed project are deemed *significant.*

Impact AIR-2b: Construction activities that could occur over the buildout horizon of the proposed 2040 General Plan would generate substantial short-term criteria air pollutant emissions that would exceed Monterey Bay Air Resources District's (MBARD's) regional significance thresholds and cumulative contribute to the nonattainment designations of the North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB).

Significance without Mitigation: Significant and unavoidable. Implementation of the proposed project would occur over a period of 20 years or longer. Construction activities associated with development that could occur under the proposed project could generate short-term emissions that exceed the MBARD's significance thresholds during this time and cumulatively contribute to the nonattainment designations of the NCCAB. Implementation of applicable regulatory measures (e.g., MBARD Rules 400, 402, and 426) and the proposed 2040 General Plan goals and policies listed above would reduce criteria air pollutant emissions from construction-related activities to the extent feasible and may result in reducing construction-related regional air quality impacts of subsequent individual projects to less than significant. Specifically, proposed 2040 General Plan Policy NRC-3.14 requires project applicants to prepare technical assessments evaluating potential project construction and operation phase-related air quality impacts to the City of Hollister for review and approval. Pursuant to this policy, the evaluations must be prepared in conformance with MBARD criteria and methodology in assessing air quality impacts. Where the technical assessment finds that air pollutants have the potential to exceed the MBARD-adopted thresholds of significance, the technical assessment must identify mitigation measures are incorporated to reduce air pollutant emissions during construction or operational activities. Future project-specific mitigation measures to reduce construction-related emissions could include, but are not limited to:

- Using construction equipment rated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency as having Tier 4 interim (model year 2008 or newer) or higher emission limits, applicable for engines between 50 and 750 horsepower. A list of construction equipment by type and model year shall

be maintained by the construction contractor on-site, which shall be available for City review upon request.

- Ensuring construction equipment is properly serviced and maintained to the manufacturer's standards.
- Use of alternative-fueled or catalyst-equipped diesel construction equipment, if available and feasible.
- Clearly posted signs that require operators of trucks and construction equipment to minimize idling time (e.g., five-minute maximum).
- Preparation and implementation of a fugitive dust control plan that may include the following measures:
  - Water all active construction areas at least twice daily. Frequency should be based on the type of operation, soil, and wind exposure.
  - Prohibit all grading activities during periods of high wind (over 15 miles per hour).
  - Apply chemical soil stabilizers on inactive construction areas (disturbed lands within construction projects that are unused for at least four consecutive days).
  - Apply non-toxic binders (e.g., latex acrylic copolymer) to exposed areas after cut and fill operations and hydro seed area.
  - Haul trucks shall maintain at least two feet and zero inches of freeboard.
  - Cover all trucks hauling dirt, sand, or loose materials.
  - Plant tree windbreaks on the windward perimeter of construction projects, if adjacent to open land.
  - Plant vegetative ground cover in disturbed areas as soon as possible.
  - Cover inactive storage piles.
  - Install wheel washers at the entrance to construction sites for all exiting trucks.
  - Pave all roads on construction sites.
  - Sweep streets if visible soil material is carried out from the construction site.
  - Post a publicly visible sign which specifies the telephone number and person to contact regarding dust complaints. This person shall respond to complaints and take corrective action within 48 hours. The phone number of the MBARD shall be visible to ensure compliance with Rule 402 (Nuisance).
  - Limit the area under construction at any one time.

However, due to the programmatic nature of the proposed project, construction time frames and equipment for individual site-specific projects are not available and there is a potential for multiple developments to be constructed at any one time, resulting in significant construction-related emissions. Therefore, despite adherence to proposed 2040 General Plan Policy NRC-3.14, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable. The identification of this program-level impact does not preclude the finding of less-than-significant impacts for subsequent individual projects that meet applicable thresholds of significance. Due to the programmatic nature of the proposed project, no additional mitigating policies are available, and the impact is considered *significant and unavoidable*.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan and does not involve any land use changes that would result in indirect growth or change in building density and intensity. Because there is no specific land use component associated with the proposed 2023 CAP, its implementation would not directly result in the generation of construction-related criteria air pollutant emissions. Additionally, implementation of the GHG Reduction Strategies identified in the proposed 2023 CAP would have co-benefits with regard to operation-related criteria air pollutant emissions. Energy efficiency improvements (e.g., Strategies 1 through 9) would promote sustainable building practices and would result in a decrease in natural gas use and associated criteria air pollutants (i.e., VOC, NO_X, CO, SO_X, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$). Likewise, transportation strategies that reduce VMT (e.g., Strategies 10, 11, 13, 14, and 15) would result in reduction in criteria air pollutants from the transportation sector. Therefore, the proposed 2023 CAP would contribute to reducing operation-phase criteria air pollutant emissions and result in beneficial air quality impacts. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of a criteria pollutant for which the project region is in nonattainment under applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion to non-agricultural uses through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALLP does not involve any land use changes that would affect air quality, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of a criteria pollutant for which the project region is in nonattainment under applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

AIR-3	**Implementation of the proposed project would expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations of toxic air contaminants.**

2040 General Plan

Operation Health Hazards

Operation of new land uses consistent with the land use plan of the proposed 2040 General Plan could generate new sources of criteria air pollutants and TACs in the EIR Study Area from area/stationary

sources and mobile sources. The following describes potential localized operational air quality impacts from implementation of the proposed project.

CO Hotspots

Areas of vehicle congestion have the potential to create pockets of CO called hotspots. These pockets have the potential to exceed the State 1-hour standard of 20 ppm or the 8-hour standard of 9.0 ppm. The Guidelines recommends CO Hotspot screening procedures developed by Caltrans for projects that trigger the level of significance for CO shown in Table 5-3 of the MBARD CEQA Guidelines. However, emissions from motor vehicles, the largest source of CO emissions, have been declining since 1985 despite increases in VMT due to the introduction of new automotive emission controls and fleet turnover.

Implementation of the proposed project in year 2040 would add vehicle trips but is not anticipated to produce the volume of traffic required to generate a CO hotspot. Furthermore, as described in Chapter 4.16, *Transportation*, the proposed 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions that will help reduce vehicle miles traveled and therefore reduce emissions from automobiles. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project and would not have the potential to substantially increase CO hotspots at intersections in the vicinity of the EIR Study Area. Accordingly, impacts would be *less than significant* and no mitigation measures are required.

Toxic Air Contaminants

Permitted Stationary Sources

Various industrial and commercial processes (e.g., manufacturing, dry cleaning) would be expected to release TACs. TAC emissions generated by stationary and point sources of emissions within the NCCAB are regulated and controlled by MBARD. However, emissions of TACs from mobile sources when operating at a property (e.g., truck idling) are regulated by statewide rules and regulations, not by MBARD, and have the potential to generate substantial concentrations of air pollutants.

The MBARD regulates TACs from new or modified sources under Rule 1000 and a Board approved protocol. They apply to any source which requires a permit to construct or operate pursuant to District Regulation II (Permits) and has the potential to emit carcinogenic or noncarcinogenic TACs. Rule 1000 requires sources of carcinogenic TACs to install best control technology and reduce cancer risk to less than one incident per 100,000 population (10 in one million cancer risk). Additionally, MBARD implements the Rule 1003, Air Toxic Emissions Inventory and Risk Assessments, which establishes the Air Toxics Hot Spots Act and requires existing facility's emissions to be less than one incident per 100,000 population (10 in one million cancer risk). Though these sources would incrementally contribute to the proposed project inventory on an individual basis, they would be mitigated to the standards identified above. Overall, combined with the standards and permitting processes described above, impacts related to permitted stationary sources of TACs are considered *less than significant* and no mitigation measures are required.

Warehouse/Industrial Land Uses

Mobile sources of TACs are not regulated by MBARD. The primary mobile source of TACs within the EIR Study Area is truck idling and use of cargo-handling equipment. New warehousing operations could

generate substantial diesel particulate matter emissions from cargo-handling equipment use and truck idling. In addition, some warehousing and industrial facilities may include use of transport refrigeration units (TRUs) for cold storage. New land uses in the EIR Study Area that would be permitted under the proposed 2040 General Plan that use trucks, including trucks with TRUs, could generate an increase in diesel particulate matter (DPM) that would contribute to cancer and noncancer health risk in the NCCAB. Additionally, these types of facilities could also generate particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$) that may cause an exceedance or contribute to the continuing exceedance of the federal and State AAQS. These new land uses could be near existing air quality sensitive receptors within and outside the EIR Study Area.

As shown in Figure 3-6, *Proposed General Plan Land Use*, in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, portions of areas designated Industrial within the EIR Study Area are in close or adjacent to areas designated for residential use. In addition, trucks would travel on regional transportation routes through the NCCAB, contributing to near-roadway diesel particulate matter concentrations.

The proposed Environmental Justice (EJ), Natural Resources and Conservation (NRC), and Health and Safety (HS) Elements of the 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to air quality sensitive receptors. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would minimize potential adverse impacts related to operational phase emissions to air quality sensitive receptors:

Goal EJ-8: Ensure access to healthy air quality for all communities so that no community bears the disproportionate burden of environmental hazards and health risks. (new)

- Policy EJ-8.1: Health Impact Assessment. Require a Health Impact Assessment, including consideration of truck traffic impacts, for any project that could potentially affect health conditions for sensitive receptors and/or in impacted communities, and require appropriate mitigation based on the findings of the assessment. (new)

Goal NRC-3: Protect clean air resources. (Goal NRC2)

- Policy NRC-3.6: Health Risk Assessment. Require new sources of air pollution that will generate significant new and unmitigable air quality impacts or expose sensitive receptors to substantial increases in harmful emissions of toxic air pollutants to prepare a Health Risk Assessment that identifies appropriate mitigation consistent with Monterey Bay Air Resources District California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Air Quality Guidelines, based on the findings of the Health Risk Assessment. (new)
- Policy NRC-3.7: Air Quality Standards in Development Review. Require developers to implement strategies for air quality improvement through the development review process. Ensure that any proposed new sources of particulate matter use latest control technology (such as enclosures, paving unpaved areas, parking lot sweeping and landscaping) and provide adequate buffer setbacks to protect existing or future sensitive receptors. (Implementation Measures NRC.H)
- Policy NRC-3.8: Commercial and Industrial Projects Exceeding 10,000 Square Feet. Require new or expanded commercial and industrial projects exceeding 10,000 square feet of gross floor area, such as big-box stores, warehouses, distribution centers, and similar uses, to be zero-emissions operations, including the facilities themselves and the associated fleets. Require all necessary measures, such as the following, to achieve zero emissions:

- Provide adequate on-site parking for all anticipated truck traffic to prevent idling and off-site queuing.
- Provide electrified loading docks with receptacles allowing plug-in of refrigerated and other types of trailers that otherwise would receive power from the tractor unit.
- Utilize heavy-duty trucks that are model year 2014 or later.
- Utilize zero-emission or "clean fleet" for delivery vehicles.
- Utilize zero-emission forklifts, pallet trucks and jacks, stackers, and other yard equipment.
- Implement practices to control road dust, tire wear, brake dust, and other contaminants in paved areas. (new)

- Policy NRC-3.9: Acute Air Quality Pollution Impact. Require projects or businesses that create acute air quality pollution impacts to implement mitigation measures to protect the health of the community in the affected area. (new)
- Policy NRC-3.10: Idling of Diesel Engines. Prohibit idling of diesel engines citywide. Prohibit non-diesel truck, construction vehicle, and transit vehicle idling within 100 feet of sensitive receptors, such as homes, schools, playgrounds, sports fields, childcare centers, senior centers, and long-term health care facilities. (new)
- Policy NRC-3.15: Operational Health Risk Assessment. Require project applicants to prepare an operational health risk assessment (HRA) for industrial or warehousing land uses and commercial land uses that would generate substantial diesel truck travel (i.e., 100 diesel trucks or 40 or more trucks with diesel-powered transport refrigeration units per day). The operational HRA shall be prepared in accordance with policies and procedures of the State Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment and the Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD). If the operational HRA shows that the incremental cancer risk exceeds 10 in a million, the appropriate noncancer hazard index exceeds 1.0; or the thresholds as determined by the MBARD, require the project applicant to identify and demonstrate measures, such as those listed in the General Plan EIR, that can reduce potential cancer and noncancer risks to an acceptable level. (new)
- Action NRC-3.1: Idling Ordinance. Adopt an ordinance that matches or is more stringent than the State's maximum idling law, and coordinate with California Air Resources Board, Monterey Bay Air Resources District, and law enforcement to achieve compliance. (new)

Goal HS-7: Protect the community's health, safety, and welfare relating to the use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials. (new)

- Policy HS-7.2: Hazardous Materials Storage and Disposal. Require proper storage and disposal of hazardous materials to prevent leakage, potential explosions, fires, or the escape of harmful gases, and to prevent individually innocuous materials from combining to form hazardous substances, especially at the time of disposal. Provide the public, industry, agriculture, and local government with the available information needed to enable them to take rational and cost- effective actions to minimize, recycle, treat, dispose of, or otherwise manage hazardous wastes within the Hollister Planning Area. (Policy HS1.14)

As a long-range policy document, the proposed 2040 General Plan lacks sufficient detail on specific development projects that would potentially be developed in the future; therefore, it is not possible to determine what types of TACs would be generated on an individual site. Because the exact nature of the future industrial uses is not known, the quantity of TACs generated by the proposed project is also unknown. Furthermore, for warehouse development projects, cancer risk is predominately associated with diesel-powered cargo handling equipment rather than onsite truck idling. There is insufficient information available at this level of analysis to conduct a reasonable or scientifically valid analysis of DPM associated with onsite diesel-powered cargo handling equipment and trucks, or other sources of TACs. Thus, for programmatic, general-plan-level assessments, it is not feasible to conduct regional dispersion modeling to determine the incremental contribution of risks associated with land use changes. Therefore, health risk impacts from non-permitted sources associated with development of industrial and commercial land uses are considered *significant*.

Impact AIR-3a: Implementation of the proposed project could expose air quality sensitive receptors to substantial toxic air contaminant concentrations from non-permitted sources during operation.

Significance without Mitigation: Significant and unavoidable. Potential future development from implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan could result in a substantial increase in DPM near existing or planned air quality sensitive receptors (e.g., children, the elderly, the acutely ill, and the chronically ill, especially those with cardiorespiratory diseases, disadvantaged communities). Proposed General Plan Policy NRC-3.15 requires that applicants of industrial or warehousing land uses in addition to commercial land uses that would generate substantial diesel truck travel (i.e., 100 diesel trucks per day or 40 or more trucks with diesel-powered transport refrigeration units per day based on the California Air Resources Board recommendations for siting new sensitive land uses) to prepare and submit an operational health risk assessment (HRA) to the City of Hollister for review and approval. If the operational HRA determines the new development poses health hazards that increase the incremental cancer risk above the threshold established by the MBARD, project specific mitigation measures shall be integrated to reduce cancer and acute risk below the MBARD threshold. The operational HRA is required to be prepared in accordance with policies and procedures of the State Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment and the MBARD. If the operational HRA shows that the incremental cancer risk exceeds 10 in a million, the appropriate noncancer hazard index exceeds 1.0; or the thresholds as determined by the MBARD at the time a project is considered, the project applicant would be required to identify and demonstrate that measures can reduce potential cancer and noncancer risks to an acceptable level, including appropriate enforcement mechanisms.

Examples of project-specific mitigation measures that future projects in Hollister can apply to reduce risk impacts may include but are not limited to:

- Restricting idling onsite beyond Air Toxic Control Measures idling restrictions, as feasible.
- Electrifying warehousing docks.
- Requiring use of newer equipment and/or vehicles.
- Restricting offsite truck travel through the creation of truck routes.

Implementation of proposed General Plan Policy NRC-3.15 would ensure mobile sources of emissions not covered under MBARD permits are considered during subsequent project-level environmental

review by the City of Hollister. Potential future development projects in the city that have the potential to generate potentially significant risks associated with the release of TACs are required to undergo an analysis of their potential health risks associated with TACs based upon the specific details of each individual project. Though individual projects would be required to have less than significant impacts, cumulative development in the City would result in an increase in DPM concentrations and could increase the environmental burden on sensitive populations, including environmental justice communities, in the NCCAB. Overall, because there are no specific development projects identified or approved under the proposed 2040 General Plan and the location and exact nature of future development projects are unknown, determining health risk at this time is considered speculative pursuant to Section 15145 of the CEQA Guidelines. Health risk impacts from development of industrial and commercial land uses are considered a *significant and unavoidable* project and cumulative impact. However, the identification of this program-level impact does not preclude the finding of less-than-significant impacts for subsequent individual projects that meet applicable thresholds of significance.

Construction Health Hazards

Future construction under the proposed project would temporarily elevate concentrations of TACs and diesel-$PM_{2.5}$ in the vicinity of sensitive land uses during construction activities. Because the details regarding future construction activities are not known at this time—including phasing of future individual projects, construction duration and phasing, and preliminary construction equipment—construction emissions are evaluated qualitatively. Subsequent project-specific evaluation of qualifying future development projects would be required to assess potential impacts and mitigate those impacts to acceptable levels.

Potential future projects could apply project-specific mitigation measures to reduce risk such as the use of construction equipment with USEPA Tier 4-rated (or higher) engines. Furthermore, Policy NRC-3.6 would require new sources of air pollution that will generate new air quality impacts or expose to harmful emissions of toxic air pollutants to prepare a Health Risk Assessment in alignment with MBARD's CEQA Air Quality Guidelines. However, construction emissions associated with the proposed project could exceed the MBARD thresholds for some projects. Therefore, construction-related health risk impacts associated with the proposed project are considered *significant*.

Impact AIR-3b: Construction activities associated with potential future development could expose nearby air quality sensitive receptors to substantial concentrations of toxic air contaminants during construction.

Significance with Mitigation: Significant and unavoidable. Implementation of the proposed project would occur over a period of 20 years or longer. Construction activities associated with development allowed under the proposed project could generate short-term emissions that could expose air quality sensitive receptors to construction emissions. Implementation of proposed 2040 General Plan Policy NRC-3.14, which requires project applicants to prepare technical assessments evaluating potential project construction and operation phase-related air quality impacts to the City of Hollister for review and approval and identify project specific mitigation measures to reduce air pollutant emissions during construction or operational activities, in addition to applicable regulatory measures, would reduce criteria air pollutant emissions from construction-related activities to the extent feasible and

may result in reducing construction-related regional air quality impacts of subsequent individual projects to less than significant. However, due to the programmatic nature of the proposed project, construction time frames and equipment for individual site-specific projects are not available and there is a potential for multiple developments to be constructed at any one time, resulting in significant construction-related emissions. Therefore, despite adherence to proposed 2040 General Plan Policy NRC-3.14, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable. The identification of this program-level impact does not preclude the finding of less-than-significant impacts for subsequent individual projects that meet applicable thresholds of significance. Due to the programmatic nature of the proposed project, no additional mitigating policies are available, and the impact is considered *significant and unavoidable*.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan and does not involve any land use changes that would result in indirect growth or change in building density and intensity. Because there is no specific land use component associated with the proposed 2023 CAP, its implementation would not directly result in the generation of operation-related criteria air pollutant, TAC emissions, or generation of vehicle trips to produce CO hotspots. In addition, as stated under Impact Discussion AIR-2, implementation of the CAP could result in beneficial long-term air quality impacts from the increase in energy efficiency, usage of clean energy, and reduction in VMT. A reduction in vehicle trips would contribute to further minimizing the potential creation of CO hotpots. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations of toxic air contaminants and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion to non-agricultural uses through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALLP does not involve any land use changes that would affect air quality, implementation of the proposed project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations of toxic air contaminants and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

AIR-4	Implementation of the proposed project could result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people.

2040 General Plan

Operational-Related Odors

Industrial Land Uses

Development allowed under the proposed 2040 General Plan could generate new sources of odors. Odors from the types of land uses that could generate objectionable odors are regulated under MBARD Rule 402, *Nuisance*, which states:

> No person shall discharge from any source whatsoever such quantities of air contaminants or other materials which cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or to the public; or which endanger the comfort, repose, health, or safety of any such persons or the public; or which cause, or have a natural tendency to cause, injury or damage to business or property.

The proposed Natural Resources and Conservation (NRC) Element of the 2040 General Plan includes policies that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts from emissions and odor and to reduce those emissions and odors. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goal and policies would minimize potential adverse air quality impacts related to odor:

Goal NRC-3: Protect clean air resources. (Goal NRC2)

- Policy NRC-3.3: Air Quality Consideration in Land Use Planning. Promote land use compatibility for new development by using buffering techniques, such as landscaping, setbacks, and screening in areas where different land uses abut one another to help ensure excellent air quality and land use compatibility. (Policy NRC2.2)
- Policy NRC-3.7: Air Quality Standards in Development Review. Require developers to implement strategies for air quality improvement through the development review process. Ensure that any proposed new sources of particulate matter use latest control technology (such as enclosures, paving unpaved areas, parking lot sweeping and landscaping) and provide adequate buffer setbacks to protect existing or future sensitive receptors. (Implementation Measures NRC.H)
- Policy NRC-3.16: Odor Management Plan. Require project applicants to prepare an Odor Management Plan for projects with the potential to emit nuisance odors beyond the property line (landfills, rendering plants, chemical plants, wastewater treatment plants, and refineries). The Odor Management Plan shall identify control technologies that will be utilized to reduce potential odors to acceptable levels, including appropriate enforcement mechanisms. The Odor Management Plan shall identify control technologies that will be utilized to reduce potential odors to acceptable levels, including appropriate enforcement mechanisms, to ensure compliance with Monterey Bay Air Resources District Rule 402. (new)

Industrial land uses accommodated under the proposed 2040 General Plan would be required to comply with MBARD Rule 402 and implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan policies would help minimize potential odor impacts to the extent feasible. As stated in the Guidelines, a lead agency should avoid siting a land use with sensitive receptors near congested intersections where carbon monoxide standards are or could be violated, sources of toxic emissions, or sources of odors.[36] However, future environmental review may be required for future industrial projects to ensure that sensitive land uses are not exposed to nuisance odors. MBARD Rule 402 requires abatement of any nuisance generating an odor complaint. Typical abatement includes passing air through a drying agent followed by two successive beds of activated carbon to generate odor-free air. Facilities listed in the table would need to consider measures to reduce odors as part of their approval process. Consequently, a protocol for assessing odor impacts should be determined with the MBARD to ensure that odor impacts are minimized. Implementation of proposed General Plan Policy NRC-3.16 would ensure that sources identified by MBARD are mitigated through adherence to an odor control plan and comply with MBARD Rule 402. Therefore, Impact AIR-4a would be mitigated to a *less-than-significant* level.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Residential and Other Land Uses

Residential and other nonresidential, nonindustrial land uses that would be accommodated by the proposed 2040 General Plan could result in the generation of odors such as exhaust from landscaping equipment and from cooking. Unlike industrial land uses, these are not considered potential generators of odor that could affect a substantial number of people. Nuisance odors are regulated under MBARD Rule 402, which requires abatement of any nuisance generating a verified odor complaint. Therefore, impacts from potential odors generated from residential and other nonresidential land uses associated with the proposed 2040 General Plan are considered *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Construction-Related Odors

During construction activities, construction equipment exhaust and application of asphalt and architectural coatings would temporarily generate odors. Any construction-related odor emissions would be temporary and intermittent in nature. Additionally, noxious odors would be confined to the immediate vicinity of the construction equipment. By the time such emissions reach any sensitive receptor sites, they would be diluted to well below any level of air quality concern. Therefore, impacts associated with construction-generated odors are considered *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

[36] Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD). 2008, February. CEQA Air Quality Guidelines, https://www.mbard.org/files/0ce48fe68/CEQA+Guidelines.pdf, accessed November 12, 2022.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan and does not involve any land use changes that would result in indirect growth or change in building density and intensity. Because there is no specific land use component associated with the proposed 2023 CAP, its implementation would not directly result in the generation of odors or other emissions. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion to non-agricultural uses through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALLP does not involve any land use changes that would affect air quality, implementation of the proposed project would not result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

AIR-5	**Implementation of the proposed project, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, would result in a cumulative impact with respect to air quality (criteria air pollutants and toxic air contaminants).**

2040 General Plan

Criteria Air Pollutants

The cumulative area of analysis is the MBARD. As identified in Section 4.3.2*, Environmental Setting*, California is divided into air basins for the purpose of managing the air resources of the state on a regional basis based on meteorological and geographic conditions. Similar to GHG emissions impacts, air quality impacts are regional in nature as no single project generates enough emissions that would cause an air basin to be designated as a nonattainment area. Criteria air pollutant emissions generated by cumulative development associated with buildout of the proposed 2040 General Plan would exceed MBARD's project-level significance thresholds during operation for VOC and would contribute to the nonattainment designations of the NCCAB. The NCCAB is currently designated a nonattainment area for O_3 and particulate matter (PM_{10}). Therefore, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects elsewhere within the MBARD, the proposed project even with implementation of applicable

regulations and proposed 2040 General Plan Policies NRC-3.14 and NRC-3.15 would result in a *significant* cumulative impact with respect to air quality.

Toxic Air Contaminants

Buildout of the proposed 2040 General Plan would generate new sources of TAC near existing or planned sensitive receptors. Review of development projects by the MBARD for permitted sources of air toxics (e.g., industrial facilities, dry cleaners, and gasoline dispensing facilities) would ensure that health risks are minimized. Implementation of proposed 2040 General Plan Policies NRC-3.14 and NRC-3.15would ensure mobile sources of TACs not covered MBARD permits are considered during subsequent project-level environmental review by the City of Hollister. Individual development projects would be required to achieve the incremental risk thresholds established by the MBARD, and TACs would be less than significant. However, implementation of the proposed project would generate TACs that could contribute to elevated levels in the NCCAB. While individual projects would achieve the project-level risk threshold of one per million, they would nonetheless contribute to the higher levels of cancer risk in the NCCAB; and therefore, result in a cumulatively considerable impact. Therefore, the cumulative contribution to health risk resulting from implementation of the proposed project is *significant*.

Impact AIR-5: The emissions that could occur over the buildout horizon of the proposed 2040 General Plan could generate a substantial increase in emissions that exceeds the Monterey Bay Air Resources District's (MBARD's) significance thresholds and cumulatively contribute to the nonattainment designations and health risk in the North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB).

> Significance without Mitigation: Significant and unavoidable. Criteria air pollutant emissions generated by land uses within the proposed project could exceed the MBARD regional thresholds (see Impact Discussions AIR-2 and AIR-3). Air quality impacts identified in the discussion under Impact AIR-2a, AIR-2b, AIR-3a, and AIR-3b constitute the proposed project's contribution to cumulative air quality impacts in the NCCAB. Proposed 2040 General Plan Policies NRC-3.14 and NRC-3.15, identified previously to reduce project-related emissions, would reduce impacts to the extent feasible. Due to the programmatic nature of the project, no additional mitigation measures are available. Air pollutant emissions associated with the project would result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to air quality impacts and remain significant and unavoidable at the program level.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. The proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would result in indirect growth or change in building density and intensity. In addition, implementation of the proposed 2023 CAP would result in beneficial impacts to air quality. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to air quality.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion to non-agricultural uses through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALLP does not involve any land use changes that would affect air quality, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to air quality.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

4.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

This chapter describes the potential biological resource impacts associated with the approval and implementation of the proposed project. This chapter also describes the regulatory framework and existing conditions, identifies criteria used to determine impact significance, provides an analysis of the potential biological resource impacts, and identifies policies that could minimize any potentially significant impacts.

This chapter is based on the City of Hollister 2040 General Plan *Biological and Wetland Resources Background Report* (Biological Background Report) prepared by Environmental Collaborative in May 2020. The Biological Background Report is attached to this Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) as Appendix C, *Biological Resources Data*.

4.4.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.4.1.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Federal Regulations

Federal Endangered Species Act

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has jurisdiction over federally listed threatened and endangered plant and animal species. The federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) and its implementing regulations prohibit the take of any fish or wildlife species that is federally listed as threatened or endangered without prior approval pursuant to either Section 7 or Section 10 of the FESA. FESA defines "take" as to "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct." Title 50, *Wildlife and Fisheries*, Part 17, *Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants*, Section 17.3, *Definitions*, of the Code of Federal Regulations, defines the term "harass" as an intentional or negligent act that creates the likelihood of injuring wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavior patterns, such as breeding, feeding, or sheltering. Furthermore, Section 17.3 defines "harm" as an act that either kills or injures a listed species. By definition, "harm" includes habitat modification or degradation that actually kills or injures a listed species by significantly impairing essential behavior patterns such as breeding, spawning, rearing, migrating, feeding, or sheltering.

Section 10(a) of the FESA establishes a process for obtaining an incidental take permit that authorizes nonfederal entities to incidentally take federally listed wildlife or fish. Incidental take is defined by FESA as take that is "incidental to, and not the purpose of, the carrying out of an otherwise lawful activity." Preparation of a habitat conservation plan (HCP) is required for all Section 10(a) permit applications. The USFWS and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries Service) have joint authority under the FESA for administering the incidental take program. NOAA Fisheries Service has jurisdiction over anadromous fish species and USFWS has jurisdiction over all other fish and wildlife species.

Section 7 of the FESA requires all federal agencies to ensure that any action they authorize, fund, or carry out is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any species listed under the FESA, or result in the destruction or adverse modification of its habitat. Federal agencies are also required to minimize impacts to all listed species resulting from their actions, including issuance of permits or funding. Section 7 requires consideration of the indirect effects of a project, effects on federally listed plants, and effects on critical habitat (FESA requires that the USFWS identify critical habitat to the maximum extent that it is prudent and determinable when a species is listed as threatened or endangered). This consultation results in a Biological Opinion prepared by the USFWS stating whether implementation of the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) will result in jeopardy to any HCP Covered Species or will adversely modify critical habitat and the measures necessary to avoid or minimize effects to listed species.

Although federally listed animals are legally protected from harm no matter where they occur, Section 9 of the FESA provides protection for endangered plants by prohibiting the malicious destruction on federal land and other "take" that violates state law. Protection for plants not living on federal lands is provided by the California Endangered Species Act (CESA).

Clean Water Act

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is responsible under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act to regulate the discharge of fill material into waters of the United States (U.S.). These waters, and their lateral limit, include streams that are tributaries to navigable waters and their adjacent wetlands.[1] The lateral limits of jurisdiction for a nontidal stream are measured at the line of the ordinary high-water mark[2] or the limit of adjacent wetlands.[3] Any permanent extension of the limits of an existing water of the U.S., whether natural or human-made, results in a similar extension of USACE jurisdiction.

Waters of the U.S. fall into two broad categories: wetlands and other waters. Other waters include waterbodies and watercourses generally lacking plant cover, such as rivers, streams, lakes, springs, ponds, coastal waters, and estuaries. Wetlands are aquatic habitats that support hydrophytic wetland plants and include marshes, wet meadows, seeps, floodplains, basins, and other areas experiencing extended seasonal soil saturation. Seasonally or intermittently inundated features, such as seasonal ponds, ephemeral streams, and tidal marshes, are categorized as wetlands if they have hydric soils and support wetland plant communities. Seasonally inundated waterbodies or watercourses that do not exhibit wetland characteristics are classified as other waters of the U.S.

Waters and wetlands that cannot trace a continuous hydrologic connection to a navigable water of the U.S. are not tributary to waters of the U.S. These are termed "isolated wetlands." Isolated wetlands are jurisdictional when their destruction or degradation can affect interstate or foreign commerce.[4] The USACE may or may not take jurisdiction over isolated wetlands depending on the specific circumstances.

[1] Code of Federal Regulations, Title 33, Navigation and Navigable Waters, Part 328.3(a).
[2] Code of Federal Regulations, Title 33, Navigation and Navigable Waters, Part 328.3(e).
[3] Code of Federal Regulations, Title 33, Navigation and Navigable Waters, Part 328.3(b).
[4] Code of Federal Regulations, Title 33, Navigation and Navigable Waters, Part 328.3(a).

In general, a project proponent must obtain a Section 404 permit from the USACE before placing fill or grading in wetlands or other waters of the U.S. Prior to issuing the permit, the USACE is required to consult with the USFWS under Section 7 of FESA if the project may affect federally listed species.

All USACE permits require water quality certification under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. This regulatory program is administered by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). Project proponents who propose to fill wetlands or other waters of the U.S. must apply for water quality certification from the RWQCB, which has adopted a policy requiring mitigation for any loss of wetland, streambed, or other jurisdictional area.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) prohibits the taking, hunting, killing, selling, purchasing, etc. of migratory birds, parts of migratory birds, or their eggs and nests. As used in the MBTA, the term "take" is defined as "to pursue, hunt, shoot, capture, collect, kill, or attempt to pursue, hunt, shoot, capture, collect, or kill, unless the context otherwise requires."[5] Most bird species native to North America are covered by this act. The MBTA prohibits the intentional or incidental killing of birds or destruction of their nests when in active use.

State Regulations

California Endangered Species Act

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has jurisdiction over State-listed endangered, threatened, and rare plant and animal species under CESA.[6] CESA is similar to the FESA both in process and substance; it is intended to provide additional protection to threatened and endangered species in California. Species may be listed as threatened or endangered under both acts (in which case the provisions of both state and federal laws apply) or under only one act. A candidate species is one that the Fish and Game Commission has formally noticed as being under review by CDFW for addition to the State list. Candidate species are protected by the provisions of CESA.

California Environmental Quality Act

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) applies to "projects" proposed to be undertaken or requiring approval by state and local government agencies. Projects are defined as having the potential to have physical impact on the environment. Under Section 15380 of the CEQA Guidelines, a species not included on any formal list "shall nevertheless be considered rare or endangered if the species can be shown by a local agency to meet the criteria" for listing. With sufficient documentation, a species could be shown to meet the definition of rare or endangered under CEQA and be considered a "de facto" rare or endangered species.

[5] United States Code, Title 16, Conservation, Section 715n.
[6] California Fish and Game Code Section 2050 *et seq.*

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

California Fish and Game Code

CDFW is responsible for enforcing the California Fish and Game Code (CFGC), which contains several protections from "take" for a variety of species. CDFW also protects streams, water bodies, and riparian corridors through the Streambed Alteration Agreement process under Section 1601 to 1606 of the CFGC. CFGC stipulates that it is "unlawful to substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow or substantially change the bed, channel or bank of any river, stream or lake" without notifying the CDFW, incorporating necessary mitigation, and obtaining a Streambed Alteration Agreement.[7] CDFW's jurisdiction extends to the top of banks and often includes the outer edge of riparian vegetation canopy cover.

The CFGC also lists animal species designated as Fully Protected or Protected, which may not be taken or possessed at any time. The CDFW does not issue licenses or permits for take of these species except for necessary scientific research, habitat restoration/species recovery actions, or live capture and relocation pursuant to a permit for the protection of livestock. Fully protected species are listed in CFGC Sections 3511 (birds), 4700 (mammals), 5050 (reptiles and amphibians), and 5515 (fish) of the CFGC, while protected amphibians and reptiles are listed in Chapter 5, Sections 41 and 42, respectively.

Several provisions in the CFGC provide for the protection of birds and bird nests in active use. Unless the CFGC or its implementing regulations provide otherwise, under California law it is unlawful to:

- Take a bird, mammal, fish, reptile, or amphibian.
- Take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird.
- Take, possess, or destroy any bird of prey in the orders Strigiformes (owls) and Falconiformes (such as falcons, hawks, and eagles) or the nests or eggs of such a bird.
- Take or possess any of the 13 fully protected bird species listed in CFGC Section 3511.
- Take any nongame bird (i.e., bird that is naturally occurring in California that is not a gamebird, migratory game bird, or fully protected bird).
- Take or possess any migratory nongame bird as designated in the MBTA or any part of such bird, except as provided by rules or regulations adopted by the United States Department of the Interior (DOI) under the MBTA.
- Take, import, export, possess, purchase, or sell any bird (or products of a bird), listed as an endangered or threatened species under the CESA unless the person or entity possesses an Incidental Take Permit or equivalent authorization from CDFW.

Non-native species, including European starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), and rock pigeon (*Columba livia*), are not afforded any protection under the MBTA or CFGC.

[7] California Fish and Game Code Section 1602.

Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

Under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act,[8] the RWQCB is authorized to regulate the discharge of waste that could affect the quality of the State's waters. The RWQCB asserts jurisdiction over isolated waters and wetlands, as well as waters and wetlands that are regulated by the USACE. Therefore, even if a project does not require a federal permit, it still requires review and approval by the RWQCB. When reviewing applications, the RWQCB focuses on ensuring that projects do not adversely affect the "beneficial uses" associated with waters of the State. In most cases, the RWQCB seeks to protect these beneficial uses by requiring the integration of waste discharge requirements into projects that will require discharge into waters of the State. For most construction projects, the RWQCB requires the use of construction and postconstruction best management practices.

California Native Plant Protection Act

The California Native Plant Protection Act of 1977 prohibits importation of rare and endangered plants into California, "take" of rare and endangered plants, and sale of rare and endangered plants. CESA defers to the California Native Plant Protection Act, which ensures that State-listed plant species are protected when State agencies are involved in projects subject to CEQA. In this case, plants listed as rare under the California Native Plant Protection Act are not protected under CESA but rather under CEQA.

The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) is a nongovernmental conservation organization that has developed a list of plants of special concern in California. The following explains the designations for each plant species:[9]

- **Rank 1A.** Plants Presumed Extirpated in California and Either Rare or Extinct Elsewhere
- **Rank 1B.** Plants Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California and Elsewhere
- **Rank 2A.** Plants Presumed Extirpated in California, But Common Elsewhere
- **Rank 2B.** Plants Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California, But More Common Elsewhere
- **Rank 3.** Plants About Which More Information is Needed; A Review List
- **Rank 4.** Plants of Limited Distribution; A Watch List

California Natural Communities

Sensitive natural communities are natural community types considered to be rare or of a "high inventory priority" by CDFW. Although sensitive natural communities have no legal protective status under FESA or CESA, they are provided some level of consideration under CEQA. Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines identifies potential impacts on a sensitive natural community as one of six criteria to consider in determining the significance of a proposed project. While no thresholds are established as part of this criterion, it serves as an acknowledgement that sensitive natural communities are an important resource and, depending on their rarity, should be recognized as part of the environmental review process. The

[8] California Water Code Sections 13000 through 14920.

[9] California Native Plant Society, 2023, CNPS Rare Plant Ranks, https://www.cnps.org/rare-plants/cnps-rare-plant-ranks, accessed March 10, 2023.

level of significance of a project's impact on any particular sensitive natural community will depend on that natural community's relative abundance and rarity.

As an example, a discretionary project that has a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat, native grassland, valley oak woodland, and/or other sensitive natural community would normally be considered to have a significant effect on the environment. Further loss of a sensitive natural community could be interpreted as substantially diminishing habitat, depending on its relative abundance, quality and degree of past disturbance, and the anticipated impacts to the specific community type.

Oak Woodlands Conservation Act

The California Oak Woodlands Conservation Act[10] of 2001 acknowledges the importance of private land stewardship to the conservation of the state's valued oak woodlands. This act established the California Oak Woodlands Conservation Program, which aims to conserve oak woodlands existing in the state's working landscapes by providing education and incentives to private landowners. The program provides technical and financial incentives to private landowners to protect and promote biologically functional oak woodlands.

Regional Regulations

County of San Benito 2035 General Plan

The *San Benito 2035 General Plan* provides a template for land use, development, and environmental quality in unincorporated areas of San Benito County. The Natural and Cultural Resources Element defines policies for management and conservation of open space, wildlife habitat, mineral, water, and other resources in San Benito County. Relevant goals from the Natural and Cultural Resources Element include the following:

- Goal NCR-1: To preserve and enhance valuable open space lands that provide wildlife habitat and conserve natural, historical, archaeological, paleontological, tribal, and visual resources of San Benito County.
- Goal NCR-2: To protect and enhance wildlife communities through a comprehensive approach that conserves, maintains, and restores important habitat areas.

Local Regulations

Hollister Municipal Code

The Hollister Municipal Code (HMC) includes various directives to minimize adverse impacts to biological resources in Hollister. The HMC is organized by title, chapter, and section. Most provisions related to biological resource impacts are included in Title 12, *Streets, Sidewalks, and Public Places,* as follows:

[10] California Fish and Game Code Section 1360 et seq.

- Chapter 12.24, *Street Trees*. This chapter outlines a Street Tree ordinance for trees along publicly maintained streets, paved or unpaved, for the purpose of vehicle travel.
- Section 12.24.050, *Written Authority to Plant, Cut, Trim etc., Trees*. This section states that "No person shall plant, root-trim, cut, prune, trim, brace, spray, remove or replace any street tree without prior written authority therefore issued by the director." There are no regulations regarding trees on private property.

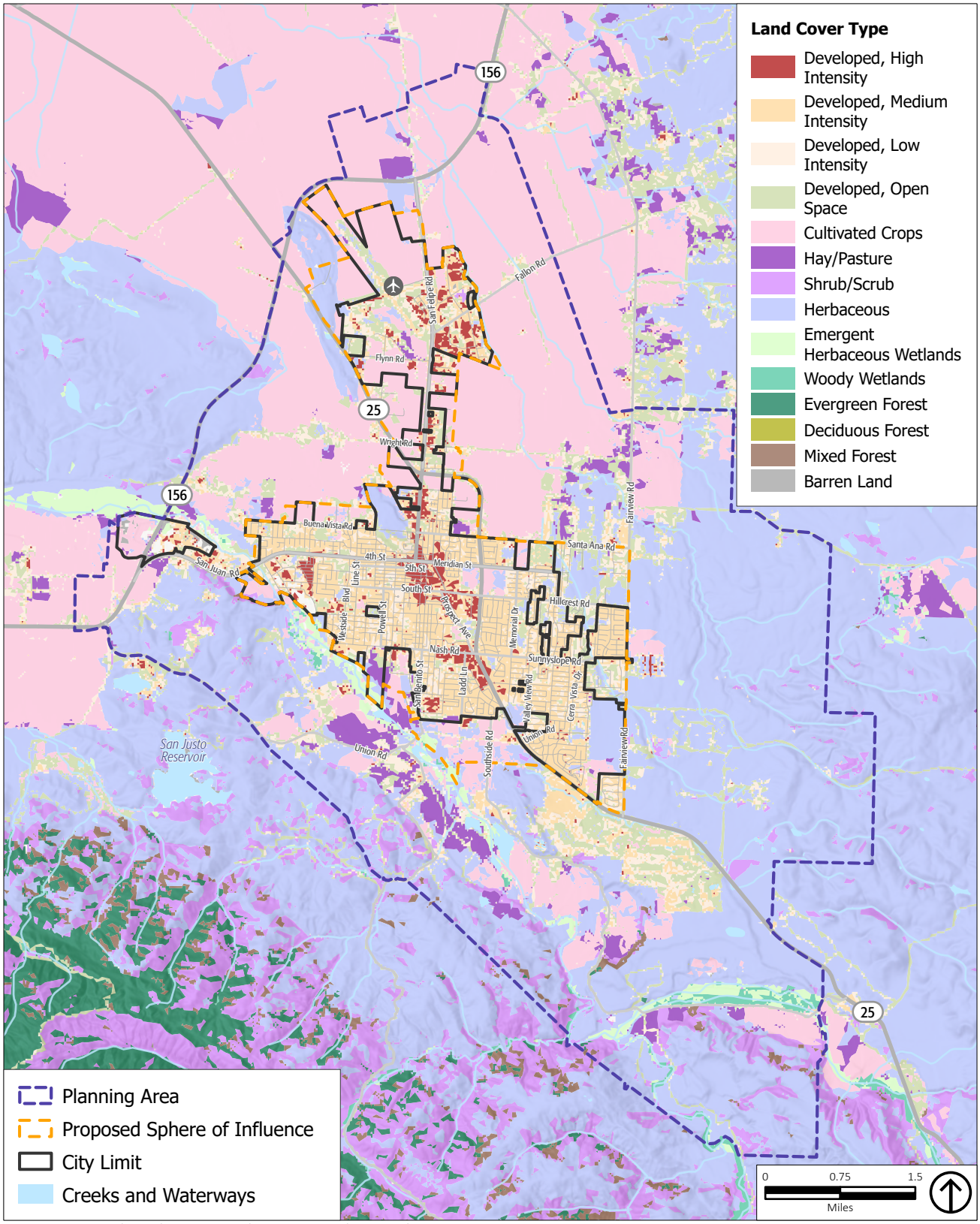
4.4.1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

For the purposes of this chapter, the existing conditions described encompass the Planning Area, as described in Chapter 3, *Project Description*. This section provides a summary of the existing biological conditions in and near the Planning Area, which includes habitat types, special-status plant and animal species, sensitive habitats, and wildlife corridors. A detailed description of these existing conditions, including maps, is provided in the Biological Background Report, included in Appendix C of this Draft EIR.

Habitat Types

The Planning Area is characterized by the broad alluvial plains of the San Benito River and Santa Ana Creek, surrounded by rolling grassland covered hills to the east, south, and southwest. Beginning in the early 1880s, the San Benito River Valley has been altered by grazing and agriculture, replacing the original riparian wetlands and grasslands. Today, most of the Planning Area has been highly modified for agricultural and urban uses. But scattered native riparian woodlands and scrub remain along segments of the San Benito River and Santa Ana Creek, and extensive grasslands occupy the surrounding hillside on the western slopes of Santa Ana Mountain and the northeast slopes of Fremont Peak and the Gabilan Mountains.

Figure 4.4-1, *Land Cover*, shows the extent of urbanization, agricultural crops, and remaining vegetative cover around the perimeter of the Planning Area, based on the National Land Cover Database of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Estimates of various vegetation cover types are summarized in Table 4.4-1, *Estimates of Land Cover Types in the Planning Area*, based on the National Land Cover Database. In general, each cover type differs in its relative value as wildlife habitat and can be characterized by both vegetative cover and associated animal species that are dependent on that habitat, although some wildlife species may use more than one habitat type. A detailed description of each vegetation type is provided in the Biological Background Report in Appendix C of this Draft EIR.



Source: National Land Cover Database, 2016; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.4-1
Land Cover

TABLE 4.4-1 ESTIMATES OF LAND COVER TYPES IN THE PLANNING AREA

Land Cover Type	Planning Area (acres)
Cultivated Crops	7,304
Hay Crops/Pasture	772
Developed - High Intensity	493
Developed - Low Intensity	1,958
Developed - Medium Intensity	2,964
Developed - Open Space	2,456
Forest - Evergreen	9
Forest - Mixed	84
Grassland/Herbaceous	10,416
Shrub/Scrub	908
Open Water	92
Wetlands - Emergent Herbaceous	409
Woody Wetlands (Riparian Woodland and Scrub)	168
Urban/Barren	21
Total	**28,054**

Source: United States Geological Survey, 2020.

Special-Status Species

Special-status species are defined as plants and animals legally protected under the FESA and/or CESA or other regulations, as discussed in Section 4.4.1.1, *Regulatory Framework*. Special-status species also include species that are considered rare enough by the scientific community and trustee agencies to warrant special consideration, particularly with regard to protection of isolated populations, nesting or den locations, communal roosts, and other essential habitat. Species with legal protection under FESA and CESA often represent major constraints to development, particularly when they are wide-ranging or highly sensitive to habitat disturbance and where proposed development would result in a "take" of these species.

The California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) is California's primary inventory on the distribution of special-status species, which is maintained by the Biogeographic Data Branch of the CDFW. The CNDDB inventory provides the most comprehensive statewide information on the location and distribution of special-status species and sensitive natural communities. Occurrence data is obtained from a variety of scientific, academic, professional organizations, and private consulting firms and is entered into the inventory as expeditiously as possible. The occurrence of a species of concern in a particular region is an indication that an additional population may occur at another location if habitat conditions are suitable. However, the absence of an occurrence in a particular location does not necessarily mean that special-status species are absent from the area in question, it only indicates that no data has been entered into the CNDDB inventory. Detailed field surveys are generally required to provide a conclusive determination on presence or absence of sensitive resources from a particular location, where there is evidence of potential occurrence.

For the purposes of this EIR, special-status species are defined as follows:

- Species that are listed, formally proposed, or designated as candidates for listing as threatened or endangered under FESA.
- Species that are listed, or designated as candidates for listing, as rare, threatened, or endangered under CESA.
- Plant species with a Rank of 1A, 1B, or 2 in the CNPS Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants.
- Animal species designated as "Species of Special Concern" or "Fully Protected" by the CDFW.
- Species that meet the definition of rare, threatened, or endangered under Section 15380 of the CEQA Guidelines.
- Species considered to be a taxon of special concern by the relevant local agencies.

Special-Status Plants

Review of the CNDDB, IPac resource list, and CNPS occurrence records indicate a total of 23 special-status plant species that have been reported from or in the vicinity of the Planning Area. These special-status plant species are listed in Table 4.4-2, *Special-Status Plant Species Known or Suspected in the Planning Area*, together with information on their status, description of typical habitat characteristics, and normal flowering season.

Of these 23 species, a total of 9 have actually been reported by the CNDDB in or near the Planning Area, as indicated on Figure 4.4-2, *Special Status Plant Species*. These consist of Pajaro manzanita (*Arctostaphylos pajaroensis*), alkali milk-vetch (*Astragalus tener* var. *tener*), San Joaquin spearscale (*Atriplex joaquiniana*), Pinnacles buckwheat (*Eriogonum nortonii*), western Heermann's buckwheat (*Eriogonum heermannii* var. *occidentale*), Hoover's button-celery (*Eryngium aristulatum* var. *hooveri*), Indian Valley bush-mallow (*Malacothamnus aboriginum*), hairless popcornflower (*Plagiobothrys glaber*), and saline clover (*Trifolium hydrophilum*).

The exact locations of most of these occurrences are unknown because of the vague descriptions and date of the historic records, so these are mapped as relatively broad occurrences within the Planning Area on Figure 4.4-2. Existing development limits the likelihood of continued occurrences of any populations of special-status plant species on the valley floor within the Planning Area, with the possible exception of riparian and wetland-dependent species that may occur along San Benito River corridor and other major drainages, or species associated with seasonal wetlands and native grasslands where suitable habitat remains.

Many of the special-status plant occurrences in the Planning Area are vulnerable to off-road vehicle use, disturbance associated with fire and fuel-reduction activities, competition with invasive species, and other threats. There remains a possibility that additional populations of one or more species occurs on the remaining undeveloped lands in the Planning Area. Detailed surveys would be required to provide confirmation on presence or absence from undeveloped portions of the Planning Area where thorough studies have not been conducted.

TABLE 4.4-2 SPECIAL-STATUS PLANT SPECIES KNOWN OR SUSPECTED IN THE PLANNING AREA

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status	State Status	CNPS Rare Plant Rank	Habitat
Arctostaphylos gabilanensis	Gabilan Mountains manzanita	—	—	1B.2	Granitic substrate in chaparral and cismontane woodland. Elevation (Elev): 984–2,297 feet (300–700 meters). Blooms: January.
Arctostaphylos pajaroensis	Pajaro manzanita	—	—	1B.1	Sandy soils in chaparral. Elev: 98–2,493 feet (30–760 meters). Blooms: December–March.
Arenaria paludicola	Marsh sandwort	FE	SE	1B.1	Sandy openings in freshwater or brackish marshes and swamps. Elev: 10–558 feet (3–170 meters). Blooms: May–August.
Astragalus tener var. *tener*	Alkali milk-vetch	—	—	1B.2	Alkaline soils. Playas, valley and foothill grassland (adobe clay), and vernal pools. Elev: 3–197 feet (1–60 meters). Blooms: March–June.
Atriplex joaquiniana	San Joaquin spearscale	—	—	1B.2	Alkaline chenopod scrub, meadows, seeps, playas, and valley and foothill grasslands. Elev: 3–2,739 feet (1–835 meters). Blooms: April–October.
California macrophylla	Round-leaved filaree	—	—	1B.1	Clay soils in cismontane woodland and valley and foothill grasslands. Elev: 49 – 3,937 feet (15–1,200 meters). Blooms: March–May.
Castilleja rubicundula var. *rubicundula*	Pink creamsacs	—	—	1B.1	Serpentinite soils of chaparral opening, cismontane woodlands, meadows, seeps, and valley and foothill grasslands. Elev: 66–2,986 feet (20–910 meters). Blooms: April–June.
Centromadia parryi ssp. *congdonii*	Congdon's tarplant	—	—	1B.1	Alkaline valley and foothill grasslands. Elev: 0–755 feet (0–230 meters). Blooms: May–November.
Chorizanthe biloba var. *immemora*	Hernandez spineflower	—	—	1B.2	Chaparral and cismontane woodland. Elev: 1,969–2,625 feet (600–800 meters). Blooms: May–September.
Chorizanthe pungens var. *pungens*	Monterey spineflower	FT	—	1B.2	Sandy soils in maritime chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal dunes, coastal scrub, and valley/foothill grasslands. Elev: 10–1,476 feet (3–450 meters). Blooms: April–August.

TABLE 4.4-2 SPECIAL-STATUS PLANT SPECIES KNOWN OR SUSPECTED IN THE PLANNING AREA

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status	State Status	CNPS Rare Plant Rank	Habitat
Eriogonum heermannii var. *occidentale*	Western Heermann's buckwheat	—	—	1B.2	Often serpentine soils. Typically roadsides, alluvium floodplains; more rarely, clay or shale slopes. Found in openings in cismontane woodlands. Elev: 345–2,608 feet (105–795 meters). Blooms: July–October.
Eriogonum nortonii	Pinnacles buckwheat	—	—	1B.3	Sandy soils, often on recent burns, in chaparral, and valley and foothill grasslands. Elev: 984–3,199 feet (300– 975 meters). Blooms: April–September.
Eryngium aristulatum var. *hooveri*	Hoover's button-celery	—	—	1B.1	Vernal pools. Elev: 10–148 feet (3–45 meters). Blooms: July–August.
Extriplex joaquinana	San Joaquin spearscale	—	—	1B.2	Alkaline soils. Chenopod scrub, meadows and seeps, playas, valley and foothill grasslands. Elev: 3–2,740 feet (1–835 meters). Blooms: April–October.
Fritillaria liliaceae	Fragrant fritillary	—	—	1B.2	Serpentinite soils in cismontane woodland, coastal prairie, coastal scrub, valley and foothill grassland. Elev: 10– 1,345 feet (3–410 meters). Blooms: February– April.
Hoita strobalina	Loma Prieta hoita	—	—	1B.1	Usually serpentinite, mesic soil in chaparral, cismontane woodland, riparian woodland. Elev: 98–2,822 feet (30–860 meters). Blooms: May–October.
Malacothamnus aboriginum	Indian Valley bush-mallow	—	—	1B.2	Rocky, granitic substrates, often in burned areas, in chaparral and cismontane woodland. Elev: 492–5,577 feet (150–1,700 meters). Blooms: April–October.
Navarretia prostrata	Prostrate vernal pool navarretia	—	—	1B.1	Mesic areas in coastal scrub, meadows and seeps, vernal pools, and alkaline valley and grasslands. Elev: 10–3,970 feet (3–1,210 meters). Blooms: April–July.
Plagiobothrys diffusus	San Francisco popcorn-flower	—	—	1B.1	Found in coastal prairies and valley and foothill grasslands. Elev: 197–1,181 feet (60–360 meters). Blooms: March–June.
Plagiobothrys glaber	Hairless popcorn-flower	—	—	1A	Alkaline meadows and seeps, and coastal salt marshes and swamps. Elev: 49–591 feet (15–180 meters). Blooms: March–May.

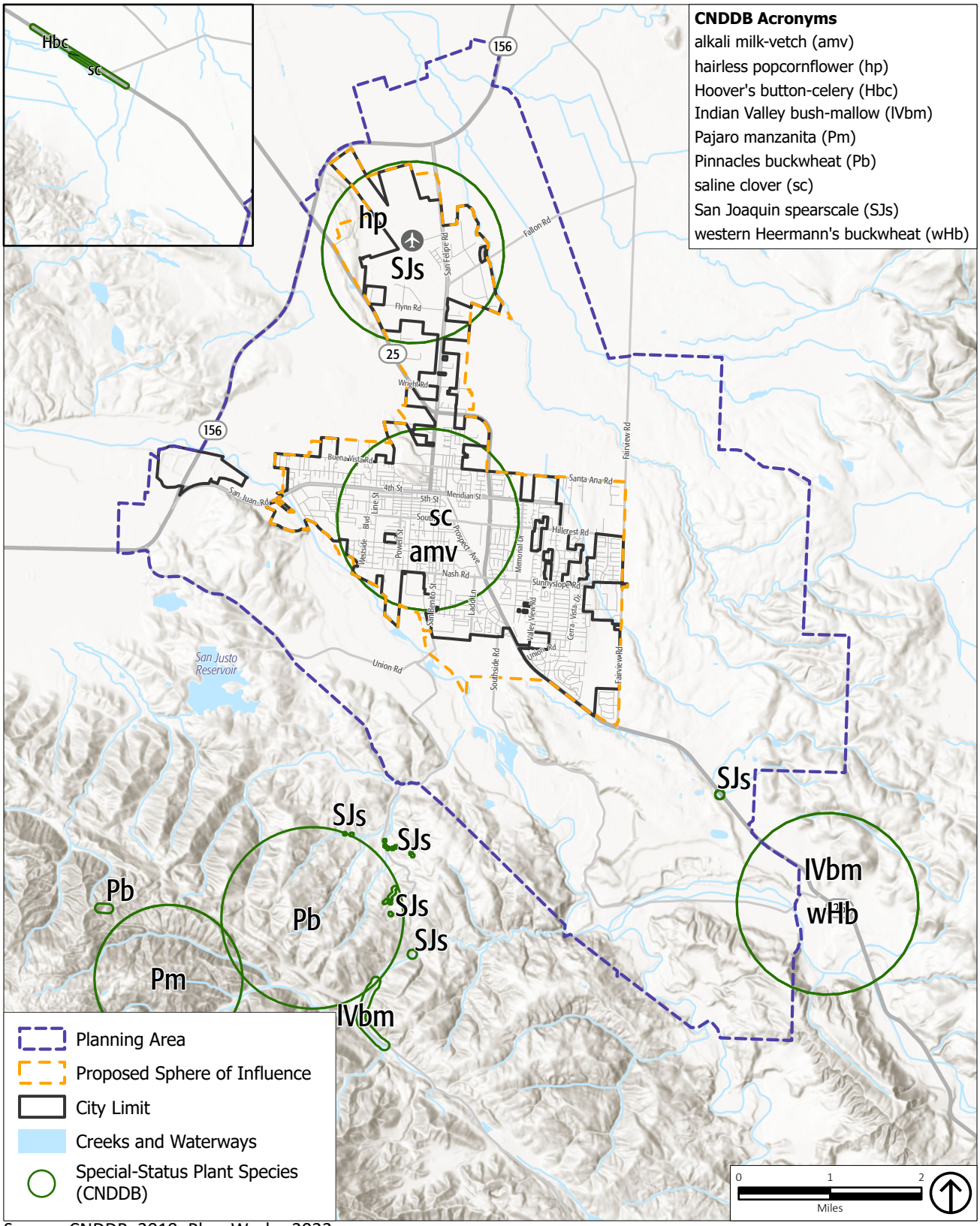
TABLE 4.4-2 SPECIAL-STATUS PLANT SPECIES KNOWN OR SUSPECTED IN THE PLANNING AREA

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status	State Status	CNPS Rare Plant Rank	Habitat
Puccinelia simplex	California alkali grass	—	—	1B.2	Alkaline and vernally mesic soils. Found in sinks, flats and lake margins. Chenopod scrub, meadows and seeps, valley and foothill grassland, vernal pools. Elev: 7–3,051 feet (2–930 meters). Blooms: March–May.
Streptanthus albidus ssp. *peramoenus*	Most beautiful jewel-flower	—	—	1B.2	Serpentinite soil in chaparral, cismontane woodland, valley, and foothill grassland. Elev: 312–3,281 feet (95–1,000 meters). Blooms: March–October.
Trifolium hydrophilum	Saline clover	—	—	1B.2	Marshes & swamps, valley & foothill grassland (mesic, alkaline), and vernal pools. Elev: 0–984 feet (0–300 meters). Blooms: April–June.

Source: California Natural Diversity Database, 2019.

Key: Federal and State Status
(FC) Federal Candidate
(FD) Federally Delisted
(FE) Federal Endangered
(FP) Fully Protected
(FT) Federal Threatened
(PT) Proposed Threatened
(SCE) State Candidate Endangered
(SCT) State Candidate Threatened
(SE) State Endangered
(SR) State Rare
(SSC) State Species of Special Concern
(ST) State Threatened
(X) Federally Designated Critical Habitat

CNPS Rare Plant Rank
Rareness Ranks
(1A) Presumed Extinct in California
(1B) Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California and Elsewhere
(2B) Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California, But More Common Elsewhere
Threat Ranks
(0.1) Seriously Threatened in California
(0.2) Fairly Threatened in California
(0.3) Not Very Threatened in California



Source: CNDDB, 2019; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.4-2
Special-Status Plant Species

Special-Status Animals

Based on a review of the CNDDB, the IPac resource list, and other sources, a total of 40 special-status animal species are known or suspected to potentially occur in the vicinity of the Planning Area. These special-status animal species are listed in Table 4-4.3, *Special-Status Animal Species Known or Suspected in the Planning Area*, together with information on their status and description of typical habitat characteristics. As indicated on Figure 4.4-3, *Special-Status Animal Species and Critical Habitat*, a total of 17 of these special-status animal species have been reported by the CNDDB within or near the Planning Area. Critical habitat has been designated by the USFWS for California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*) in the eastern foothills and for California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*) in the southern and southwestern foothills, as indicated on Figure 4.4-3.

Many of the special-status animal species listed in Table 4.4-3 may occasionally pass through or forage in the Hollister vicinity but are not known or believed to breed in the Planning Area. These include steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), prairie falcon (*Falco mexicanus*), American peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*), merlin (*Falco columbarius*), California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*), mountain plover (*Charadrius montanus*), western yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*), bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), and western red bat (*Lasiurus blossevillii*).

Most of the species listed in Table 4.4-3 without state and/or federal listing status are not closely monitored by the CNDDB and therefore occurrence records are typically not included in the database. These include most of the species identified as Species of Special Concern by the CDFW. Special-status animal species known from the Planning Area of greatest concern because of their status or distribution are discussed in further detail herein.

California Tiger Salamander (State and Federally Threatened)

California tiger salamander occurs in grassland and savanna habitat, breeding in vernal pools and swales, seasonal drainages, and human-made ponds, and spending most of the year in subterranean refugia, such as rodent burrows, cracks, and under rocks and logs. Adults migrate to suitable breeding locations with the onset of sustained rainfall and have been reported to move considerable distances. The migratory behavior of this species presents challenges when attempting to define occupied habitat for known populations or the effects of proposed development.

California tiger salamander have been reported from the periphery of the development core of Hollister, including the eastern hills, the plains along the San Benito River corridor, and even the vicinity of the Hollister airport. USFWS has designated the hillsides in the eastern hills, generally east of Fairview Road, as Critical Habitat, as indicated on Figure 4.4-3.

TABLE 4.4-3 SPECIAL-STATUS ANIMAL SPECIES KNOWN OR SUSPECTED IN THE PLANNING AREA

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status	State Status	Habitat
Invertebrates				
Branchinecta lynchi	Vernal pool fairy shrimp	FT	—	Found in vernal pools and ephemeral wetlands. Distributed throughout the Central Valley and suitable habitat in Bay Area and Coast Ranges.
Optioservus canus	Pinnacles optioservus riffle beetle	—	—	Small beetle occurring in flowing streams and rivers. Endemic to Pinnacles and surrounding areas.
Fish				
Lavinia exilicauda	Sacramento hitch	—	SSC	Found in warm lowland waters with side pools and riffles. Spawning occurs in gravel riffles of streams that are tributaries to larger waters such as lakes, rivers, and sloughs.
Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus	Steelhead, south/central California coast	FT	—	Anadromous species found in accessible rivers and streams of central coast for spawning and returns to ocean as young adult.
Amphibians				
Ambystoma californiense	California tiger salamander, central population	FT/X	ST	Occurs in grasslands of the Central Valley and oak savannah communities in the Central Valley, the Sierra Nevada and Coast Ranges, and the San Francisco Bay Area. Needs seasonal or semi-permanent wetlands to reproduce, and terrestrial habitat with active ground squirrel or gopher burrows.
Rana draytonii	California red-legged frog	FT/X	SSC	Found mainly near ponds in riparian woodlands, grasslands, coastal scrub, and streamsides with emergent vegetation. Most common in lowlands or foothills. Frequently found in woodlands adjacent to streams. Breeding habitat is in permanent or ephemeral water sources; lakes, ponds, reservoirs, slow streams, marshes, bogs, and swamps. Ephemeral wetland habitats require animal burrows or other moist refuges for estivation when the wetlands are dry.
Spea hammondii	Western spadefoot	—	SSC	Occurs in open areas with sandy or gravelly soils, in a variety of habitats ranging from grasslands and woodlands to floodplains, alluvial fans, and alkali flats. Rainpools that do not contain bullfrogs, fish, or crayfish are necessary for breeding.
Taricha torosa	Coast Range newt	—	SSC	Found in wet forests, oak forests, chaparral, and rolling grasslands. In Southern California, drier chaparral, oak woodland, and grassland are used.
Reptiles				
Anniella pulchra	Silvery legless lizard	—	SSC	Occurs in sparsely vegetated areas of beach dunes, chaparral, pine-oak woodland, desert scrub, sandy washes, and stream terraces.

TABLE 4.4-3 SPECIAL-STATUS ANIMAL SPECIES KNOWN OR SUSPECTED IN THE PLANNING AREA

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status	State Status	Habitat
Emys marmorata	Western pond turtle	—	SSC	Found in ponds, lakes, rivers, streams, creeks, marshes, and irrigation ditches, with abundant vegetation, and either rocky or muddy bottoms, in woodland, forest, and grassland. In streams, prefers pools to shallower areas. Logs, rocks, cattail mats, and exposed banks are required for basking.
Gambelia sila	Blunt-nosed leopard lizard	FE	SE	Occurs in grasslands, alkali flats, and washes. Prefers flat areas with open space for running, avoids densely vegetated areas. Uses mammal dens and burrows for cover.
Masticophis flagellum ruddocki	San Joaquin coachwhip	—	SSC	Occurs in open, dry, treeless areas, including grassland and saltbush scrub. Takes refuge in rodent burrows, under shaded vegetation, and under surface objects.
Phrynosoma blainvilli	Coast horned lizard	—	SSC	Occurs in valley-foothill hardwood, conifer, and riparian habitats, as well as in pine- cypress, juniper, and annual grassland habitats.
Birds				
Agelaius tricolor	Tricolored blackbird	—	ST ,SSC	Nests in wetlands or in dense vegetation near open water. Dominant nesting substrates: cattails, bulrushes, blackberry, agricultural silage. Nesting substrate must either be flooded, spinous, or in some way defended against predators.
Aquila chrysaetos	Golden eagle	—	FP, WL	Uncommon resident and migrant throughout California, except center of Central Valley. Habitat typically includes rolling foothills, mountains, sage-juniper flats, and desert.
Athene cunicularia	Western burrowing owl	—	SSC	Occurs in grasslands, open scrub, desert, agricultural fields, and vacant land with open, flat expanses, short/sparse vegetation and few shrubs, level to gentle topography and well-drained soils. Requires underground burrows or cavities for nesting and roosting, but also uses rock cavities, debris piles, pipes, and culverts.
Accipiter cooperii	Cooper's hawk	—	WL	Forages in habitat fringes and patchy woodlands. Occurs in dense stands of oak, riparian, and other forested areas near water. Breeds in dense stands of oak woodland or riparian.
Buteo swainsoni	Swainson's hawk	—	ST	Nests in stands with few trees in riparian areas, juniper-sage flats, and oak savannah in the Central Valley. Forages in adjacent grasslands, agricultural fields, and pastures.
Charadrius montanus	Mountain plover	—	SSC	Frequents open plains with low, herbaceous or scattered shrub vegetation.
Circus hudsonius	Northern harrier	—	SSC	Widespread in open grasslands, marshes, and agricultural fields with low, thick vegetation. During winter, uses a range of habitats with low vegetation, including deserts, pasturelands, croplands, grasslands, and ruderal fields.

TABLE 4.4-3 SPECIAL-STATUS ANIMAL SPECIES KNOWN OR SUSPECTED IN THE PLANNING AREA

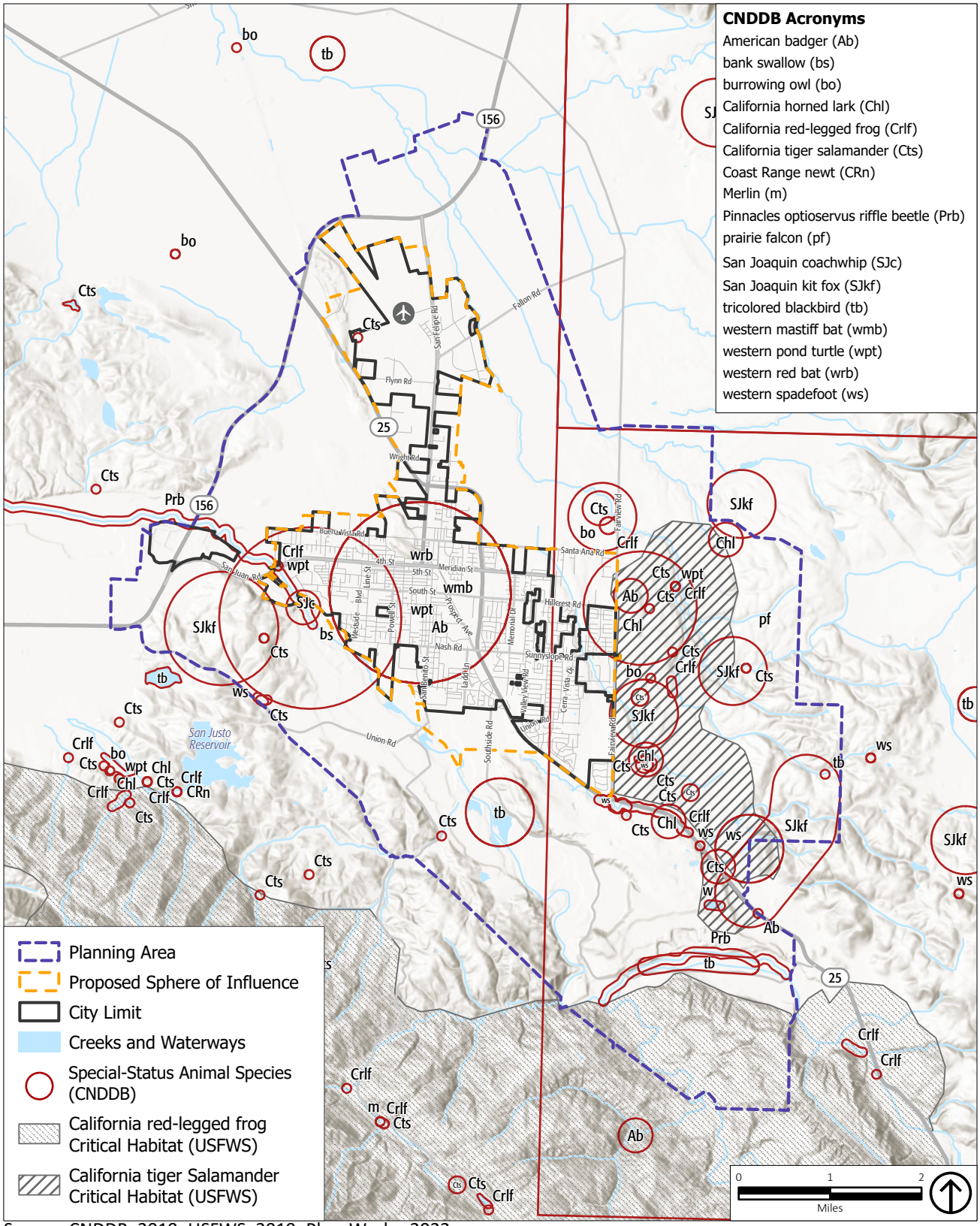
Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status	State Status	Habitat
Coccyzus americanus occidentalis	Western yellow-billed cuckoo	PT	SE	Requires large, dense tracts of riparian woodland with well-developed understories. Occurs in deciduous trees or shrubs. Restricted to moist habitats along slow-moving waterways during breeding season.
Elanus leucurus	White-tailed kite	—	FP	Found in wide variety of open habitats, including open oak savanna, grasslands, desert grassland, agricultural fields, and marshes. Requires trees for perching and nesting, and open ground with high prey populations.
Empidonax traillii extimus	Southwestern willow flycatcher	FE	SE	Dense riparian forest and scrub habitats associated with rivers, swamps, wetlands, lakes, and reservoirs.
Eremophilia alpestris actia	California horned lark	—	WL	Found often in treeless areas such as grasslands and sparsely vegetated open areas. Sea level to alpine dwarf-scrub habitat. Forages along the ground for small prey and forbs.
Falco columbarius	Merlin	—	WL	Occurs in California during winter from September to May. Found along coastlines, grasslands, savannahs, woodlands, lakes, wetlands, and habitat fringes. Often in open habitats at low elevations near water and tree. Does not breed in California.
Falco mexicanus	Prairie falcon	—	WL	Ranges from Central Valley, Sierra Nevada, and Coast Ranges to southeastern deserts. Most commonly found in perennial grasslands, savannahs, rangeland, agricultural fields, and desert scrub. Forages in open areas and uses nearby cliff ledges, canyons, or outcrops for cover and nesting.
Gymnogyps californianus	California condor	FE	SE, FP	Chaparral, coniferous forest and oak savannah in Southern and Central California. Nests in cliff cavities, large rock outcrops, or large trees. Roosts on large cliffs or trees near feeding areas.
Haliaeetus leucocephalus	Bald eagle	FD	SE/FP	Requires large bodies of water or rivers with abundant fish, and adjacent snags and trees with open branch structure for nesting.
Icteria virens	Yellow-breasted chat	—	SSC	Nests in early-successional riparian habitats with a well-developed shrub layer and an open canopy. Restricted to narrow border of streams, creeks, sloughs, and rivers. Often nest in dense thicket plants, such as blackberry and willow.
Lanius ludovicianus	Loggerhead shrike	—	SSC	Breeds in shrublands or open woodlands with a fair amount of grass cover and areas of bare ground.
Riparia riparia	Bank swallow	—	ST	Found along riparian areas with sandy, vertical bluffs or riverbanks for nesting burrows. Also nests on banks and stockpiles in sand and gravel pits.
Setophaga petechia	Yellow warbler	—	SSC	Occurs in riparian vegetation along streams and in wet meadows. Willow cover and Oregon ash important predictors of abundance in Northern California.

TABLE 4.4-3 SPECIAL-STATUS ANIMAL SPECIES KNOWN OR SUSPECTED IN THE PLANNING AREA

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status	State Status	Habitat
Vireo bellii pusillus	Least Bell's vireo	FE	SE	Obligate riparian breeder found along watercourses with cottonwood, willow, oak woodlands, and scrub cover.
Mammals				
Antrozous pallidus	Pallid bat	—	SSC	Day roosts in caves, crevices, mines, and occasionally in hollow trees and buildings.
Corynorhinus townsendii	Townsend's big-eared bat	—	SCT/SCC	Typically roosts in caves but also in old mine tunnels and occasionally found in buildings.
Eumops perotis californicus	Western mastiff bat	—	SSC	Found in open, semi-arid to arid habitats, including conifer and deciduous woodlands, coastal scrub, grasslands, chaparral, desert scrub, and urban areas. Roosts in crevices on vertical cliff faces, high buildings, trees, and tunnels.
Lasiurus blossevillii	Western red bat	—	SSC	Roosting habitat includes forests and woodlands, often in edge habitats adjacent to streams, fields, or urban areas.
Neotoma fuscipes annectens	San Francisco dusky- footed woodrat	—	SSC	Found in grassland, scrub, and wooded areas with evergreen or live oaks and other thick-leaved trees and shrubs.
Taxidea taxus	American badger	—	SSC	Occurs in grasslands, open shrub, and forests cover with friable soils. Associated with treeless regions, prairies, parklands, and cold desert areas.
Vulpes macrotis mutica	San Joaquin kit fox	FE	ST	Occurs in grasslands and desert-like habitats characterized by sparse or absent shrub cover, sparse groundcover, and short vegetative structure. Areas having open, level, sandy ground necessary for dens.

Source: California Natural Diversity Database, 2019.

Key: Federal and State Status
(FC) Federal Candidate
(FD) Federally Delisted
(FE) Federal Endangered
(FP) Fully Protected
(FT) Federal Threatened
(PT) Proposed Threatened
(SCE) State Candidate Endangered
(SCT) State Candidate Threatened
(SE) State Endangered
(SR) State Rare
(SSC) State Species of Special Concern
(ST) State Threatened
(WL) CDFW Watch List
(X) Federally Designated Critical Habitat



Source: CNDDB, 2019; USFWS, 2019; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.4-3
Special-Status Animal Species and Critical Habitat

California Red-Legged Frog (Federally Threatened and California Species of Special Concern)

California red-legged frog has been extirpated or nearly extirpated from 70 percent of its former range. Population declines of this species have been attributed to a variety of factors, with habitat loss and predation by non-native aquatic predators (e.g., bullfrogs, crayfish, other non-native fishes) typically implicated as the primary factors. California red-legged frogs occur in and along freshwater marshes, streams, ponds, and other semi-permanent water sources.

According to the CNDDB records, occurrences of California red-legged frogs have been reported within the Planning Area along the San Benito River, Santa Ana Creek, and drainages with suitable habitat in the eastern and southwestern hills. Suitable habitat remains in other locations with freshwater bodies where predatory species haven't precluded their occupation. Designated critical habitat for this species occurs in the southern and southwestern portion of the Planning Area, extending south of Tres Pinos through the Gabilan Mountains, as indicated on Figure 4.4-3.

Western Spadefoot (California Species of Special Concern)

This nocturnally active toad is generally associated with seasonal pools in grasslands or open mixed woodlands where temporary pools form, or in washes or temporary streams with sandy or gravelly substrate. For most of the year, they live in burrows that they dig with their hind feet. They depend on heavy rainfall during the winter and early spring where water ponds and creates suitable habitat conditions for breeding and metamorphosis of young. As indicated on Figure 4.4-3, numerous occurrences of this species are found in the eastern hills of the Planning Area, in similar habitat known to support California tiger salamander.

Western Pond Turtle (California Species of Special Concern)

Western pond turtles occur in a wide variety of aquatic habitats, including ponds, lakes, marshes, rivers, streams, and canals that typically have a rocky or muddy bottom and contain stands of aquatic vegetation. The presence or absence of pond turtles at a given aquatic site is largely dependent on the availability of suitable basking sites and adjacent upland habitat for egg-laying (e.g., sandy banks or grassy open fields) and over-wintering. Nests are typically dug in dry substrate with a high clay or silt fraction since the female moistens the site where she will excavate the nest prior to egg-laying. Hatchlings require shallow water habitat with relatively dense submergent or short emergent vegetation in which to forage. Western pond turtles have been reported from scattered locations with suitable habitat in the Planning Area, as indicated on Figure 4.4-3. Other freshwater bodies and drainages with deep pools may provide suitable habitat for this species.

Bank Swallow (State Threatened)

Bank swallow is a migrant species found primarily in riparian and other lowland habitat of California, arriving from South America in early April and leaving by mid-September. Typically a colonial breeder, this species requires vertical banks and cliffs with fine-textured or sandy soils along stream banks, rivers, ponds, and other bodies of water for nesting, where it excavates a hole for breeding. Although it generally

nests along exposed channel banks, stockpiled or exposed topsoil in gravel mines and even trenches have been used for nesting. It is known to colonize the vertical faces of trenches within one day of excavation. This species was once believed to be more common as a breeder in California, but now only a few larger colonies remain. As indicated on Figure 4.4-3, the CNDDB reports an occurrence of this species along San Benito River in the western portion of the Planning Area.

Northern Harrier (California Species of Special Concern)

Northern harriers are widespread in California, although they have become uncommon in the southern part of the state. Their preferred habitats are freshwater wetlands and saltmarshes, although they are also commonly found over grasslands and agricultural fields. Harriers breed from mid-March to September, building their nests on the ground and in low vegetation. Suitable foraging habitat for northern harriers are present in the remaining grasslands and open croplands in the Planning Area, although nesting opportunities are limited because of the presence of humans and generally limited nesting areas along field margins.

Tricolored Blackbird (State Threatened and California Species of Special Concern)

Tricolored blackbird was once widespread in marshes and agricultural fields in the Central Valley and valleys of the inner Coast Range, but numbers have diminished in recent years. It usually nests in cattails or tules, sometimes in thickets of willow, blackberry, and other riparian habitat near available surface water. Due to the absence of well-developed marshland vegetation, suitable nesting habitat is generally absent in most of the Planning Area. However, several occurrences of tricolored blackbird have been reported by the CNDDB along the San Benito River corridor, as indicated on Figure 4.4-3.

Western Burrowing Owl (California Species of Special Concern)

Western burrowing owl inhabits open grasslands and shrublands that have perches and burrows. These owls eat mainly insects, with small mammals and birds also making up a portion of their diet. The owls use old rodent burrows, particularly California ground squirrel burrows, for cover and breeding. They are also known to use pipes, debris piles, and other human-made structures for retreat and nesting. As indicated on Figure 4.4-3, this species has been reported by the CNDDB from the open grasslands in the eastern hillsides and agricultural fields in the Planning Area.

White-tailed Kite (California Fully Protected Species)

Most white-tailed kites in California occur west of the Sierra Nevada in lowlands and foothills, where they are often seen year-round. This species tends to nest in solitary trees and large shrubs near suitable foraging habitat, such as grasslands, marshes, and agricultural fields. Preferred prey items include California voles and mice.

The grasslands and open croplands in the Planning Area provide foraging habitat for white-tailed kites, where scattered trees and large shrubs are present in the vicinity to provide suitable perching and nesting locations. Nests of white-tailed kite in active use are fully protected by the CDFW from any disturbance. Nests of native birds, including raptors such as white-tailed kite, are protected under the federal MBTA and CFGC (see Section 4.4.1.1, *Regulatory Framework*).

American Badger (California Species of Special Concern)

American badger is usually found in open, dry country of western North America. This predator species relies on ground-dwelling rodents, such as California ground squirrel, voles, and pocket gopher as its primary prey source, and will excavate burrows to capture prey. The rolling grasslands in the eastern, southern, and southwestern portions of the Planning Area provide suitable habitat for this species, and several occurrences have been reported by the CNDDB, as indicated on Figure 4.4-3.

San Joaquin Kit Fox (Federally Endangered and State Threatened)

San Joaquin kit fox occurs in annual grasslands and alkali scrub communities with suitable prey base and loose-textured sandy soils where dens can be enlarged from California ground squirrel burrows. This species was once widely distributed throughout the native grasslands that formerly occupied the low rolling hills around the San Joaquin, Salinas, Santa Clara, and San Benito Valleys. Agricultural operations and more recently, urban development, have eliminated or fragmented their habitat, resulting in a substantial decline in numbers.

Suitable foraging habitat occurs in the hillsides around the perimeter of the Planning Area, particularly where ground squirrels are abundant. As indicated on Figure 4.4-3, CNDDB records include occurrences of this subspecies in the southwestern, southeastern, and eastern margins of the Planning Area where development remains sparse. Ground squirrel burrows with openings of at least four inches are typically considered potential dens for kit fox by the USFWS in areas occupied by San Joaquin kit fox.

Sensitive Habitats

Sensitive Natural Communities

The CDFW tracks the occurrences of "special" plant communities that are either known or believed to be of high priority for inventory in the CNDDB. These plant communities are listed in the CDFW *List of California Terrestrial Natural Communities Recognized by the California Natural Diversity Database* publication,[11] which has been updated periodically since and available online on CDFW's website. These communities are sometimes addressed by lead or trustee agencies, but generally are not afforded the same protection as CNPS Rank 1B and 2 plant species. Many sensitive natural community types support special-status plants and animals and are addressed under CEQA as essential habitat for those species.

Sensitive natural community types in the Planning Area include remnant native grasslands, wetlands, and possibly some areas with forest and scrub cover. The vegetated wetland types (Emergent and Forested/Scrub) shown on Figure 4.4-4, *National Wetland Inventory Map*, are most likely considered sensitive natural community types associated with waters regulated by state and federal agencies (see Section 4.4.1.1, *Regulatory Setting*). These include emergent marshland, willow scrub, and well-developed

[11] California Department of Fish and Game, 2003. *List of California Terrestrial Natural Communities Recognized by the California Natural Diversity Database*. Wildlife and Habitat Data Analysis Branch, Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program, California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento. Last updated in January 2023.

stands or riparian woodland along the San Benito River, segments of Santa Ana Creek, and some reaches of tributary drainages.

Based on the *Manual of California Vegetation*[12] classification system and latest list of terrestrial natural communities prepared by CDFW, sensitive natural community types known from or suspected to occur in the Planning Area include several associations of Black Oak Forests and Woodlands, California Bay Forests and Woodlands, California Buckeye Woodlands, several associations of Coyote Brush Scrub, freshwater marsh, freshwater seeps and springs, and numerous alliances of native grasslands. Occurrences of these sensitive natural community types may be present within the remaining woodland, forest, and grasslands in the Planning Area, but have not been mapped as part of the Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program (VegCAMP) of the CDFW or other regional mapping efforts. Detailed surveys would be required to provide confirmation on presence or absence of any sensitive natural community types from undeveloped portions of the Planning Area where thorough studies have not been conducted.

Wetlands and Jurisdictional Waters

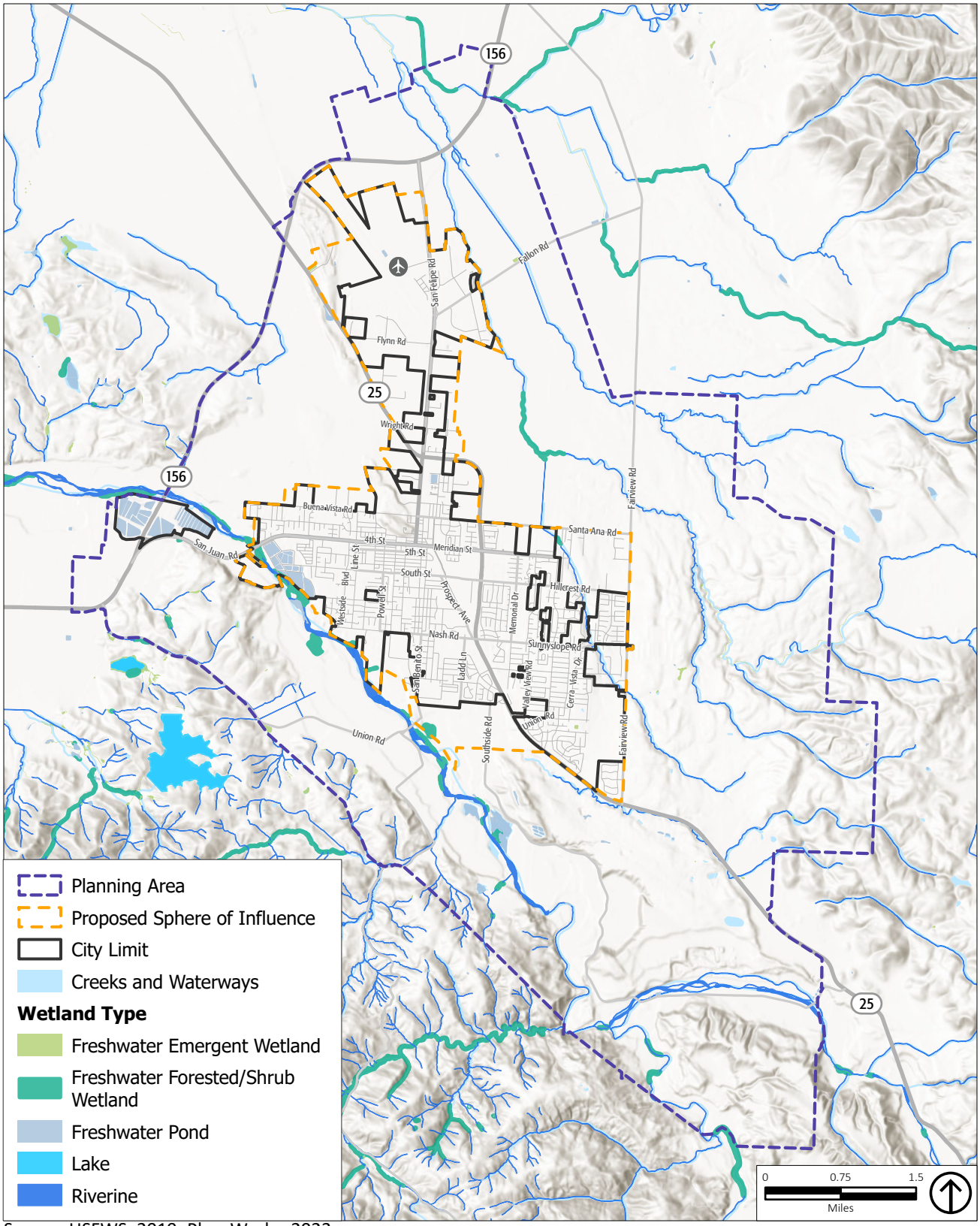
According to the USACE, wetlands are areas that are periodically or permanently inundated by surface or groundwater and support vegetation adapted for life in saturated soil. Wetlands include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas. As a significant natural resource, wetlands serve important functions for fish and wildlife.

Wetland functions include food chain production, habitat, nesting spawning, rearing, and resting sites for aquatic and land species. They also provide protection of other areas from storm and floodwaters; natural recharge areas where ground and surface water are interconnected; and natural water filtration and purification functions.[13] A formal jurisdictional delineation of wetlands and other waters of the U.S. and State was not conducted for the Planning Area. However, based on information available from the National Wetlands Inventory, numerous features can be assumed to fall under jurisdiction of the USACE and the RWQCB pursuant to Sections 401 and 404 of the federal Clean Water Act and as State waters regulated by the RWQCB under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. Creeks and lakes are also regulated by the CDFW, pursuant to Section 1600 of the CFGC, with jurisdiction extending to the top of bank or the outer dripline of riparian vegetation along these features, whichever is greater.

As indicated on Figure 4.4-4, features within the Planning Area that would be considered wetlands or other waters of the U.S. by the USACE include the San Benito River corridor, Santa Ana Creek, and numerous smaller tributary drainages. Additional jurisdictional other waters of the U.S. and wetlands maybe be present elsewhere in the Planning Area, but detailed site-specific assessments would be required to confirm presence or absence from undeveloped lands. As described in Section 4.4.1.1, *Regulatory Setting*, the USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW generally exercise authority over these wetland habitat types.

[12] Sawyer, J.O. and T. Keeler-Wolf. 1995. *A Manual of California Vegetation*. California Native Plant Society, Sacramento.

[13] US Army Corps of Engineers, 2020, Headquarters Website, Regulatory Program and Permits, https://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Regulatory-Program-and-Permits/Frequently-Asked-Questions, accessed December 16, 2020.



Source: USFWS, 2019; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.4-4
National Wetland Inventory Map

A detailed wetland delineation and verification by the USACE would be required to determine the extent of jurisdictional wetlands on sites where modifications are proposed. Federally regulated waters along the San Benito River and tributary drainages in the Planning Area (see Figure 4.4-4) are generally defined by the Ordinary High-Water Mark rather than the band of any adjacent riparian vegetation, limiting USACE jurisdiction where dense willow riparian scrub and forest extend a considerable distance from the channel bank. However, the limits of State waters regulated by CDFW and RWQCB typically encompass both the bed and bank of a drainageway, as well as the limits of the associated riparian vegetation where it extends beyond the top of bank. Both agencies typically request that an adequate setback be provided to avoid both direct and indirect impacts on riparian corridors as part of environmental review for specific development plans.

4.4.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The EIR Study Area is not within any local, regional, or State HCP areas. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with the conservation strategy in any HCP or Natural Community Conservation Plan. Consequently, there would be no impacts to forestry resources, and the following standards are not discussed further in this EIR:

- Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan; Natural Community Conservation Plan; or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.

Implementation of the proposed project would result in a significant impact related to biological resources if it would:

1. 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, or regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS.
2. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the CDFW or USFWS.
3. Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrologic interruption, or other means.
4. 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.
5. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance.
6. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to biological resources.

4.4.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

BIO-1	**Implementation of the proposed project would not 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, or regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS.**

2040 General Plan

Local, regional, state, and federal regulations provide varying levels of protection for special-status species, depending on a number of factors, including legal protective status, rarity and distribution, the magnitude of the potential impact on essential habitat, specific occurrence and overall population levels, and take of individual plants or animals. Activities requiring discretionary approvals by local, regional, state, and federal agencies provide for the greatest oversight because each potential future development that could occur from implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan must be evaluated for their potential impact on special-status species and other sensitive biological resources.

As indicated in Table 4.4-2, a total of 23 special-status plant species occur within or in the vicinity of the Planning Area, while a total of 9 have reported occurrences monitored by the CNDDB that occur within the Planning Area. These consist of Pajaro manzanita, alkali milk-vetch, San Joaquin spearscale, Pinnacles buckwheat, western Heermann's buckwheat, Hoover's button-celery, Indian Valley bush-mallow, hairless popcornflower, and saline clover. As shown in Table 4.4-2, none of these nine species have any listing status under the FESA and CESA, but all have a rare plant rank of 1B and are considered rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere and therefore warrant consideration during CEQA review.

Table 4.4-3 lists a total of 40 special-status animal species are known or suspected to potentially occur in the vicinity of the Planning Area. As indicated on Figure 4.4-3, a total of 17 of these special-status animal species that are monitored more closely by the CNDDB have been reported within or near the Planning Area. As shown in Table 4.4-3, these have varied legal status or are considered Species of Special Concern by the CDFW. A few have no special status but are monitored by the CDFW because of recent declines and abundance. Critical habitat has been designated by the USFWS for California tiger salamander and California red-legged frog that extend over portions of the Planning Area, as indicated on Figure 4.4-3.

As discussed in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, of this Draft EIR, potential future development would largely occur on vacant parcels and in the form of infill/intensification on sites either already developed and/or underutilized, and/or in close proximity to existing development, where special-status species are generally not expected to occur. The potential for occurrence of special-status species in developed areas is generally very remote in comparison to undeveloped lands with natural habitat that contain essential habitat characteristics for the range of species known in the EIR Study Area vicinity. However, potential future development under the proposed 2040 General Plan includes residential and other uses in the rolling hills of the eastern portion of the EIR Study Area, along the riparian corridors of the San Benito River and Santa Ana Creek, in scattered locations where intensive disturbance has not occurred, and essential habitat for some special-status species may be present. Conversion of existing habitat to urban

and suburban uses could reduce available habitat for special-status species known from or expected to occur in the EIR Study Area, including listed species such as California tiger salamander, California red-legged frog, and San Joaquin kit fox. There remains a varying potential for loss or disruption to special-status species due to conversion of areas of natural habitat, removal of trees and other vegetation, increases in light and noise, and other modifications and disturbance. Development in locations with remaining natural habitat, abutting or in the vicinity of open space lands or water resources, where special-status species are more likely to occur, could potentially cause a significant impact to, or cause the inadvertent loss of bird nests in active use, conflicting with both the MBTA and CFGC.

The proposed Natural Resource and Conservation (NRC) Element of the 2040 General Plan contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to biological resources, including special-status species, on a project-by-project basis. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts on sensitive habitats and special-status species in the EIR Study Area:

Goal NRC-1: Ensure enhanced habitat for native plants and animals, and protection for culturally significant-status species. (Goal NRC1)

- Policy NRC-1-1: Protection of Environmental Resources. Protect or enhance environmental resources, such as wetlands, creeks and drainage-ways, sensitive natural communities, and habitat for special-status species. (Policy NRC1.1)
- Policy NRC-1.2: Protection of Special-Status Species Habitat and Sensitive Natural Communities. Identify and protect the habitats of special-status species and sensitive natural communities that may found within the Hollister Planning Area, in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, through the review of development proposals for compliance with regulations of these agencies and the California Environmental Quality Act. (Policy NRC1.2)
- Policy NRC-1.3: Other Habitat Planning Measures. Use regional planning concepts such as mitigation banking to offset the cumulative effects of piecemeal development on the habitat of special-status species. (Policy NRC1.4)
- Policy NRC-1.4: Specialized Surveys for Special-Status Species and Sensitive Natural Communities. Require that sites with suitable natural habitat, including creek corridors through urbanized areas, be surveyed for special-status species and sensitive natural communities prior to development approval as part of the environmental review process. Such surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist and occur prior to development-related vegetation removal. All surveys shall take place during appropriate seasons to determine presence or absence, including nesting or breeding occurrences, with a determination on whether the project site contains suitable habitat for such species and sensitive natural community types. These results would inform the site assessment and environmental review process for proposed developments and other activities that could adversely affect special-status species. (Policy NRC1.7)
- Policy NRC-1.5: Biological Site Assessment. Require a biological resource assessment for proposed development on sites with natural habitat conditions that may support special-status species, sensitive natural communities, or regulated wetlands and waters. The assessment shall be conducted

by a qualified biologist to determine the presence or absence of any sensitive resources that could be affected by proposed development, shall provide an assessment of the potential impacts, and shall define measures for protecting the resource and surrounding buffer habitat, in compliance with City policy and state and federal laws. An assessment shall not be necessary for locations where past and existing development have eliminated natural habitat and the potential for presence of sensitive biological resources and regulated waters. (new)

- Policy NRC-1.6: Mitigation of Potential Impacts on Special-Status Species and Sensitive Habitat Areas. Require that potential significant impacts on special-status species, occurrences of sensitive natural communities, or regulated wetlands and waters be minimized through adjustments and controls on the design, construction, and operations of a proposed project. Where impacts to these sensitive biological habitat areas are unavoidable, appropriate compensatory mitigation shall be required by the City. Such compensatory mitigation shall be developed and implemented in accordance with City policy and any relevant state and federal regulations. These may include on-site set asides, off-site acquisitions (conservation easements, deed restrictions, etc.), and specific restoration efforts that benefit the special-status species and sensitive habitat areas. (new)
- Policy NRC-1.7: Preconstruction Surveys for the San Joaquin Kit Fox. Require preconstruction surveys for the San Joaquin kit fox, in accordance with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Guidelines for Preconstruction Surveys for the endangered San Joaquin Kit Fox, for new developments within the County-designated kit fox habitat area. Development within the habitat area boundaries will be assessed an impact fee by the County for every home or acre developed. (new)
- Policy NRC-1.8: California Red-Legged Frog and California Tiger Salamander Site Assessments. Require site assessments by a qualified biologist to evaluate the potential for proposed projects within identified critical habitat areas for the California red-legged frog and/or California tiger salamander to have a negative effect on these species. Such assessments shall identify any high-quality habitat for these species and shall be peer reviewed by a second qualified biologist. Protocol surveys may be warranted to confirm presence or absence of these species based on the results of the habitat assessment. Development in areas with identified high-quality occupied habitat shall be avoided. High-quality habit includes sites known to be occupied by the species, breeding habitat, large areas of suitable habitat, and the absence of nearby development. (new)
- Policy NRC-1.9: Surveys and Mitigation for Burrowing Owls. Require project applicants with proposed projects on grazing or fallow agricultural land to conduct a survey for burrowing owls in accordance with the latest guidelines of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Project applicants in the Fairview Road/Santa Ana Road area shall be required to develop and implement a mitigation plan to avoid or otherwise compensate for any disturbance to the burrowing owl colony in that area. This plan shall be developed in coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. (Implementation Measure NRC.G & NRC.I)
- Policy NRC-1.10: Preconstruction Surveys for Nesting Birds. Require preconstruction surveys for nesting native birds, to be conducted by a qualified biologist, for those projects that would affect on-site oaks or orchards, or which would involve vegetation removal and construction during the nesting season (February 1 to August 31). Hollister shall allow no construction activities that would result in the disturbance of an active native bird nest (including tree removal) to proceed until after it has been

determined by a qualified biologist that the nest has been abandoned. (Implementation Measure NRC.U)

- Policy NRC-1.11: Maintain a List of Species. Maintain current California Natural Diversity Database digital (GIS) maps and data tables listing threatened, endangered, and special-status species in the Hollister Planning Area. (Implementation Measure NRC.F)
- Policy NRC-1.12: Riparian Habitat. Maintain existing riparian areas in their natural state to provide for wildlife habitat, groundwater percolation, water quality, aesthetic relief, and recreational uses that are environmentally compatible with wetland preservation. (Policy NRC1.5)
- Policy NRC-1.13: Wetland Preservation. Require appropriate public and private wetlands preservation, restoration, and/or rehabilitation through compensatory mitigation in the development process for unavoidable impacts. Continue the City's practice of requiring mitigation for projects that would affect wetlands in conjunction with requirements of state and federal agencies. (Implementation Measure NRC.V and Policy NRC1.5)
- Policy NRC-1.14: Wetlands Delineation. Require a delineation of jurisdictional waters by a qualified wetland specialist at the outset of the project planning stage of any proposed development that may contain wetlands or other regulated waters. This delineation shall be verified and approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or the Regional Water Quality Control Board where federally regulated waters are absent. (Implementation Measure NRC.X).
- Policy NRC-1.15: Wetland Avoidance. Encourage development projects, which may result in the disturbance of delineated seasonal wetlands and other regulated waters, to be redesigned to avoid such disturbance or to provide adequate compensatory mitigation where avoidance is not feasible. (Policy NRC1.5)
- Policy NRC-1.16: Enhancement of Creeks and Drainageways. Support enhancement of drainageways to improve their function as wildlife habitat, wildlife corridors, and storm drainage facilities. Require setbacks, creek enhancement, and associated riparian habitat restoration/creation for projects adjacent to creeks to maintain storm flows, reduce erosion and maintenance needs, and improve habitat values. Require all new structures and paved surfaces to be set back from wetlands and creeks. Exceptions may be granted under extenuating circumstances and if also approved by responsible resource agencies. (Policy NRC1.6)
- Policy NRC-1.17: Tree Preservation. Preserve and protect heritage trees and other trees of importance. (new)
- Policy NRC-1.22: Native Trees and Riparian Habitat. Ensure protection of native trees and riparian habitat. (new)
- Policy NRC-1.23: Non-Native Plants. Prohibit the planting of invasive, non-native plant species in natural habitats that support special-status species. (new)
- Action NRC-1.1: Riparian Habitat Setbacks. Amend the Zoning Code to establish setback requirements from wetlands and creeks. (new)

These proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would require that detailed surveys and assessments be completed as part of future environmental review to identify occurrences of special-

status species and minimize adverse impacts on any species identified as an endangered, threatened, candidate, sensitive, or special-status species and their habitat. Where natural habitat remains that could support special-status species, wetlands, and other sensitive resources, further detailed studies and assessment would be performed to verify presence or absence. They include requirements for conducting preconstruction surveys to ensure avoidance of select special-status species and nests of native bird species when in active use.

The location and nature of future development considered would be guided by the proposed 2040 General Plan and Municipal Code. Future development would continue to be reviewed through the City's entitlement process and CEQA to ensure consistency with local, state, and federal regulations and proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions intended to protect sensitive biological resources. Therefore, potential impacts on special-status species would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 Climate Action Plan (2023 CAP) is a strategic plan focused on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect biological resources, implementation of the proposed project would not 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, or regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP) is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would affect biological resources, implementation of the proposed project would not 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, or regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS and impacts would be *less than significant.*

BIO-2 Implementation of the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS.

2040 General Plan

Impacts to riparian habitats and other sensitive natural communities may occur from both direct and indirect sources from implementation of the proposed project. Direct impacts occur as a result of converting natural habitat to development, including construction of new structures, creating impervious surfaces for roadways and parking, and culverting of natural drainages. Direct impacts may also be temporary in nature if they disturb a habitat that is subsequently restored after construction. An indirect impact is a physical change in the environment, which is not immediately related to, but could be caused by, implementation of the proposed project. For example, if future development under the proposed General Plan 2040 results in a collective reduction in habitat, the values and functions of that remaining habitat would be reduced. Changes in hydrology and water quality, through increases in sedimentation as a result of grading and the introduction of urban pollutants, could also have indirect impacts on aquatic habitat and contribute to a reduction in the value of downgradient waters.

As discussed in Section 4.4.1.2, *Existing Conditions*, sensitive natural community types in the Planning Area include remnant native grasslands, wetlands and riparian habitat, and possibly some areas with forest and scrub cover where several associations of Black Oak Forests and Woodlands, California Bay Forests and Woodlands, California Buckeye Woodlands, and Coyote Brush Scrub are present. Occurrences of these sensitive natural community types may be present within the remaining woodland, forest, and grasslands in the Planning Area, but have not been mapped or identified. Detailed surveys would be required to provide confirmation on presence or absence of any sensitive natural community types from undeveloped portions of the EIR Study Area where thorough studies have not been conducted.

As discussed in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, of this Draft EIR, potential future development that results from implementation of the proposed project would occur on vacant parcels and in the form of infill/intensification on sites either already developed and/or underutilized, and/or in close proximity to existing development. Although these areas generally do not appear to contain large amounts of sensitive habitat, there remains a potential for presence of sensitive natural communities in some locations. Additionally, potential future development that occurs in areas that have not been extensively disturbed, such as the rolling eastern hills, adjacent to open space areas or along drainages, could have a significant impact on sensitive natural communities if present on a particular site. Further detailed investigation is typically necessary to determine whether any sensitive natural communities are present on undeveloped sites with natural habitat. The proposed Natural Resource and Conservation (NRC) Element of the 2040 General Plan contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to biological resources, including riparian habitats and other sensitive natural community types, on a project-by-project basis. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts on riparian habitats and other sensitive natural community types in the EIR Study Area.

Goal NRC-1: Ensure enhanced habitat for native plants and animals, and protection for culturally significant-status species. (Goal NRC1)

- Policy NRC-1-1: Protection of Environmental Resources. Protect or enhance environmental resources, such as wetlands, creeks and drainage-ways, sensitive natural communities, and habitat for special-status species. (Policy NRC1.1)
- Policy NRC-1.2: Protection of Special-Status Species Habitat and Sensitive Natural Communities. Identify and protect the habitats of special-status species and sensitive natural communities that may found within the Hollister Planning Area, in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, through the review of development proposals for compliance with regulations of these agencies and the California Environmental Quality Act. (Policy NRC1.2)
- Policy NRC-1.4: Specialized Surveys for Special-Status Species and Sensitive Natural Communities. Require that sites with suitable natural habitat, including creek corridors through urbanized areas, be surveyed for special-status species and sensitive natural communities prior to development approval as part of the environmental review process. Such surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist and occur prior to development-related vegetation removal. All surveys shall take place during appropriate seasons to determine presence or absence, including nesting or breeding occurrences, with a determination on whether the project site contains suitable habitat for such species and sensitive natural community types. These results would inform the site assessment and environmental review process for proposed developments and other activities that could adversely affect special-status species. (Policy NRC1.7)
- Policy NRC-1.5: Biological Site Assessment. Require a biological resource assessment for proposed development on sites with natural habitat conditions that may support special-status species, sensitive natural communities, or regulated wetlands and waters. The assessment shall be conducted by a qualified biologist to determine the presence or absence of any sensitive resources that could be affected by proposed development, shall provide an assessment of the potential impacts, and shall define measures for protecting the resource and surrounding buffer habitat, in compliance with City policy and state and federal laws. An assessment shall not be necessary for locations where past and existing development have eliminated natural habitat and the potential for presence of sensitive biological resources and regulated waters. (new)
- Policy NRC-1.6: Mitigation of Potential Impacts on Special-Status Species and Sensitive Habitat Areas. Require that potential significant impacts on special-status species, occurrences of sensitive natural communities, or regulated wetlands and waters be minimized through adjustments and controls on the design, construction, and operations of a proposed project. Where impacts to these sensitive biological habitat areas are unavoidable, appropriate compensatory mitigation shall be required by the City. Such compensatory mitigation shall be developed and implemented in accordance with City policy and any relevant state and federal regulations. These may include on-site set asides, off-site acquisitions (conservation easements, deed restrictions, etc.), and specific restoration efforts that benefit the special-status species and sensitive habitat areas. (new)
- Policy NRC-1.22: Native Trees and Riparian Habitat. Ensure protection of native trees and riparian habitat. (new)

- Action NRC-1.1: Riparian Habitat Setbacks. Amend the Zoning Code to establish setback requirements from wetlands and creeks. (new)

Implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions listed would serve to ensure that occurrences of sensitive natural communities are identified, avoided, or adequately mitigated. Therefore, potential impacts on sensitive natural communities would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect biological resources, implementation of the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by CDFW or USFWS and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would affect biological resources, implementation of the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the CDFW or UDFWS and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

BIO-3	**Implementation of the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means.**

2040 General Plan

Development and land use activities associated with implementation of the proposed project could result in direct loss or modification to existing wetlands and unvegetated other waters, as well as indirect impacts due to water quality degradation. Affected wetlands could include both the wetland-related sensitive natural community types described under Impact Discussion BIO-2, as well as areas of open water, degraded and modified streams and channels, unvegetated waters, and isolated seasonal wetlands

or freshwater seeps. Indirect impacts to wetlands and jurisdictional other waters include an increase in the potential for sedimentation due to construction grading and ground disturbance, an increase in the potential for erosion due to increased runoff volumes generated by impervious surfaces, and an increase in the potential for water quality degradation due to increased levels in non-point pollutants.

Water quality degradation may occur even when wetlands and unvegetated channels are avoided by proposed development if setbacks are inadequate to provide critical vegetation filtration functions. Indirect water quality-related issues are discussed further in Chapter 4.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, of this Draft EIR, and as discussed under Impact Discussion HYDRO-1, water quality impacts were determined to be *less than significant*. Refer to Chapter 4.10 for a list of proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and programs that would preserve water quality of all water resources in the EIR Study Area, including wetlands. The proposed Natural Resource and Conservation (NRC) Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to biological resources, including wetlands and other regulated waters, on a project-by-project basis. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts on wetlands in the EIR Study Area.

Goal NRC-1: Ensure enhanced habitat for native plants and animals, and protection for culturally significant-status species. (Goal NRC1)

- Policy NRC-1-1: Protection of Environmental Resources. Protect or enhance environmental resources, such as wetlands, creeks and drainage-ways, sensitive natural communities, and habitat for special-status species. (Policy NRC1.1)
- Policy NRC-1.5: Biological Site Assessment. Require a biological resource assessment for proposed development on sites with natural habitat conditions that may support special-status species, sensitive natural communities, or regulated wetlands and waters. The assessment shall be conducted by a qualified biologist to determine the presence or absence of any sensitive resources that could be affected by proposed development, shall provide an assessment of the potential impacts, and shall define measures for protecting the resource and surrounding buffer habitat, in compliance with City policy and state and federal laws. An assessment shall not be necessary for locations where past and existing development have eliminated natural habitat and the potential for presence of sensitive biological resources and regulated waters. (new)
- Policy NRC-1.6: Mitigation of Potential Impacts on Special-Status Species and Sensitive Habitat Areas. Require that potential significant impacts on special-status species, occurrences of sensitive natural communities, or regulated wetlands and waters be minimized through adjustments and controls on the design, construction, and operations of a proposed project. Where impacts to these sensitive biological habitat areas are unavoidable, appropriate compensatory mitigation shall be required by the City. Such compensatory mitigation shall be developed and implemented in accordance with City policy and any relevant state and federal regulations. These may include on-site set asides, off-site acquisitions (conservation easements, deed restrictions, etc.), and specific restoration efforts that benefit the special-status species and sensitive habitat areas. (new)
- Policy NRC-1.12: Riparian Habitat. Maintain existing riparian areas in their natural state to provide for wildlife habitat, groundwater percolation, water quality, aesthetic relief, and recreational uses that are environmentally compatible with wetland preservation. (Policy NRC1.5)

- Policy NRC-1.13: Wetland Preservation. Require appropriate public and private wetlands preservation, restoration, and/or rehabilitation through compensatory mitigation in the development process for unavoidable impacts. Continue the City's practice of requiring mitigation for projects that would affect wetlands in conjunction with requirements of state and federal agencies. (Implementation Measure NRC.V and Policy NRC1.5)
- Policy NRC-1.14: Wetlands Delineation. Require a delineation of jurisdictional waters by a qualified wetland specialist at the outset of the project planning stage of any proposed development that may contain wetlands or other regulated waters. This delineation shall be verified and approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or the Regional Water Quality Control Board where federally regulated waters are absent. (Implementation Measure NRC.X).
- Policy NRC-1.15: Wetland Avoidance. Encourage development projects, which may result in the disturbance of delineated seasonal wetlands and other regulated waters, to be redesigned to avoid such disturbance or to provide adequate compensatory mitigation where avoidance is not feasible. (Policy NRC1.5)
- Policy NRC-1.16: Enhancement of Creeks and Drainageways. Support enhancement of drainageways to improve their function as wildlife habitat, wildlife corridors, and storm drainage facilities. Require setbacks, creek enhancement, and associated riparian habitat restoration/creation for projects adjacent to creeks to maintain storm flows, reduce erosion and maintenance needs, and improve habitat values. Require all new structures and paved surfaces to be set back from wetlands and creeks. Exceptions may be granted under extenuating circumstances and if also approved by responsible resource agencies. (Policy NRC1.6)
- Action NRC-1.1: Riparian Habitat Setbacks. Amend the Zoning Code to establish setback requirements from wetlands and creeks. (new)

These proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to ensure that wetlands and regulated waters are identified, avoided, or adequately mitigated. Therefore, potential impacts on wetlands and regulated waters would be less than significant.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect biological resources, implementation of the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would affect biological resources, implementation of the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

BIO-4 Implementation of the proposed project would not 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.

2040 General Plan

Development and land use activities associated with implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan would generally be in urbanized areas with few wildlife corridors or locations where wildlife is already acclimated to human activity. However, the EIR Study Area does contain some habitat areas that could be adversely affected by new development, particularly along creeks and other drainages, or adjacent to open space and undeveloped lands.

As discussed under Impact Discussions BIO-1, BIO-2, and BIO-3, the proposed Natural Resource and Conservation (NRC) Element of the 2040 General Plan includes goals, policies, and actions that would ensure that important wildlife habitats, such as essential habitat for special-status species, occurrences of sensitive natural communities, and regulated wetlands and waters are preserved and protected. These include avoidance of riparian habitat and wetlands, enhancement of creeks and drainageways, and protection of bird nests in active use. Site-specific biological resource assessments on sites with remaining natural habitat would also be required under Policy NRC-1.5, which would determine whether any important wildlife movement corridors are present on undeveloped lands where potential future development is proposed. This project-specific assessment would serve to identify presence of any sensitive wildlife movement corridors and would ensure sensitive resources are adequately protected or appropriate compensatory mitigation is provided as part of new development. Therefore, potential impacts on the movement of native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or use of native wildlife nursery sites would *be less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect biological resources, implementation of the proposed project would not 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 and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would affect biological resources, implementation of the proposed project would not 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 and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

BIO-5	**Implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance.**

2040 General Plan

The City of Hollister General Plan is the primary planning document for the City of Hollister. The proposed 2020 General Plan is intended to ensure consistency between the General Plan and Municipal Code. Because the General Plan is the overriding planning document for Hollister and because the proposed project involves updating the General Plan and Municipal Code for internal consistency, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with local policies and ordinances protecting biological resources.

The proposed Natural Resource and Conservation (NRC) Element of the 2040 General Plan contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to biological resources, including trees and riparian habitat. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts to biological resources, such as trees and riparian habitat, in the EIR Study Area.

Goal NRC-1: Ensure enhanced habitat for native plants and animals, and protection for culturally significant-status species. (Goal NRC1)

- Policy NRC-1.17: Tree Preservation. Preserve and protect heritage trees and other trees of importance. (new)
- Policy NRC-1.18: Replacement Planting. Require replacement planting when heritage trees and trees of importance must be removed. (new)
- Policy NRC-1.19: Tree Maintenance. Allow routine maintenance and pruning of heritage trees only when the survival of the tree will not be compromised. (new)
- Policy NRC-1.20: Construction Near Heritage Trees. Require that construction activities avoid impacts to heritage trees through construction of barrier fencing, construction worker training from a qualified arborist, and construction monitoring by an arborist. Heritage tree protection measures shall be identified prior to issuance of a building permit for a new development project. (new)
- Policy NRC-1.21: Street Trees. Require new development provide street trees of various species along pedestrian corridors and require the installation of root barriers when planting new street trees. (new)
- Policy NRC-1.22: Native Trees and Riparian Habitat. Ensure protection of native trees and riparian habitat. (new)
- Policy NRC-1.23: Non-Native Plants. Prohibit the planting of invasive, non-native plant species in natural habitats that support special-status species. (new)
- Action NRC-1.1: Riparian Habitat Setbacks. Amend the Zoning Code to establish setback requirements from wetlands and creeks. (new)
- Action NRC-1.2: Tree Preservation Ordinance. Adopt a Tree Preservation Ordinance that defines heritage trees and other trees of importance and provides for their replacement when removed as part of a new development project. The Tree Preservation Ordinance shall:
  - Define the trees to be preserved.
  - Establish mitigation requirements when removal of a heritage tree or tree of importance is approved.
  - Require that a tree protection zone be established on a new development site that serves to protect heritage trees and trees of importance to prevent possible damage during construction activities.
  - Require training for construction workers on best practices for avoiding damage and require monitoring by a qualified arborist during construction activities.
  - Require City approval prior to the removal of street trees.
  - Permit routine maintenance and pruning of heritage trees only when the survival of the tree will not be compromised. (new)
- Action NRC-1.3: Urban Forest Master Plan. Prepare an urban forest master plan for the city that includes quantified goals and tracking methods, including mapping the tree canopy. (new)
- Action NRC-1.4: List of Native Plant Species. Establish a list of native plant species for incorporation into the landscape design of proposed development projects. (new).

Potential future development within the EIR Study Area would be required to comply with applicable Hollister regulations and the proposed General Plan 2040 goals, policies, and actions listed, which would reduce potential impacts on sensitive biological resources as a result of implementing the proposed project. With adherence to these regulations, policies, and actions, no conflicts with local plans and policies are anticipated, and impacts would be considered *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect biological resources, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would affect biological resources, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

BIO-6	**Implementation of the proposed project, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, would result in significant cumulative impacts with respect to biological resources.**

2040 General Plan

The impacts of potential future development on biological resources tend to be site-specific, and the overall cumulative effects would be dependent on the degree to which significant vegetation and wildlife resources are avoided or potential impacts are addressed through various forms of mitigation. This includes potential impacts on well-developed native vegetation (e.g., marshlands, native grasslands, oak woodlands, and riparian scrub and woodland), populations of special-status plant or animal species, and wetland features (including freshwater marsh, seasonal wetlands, and riparian corridors and drainages). To some degree, cumulative development contributes to an incremental reduction in the amount of existing natural wildlife habitat, particularly for birds and larger mammals. Habitat for species intolerant of

human disturbance can be lost as development encroaches into previously undeveloped areas, disrupting or eliminating movement corridors and fragmenting the remaining suitable habitat retained within parks, public and private open space, and/or undeveloped properties. New cumulative development in the EIR Study Area could result in further conversion of existing natural habitats to urban and suburban conditions, limiting the existing habitat values of the surrounding area.

Adoption and anticipated development under the proposed 2040 General Plan, as well as other future projects within the cumulative geographic context of the EIR Study Area, would be required to comply with local, state, and federal laws and policies and all applicable permitting requirements of the regulatory and oversight agencies intended to address potential impacts on sensitive biological resources. Environmental review of specific development proposals within the EIR Study Area should serve to ensure that important biological resources are identified, avoided, or adequately mitigated for where potential impacts are unavoidable, and would serve to prevent any significant adverse development-related impacts.

Because the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to reduce any potential biological impacts within the EIR Study Area to a less-than-significant level, the proposed project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to any significant cumulative impacts on special-status species, sensitive natural communities, or regulated waters. The impacts associated with implementation of the proposed project would not contribute to a cumulative reduction of important wildlife habitat or impede wildlife movement opportunities. Accordingly, the proposed project would have *a less-than-significant* cumulative impact on biological resources.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect biological resources, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to biological resources.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would affect biological resources, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to biological resources.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

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4.5 CULTURAL AND TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

This chapter describes the potential impacts to cultural and tribal cultural resources (TCR) associated with the approval and implementation of the proposed project. This chapter also describes the regulatory framework and existing conditions, identifies criteria used to determine impact significance, provides an analysis of the potential cultural and TCR impacts, and identifies policies that could minimize any potentially significant impacts.

4.5.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.5.1.1 TERMINOLOGY

Impacts to cultural resources include archaeological resources, built environment resources, and TCRs. These terms are described herein.

- Archaeological resources are defined as sites. These resources are subsurface human cultural remains that are over 50 years old. Archaeological resources in the region are generally divided into two temporal categories: prehistoric (12,000 years ago-1541) and historic period (1542-50 years ago). A site is the location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined, or vanished, where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archaeological value regardless of the value of any existing structure.
- Built environment resources are defined as buildings, structure, objects, and districts. [1]
  - A *building*, such as a house, barn, church, hotel, or similar construction, is created principally to shelter any form of human activity. A building may also refer to a historically or functionally related unit, such as a courthouse and jail, or a house and barn.
  - The term *structure* is used to distinguish buildings from those functional constructions made usually for purposes other than human shelter.
  - The term *object* is used to distinguish from buildings and structures. These constructions that are primarily artistic in nature or are relatively small in scale and simply constructed. Although it may be, by nature or design, movable, an object is associated with a specific setting or environment.
  - A *district* possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.
- Tribal cultural resources are defined in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as a site, feature, place, cultural landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, which may include nonunique archaeological resources previously subject to limited review under CEQA.

[1] Office of Historic Preservation, March 1995. *Instructions for Recording Historical Resources*, http://scic.org/docs/OHP/manual95.pdf, accessed May 6, 2020.

4.5.1.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Federal Regulations

National Historic Preservation Act

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 defines the responsibilities of federal agencies to protect and preserve historic properties and established the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) as the official designation of historical resources, including districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects. Sites less than 50 years in age, unless of exceptional importance, are not eligible for the National Register. Listing in the National Register does not entail specific protection for a property, but project effects on properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register must be evaluated under CEQA. For a property to be eligible for listing in the National Register, it must be significant and possess integrity. According to the National Register criteria for evaluation,[2] a property is significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture if it is:

A. Associated with events that made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;

B. Associated with the lives of significant persons in our past;

C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

D. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

Archaeological Resources Protection Act

The Archaeological Resources Protection Act (United States Code, Title 16, Sections 470aa–mm) became law on October 31, 1979, and has been amended four times. It regulates the protection of archaeological resources and sites that are on federal and Indian lands.

American Indian Religious Freedom Act

The American Indian Religious Freedom Act (United States Code, Title 15, Section 1996) establishes as national policy that traditional Native American practices; beliefs; sites, including the right of access; and the use of sacred objects shall be protected and preserved. It does not include provisions for compliance.

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (United States Code, Title 25, Sections 3001 et seq.) protects Native American remains, including Native American graves on federal and tribal lands, and recognizes tribal authority over the treatment of unmarked graves. This act prohibits the selling of Native American remains and provides guidelines for the return of Native American human

[2] Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR Part 60.4.

remains and cultural objects from any collection receiving federal funding, such as museums, universities, or governments. Noncompliance with this act can result in civil and criminal penalties.

State Regulations

California Environmental Quality Act

CEQA was passed in 1970 to institute a statewide policy of environmental protection. The CEQA Statute is found at California Public Resources Code, Division 13, Sections 21000–21177. The CEQA Guidelines are found at California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 15000–15387.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 states that a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. The CEQA Guidelines define four ways that a property can qualify as a historical resource for purposes of CEQA compliance:

- The resource is listed in or determined eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources.
- The resource is included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in Section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code (PRC), or identified as significant in a historical resource survey meeting the requirements of PRC Section 5024.1(g), unless the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that it is not historically or culturally significant.
- The lead agency determines the resource to be significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California, as supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record.
- The lead agency determines that the resource may be a historical resource as defined in PRC Sections 5020.1(j) or 5024.1 (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5), which means, in part, that it may be eligible for the California Register.

In addition, PRC Section 21083.2 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4 specify lead agency responsibilities in determining whether a project may have a significant effect on archaeological resources. If it can be demonstrated that a project will damage a unique archaeological resource, the lead agency may require reasonable efforts for the resources to be preserved in place or left in an undisturbed state. Preservation in place is the preferred approach to mitigation. The PRC also details required mitigation if unique archaeological resources are not preserved in place.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(e) requires that excavation activities stop whenever human remains are uncovered during a project or activity, and that the county coroner be called in to assess the remains. If the county coroner determines that the remains are Native American, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) must be contacted within 24 hours. At that time, the lead agency must consult with the appropriate Native American descendants, if any, as identified by the NAHC. Under certain circumstances, the lead agency (or applicant), is required to develop an agreement with the Native American descendants for the treatment and disposition of the remains. In addition to the mitigating provisions pertaining to accidental discovery of human remains, Section 15064.5(f) of the CEQA

Guidelines also requires that a lead agency make provisions for the accidental discovery of historical or archaeological resources. These provisions should include an immediate evaluation of the find by a qualified archaeologist. If the find is determined to be a Historical Resource or Unique Archaeological Resource, avoidance measures should be implemented, or appropriate mitigation should be available.

Native American Historic Resource Protection Act

The Native American Historic Resource Protection Act, formally known as Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52), passed in 2014 and amended CEQA to address California Native American tribal concerns regarding how cultural resources of importance to tribes are treated under CEQA and created the new TCR category. CEQA identifies a TCR as a separate and distinct category of resource, separate from a historical resource or archaeological resource. CEQA specifies that a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a TCR (as defined in CEQA Statute or PRC Section 21074[a]) is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. To help determine whether a project may have such an effect, the PRC requires a lead agency to consult with any California Native American tribe that requests consultation and is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the proposed project. According to AB 52, tribes may have expertise in tribal history and "tribal knowledge about land and TCRs at issue should be included in environmental assessments for projects that may have a significant impact on those resources."

CEQA Section 21074.3(a) defines a TCR as a site, feature, place, or cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of size and scope, sacred place, and object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that is either included or eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historic Resources or included in a local register of historical resources, or if the City of Hollister, acting as the lead agency, supported by substantial evidence, chooses at its discretion to treat the resource as a TCR. Because these criteria also meet the definition of a historical resource under CEQA, a TCR may also require additional consideration as a historical resource. TCRs may or may not exhibit archaeological, cultural, or physical indicators.

PRC Section 21080.3.2 provides that as part of the tribal consultation process, parties could propose mitigation measures. If the California Native American tribe requests consultation to include project alternatives, mitigation measures, or significant effects, the consultation would be required to cover those topics. PRC Section 21082.3 provides that any mitigation measures agreed upon during this consultation "shall be recommended for inclusion in the environmental document and in an adopted mitigation monitoring program" if determined to avoid or lessen a significant impact on TCRs.

California Register of Historic Resources

The California Register of Historic Resources (California Register) establishes a list of properties to be protected from substantial adverse change (PRC Section 5024.1). A historical resource may be listed in the California Register if it is historically or archaeologically significant, or is significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, or cultural annals of California, and meets any of the following criteria:

- Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage.

- Is associated with the lives of persons important in California's past.
- Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction; represents the work of an important creative individual; or possesses high artistic value.
- Has yielded or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

The California Register includes properties that are listed or have been formally determined eligible for listing in the National Register, State Historical Landmarks, and eligible Points of Historical Interest. Other potential resources require nomination for inclusion in the California Register.

For a property to be eligible for listing in the California Register, it must possess integrity as well as be significant. Integrity is the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's historic or prehistoric period. Loss of integrity, if sufficiently great, will render a resource ineligible for the California Register. Integrity is determined through application of seven factors:

- *Location*. Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.
- *Design*. Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.
- *Setting*. Setting is the physical environment of the historic property.
- *Materials*. Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration form a historic property
- *Workmanship*. Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.
- *Feeling*. Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
- *Association*. Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

Health and Safety Code Sections 7052 and 7050.5

Health and Safety Code Section 7052 states that the disturbance of Native American cemeteries is a felony. Section 7050.5(b) of the California Health and Safety Code specifies protocol when human remains are discovered during activities involving ground disturbance. If human remains are discovered or identified in any location other than a dedicated cemetery, there should be no further disturbance or excavation nearby until the county coroner has determined the area is not a crime scene that warrants further investigation into the cause of death and made recommendations to the persons responsible for the work in the manner provided in PRC Section 5097.98 (the California Native American Historical, Cultural, and Sacred Sites Act). This section, which applies to both State and private lands, provides guidance for proceeding when human remains associated with Native American burials and associated items are encountered. This act stipulates the procedures the descendants may follow for treating or disposing of the remains and associated grave goods.

Public Resources Code Section 5097

PRC Section 5097.5(a) specifies that a person shall not knowingly and willfully excavate upon, or remove, destroy, injure, or deface any historic or prehistoric ruins, burial grounds, or archaeological sites, which can include fossilized footprints, inscriptions made by human agency, rock art, or any other archaeological or historical feature, situated on public lands, except with the express permission of the public agency having jurisdiction over the lands. County and city lands are exempt from this provision, expect for parklands larger than 100 acres.

California Code of Regulations

Archaeological resources, on lands administered by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, are addressed in CCR Title 14, Division 3, Chapter 1. Section 4308 of this chapter addresses archaeological features and states that no person shall remove, injure, disfigure, deface, or destroy any object of archaeological or historical interest or value.

Historical Building Code

The California Historical Building Code (CCR, Title 24, Part 8) provides regulations for permitting repairs, alterations, and additions for the preservation, rehabilitation, relocation, reconstruction, change of use, or continued use of historical buildings, structures, and properties determined by any level of government as qualifying as a historical resource. A historical resource is defined in Sections 18950 to 18961 of Division 13, Part 2.7 of the Health and Safety Code, and subject to rules and regulations in the California Historical Building Code.

Government Code Section 65352.3-5 (Senate Bill 18)

California Government Code Section 65352.3-5, commonly known by its legislative bill number, Senate Bill (SB) 18, states that prior to the adoption or amendment of a city or county's general plan, or specific plans, the city or county shall consult with California Native American tribes that are on the contact list maintained by the NAHC. The intent of this legislation is to preserve or mitigate impacts on places, features, and objects, as defined in PRC 5097.9 and PRC 5097.993, that are within the city or county's jurisdiction. Government Code 65362.3-5 also states that the city or county shall protect the confidentiality of information concerning the specific identity, location, character, and use of those places, features, and objects identified by Native American consultation. Government Code 65362.3-5 applies to all general and specific plans and amendments proposed after March 1, 2005.

Assembly Bill 168

AB 168 was signed in 2020 and extends the responsibility of a development proponent to consult with Native American tribes to streamlined ministerial approvals for affordable multifamily housing developments under SB 35. A development with streamlined ministerial approval under SB 35 is not subject to CEQA, allowing for such developments to occur without going through a CEQA review or screening process to determine if they would affect TCRs.

AB 168 requires a development proponent to submit notice of its intent to apply for streamlined approval to the local government prior to the actual application submittal. The local government is then required to provide formal notice to each California Native American tribe that is culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the proposed development and to engage in a scoping consultation regarding the potential effects the proposed development could have on a potential TCR (California Government Code Section 65913.4(b)).

The scoping consultation must commence within 30 days after the proponent submits a notice of intent to apply for ministerial approval and concluded before the proponent can submit the application.

AB 168 deems a project ineligible for the streamlined, ministerial approval process and require it be subject to CEQA if:

A. The site of the proposed development is a TCR that is on a national, state, tribal, or local historic register list;

B. The local government and the California Native American tribe do not agree that no potential TCR would be affected by the proposed development; or

C. The local government and California Native American tribe find that a potential TCR could be affected by the proposed development and the parties do not document an enforceable agreement regarding the methods, measures, and conditions for treatment of those TCRs, as provided.

Local Regulations

Hollister Municipal Code

The Hollister Municipal Code (HMC) includes various directives pertaining to cultural resources and TCRs in Hollister. The HMC is organized by title, chapter, and section. Provisions related to cultural resources and TCRs are included in Title 15, *Buildings and Construction*, and Title 17, *Zoning*, as follows:

- Chapter 15.16, *Historic Resources.* This chapter ensures that the character and history of the city are reflected in its cultural, historical, and architectural heritage, asserting that "these historical and cultural foundations should be preserved as living parts of community life and development to build an understanding of the city's past so that future generations may have a genuine opportunity to appreciate, enjoy and understand the heritage of the city," and "…[i]n the face of modernization and urbanization, areas of historical and cultural interest are threatened with demolition." The Section 15.16.020, *Purpose* states that the City, pursuant to the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended, will develop preservation programs and activities to maximize preservation efforts of the city's unique architectural, historical, aesthetic, and cultural heritage.
- Chapter 17.16, *Performance Standards*. Section 17.16.030, *Archaeological and historic resources*, addresses the incidental disruption of archaeological or historic resources discovered during any construction. This section requires cessation of construction activity, notification to the Planning Department, and examination by a qualified archaeologist or historian for historic resources, so that the extent and location of discovered materials are recorded, subject to the approval of the director, and disposition of artifacts are in compliance with applicable state and federal laws.

Hollister Downtown Design Guidelines

In 2008, the City prepared the Hollister Downtown Plan for Downtown Hollister, a revitalization plan with a series of visions to help the City's downtown area evolve over time with specific projects that was not formally adopted by City Council. Section 7, *Design Guidelines*, of the Hollister Downtown Plan, herein referred to as the Downtown Design Guidelines, is however used by the City for redevelopment and new development. The Downtown Design Guidelines provide design guidelines to coordinate and orchestrate the overall development of downtown so that each development project exudes quality and contributes to a better, more livable, and vital downtown.

A large portion of Downtown Hollister is classified as the Downtown Hollister Historic District (see Section 4.5.1.3, *Existing Conditions*) and there are several individual buildings listed as historic buildings on the National Register throughout the downtown area. Accordingly, the Downtown Design Guidelines includes design guidelines for new development projects as well as downtown projects that involve renovating or modifying historic buildings (as determined by the National Register or local equivalent). These guidelines also apply to property owners who wish to maintain the historical integrity of a building.

The Downtown Design Guidelines include standards for renovating or modifying historic buildings and addresses roofs, building façades, projecting façade elements, landscaping, and mechanical equipment. The Downtown Design Guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the guidelines for the appropriate building types (i.e., main street commercial building, apartment flat building, townhouse building, or detached house building) and other resources, such as the Secretary of the Interior's standards. The Secretary of the Interior has prepared standards for preserving, rehabilitating, restoring, and reconstructing historic buildings.

4.5.1.3 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Historical Context

Prehistory

Hollister is situated within Ohlone territory, which ranges from the Carquinez Strait to the southern border of Monterey Bay, and extends 50 miles inland.[3] Eight Ohlone languages were spoken in the region, with Hollister situated within Ohlone's Mutsun ethnolinguistic group, which extends inland from Monterey Bay. Evidence suggests that the Ausaima Indians, who were part of the Ohlone linguistic group, had dwelt in the vicinity since 5,000 B.C. Ohlones lived in tribelets, or autonomous territory-dependent political units ranging from 50 to 500 people in size.[4] Labor was divided between hunting and gathering based on gender, where women found a variety of nuts, seeds, and berries, while men hunted numerous creek,

[3] Levy, Richard. 1978. "Costanoan." In *California,* edited by Robert F. Heizer, 485-495. *Handbook of the North American Indians*, vol. 8, William C. Sturtevant, general editor. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.

[4] Kroeber, Alfred L. 1925. *Handbook of the Indians of California*. Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 78. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution. Reprinted 1976 by Dover Publications, New York.

shore, and terrestrial species.[5] Men hunted larger mammals with the bow and arrow, and devised communal drives and nets for smaller game. Resources were distributed via trade networks, but Ohlone groups imported relatively few goods: pinyon nuts and obsidian. In exchange for these goods, Ohlone exported mussels, salt, Olivella shells, abalone, and bows to the Sierra Miwok and Yokuts tribes.[3]

Historic Overview

Hollister is within the ancestral lands of the Ohlone (also known as Costanoan) people, which ranges from the Carquinez Strait to the southern border of Monterey Bay and extends 50 miles inland. Loosely united by related languages and histories, the Ohlone people have never constituted a single political or cultural entity. Prior to European settlement, Ohlone peoples spoke at least eight distinctive language dialects and were organized into roughly 50 documented villages and extended family groups.

Evidence suggests that the Ausaima Indians, who were part of the Ohlone linguistic group, have dwelt in the vicinity of the EIR Study Area since 5,000 B.C. Ohlones lived in tribelets, or autonomous territory-dependent political units, ranging from 50 to 500 people in size. Labor was divided between hunting and gathering based on gender; where women gathered a variety of nuts, seeds, and berries, while men hunted numerous creek, shore, and terrestrial species. Larger mammals were hunted with the bow and arrow and devised communal drives and nets for smaller game. Resources were distributed via trade networks, but Ohlone groups imported relatively few goods: pinyon nuts and obsidian. In exchange for these goods, Ohlone exported mussels, salt, olivella shells, abalone, and bows to the Sierra Miwok and Yokuts tribes.

Spanish colonials came to settle in the Bay Area and on the Central Coast during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, displacing the Ohlone people and their cultures. In 1797, Mission San Juan Bautista, one of the many missions constructed along the California coast during this time period, was established by Franciscan Missionaries who sought to convert indigenous peoples to Catholicism and eliminate traditional cultural practices and beliefs. During this period of Mexican and European colonization, cultural and spiritual traditions of the Ohlone people were forced into dormancy or secrecy.

In 1839, Rancho San Justo was established by a land grant from the Mexican government. Shortly after, in 1868, 50 farmers established the San Justo Homestead Association and used their joint power to purchase 21,000 acres of land from Colonel William Hollister, a sheep rancher. The San Justo Homestead Association subdivided the land into homesteads, setting aside 100 acres for a town site. The city was incorporated that same year.

Settlement ramped up when the Southern Pacific Railroad line was extended through the community in 1870.[6] By 1874, Hollister had been designated as San Benito County's government seat. The city became the economic and social hub of the county. Surrounded by fertile soils of the upper San Benito Valley, Hollister benefited from agricultural success and grain trading. Some of California's best wheat and hay

[5] Milliken, Randall. 1995. *A Time of Little Choice: The Disintegration of Tribal Culture in the San Francisco Bay Area 1769–1910*. Menlo Park, CA: Ballena Press Publication.

[6] City of Hollister, 2005. *General Plan Final Program EIR*, Page 4.6-1.

was farmed in the region, and Hollister became known as "Hay City." By 1890, Hollister was exporting high volumes of hay for the whole region.[6]

Historical Resources

Despite its small size, Hollister had developed a substantial downtown by the early twentieth century. Many historically significant buildings in downtown Hollister were destroyed in the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906 and the Loma Prieta Earthquake of 1989, which has diminished the historical relevance of the downtown. The surge of the suburbs starting in the 1960s has further obscured the community's historical context.[7] Nonetheless, Hollister still harbors a large number of recognized cultural resources.

Prehistoric and historic resources in the EIR Study Area are recorded in the California Built Environment Resources Directory (BERD) files, which keep a log of all nonarchaeological cultural resources in the State Office of Historic Preservation inventory. The California BERD contains documentation in the EIR Study Area, which consists of over 360 nonarchaeological cultural resources.[8] Historical resources listed in both the National Register and California Register include:[9, 10]

- Downtown Hollister Historic District
- Monterey Street Historic District
- Hawkins, Joel and Rena, House
- Hollister Carnegie Library
- McCallum, Roy D., House

Other cultural resources have been identified in previously prepared project-specific environmental review in Hollister. Two unrecorded cultural resources noted in the EIR Study Area, including a historic farm complex settled in the late 1860s and a historic building, dating from the early 1900s.6 The two National Register and California Register listed historic districts in Hollister are described herein and shown on Figure 4.5-1, *Historic Districts in Hollister*. Information about the districts is based on a review of the National Register nomination completed for each district in 1992. This nomination form is on file with the City of Hollister and provides a brief description of each building within each district.

Downtown Hollister Historic District

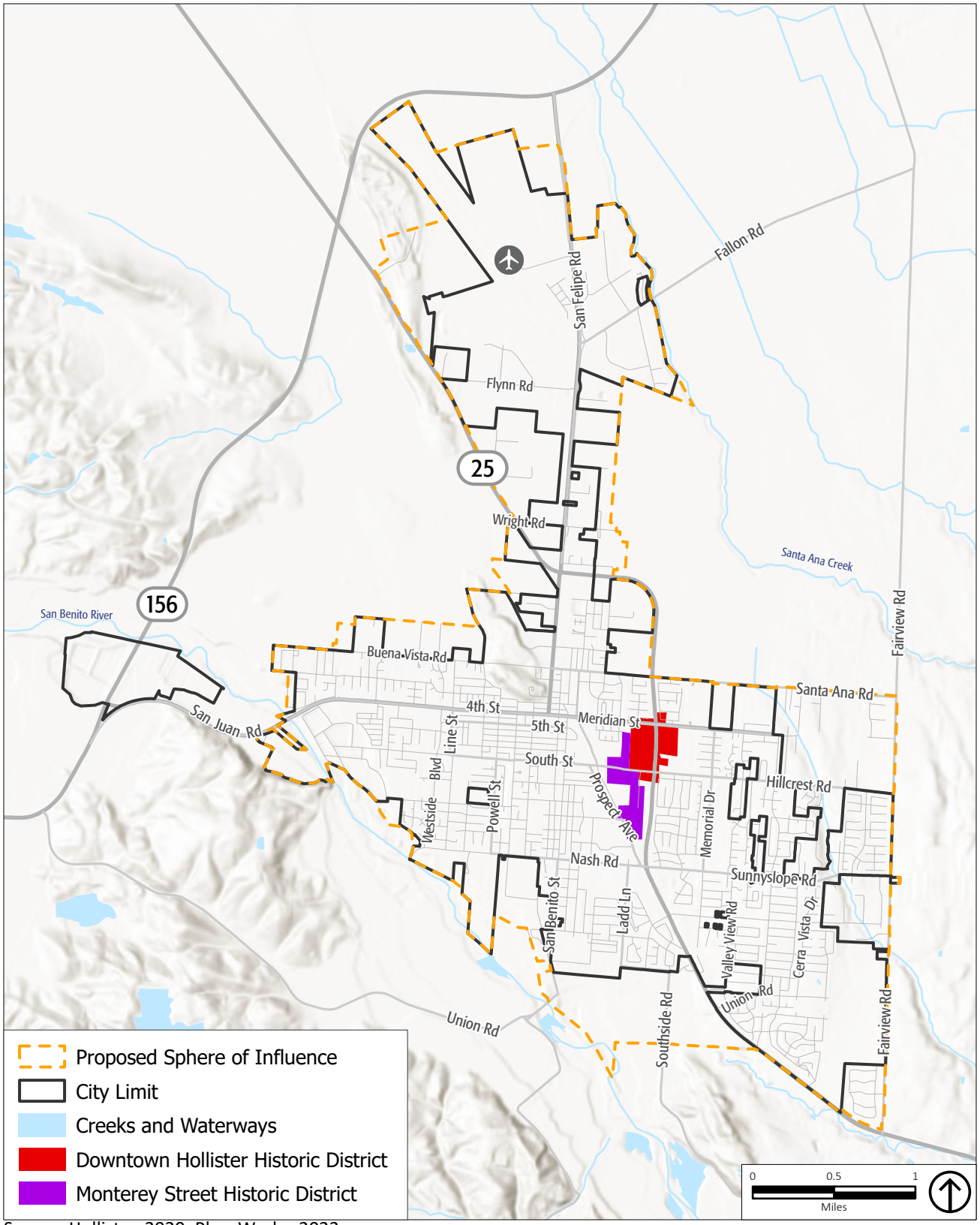
The Downtown Hollister Historic District (Downtown District) is concentrated along San Benito Street and intersecting streets between 4th and South Streets. It became listed on the National Register in January 1993.

[7] City of Hollister, 2005, *General Plan Final Program EIR*, Pages 4.6-2 and 4.9-2. Most of the text in this section come directly from the EIR with little alteration.

[8] Office of Historic Preservation, March 2020. *Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD)*, https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/pages/1068/files/San%20Benito.csv, accessed on May 6, 2020.

[9] National Park Service, last updated September 2020. National Register of Historic Places, https://www.nps.gov/maps/full.html?mapId=7ad17cc9-b808-4ff8-a2f9-a99909164466, accessed on January 23, 2023.

[10] California Office of Historic Preservation, 2023. California Historical Resources, https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/ListedResources/?view=county&criteria=35, accessed on January 23, 2023.



Source: Hollister, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.5-1
Historic Districts in Hollister

The Downtown District is representative of the character of Hollister's downtown prior to World War II and has a period of significance that spans the years from 1880 to 1942. At the time of district nomination to the National Register, it contained 83 buildings constructed over the course of the past 120 years; however, in June 1993, some of the contributing buildings in the 400 block of Monterey Street were damaged by fire. The Downtown District consists of 54 buildings (65 percent of total) that contribute to the historic character of downtown and 29 noncontributing buildings. The integrity of the district is high due to the concentration of historic resources. San Benito Street forms the spine of the district, extending north and south for more than four blocks. About half of the Downtown District's buildings front San Benito Street. All but a few of the remaining buildings face the five crossing streets, the most important of which is Fifth Street.

Buildings within the Downtown District are primarily in retail use; others include civic and religious buildings, auxiliary structures, such as garages and warehouses, a few residential units, and one office building. The design of buildings within the district is utilitarian. However, a range of architectural styles is represented, including Italianate, Late Gothic Revival, Greek Revival, Neo-Classical Revival, and Mediterranean Revival. All of the contributing buildings within the Downtown District retain original materials and design elements above the first floor. These include original cornice treatments, ornamentation, and windows. Although only a few of the retail buildings have unaltered storefronts, many of the contributors not in retail use have first stories without substantial alteration.[7]

Monterey Street Historic District

The Monterey Street Historic District (Monterey Street District) became listed on the National Register in December 1992. The Monterey Street District reflects the architectural development of Hollister more clearly than any other group of buildings in the city. Monterey Street, an element of Hollister's original street grid, forms the spine of the district. It extends north and south for six blocks and consists of primarily single-family residences constructed between 1875 and 1941. The Monterey Street District reflects the state of architectural development in Hollister at the beginning of World War II. In particular, it depicts changes and continuities in residential architecture from the founding of the city to the end of the Great Depression.

The Monterey Street District contains 252 buildings, of which, 188 (75 percent) contribute to its historic character. Major contributing structures mark each intersection. The Monterey Street District's integrity is high due to the concentration of resources and the large proportion of contributors, as well as the arrangement of the streets and the placement of buildings on their lots.

Representative architectural styles include Queen Anne, Gothic Revival, Italianate, Craftsman, Prairie and Gable-Front-and-Wing. Many of the houses were not designed to represent an architectural style. Some were purely functional and had no ornamental or stylistic pretension. Other buildings reflect style popular at different times during the district's period of significance. Many display very sophisticated designs rendered with care and craftsmanship.[11]

[11] City of Hollister, 2005, *General Plan Final Program EIR*, Page 4.6-5. Most of the text in this section comes directly from the EIR with little alteration.

Generally, the buildings within the Monterey Street District have suffered only minor alterations over the years. Typical alterations include additions, porch modifications, re-siding, and window replacement. However, many buildings appear virtually unaltered since the time of construction, and many of the rest have alterations that date from the period of significance. Only about a half-dozen have lost their architectural integrity in the last 15 years. All of the Monterey Street District's contributing buildings retain important materials and design elements from the close of the period of significance. These include siding, roof shape and sizes, door and window openings and surrounds, porch location, and ornamentation. In almost all cases, the elements are original rather than pre-1942 alterations.[7]

Archaeological Resources

Less than 10 percent of the EIR Study Area has been surveyed for the presence of archaeological resources. Nevertheless, literature reveals that at least three prehistoric sites have been found in and within the vicinity of the EIR Study Area. These have been recorded with the Northwest Information Center of the California Archaeological Inventory and include: CA-SBN-14, a Native American burial site; CA-SBN-15, a site containing human-modified flakes (usually from carving projectile points); and CA-SBN-181, a site also containing a flake scatter, suggesting the location of a campsite, and other cultural materials (e.g., core rocks). These remains are suggestive of one or more village sites in the EIR Study Area vicinity and point toward the need for project-level archaeological investigations.[12]

Native American Consultation

As previously described, Hollister is within the ancestral lands of the Ohlone (also known as Costanoan) people, which ranges from the Carquinez Strait to the southern border of Monterey Bay and extends 50 miles inland, and evidence suggests that the Ausaima Indians, who were part of the Ohlone linguistic group, have dwelt in the vicinity of the EIR Study Area since 5,000 B.C. In Hollister's current setting, there is a diverse spectrum of culturally and politically active Ohlone families and tribes within the region. Tribal cultural resources often are less tangible than merely an object of the site itself. Sometimes, the importance is tied to views of or access to a sacred site. Therefore, consultation with culturally affiliated Native American tribes is key to identifying tribal cultural resources.

Pursuant to SB 18, a request was sent to the NAHC for a Tribal Consultation List. The NAHC identified four local Native American representatives from the following tribes as potentially having local knowledge:

- Amah Mutsun Tribal Band
- Amah Mutsun Tribal Band of Mission San Juan Bautista
- Indian Canyon Mutsun Band of Costanoan
- Xolon-Salinan Triba

The City notified all four tribal representatives about the proposed project on May 13, 2020, and asked for information about potential resources at or near the project site.[13] While the City and the representative for the Indian Canyon Mutsun Band of Costanoan Tribe were in contact, the representative requested to

[12] City of Hollister, 2005, *General Plan Final Program EIR*, Page 4.6-1. Most of the text in this section comes directly from the EIR with little alteration.

[13] See Appendix D, *Cultural Resources Data*.

be added to the email distribution list, which the City did. No responses or requests for consultation were received at the time of the release of this Draft EIR. The City remains open to consultation with tribal representatives.

Concurrently with the request for the Tribal Consultation List, a request was sent to the NAHC for a Sacred Lands File search. The NAHC reported that the result of the Sacred Lands File search was positive and provided direction for the City to contact the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band. As stated, the City contacted the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band and have not received any response to date.

4.5.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the proposed project would result in significant cultural resources and tribal resources impacts if it would:

1. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5.
2. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5.
3. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries.
4. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a TCR, defined in PRC Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, 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: (i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in PRC Section 5020.1(k), or (ii) 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 PRC Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of the PRC Section 5024.1 for the purposes of this paragraph, the lead agency shall consider the significance to a California Native American tribe.
5. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to cultural or tribal cultural resources.

4.5.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

CUL-1 Implementation of the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5.

2040 General Plan

The types of cultural resources that meet the definition of historical resources under CEQA Section 21084.1 generally consist of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant for their traditional, cultural, and/or historical associations. Under CEQA, both prehistoric and historic-period archaeological sites may qualify based on historical associations. As such, the two main historical resources that are subject to impact, and that may be impacted by implementation of the proposed project, are historical archaeological deposits and historical architectural resources. Archaeological deposits are addressed under Impact Discussion CUL-2, and human remains are addressed under Impact Discussion CUL-3.

As discussed under Section 4.5.1.2, *Existing Conditions*, a number of historical resources exist within the EIR Study Area. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project could have the potential to directly impact historical resources by altering land use regulations that govern these properties or surrounding sites.

Implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan would allow for an increase in residential, commercial, and industrial development in Hollister over the planning horizon of the plan, which is 2040. Potential future development permitted under the proposed 2040 General Plan could cause a significant impact on the historical resources in question if new construction were incompatible with the existing historical resources' site relationships that contribute to the significance of the existing property, or if the massing (height and bulk) of new construction were incompatible with the historical resource. Lastly, the design characteristics and materials of new construction could impact adjoining or nearby historical buildings. Because the proposed 2040 General Plan would allow denser new development by facilitating infill development opportunities through Policy L-1.3, *Infill Development*, and Action L1.2, *Infill Streamlining*, if new development near historic properties is not compatible, impacts on historical resources could be significant. Additionally, if new development were to directly impact existing resources, impacts on historical resources could be significant.

HMC Section 15.04.050, *Construction codes adopted by reference*, adopts the California State Historic Building Code, which provides regulations for permitting repairs, alterations, and additions necessary for the preservation, rehabilitation, relocation, related construction, change of use, or continued use of a qualified historical building or structure. Section 15.06.060, *Powers and duties of commission*, outlines the responsibilities of the Historic Resources Commission, including establishing criteria to conduct a comprehensive survey in conformance with federal and state survey standards and guidelines of historic resources; maintaining a local register of historic resources; and reviewing and commenting on the conduct of land use, housing and redevelopment, municipal improvement, and other types of planning and programs as they relate to the survey results and historic resources. Additionally, any permits for work

for or on a designated historic resource are to be reviewed and approved by the commission staff, as outlined in HMC Section 15.16.090, *Certificate of appropriateness (permits) required – Application*. HMC Section 17.16.030, *Archeological and historic resources*, establishes the procedure in the event of discovery of a historic resource during construction. Construction activities are to cease, and the City's Planning Department is to be notified so that a qualified historian may record the extent and location of discovered materials. Additionally, the City's Downtown Design Guidelines contain design guidelines for new development projects as well as downtown projects that involve renovating or modifying historic buildings (as determined by the National Register or local equivalent). These guidelines also apply to property owners who wish to maintain the historical integrity of a building. The Downtown Design Guidelines include standards for renovating or modifying historic buildings and addresses roofs, building façades, projecting façade elements, landscaping, and mechanical equipment. The Downtown Design Guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the guidelines for the appropriate building types (i.e., main street commercial building, apartment flat building, townhouse building, or detached house building) and other resources, such as the Secretary of the Interior's standards.

Furthermore, the proposed Land Use and Community Design (LU) Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to historical resources. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts on historical resources.

Goal LU-10: Preserve and enhance the downtown as a major focus of the community. (new)

- Policy LU-10.1: Visual Quality. Enhance the visual quality of the downtown through streetscape improvements, sign regulations, landscaping, maintenance, and the design of proposed buildings. (new)
- Policy LU-10.2: New and Modified Buildings. Require new development and exterior modifications to existing buildings in the downtown to be sited and designed to reflect the existing layout, architectural style, character, massing and height of the existing buildings in the downtown area in order to ensure that exterior modifications, redevelopment, and infill development preserves and enhances the character of the downtown. (new)
- Policy LU-10.6: Building Design. Prohibit the use of corporate or franchise architecture, building branding, colors, and signage in the downtown. (new)
- Policy LU-10:8: Downtown Scale. Maintain the scale and character of Hollister's historic downtown and surrounding areas. (new)
- Policy LU-10.13: Site and Architectural Review. Require design review of all exterior modifications in the downtown area. (new)

Goal LU-11: Preserve the diverse historic architecture of existing residential uses, and ensure that new development in these areas blends with the existing character of historic neighborhoods. (new)

- Policy LU-11.2: Setback Patterns. Preserve existing setback patterns where possible in all new development or alterations to existing buildings in the Old Town Special Planning Area. (new)

Goal LU-16: Maintain and enhance Hollister's small-town charm and identity. Ensure orderly development with attractive and high-quality design. (Goal LU1)

- Policy LU-16.1: Design Standards. Require the highest standards of architectural and site design, proper transitions between different land use types, and apply strong design controls for all development projects to encourage creative, high-quality, and innovative architecture and discourages the use of franchise architecture and/or corporate branding. (new)
- Policy LU-16.2: Neighborhood Scale. Preserve and enhance the character of existing residential neighborhoods by limiting encroachment of new buildings and activities that are out of scale and character with surrounding uses. (Policy LU8.4)
- Policy LU-16.3: Design Compatibility. Ensure that exterior modifications of commercial, office, and industrial uses are compatible with the surrounding area. (new)
- Policy LU-16.4: Design Review. Require design review of all new development, redevelopment, and exterior modifications to multi-family, commercial, office, and industrial buildings. (new)

Goal LU-20: Preserve Hollister's historic identity and historic and culturally important structures, assets, and districts for future generations. (new)

- Policy LU-20.1: Historic Structure Preservation, Renovation and Rehabilitation. Promote preservation, renovation and rehabilitation of historic structures that conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Structures and the California Historical Building Code. (new)
- Policy LU-20.2: Historic Neighborhoods. Ensure that existing historical neighborhoods remain intact by prohibiting incompatible uses and development types within designated historic districts or near designated historic properties. (Policy LU8.2)
- Policy LU-20.3: Property Coordination. Allow adjacent and abutting properties to work together to meet requirements such as fire exiting and access in rehabilitation and reuse projects of historic buildings. (new)
- Policy LU-20.4: Historic Preservation Funding. Pursue and promote historic preservation funding sources to incentivize the protection of historic resources. Examples include the California Mills Act Property Tax Abatement Program and Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program. (new)
- Policy LU-20.5: Historic Structure Alteration. Prior to approving alteration (including demolition) of historically significant buildings, evaluate alternatives, including structural preservation, relocation or other mitigation, and demonstrate that financing has been secured for replacement use. Demolition of historically significant buildings shall only be considered after all other options have been thoroughly reviewed and exhausted. (new)
- Policy LU-20.6: Historic Resource Education. Educate the public about Hollister's historic and cultural resources. Foster public awareness and appreciation of the city's historic, architectural, and archaeological resources and educate the community about how to preserve and improve these resources. (new)

- Action LU-20.1: Historical Preservation Ordinance. Develop a Historic Preservation Ordinance which exceeds State standards for historic buildings. (modified)
- Action LU-20.2: Historical Resources Inventory. Prepare an inventory and designation of potential sites and structures of architectural, historic, archaeological and cultural significance. The City should then consider action to list the most significant structures or sites on the California Register of Historical Resources and the National Register of Historic Places. (Policy LU1.2 and Implementation Measure LU.L)
- Action LU-20.3: State Historic Building Code. Adopt the California Historic Building Code and all subsequent updates. (new)
- Action LU-20.4: Historic and Cultural Resource Preservation Incentives. Conduct a study to consider establishing incentives for property owners to rehabilitate or preserve historic and cultural resources, such as expediting the permitting process, waiving or reducing City development fees, reducing parking requirements, and/or encouraging the adaptive reuse of historic buildings (new)
- Action LU-20.5: Historic Resources Commission. Form a historic resources commission whose function would be to evaluate the proposed demolition or alteration of historic buildings or cultural resources to minimize development impact. (new)

Implementation of the 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions will ensure that new development and exterior remodels are compatible with cultural and historic resources; that landmarks and historic treasures will be preserved, enhanced, and rehabilitated; and that cultural and historic resources of Hollister will be protected and restored. Additionally, implementation of the 2040 General Plan would require the formation of a historic resources commission whose function would be to evaluate the proposed demolition or alteration of historic buildings or cultural resources to minimize development impact.

Finally, CEQA would require that future potential projects permitted under the proposed 2040 General Plan with the potential to significantly impact historical resources be subject to project-level CEQA review wherein the future potential project's potential to affect the significance of a surrounding historical resource would be evaluated and mitigated to the extent feasible. The requirement for subsequent CEQA review, pursuant to state law, would minimize the potential for new development to indirectly affect the significance of existing historical resources to the maximum extent practicable.

Potential impacts from future development on historical resources could lead to (1) demolition, which by definition results in the material impairment of a resource's ability to convey its significance; (2) inappropriate modification, which may use incompatible materials, designs, or construction techniques in a manner that alters character-defining features; and (3) inappropriate new construction, which could introduce incompatible new buildings that clash with an established architectural context. While any of these scenarios, especially demolition and alteration, have the potential to change the historic fabric or setting of an architectural resource such that the resource's ability to convey its significance may be materially impaired, adherence to the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions and HMC regulations identified, and compliance with federal and state laws as described in Section 4.5.1.1, *Regulatory Framework*, would ensure future development would not be detrimental or injurious to property or improvements in the vicinity and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 Climate Action Plan (2023 CAP) is a strategic plan focused on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect cultural resources, implementation of the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP) is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would affect cultural resources, implementation of the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

CUL-2	**Implementation of the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5.**

2040 General Plan

Historical and pre-contact archaeological deposits that meet the definition of archaeological resources under CEQA could be damaged or destroyed by ground-disturbing activities associated with future development allowed under the proposed 2040 General Plan. A substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource would occur from its demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration such that the significance of the resource would be materially impaired per CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064.5(b)(1). Should this occur, the ability of the deposits to convey their significance, either through containing information important in prehistory or history, or through possessing traditional or cultural significance to Native American or other descendant communities, would be materially impaired.

As discussed in Section 4.5.1.2, *Existing Conditions*, there were three prehistoric sites in and within the vicinity of the EIR Study Area that contain archaeological resources. These sites suggest the presence of other sites that may contain archaeological resources.

The Land Use and Community Design (LU) Element and Open Space and Agricultural (OS) Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development

decisions to consider impacts to cultural resources, including archaeological resources. The following General Plan goals and policies would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts on archaeological resources.

Goal LU-1: Promote orderly and balanced growth within Hollister's planning area boundaries. (Goal LU6)

- Policy LU-1.1: Prioritize Infill Development. Ensure an orderly pattern of development in the city that prioritizes infill development over the annexation of properties. (new)
- Policy LU-1.6: Development Projects Outside of the City. The City shall not accept an application for any projects (subdivision, grading, development, etc.) for any land that has not been annexed into the City Limits. (new)
- Policy LU-1.9: Contiguous Annexations. Prohibit any annexations of land that are not contiguous to City Limits. Annexation of land that would result in formation of a County "island" or irregular City boundary shall not be permitted. (new)
- Action LU-1.8: Infill Streamlining. Update the City's regulatory measures to make it easier to develop in infill areas than at other locations in the city. Infill development means those areas already surrounded by development. (new)

Goal LU-16: Maintain and enhance Hollister's small-town charm and identity. Ensure orderly development with attractive and high-quality design. (Goal LU1)

- Policy LU-16.5: Environmentally Sensitive Areas. Design new developments to mitigate environmental impacts by locating development away from environmentally sensitive areas. (new)

Goal LU-20: Preserve Hollister's historic identity and historic and culturally important structures, assets, and districts for future generations. (new)

- Policy LU-20.6: Historic Resource Education. Educate the public about Hollister's historic and cultural resources. Foster public awareness and appreciation of the city's historic, architectural, and archaeological resources and educate the community about how to preserve and improve these resources. (new)
- Action LU-20.2: Historical Resources Inventory. Prepare an inventory and designation of potential sites and structures of architectural, historic, archaeological and cultural significance. The City should then consider action to list the most significant structures or sites on the California Register of Historical Resources and the National Register of Historic Places. (Policy LU1.2 and Implementation Measure LU.L)
- Action LU-20.4: Historic and Cultural Resource Preservation Incentives. Conduct a study to consider establishing incentives for property owners to rehabilitate or preserve historic and cultural resources, such as expediting the permitting process, waiving or reducing City development fees, reducing parking requirements, and/or encouraging the adaptive reuse of historic buildings (new)
- Action LU-20.5: Historic Resources Commission. Form a historic resources commission whose function would be to evaluate the proposed demolition or alteration of historic buildings or cultural resources to minimize development impact. (new)

Goal OS-1: Preserve and protect open space and the natural environment for all to enjoy. (Goal OS1)

- Policy OS-1.1: Open Space Preservation. Retain and protect open space areas through the protection of prime farmlands, the prevention of new development in areas subject to natural and human-caused hazards, that serve as wildlife habitat or as visual assets for the community, and where the development of additional parks and trails is possible. Open space areas can also function as connections between neighborhoods, for example with the creation of pedestrian pathways in environmentally appropriate areas. (Policy OS1.1)
- Policy OS-1.3: Cluster Development. Wherever feasible, encourage those proposing development to cluster planned residential development, leaving open space buffers in proposed site plans, particularly on the borders of development facing agricultural uses and State Routes 25 and 156. This will diminish the potential for land use conflicts and improve opportunities for visual harmonization between agricultural and urban activities. (Policy OS1.2)
- Policy OS-1.5: Open Space Use. Protect and preserve the natural value of open space and wildlife habitat areas while permitting educational and recreational uses compatible with these resources. Uses of open space areas shall be secondary to open space preservation. (Policy OS1.5)
- Policy OS-1.6: Site Planning to Preserve Open Space. Consider the use of creative site planning in a way that is responsive to open space values. Require those proposing new development to design open spaces to minimize paved areas and to maximize landscaping to reduce outdoor air temperatures around buildings in warm weather. (Policy OS1.3)

The City plans to actively encourage infill development through the implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan to focus new residential and job-generating uses in the downtown, on residential and mixed-use infill sites, and the Special Planning Areas where development already occurs and is in close proximity to existing infrastructure and services. The City does not support new urban development outside the SOI and will work with the County to focus future development in already urbanized areas, thereby reducing the potential for unearthing archaeological resources on undeveloped lands. Specifically, Policy LU-1.1 requires the City to maintain a well-defined compact urban form that prioritizes infill development over the annexation of properties, thus reducing potential impacts to development in undisturbed lands. As demonstrated, the proposed General Plan goals, policies, and actions encourage infill development, adaptive reuse of structures, development on underutilized land, and the protection of open spaces, which would reduce the potential for disturbing archaeological deposits since ground-disturbing activities have already taken place in developed areas. As further shown in Impact Discussion CUL-4, the proposed 2040 General Plan also promotes the registration of historic sites in the National and California Register and requires applicants of major development projects to consult with Native American representatives regarding cultural resources to identify locations of importance to Native Americans, including archaeological sites and traditional cultural properties.

Compliance with existing federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions listed previously, would protect recorded and unrecorded archaeological deposits in the greater EIR Study Area by providing for the early detection of potential conflicts between development and resource protection, and by preventing or minimizing the material impairment of the ability of archaeological deposits to convey their significance through excavation or preservation would

ensure that potential impacts from implementation of the proposed project would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect cultural resources, implementation of the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP) is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would affect cultural resources, implementation of the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

CUL-3 Implementation of the proposed project would not disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries.

2040 General Plan

Previously undiscovered human remains associated with pre-contact archaeological deposits may exist within the EIR Study Area, as ground-disturbing activities sometimes uncover such previously unrecorded remains. As described in Impact Discussion CUL-2, ground-disturbing activities and excavation for the project would have the potential to uncover buried resources. It is possible that human remains may be present in the EIR Study Area. Descendant communities may ascribe religious or cultural significance to such remains, making any such disturbances a potentially significant impact.

As described in Impact Discussion CUL-2, the proposed Land Use and Community Design (LU) Element and Open Space and Agricultural (OS) Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to archaeological resources, which includes human remains. Additionally, procedures of conduct following the discovery of human remains have been mandated by Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, PRC Section 5097.98, and the CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(e), as described in Section 4.5.1.2, *Regulatory Framework*.

According to the provisions in CEQA, in the event a human burial or skeletal element is identified during excavation or construction, work in that location shall stop immediately until the find can be properly treated. The San Benito County Coroner shall be notified immediately. The Coroner shall then determine whether the remains are Native American. If the Coroner determines the remains are Native American, the Coroner shall notify the NAHC within 24 hours, who will, in turn, notify the person the NAHC identifies as the Most Likely Descendant (MLD) of any human remains. Further actions shall be determined, in part, by the desires of the MLD. The MLD has 48 hours to make recommendations regarding the disposition of the remains following notification from the NAHC of the discovery. If the MLD does not make recommendations within 48 hours, the owner shall, with appropriate dignity, reinter the remains in an area of the property secure from further disturbance. If the NAHC is unable to identify an MLD, the MLD fails to make a recommendation within 48 hours after being notified, or the landowner rejects the recommendation of the MLD, and mediation by the NAHC fails to provide measures acceptable to the landowner, the owner shall, with appropriate dignity, reinter the remains in an area of the property secure from further disturbance. As further shown in Impact Discussion CUL-4, the proposed 2040 General Plan includes goals and policies to protect TCRs, which may include Native American human remains.

Therefore, with the mandatory regulatory procedures and compliance with the General Plan policies, potential impacts related to the potential discovery or disturbance of any human remains accidently unearthed during construction activities associated with future development resulting from implementation of the proposed project would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect cultural resources, implementation of the proposed project would not disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP) is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would affect cultural resources, implementation of the proposed project would not disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

CUL-4	**Implementation of the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a TCR, defined in PRC Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, 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: (i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in PRC Section 5020.1(k), or (ii) 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 PRC Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of the PRC Section 5024.1 for the purposes of this paragraph, the lead agency shall consider the significance to a California Native American tribe.**

2040 General Plan

As previously described in Section 4.5.1.2, *Regulatory Framework*, a TCR is defined in PRC Section 21074(a) as a site, feature, place, or cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of size and scope, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that is either included or eligible for inclusion in the California Register or included in a local register of historical resources, or if the City of Hollister, acting as the lead agency, supported by substantial evidence, chooses at its discretion to treat the resource as a TCR.[14]

As described under Impact Discussions CUL-2 and CUL-3, impacts from potential future development in the EIR Study Area could impact unknown archaeological resources, including Native American artifacts and human remains.

In addition to the goals, policies, and actions of the proposed Land Use and Community Design (LU) Element and Open Space and Agricultural (OS) Element that protect archaeological resources, the proposed Natural Resource and Conservation (NRC) Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals and policies that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to TCRs. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals and policies would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts to TCRs.

Goal NRC-2: Protect and preserve the tribal cultural resources within the Hollister Sphere of Influence. (new)

- Policy NRC-2.1: Tribal Cultural Resources. The City shall acknowledge the importance of tribal cultural resources by taking concrete steps to preserve areas that have identifiable and important tribal cultural resources. (new)
- Policy NRC-2.2: Tribal Consultation. Support the tribal consultation process, relationship building, and respect for tribal cultural resources. Consult with Native American representatives, including through

[14] Public Resources Code Sections 21074(a)(1) and (2).

early coordination, to identify locations of importance to Native Americans, including archaeological sites, sacred sites, traditional cultural properties, and other types of tribal cultural resources. Respect tribal concerns if a tribe has a religious prohibition against revealing information about specific practices or locations. (new)

- Policy NRC-2.3: On-Site Mitigation of Cultural Resources. Comply with state and federal standards to evaluate and mitigate impacts to tribal resources. Require the developer of a proposed project that could impact a tribal cultural resource to contact an appropriate tribal representative to train construction workers on appropriate avoidance and minimization measures, requirements for confidentiality and culturally appropriate treatment, other applicable regulations, and consequences of violating State laws and regulations. (new)
- Policy NRC-2.4: Preconstruction Investigations. Require preconstruction investigations of potential tribal cultural resources and on-site mitigation for all developments. (new)

Compliance with existing federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and the proposed 2040 General Plan goals and policies listed here and in Impact Discussion CUL-2 would protect unrecorded TCRs in the EIR Study Area by providing for the early detection of potential conflicts between development and resource protection, and by preventing or minimizing the material impairment of the ability of archaeological deposits to convey their significance through excavation or preservation. Therefore, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* impact on TCRs.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect TCRs, implementation of the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a TCR and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP) is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would affect TCRs, implementation of the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a TCR and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

CUL-5 Implementation of the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to cultural and tribal cultural resources.

2040 General Plan

The impacts of potential future development under implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan on cultural resources and TCRs tend to be site-specific, and cumulative impacts would occur when a series of actions leads to the loss of a substantial type of site, building, or resource. For example, while the loss of a single historic building may not be significant to the character of a neighborhood or streetscape, continued loss of such resources on a project-by-project basis could constitute a significant cumulative effect. This is most obvious in historic districts, where destruction or alteration of a percentage of the contributing elements may lead to a loss of integrity for the district overall. For example, changes to the setting or atmosphere of an area by adding modern structures on all sides of a historically significant building, thus altering the aesthetics of the streetscape, would create a significant impact. Destruction or relocation of historic buildings would also significantly impact the setting.

Future development planned for under the proposed 2040 General Plan would be primarily located within the developed portions of the EIR Study Area. This, in conjunction with buildout of the city and the region, has the potential to cumulatively impact cultural resources and TCRs. As previously discussed, impacts to historical resources, archaeological resources, human remains, or TCRs identified within the areas of potential development in the EIR Study Area would be less than significant. Additionally, the existing federal, state, and local regulations and proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions described throughout this chapter serve to protect cultural resources in Hollister. Continued compliance with these regulations substantially decreases potential impacts to historical resources, archaeological resources, human remains, and TCRs to the maximum extent practicable and ensures the cumulative impact would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect cultural or tribal cultural resources, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to cultural resources or TCRs.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert

agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would affect cultural resources or TCRs, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to cultural resources or TCRs.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

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4.6 ENERGY

This chapter describes the potential energy impacts associated with the approval and implementation of the proposed project. This chapter describes the regulatory framework and existing conditions, identifies criteria used to determine impact significance, provides an analysis of the potential energy impacts, and identifies policies that could minimize any potentially significant impacts.

4.6.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.6.1.1 REGULATORY SETTING

Federal Regulations

Federal Energy Policy and Conservation Act

The Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975 was established in response to the 1973 oil crisis. The act created the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, established vehicle fuel economy standards, and prohibited the export of U.S. crude oil (with a few limited exceptions). It also created Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards for passenger cars starting in model year 1978. The CAFE standards are updated periodically to account for changes in vehicle technologies, driver behavior, and/or driving conditions.

The federal government issued new CAFE standards in 2012 for model years 2017 to 2025 that required a fleet average of 54.5 miles per gallon (MPG) for model year 2025. In addition, on March 31, 2022, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration finalized new fuel standards that will increase fuel efficiency 8 percent annually for model years 2024 and 2025 and 10 percent for model year 2026. Overall, latest CAFE standards require a fleet average of 49 MPG for passenger vehicles and light trucks for model year 2026, which will be a 10 MPG increase relative to model year 2021.[1]

Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007

The Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (Public Law 110-140) seeks to provide the nation with greater energy independence and security by increasing the production of clean renewable fuels; improving vehicle fuel economy; and increasing the efficiency of products, buildings, and vehicles. It also seeks to improve the energy performance of the federal government. The act sets increased CAFE standards; the Renewable Fuel Standard; appliance energy-efficiency standards; building energy-efficiency standards; and accelerated research and development tasks on renewable energy sources (e.g., solar energy, geothermal energy, and marine and hydrokinetic renewable energy technologies), carbon capture, and sequestration.[2]

[1] National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2022, April 1, USDOT Announces New Vehicle Fuel Economy Standards for Model Year 2024-2026, https://www.nhtsa.gov/press-releases/usdot-announces-new-vehicle-fuel-economy-standards-model-year-2024-2026, accessed December 29, 2022.

[2] United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2007, Summary of the Energy Independence and Security Act Public Law 110-140, https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-energy-independence-and-security-act, accessed December 29, 2022.

Energy Policy Act of 2005

Passed by Congress in July 2005, the Energy Policy Act includes a comprehensive set of provisions to address energy issues. This act includes tax incentives for energy conservation improvements in commercial and residential buildings, fossil fuel production and clean coal facilities, and construction and operation of nuclear power plants, among other things. Subsidies are also included for geothermal, wind energy, and other alternative energy producers.

National Energy Policy

Established in 2001 by the National Energy Policy Development Group, the National Energy Policy is designed to help the private sector and state and local governments promote dependable, affordable, and environmentally sound production and distribution of energy for the future. Key issues addressed by the energy policy are energy conservation, repair and expansion of energy infrastructure, and ways of increasing energy supplies while protecting the environment.

Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Act of 1968

The Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Act of 1968 authorizes the United States Department of Transportation to regulate pipeline transportation of flammable, toxic, or corrosive natural gas and other gases as well as the transportation and storage of liquefied natural gas. The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration within the Department of Transportation develops and enforces regulations for the safe, reliable, and environmentally sound operation of the nation's 2.6-million-mile pipeline transportation system.

State Regulations

Warren-Alquist Act

Established in 1974, the Warren-Alquist Act created the California Energy Commission (CEC) in response to the energy crisis of the early 1970s and the state's unsustainable growing demand for energy resources. The CEC's core responsibilities include advancing state energy policy, encouraging energy efficiency, certifying thermal power plants, investing in energy innovation, developing renewable energy, transforming transportation, and preparing for energy emergencies. The Warren-Alquist Act is updated annually to address current energy needs and issues, and its latest edition was in January 2022.

California Public Utilities Commission

In September 2008, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) adopted the Long-Term Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan, which provides a framework for energy efficiency in California through the year 2020 and beyond. It articulates a long-term vision, as well as goals for each economic sector, identifying specific near-term, mid-term, and long-term strategies to assist in achieving these goals. This plan sets forth the following four goals, known as Big Bold Energy Efficiency Strategies, to achieve significant reductions in energy demand:

- All new residential construction in California will be zero net energy by 2020;[3]
- All new commercial construction in California will be zero net energy by 2030;
- Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning, commonly referred to as "HVAC," will be transformed to ensure that its energy performance is optimal for California's climate; and
- All eligible low-income customers will be given the opportunity to participate in the low-income energy-efficiency program by 2020.

With respect to the commercial sector, the *Long Term Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan* notes that commercial buildings, which include schools, hospitals, and public buildings, consume more electricity than any other end-use sector in California. The commercial sector's five-billion-plus square feet of space accounts for 38 percent of the state's power use and over 25 percent of natural gas consumption. Lighting, cooling, refrigeration, and ventilation account for 75 percent of all commercial electric use, while space heating, water heating, and cooking account for over 90 percent of gas use. In 2006, schools and colleges were in the top five facility types for electricity and gas consumption, accounting for approximately 10 percent of the state's electricity and gas use.[4]

The CPUC and the CEC have adopted the following goals to achieve zero net energy (ZNE) levels by 2030 in the commercial sector:

- Goal 1. New construction will increasingly embrace zero net energy performance (including clean, distributed generation), reaching 100 percent penetration of new starts in 2030.
- Goal 2. 50 percent of existing buildings will be retrofit to zero net energy by 2030 through achievement of deep levels of energy efficiency and with the addition of clean distributed generation.
- Goal 3. Transform the commercial lighting market through technological advancement and innovative utility initiatives.

Energy-Efficiency Regulations

Appliance Efficiency Regulations

California's Appliance Efficiency Regulations contain energy performance, energy design, water performance, and water design standards for appliances (including refrigerators, ice makers, vending machines, freezers, water heaters, fans, boilers, washing machines, dryers, air conditioners, pool equipment, and plumbing fittings) that are sold or offered for sale in California (California Code of Regulations Title 20, Parts 1600–1608). These standards are updated regularly to allow consideration of new energy-efficiency technologies and methods.[5]

[3] Zero net energy buildings are buildings that the total amount of energy used by the building on an annual basis is equal to or less than the amount of renewable energy created on the site.

[4] California Public Utilities Commission. 2011, January. *CA Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan*. https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/-/media/cpuc-website/files/legacyfiles/c/5303-caenergyefficiencystrategicplan-jan2011.pdf, accessed December 9, 2022.

[5] California Energy Commission, 2017, 2016 Appliance Efficiency Regulations, https://pdf4pro.com/cdn/2016-appliance-efficiency-regulations-5104f7.pdf, accessed February 20, 2022.

ENERGY

California Building Energy Code: Title 24, Part 6, Energy Efficiency Standards

Energy conservation standards for new residential and nonresidential buildings were adopted by the California Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission (now the CEC) in June 1977 and were revised in 2019 and 2022 (California Code of Regulations [CCR] Title 24, Part 6). Title 24 requires the design of building shells and building components to conserve energy. The standards are updated periodically to allow for consideration and possible incorporation of new energy efficiency technologies and methods.

The 2019 Building Energy Efficiency Standards, which were adopted on May 9, 2018, went into effect starting January 1, 2020. The 2019 standards move toward cutting energy use in new homes by more than 50 percent and require installation of solar photovoltaic systems for single-family homes and multifamily buildings of three stories and less. The 2019 standards focus on four key areas: (1) smart residential photovoltaic systems; (2) updated thermal envelope standards (preventing heat transfer from the interior to exterior and vice versa); (3) residential and nonresidential ventilation requirements; and (4) nonresidential lighting requirements.[6] Under the 2019 standards, nonresidential buildings are generally 30 percent more energy efficient compared to the 2016 standards, and single-family homes are generally 7 percent more energy efficient.[7] When accounting for the electricity generated by the solar photovoltaic system, single-family homes would use 53 percent less energy compared to homes built to the 2016 standards.[8]

Furthermore, on August 11, 2021, the CEC adopted the 2022 Building Energy Efficiency Standards, which were subsequently approved by the California Building Standards Commission in December 2021. The 2022 standards became effective and replaced the existing 2019 standards on January 1, 2023. The 2022 standards would require mixed-fuel, single-family homes to be electric-ready to accommodate replacement of gas appliances with electric appliances. In addition, the 2022 standards include prescriptive photovoltaic system and battery requirements for high-rise, multifamily buildings (i.e., more than three stories) and noncommercial buildings, such as hotels, offices, medical offices, restaurants, retail stores, schools, warehouses, theaters, and convention centers.[9]

California Building Code: Title 24, Part 11, California Green Building Standards

On July 17, 2008, the California Building Standards Commission adopted the nation's first green building standards. The California Green Building Standards Code (24 CCR, Part 11, known as "CALGreen") was adopted as part of the California Building Standards Code. It includes mandatory requirements for new residential and nonresidential buildings throughout California. CALGreen is intended to (1) reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from buildings; (2) promote environmentally responsible, cost-effective,

[6] California Energy Commission, 2021, Amendments to the Building Energy Efficiency Standards (2022 Energy Code) Draft Environmental Report. CEC-400-2021-077-D.

[7] California Energy Commission, 2021, Amendments to the Building Energy Efficiency Standards (2022 Energy Code) Draft Environmental Report. CEC-400-2021-077-D.

[8] California Energy Commission, 2021, Amendments to the Building Energy Efficiency Standards (2022 Energy Code) Draft Environmental Report. CEC-400-2021-077-D.

[9] California Energy Commission, 2021, Amendments to the Building Energy Efficiency Standards (2022 Energy Code) Draft Environmental Report. CEC-400-2021-077-D.

healthier places to live and work; (3) reduce energy and water consumption; and (4) respond to directives by the Governor. The mandatory provisions of CALGreen became effective January 1, 2011, and were last updated in 2022. The 2022 Standards became effective January 1, 2023.

Overall, the code is established to reduce construction waste, make buildings more efficient in the use of materials and energy, and reduce environmental impact during and after construction. CALGreen contains requirements for construction site selection, stormwater control during construction, construction waste reduction, indoor water use reduction, material selection, natural resource conservation, site irrigation conservation, and more. The code provides for design options allowing the designer to determine how best to achieve compliance for a given site or building condition. The code also requires building commissioning, which is a process for verifying that all building systems (e.g., heating and cooling equipment and lighting systems) are functioning at their maximum efficiency.[10]

Renewable Portfolio: Carbon Neutrality Regulations

Senate Bills 1078, 107, X1-2, and Executive Order S-14-08

A major component of California's Renewable Energy Program is the renewables portfolio standard (RPS) established under Senate Bills (SB) 1078 (Sher) and 107 (Simitian). Under the RPS, certain retail sellers of electricity were required to increase the amount of renewable energy each year by at least 1 percent to reach at least 20 percent by December 30, 2010. Executive Order (EO) S-14-08, signed in November 2008, expanded the state's renewable energy standard to 33 percent renewable power by 2020. This standard was adopted by the legislature in 2011 (SB X1-2). Renewable sources of electricity include wind, small hydropower, solar, geothermal, biomass, and biogas. The increase in renewable sources for electricity production decreases indirect GHG emissions from development projects because electricity production from renewable sources is generally considered carbon neutral.

Senate Bill 350

SB 350 (de Leon) was signed into law in September 2015 and establishes tiered increases to the RPS—40 percent by 2024, 45 percent by 2027, and 50 percent by 2030. SB 350 also set a new goal to double the energy-efficiency savings in electricity and natural gas through energy efficiency and conservation measures.

Senate Bill 100

On September 10, 2018, SB 100 was signed into law, which replaces the SB 350 requirements. Under SB 100, the RPS for public-owned facilities and retail sellers consist of 44 percent renewable energy by 2024, 52 percent by 2027, and 60 percent by 2030. Additionally, SB 100 also established a new RPS requirement of 50 percent by 2026. Furthermore, the bill also establishes an overall State policy that eligible renewable energy resources and zero-carbon resources supply 100 percent of all retail sales of electricity to California end-use customers and 100 percent of electricity procured to serve all State agencies by

[10] California Building Standards Commission, 2022, 2022 California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 11, https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/CAGBC2022P1, accessed December 29, 2022.

December 31, 2045. Under the bill, the State cannot increase carbon emissions elsewhere in the western grid or allow resource shuffling to achieve the 100 percent carbon-free electricity target.

Senate Bill 1020

SB 1020 was signed into law on September 16, 2022. It requires renewable energy and zero-carbon resources to supply 90 percent of all retail electricity sales by 2035 and 95 percent by 2040. Additionally, SB 1020 requires all State agencies to procure 100 percent of electricity from renewable energy and zero-carbon resources by 2035.

Off-Road Equipment and Transportation-Related Regulations

Assembly Bill 1493

California vehicle GHG emission standards were enacted under AB 1493 (Pavley I). Pavley I is a clean-car standard that reduces GHG emissions from new passenger vehicles (light-duty auto to medium-duty vehicles) from 2009 through 2016 and is anticipated to reduce GHG emissions from new passenger vehicles by 30 percent in 2016. California implements the Pavley I standards through a waiver granted to California by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In 2012, the EPA issued a Final Rulemaking that sets even more stringent fuel economy and GHG emissions standards for model year 2017 through 2025 light-duty vehicles (see also the previous discussion on the update to the CAFE standards under *Federal*). In January 2012, the California Air Resources Board approved the Pavley Advanced Clean Cars program (formerly known as Pavley II) for model years 2017 through 2025. The program combines the control of smog, soot, and global warming gases and requirements for greater numbers of zero-emission vehicles into a single package of standards. Under California's Advanced Clean Car program, by 2025, new automobiles will emit 34 percent fewer global warming gases and 75 percent fewer smog-forming emissions.[11]

Title 13, Chapter 9, Article 4.8, Section 2449

Section 2449 of the CCR, Title 13, Chapter 9, Article 4.8 was adopted on May 2, 2008, that limits nonessential idling of fleets to no more than five consecutive minutes at any location. This idling restriction applies to all vehicles in California with a diesel-fueled or alternative diesel-fueled off-road engine, unless a waiver provides sufficient justification that such idling is necessary.

Senate Bill 375

In 2008, SB 375, the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act, was adopted to connect the GHG emissions-reductions targets established in the 2008 Scoping Plan for the transportation sector to local land use decisions that affect travel behavior. Its intent is to reduce GHG emissions from light-duty trucks and automobiles (excludes emissions associated with goods movement) by aligning regional long-

[11] California Air Resources Board. 2017, January 18. California's Advanced Clean Cars Midterm Review. https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2020-01/ACC%20MTR%20Summary_Ac.pdf, accessed May 16, 2022.

range transportation plans, investments, and housing allocations to local land use planning to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and vehicle trips. Specifically, SB 375 required the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to establish GHG emissions-reduction targets for each of the 18 metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) is the MPO for the Monterey Bay Area, which includes Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties. Pursuant to the recommendations of the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee, CARB adopted per-capita reduction targets for each of the MPOs rather than a total magnitude reduction target.

Executive Order N-79-20

On September 23, 2020, EO N-79-20 was issued, which sets a time frame for the transition to zero-emissions (ZE) passenger vehicles and trucks in addition to off-road equipment. It directs CARB to develop and propose the following:

- Passenger vehicle and truck regulations requiring increasing volumes of new ZEVs (zero-emission vehicles) sold in the California toward the target of 100 percent of in-state sales by 2035.
- Medium- and heavy-duty vehicle regulations requiring increasing volumes of new ZE trucks and buses sold and operated in California toward the target of 100 percent of the fleet transitioning to ZEVs by 2045 everywhere feasible, and for all drayage trucks to be ZE by 2035.
- Strategies to achieve 100 percent zero emissions from all off-road vehicles and equipment operations in California by 2035, in cooperation with other State agencies, the EPA, and local air districts.

On August 25, 2022, CARB adopted the Advanced Clean Cars II (ACC II) regulations that codifies the EO goal of 100 percent of in-state sales of new passenger vehicles and trucks be ZE by 2035. Starting in year 2026, ACC II requires that 35 percent of new vehicles sold be ZE or plug-in hybrids.

Regional Regulations

Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments

AMBAG is the transportation planning, coordinating, and financing agency for the Monterey Bay Area, which, as previously stated, includes Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties. AMBAG is a federally designated MPO and is required to produce certain documents that maintain the region's eligibility for federal transportation assistance. Among AMBAG's many functions, it also authors the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS) with Regional Transportation Planning Agencies, transit providers, Monterey Bay Air Resources District, state and federal governments, and organizations involved in transportation planning.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainability Communities Strategy

AMBAG adopted the 2045 MTP/SCS in June 2022 with a framework of goals and policy objectives to address the mobility and accessibility needs of the region.[12] As the MPO, AMBAG updates the MTP/SCS every four years through a bottom-up process involving numerous stakeholders to develop a new growth and an updated multimodal transportation network with the available revenues.

AMBAG also recognizes the importance of advancements in technology, including energy, and overall efficiency of transportation operations. The region's need for gasoline and diesel is projected to decline largely due to the increase in plug-in hybrids and electric vehicle adoption. Electric vehicles would help reduce GHG emissions resulting from the consumption of fossil fuels and would help achieve statewide policies aimed at reducing GHG emissions. Overall, the investments identified in the 2045 MTP/SCS are expected to result in significant benefits to the region, not only with respect to transportation and mobility, but also economic activity, air quality, safety, and social equity.

Local Regulations

Hollister Municipal Code

The Hollister Municipal Code (HMC) includes various directives to minimize energy impacts in Hollister. The HMC is organized by title, chapter, and section. Most provisions related to energy are in Title 13, *Public Service*s, Title 15, *Buildings and Construction,* and Title 17, *Zoning*, as follows:

- Chapter 13.32, *Community Choice Aggregation Program.* This chapter authorizes the implementation of a Community Choice Aggregation for businesses and residents within the City of Hollister. Section 13.32.010, *Authorization to implement a Community Choice Aggregation Program*, establishes that groups of counties and cities can be part of the Community Choice Aggregation Program of the Monterey Bay Community Power Authority.
- Chapter 15.04, *Hollister Building Code.* This chapter provides regulations for all new construction and any alterations, repairs, relocations, or reconstruction of any building. This chapter ensures that the minimum requirements and standards for building standards are met to protect the public safety and welfare of the city. Section 15.04.050, *Construction codes adopted by reference*, establishes that the City adopts the 2019 edition of the California Building Standards, Title 24, Part 6, *California Energy Code,* to ensure buildings are developed to code and are energy efficient.
- Chapter 17.04, Residential Zoning Districts. This chapter defines the applicable regulations regarding development and new land uses in the residential zoning districts established by Section 17.02.030, *Districts Established and Designated*. Section 17.04.030, *Residential general development standards*, provides regulations for energy efficiency, such that solar access shall be maintained through the siting and orientation of buildings and two/three-story residences.

[12] Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), 2022. *2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan & the Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS)*. https://www.ambag.org/plans/2045-metropolitan-transportation-plan-sustainable-communities-strategy, accessed November 28, 2022.

- Chapter 17.10, Industrial/Manufacturing Zones. This chapter defines the regulations applicable to development and new land uses in the industrial zoning districts established by Section 17.02.030, *Districts Established and Designated*. Section 17.10.040, *Industrial Zoning District performance standards*, established building regulations that should be designed to conserve energy (such as passive solar, solar panels on roofs, or in the parking lot) and incorporated additive measures to incentivize reduced vehicle trips (such as shaded outdoor eating areas, Class II bicycle paths with road improvements, and integration of shade trees along sidewalk frontages).
- Chapter 17.12, Special Purpose Zones. This chapter is intended to regulate development of new land uses in the special purpose zoning districts established by Section 17.02.030, *Districts Established and Designated*. Section 17.12.060, *Open space, park and public facilities/institution general development standards,* encourages the use of solar panels on roofs or in the parking lot to conserve maximum energy.
- Chapter 17.16, Performance Standards. This chapter defines the performance standards for specific land uses, land use activities, and site-specific conditions. Section 17.16.120, *Solar energy development standards*, regulates the passive heating and cooling opportunities that shall be incorporated in all new development.

4.6.1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Electricity and Natural Gas

Electricity is quantified using kilowatts (kW) and kilowatt-hours (kWh), and natural gas is measured in therms. A kW is a measure of 1,000 watts of electrical power and a kWh is a measure of electrical energy equivalent to a power consumption of 1,000 watts for one hour. The kWh is commonly used as a billing unit for energy delivered to consumers by electric utilities. According to the CEC's "Tracking Progress" regarding statewide energy demand, total electric energy usage in California was 280,738 gigawatt-hours in 2021.[13] A gigawatt is equal to one million kilowatts.

Energy Providers

Two energy providers, Central Coast Community Energy (CCCE) and Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), serve the environmental impact report (EIR) Study Area, as described herein.

Central Coast Community Energy

In 2018, the CCCE was created as a joint-powers authority as part of the Community Choice Energy model implemented by the State of California. CCCE is the default electricity provider for all communities in San Benito County, including Hollister, as well as for communities in Santa Cruz, Monterey, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo Counties. CCCE provides two choices for electricity generated: 3CE Choice and 3CE Prime.

[13] CEC (California Energy Commission), 2022, December 9 (accessed). Electricity Consumption by Planning Area. http://www.ecdms.energy.ca.gov/elecbyplan.aspx.

ENERGY

Sources of electricity sold by CCCE under the 3CE Choice plan in 2021, the latest year for which data are available, were:[14]

- 38.4 percent renewable, consisting mostly of solar and geothermal
- 11.8 percent large hydroelectric
- 49.8 percent unspecified power[15]

Customers have the option of opting up to 3Cprime plan, which provides 100 percent renewable and carbon-free electricity.[16] Conversely, customers have the option to opt out of CCCE renewable energy sources and receive their energy service from PG&E. PG&E is responsible for maintaining transmission lines, handling customer billing, and responding to new service requests and emergencies within the CCCE service area.

Pacific Gas and Electric Company

Electricity

PG&E is a publicly traded utility company that generates, purchases, and transmits energy and natural gas under contract with the CPUC. PG&E's service territory is 70,000 square miles, roughly extending north to Eureka, south to Bakersfield, west to the Pacific Ocean, and east to the Sierra Nevada. PG&E's electricity distribution system consists of 106,681 circuit-miles of electric distribution lines and 18,466 circuit-miles of interconnected transmission lines.[17] PG&E owns and maintains aboveground networks of electric transmission and distribution facilities throughout the EIR Study Area.

PG&E electricity is generated by a combination of sources, such as coal-fired power plants, nuclear power plants, and hydro-electric dams, as well as newer sources of energy, such as wind turbines and photovoltaic plants, also known as solar farms. The bulk electric grid (collectively referred to as "The Grid"), is a network of high-voltage transmission lines, linked to power plants within the PG&E system. The distribution system, made up of lower voltage secondary lines, is at the street and neighborhood level, and consists of overhead or underground distribution lines, transformers, and individual service "drops" that connect to the individual customer.

Natural Gas

PG&E gas transmission pipeline systems serve approximately 4.5 million gas customers in northern and central California.[18] The system is operated under an inspection and monitoring program. The system

[14] Central Coast Community Energy (CCCE), 2021 Power Content Label, https://3cenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2021-PCL-Postcard-final.pdf, accessed January 9, 2023.

[15] Unspecified power is electricity that has been purchased through open market transactions and is not traceable to a specific generation source.

[16] Central Coast Community Energy (CCCE), 2021 Power Content Label, https://3cenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2021-PCL-Postcard-final.pdf, accessed January 9, 2023.

[17] Pacific Gas and Electric Company, 2022, *Company profile.* https://www.pge.com/en_US/about-pge/company-information/profile/profile.page, accessed December 19, 2022.

[18] Pacific Gas and Electric Company, 2022. *Company profile.* https://www.pge.com/en_US/about-pge/company-information/profile/profile.page, accessed December 29, 2022.

operates in real time on a 24-hour basis, and includes leak inspections, surveys, and patrols of the pipelines. PG&E also adopted the Pipeline 2020 program, which aims to modernize critical pipeline infrastructure, expand the use of automatic or remotely operated shut-off valves, catalyze development of next-generation inspection technologies, develop industry-leading best practices, and enhance public safety partnerships with local communities, public officials, and first responders. Total natural gas consumption in PG&E's service area was 449,302,071,200 kilo-BTU (KBTU) for 2021.[19]

4.6.1.3 EXISTING ELECTRICITY AND NATURAL GAS DEMAND

The existing electricity and natural gas use demand in the City of Hollister is shown in Table 4.6-1, *Estimated Existing Electricity and Natural Gas Demand.*

TABLE 4.6-1 ESTIMATED EXISTING ELECTRICITY AND NATURAL GAS DEMAND

Land Use in EIR Study Area	Electricity Usage (kWh/year) [a]	Natural Gas Usage (Therms/year)
Residential	43,082,470	4,515,300
Nonresidential	94,633,440	2,001,050
Total	**137,715,910**	**6,516,350**

Note:
a. Based on energy and natural gas usage inventory as part of the development for the 2022 Climate Action Plan.
Source: See Appendix B, *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data*.

4.6.1.4 EXISTING TRANSPORTATION FUELS

Table 4.6-2*, Existing Operation-Related Annual Fuel Usage,* shows the fuel usage associated with VMT currently generated under existing baseline conditions based on fuel usage data obtained from EMFAC2021, Version 1.0.2, and VMT data provided by Kimley-Horn (see Appendix H, *Transportation Data*). VMT is based on vehicle trips beginning and ending in the city boundaries and from external/internal trips (i.e., trips that either begin or end in the city).

TABLE 4.6-2 EXISTING OPERATION-RELATED ANNUAL FUEL USAGE

Gas		Diesel		Compressed Natural Gas		Electricity	
VMT [a]	Gallons	VMT [a]	Gallons	VMT [a]	Gallons	VMT [a]	kWh
410,802	18,077	57,366	7,917	113	20	3,380	1,157

Note:
a. VMTs based on daily VMT provided by Kimley-Horn. VMT per year based on a conversion of VMT x 347 days per year to account for less travel on weekend, consistent with CARB statewide GHG emissions inventory methodology.
Source: EMFAC2021, version 1.0.2. See Appendix B, *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data*.

[19] California Energy Commission, 2021, Gas Consumption by Planning Area. http://www.ecdms.energy.ca.gov/gasbyplan.aspx, accessed December 9, 2022.

4.6.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the proposed project would result in a significant energy impact if it would:

1. Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation.
2. Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.
3. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to energy.

The analysis also uses considerations identified in Appendix F, *Energy Conservation,* of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, as appropriate, to assist in answering the Appendix G, *Environmental Checklist Form*, of the CEQA Guidelines, questions. The factors to evaluate energy impacts under standard one listed previously include:

- The project's energy requirements and its energy-use efficiencies by amount and fuel type for each stage of the project, including construction, operation, maintenance, and/or removal. If appropriate, the energy intensiveness of materials may be discussed.
- The effects of the project on local and regional energy supplies and on requirements for additional capacity.
- The effects of the project on peak and base period demands for electricity and other forms of energy.
- The degree to which the project complies with existing energy standards.
- The effects of the project on energy resources.
- The project's projected transportation energy use requirements and its overall use of efficient transportation alternatives

4.6.2.1 METHODOLOGY

The energy and fuel usage information provided in this section are based on the following:

- Energy (Natural Gas and Electricity): Energy use for residential and nonresidential land uses in the city were modeled using electricity and natural gas data provided by PG&E and CCCE. Residential energy and nonresidential energy forecasts are adjusted for increases in housing units and employment, respectively.
- On-Road Fuel Use: Fuel use was based on Origin-Destination Method VMT provided by Kimley-Horn (see Chapter 4.16, *Transportation*), and modeled using CARB's EMFAC2021 v.1.0.2 web database and calendar year 2019 (existing) and 2040 fuel usage rates.

4.6.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

ENE-1	**Implementation of the proposed project would not result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation.**

2040 General Plan

Short-Term Construction Impacts

Future development projects under the proposed 2040 General Plan would create temporary demands for electricity. Natural gas is not generally required to power construction equipment, and therefore is not anticipated during construction phases. Electricity use would fluctuate according to the phase of construction. Additionally, it is anticipated that most electric-powered construction equipment would be hand tools (e.g., power drills, table saws, compressors) and lighting, which would result in minimal electricity usage during construction activities.

Future development projects would also temporarily increase demands for energy associated with transportation. Transportation energy use depends on the type and number of trips, VMT, fuel efficiency of vehicles, and travel mode. Energy use during construction would come from the transport and use of construction equipment, delivery vehicles and haul trucks, and construction employee vehicles that would use diesel fuel or gasoline. The use of energy resources by these vehicles would fluctuate according to the phase of construction and would be temporary. It is anticipated that most off-road construction equipment, such as those used during demolition and grading, would be gas or diesel powered. In addition, all operation of construction equipment would cease upon completion of project construction. Furthermore, the construction contractors would be required to minimize nonessential idling of construction equipment during construction in accordance with CCR Title 13, Chapter 9, Article 4.8, Section 2449. Such required practices would limit wasteful and unnecessary energy consumption. Also, future projects within the EIR Study Area would be similar to projects currently in development within the City of Hollister. Overall, there would be no unusual project characteristics anticipated that would necessitate the use of construction equipment that would be less energy efficient than at comparable construction sites in other parts of California. Therefore, short-term construction activities that occur as a result of implementation of the proposed project would not result in inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary fuel consumption.

Long-Term Impacts During Operation

Operation of potential future development accommodated under the proposed 2040 General Plan would create additional demands for electricity and natural gas compared to existing conditions. Operational use of electricity and natural gas would include heating, cooling, and ventilation of buildings; water heating; operation of electrical systems; use of on-site equipment and appliances; lighting; and charging electric vehicles. Land uses accommodated under the proposed 2040 General Plan would also result in additional

demands for transportation fuels (e.g., gasoline, diesel, compressed natural gas, and electricity) associated with on-road vehicles.

Nontransportation Energy

Electrical service to the EIR Study Area is provided by PG&E and CCCE through connections to existing off-site electrical lines and new on-site infrastructure. As shown in Table 4.6-3, *Year 2040 Forecast Electricity Consumption*, by year 2040, electricity use in the EIR Study Area would increase by 63,557,929 kWh/year, or approximately 46 percent, from existing conditions.

TABLE 4.6-3 YEAR 2040 FORECAST ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION

	Electricity Usage (kWh/year) [a]		
Land Use	Existing Conditions	Proposed 2040 General Plan	Net Change
City			
Residential	43,082,470	67,675,040	24,592,570
Nonresidential	94,633,440	133,023,990	38,390,550
SOI			
Residential	444,566	965,920	521,354
Nonresidential	714,895	768,350	53,455
Total	**138,875,371**	**202,433,300**	**63,557,929**

Note:
a. Residential energy and nonresidential energy forecasts do not account for reductions due to increase in energy efficiency from compliance with the Building Energy Efficiency Standards and CALGreen.
Source: See Appendix B, *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data*.

As shown in Table 4.6-4, *Year 2040 Forecast Natural Gas Consumption*, natural gas use under the proposed 2040 General Plan totals 10,023,060 therms annually. By 2040, natural gas use in the EIR Study Area would increase by 3,445,000 therms annually, or approximately 52 percent, from existing conditions.

TABLE 4.6-4 YEAR 2040 FORECAST NATURAL GAS CONSUMPTION

	Natural Gas Usage (Therms per year) [a]		
Land Use	Existing Conditions	Proposed 2040 General Plan	Net Change
City			
Residential	4,515,300	7,092,750	2,577,450
Nonresidential	2,001,050	2,812,830	811,780
SOI			
Residential	46,593	101,230	54,637
Nonresidential	15,117	16,250	1,133
Total	**6,578,060**	**10,023,060**	**3,445,000**

Note:
a. Residential energy and nonresidential energy forecasts do not account for reductions due to increase in energy efficiency from compliance with the Building Energy Efficiency Standards and CALGreen.
Source: See Appendix B, *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data.*

ENERGY

While the electricity and natural gas demand for the potential future development in the project's EIR Study Area would increase compared to existing conditions, potential future development would be required to comply with the current and future updates to the Building and Energy Efficiency Standards (CCR, Title 24, Part 6) and the California Green Building Code or CALGreen (CCR, Title 24, Part 11), which would contribute to reducing the energy demands. New buildings would also use new energy-efficient appliances and equipment, pursuant to the Appliance Efficiency Regulations (Title 20, CCR, Sections 1601 through 1609), which would ensure the use of efficient and non-wasteful electricity and natural gas consumption. New and replacement buildings in compliance with these standards would generally have greater energy efficiency than existing buildings. It is anticipated that each update to the Building Energy Efficiency Standards and CALGreen will result in greater building energy efficiency and move closer toward buildings achieving ZNE.

The proposed Natural Resource and Conservation (NRC) and Health and Safety (HS) Elements of the 2040 General Plan contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to address efficient use of energy and energy conservation. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would further limit wasteful and unnecessary energy consumption:

Goal NRC-4: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Hollister to meet or exceed state targets. (new)

- Policy NRC-4.3: Energy Use. Reduce energy use through use of energy-efficient appliances, lighting, and materials in our homes, businesses, and City facilities and use education and incentives to promote and sustain energy-conserving design and practices. (new)
- Policy NRC-4.8: Carbon Free Energy. Promote carbon-free energy sources in new and existing developments. (new)
- Action NRC-4.2: Building Standards Code Efficiency Amendments. Conduct a study to explore opportunities to amend the Hollister Building Standards Code to improve building energy efficiency, transition to carbon-free energy sources, increase renewable energy supplies, and promote greater electric vehicle adoption. (new)

Goal NRC-5: Promote energy efficiency and resilient design in the built environment. (Goal NRC3)

- Policy NRC-5.1: Development Practices to Conserve Resources. Promote development practices, which will result in the conservation of energy, water, minerals, and other natural resources, and promote the use of renewable energy technologies, such as solar and wind, when possible. (Policy NRC3.1)
- Policy NRC-5.2: Resource Efficiency in Site Development. Encourage site planning and development practices that reduce energy demand and incorporate resource- and energy-efficient infrastructure. (Policy NRC3.3)
- Policy NRC-5.3: Resource-Efficient Building Design. Promote and encourage residences and businesses to be resource, energy, and water efficient by creating incentives and removing obstacles to promote their use. Require those proposing new development to incorporate energy conservation measures in the design and construction of all proposed residential, commercial, industrial, and public buildings. This would include:
    - Shading of parking lots and summertime shading of south-facing windows

- Requiring those proposing new development to design all proposed commercial, office, and industrial structures with high-efficiency heating-ventilation-air conditioning (HVAC) systems for maximum energy efficiency
- Requiring those proposing new development to design all window systems to reduce thermal gain during warm weather and heat loss during cool weather
- Encouraging the use of domestic solar energy. (Policy NRC 3.4 & Implementation Measures NRC.S)

- Policy NRC-5.4: Efficiency in Government. Promote and serve as an effective leader in implementing conservation practices and incorporating resource-efficient alternatives in government facilities and services. (Policy NRC3.5)
- Policy NRC-5.5: Project Review for Energy Conservation Measures. Review all development proposals for energy efficiency and features, and conservation of water resources. Review impacts on mineral resources and other natural resources prior to the issuance of any building permit. (Implementation Measures NRC.W)
- Policy NRC-5.6: Title 24 Requirements. Require new development projects to meet or exceed Title 24 energy conservation requirements, and, where possible, require structural and landscaping design to make use of natural heating and cooling. Encourage the use of solar and alternative energy technologies to meet or exceed Title 24 requirements. (Implementation Measures NRC.J)
- Policy NRC-5.7: LEED Program. Encourage developers to use Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design standards. (Implementation Measures NRC.O)
- Policy NRC-5.8: Solar Design. Promote the use of solar energy and develop design standards relating to solar orientation, including landscaping, and appropriate impervious surfaces. (Implementation Measures NRC.P)
- Policy NRC-5.9: Energy Providers Assistance. Obtain the assistance of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company and Central Coast Community Energy in reviewing proposals for commercial buildings and major subdivisions of more than 25 units during the design and approval process to ensure the incorporation of energy-efficiency recommendations into the plans. (Implementation Measures NRC.C)

Goal HS-2: Develop a resilient community with the ability to adapt to climate change hazards. (new)

- Policy HS-2.5: Sustainability Features. Encourage new developments and existing property owners to incorporate sustainable, energy-efficient, and environmentally regenerative features into their facilities, landscapes, and structures to reduce energy demands and improve on-site resilience. Support financing efforts to increase community access to these features. (new)

Transportation Energy

The growth accommodated under the proposed 2040 General Plan would consume transportation energy in the EIR Study Area from the use of motor vehicles (e.g., gasoline, diesel, compressed natural gas, and electricity). Table 4.6-5, *Operation-Related Annual Fuel Usage: Net Change from Existing Conditions*, shows the net change in VMT, fuel usage, and fuel efficiency of the proposed project compared to the existing conditions.

TABLE 4.6-5 OPERATION-RELATED ANNUAL FUEL USAGE: NET CHANGE FROM EXISTING CONDITIONS

Land Use	Existing Conditions	Proposed 2040 General Plan	Net Change
Gasoline			
VMT [a]	410,857	623,667	212,810
Gallons	18,077	19,643	1,566
Miles Per Gallon	22.73	31.75	9.02
Diesel			
VMT [a]	57,311	79,715	22,405
Gallons	7,917	10,095	2,178
Miles Per Gallon	7.24	7.90	0.66
Compressed Natural Gas			
VMT [a]	133	169	36
Gallons	20	28	9
Miles Per Gallon	6.79	5.98	-0.81
Electricity			
VMT [a]	3,380	76,105	72,758
kWh	1,157	43,268	42,110
Miles Per kWh	2.92	1.76	-1.16
Total VMT	**471,680**	**779,689**	**308,010**

Note:
a. Based on daily VMT provided by Kimley-Horn, 2022. VMT per year based on a conversion of VMT x 347 days per year to account for less travel on weekend, consistent with CARB statewide GHG emissions inventory methodology.[20]
Source: EMFAC2021. Version 1.0.2. See Appendix B, *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data*.

As shown in Table 4.6-5, implementation of the proposed project would result in an overall increase in annual VMT and increase in fuel usage for diesel-, compressed natural gas- and electric-powered vehicles. The increase would primarily be caused by the increase in population growth as shown in Table 4.14-1, *BAE Regional Growth Projections for Hollister, 2019 to 2040,* in Chapter 4.14, *Population and Housing*. As discussed in Chapter 4.16, *Transportation*, the proposed project would result in a significant VMT impact for VMT per service population rate (VMT/SP)[21] due to the forecasted land use growth through 2040 and would not achieve a reduction of 15 percent below the baseline. An increase in VMT/SP indicates more vehicle trips and/or longer trip distances associated with growing service population in the city. Factors that can aid in decreasing in VMT per service population include better jobs-housing ratio and the proposed policies listed in Impact TRANS-2.

While total fuel usage for diesel, compressed natural gas, and electricity would increase, fuel efficiency of on-road vehicles would also improve over time. The improvement in fuel efficiency would be attributable to regulatory compliance (e.g., CAFE standards), resulting in new cars that are more fuel efficient and the attrition of older, less fuel-efficient vehicles. The CAFE standards are not directly applicable to residents or land use development projects, but to car manufacturers. Thus, residents and employees of Hollister do

[20] California Air Resources Board (CARB). 2008, October. Climate Change Proposed Scoping Plan: A Framework for Change.
[21] Service population is residents plus employees.

not have direct control in determining the fuel efficiency of vehicles manufactured and that are made available. However, compliance with the CAFE standards by car manufacturers would ensure that vehicles produced in future years have greater fuel efficiency and would generally result in an overall benefit of reducing fuel usage by providing the population of the city more fuel-efficient vehicle options. Furthermore, while the demand in electricity would increase under the proposed project, in conjunction with the regulatory (i.e., Renewables Portfolio Standard, SB 350, and SB 100) and general trend toward increasing the supply and production of energy from renewable sources, it is anticipated that a greater share of electricity used to power electric vehicles would be from renewable sources in future years (e.g., individual photovoltaic systems, purchased electricity from CCCE, and/or purchased electricity from PG&E that is generated from renewable sources).

In addition to regulatory compliance that would contribute to more fuel-efficient vehicles and less demand in fuels, the proposed 2040 General Plan includes goals, policies, and actions listed previously that would contribute to efficient energy and fuel use. Because transportation is a leading source of energy use in Hollister, many policies in the Land Use and Community Design (LU) and Circulation (C) Elements of the proposed 2040 General Plan also promote energy conservation from the transportation sector by increasing safe and sufficient transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities to reduce automobile use and VMT. In addition, the proposed policies in these elements focus on minimizing VMT through land use and transportation planning efforts that work in conjunction with one another. The following are the applicable proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions:

Goal LU-3: Encourage mixed-use development projects that create vibrant, walkable districts and contain residential and community serving commercial uses. (new)

- Policy LU-3.1: Mix of Uses. Require commercial uses on mixed-use properties to provide community-supporting services, retail, restaurants, and other amenities for residents and visitors and to promote pedestrian activity and reduce the need to drive to other areas in the city. (rewrite of L-2.3)

Goal C-1: Provide for a healthy, active community based on complete streets, reflecting a balanced, safe, multimodal transportation system for all users, where pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities will be emphasized along with vehicular facilities. (new)

- Policy C-1.1: Sustainable Transportation. Reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from transportation by increasing mode shares for sustainable travel modes such as walking, bicycling, and public transit. (new)
- Policy C-1.4: Transportation Demand Management. Reduce single-occupant vehicle usage using Transportation Demand Management strategies. (new)
- Policy C-1.5: Public Transit Regional Coordination. Cooperatively work with Council of San Benito County Governments, Caltrans, and San Benito County to develop, implement, and maintain public transit services. (Policy C4.2)
- Policy C-1.6: Public Transit Improvements. Promote public realm improvements that support increased use of public transit, including inviting sidewalks, ADA-compliant curb ramps, signal priorities, and amenities such as sidewalks, benches, bus stop shelters, signage, street lighting, and real-time schedule systems on key routes. (new)

- Action C-1.1: Performance and Monitoring. Monitor the City's mode split progress on reducing VMT, and reducing GHG emissions from VMT, as data is available. (new)

Goal C-3: Build and maintain a safe, connected, and equitable pedestrian, bicycle and micromobility network that provides access to community destinations such as employment centers, transit, schools, shopping, and recreation. (new)

- Policy C-3.1: Pedestrian and Bicycle Network. Create and maintain a pedestrian- and bike-friendly environment in Hollister and increase the number of people who choose to walk and bike. (new)
- Policy C-3.2: Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections. Work with local businesses, private developers, and public agencies to ensure provision of safe pedestrian pathways and bicycle connections to major public facilities, schools, and employment centers. Require new development to provide internal pedestrian connections and linkages to adjacent neighborhoods and community facilities. (Policy C2.3)
- Policy C-3.3: Pedestrian Right-of-Way Improvements. Require new developments to construct or contribute to improvements that enhance the pedestrian experience including human-scale lighting, streetscaping, crosswalk striping, crossing lights, wayfinding signage, and accessible sidewalks adjacent to the site. (new)
- Policy C-3.5: Bicycle Improvements. Require new developments to construct or contribute to improvements that enhance the cyclist experience, including bike lanes and bicycle parking. (new)
- Policy C-3.6: Bicycle Facilities. Cooperatively work with Council of San Benito County Governments, Caltrans, and San Benito County to develop, implement and maintain bicycle facilities providing direct access to major public facilities, schools and employment centers as described in the San Benito County Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plan. (Policy C2.1)
- Action C-3.1: Pedestrian Master Plan. Prepare and adopt a Pedestrian Master Plan that identifies citywide pedestrian network improvements. (new)
- Action C-3.3: Bicycle Master Plan. Prepare and adopt a Bicycle Master Plan that identifies citywide bicycle network improvements. (new)
- Action C-3.4: Implement Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements. Prioritize implementation of goals, programs, and projects that improve the comfort, safety, and connectivity of the pedestrian and bicycle network. (new)
- Action C-3.5: Pedestrian and Bicycle Trails and Routes Awareness. Increase awareness of existing pedestrian and bicycle trails and routes by working with outside agencies and developers to promote these amenities to residents. Collaborate with the County on development of the trail network. (new)

Goal C-4: Implement a uniform set of standards for Hollister's transportation system including standard rights-of-way and typical sections. These standards may be amended as necessary in response to changes in technology and industry design standards. (Goal C-4)

- Policy C-4.6: TDM Requirements. Require new or existing developments that meet specific size, capacity, and/or context conditions to implement Transportation Demand Management strategies and other single vehicle occupancy reduction methodologies. Comply with tiered trip reduction and VMT

reduction targets and monitoring that are consistent with the targets of the City's VMT CEQA thresholds. (new)

Collectively, the goals, policies, and actions listed would contribute to minimizing overall VMT, and thus fuel usage associated with potential future development under the proposed 2040 General Plan. Furthermore, development would likely occur in the form of infill development on urbanized sites in the surrounding cities and Hollister region, thus contributing to reduced energy use from the transportation sector. Placing residential and nonresidential uses near each other to create self-sustaining communities and neighborhoods and offering mixed-used developments, could result in shorter distances traveled between where people work and live and to amenities. The shorter distances reduce VMT by reducing the average vehicle trip distance traveled. It also encourages people to forego vehicle travel altogether and either bike, walk, or take public transportation, which would also contribute to minimizing VMT.

Summary

Overall, compliance with federal, state, and local regulations (e.g., Building Energy Efficiency Standards, CALGreen, Renewables Portfolio Standard, and CAFE standards) would increase building energy efficiency and vehicle fuel efficiency and reduce building energy demand and transportation-related fuel usage. Additionally, the proposed 2040 General Plan includes goals, policies, and actions related to land use and transportation planning and design, energy efficiency, public and active transit, and renewable energy generation that will contribute to minimizing building and transportation-related energy demands overall and demands on nonrenewable sources of energy. Implementation of proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions, in conjunction with and complementary to regulatory requirements, would ensure that energy demand associated with growth under the proposed 2040 General Plan would not be inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary. Therefore, energy impacts associated with implementation and operation of land uses accommodated under the proposed 2040 General Plan would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 Climate Action Plan (2023 CAP) is strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan and does not involve any land use changes. The proposed 2023 CAP would help reduce GHG emissions generated by existing and proposed land uses in the EIR Study Area. Transportation measures that reduce VMT (e.g., Strategies 10 and 11) would result in a reduction of transportation-related fuel usage. Likewise, energy-efficiency improvements (e.g., Strategies 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 9) would reduce the heating and cooling requirements for buildings. These measures for increasing energy efficiency, increasing water efficiency (Strategy 4), and reducing energy demand (Strategies 5 and 6) would contribute to minimizing energy demand and energy sector emissions. Thus, implementation of the proposed 2023 CAP would result in beneficial impacts to energy. Because the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land uses changes that would result in indirect growth or change in building density and intensity, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful,

inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP) is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion to nonagricultural uses through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would affect energy, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation, and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

ENE-2 Implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

2040 General Plan

The state's electricity grid is transitioning to renewable energy under California's RPS Program. Renewable sources of electricity include wind, small hydropower, solar, geothermal, biomass, and biogas. In general, California has RPS requirements of 33 percent renewable energy by 2020 (SB X1-2), 40 percent by 2024 (SB 350), 50 percent by 2026 (SB 100), 60 percent by 2030 (SB 100), 90 percent by 2035 (SB 1020), 95 percent by 2040 (SB 1020), and 100 percent by 2045 (SB 100). SB 100 also establishes RPS requirements for publicly owned utilities that consist of 44 percent renewable energy by 2024, 52 percent by 2027, and 60 percent by 2030. Additionally, SB 1020 requires all state agencies to procure 100 percent of electricity from renewable energy and zero-carbon resources by 2035.

The statewide RPS requirements do not directly apply to individual development projects, but to utilities and energy providers such as PG&E and CCCE, whose compliance with RPS requirements would contribute to the State of California objective of transitioning to renewable energy. In addition, customers are automatically enrolled in the CCCE's 3Cchoice program, which uses approximately 31 percent renewable energy and will reach 60 percent clean and renewable by 2025 and 100 percent by 2030.[22] Even if customers in the proposed project's EIR Study Area were to opt out of the 3Cchoice program, and therefore receive all their electricity from PG&E, 33 percent of PG&E's electricity is generated from

[22] Central Coast Community Energy (CCCE), Enrollment, https://3cenergy.org/about-us/understanding-clean-energy/, accessed December 9, 2022.

renewable energy since 2017.[23] By 2030, PG&E is set to meet the State's new 60 percent renewable energy mandate set forth in SB 100.

The land uses accommodated under the proposed 2040 General Plan would be required to comply with the current and future iterations of the Building Energy Efficiency Standards and CALGreen. Furthermore, as described under Impact Discussion ENE-1, the proposed 2040 General Plan includes goals, policies, and actions that would support the statewide goal of transitioning the electricity grid to renewable sources. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of California's RPS program, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan and does not involve any land use changes that would result in indirect growth or change in building density and intensity. Also, as discussed under Impact Discussion ENE-1, the proposed 2023 CAP includes strategies for increasing energy efficiency, increasing water efficiency (Strategy 4), and reducing energy demand (Strategies 5 and 6), and would contribute to minimizing energy demand and energy sector emissions. Therefore, the proposed 2023 CAP would complement the statewide goal of transitioning the electricity grid to renewable sources. Implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion to nonagricultural uses through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would affect energy, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

[23] Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), Renewable Energy, https://www.pgecorp.com/corp_responsibility/reports/2018/bu07_renewable_energy.html#:~:text=PG%26E%20delivers%20some%20of%20the,and%20various%20forms%20of%20bioenergy, accessed December 9, 2022.

ENE-3	**Implementation of the proposed project would not, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to energy.**

2040 General Plan

Cumulative impacts would occur if a series of actions lead to a wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources or a conflict with or obstruction of a state or local plan for renewable energy and energy efficiency. All the development projects within the vicinity of the project's EIR Study Area are within the service area of CCCE and PG&E. These projects would result in a long-term increase in operational energy demand for electricity and natural gas use associated with population growth. In addition, construction activities would require the use of energy for purposes such as the operation of construction equipment and tools, and construction of development projects may overlap. However, all projects developed within the CCCE and PG&E service area would implement the requirements of the Building and Energy Efficiency Standards (CCR, Title 24, Part 6) and the California Green Building Code (CCR, Title 24, Part 11). Furthermore, new buildings would use new energy-efficient appliances and equipment, pursuant to the Appliance Efficiency Regulations.

Future development would also increase annual fuel consumption and VMT. However, vehicles would be subject to the EPA's CAFE standards for vehicular fuel efficiency, and average corporate fuel economy continues to increase as a result of state and federal laws, including the Pavley Advanced Clean Cars program. Vehicle turnover also improves the overall fuel economy of California's vehicle fleets.

Furthermore, as listed under Impact Discussion ENE-1, the proposed 2040 General Plan includes goals, policies, and actions that would contribute toward minimizing inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary transportation energy consumption, and ensure compliance with state, regional, or local plans for renewable energy. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to energy and cumulative impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. The proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would result in indirect growth or change in building density and intensity. In addition, implementation of the proposed 2023 CAP would result in beneficial impacts to energy. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to energy.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion to nonagricultural uses through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would affect energy, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to energy.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

4.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

This chapter describes the potential geology and soils impacts associated with the approval and implementation of the proposed project. This chapter describes the regulatory framework and existing conditions, identifies criteria used to determine impact significance, provides an analysis of the potential geology and soils impacts, and identifies policies that could minimize any potentially significant impacts.

4.7.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.7.1.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Federal Regulations

Paleontological Resources Preservation Act

The federal Paleontological Resources Preservation Act of 2002 limits the collection of vertebrate fossils and other rare and scientifically significant fossils to qualified researchers who have obtained a permit from the appropriate state or federal agency. Additionally, it specifies these researchers must agree to donate any materials recovered to recognized public institutions, where they will remain accessible to the public and to other researchers. This act incorporates key findings of a report, *Fossils on Federal Land and Indian Lands*, issued by the Secretary of Interior in 2000, which establishes that most vertebrate fossils and some invertebrate and plant fossils are considered rare resources.[1]

State Regulations

Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act

The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act was passed in 1972 to mitigate the hazard of surface fault rupture to structures used for human occupancy.[2] The main purpose of this act is to prevent the construction of buildings used for human occupancy on top of active faults. This act only addresses the hazard of surface fault rupture and is not directed toward other earthquake hazards, such as earthquake-induced liquefaction or landslides.[3] This act requires the State Geologist to establish regulatory zones (known as Earthquake Fault Zones or Alquist-Priolo Zones) around surface traces of active faults, and to issue appropriate maps.[4] The maps, which are developed using existing United States Geological Survey's

[1] U.S. Department of the Interior, May 2000, *Fossils on Federal & Indian Lands, Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, May 2000. https://www.blm.gov/sites/blm.gov/files/programs_paleontology_quick%20links_Assessment%20of%20Fossil%20Management%20on%20Federal%20%26%20Indian%20Lands%2C%20May%202000.pdf, accessed January 31, 2022.

[2] California Geological Survey, Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act, https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/alquist-priolo, accessed January 31, 2022.

[3] California Geological Survey, Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act, https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/alquist-priolo, accessed January 31, 2022.

[4] California Geological Survey, Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act, https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/alquist-priolo, accessed January 31, 2022.

(USGS) 7.5-minute quadrangle map bases, are then distributed to all affected cities, counties, and state agencies for their use in planning and controlling new or renewed construction. Generally, construction within 50 feet of an active fault zone is prohibited.

Seismic Hazards Mapping Act

The Seismic Hazards Mapping Act, which was passed in 1990, addresses seismic hazards, such as liquefaction and seismically induced landslides.[5] Under this act, seismic hazard zones are mapped by the State Geologist to assist local governments in land use planning. Section 2691(c) of this act states that "it is necessary to identify and map seismic hazard zones in order for cities and counties to adequately prepare the safety element of their general plans and to encourage land use management policies and regulations to reduce and mitigate those hazards to protect public health and safety." Section 2697(a) of the act states that "cities and counties shall require, prior to the approval of a project located in a seismic hazard zone, a geotechnical report defining and delineating any seismic hazard."

California Building Code

The State of California provides a minimum standard for building design through Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), commonly referred to as the California Building Code (CBC). The CBC is in Part 2 of Title 24 of the CCR. The CBC is updated every three years. It is generally adopted on a jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction basis, subject to further modification based on local conditions. The City of Hollister regularly adopts each new CBC update under the Hollister Municipal Code (HMC), Section 15.04.050, *Construction Codes Adopted by Reference*. Through the CBC, the State provides a minimum standard for building design and construction. The CBC contains specific requirements for seismic safety, excavation, foundations, retaining walls, and site demolition. It also regulates grading activities, including drainage and erosion control.

California Environmental Quality Act

Paleontological resources are afforded protection under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Society of Vertebrate Paleontology has set significance criteria for paleontological resources.[6] Most practicing professional vertebrate paleontologists adhere closely to the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology's assessment, mitigation, and monitoring requirements as specifically provided in its standard guidelines. Most State regulatory agencies with paleontological laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards accept and use the professional standards set forth by the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology.

[5] California Geological Survey, Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act, https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/alquist-priolo, accessed January 31, 2022.

[6] Society of Vertebrate Paleontology, 2010, *Standard Procedures for the Assessment and Mitigation of Adverse Impacts to Paleontological Resources.* Society of Vertebrate Paleontology. Impact Mitigation Guidelines Revision Committee.

California Public Resources Code Section 5097

California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5097.5 prohibits the destruction or removal of any paleontological site or feature from public lands without the permission of the jurisdictional agency.

California Penal Code Section 622.5

The California Penal Code Section 622.5 details the penalties for damage or removal of paleontological resources, whether from private or public lands.

Regional Regulations

San Benito County Emergency Operations Plan

The San Benito County *Emergency Operations Plan* (EOP), adopted August 2015, formalizes the County's emergency management approach to reduce vulnerabilities to both natural and human-made disasters. The EOP provides basic guidance for earthquakes, flooding, fire, landslides, severe weather, pandemics and epidemics, as well as hazardous material emergencies. The EOP further includes mitigation programs, which are split into three categories: emergency prevention and protection; response concept of operations; and recovery concept of operations. The City of Hollister does not have an Office of Emergency Services or an assigned emergency planner. Therefore, responsibility for preparation and response to a disaster is enforced by the San Benito County Office of Emergency Services.[7]

San Benito County Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

San Benito County's hazard mitigation programs are enforced through the *Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan* (LHMP), which was adopted concurrently with the County EOP. The LHMP includes hazard mitigation goals, strategies, and priorities, and provides a comprehensive assessment of the county's hazards and vulnerabilities. The priorities of the mitigation programs are to reduce the loss of life, minimize structural damage, reduce disruption of essential services, protect the environment, and promote hazard mitigation as an integrated public policy. The LHMP covers all jurisdictions in San Benito County, including the City of Hollister.[8]

Local Regulations

Hollister Municipal Code

The HMC regulates geology, soil, and seismic-related issues in the city. The HMC is organized by title, chapter, and section. Most provisions related to geology, soils, and seismic events are in Title 15, *Buildings and Constructions*; Title 16, *Subdivisions;* and Title 17, *Zoning,* as follows:

[7] San Benito County Office of Emergency Services, August 2015, *San Benito County Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan*, http://www.cosb.us/wp-content/uploads/SBC-EOP-2015.pdf, accessed April 25, 2020.

[8] San Benito County Office of Emergency Services, August 2015, *San Benito County Operational Area Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan*, http://www.cosb.us/wp-content/uploads/Local-Hazard-Mitigation-Plan-_-SBC-FEMA-Approved.pdf, accessed April 25, 2020.

- Chapter 15.24, *Grading and Stormwater Best Management Practices Control.* This chapter provides best practices required to be followed to ensure safe grading operations that reduce erosion and other soil influences. This chapter includes specific sections related to soils and geology as follows:
  - Section 15.24.130, *Site map and grading plan (grading plan*). This section sets forth the requirements for the submittal of grading plans that demonstrate that potential future development has been designed to minimize soil erosion.
  - Section 15.24.140, *Soils Engineering Report.* This section establishes the method to collect data and prepare a soils engineering report.
  - Section 15.24.141, *Engineering Geology Report.* This section requires a project applicant submit an Engineering Geology Report to describe the effect a site's geologic conditions would have on the proposed development.
- Chapter 16.28, *Soil and Seismic Reports.* This chapter requires a soils investigation for subdivision applications to assess whether the site has expansive soils or other soil issues, which, if not mitigated, would lead to structural defects.
  - Section 17.14.030, *Earthquake Hazard Overlay Zone.* This section requires a surface fault hazard investigation for developments in the Earthquake Hazard Overlay District.

4.7.1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Geology

The EIR Study Area is in the Hollister Valley, a lowland basin surrounded by coastal mountain ranges, a remnant of a prehistoric lake.[9] The Hollister Valley is within the Coast Ranges geomorphic province, which is characterized by relatively flat land composed of alluvial soils. The alluvial soils of the Coast Ranges are characterized as fertile, supporting various agricultural activities.[10]

The Hollister Valley was formed by the surrounding mountains uprising through tectonic uplift, which occurred in the late Pliocene to Pleistocene era approximately 2 to 3 million years ago, ultimately forming the Diablo Mountain Range to the east and the Gabilan Mountain Range to the west. The Hollister Valley is structurally controlled by faulting from the San Andreas, Calaveras, and Quien Sabe Faults. Fault activity has resulted in the disruption of deep subsurface marine and non-marine sediments, referred to as the Hollister Basin, which has therefore filled a majority of the Hollister Valley. Drainage in the Hollister Basin trends west towards the San Benito River.[11]

In 1998, a geological survey mapped the Hollister Valley, and identified that the Younger Flood Plain Deposits medium textured (referred to as "Qyfm") is the predominant geological unit underneath the EIR Study Area and neighboring unincorporated lands of San Benito County. The Qyfm geologic unit consists

[9] City of Hollister, 2005, *General Plan Final Program EIR*, 4.10-24.

[10] County of San Benito, March 2015, *2035 San Benito County General Plan Update*, State Clearinghouse No. 2011111016, page 10-5.

[11] City of Hollister, July 2017, *Design-Level Geologic and Geotechnical Evaluation of the Allendale Residential Subdivision North of North Street*, page 13.

of medium-textured sandy silt clay with layers of clean sand anticipated to be approximately 82 to 98 feet in thickness.[12] Additional explorations identified the presence of sedimentary structures within the Qyfm geologic unit, which suggests a fluvial deposit,[13] with the exception of a location along 6th Street in the EIR Study Area, which is underlain by clay and silt.[14]

In the immediate vicinity of the EIR Study Area lies the San Benito Formation, characterized by Holocene lacustrine and fluvial deposits in low-lying alluvial plains. This indicates that the sedimentary fill of the Hollister Basin is primarily from alluvial fan deposits, which are fan-shaped sediments that form at the base of mountain slopes or at the mouth of rivers. Alluvial fan sediment is deposited via water that drains the soil into low-lying plains. Alluvial deposits in the Hollister Basin are estimated to average about 500 feet in thickness.[15]

Soils

As shown in Figure 4.7-1, *Soils Map*, soils in the EIR Study Area primarily consist of alluvial soils. Alluvial soils are characterized by complex layering of gravel, silty sands, sand, and clayey soils. These soils in the EIR Study Area have been deposited into the Hollister Valley over thousands of years by the San Benito River.[16] Alluvial soils are highly fertile and therefore suitable for the growing of various crops. There are two specific types of soils within the EIR Study Area, which include soils of Terraces, Alluvial Fans, and Floodplains, and soils of the Uplands.

Soils of the Terraces, Alluvial Fans, and Floodplains

Soils of the Terraces, Alluvial Fans, and Floodplains are in flat geographic areas, such as the Hollister Valley and are built from erosion and of sedimentary and igneous rock formations. These soils support the natural growth of annual grasses, forbs, and oak trees, but are generally considered highly fertile and suitable for crop cultivation. There are three specific soil types, which include the following:[17]

- Sorrento Yolo Mocho soils are nearly level and sloping, well-drained, medium-textured soils on floodplains and alluvial fans. Such soils are suitable for irrigated fruits and nuts, row and field crops, alfalfa, and pastures.
- Clear Lake Pacheco Willows soils are nearly level yet gently sloping, poorly drained to somewhat poorly drained, fine- and medium-textured soils on floodplains and in basins. Such soils are suitable for row and field crops, alfalfa, and small grains.

[12] County of San Benito, 1998, *Liquefaction Susceptibility of the Hollister Area in San Benito County, National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program*.

[13] Fluvial deposits are characterized as sediments that have been transported and deposited by rivers.

[14] City of Hollister, 1991, City of Hollister, California: Unpublished Report Prepared for City of Hollister Redevelopment Agency, File No. A0-2280-S1.

[15] City of Hollister, July 2017, *Design Level Geologic and Geotechnical Evaluation of the Allendale Residential Subdivision North of North Street*, page 14.

[16] City of Hollister, 2005, *General Plan Final Program EIR*, page 4.10-24. Most of the text in this sentence comes directly from the EIR with little alteration.

[17] County of San Benito, March 2015, *2035 San Benito County General Plan Update*, State Clearinghouse No. 2011111016, page 10-5.

- Rincon Antioch Cropley soils, which are nearly level to strongly sloping, well-drained to moderately well-drained, medium- to fine-textured soils on terraces and alluvial fans. Such soils suitable for irrigated fruits and nuts, row and field crops, alfalfa, and pastures.

Soils of the Uplands

Soils of the Uplands are composed of igneous and sedimentary rocks. There is only one such soil associated with Uplands in the EIR Study Area, San Benito Gazos Linne, a soil which consists of rolling to very steep hills, is well drained to somewhat excessively drained, moderately- to fine-textured soils formed over sandstone and shale. These soils are largely eroded, but may still be used for cultivating small grains, annual grass pastures, and ranges.[18]

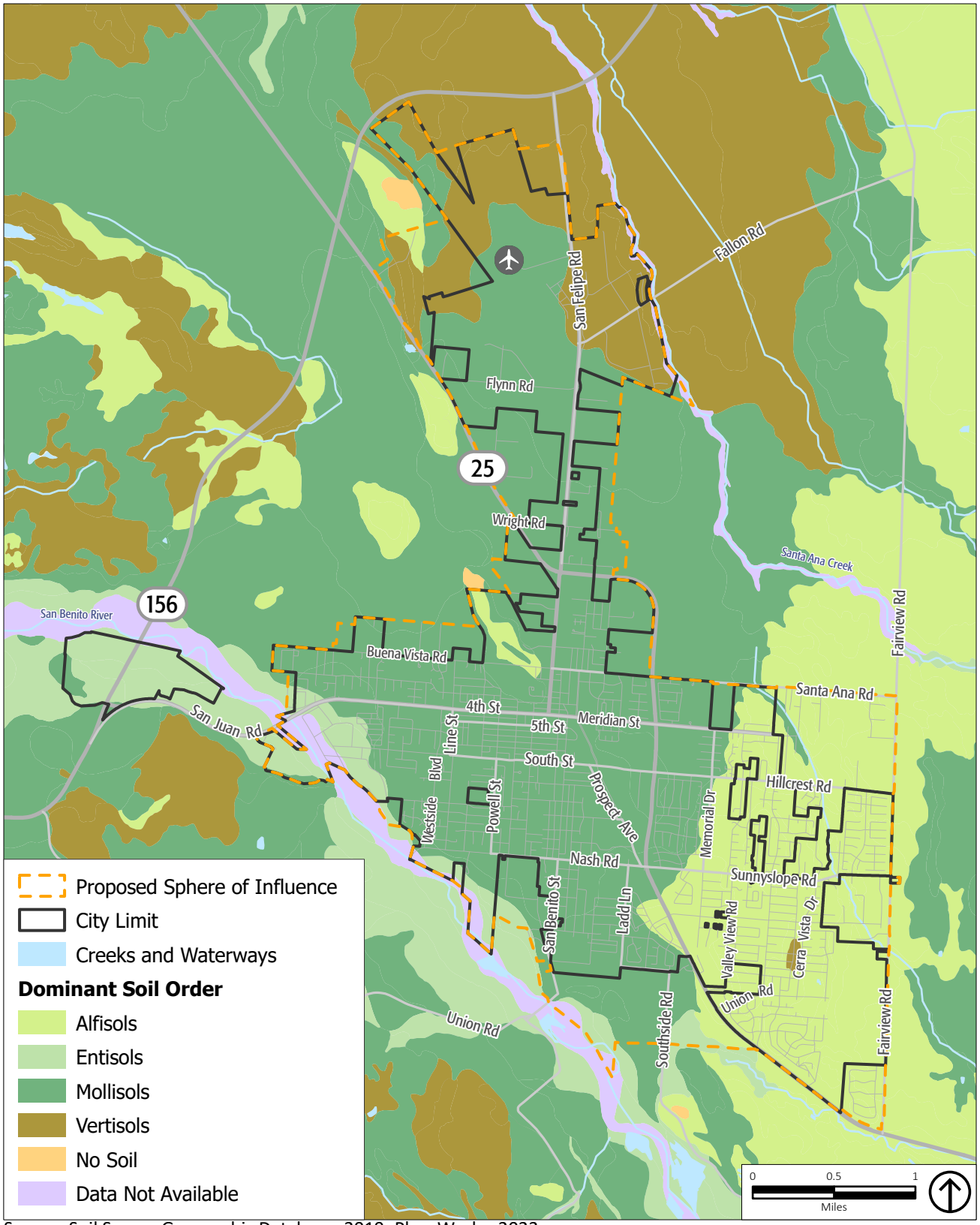
Regional Seismicity

The Earth's crust includes tectonic plates that locally collide with or slide past one another along plate boundaries. California is particularly susceptible to such plate movements, notably the largely horizontal or "strike-slip" movements of the Pacific Plate, as it impinges on the North American Plate. In general, earthquakes occur when the accumulated stress along a plate boundary or fault is suddenly released, resulting in seismic slippage. This slippage can vary widely in magnitude, ranging in scale from a few millimeters or centimeters to tens of feet.

The performance of human-made structures during a major seismic event varies widely due to a number of factors, including location, with respect to active fault traces or areas prone to liquefaction or seismically induced landslides; the type of building construction (i.e., wood frame, unreinforced masonry, non-ductile concrete frame); the proximity, magnitude, depth, and intensity of the seismic event itself; and many other factors. In general, evidence from past earthquakes shows that wood-frame structures tend to perform well during a seismic event, especially when their foundations are properly designed and anchored. Conversely, older, unreinforced masonry structures and non-ductile reinforced concrete buildings (especially those built in the 1960s and early 1970s), do not perform as well, especially if they have not undergone appropriate seismic retrofitting. Applicable building code requirements, such as those found in the CBC, include seismic requirements that are designed to ensure the satisfactory performance of building materials under prescribed seismic conditions.

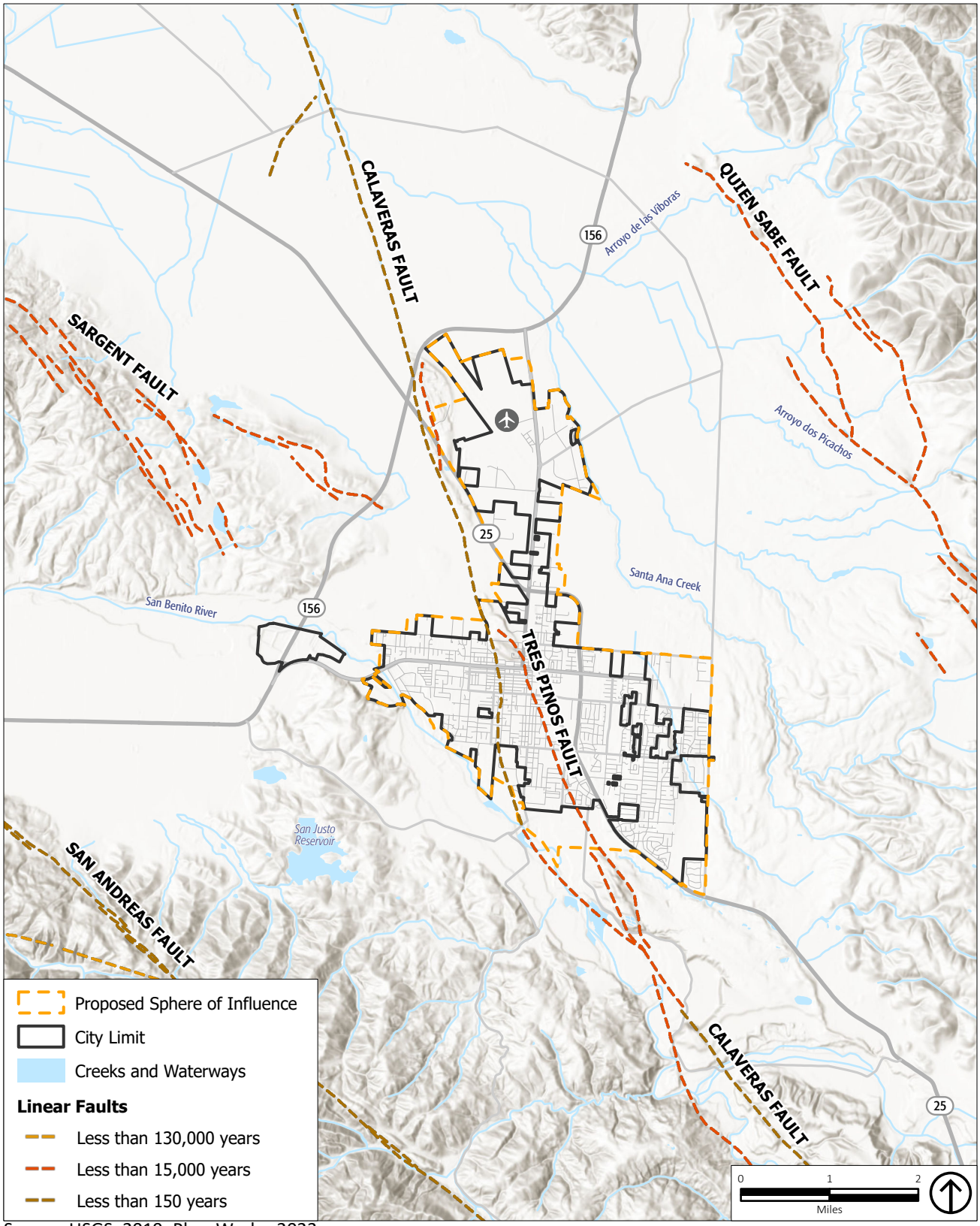
The City of Hollister is in a seismically active region, as shown in Figure 4.7-2, *Fault Map*. There are four major fault zones in the vicinity of the EIR Study Area, the San Andreas, Quien Sabe, Tres Pinos, and Calaveras Faults.

[18] County of San Benito, March 2015, *2035 San Benito County General Plan Update*, State Clearinghouse No. 2011111016, page 10-7.



Source: Soil Survey Geographic Database, 2019; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.7-1
Soils Map



Source: USGS, 2019; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.7-2
Fault Map

The San Andreas Fault system runs approximately 2.5 miles to the west of the EIR Study Area and is capable of generating an earthquake of up to Magnitude 8.3. The Quien Sabe Fault is three miles east of the EIR Study Area and has been recorded to have generated an earthquake of maximum Magnitude 5.5. The Calaveras Fault system bisects Hollister's downtown on a north to south axis and has the capacity to generate an earthquake of up to approximately Magnitude 7. Lastly, the Tres Pinos Fault is a minor off-shoot of the Calaveras Fault in the downtown, then running southeast through the EIR Study Area. However, the Tres Pinos Fault is not considered to be active. Due to the active fault lines within and surrounding it, the EIR Study Area is historically susceptible to all earthquake-related hazards, which include ground rupture, ground shaking, and liquefaction. Additionally, the EIR Study Area experiences a phenomenon called aseismic creep, as described later in this chapter.[19]

Ground Shaking and Rupture

The most common hazard from a seismic event is ground shaking. While ground shaking due to an earthquake may be experienced many miles from the source of an earthquake, ground rupture is frequent in the immediate vicinity of any fault line that experiences a significant seismic event.[20] Because the Calaveras Fault lies beneath Hollister's downtown, this area has the potential to experience ground rupture in the event of a strong seismic event. Figure 4.7-3, *Ground Shake Potential,* shows the ground shake potential in the EIR Study Area.

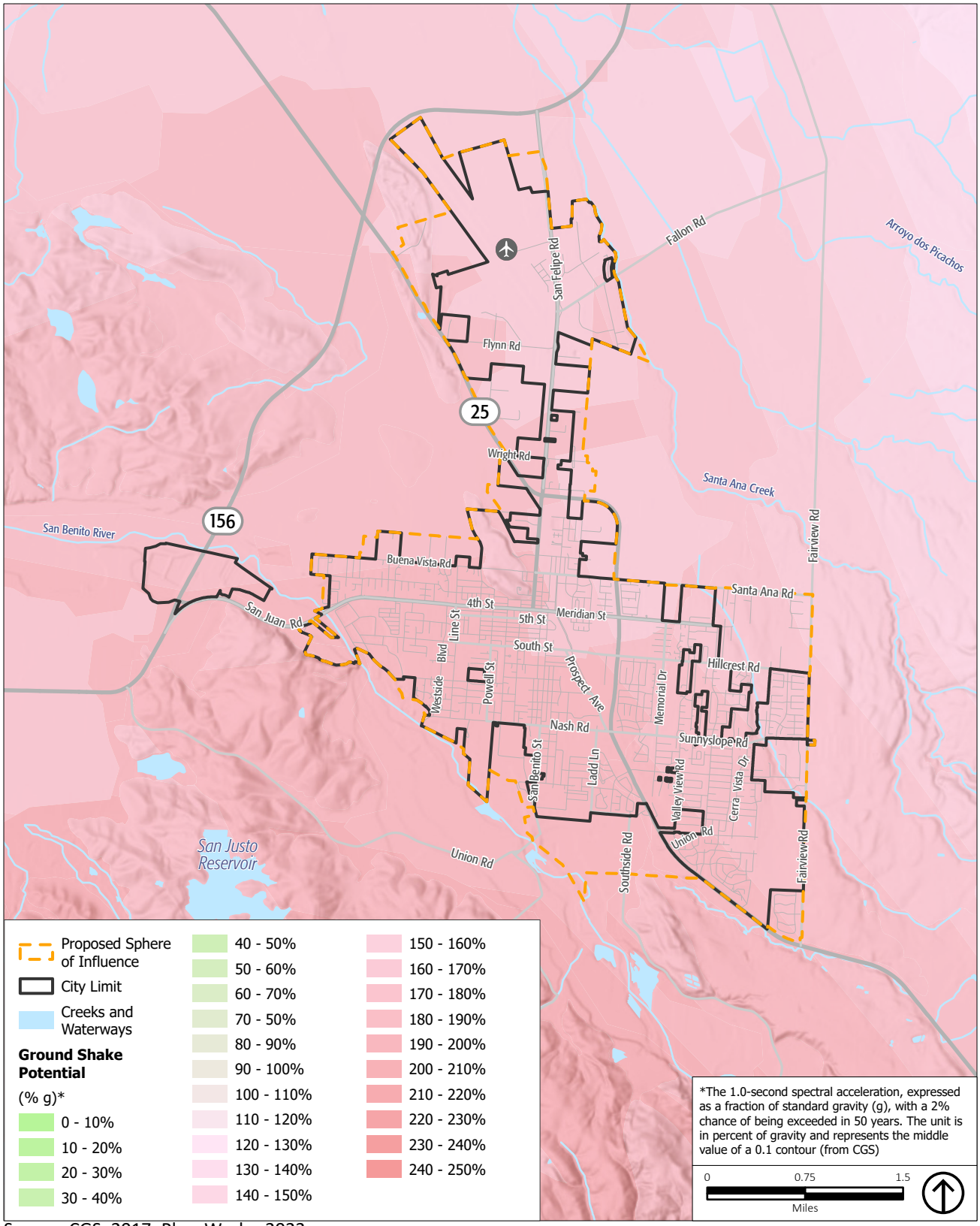
Liquefaction

Liquefaction is a hazard that occurs during prolonged periods of ground shaking in areas with alluvial or granular soils that are less compacted than soil types such as clay. Liquefaction is a result of prolonged ground shaking from a seismic event, which causes a sudden rise of an underground water table. When a water table rises in areas with alluvial and granular soils, the water infiltrates the soil bed and compromises the strength and stability of the soil, which can therefore compromise structures in such areas. As discussed in Section 4.7.1.2, *Existing Conditions*, the EIR Study Area is largely on alluvial soils. These alluvial soils, in addition to a perched water table, mean that there is a high risk of liquefaction in the EIR Study Area, particularly within the floodplain on either side of the San Benito River, as shown in Figure 4.7-4, *Liquefaction Susceptibility*. However, there is insufficient evidence to definitively link structural damage with liquefaction events triggered by an earthquake.[21]

[19] City of Hollister, 2005, *General Plan Final Program EIR*, page 4.9-1. Some of the text in this section comes directly from the EIR with little alteration.

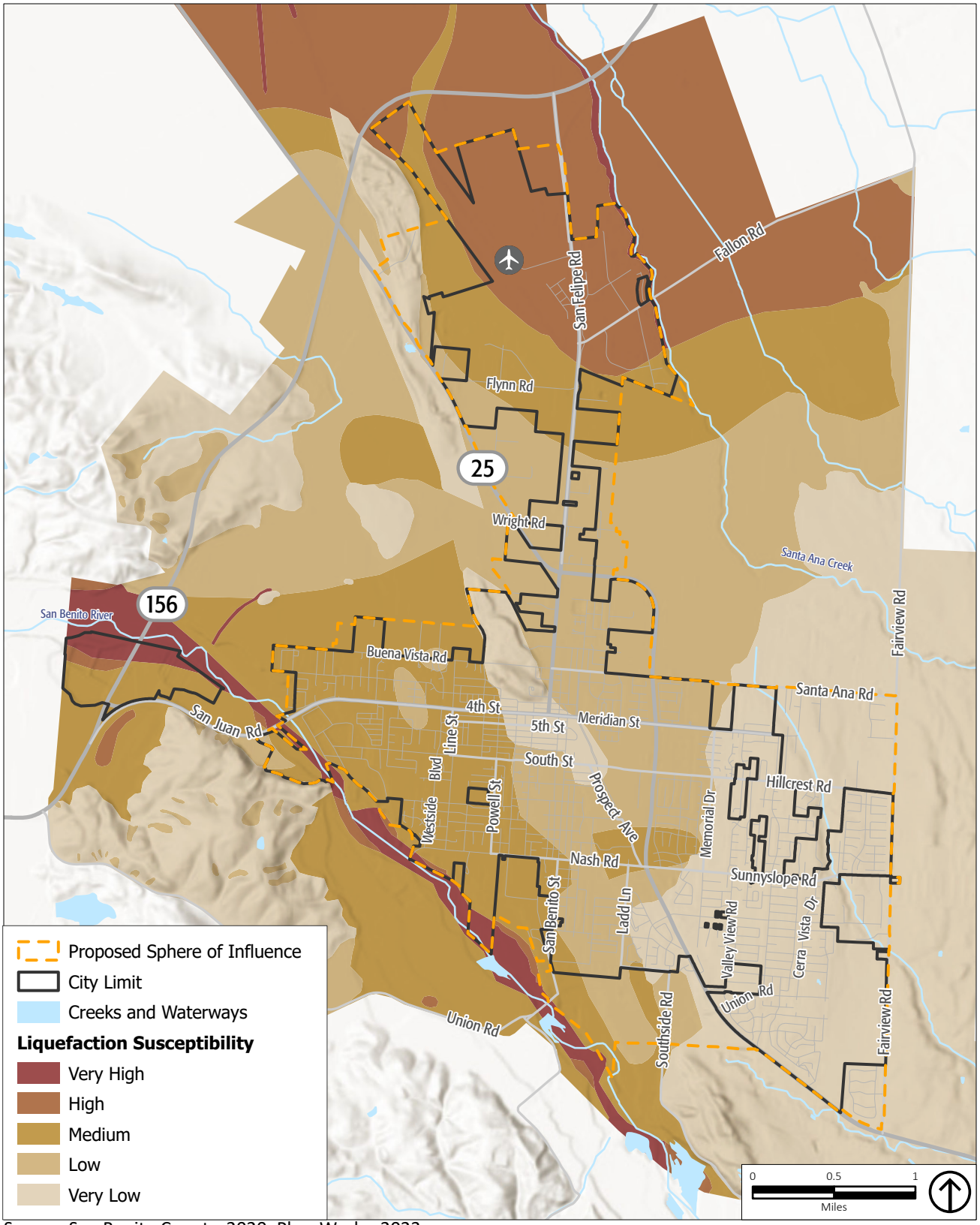
[20] City of Hollister, 2005, *General Plan Final Program EIR*, page 4.9-1.

[21] City of Hollister, 2005, *General Plan Final Program EIR*, page 4.9-2. The last sentence of the text in this section comes directly from the EIR with little alteration.



Source: CGS, 2017; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.7-3
Ground Shake Potential



Source: San Benito County, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.7-4
Liquefaction Susceptibility

Aseismic Creep

Aseismic creep is the steady and ongoing movement of fault lines, generally without any associated earthquake. Faults that cause aseismic creep are unusual in that they slowly move for long periods of time, usually producing small earthquakes rather than large ones.[22] In cities that experience aseismic creep, it is common to see roadways, curbs, or buildings that appear offset or cracked. The Calaveras Fault, which runs through the EIR Study Area, moves an estimated 4 to 12 millimeters per year due to aseismic creep.[23] Although not considered a significant hazard, aseismic creep can result in significant structural damage in areas where structures are built on top of an active fault line.[24]

Landslides

Due to the flat terrain in the EIR Study Area, landslides are not an environmental concern. In the event of a severe earthquake, a landslide could possibly be triggered on the west side of Park Hill; however, the soil profile is not made up of materials that would likely contribute to large landslides or mudflows.[25]

Erosion

Erosion occurs when the upper layers of soil are displaced by erosive agents, such as water, ice, snow, air, plants, animals, or anthropogenic (human-caused) forces. Sandy soils on moderate slopes, or clayey soils on steep slopes are susceptible to erosion when exposed to these forces. Erosion can become more frequent when established vegetation is disturbed or removed due to grading, wildfires, or other factors.

As described in Section 4.7.1.2, *Existing Conditions*, the valley floors of the EIR Study Area are largely flat, and erosion is not a common occurrence. Erosion can occur around agricultural lands; however, soils associated with Prime Farmland are classified as having only a slight or moderate erosion potential.[26] The areas most subject to erosion are Park Hill and the outer banks of the San Benito River where sand and gravel have been mined.[27]

Land Subsidence

Land subsidence is a human-induced hazard in which the over-extraction of groundwater causes the depression and caving in of soil deposits. Land subsidence is particularly common in areas with fine-

[22] U.S. Geological Survey, Earthquake Hazards, Creep Evidence of Active Faulting, https://www.usgs.gov/natural-hazards/earthquake-hazards/science/creep-evidence-active-faulting?qt-science_center_objects=0#qt-science_center_objects, accessed April 29, 2020.

[23] City of Hollister, September 2015, Phase I Fault Rupture Hazard Assessment, City of Hollister Downtown Area, Project No. 2015.0062, http://hollister.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Phase-I-City-of-Hollister-Downtown-Fault-Rupture-Hazard-Assessment-FINAL.pdf, accessed April 29, 2020.

[24] American Geophysical Union, April 2017, "Reviews of Geophysics, Creeping Faults: Good News, Bad News?," https://agupubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/2017RG000565, accessed April 29, 2020.

[25] City of Hollister, March 2016, *Draft Environmental Impact Report North Street Subdivision*, State Clearinghouse No. 2014121066, pages 3-104 and 3-117.

[26] City of Hollister, 2005, *General Plan Final Program EIR*, page 4.11-1.

[27] City of Hollister, 2005, *General Plan Final Program EIR*, page 4.10-24.

grained sediments, such as silt and clay, in which water molecules are partly responsible for the strength of the soil. The over-extraction of groundwater thus causes these soils to shrink, which results in sinkholes that may compromise building foundations, pavement, and infrastructure.[28]

Land subsidence has not been well documented within San Benito County, although valley deposits within the county are at risk of subsidence if groundwater over-extraction occurs. However, no cases of groundwater over-extraction have been documented in the EIR Study Area or the greater San Benito County.[29] The Gilroy-Hollister groundwater basin has been ranked as medium priority by the 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act from the State of California. Medium-priority basins are those that have statewide importance but that have not been critically over-extracted.[30]

Expansive Soils

Soils classified as expansive are those that change dramatically in volume depending on moisture content. When wet, these soils expand; conversely, when dry, these soils contract. Sources of moisture that trigger an expansion include rainfall, landscape irrigation, utility leakage, and perched groundwater. Expansive soils are typically very fine-grained with a high to very high percentage of clay, typically montmorillonite, smectite, or bentonite clay. Soil tests are often used to identify expansive soils, wherein a soil sample's volume and length changes in response to reduced moisture content.[31] A change of 3 percent or greater indicates a moderate to high shrink-swell potential. Such soils are known to cause damage to concrete slabs, structure foundations, and pavement. Areas that have expansive soils must often implement special building and structure design that can withstand such a fluctuation in soil.

There are clay deposits in the northern portion of the EIR Study Area, which are known to swell and contract during moisture events.[32] However, as described in Section 4.7.1.2, *Existing Conditions*, soils in the EIR Study Area are predominantly well-draining soils that are not known to be expansive in nature. Soils that have a high to very high potential for shrink-swell properties within the EIR Study Area include Clear Lake clay, Cropley clay, Diablo clay, Pacheco silty clay, San Benito clay loam, and Willows clay.

Paleontological Resources

As discussed in Section 4.7.1.2, *Existing Conditions*, the Hollister Valley is underlain with the San Benito Formation, a thick layer of alluvial sediments that are drained from other locations in the surrounding region and deposited into low-lying lands. The alluvial deposits in the Hollister Valley have been recorded to contain several megafauna vertebrate fossils, extracted from the upper portion of the San Benito

[28] U.S. Geological Survey, Land Subsidence, https://www.usgs.gov/special-topic/water-science-school/science/land-subsidence?qt-science_center_objects=0#qt-science_center_objects, accessed on April 30, 2020.

[29] County of San Benito, March 2015, *2035 San Benito County General Plan Update,* State Clearinghouse No. 2011111016, page 10-13 and 10-35.

[30] City of Hollister, October 2017, *Chappell Road Project Final Environmental Impact Report*, "Appendix B," State Clearinghouse No. 2016101044, page 3.6-4.

[31] Army Corps of Engineers Field Manual TM 5-818-7, 1985, https://www.wbdg.org/FFC/ARMYCOE/COETM/ARCHIVES/tm_5_818_7.pdf, accessed on April 30, 2020.

[32] City of Hollister, 2005, *General Plan Final Program EIR*, page 4.9-6.

Formation. The fossils have been located specifically in areas where tectonic plate movement forces the San Benito Formation into pressure ridges, which occurs when lateral tectonic movements force sub-surface sediment to rupture to the surface. Discoveries specifically from the upper San Benito Formation include an elephant scapula, a Mammoth tooth, Columbian mammoth (*Mammuthus columbi*), ancient bison (*Bison antiquus*), camel (*Camelops hesternus*), and western horse (*Equus occidentalis*), along with various invertebrate fossils, such as teeth and large vertebrate bones. Recent fault investigations have uncovered additional megafauna vertebrate fossils, such as gastropod fossils (clams), and vertebrate bones from various mammals including the giant ground sloth (*Megalonyx jeffersonii).* These fossil discoveries suggest that the upper layers of the San Benito Formation were formed in the Middle to Late Pleistocene, generally characterized as between 240,000 and 11,000 years before present.[33] It is anticipated that due to the rich geologic past within the Hollister Valley, there may be significant paleontological resources in alluvial clay deposits that have not been unearthed.

4.7.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the proposed project would result in significant geology and soils impacts if it would:

1. Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury or death involving: (i) 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; (ii) Strong seismic ground shaking; (iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction; (iv) Landslides.
2. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil.
3. 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.
4. Be located on expansive soil, as defined by Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property.
5. 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.
6. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature.
7. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to geology and soils.

[33] City of Hollister, July 2017, *Design Level Geologic and Geotechnical Evaluation of the Allendale Residential Subdivision North of North Street*, page 16.

4.7.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

GEO-1	**Implementation of the proposed project would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury or death involving: (i) 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;(ii) Strong seismic ground shaking; (iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction; (iv) Landslides.**

2040 General Plan

The location and underlying geology in the EIR Study Area make it likely to experience seismic hazards, including strong seismic ground shaking, and secondary hazards, like liquefaction.

Earthquake Faults

As stated in Section 4.7.1.2, *Existing Conditions,* active surface faults are mapped and zoned under the Alquist-Priolo Zoning Act in the EIR Study Area. Faults included within Alquist-Priolo Zones in the EIR Study Area include the Calaveras and Sargent Faults. HMC Chapter 17.14.030 applies to proposed developments on active faults pursuant to the Alquist-Priolo Act and requires a surface fault investigation filed by the State Geologist to be provided to the City to prove that all structures proposed for human occupancy do not cross any active fault traces for properties identified within the Earthquake Hazard Overlay District. Should the surface fault investigation confirm the presence of active fault traces, those areas would be included within a deed restriction that forbids development of structures for human occupancy. Such compliance would reduce hazards arising from fault rupture such that there would not be a significant impact.

Strong Seismic Ground Shaking

Ground shaking is responsible for most of the damage from earthquakes and can damage or destroy buildings, structures, pipelines, and infrastructure. The intensity of shaking depends on the type of fault, distance to the epicenter, magnitude of the earthquake, and subsurface geology. The Great Valley, Ortigalita, and San Andreas Faults west and southwest of the city are potentially capable of producing the most intense ground accelerations. The seismic design of buildings within the EIR Study Area is governed by the requirements of the most recent CBC. The CBC has been accepted as the basic design standard in Hollister. All structures that would be constructed pursuant to the proposed project would be designed to meet or exceed current design standards in the latest CBC. Therefore, new structures are expected to remain standing, but may suffer damage requiring closure and replacement. These project design measures would reduce the exposure of people and structures to harm from strong ground-shaking hazards such that there would not be a significant impact.

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Seismic-Related Ground Failure

Secondary effects of earthquakes are nontectonic processes, such as ground deformation, including fissures, settlement, displacement, and loss of bearing strength, and are the leading causes of damage to structures during a moderate to large earthquake. Secondary effects could lead to ground deformation, including liquefaction, lateral spreading, seismically induced landslides, and ground lurching.

Based on the potential for strong ground shaking combined with a groundwater depth of under 50 feet in parts of the EIR Study Area, much of the city is within an area susceptible to liquefaction. All potential future structures constructed in the EIR Study Area would be designed in accordance with current seismic design standards as found in the CBC. Design measures would be implemented according to the most recent CBC, which would reduce the impact of liquefaction and seismic settlement, including, but not limited to, ground improvement techniques, such as in-situ densification, load transfer to underlying nonliquefiable bearing layers, and over-excavation and recompaction with engineered fill method. These design measures would reduce the potential exposure of people and structures to the hazard from liquefaction and seismic settlement such that there would not be a significant impact.

Landslides

Marginally stable slopes (including existing landslides) may be subject to landslides caused by earthquakes. The landslide hazard depends on many factors, including existing slope stability, shaking potential, and presence of existing landslides. Landslides, debris flows, or any movement of earth or rock are most common in areas of high topographic relief, such as steep canyon walls or steep hillsides. There are no substantial hazards with respect to slope stability, as the EIR Study Area is mostly flat. There would not be a significant impact from slope stability.

Summary

The Health and Safety Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider potential impacts to the risk of loss, injury, or death as a result of earthquakes. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts from earthquakes:

Goal HS-1: Protect community health and safety from natural and human-caused hazards. (Goal HS1)

- Policy HS-1.1: Location of Future Development. Permit development only in areas where potential danger to the health, safety, and welfare of the community can be adequately mitigated. This includes prohibiting development that would be subject to severe flood damage or geological hazard due to its location and/or design and that cannot be mitigated to safe levels.

  Development also shall be prohibited where emergency services, including fire protection, cannot be provided. (Policy HS1.1)

- Policy HS-1.2: Safety Considerations in Development Review. Require appropriate studies to assess identified hazards and ensure that impacts are adequately mitigated. (Policy HS1.2)

- Action HS-1.1: Geologic, Flooding, Fire, and Other Hazard Mapping. Upon each update of the Safety Element, update hazard maps for use in development review. Use this mapping data to inform

decisions about existing risk and future land uses throughout the city. (Implementation Measure HS.G)

Goal HS-3: Protect the community from seismic and geologic hazards. (new)

- Policy HS-3.1: Seismic Hazards. Ensure existing and new structures are designed to protect people and property from seismic hazards. Review all development proposals for compliance with the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act and the Uniform Building Code as a way to reduce the risk of exposure to seismic hazards for those who will be living and working within the Hollister Planning Area. (Policy HS1.4)
- Policy HS-3.2: Geotechnical and Geologic Review. Require all geologic hazards to be adequately addressed and mitigated through project development. Development proposed within areas of potential geological hazards shall not be endangered by, nor contribute to, the hazardous conditions on the site or on adjoining properties. (Policy HS1.5)
- Policy HS-3.3: Engineering Tests for Geologic Conditions. Require engineering tests for those development projects that may be exposed to impacts associated with expansive soils, so that building foundation footings, utility lines, roadways, and sidewalks can be designed to accept the estimated degree of soil contraction, expansion and settlement, according to the standards of the Uniform Building Code. (Policy HS1.6)
- Policy HS-3.4: High-Occupancy Structures. High-occupancy structures (such as schools, hospitals, office buildings, and multifamily housing) or critical emergency facilities (such as fire and police stations, emergency relief storage facilities, and water storage tanks) should not be located within an active fault's "zone of potential surface deformation." In addition, high-occupancy structures should be designed or redesigned to protect human life to the highest degree possible during the "maximum probable event" of seismic activity. Existing and new high-occupancy structures should also have emergency plans approved by the City. (Policy HS2.1)
- Policy HS-3.5: Design of Safe Structures and Utilities. Require new roads, bridges, and utility lines be constructed to accommodate possible fault movement and withstand the expected ground motion induced during an earthquake. (Policy HS1.7)
- Action HS-3.1: Building Code Updates. Regularly adopt updates to the Building Code and other essential codes as necessary to address earthquake, fire, and other hazards and support programs for the identification, abatement, or mitigation of existing hazardous structures. (Implementation Measure HS.Q)
- Action HS-3.2: Unreinforced Masonry Building Improvements. Continue to implement actions to address safety issues related to Unreinforced Masonry Buildings (URM) and other buildings as conditions are discovered. (Implementation Measure HS.L)

Implementation of these goals, policies, and actions of the proposed 2040 General Plan, as well as compliance with state, regional, and local regulations pertaining to structural safety regarding fault rupture, ground shaking, liquefaction, and landslides, would ensure that potential future development that results from implementation of the proposed project would not directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known

earthquake fault, strong seismic ground shaking, seismic-related ground failure, or landslides. Therefore, impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect geology and soils, 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, strong seismic ground shaking, seismic-related ground failure, or landslides, and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would affect geology and soils, 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, strong seismic ground shaking, seismic-related ground failure, or landslides, and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

GEO-2 Implementation of the proposed project would not result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil.

2040 General Plan

Soils are particularly prone to erosion during the grading phase of development, especially during heavy rains. Substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil during construction of future development could undermine structures or minor slopes, which would be a concern during implementation of the proposed project.

The CBC provides regulations for construction to provide proper grading, drainage, and erosion and sediment control. In addition, HMC Chapter 15.24 requires erosion and sediment be controlled. Erosion-control measures can include seeding slopes, installation of temporary dikes and swales, placement of straw bales and filter fences, outlet protection, grass-lined swales, and installation of sediment retention structures, as appropriate for specific sites. In addition, HMC Section 15.24.130 sets forth the

requirements for the submittal of grading plans that demonstrate that potential future development has been designed to minimize soil erosion.

As described in further detail in Chapter 4.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, to minimize potential impacts related to erosion, future development pursuant to the proposed 2040 General Plan would require compliance with the Construction General Permit (CGP) Water Quality Order 2009-0009-DWQ (as amended by Order No. 2010-0014-DWQ and 2012-006-DWQ), which includes the preparation and implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). A SWPPP requires an erosion control plan with the incorporation of best management practices to control erosion during construction. Typical construction best management practices include silt fences, fiber rolls, catch basin inlet protection, water trucks, street sweeping, and stabilization of truck entrance/exits. While this regulation is primarily aimed at water quality, it is another mechanism routinely applied by the City that would help to minimize the risk of erosion.

Adherence to existing regulatory requirements that include, but are not limited to, the CBC and the HMC grading and drainage requirements for new developments, would ensure that impacts associated with substantial erosion and loss of topsoil from potential future development under the proposed 2040 General Plan would be *less than significant* and no mitigation measures are required.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect geology and soils, implementation of the proposed project would not result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would affect geology and soils, implementation of the proposed project would not result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

GEO-3 Implementation of the proposed project would not be 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.

2040 General Plan

Unstable geologic units are known to be present within the EIR Study Area. The following sections discuss the hazards associated with landslides, subsidence, lateral spreading, liquefaction, or settlement and collapse.

Landslides

As stated under Impact Discussion GEO-1, there are no substantial hazards with respect to landslides and slope stability, as the EIR Study Area is mostly flat. There would not be a significant impact from slope stability.

Subsidence

Minor subsidence has been historically documented in Hollister and is considered a potential hazard.[34] Historically, subsidence in Hollister does not show a pattern of widespread irreversible permanent lowering of the ground surface.[35] The probability of subsidence impacts is generally low in Hollister, due to the lack of prominent geologic structures or contacts within the EIR Study Area. As described in further detail in Chapter 4.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act encourages sustainable groundwater management practices to reduce the potential for future land subsidence, and ongoing surveying of the ground surface by the California Department of Water Resources and the USGS provides a way to verify that efforts in preventing subsidence are effective. The groundwater recharge programs within the *existing North San Benito County Groundwater Sustainability Plan* for the Gilroy-Hollister Groundwater Basin[36] continue to prevent long-term groundwater overdraft conditions and reduce the impact of subsidence to less than significant.

Liquefaction and Lateral Spreading

As stated under Impact Discussion GEO-1, based on the potential for strong ground shaking combined with a groundwater depth of under 50 feet in parts of the EIR Study Area, much of the EIR Study Area is within an area susceptible to liquefaction. All structures constructed in the EIR Study Area would be designed in accordance with current seismic design standards as found in the CBC. Design measures

[34] Poland, J. F., and R. L. Ireland, 1988, *Land Subsidence in the Santa Clara Valley, California*, as of 1982, U. S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 497-F, https://pubs.usgs.gov/pp/0497f/report.pdf, accessed April 8, 2022.

[35] California Department of Water Resources, 2022. SGMA Basin Prioritization Dashboard, https://gis.water.ca.gov/app/bp-dashboard/final/, accessed April 8, 2022.

[36] Todd Groundwater, 2018, *North San Benito County Groundwater Sustainability Plan*, Draft: Introduction and Plan Area, dated December 2018, https://www.sbcwd.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/DraftGSPIntroPlanAreawithTablesFigures12202018.pdf, accessed April 8, 2022.

would be implemented according to the most recent CBC, which would reduce the impact of liquefaction and seismic settlement, including, but not limited to, ground improvement techniques, such as in-situ densification, load transfer to underlying nonliquefiable bearing layers, and over-excavation and recompaction with engineered fill method. These design measures would reduce the potential exposure of people and structures to the hazard from liquefaction and seismic settlement such that there would not be a significant impact. In addition, based on the lack of a free face, there would not be a significant impact from ground lurching or lateral spreading.

Settlement and Collapse

Settlement and collapse are likely to exist in areas with alluvial soils. Areas of large settlement can damage, or in extreme cases, destroy structures. The presence of compressible soils in the EIR Study Area represents a hazard to structures and people.

CBC design standards have been adopted by the City and require that structures be designed to mitigate compressible soils. Methods that could be used to reduce the impact of compressible soils include in-situ densification, transferring the load to underlying non-compressible layers with piles, and overexcavation of compressible soil and recompaction with engineered fill. These design measures, or a combination of them, would reduce the impact of compressible soils to less than significant.

Summary

As determined under Impact Discussions GEO-1 and GEO-2, future development from implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan would be required to comply with the CBC, which provides regulations for building design and construction to ensure geologic and soil stability. In addition to protections afforded by State laws, the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions listed under Impact Discussion GEO-1 would require local planning and development decisions to consider potential risks of development on unstable soils or geologic units. Policies HS-1.1, HS-1.2, HS-3.1, HS-3.2, and HS-3.3 specifically address the early review of potential future development to identify where there is a potential danger from geologic hazards.

All potential future development from implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan would be required to comply with State and local regulations, including HMC provisions and the proposed General Plan goals, policies, and actions that minimize impacts related to unstable geologic units and soils where landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse could occur in the EIR Study Area. Implementation of the identified goals, policies, and actions, as well as compliance with state, regional, and local regulations pertaining to structural safety regarding a geologic unit or soils that are unstable, would ensure that potential future development that results from implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan would not directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects. Therefore, impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect geology and soils, implementation of the proposed project would not potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would affect geology and soils, implementation of the proposed project would not potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse, and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

GEO-4	**Implementation of the proposed project would be on expansive soil, as defined by Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property.**

2040 General Plan

Based on the presence of alluvial materials in the EIR Study Area, there is some potential for expansive/shrink-swell soils throughout Hollister.[37, 38] Expansive soils are possible wherever clays and elastic silts may be present, including alluvial soils and weathered granitic and fine-grained sedimentary rocks. The presence of expansive soils represents a hazard to structures and people. In the event that future development is proposed in these portions of the EIR Study Area, the proposed 2040 General Plan Policy HS-1.2 would require identification of any potential geological or seismic hazards early in the process and Policy HS-3.3 would be required to evaluate soil characteristics that would identify if the soils were determined to be expansive. Future development proposed on expansive soils under the proposed 2040 General Plan would be required to follow regulations imposed by the CBC, such as standards for seismic safety, excavation, foundations, retaining walls, site demolition, and grading activities, including drainage and erosion control. Specific engineering methods that could be used to reduce the impact of

[37] Rogers, T. H., 1966, Geologic Map of California, San Jose Sheet, scale 1:250,000, http://archives.csuchico.edu/digital/collection/coll19/id/326, accessed January 31, 2022.

[38] U. S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service, 1990, Soil Survey of Merced County, Western Part, https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_MANUSCRIPTS/california/CA647/0/merced.pdf, accessed January 31, 2022.

expansive soils include drainage-control devices to limit water infiltration near foundations, over-excavation and recompaction of engineered fill method, or support of the foundation with piles.

Implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions identified previously and listed under Impact Discussion GEO-1, as well as compliance with state, regional, and local regulations pertaining to structural safety regarding an unstable geologic unit/soils, would ensure that potential future development that results from implementation of the proposed project would not directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects, including risks to life or property. Therefore, impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect geology and soils, implementation of the proposed project would not create substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would affect geology and soils, implementation of the proposed project would not create substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

GEO-5	**Implementation of the proposed project would not use septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where soils would be incapable of adequately supporting in cases where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater.**

2040 General Plan

As discussed in Chapter 4.17, *Utilities and Service Systems*, wastewater from new lots or parcels would be discharged into the existing public sanitary sewer system serviced by the City of Hollister. Therefore, potential future development in the EIR Study Area is not anticipated to result in the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems.

Policy CSF-2.4, *Sewer Collection System Deficiencies*, in the proposed Community Services and Facilities Element of the 2040 General Plan requires the City prioritize the implementation of recommendations from the Sanitary Collection System Master Plan to address deficiencies in wastewater collection and treatment facilities. In addition, HMC Section 13.04.040, *Septic Tanks, etc., Prohibited*, would allow for the construction of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems provided that the applicant obtains a County permit and the construction is in accordance with the permit.

In summary, implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan policy listed above, as well as compliance with state, regional, and local regulations pertaining to structural safety regarding inadequate soils, would ensure that potential future development that results from implementation of the proposed project would not directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects. Therefore, potential future development would not result in septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where soils are not capable of adequately supporting such systems, and the impact would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect geology and soils, implementation of the proposed project would not use septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where soils would be incapable of adequately supporting them in cases where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would affect geology and soils, implementation of the proposed project would not use septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where soils would be incapable of adequately supporting them in cases where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

GEO-6 Implementation of the proposed project would not directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature.

2040 General Plan

As stated in Section 4.7.1.2 *Existing Conditions*, the geology and soils in the EIR Study Area are common throughout the city and region and are not considered to be unique. However, geological formations underlying the EIR Study Area have the potential to contain unique paleontological resources. Potential future development would be required to comply with the federal Paleontological Resources Preservation Act that limits the collection of vertebrate fossils and other rare and scientifically significant fossils to qualified researchers who have obtained a permit from the appropriate state or federal agency and the PRC Section 5097 that prohibits the removal of any paleontological site or feature from public lands without the permission of the jurisdictional agency. Ground-disturbing construction activities (e.g., grading and excavation) associated with potential future development in the EIR Study Area could uncover fossilized remains of organisms from prehistoric environments that have not been recorded. The implementation protocols and adherence to the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology standards would ensure the protection of unique paleontological resources during construction of future development. Some protocols include, but are not limited to:

- Excavations within a 50-foot radius of the find shall be temporarily halted or diverted.
- Ground-disturbance work shall cease until a City-approved, qualified paleontologist determines whether the resource requires further study.
- The paleontologist shall document the discovery as needed, in accordance with Society of Vertebrate Paleontology standards,[39] as appropriate, evaluate the potential resource, and assess the significance of the finding under the criteria set forth in CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064.5.
- The paleontologist shall notify the appropriate agencies to determine procedures that would be followed before construction activities are allowed to resume at the location of the find.
- If not feasible, the paleontologist shall prepare an excavation plan for mitigating the effect of construction activities on the discovery. The excavation plan shall be submitted to the City of Hollister for review and approval prior to implementation.
- All construction activities shall adhere to the recommendations in the excavation plan.

In summary, compliance with state, regional, and local regulations pertaining to paleontological resources would ensure that potential future development that results from implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan would not directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects to paleontological resources. Therefore, the impact would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

[39] Society of Vertebrate Paleontology, 2010, *Standard Procedures for the Assessment and Mitigation of Adverse Impacts to Paleontological Resources*, https://vertpaleo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/SVP_Impact_Mitigation_Guidelines-1.pdf, accessed March 20, 2023.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect geology and soils, implementation of the proposed project would not directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would affect geology and soils, implementation of the proposed project would not directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

GEO-7	**In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a cumulative impact with respect to geology and soils.**

2040 General Plan

As discussed in Chapter 4, *Environmental Analysis*, the cumulative setting includes growth within the EIR Study Area in combination with projected growth in the rest of San Benito County and the surrounding region. As discussed previously, implementation of the proposed project would not result in significant impacts related to geology and soils. Although the EIR Study Area includes some potentially significant hazards—fault rupture, strong ground shaking, subsidence, settlement, collapse, seismic-related ground failure and erosion—anticipated development under the proposed 2040 General Plan would be subject to regulations pertaining to seismic safety, including the CBC and HMC requirements. Compliance with these requirements would, to the maximum extent practicable, reduce cumulative, development-related impacts that pertain to seismic shaking, seismic-related ground failure, seismically induced landslides, soil erosion, and unstable soils. Similarly, compliance with relevant HMC requirements, as well as the requirements of the CBC, would minimize the cumulative impacts associated with substantial erosion or loss of topsoil. While none of the soils in the EIR Study Area are considered to have unique geological resources, unique paleontological resources may occur. Site-specific evaluation in the event that previously unknown resources are discovered during construction activities for new development or redevelopment would be required. Future development would be focused on specific sites or areas, which would be evaluated for site development constraints on a case-by-case basis. Cumulative development in

adjacent jurisdictions would be subject to the same federal, state, and local regulations. Since impacts associated with geology and soils are by their nature focused on specific sites or areas, the less-than-significant impacts within the EIR Study Area to avoid impacts related to geology and soils from the proposed project, would not contribute to a cumulative increase in hazards in the immediate vicinity of the EIR Study Area or greater San Benito County. Therefore, cumulative impacts associated with geology and soils would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect geology and soils, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to geology and soils.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would affect geology and soils, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to geology and soils.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

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4.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

This chapter describes the potential impacts from greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with the approval and implementation of the proposed project. This chapter describes the regulatory framework and existing conditions, identifies criteria used to determine impact significance, provides an analysis of the potential GHG impacts, and identifies policies that could minimize any potentially significant impacts.

The analysis in this chapter is based on buildout of the proposed project, as modeled using the California Air Resources Board's (CARB's) Emissions Factor Model (EMFAC2021), the Off-Road Emissions Factor Model (OFFROAD2021, version 1.0.2), energy use provided by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) and Central Coast Community Energy (CCCE), solid waste disposal from Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), water use and wastewater generation based on Hollister's 2020 Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP), as well as trip generation and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) provided by Kimley Horn (see Appendix F, *Transportation Data*). The GHG emissions modeling is based on emissions inventory and forecast prepared for the proposed 2023 Climate Action Plan (2023 CAP).

4.8.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.8.1.1 TERMINOLOGY

The following are definitions for terms used throughout this chapter.

- **Greenhouse gases (GHG).** Gases in the atmosphere that absorb infrared light, thereby retaining heat in the atmosphere and contributing to a greenhouse effect.
- **Global warming potential (GWP).** Metric used to describe how much heat a molecule of a GHG absorbs relative to a molecule of carbon dioxide (CO_2) over a given period of time (20, 100, and 500 years). CO_2 has a GWP of 1.
- **Carbon dioxide-equivalent (CO_2e).** The standard unit to measure the amount of GHGs in terms of the amount of CO_2 that would cause the same amount of warming. CO_2e is based on the GWP ratios between the various GHGs relative to CO_2.
- **$MTCO_2e$.** Metric ton of CO_2e.
- **$MMTCO_2e$.** Million metric tons of CO_2e.

4.8.1.2 GREENHOUSE GASES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Scientists have concluded that human activities are contributing to global climate change by adding large amounts of heat-trapping gases, known as GHGs, to the atmosphere. The primary source of these GHGs is fossil fuel use. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has identified four major GHGs—water vapor, carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), and ozone (O_3)—that are the likely cause of an increase in global average temperatures observed in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Other GHGs identified by the IPCC that contribute to global warming to a lesser extent are nitrous oxide (N_2O), sulfur

hexafluoride (SF_6), hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and chlorofluorocarbons.[1,2,3] The major GHGs applicable to the proposed project are briefly described herein.

- **Carbon dioxide (CO_2)** enters the atmosphere through the burning of fossil fuels (oil, natural gas, and coal), solid waste, trees and wood products, and respiration, and also as a result of other chemical reactions (e.g., manufacture of cement). Carbon dioxide is removed from the atmosphere (sequestered) when it is absorbed by plants as part of the biological carbon cycle.
- **Methane (CH_4)** is emitted during the production and transport of coal, natural gas, and oil. Methane emissions also result from livestock and other agricultural practices and from the decay of organic waste in landfills and water treatment facilities.
- **Nitrous oxide (N_2O)** is emitted during agricultural and industrial activities as well as during the combustion of fossil fuels and solid waste.

GHGs are dependent on the lifetime, or persistence, of the gas molecule in the atmosphere. Some GHGs have stronger greenhouse effects than others. These are referred to as high GWP gases. The GWP of GHG emissions are shown in Table 4.8-1, *GHG Emissions and Their Relative Global Warming Potential Compared to CO_2*.

TABLE 4.8-1 GHG EMISSIONS AND THEIR RELATIVE GLOBAL WARMING POTENTIAL COMPARED TO CO_2

GHGs	Second Assessment Report (SAR) Global Warming Potential Relative to CO_2 [a]	Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) Global Warming Potential Relative to CO_2 [a]	Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) Global Warming Potential Relative to CO_2 [a]
Carbon Dioxide (CO_2)	1	1	1
Methane (CH_4) [b]	21	25	28
Nitrous Oxide (N_2O)	310	298	265

Notes: a. Based on 100-year time horizon of the GWP of the air pollutant compared to CO_2.
b. The methane GWP includes direct effects and indirect effects due to the production of tropospheric ozone and stratospheric water vapor. The indirect effect due to the production of CO_2 is not included.
Sources: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 1995, *Second Assessment Report: Climate Change 1995.* New York: Cambridge University Press; Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. 2007. *Fourth Assessment Report: Climate Change 2007*. New York: Cambridge University Press; Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. 2013. *Fifth Assessment Report: Climate Change 2013*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

The GWP is used to convert GHGs to CO_2-equivalence (CO_2e) to show the relative potential that different GHGs have to retain infrared radiation in the atmosphere and contribute to the greenhouse effect. For

[1] Water vapor (H_2O) is the strongest GHG and the most variable in its phases (vapor, cloud droplets, ice crystals). However, water vapor is not considered a pollutant because it is considered part of the feedback loop rather than a primary cause of change.

[2] Black carbon contributes to climate change by absorbing sunlight, and indirectly, by depositing on snow (making it melt faster) and by interacting with clouds and affecting cloud formation. Black carbon is the most strongly light-absorbing component of particulate matter (PM) emitted from burning fuels such as coal, diesel, and biomass. Reducing black carbon emissions globally can have immediate economic, climate, and public health benefits. California has been an international leader in reducing emissions of black carbon (CARB, 2017, March. *Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction Strategy*. https://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/shortlived/shortlived.htm). However, state and national GHG inventories do not include black carbon due to ongoing work resolving the precise global warming potential of black carbon. Guidance for California Environmental Quality Act documents does not yet include black carbon.

[3] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). 2001. *Third Assessment Report: Climate Change 2001*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

example, under the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5), GWP values for CH_4, 10 MT of CH_4 would be equivalent to 280 MT of CO_2.[4]

Human Influence on Climate Change

For approximately 1,000 years before the Industrial Revolution, the amount of GHGs in the atmosphere remained relatively constant. During the twentieth century, scientists observed a rapid change in the climate and the quantity of climate change pollutants in the Earth's atmosphere that is attributable to human activities. The amount of CO_2 in the atmosphere has increased by more than 35 percent since pre-industrial times and has increased at an average rate of 1.4 parts per million per year since 1960, mainly due to the combustion of fossil fuels and deforestation.[5] These recent changes in the quantity and concentration of climate change pollutants far exceed the extremes of the ice ages, and the global mean temperature is warming at a rate that cannot be explained by natural causes alone. Human activities are directly altering the chemical composition of the atmosphere through the buildup of climate change pollutants. In the past, gradual changes in the Earth's temperature changed the distribution of species, availability of water, etc. Human activities are accelerating this process so that environmental impacts associated with climate change no longer occur in a geologic time frame but within a human lifetime.[6]

Like the variability in the projections of the expected increase in global surface temperatures, the environmental consequences of gradual changes in the Earth's temperature are hard to predict. Projections of climate change depend heavily on future human activity. Therefore, climate models are based on different emission scenarios that account for historical trends in emissions and on observations of the climate record that assess the human influence of the trend and projections for extreme weather events. Climate-change scenarios are affected by varying degrees of uncertainty. For example, there are varying degrees of certainty on the magnitude of the trends for:

- Warmer and fewer cold days and nights over most land areas
- Warmer and more frequent hot days and nights over most land areas
- An increase in the frequency of warm spells and heat waves over most land areas
- An increase in frequency of heavy precipitation events (or proportion of total rainfall from heavy falls) over most areas
- Larger areas affected by drought
- Intense tropical cyclone activity increases
- Increased incidence of extreme high sea level (excluding tsunamis)

Potential Climate Change Impacts for California

Observed changes over the last several decades across the western United States reveal clear signs of climate change. Statewide, average temperatures increased by about 1.7 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) from

[4] The global warming potential of a GHG is dependent on the lifetime, or persistence, of the gas molecule in the atmosphere.

[5] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). 2007. *Fourth Assessment Report: Climate Change 2007*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

[6] IPCC. 2007. *Fourth Assessment Report: Climate Change 2007*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

1895 to 2011, and warming has been greatest in the Sierra Nevada.[7] The years from 2014 through 2016 showed unprecedented temperatures, with 2014 being the warmest.[8] By 2050, California is projected to warm by approximately 2.7°F above 2000 averages, a threefold increase in the rate of warming over the last century. By 2100, average temperatures could increase by 4.1°F to 8.6°F, depending on emissions levels.[9]

In California and western North America, observations of the climate have shown: (1) a trend toward warmer winter and spring temperatures; (2) a smaller fraction of precipitation falling as snow; (3) a decrease in the amount of spring snow accumulation in the lower and middle elevation mountain zones; (4) advanced shift in the timing of snowmelt of 5 to 30 days earlier in the spring; and (5) a similar shift (5 to 30 days earlier) in the timing of spring flower blooms.[10] Overall, California has become drier over time, with five of the eight years of severe to extreme drought occurring between 2007 and 2016, and with unprecedented dry years in 2014 and 2015. Statewide precipitation has become increasingly variable from year to year, with the driest consecutive four years occurring from 2012 to 2015.[11]

According to the California Climate Action Team—a committee of state agency secretaries and the heads of agencies, boards, and departments, led by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA)—even if actions could be taken to immediately curtail climate change emissions, the potency of emissions that have already built up, their long atmospheric lifetimes (see Table 4.8-1), and the inertia of the Earth's climate system could produce as much as 0.6°C (1.1°F) of additional warming. Consequently, some impacts from climate change are now considered unavoidable. Global climate change risks to California are described herein and shown in Table 4.8-2, *Summary of GHG Emissions Risks to California*, and include impacts to public health, water resources, agriculture, coastal sea level, forest and biological resources, and energy.

TABLE 4.8-2 SUMMARY OF GHG EMISSIONS RISK TO CALIFORNIA

Impact Category	Potential Risks
Public Health Impacts	Heat waves will be more frequent, hotter, and longer Fewer extremely cold nights Poor air quality made worse Higher temperatures increase ground-level ozone levels
Water Resource Impacts	Decreasing Sierra Nevada snowpack Challenges in securing adequate water supply Potential reduction in hydropower Loss of winter recreation
Agricultural Impacts	Increasing temperature

[7] California Climate Change Center, 2012. *Our Changing Climate 2012: Vulnerability and Adaptation to the Increasing Risks from Climate Change in California*.

[8] Office of Environmental Health Hazards Assessment (OEHHA), 2018. *Indicators of Climate Change in California*. https://oehha.ca.gov/media/downloads/climate-change/report/2018caindicatorsreportmay2018.pdf, accessed November 21, 2019.

[9] California Climate Change Center, 2012. *Our Changing Climate 2012: Vulnerability and Adaptation to the Increasing Risks from Climate Change in California*.

[10] California Climate Action Team, 2006. *Climate Action Team Report to Governor Schwarzenegger and the Legislature*.

[11] OEHHA. 2018. *Indicators of Climate Change in California*. https://oehha.ca.gov/media/downloads/climate-change/report/2018caindicatorsreportmay2018.pdf, accessed April 3, 2019.

TABLE 4.8-2 SUMMARY OF GHG EMISSIONS RISK TO CALIFORNIA

Impact Category	Potential Risks
	Increasing threats from pests and pathogens
	Expanded ranges of agricultural weeds
	Declining productivity
	Irregular blooms and harvests
Coastal Sea-Level Impacts	Accelerated sea-level rise
	Increasing coastal floods
	Shrinking beaches
	Worsened impacts on infrastructure
Forest and Biological Resource Impacts	Increased risk and severity of wildfires
	Lengthening of the wildfire season
	Movement of forest areas
	Conversion of forest to grassland
	Declining forest productivity
	Increasing threats from pests and pathogens
	Shifting vegetation and species distribution
	Altered timing of migration and mating habits
	Loss of sensitive or slow-moving species
Energy Demand Impacts	Potential reduction in hydropower
	Increased energy demand

Sources: California Climate Change Center, 2012, *Our Changing Climate 2012: Vulnerability and Adaptation to the Increasing Risks from Climate Change in California*. California Energy Commission, 2006. *Our Changing Climate: Assessing the Risks to California, 2006 Biennial Report*, CEC-500-2006-077. California Energy Commission, 2009. *The Future Is Now: An Update on Climate Change Science, Impacts, and Response Options for California*. CEC-500-2008-0077. California Natural Resources Agency, 2014. *Safeguarding California: Reducing Climate Risk, An Update to the 2009 California Climate Adaptation Strategy*.

4.8.1.3 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Federal Regulations

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) announced on December 7, 2009, that GHG emissions threaten the public health and welfare of the American people and that GHG emissions from on-road vehicles contribute to that threat. The USEPA's final findings respond to the 2007 U.S. Supreme Court decision that GHG emissions fit within the Clean Air Act definition of air pollutants. The findings do not impose any emission-reduction requirements but allow the USEPA to finalize the GHG standards proposed in 2009 for new light-duty vehicles as part of the joint rulemaking with the Department of Transportation.[12]

To regulate GHGs from passenger vehicles, the USEPA was required to issue an endangerment finding. The finding identified emissions of six key GHGs—CO_2, CH_4, N_2O, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and SF_6—that have been the subject of scrutiny and intense analysis for decades by scientists in the United States and around the world. The first three are applicable to the project's GHG emissions inventory because they constitute the majority of GHG emissions and, according to guidance by the San Joaquin

[12] USEPA. 2009, *USEPA: Greenhouse Gases Threaten Public Health and the Environment*, https://archive.epa.gov/epapages/newsroom_archive/newsreleases/08d11a451131bca585257685005bf252.html, accessed March 18, 2019.

Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD), are the GHG emissions that should be evaluated as part of a project's GHG emissions inventory.

- US Mandatory Report Rule for Greenhouse Gases (2009). In response to the endangerment finding, the USEPA issued the Mandatory Reporting of GHG Rule that requires substantial emitters of GHG emissions (large stationary sources, etc.) to report GHG emissions data. Facilities that emit 25,000 MT or more of CO_2e per year are required to submit an annual report.
- Update to Corporate Average Fuel Economy Standards (2021 to 2026). The federal government issued new Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards in 2012 for model years 2017 to 2025, which required a fleet average of 54.5 miles per gallon (MPG) in 2025. On March 30, 2020, the USEPA finalized an updated CAFE and GHG emissions standards for passenger cars and light trucks and established new standards covering model years 2021 through 2026, known as the Safer Affordable Fuel Efficient (SAFE) Vehicles Final Rule for Model Years 2021 to 2026. In response to Executive Order 13990, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) announced new proposed fuel standards on August 5, 2021. On December 21, 2021, under the direction of Executive Order (EO) 13990, the NHTSA repealed SAFE Vehicles Rule Part One, which had preempted state and local laws related to fuel economy standards. Fuel efficiency under the new standards proposed would increase 8 percent annually for model years 2024 to 2026 and increase estimated fleetwide average by 12 MPG for model year 2026 compared to model year 2021. [13]
- USEPA Regulation of Stationary Sources under the Clean Air Act (Ongoing). Pursuant to its authority under the Clean Air Act, the USEPA has developed regulations for new, large, stationary sources of emissions such as power plants and refineries. Under the 2013 Climate Action Plan, the USEPA was directed to develop regulations for existing stationary sources as well. On June 19, 2019, the USEPA issued the final Affordable Clean Energy (ACE) rule, which became effective on August 19, 2019. The ACE rule was crafted under the Energy Independence Executive Order. It officially rescinded the Clean Power Plan rule previously issued during the former administration and set emissions guidelines for states in developing plans to limit CO_2 emissions from coal-fired power plants. The ACE rule was vacated by the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit on January 19, 2021. As of 2022, the current administration is assessing options on potential future regulations.

State Regulations

Current State of California guidance and goals for reductions in GHG emissions are generally embodied in Executive Order (EO) S-03-05, EO B-55-18, and EO B-30-15; Assembly Bill (AB) 32 and AB 1279; and Senate Bill (SB) 32 and SB 375. These regulations are summarized in the following bulleted list.

- Executive Order S-03-05. EO S-03-05, signed June 1, 2005, set the following GHG-reduction targets for the state: 2000 levels by 2010; 1990 levels by 2020; and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.
- Assembly Bill 32. AB 32 was passed by the state legislature on August 31, 2006, to place the state on a course toward reducing its contribution of GHG emissions. AB 32 follows the 2020 tier of emissions

[13] National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). 2021, August 5. *USDOT Proposes Improved Fuel Economy Standards for MY 2024-2026 Passenger Cars and Light Trucks*. https://www.nhtsa.gov/press-releases/fuel-economy-standards-2024-2026-proposal.

reduction targets established in EO S-03-05. CARB prepared the 2008 Climate Change Scoping Plan (Scoping Plan) to outline a plan to achieve the GHG-emissions reduction targets of AB 32.

- Executive Order B-30-15. EO B-30-15, signed April 29, 2015, set a goal of reducing GHG emissions in the state to 40 percent of 1990 levels by year 2030. EO B-30-15 also directed CARB to update the Scoping Plan to quantify the 2030 GHG reduction goal for the state and requires state agencies to implement measures to meet the interim 2030 goal as well as the long-term goal for 2050 in EO S-03-05. It also requires the Natural Resources Agency to conduct triennial updates of the California adaption strategy, *Safeguarding California*, to ensure climate change is accounted for in state planning and investment decisions.
- Senate Bill 32 and Assembly Bill 197. In September 2016, SB 32, and AB 197 were signed into law, making the EO goal for year 2030 into a statewide mandated legislative target. AB 197 established a joint legislative committee on climate change policies and requires CARB to prioritize direct emissions reductions rather than the market-based cap-and-trade program for large stationary, mobile, and other sources.
- Assembly Bill 1279. AB 1279, signed by Governor Newsom in September 2022, codified the carbon neutrality targets of EO B-55-18 for year 2045 and sets a new legislative target for year 2045 of 85 percent below 1990 levels for anthropogenic (human-caused) GHG emissions. SB 1279 also requires CARB to update the Scoping Plan to address these new targets.
- 2022 Scoping Plan. CARB adopted the *2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality* (2022 Scoping Plan) on December 15, 2022, which lays out a path to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045 or earlier and to reduce the state's anthropogenic GHG emissions.[14] The Scoping Plan was updated to address the carbon neutrality goals of EO B-55-18 (discussed later in this chapter) and the ambitious GHG reduction target as directed by AB 1279. Previous Scoping Plans focused on specific GHG reduction targets for our industrial, energy, and transportation sectors—to meet 1990 levels by 2020, and then the more aggressive 40 percent below that for the 2030 target. This plan expands on earlier Scoping Plans with a target of reducing anthropogenic emissions to 85 percent below 1990 levels by 2045. Carbon neutrality takes it one step further by expanding actions to capture and store carbon, including through natural and working lands and mechanical technologies, while drastically reducing anthropogenic sources of carbon pollution at the same time.

  The path forward was informed by the recent Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) of the IPCC and the measures would achieve 85 percent below 1990 levels by 2045 in accordance AB 1279. CARB's 2022 Scoping Plan identifies strategies that would be most impactful at the local level for ensuring substantial process towards the state's carbon neutrality goals (see Table 4.8-3, *Priority Strategies for Local Government Climate Action Plans*).

[14] California Air Resources Board (CARB), 2022, *2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality*, https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/2022-sp.pdf, accessed December 7, 2022.

TABLE 4.8-3 PRIORITY STRATEGIES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT CLIMATE ACTION PLANS

Priority Areas	Priority Strategies
Transportation Electrification	Convert local government fleets to zero-emission vehicles (ZEV) and provide EV charging at public sites.
	Create a jurisdiction-specific ZEV ecosystem to support deployment of ZEVs statewide (such as building standards that exceed state building codes, permit streamlining, infrastructure siting, consumer education, preferential parking policies, and ZEV readiness plans).
VMT Reduction	Reduce or eliminate minimum parking standards.
	Implement Complete Streets policies and investments, consistent with general plan circulation element requirements.
	Increase access to public transit by increasing density of development near transit, improving transit service by increasing service frequency, creating bus priority lanes, reducing or eliminating fares, microtransit, etc.
	Increase public access to clean mobility options by planning for and investing in electric shuttles, bike share, car share, and walking.
	Implement parking pricing or transportation demand management pricing strategies.
	Amend zoning or development codes to enable mixed-use, walkable, transit-oriented, and compact infill development (such as increasing allowable density of the neighborhood).
	Preserve natural and working lands by implementing land use policies that guide development toward infill areas and do not convert "greenfield" land to urban uses (e.g., green belts, strategic conservation easements).
Building Decarbonization	Adopt all-electric new construction reach codes for residential and commercial uses.
	Adopt policies and incentive programs to implement energy efficiency retrofits for existing buildings, such as weatherization, lighting upgrades, and replacing energy-intensive appliances and equipment with more efficient systems (such as Energy Star-rated equipment and equipment controllers).
	Adopt policies and incentive programs to electrify all appliances and equipment in existing buildings such as appliance rebates, existing building reach codes, or time of sale electrification ordinances.
	Facilitate deployment of renewable energy production and distribution and energy storage on privately owned land uses (e.g., permit streamlining, information sharing).
	Deploy renewable energy production and energy storage directly in new public projects and on existing public facilities (e.g., solar photovoltaic systems on rooftops of municipal buildings and on canopies in public parking lots, battery storage systems in municipal buildings).

Source: California Air Resources Board (CARB), 2022, *2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality*, https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/2022-sp.pdf, accessed December 7, 2022.

For residential and mixed-use development projects, CARB recommends this first approach to demonstrate that these land use development projects are aligned with state climate goals based on the attributes of land use development that reduce operational GHG emissions while simultaneously advancing fair housing. Attributes that accommodate growth in a manner consistent with the GHG and equity goals of SB 32 have all the following attributes:

- Transportation Electrification
  - Provide EV charging infrastructure that, at a minimum, meets the most ambitious voluntary standards in the California Green Building Standards Code at the time of project approval.
- VMT Reduction

- Is located on infill sites that are surrounded by existing urban uses and reuses or redevelops previously undeveloped or underutilized land that is presently served by existing utilities and essential public services (e.g., transit, streets, water, sewer);
- Does not result in the loss or conversion of the State's natural and working lands;
- Consists of transit-supportive densities (minimum of 20 residential dwelling units/acre) or is in proximity to existing transit stops (within a half mile) or satisfies more detailed and stringent criteria specified in the region's Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS).

- Reduces parking requirements by:
  - Eliminating parking requirements or including maximum allowable parking ratios (i.e., the ratio of parking spaces to residential units or square feet);
  - Providing residential parking supply at a ratio of <1 parking space per dwelling unit;
  - For multifamily residential development, requiring parking costs to be unbundled from costs to rent or own a residential unit;
  - At least 20 percent of the units are affordable to lower-income residents;
  - Result in no net loss of existing affordable units.

- Building Decarbonization
  - Use all electric appliances without any natural gas connections and does not use propane or other fossil fuels for space heating, water heating, or indoor cooking.

The second approach to project-level alignment with state climate goals is net-zero GHG emissions. The third approach to demonstrating project-level alignment with state climate goals is to align with GHG thresholds of significance, which many local air quality management districts (AQMDs) and air pollution control districts (APCDs) have developed or adopted. [15]

- Executive Order B-55-18. EO B-55-18, signed September 10, 2018, sets a goal "to achieve carbon neutrality as soon as possible, and no later than 2045, and achieve and maintain net negative emissions thereafter." EO B-55-18 directs CARB to work with relevant state agencies to ensure future Scoping Plans identify and recommend measures to achieve the carbon neutrality goal. The goal of carbon neutrality by 2045 is in addition to other statewide goals, meaning not only should emissions be reduced to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050, but that, by no later than 2045, the remaining emissions be offset by equivalent net removals of CO_2e from the atmosphere, including through sequestration in forests, soils, and other natural landscapes.

- Senate Bill 375. In 2008, the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act, generally known as its legislative bill number, SB 375, was adopted to connect the GHG emissions-reductions targets established in the 2008 Scoping Plan for the transportation sector to local land use decisions that affect travel behavior. Its intent is to reduce GHG emissions from light-duty trucks and automobiles (excludes emissions associated with goods movement) by aligning regional long-range transportation plans, investments, and housing allocations to local land use planning to reduce VMT and vehicle trips. Specifically, SB 375 required CARB to establish GHG emissions-reduction targets for each of the 18 Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). AMBAG is the MPO for the Monterey Bay region,

[15] California Air Resources Board (CARB), 2022, *2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality*, https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/2022-sp.pdf, accessed December 7, 2022.

which includes San Benito County and the City of Hollister. Pursuant to the recommendations of the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC), CARB adopted per-capita reduction targets for each of the MPOs rather than a total magnitude reduction target.

- 2017 Update to the SB 375 Targets. CARB is required to update the targets for the MPOs every eight years. CARB adopted revised SB 375 targets for the MPOs in March 2018.[16] The updated targets become effective on October 1, 2018. The targets consider the need to further reduce VMT, as identified in the 2017 Scoping Plan Update (for SB 32), while balancing the need for additional and more flexible revenue sources to incentivize positive planning and action toward sustainable communities. Like the 2010 targets, the updated SB 375 targets are in units of percent per-capita reduction in GHG emissions from automobiles and light trucks relative to 2005; this excludes reductions anticipated from implementation of state technology and fuels strategies, and any potential future state strategies, such as statewide road user pricing. The proposed targets call for greater per-capita GHG emission reductions from SB 375 than are currently in place, which for 2035, translates into proposed targets that either match or exceed the emission-reduction levels in the MPOs' currently adopted SCS.[17]

In addition to these regulations, California has also adopted other regulations that reduce GHG emissions as they relate to transportation, renewable energy, energy efficiency, solid waste, water efficiency, and short-lived climate pollutants (e.g., black carbon and CH_4). These are listed in Table 4.8-4, *List of State GHG Regulations*. See Appendix B, *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data*, for a complete summary of additional regulations not summarized in this section.

TABLE 4.8-4 LIST OF STATE GHG REGULATIONS

Sector	Regulations
State GHG Targets	AB 32, SB 32, AB 1279, and EO B-15-30
Transportation Sector	AB 1493, EO S-01-07, and SB 375
Renewable Energy	SB 1078, SB 107, SB X1-2, EO S-14-08, SB 350, SB 100, and EO B-55-18
Energy Efficiency	Title 24, Part 6, *Building Energy Efficiency Standards* Title 24, Part 11, *Green Building Standards Code* (CALGreen) Title 20, *Appliance Efficiency Regulations*
Solid Waste	AB 939, AB 341, AB 1327, and AB 1826
Water Efficiency	SBX7-7 and AB 1881
Short-Lived Climate Pollutants	SB 1383

Notes: See Appendix B, *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data*, for a summary of each of the identified regulations.
Source: Compiled by PlaceWorks, 2022.

[16] CARB, 2018. *Updated Final Staff Report: Proposed Update to the SB 375 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Targets*.

[17] CARB.,2018, February. *Proposed Update to the SB 375 Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Targets*. https://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/sb375/sb375_target_update_final_staff_report_feb2018.pdf.

Regional Regulations

Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments

AMBAG is the transportation planning, coordinating, and financing agency for the Monterey Bay region, which includes Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties. AMBAG is a federally designated MPO and is required to produce certain documents that maintain the region's eligibility for federal transportation assistance. Among AMBAG's many functions, it also authors the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the SCS (MTP/SCS) with Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPA), transit providers, MBARD, state and federal governments, and organizations involved in transportation planning. The Council of San Benito County Governments (SBCOG) is the RTPA for San Benito County and is responsible for the county-wide Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which includes the City of Hollister. AMBAG maintains the region's travel demand model, which incorporates regional housing, population, and employment forecasts, including those for San Benito County, which includes the City of Hollister. AMBAG is primarily funded from state and federal transportation funds and planning grants.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainability Communities Strategy

AMBAG adopted the 2045 MTP/SCS in June 2022 with a framework of goals and policy objectives to address the mobility and accessibility needs of the region.[18] As the MPO, AMBAG updates the MTP/SCS every four years through a bottom-up process involving numerous stakeholders to develop a new growth and an updated multimodal transportation network with the available revenues.

The 2045 MTCP/SCS must comply with specific state and federal mandates, including SB 375. SB 375 promotes the coordination of transportation investments with land use patterns, such that the region makes informed decisions to reduce GHG emissions by providing more direct access to destinations as well as by providing alternative transportation options. Under SB 375, the 2045 MTCP/SCS should demonstrate how the land use and transportation measures will be implemented to meet the region's GHG emission-reduction targets established by CARB (3 percent reduction per-capita change by 2020 and 6 percent per-capita reduction by 2035 from passenger vehicles).

This living document provides a number of improvements to better promote active transportation (bicycling and walking) and electric vehicle infrastructure to help reduce GHG emissions resulting from the consumption of fossil fuels and to help the region achieve statewide policies aimed at reducing GHG emissions over the next 25 years. Overall, the investments identified in the 2045 MTP/SCS are expected to result in significant benefits to the region, not only with respect to transportation and mobility, but also economic activity, air quality, safety, and social equity.

[18] Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), 2022. *2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan & the Sustainable Communities Strategy* (MTP/SCS). https://www.ambag.org/plans/2045-metropolitan-transportation-plan-sustainable-communities-strategy, accessed November 28, 2022.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Local Regulations

Hollister Municipal Code

The Hollister Municipal Code (HMC) includes various directives to minimize adverse impacts related to GHG emissions in Hollister. The HMC is organized by title, chapter, and section. Most provisions related to GHG impacts are included in Title 15, *Buildings and Construction,* and Title 17, *Zoning,* as follows:

- Chapter 15.04, *Hollister Building Code.* This chapter provides regulations for all new construction and any alterations, repairs, relocations, or reconstruction of any building. This chapter ensures that the minimum requirements and standards for building standards are met to protect the public safety and welfare of the city. Section 15.04.050, *Construction codes adopted by reference*, establishes that the City adopts the 2019 edition of the California Building Standards and Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations to ensure buildings are developed up to code. This also includes the California Energy Code and CAL Green.

- Chapter 17.04, *Residential Zoning Districts*. This chapter defines the applicable regulations regarding development and new land uses in the residential zoning districts established by Section 17.02.030, *Districts Established and Designated*. Section 17.04.030, *Residential general development standards*, provides regulations for energy efficiency, such that solar access shall be maintained through the siting and orientation of buildings and two/three-story residences.
- Chapter 17.10, *Industrial/Manufacturing Zones*. This chapter defines the regulations applicable to development and new land uses in the industrial zoning districts established by Section 17.02.030, *Districts Established and Designated*. Section 17.10.040, *Industrial Zoning District performance standards*, established building regulations that should be designed to conserve energy (such as passive solar, solar panels on roofs or in the parking lot) and incorporated of additive measures to incentives reduced vehicle trips (such as shaded outdoor eating areas, Class II bicycle paths with road improvements, and integration of shade trees along sidewalk frontages).
- Chapter 17.12, *Special Purpose Zones*. This chapter is intended to regulate development of new land uses in the special purpose zoning districts established by Section 17.02.030, *Districts Established and Designated*. Section 17.12.060, *Open space, park and public facilities/institution general development standards,* encourages the use of solar panels on roofs or in the parking lot to conserve maximum energy.
- Chapter 17.16, *Performance Standards*. This chapter defines the performance standards for specific land uses, land use activities, and site-specific conditions. Section 17.16.120, *Solar energy development standards*, regulates the passive heating and cooling opportunities that shall be incorporated in all new development.

4.8.1.4 EXISTING CONDITIONS

California's GHG Sources and Relative Contribution

In 2021, the statewide GHG emissions inventory was updated for 2000 to 2019 emissions using the GWPs in IPCC's AR4.[19] Based on these GWPs, California produced 418.2 $MMTCO_2e$ GHG emissions in 2019. California's transportation sector was the single-largest generator of GHG emissions, producing 39.7 percent of the state's total emissions. Industrial sector emissions made up 21.1 percent, and electric power generation made up 14.1 percent of the state's emissions inventory. Other major sectors of GHG emissions include commercial and residential (10.5 percent), agriculture and forestry (7.6 percent), high GWP (4.9 percent), and recycling and waste (2.1 percent). [20]

Since the peak level in 2004, California's GHG emissions have generally followed a decreasing trend. In 2016, California statewide GHG emissions dropped below the AB 32 target for year 2020 of 431 $MMTCO_2e$ and have remained below this target since then. In 2019, emissions from routine GHG-emitting activities statewide were almost 13 $MMTCO_2e$ lower than the AB 32 target for year 2020. Per-capita GHG emissions in California have dropped from a 2001 peak of 14.0 $MTCO_2e$ per person to 10.5 $MTCO_2e$ per person in 2019, a 25 percent decrease.

Transportation emissions continued to decline in 2019 statewide as they had done in 2018, with even more substantial reductions due to a significant increase in renewable diesel. Since 2008, California's electricity sector has followed an overall downward trend in emissions. In 2019, solar power generation continued its rapid growth since 2013. Emissions from high-GWP gases made up 4.9 percent of California's emissions in 2019. This continues the increasing trend as the gases replace ozone-depleting substances being phased out under the 1987 Montreal Protocol. Overall trends in the inventory also demonstrate that the carbon intensity of California's economy (the amount of carbon pollution per million dollars of gross domestic product) has declined 45 percent since the 2001 peak, though the state's gross domestic product grew 63 percent during this period.[21]

2019 Community-Wide GHG Emissions Inventory

As part of the process to prepare the proposed 2023 CAP, PlaceWorks revised the existing community-wide GHG inventories for 2005 and 2019 to support environmental review of projects subject to CEQA. These revisions included the addition of new sectors and sources, revised emission factors, updated GWP for certain GHGs, different data sources for certain sectors for consistency with the proposed 2040 General Plan, and adjustments to methods for certain sectors.

[19] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). 2013. *Fifth Assessment Report: Climate Change 2013*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

[20] CARB. 2021, July 28. *California Greenhouse Gas 2000-2019 Emissions Trends and Indicators Report*. https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/cc/inventory/pubs/reports/2000_2019/ghg_inventory_trends_00-19.pdf.

[21] CARB. 2021, July 28. *California Greenhouse Gas 2000-2019 Emissions Trends and Indicators Report*. https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/cc/inventory/pubs/reports/2000_2019/ghg_inventory_trends_00-19.pdf.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

As shown in Table 4.8-5, *Existing EIR Study Area GHG Emissions Inventory*, in 2019 238,550 $MTCO_2e$ were generated, which represented a 21 percent reduction from the updated 2005 baseline per-capita emissions. This decrease from the 2005 per-capita emissions is primarily the result of emission reductions across the nonresidential energy sector, water and wastewater, and residential energy sectors.[22] Reductions in these sectors were primarily caused by CCCE and PG&E supplying more renewable and carbon-free sources in 2019. However, reduction in per-capita GHG emissions were partially offset by increases in the solid waste, off-road equipment, and transportation sectors due to a growing population and an increase in VMT.

TABLE 4.8-5 EXISTING EIR STUDY AREA GHG EMISSIONS INVENTORY

	Existing 2019 GHG Emissions ($MTCO_2e$/year)			
Emissions Sector	**City**	**SOI**	**EIR Study Area**	**Percentage of Total**
Transportation [a]	140,270	1,020	141,290	59%
Nonresidential energy	11,150	80	11,230	5%
Residential energy	24,240	250	24,490	10%
Off-road equipment	43,590	430	44,020	18%
Solid waste	17,930	170	18,100	8%
Water and wastewater	1,010	10	1,020	<1%
Agriculture	320	220	540	<1%
Land use and sequestration	-1,960	-180	-2,140	-1%
Total	**236,550**	**2,000**	**238,550**	**100%**
Service Population	52,671	498	53,170	NA
Per-Capita Emissions	4.5	4.0	4.5	NA

Note: NA: not available. Emissions may not total to 100 percent due to rounding. Based on GWPs in the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5).

a. The transportation sector analysis uses the "origin-destination" model, which accounts for travel demand by reporting all trips in which both the origin and destination are within the geographic area, as well as trips that have only an origin or destination within the area (accounts for travel demand into and outside of the city limits).

Source: Based on the emissions inventory and forecast being conducted for the Hollister Climate Action Plan, 2023.

4.8.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the proposed project would result in significant impact from GHG emissions if it would:

1. Generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment.
2. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs.
3. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to GHG emissions.

[22] PlaceWorks, 2022. *Draft Community Greenhouse Gas Inventories, Forecast, and Target Setting Memorandum.*

4.8.2.1 CONSISTENCY WITH AB 1279

The proposed 2023 CAP prepared for the proposed 2040 General Plan forecasts growth in Hollister through year 2045; therefore, this environmental impact report (EIR) analyzes the potential for the proposed project to conflict with statewide GHG reduction goals identified in the CARB Scoping Plan that are applicable to local governments. This includes AB 1279, which requires an 85 percent reduction in GHG emissions by 2045 to stabilize CO_2e emissions and avoid the most catastrophic impacts of climate change as well as substantial progress toward carbon neutrality.[23] The proposed 2023 CAP identifies targets for Hollister that are consistent with the targets established for the state for year 2045:

- 2045 Target: 31,500 $MTCO_2e$ (85 percent below 1990 levels)[24]

4.8.2.2 MASS EMISSIONS AND HEALTH EFFECTS

On December 24, 2018, in the case *Sierra Club et al. v. County of Fresno et al.* (Friant Ranch), the California Supreme Court determined that the EIR for the proposed Friant Ranch project failed to adequately analyze the project's air quality impacts on human health. The EIR prepared for the project, which involved a master planned retirement community in Fresno County, showed that project-related mass emissions would exceed the SJVAPCD's regional significance thresholds. In its findings, the California Supreme Court affirmed the holding of the Court of Appeal that EIRs for projects must not only identify impacts to human health, but also provide an "analysis of the correlation between the project's emissions and human health impacts" related to each criteria air pollutant that exceeds the regional significance thresholds or explain why it could not make such a connection. In general, the ruling focuses on the correlation of emissions of toxic air contaminants and criteria air pollutants and their impact to human health.

In 2009, the USEPA issued an endangerment finding for six GHGs (CO_2, CH_4, N_2O, HFCs, PFCs, and SF_6) to regulate GHG emissions from passenger vehicles. The endangerment finding is based on evidence that shows an increase in mortality and morbidity associated with increases in average temperatures, which increase the likelihood of heat waves and ozone levels. The effects of climate change are identified in Table 4.8-2. While these identified effects, such as sea-level rise and increases in extreme weather, can indirectly impact human health, neither the USEPA nor CARB has established ambient air quality standards for GHG emissions. The state's GHG-reduction strategy outlines a path to avoid the most

[23] The 2022 Scoping Plan includes statewide measures to achieve the state's carbon neutrality goals under Executive Order B-55-18 such as carbon dioxide removal (CDR) that are not applicable to local governments. Carbon neutrality goals are a "no impact" level and not a "less than significant" impact level for climate change effects. There are presently no reliable means of forecasting how future technological developments related to carbon dioxide removal may affect future emissions in a planning jurisdiction. Therefore, carbon neutrality targets are not directly applicable to local governments and CEQA projects to mitigate GHG emissions impacts of a proposed project. Moreover, AB 1279 GHG reduction targets for 2045 are in line with the scientifically established levels needed in the U.S. to limit global warming below 1.5 to 2.0 degrees Celsius, the warming threshold at which scientists say there will likely be major climate disruptions such as super droughts and rising sea levels. For these reason, the targets of AB 1279 are applicable to the EIR. However, the CAP includes measures that align with the state's carbon neutrality goals under Executive Order B-55-18 and per-capita targets under SB 32.

[24] Hollister's 2005 emissions were 247,030 $MTCO_2e$. 1990 levels are assumed to be 15 percent below that, or 209,980 $MTCO_2e$. The 2045 target is 85 percent below 1990 levels, or 31,500 $MTCO_2e$.

catastrophic effects of climate change. Yet the state's GHG-reduction goals and strategies are based on the state's path toward reducing statewide cumulative GHGs, as outlined in AB 32, SB 32, EO S-03-05, and AB 1279.

The two significance thresholds that the City uses to analyze GHG impacts are based on achieving the statewide GHG-reduction goals (Impact Discussion GHG-1) and relying on consistency with policies or plans adopted to reduce GHG emissions (Impact Discussion GHG-2). Further, because no single project is large enough to result in a measurable increase in global concentration of GHG emissions, climate change impacts of a project are considered on a cumulative basis. Without federal ambient air quality standards for GHG emissions and given the cumulative nature of GHG emissions and the City's significance thresholds that are tied to reducing the state's cumulative GHG emissions, it is not feasible at this time to connect the project's specific GHG emissions to the potential health impacts of climate change.

4.8.2.1 METHODOLOGY

This GHG evaluation was prepared in accordance with the requirements of CEQA to determine if significant GHG impacts are likely to occur in conjunction with future development that would be accommodated by the proposed project. The City's GHG emissions inventory was developed as part of the proposed 2023 CAP and includes the following sectors:

- Transportation includes GHG emissions created by driving on-road vehicles, including passenger and freight vehicles.
- Energy includes GHG emissions attributed to the use of electricity and natural gas in residential and nonresidential buildings.
- Solid Waste Disposal includes the GHG emissions released from trash collected in the City of Hollister.
- Off-road equipment includes GHG emissions from equipment that does not provide on-road transportation, such as tractors for construction or equipment used for landscape maintenance
- Agriculture includes GHG emissions from fertilizer use for crop cultivation.
- Water and wastewater accounts for the electricity used to transport every gallon of water or wastewater to residents and businesses, as well as direct emissions resulting from the processing of wastewater material.
- Land use and sequestration includes GHG emissions released into the atmosphere from development of previously undeveloped land and GHG emissions saved from carbon absorption and storage in trees.

Industrial sources of emissions that require a permit from MBARD are not included in the community inventory. However, due to the 15/15 Rule, natural gas and electricity use data for industrial land uses may also be aggregated with the nonresidential land uses in the data provided by PG&E. Lifecycle emissions are not included in this analysis because not enough information is available for the proposed project; therefore, they would be speculative. Black carbon emissions are not included in the GHG analysis because CARB does not include this pollutant in the state's GHG emissions inventory and treats this short-lived climate pollutant separately.

4.8.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

GHG-1 Implementation of the proposed project would generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment.

2040 General Plan

Future potential development under the proposed 2040 General Plan would contribute to global climate change through direct and indirect emissions of GHGs in the city. However, a general plan is a long-range policy document that does not directly result in development without additional approvals. Any development proposed in the city must be analyzed for consistency with the General Plan, zoning requirements, and other applicable local and state requirements; comply with the requirements of CEQA if required; and obtain all necessary clearances and permits from regulatory agencies.

Buildout of the proposed 2040 General Plan is not linked to a specific development time frame but is assumed over a 20-year project horizon through 2040. This EIR also analyzes the potential for the proposed project to conflict with the GHG reduction goals established under AB 1279, which include substantial progress toward the state's carbon neutrality goals by year 2045. As a result, the City would need to reduce GHG emissions by 85 percent below 1990 levels to ensure the City is on a trajectory to achieve the long-term goal under AB 1279 and substantial progress toward the state's carbon neutrality goal.

Table 4.8-6, *EIR Study Area Year 2045 GHG Emissions Forecast*, provides a comparison of the change in GHG emissions in the EIR Study Area between the existing conditions (2019) and trajectory to AB 1279 for year 2045.

Year 2045 Emissions Compared to Existing Conditions

As shown in Table 4.8-6, buildout of the land uses in year 2045 would result in a decrease of 213,460 $MTCO_2e$ of GHG emissions with state and local reductions from existing conditions. In addition, while buildout under the year 2045 is projected to increase the service population by 35,012 persons, emissions per person would decrease compared to existing baseline. Emissions per service population would decrease to 0.3 $MTCO_2e$/SP in year 2045 from 4.5 $MTCO_2e$/SP for the existing year 2019.

Consistency with AB 1279 GHG Reduction Targets

As mentioned previously, this EIR also analyzes the potential for the proposed project to conflict with the GHG reduction goals established under AB 1279, which include substantial progress toward the state's carbon neutrality goals. As a result, the City would need to reduce GHG emissions by 85 percent below 1990 levels to ensure the City is on a trajectory to achieve the long-term goal under AB 1279 and substantial progress toward the state's carbon neutrality goal. This is equivalent to 31,500 $MTCO_2e$ in the EIR Study Area by year 2045.

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TABLE 4.8-6 EIR STUDY AREA YEAR 2045 GHG EMISSIONS FORECAST

Emissions Sector	GHG Emissions ($MTCO_2e$/Year)									
	Existing (2019)				Year (2045)				Net Change	
	City	SOI	EIR Study Area	%	City	SOI	EIR Study Area	%	EIR Study Area	%
Transportation	140,270	1,020	141,290	59%	268,430	1,810	270,240	62%	128,950	91%
Nonresidential energy	11,150	80	11,230	5%	16,900	90	16,990	4%	5,760	51%
Residential energy	24,240	250	24,490	10%	41,970	650	42,620	10%	18,130	74%
Off-road equipment	43,590	430	44,020	18%	73,880	900	74,780	17%	30,760	70%
Solid waste	17,930	170	18,100	8%	29,660	360	30,020	7%	11,920	66%
Water and wastewater	1,010	10	1,020	0%	1,670	20	1,690	0%	670	66%
Agriculture	320	220	540	0%	180	140	320	0%	-220	-41%
Land use and sequestration	-1,960	-180	-2,140	-1%	-2,590	-460	-3,050	-1%	-910	43%
Total Community Emissions	236,550	2,000	**238,550**	**100%**	430,100	3,510	**433,610**	**100%**	**195,060**	**82%**
GHG Reductions from State and Local Actions (i.e., CAP Measures)	NA	NA	NA	—	-402,180	-6,350	**-408,530**	—	NA	—
Total Community Emissions with State and Local Reductions	**NA**	**NA**	**NA**	**—**	27,920	-2,850	**25,090**	**—**	**-213,460**	**-89%**
Service Population (SP)	52,671	498	53,169	—	87,128	1,059	88,181	—	35,012	66%
$MTCO_2e$/SP	4.5	4.0	4.5	—	0.3	-2.7	0.3	—	-4.2	-94%
Trajectory to AB 1279 for Year 2045										
Magnitude Threshold	NA	NA	31,500	-85%	**Achieves Threshold: Yes**		**-6,410**	**-88%**	—	—

Notes: Emissions may not total to 100 percent due to rounding. Based on GWPs in the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5). SP = service population.
Source: Based on the emissions inventory and forecast being conducted for the proposed *Hollister Climate Action Plan*, 2023. See Appendix B, *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data*.

As shown in Table 4.8-6 and discussed previously, it is anticipated that year 2045 conditions would result in an overall decrease in emissions compared to the existing baseline. Therefore, the EIR Study Area would achieve the 85 percent reduction necessary to ensure the City is on a trajectory to achieve the long-term year goals under AB 1279. Overall, GHG emissions impacts for the proposed project are considered less than significant in regard to meeting the long-term year carbon neutrality goals of AB 1279.

While growth within the EIR Study Area would cumulatively contribute to GHG emissions impacts, the proposed Land Use (LU), Circulation (C), Community Services and Facilities (CSF), Natural Resource and Conservation (NRC), and Health and Safety (HS) Elements of the 2040 General Plan contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts from GHG emissions and to reduce those GHG emissions. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to minimize GHG emissions in the EIR Study Area:

Goal LU-3: Encourage mixed-use development projects that create vibrant, walkable districts and contain residential and community serving commercial uses. (new)

- Policy LU-3.1: Mix of Uses. Require commercial uses on mixed-use properties to provide community-supporting services, retail, restaurants, and other amenities for residents and visitors and to promote pedestrian activity and reduce the need to drive to other areas in the city. (rewrite of L-2.3)

Goal C-1: Provide for a healthy, active community based on complete streets, reflecting a balanced, safe, multimodal transportation system for all users, where pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities will be emphasized along with vehicular facilities. (new)

- Policy C-1.1: Sustainable Transportation. Reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from transportation by increasing mode shares for sustainable travel modes such as walking, bicycling, and public transit. (new)
- Policy C-1.4: Transportation Demand Management. Reduce single-occupant vehicle usage using Transportation Demand Management strategies. (new)
- Policy C-1.5: Public Transit Regional Coordination. Cooperatively work with Council of San Benito County Governments, Caltrans, and San Benito County to develop, implement, and maintain public transit services. (Policy C4.2)
- Policy C-1.6: Public Transit Improvements. Promote public realm improvements that support increased use of public transit, including inviting sidewalks, ADA-compliant curb ramps, signal priorities, and amenities such as sidewalks, benches, bus stop shelters, signage, street lighting, and real-time schedule systems on key routes. (new)
- Action C-1.1: Performance and Monitoring. Monitor the City's mode split progress on reducing VMT, and reducing GHG emissions from VMT, as data is available. (new)

Goal C-3: Build and maintain a safe, connected, and equitable pedestrian, bicycle and micromobility network that provides access to community destinations such as employment centers, transit, schools, shopping, and recreation. (new)

- Policy C-3.1: Pedestrian and Bicycle Network. Create and maintain a pedestrian- and bike-friendly environment in Hollister and increase the number of people who choose to walk and bike. (new)

- Policy C-3.3: Pedestrian Right-of-Way Improvements. Require new developments to construct or contribute to improvements that enhance the pedestrian experience including human-scale lighting, streetscaping, crosswalk striping, crossing lights, wayfinding signage, and accessible sidewalks adjacent to the site. (new)
- Policy C-3.5: Bicycle Improvements. Require new developments to construct or contribute to improvements that enhance the cyclist experience, including bike lanes and bicycle parking. (new)
- Policy C-3.6: Bicycle Facilities. Cooperatively work with Council of San Benito County Governments, Caltrans, and San Benito County to develop, implement and maintain bicycle facilities providing direct access to major public facilities, schools and employment centers as described in the San Benito County Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plan. (Policy C2.1)
- Action C-3.1: Pedestrian Master Plan. Prepare and adopt a Pedestrian Master Plan that identifies citywide pedestrian network improvements. (new)
- Action C-3.3: Bicycle Master Plan. Prepare and adopt a Bicycle Master Plan that identifies citywide bicycle network improvements. (new)
- Action C-3.5: Pedestrian and Bicycle Trails and Routes Awareness. Increase awareness of existing pedestrian and bicycle trails and routes by working with outside agencies and developers to promote these amenities to residents. Collaborate with the County on development of the trail network. (new)

Goal C-4: Implement a uniform set of standards for Hollister's transportation system including standard rights-of-way and typical sections. These standards may be amended as necessary in response to changes in technology and industry design standards. (Goal C-4)

- Policy C-4.6: TDM Requirements. Require new or existing developments that meet specific size, capacity, and/or context conditions to implement Transportation Demand Management strategies and other single vehicle occupancy reduction methodologies. Comply with tiered trip reduction and VMT reduction targets and monitoring that are consistent with the targets of the City's VMT CEQA thresholds. (new)

Goal CSF-4: Ensure adequate and sustainable solid waste management that meets the existing and future needs of the city and reduces disposable waste over time. (new)

- Policy CSF-4.2: Waste Reduction and Recycling. Comply with State laws to promote recycling, and divert recyclable materials from the landfill such as encouraging businesses to recycle building and other materials; promoting composting by restaurants, institutions, and residences; and supporting programs to promote recycling. Encourage residential, commercial and industrial customers to evaluate and reduce their waste streams and to participate in waste exchanges and used goods resale programs. (Policy CSF4.11)
- Action CSF-4.1: Identification of Recycling Program Opportunities. Create a formal recycled product procurement program for the City, and work with local industry and commercial enterprises to encourage the purchase and use of recycled materials where possible. (Implementation Measure CSF.K)
- Action CSF-4.2: Zero Waste Goal. Prepare a zero-waste strategic plan to maximize solid waste diversion community-wide. (new)

- Action CSF-4.3: Reusable Foodware Ordinance. Develop and adopt a Reusable Foodware Ordinance that requires the use of reusable foodware when dining on-site at restaurants and the use of compostable or recyclable foodware containers for carryout orders. (new)

Goal NRC-3: Protect clean air resources. (Goal NRC2)

- Policy NRC-3.8: Commercial and Industrial Projects Exceeding 10,000 Square Feet. Require new or expanded commercial and industrial projects exceeding 10,000 square feet of gross floor area, such as big-box stores, warehouses, distribution centers, and similar uses, to be zero-emissions operations, including the facilities themselves and the associated fleets. Require all necessary measures, such as the following, to achieve zero emissions:
  - Provide adequate on-site parking for all anticipated truck traffic to prevent idling and off-site queuing.
  - Provide electrified loading docks with receptacles allowing plug-in of refrigerated and other types of trailers that otherwise would receive power from the tractor unit.
  - Utilize heavy-duty trucks that are model year 2014 or later.
  - Utilize zero-emission or "clean fleet" for delivery vehicles.
  - Utilize zero-emission forklifts, pallet trucks and jacks, stackers, and other yard equipment.
  - Implement practices to control road dust, tire wear, brake dust, and other contaminants in paved areas. (new)
- Policy NRC-3.10: Idling of Diesel Engines. Prohibit idling of diesel engines citywide. Prohibit non-diesel truck, construction vehicle, and transit vehicle idling within 100 feet of sensitive receptors, such as homes, schools, playgrounds, sports fields, childcare centers, senior centers, and long-term health care facilities. (new)
- Action NRC-3.1: Idling Ordinance. Adopt an ordinance that matches or is more stringent than the State's maximum idling law, and coordinate with California Air Resources Board, Monterey Bay Air Resources District, and law enforcement to achieve compliance. (new)

Goal NRC-4: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Hollister to meet or exceed state targets. (new)

- Policy NRC-4.1: Carbon Neutral. Encourage efforts that help Hollister become a net carbon-neutral community by 2045. (new)
- Policy NRC-4.2: Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Targets. Maintain a greenhouse gas reduction trajectory that meets or exceeds the statewide greenhouse gas reduction targets of Executive Orders B-30-15 (40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030) and S-03-05 (80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050) to ensure the City is consistent with statewide efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. (new)
- Policy NRC-4.3: Energy Use. Reduce energy use through use of energy-efficient appliances, lighting, and materials in our homes, businesses, and City facilities and use education and incentives to promote and sustain energy-conserving design and practices. (new)
- Policy NRC-4.4: Climate Action Plan Implementation in City Work Plans. Include Climate Action Plan implementation needs, including funding sources and staff time, in City department work plans. (new)
- Policy NRC-4.5: Infill and Mixed-Use Development. Support the development of infill sites and compact mixed-use projects that reduce travel distances and promote alternative modes of transportation. (new)

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- Policy NRC-4.6: Low Emission/No-Carbon Transportation. Encourage the transition to low- or no-carbon transportation system, which could include installation of electric vehicle charging stations at public and private facilities, expansion of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and conversion to zero-emission buses. (new)
- Policy NRC-4.7: Municipal Fleet Alternative Fuel Vehicles. Shift municipal vehicle fleet from gasoline- and diesel-powered vehicles zero-emission and low-carbon vehicles, to the extent possible. (new)
- Policy NRC-4.8: Carbon Free Energy. Promote carbon-free energy sources in new and existing developments. (new)
- Policy NRC-4.9: Zero Waste Community. Reduce and ultimately eliminate single-use materials, like plastic cups, Styrofoam containers, and similar disposable items, from landfills, and support the reuse of materials and products, repair and sharing of items, and rely on sustainable materials to build homes and businesses. (new)
- Action NRC-4.1: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Monitoring. Annually monitor and report on changes in community-wide emissions and progress toward greenhouse gas emission-reduction targets, and revise greenhouse gas reduction efforts as needed to progress toward net-carbon neutrality and other targets. (new)
- Action NRC-4.2: Building Standards Code Efficiency Amendments. Conduct a study to explore opportunities to amend the Hollister Building Standards Code to improve building energy efficiency, transition to carbon-free energy sources, increase renewable energy supplies, and promote greater electric vehicle adoption. (new)
- Action NRC-4.3: Zero-Waste Plan. Prepare a Zero-Waste Plan in partnership with the San Benito County Integrated Waste Management Regional Agency. (new)
- Action NRC-4.4: Community Energy Efficiency Education Programs. Develop community education programs on energy efficiency and renewable energy, sustainable transportation options, waste reduction, and water conservation in partnership with regional agencies and community groups. (new)

Goal NRC-7: Promote energy efficiency and resilient design in the built environment. (Goal NRC3)

- Policy NRC-5.1: Development Practices to Conserve Resources. Promote development practices, which will result in the conservation of energy, water, minerals, and other natural resources, and promote the use of renewable energy technologies, such as solar and wind, when possible. (Policy NRC3.1)
- Policy NRC-5.2: Resource Efficiency in Site Development. Encourage site planning and development practices that reduce energy demand and incorporate resource- and energy-efficient infrastructure. (Policy NRC3.3)
- Policy NRC-5.3: Resource-Efficient Building Design. Promote and encourage residences and businesses to be resource, energy, and water efficient by creating incentives and removing obstacles to promote their use. Require those proposing new development to incorporate energy conservation measures in the design and construction of all proposed residential, commercial, industrial, and public buildings. This would include:

- Shading of parking lots and summertime shading of south-facing windows
- Requiring those proposing new development to design all proposed commercial, office, and industrial structures with high-efficiency heating-ventilation-air conditioning (HVAC) systems for maximum energy efficiency
- Requiring those proposing new development to design all window systems to reduce thermal gain during warm weather and heat loss during cool weather
- Encouraging the use of domestic solar energy. (Policy NRC3.4 & Implementation Measures NRC.S)

- Policy NRC-5.5: Project Review for Energy Conservation Measures. Review all development proposals for energy efficiency and features, and conservation of water resources. Review impacts on mineral resources and other natural resources prior to the issuance of any building permit. (Implementation Measures NRC.W)
- Policy NRC-5.6: Title 24 Requirements. Require new development projects to meet or exceed Title 24 energy conservation requirements, and, where possible, require structural and landscaping design to make use of natural heating and cooling. Encourage the use of solar and alternative energy technologies to meet or exceed Title 24 requirements. (Implementation Measures NRC.J)
- Policy NRC-5.9: Energy Providers Assistance. Obtain the assistance of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company and Central Coast Community Energy in reviewing proposals for commercial buildings and major subdivisions of more than 25 units during the design and approval process to ensure the incorporation of energy-efficiency recommendations into the plans. (Implementation Measures NRC.C)

Goal HS-2: Develop a resilient community with the ability to adapt to climate change hazards. (new)

- Policy HS-2.5: Sustainability Features. Encourage new developments and existing property owners to incorporate sustainable, energy-efficient, and environmentally regenerative features into their facilities, landscapes, and structures to reduce energy demands and improve on-site resilience. Support financing efforts to increase community access to these features. (new)

Local GHG Reduction Measures

The City of Hollister will also be implementing the GHG reduction measures identified in the proposed 2023 CAP to reduce GHG emissions in the EIR Study Area. The proposed 2023 CAP provides an analysis of the community's existing GHG emissions and projected future emissions in different scenarios and provides a framework for reducing GHG emissions through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Additionally, the proposed 2023 CAP is consistent with the CEQA Guidelines for Plans for the Reduction of GHG Emissions (California Code of Regulations, Section 15183.5), which allows the proposed 2023 CAP to be used in a streamlined environmental review of GHG emissions for future development projects within the city.

The proposed 2023 CAP identifies GHG emissions-reductions targets for Hollister that would ensure consistency with the state GHG reduction goals of EO S-03-05 and substantial progress toward the state's carbon neutrality goals. Table 4.8-7, *Proposed 2023 CAP Local GHG Reduction Strategies*, shows the reductions associated with each of the GHG reduction strategies in the proposed 2023 CAP.

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TABLE 4.8-7 PROPOSED 2023 CAP LOCAL GHG REDUCTION STRATEGIES

Number	Community-wide Emissions-Reduction Measures	EIR Study Area Local GHG Reductions for Year 2045 ($MTCO_2e$)
1	Municipal energy efficiency and conservation	20
2	Sustainable community-wide building standards	3,710
3	Residential energy efficiency and conservation	2,140
4	Nonresidential energy conservation and efficiency	2,470
8	Electrification	17,290
9	Building code updates and incentives for electrification of new buildings	7,040
10	Vehicle miles traveled	12,660
11	Active transportation infrastructure	1,010
13	Transit access	30,660
14	Electric vehicles	119,920
16	Electrification of construction and landscaping equipment	15,450
17	Reduce community-wide waste generation	9,180
18	Recycling and composting education	1,420
19	Methane capture at landfills	8,400
20	Reduce community-wide water use	490
22	Methane capture for wastewater treatment facilities	470
24	Tree planting and preservation	170
27	Sustainable agriculture and carbon sequestration	560
33	Car-share program	900
Total 2023 CAP GHG Reductions from All New Strategies and Existing Local Actions		233,960

Notes: Based on GWPs in the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5).
Source: Based on the emissions inventory and forecast being conducted for the Hollister Climate Action Plan, 2023. See Appendix B, Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data.

Table 4.8-8, *Year 2045 GHG Emissions-Reduction Target Analysis with the Proposed 2023 CAP*, shows that Hollister would achieve the GHG reduction target for year 2045 with implementation of the proposed 2023 CAP.

TABLE 4.8-8 YEAR 2045 GHG EMISSIONS-REDUCTION TARGET ANALYSIS WITH THE PROPOSED 2023 CAP

Scenario	GHG Emissions for Year 2045 ($MTCO_2e$/year)
Total Community Emissions	433,610
GHG Reductions from Existing Local and State Actions	174,570
GHG Reductions from CAP Measures	233,960
Total Community Emissions with State and Local Actions & CAP Measures	**25,090**
2045 GHG Reduction Target	31,500
Achieves GHG Reduction Target	**Yes**

Notes: Based on GWPs in the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5). SP = service population.
Source: Based on the emissions inventory and forecast being conducted for the Hollister Climate Action Plan, 2023. See Appendix B, Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data.

Furthermore, as described in Chapter 4.16, *Transportation*, the proposed 2040 General Plan outlines specific goals, policies, and actions that will help reduce VMT and therefore reduce GHG emissions from automobiles (see Impact Discussion TRANS-2). Therefore, implementation of these goals, policies, and actions of the proposed 2040 General Plan would reduce GHG emissions in the EIR Study Area to the extent feasible. As described and shown in Table 4.8-6, GHG emissions decreased by 88 percent from 1990 levels to satisfy the 85 percent decrease necessary to ensure the city is on a trajectory to achieve the long-term reductions goals of AB 1279 and substantial progress toward the state's carbon neutrality goal. As such, impacts are *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan and does not involve any land use changes that would result in indirect growth or change in building density and intensity. Because there is no specific land use component associated with the proposed 2023 CAP, its implementation would not directly result in the generation of GHG emissions. In addition, the proposed 2040 General Plan will reference the 2023 CAP, recognizing that the City's climate action planning efforts must be updated more regularly to be responsive to the changing regulations, guidance, technology, best practices, and science. For example, CAP transportation strategies that reduce VMT (e.g., Strategies 10 and 11) would result in reduction in GHG emissions from the transportation sector. Likewise, energy-efficiency improvements (e.g., Strategies 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 9) would reduce the heating and cooling requirements for buildings. These measures for increasing energy efficiency, increasing water efficiency (Strategy 4), and reducing energy demand (Strategies 5 and 6) would contribute to minimizing energy demand and energy sector emissions. Furthermore, the proposed 2023 CAP also supports partnering with CCCE and AMBAG Energy by publicizing energy-efficiency programs (Strategies 3, 4, and 7). Thus, implementation of the proposed 2023 CAP would result in beneficial impacts to GHG emissions. Implementation of the proposed project would not generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would affect air quality, implementation of the proposed project would not generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

GHG-2 Implementation of the proposed project would conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions.

2040 General Plan

Applicable plans adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions include CARB's Scoping Plan and AMBAG's 2045 MTP/SCS. A consistency analysis with these plans is presented herein.

CARB Scoping Plan

The CARB Scoping Plan is applicable to state agencies but is not directly applicable to cities/counties and individual projects (i.e., the Scoping Plan does not require local jurisdictions to adopt its policies, programs, or regulations to reduce GHG emissions). However, new regulations adopted by the state agencies from the Scoping Plan result in GHG emissions reductions at the local level. So local jurisdictions benefit from reductions in transportation emissions rates, increases in water efficiency in the building and landscape codes, and other statewide actions that affect a local jurisdiction's emissions inventory from the top down. Statewide strategies to reduce GHG emissions include the Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) and changes in the CAFE standards.

Project GHG emissions shown in Table 4.8-6 include reductions associated with statewide strategies that have been adopted since AB 32, SB 32, and AB 1279. Development projects accommodated under the proposed 2040 General Plan are required to adhere to the programs and regulations identified by the Scoping Plan and implemented by state, regional, and local agencies to achieve the statewide GHG reduction goals of AB 32, SB 32, and AB 1279. Future development projects would be required to comply with these state GHG emissions-reduction measures because they are statewide strategies. For example, new buildings associated with land uses accommodated by implementing the proposed 2040 General Plan would be required to meet the CALGreen and Building Energy Efficiency Standards in effect at the time when applying for building permits. Furthermore, as discussed under Impact Discussion GHG-1, the proposed 2040 General Plan includes goals, policies, and actions that would help reduce GHG emissions and therefore help achieve GHG reduction goals. The proposed project would not obstruct implementation of the CARB Scoping Plan, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy

SB 375 requires each MPO to prepare an SCS in its RTP. AMBAG updated and adopted an SCS in its RTP on June 15, 2022 (2045 MTP/SCS).[25] Under the 2045 RTP/SCS, the Monterey Bay region would meet the GHG targets provided under SB 375 with a 3 percent per-capita reduction from 2005 levels by 2020 and a 6 percent per-capita reduction from 2035 GHG emission levels by 2035. The 2045 AMBAG RTP/SCS focuses on achieving GHG reduction goals by focusing housing and employment growth in urbanized areas;

[25] Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), 2020, June. *Monterey Bay 2045 Moving Forward: 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy* (MTP/SCS). https://www.ambag.org/sites/default/files/2022-07/AMBAG_MTP-SCS_Final_EntireDocument_PDFA_Updated071422.pdf, accessed August 11,2022.

protecting sensitive habitat and open space; and investing in a more accessible transportation system. Additionally, the 2045 MTP/SCS includes economic development strategies to encourage job growth in job-poor communities and develop new housing centered in job-rich areas to address the jobs/housing imbalance as well as reduce VMT.

As described in Chapter 4.16, *Transportation*, the proposed 2040 General Plan outlines specific goals, policies, and actions that will help reduce VMT and therefore reduce GHG emissions from automobiles. Please see Impact Discussion TRANS-2 for a complete list of these goals, policies, and actions. Furthermore, implementation of the 2040 General Plan is projected to result in a decrease in GHG emissions on a per-capita basis. Thus, the proposed project would be consistent with the overall goals of AMBAG's 2045 RTP/SCS in concentrating new development in locations where there is existing infrastructure and transit (see Chapter 4.11, *Land Use and Planning*). Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with the land use concept plan in AMBAG's 2045 RTP/SCS and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan and does not involve any land use changes that would result in indirect growth or change in building density and intensity. Furthermore, as discussed under Impact Discussion GHG-1, implementation of the 2023 CAP would result in beneficial GHG emissions impacts by contributing to reducing VMT, increasing energy and water use efficiency, and increasing renewable energy use. Therefore, the 2023 CAP would be complementary to statewide and regional plans to reduce GHG and would not interfere with or obstruct the implementation of the CARB Scoping Plan or the 2045 AMBAG RTP/SCS. Implementation of the proposed CAP would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would affect air quality, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

GHG-3 Implementation of the proposed project would, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to GHG emissions.

2040 General Plan

Project-related GHG emissions are not confined to a particular air basin but are dispersed worldwide. Therefore, impacts under Impact Discussion GHG-1 are not project-specific impacts to global warming, but are the proposed project's contribution to this cumulative impact. As described under Impact Discussion GHG-1, implementation of the proposed project would result in a decrease in GHG emissions in year 2045 from existing baseline and would meet the long-term GHG reduction goal under AB 1279. Therefore, project-related GHG emissions and their contribution to global climate change would not be cumulatively considerable, and GHG emissions impacts would be *less than significant*.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan and does not involve any land use changes that would result in indirect growth or change in building density and intensity. Furthermore, as discussed under Impact Discussions GHG-1 and GHG-2, the implementation of the proposed 2023 CAP would result in beneficial GHG emissions impacts and would be consistent with applicable plans to reduce the city's GHG emissions. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to GHG emissions.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new GHG emissions, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to GHG emissions.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

4.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

This chapter describes the potential hazards and hazardous materials impacts associated with the approval and implementation of the proposed project. This chapter describes the regulatory framework and existing conditions, identifies criteria used to determine impact significance, provides an analysis of the potential hazards and hazardous materials impacts, and identifies policies that could minimize any potentially significant impacts. A discussion of wildland fire hazards is provided in Chapter 4.18, *Wildfire*.

4.9.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.9.1.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Federal Regulations

United States Environmental Protection Agency

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) is the primary federal agency that regulates hazardous materials and waste. In general, the USEPA works to develop and enforce regulations that implement environmental laws enacted by Congress. The agency is responsible for researching and setting national standards for a variety of environmental programs, delegating the responsibility for issuing permits, and monitoring and enforcing compliance to states and Native American tribes. USEPA programs promote handling hazardous wastes safely, cleaning up contaminated land, and reducing waste volumes through such strategies as recycling. California falls under the jurisdiction of USEPA Region 9. Under the authority of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and in cooperation with State and tribal partners, the USEPA Region 9 Waste Management and Superfund Divisions manage programs for site environmental assessment and cleanup, hazardous and solid waste management, and underground storage tanks.

United States Department of Transportation

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) has the regulatory responsibility for the safe transportation of hazardous materials between states and internationally. The USDOT regulations govern all means of transportation, except for those packages shipped by mail, which are covered by United States Postal Service regulations. The federal RCRA of 1976 (described later in this chapter) imposes additional standards for the transport of hazardous wastes.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires specific training for hazardous materials handlers, provision of information to employees who may be exposed to hazardous materials, and acquisition of material safety data sheets from materials manufacturers. The material safety data sheets describe the risks, as well as proper handling and procedures, related to specific hazardous materials. Employee training must include response and remediation procedures for hazardous materials releases and exposures.

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976, as amended by the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments of 1984

Federal hazardous waste laws are generally promulgated under the RCRA, as amended by the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments of 1984. These laws provide for the "cradle to grave" regulation of hazardous wastes. Any business, institution, or other entity that generates hazardous waste is required to identify and track its hazardous waste from the point of generation until it is recycled, reused, or disposed. The Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) is responsible for implementing the RCRA program as well as California's own hazardous waste laws, which are collectively known as the Hazardous Waste Control Law.

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act and the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986

Congress enacted the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), commonly known as "Superfund," on December 11, 1980. CERCLA established prohibitions and requirements concerning closed and abandoned hazardous waste sites; provided for liability of persons responsible for releases of hazardous waste at these sites; and established a trust fund to provide for cleanup when no responsible party could be identified. The Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) amended the CERCLA on October 17, 1986. SARA stressed the importance of permanent remedies and innovative treatment technologies in cleaning up hazardous waste sites; required Superfund actions to consider the standards and requirements found in other state and federal environmental laws and regulations; provided new enforcement authorities and settlement tools; increased state involvement in every phase of the Superfund program; increased the focus on human health problems posed by hazardous waste sites; encouraged greater citizen participation in making decisions on how sites should be cleaned up; and increased the size of the trust fund to $8.5 billion.

Emergency Planning Community Right-to-Know Act

The Emergency Planning Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), also known as SARA Title III, was enacted in October 1986. This law requires state and local governments to plan for chemical emergencies. Reported information is then made publicly available so that interested parties may become informed about potentially dangerous chemicals in their community. EPCRA Sections 301 through 312 are administered by USEPA's Office of Emergency Management. USEPA's Office of Information Analysis and Access implements the EPCRA Section 313 program. In California, SARA Title III is implemented through the California Accidental Release Prevention (CalARP) program.

Hazardous Materials Transportation Act

The USDOT regulates hazardous materials transportation under Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). State agencies that have primary responsibility for enforcing federal and state regulations and responding to hazardous materials transportation emergencies are the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The California State Fire Marshal's Office has oversight authority for hazardous materials liquid pipelines. The California Public Utilities Commission has oversight authority for natural gas pipelines in California. These agencies also govern permitting for hazardous materials transportation.

The Stafford Act

The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act) of 1988 authorizes federal government assistance for emergencies and disasters when state and local capabilities are exceeded. The Stafford Act forms the statutory authority for most federal disaster response activities, especially as they relate to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and FEMA programs.

Federal Response Plan

The Federal Response Plan of 1999 is a signed agreement among 27 federal departments and agencies and other resource providers, including the American Red Cross, that: (1) provides the mechanism for coordinating delivery of federal assistance and resources to augment efforts of state and local governments overwhelmed by a major disaster or emergency; (2) supports implementation of the Stafford Act, as well as individual agency statutory authorities; and (3) supplements other federal emergency operations plans developed to address specific hazards. The Federal Response Plan is implemented in anticipation of a significant event likely to result in a need for federal assistance or in response to an actual event requiring federal assistance under a Presidential declaration of a major disaster or emergency. The Federal Response Plan is part of the National Response Framework, which was most recently updated on October 28, 2019.

National Response Framework

The National Response Framework, published by the United States Department of Homeland Security and most recently updated on October 28, 2019, is a guide for the nation to respond to all types of disasters and emergencies. This framework describes specific authorities and best practices for managing incidents that range from serious local or large-scale terrorist attacks or catastrophic natural disasters. In addition, the National Response Framework describes the principles, roles, and responsibilities, and coordinating structures for responding to an incident, and further describes how response efforts integrate with those of the other mission areas.

State Regulations

California Environmental Protection Agency

One of the primary State agencies that regulates hazardous materials is the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA). CalEPA is authorized by the USEPA to enforce and implement certain federal hazardous materials laws and regulations. The California DTSC, a department of the CalEPA, protects California and Californians from exposure to hazardous waste, primarily under the authority of the RCRA and the California Health and Safety Code.[1] The DTSC requirements include the need for written programs and response plans, such as Hazardous Materials Management Plans. The DTSC programs include dealing with aftermath cleanups of improper hazardous waste management; evaluation of samples taken from

[1] Hazardous Substance Account, Chapter 6.5 (Section 25100 et seq.) and the Hazardous Waste Control Law, Chapter 6.8 (Section 25300 et seq.) of the Health and Safety Code.

sites; enforcement of regulations regarding use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials; and encouragement of pollution prevention.

California Division of Occupational Safety and Health

Like OSHA at the federal level, the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (CalOSHA) is the responsible State-level agency for ensuring workplace safety. CalOSHA assumes primary responsibility for the adoption and enforcement of standards regarding workplace safety and safety practices. In the event that a work site is contaminated, a Site Safety Plan must be crafted and implemented to protect the safety of workers. Site Safety Plans establish policies, practices, and procedures to prevent the exposure of workers and members of the public to hazardous materials originating from the contaminated site or building.

California Office of Emergency Services

The California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) was established as part of the Governor's Office on January 1, 2009. It was created pursuant to Assembly Bill 38, which merged the duties, powers, purposes, and responsibilities of the former Governor's Emergency Management Agency with those of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security. Cal OES is responsible for the coordination of overall State agency response to major disasters in support of local government. The agency is responsible for ensuring the State's readiness to respond to and recover from all hazards—natural, human-made, emergencies, and disasters—and for assisting local governments in their emergency preparedness, response, recovery, and hazard mitigation efforts.

California Department of Transportation and California Highway Patrol

Caltrans and the CHP are the two State agencies that have primary responsibility for enforcing federal and State regulations and responding to hazardous materials transportation emergencies. Caltrans manages more than 50,000 miles of California's highways and freeways, provides intercity rail services, permits more than 400 public-use airports and special-use hospital heliports, and works with local agencies. Caltrans is also the first responder for hazardous material spills and releases that occur on highways, freeways, and intercity rail lines. The CHP enforces hazardous materials and hazardous waste labeling and packing regulations designed to prevent leakage and spills of materials in transit and to provide detailed information to cleanup crews in the event of an accident. Vehicle and equipment inspection, shipment preparation, container identification, and shipping documentation are all part of the responsibility of the CHP, which conducts regular inspections of licensed transporters to ensure regulatory compliance. In addition, the State of California regulates the transportation of hazardous waste originating or passing through the state. Common carriers are licensed by the CHP, pursuant to Section 32000 of the California Vehicle Code. This section requires licensing every motor (common) carrier who transports, for a fee, in excess of 500 pounds of hazardous materials at one time and every carrier, if not for hire, who carries more than 1,000 pounds of hazardous material of the type requiring placards. Common carriers conduct a large portion of the business in the delivery of hazardous materials.

California Building Code

The State of California provided a minimum standard for building design through the California Building Code (CBC), which is found in Title 24, Part 2 of the California Code of Regulations. The CBC is updated every three years. It is generally adopted on a jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction basis and may be subject to further modification based on local conditions. Commercial and residential buildings are plan-checked by local city and county building officials for compliance with the typical fire safety requirements of the CBC, including the installation of sprinklers in all high-rise buildings; the establishment of fire-resistance standards for fire doors and building materials; and the clearance of debris and vegetation near occupied structures in wildfire hazard areas. The City of Hollister regularly adopts each new CBC update under the Hollister Municipal Code (HMC) Title 15, *Buildings and Construction*, Section 15.04.050, *Construction Codes Adopted by Reference*.

California Health and Safety Code

California Health and Safety Code Chapter 6.95 and California Code of Regulations Title 19, Section 2729, set out the minimum requirements for business emergency plans and chemical inventory reporting. These regulations require businesses to provide emergency response plans and procedures, training program information, and a hazardous material chemical inventory disclosing hazardous materials stored, used, or handled on-site. A business that uses hazardous materials or a mixture containing hazardous materials must establish and implement a management plan if the hazardous material is handled in certain quantities.

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) has mapped fire threat potential throughout California.[2] CAL FIRE ranks fire threat based on the availability of fuel and the likelihood of an area burning (based on topography, fire history, and climate). The rankings include no fire threat, moderate, high, and very high fire threat. Additionally, CAL FIRE produced the *2018 Strategic Fire Plan for California*, which contains goals, objectives, and policies to prepare for and mitigate for the effects of fire on California's natural and built environments.[3]

California Fire Code

California Code of Regulations, Title 24, also known as the California Building Standards Code, contains the California Fire Code (CFC), included as Part 9. Updated every three years, the CFC includes provisions and standards for emergency planning and preparedness, fire service features, fire protection systems, hazardous materials, fire flow requirements, and fire hydrant locations and distribution. Similar to the CBC, the CFC is generally adopted on a jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction basis, subject to further modification

[2] CalFIRE, Fire Hazards Severity Zones Map, https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/divisions/community-wildfire-preparedness-and-mitigation/wildland-hazards-building-codes/fire-hazard-severity-zones-maps/, accessed January 31, 2022.

[3] CalFIRE, *2018 Strategic Fire Plan for California,* https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/divisions/community-wildfire-preparedness-and-mitigation/fire-plan/, accessed January 31, 2022.

based on local conditions. The City of Hollister regularly adopts each new CFC update under the HMC Title 15, *Buildings and Construction*, Section 15.04.050, *Construction Codes Adopted by Reference*.

Regional Regulations

Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act established the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and divided the state into nine regional basins, each under the jurisdiction of a Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). The Central Coast Region (Region 3) is the RWQCB that regulates water quality in the EIR Study Area. The Central Coast RWQCB has the authority to require groundwater investigations when the quality of groundwater or surface waters of the state is threatened, and to require remediation actions, if necessary.

Monterey Bay Air Resources District

The Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD) has primary responsibility for control of air pollution from sources other than motor vehicles and consumer products (which are the responsibility of CalEPA and California Air Resources Board [CARB]). MBARD is responsible for preparing attainment plans for non-attainment criteria pollutants, control of stationary air pollutant sources, and the issuance of permits for activities including demolition and renovation activities affecting asbestos-containing materials (District Regulation III, Rule 306).

San Benito County Health Department

The routine management of hazardous materials in California is administered under the Unified Hazardous Waste and Hazardous Materials Management Program (Unified Program), and most of the City of Hollister hazardous materials programs are administered and enforced under the Unified Program. The CalEPA has granted responsibilities to the San Benito County Health Department for implementation and enforcement of hazardous material regulations under the Unified Program as a Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA). The San Benito County Health Department also enforces additional hazardous materials storage requirements in accordance with the San Benito County Hazardous Materials Storage Ordinance and Toxic Gas Ordinance.

Under authority from the RWQCB, San Benito County Health Department implements the Local Oversight Program (LOP) to oversee the investigation and remediation of leaking underground storage tank (LUST) sites in San Benito County, including the City of Hollister. Businesses storing hazardous materials over threshold quantities are required to submit Hazardous Materials Business Plans (HMBPs) to the San Benito County Health Department. An HMBP must include measures for safe storage, transportation, use, and handling of hazardous materials. An HMBP must also include a contingency plan that describes the facility's response procedures in the event of a hazardous materials release.

San Benito County Emergency Operations Plan

The San Benito County *Emergency Operations Plan* (EOP), adopted August 2015, establishes the County's emergency management approach to reduce vulnerabilities to both natural and human-made disasters.

The EOP provides basic guidance related to earthquakes, flooding, fire, landslides, severe weather, pandemics and epidemics, as well as hazardous material emergencies. The mitigation programs are split into three categories: emergency prevention and protection; response concept of operations; and recovery concept of operations. The City of Hollister does not have an Office of Emergency Services or an assigned emergency planner. Therefore, responsibility for preparation and response to a disaster is undertaken by the San Benito County Office of Emergency Services.[4]

San Benito County Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

San Benito County's mitigation programs are enforced through the *Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan* (LHMP), which was adopted concurrently with the County EOP. The LHMP includes hazard mitigation goals, strategies, priorities, and provides a comprehensive assessment of the county's hazards and vulnerabilities. The mitigation programs aim to reduce the loss of life, minimize structural damage, reduce disruption of essential services, protect the environment, and promote hazard mitigation as an integrated public policy. The LHMP covers all jurisdictions in San Benito County, including the City of Hollister.[5]

San Benito County Integrated Waste Management Regional Agency

The San Benito County Integrated Waste Management (SBCIWM) Regional Agency administers recycling and waste reduction programs to meet CalRecycle waste mandates that protect public health and increase sustainability for all incorporated and unincorporated areas within the county. The SBCIWM administers the Household Hazardous Waste and Business Hazardous Waste programs, which host monthly hazardous waste collection days. The SBCIWM also provides guidance on the safe disposal of hazardous materials, such as electronic or medical waste, motor oil, and filters.[6]

San Benito County Hollister Municipal Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan

San Benito County's Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) adopted the *Hollister Municipal Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan* (ALUCP) in 2012 to ensure land uses surrounding the Hollister Municipal Airport (HMA) are compatible with airport-serving uses. The creation of the ALUC and the preparation of the ALUCP are requirements of the California State Aeronautics Act.[7] Provisions for creation of ALUCs were first established under state law in 1967 and the fundamental purpose of ALUCs to protect public health, safety, and welfare by ensuring the orderly expansion of airports and the adoption of land use measures that minimize the public's exposure to excessive noise and safety hazards within areas around public airports to the extent that these areas are not already devoted to incompatible uses has remained unchanged. The ALUCP evaluates all surrounding land within the airport influence area, defined as any

[4] San Benito County Office of Emergency Services, August 2015, *San Benito County Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan*, http://www.cosb.us/wp-content/uploads/SBC-EOP-2015.pdf, accessed April 25, 2020.

[5] San Benito County Office of Emergency Services, August 2015, *San Benito County Operational Area Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan*, http://www.cosb.us/wp-content/uploads/Local-Hazard-Mitigation-Plan-_-SBC-FEMA-Approved.pdf, accessed April 25, 2020.

[6] San Benito County Integrated Waste Management, Integrated Waste Management, https://www.cosb.us/departments/resource-management-agency/integrated-waste-management, accessed April 25, 2020.

[7] Public Utilities Code Section 21670 et seq.

land on which current or future airport-related noise, overflight, safety, or airspace protection factors may impact existing land uses. The ALUCP requires that any proposed project, specific plan, general plan, zoning ordinance, or building regulation, proposed within the airport influence area, is reviewed by the ALUC to ensure consistency with the ALUCP. By considering the ALUCP, the City of Hollister General Plan can ensure it will not conflict with the policies and overall purpose of the ALUCP.

Local Regulations

Hollister Municipal Code

The HMC regulates hazards and the use of hazardous materials in the city. The HMC is organized by title, chapter, and section. Provisions related to hazards, hazardous materials, and the Hollister Airport are in Title 8, *Health and Safety*, Title 13, *Public Services*, and Title 17, *Zoning,* as follows:

- Chapter 8.20, *Hazardous Materials.* This chapter regulates the prevention and control of unauthorized discharges of hazardous materials. This chapter includes several sections that cover permitting, storage, and transport of hazardous materials; requirements for hazardous materials storage plans; as well as reporting and cleanup provisions.
- Chapter 13.24, *Hollister Municipal Airport Use and Operations Regulations.* This chapter governs the use of the Hollister Airport as a public transportation facility, and as a base for aviation and aviation-related operations. This chapter ensures operations at the Hollister Airport comply with those set by the state and federal governments.
- Chapter 17.12, *Special Purpose Zones.* This chapter dictates allowable uses in the Airport Zoning (A) District and the Airport Support Zoning (AS) District. Uses that are permitted or conditionally permitted include:
    - Crop production and floriculture
    - Aircraft chartering and leasing, sales, and manufacturing
    - Air cargo facilities and maintenance buildings
    - Air freight terminal
    - Aircraft parking, tie-down, hangars, shelters, and storage facilities
    - Aircraft parts rebuilding
    - Auto rentals
    - Industrial, commercial, office, and food related support services
    - Fuel storage and sales
    - Museums and cultural displays related to aviation
    - Municipal emergency response facilities
    - Passenger terminals
    - Private and public parking
    - Runways, taxiways, and aprons
    - Small package delivery services
    - Employee housing
    - Cannabis cultivation, delivery, dispensary, distribution, manufacturing, nursery, and testing
- Section 17.14.020, *Airport Overlay Zoning District*. This section establishes an overlay that provides regulations for protecting people and property in the vicinity of the Hollister Airport. This section determines allowed and conditional uses that may occur in six separate zones adjacent to the HMA: runway protection zone, inner approach/departure zone, inner turning zone, outer approach/departure zone, sideline zone, and traffic pattern zone. Examples of uses either permitted or conditionally permitted in these six zones include: Semipublic uses (auditoriums, meeting halls,

religious assembly, etc.), day care facilities, limited residential, commercial uses (auto parking, office buildings, restaurants), Industrial uses (agriculture, auto parking, fuel storage, hazardous uses, etc.).

- Section 17.22.100, *Hazardous Waste Facilities Siting*. This section establishes uniform standards to regulate the location, design, operations, and maintenance of hazardous waste facilities.

Hollister Municipal Airport Master Plan

The Hollister Municipal Airport Master Plan (Master Plan) identifies and plans for the future facility needs of the HMA through 2025. The primary objective of the Master Plan is to provide guidelines for the maintenance, development, and operation of the HMA as expansion occurs. The Master Plan also preserves areas surrounding the existing footprint of the HMA to ensure that land is available for future improvements.

4.9.1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Hazardous Material Sites Databases

California Government Code Section 65962.5 requires the CalEPA to compile, maintain, and update lists of hazardous material release sites. CEQA requires the lead agency to consult the lists compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 to determine whether a project or any alternatives are identified on any of the following lists:[8]

- USEPA NPL. The USEPA's National Priorities List (NPL) includes all sites under the USEPA's Superfund program, which was established to fund the cleanup of contaminated sites that pose risks to human health and the environment.
- USEPA CERCLIS and Archived Sites. The USEPA's Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Information System (CERCLIS) includes a list of 15,000 sites nationally identified as hazardous sites. This would also involve a review for archived sites that have been removed from CERCLIS due to "No Further Remedial Action Planned" status.
- USEPA RCRIS (RCRA Info). The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Information System (RCRIS or RCRA Info) is a national inventory system about hazardous waste handlers. Generators, transporters, handlers, and disposers of hazardous waste are required to provide information for this database.
- DTSC Cortese List. The DTSC maintains the Hazardous Waste and Substances Sites (Cortese) list as a planning document for use by state and local agencies to comply with the CEQA requirements in providing information about the location of hazardous materials release sites. This list includes the Site Mitigation and Brownfields Reuse Program Database.
- DTSC HazNet. DTSC uses this database to track hazardous waste shipments.
- SWRCB LUSTIS. Through the Leaking Underground Storage Tank Information System (LUSTIS), the SWRCB (State Water Resources Control Board) maintains an inventory of Underground Storage Tanks (USTs) and leaking USTs (LUST), which tracks unauthorized releases.

[8] California Public Resources Code Section 21092.6.

The required lists of hazardous material release sites are commonly referred to as the "Cortese List," named after the legislator who authored the legislation. Because the statute was enacted more than 20 years ago, some of the provisions refer to agency activities that were conducted many years ago and are no longer being implemented, and, in some cases, the information required in the Cortese List does not exist. Those requesting a copy of the Cortese Lists are now referred directly to the appropriate information resources contained on internet websites hosted by the boards or departments referenced in the statute, including DTSC's online EnviroStor database and the SWRCB's online GeoTracker database. These two databases include hazardous material release sites, along with other categories of sites or facilities specific to each agency's jurisdiction. The hazardous materials sites listed in this chapter are therefore gathered from the online EnviroStor and GeoTracker databases.

Hazardous Material Sites and Status Types

As stated, hazardous materials sites are documented on the DTSC's online EnviroStor and the SWRCB's online GeoTracker databases. Each site is identified by name, address, site type, and status. There are two primary types of hazardous material sites, permitted and cleanup sites.

A site that is used to operate a business which must, by nature of the business, store, treat, or dispose of hazardous materials, must obtain a permit or a grant of authorization from the DTSC. Such sites in the state are regulated through a five-tiered permitting program that enforces regulatory requirements imposed on each category of hazardous material site. The permit ensures that any business that handles hazardous materials, does so in compliance with the federal RCRA and the state-adopted regulations to ensure hazardous materials are not released into the environment.[9]

In cases where the storage, treatment, or disposal of hazardous materials has resulted in those hazardous materials being released into the environment, extensive investigation and cleanup actions are required. The USEPA, DTSC, SWRCB, and any other applicable agency, actively conducts investigations into hazardous material sites to monitor the potential release of hazardous materials into the environment. When a release is identified, these agencies direct and supervise cleanup activities to ensure the hazardous materials are satisfactorily removed from the site and no longer pose a danger to the public or the environment.[10]

The listing of status types is the mechanism by which the DTSC and SWRCB identify their involvement at each site, the status of cleanup activities, and whether the cleanup is active or complete. Status types are also an important tool for jurisdictions to understand where there are sites actively undergoing cleanup of a hazardous material that may pose a hazard to the public or the environment. Status types that identify active and ongoing cleanup activities in the EIR Study Area include:

- Active: Identifies that an investigation and/or remediation is currently in progress and that DTSC is actively involved.

[9] Department of Toxic Substances Control, 2020, Managing Hazardous Waste, https://dtsc.ca.gov/hazardous-waste-facility-permit/, accessed May 2, 2020.

[10] United States Environmental Protection Agency, February 2019, Basic Information about Cleanups, https://www.epa.gov/cleanups/basic-information-about-cleanups, accessed May 2, 2020.

- Certified O & M - Land Use Restriction Only: Identifies sites where a remedy is implemented that results in hazardous substances remaining at the site at concentrations above acceptable levels.
- Inactive - Action Required: Identifies non-active sites where DTSC has determined that a removal or remedial action or further extensive investigation is required.
- Inactive - Needs Evaluation: Identifies non-active sites where DTSC has determined an evaluation is required.
- Open - Action Required: Identifies an active site where DTSC has determined that a removal or remedial action or further extensive investigation is required.
- Open - Assessment and Interim Remedial Action: An interim remedial action is considered to be occurring at the site simultaneously with other activities, such as site characterization, investigation, risk evaluation, or site conceptual model development.
- Open - Inactive: Means no regulatory oversight activities are being conducted.
- Open - Remediation- Land Use Restrictions: Identifies sites for which approved remedies have been selected and that the remedies have been started and includes remedies that are both passive and active.
- Open - Verification Monitoring: Refers to sites where the remediation phases are essentially complete and a monitoring/sampling program is occurring to confirm successful completion of the cleanup activities.
- Refer: Identifies sites that DTSC referred to other agencies for investigation, which often includes the Regional Water Quality Control Board or local jurisdictions.

Existing Hazardous Material Sites in Hollister

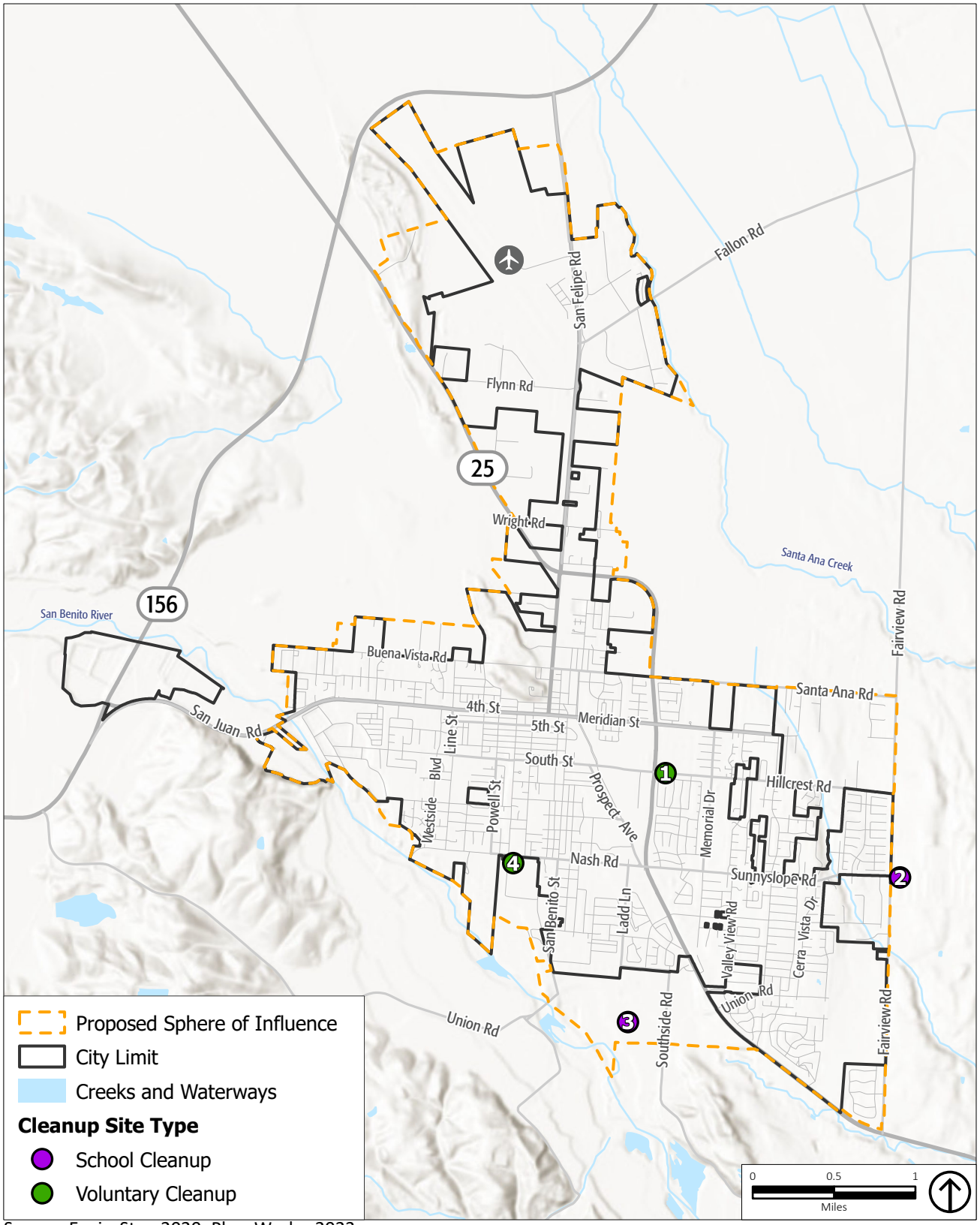
A search of the online databases on May 1, 2020, identified four EnviroStor sites that have not been fully remediated or closed.[11] The complete list and location of active cleanup sites within the EIR Study Area is shown in Table 4.9-1, *Active Hazardous Material Sites in the EIR Study Area*, and on Figure 4.9-1, *Hazardous Materials Sites*.

Table 4.9-1 Active Hazardous Material Sites in the EIR Study Area

ID Number	Site Name	Address	Site Type	Status Type
1	Cerrato Property	510 Hillcrest Road	Voluntary Cleanup	Certified O&M- Land Use Restriction Only
2	Rancho Santana School AKA Proposed New Hollister School Site	1454 Santana Ranch Drive	School Cleanup	Active
3	San Benito High School Modernization Project	1220 Monterey Street	School Cleanup	Active
4	Sunnyside Estates	2780 Southside Road	Voluntary Cleanup	Active

Source: Department of Toxic Substances Control, EnviroStor, https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/, accessed May 2, 2020.

[11] Sites that are no longer active and that have a status type of "Certified," "No Further Action," "No Action Required," "No Action," and "Completed-Case Closed" were not included in this search.



Source: EnviroStor, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.9-1
Hazardous Materials Sites

The City has also received reports of additional hazardous materials sites at Park Hill. Residents have noted that Park Hill could contain underground fuel tanks and a structure with both asbestos and lead-containing materials. Evidence of asbestos was recorded at a commercial property at 420 Hill Street, at the base of Park Hill, approximately 500 feet from the Vista Hill Park playground. These sites are not identified in the EnviroStor or GeoTracker databases as having an active hazardous materials site. However, Park Hill and three sites around the base of Park Hill are designated LUST Cleanup Sites due to potential gasoline contamination. In addition, a diesel-fired prune dipper was known to exist on the site during past agricultural uses in the vicinity of the project site. Cleanup activities were undertaken at Park Hill until the site was fully remediated and the cleanup site was closed on December 16, 1998.[12] GeoTracker currently lists this site along with the other three around the base of Park Hill as "Completed-Case Closed."

The 2015 Allendale North Street Subdivision Environmental Impact Report, a residential development adjacent to Park Hill, included a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (Phase I ESA) dated December 12, 2012, and a Phase II Soil Assessment (Phase II ESA) dated December 10, 2012. The Phase I ESA determined that several past uses have the potential to result in hazardous materials within the EIR Study Area, which could impact adjacent properties, including Park Hill. Former agricultural uses could have introduced harmful pesticides or fertilizers. The EIR Study Area also included the use of a diesel-fired prune dipper on-site. Further, the Phase I ESA identified the historical Hart's Landfill Site operated by Cal Recycle between 1950 and 1983 in the west to southwest portion of the EIR Study Area, directly north of Park Hill. Items disposed on-site include concrete and wood along with some tires, asbestos paper, household garbage, and pesticide containers. The Phase I ESA ultimately determined that there was no indication of significant impact to shallow soil due to pesticides, select metals, and mid- to heavy-petroleum products and that landfill gas based on the waste disposed of on-site did not have the potential to impact adjacent parcels.[13]

The Phase II ESA conducted for the North Street Subdivision Draft EIR tested shallow portions of soil from 68 locations on the EIR Study Area. Each soil sample site corresponded with known or suspected locations of hazardous materials, as identified in the Phase I ESA. The Phase II ESA did not find any indication of a significant impact to shallow soil due to pesticides, metals, asbestos, and mid- to heavy-petroleum product. However, the Phase II ESA notes that evidence of a minor release of diesel and motor oil was identified in the area of the former prune dipper and therefore concentrations of diesel and motor oil higher than that detected during the Phase II ESA investigation could potentially be encountered during grading activities associated with the North Street Subdivision project.[14] However, such gasoline was deemed remediated by the SWRCB in December 1998.

[12] California State Water Resources Control Board, Geotracker, ROADRUNNER#3 (T0606900047), https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/profile_report?global_id=T0606900047, accessed September 29, 2020.

[13] City of Hollister Development Services, April 14, 2015, *North Street Subdivision Administrative Draft Environmental Impact Report*, State Clearinghouse No. 2014121066.

[14] City of Hollister Development Services, April 14, 2015, *North Street Subdivision Administrative Draft Environmental Impact Report*, State Clearinghouse No. 2014121066.

Hollister Municipal Airport

The 343-acre HMA is owned and operated by the City of Hollister. The HMA is classified as a General Utility airport, which means that it accommodates most general aviation aircraft. HMA's airfield consists of two intersecting runways equipped with standard identification lights. The HMA has two types of aircraft hangars, conventional and T-hangars, totaling approximately 153,100 square feet. A total of six conventional hangars accommodate 16 aircraft while 9 separate T-hangar buildings accommodate 75 separate aircraft. In addition to general aviation and aircraft storage, operations at the airport include aircraft maintenance, supplies, flight instruction, commercial scenic flights, and repairs.[15] Operations at the HMA are overseen by a five-member Hollister Airport Commission and a part-time airport manager.[16] Land uses surrounding the HMA include light industrial to the south and west and agricultural rangeland to the north and east.

As shown on Figure 4.9-2, *Airport Influence Area*, the HMA has an area of influence that covers the northern portion of the EIR Study Area. The ALUCP discussed in Section 4.9.1.1, *Regulatory Framework*, identifies land uses that are not compatible with airport land uses. Such non-compatible land uses include those used by vulnerable populations such as day cares, nursing homes or hospitals, sites that store hazardous materials that may be flammable, or sites with critical community infrastructure, such as police and fire stations or power plants.[17] The light industrial and agricultural rangeland land uses surrounding the HMA are generally consistent with those that are considered appropriate in the ALUCP so long as there are no vulnerable populations susceptible to noise, flammable products, or critical facilities that may be damaged in the event of an aviation-related emergency.

4.9.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Impacts related to wildland fires are fully discussed in Chapter 4.18, *Wildfire*. Therefore, the following standard is not discussed in this chapter:

- Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires.

Implementation of the proposed project would result in a significant impact related to hazards and hazardous materials if it would:

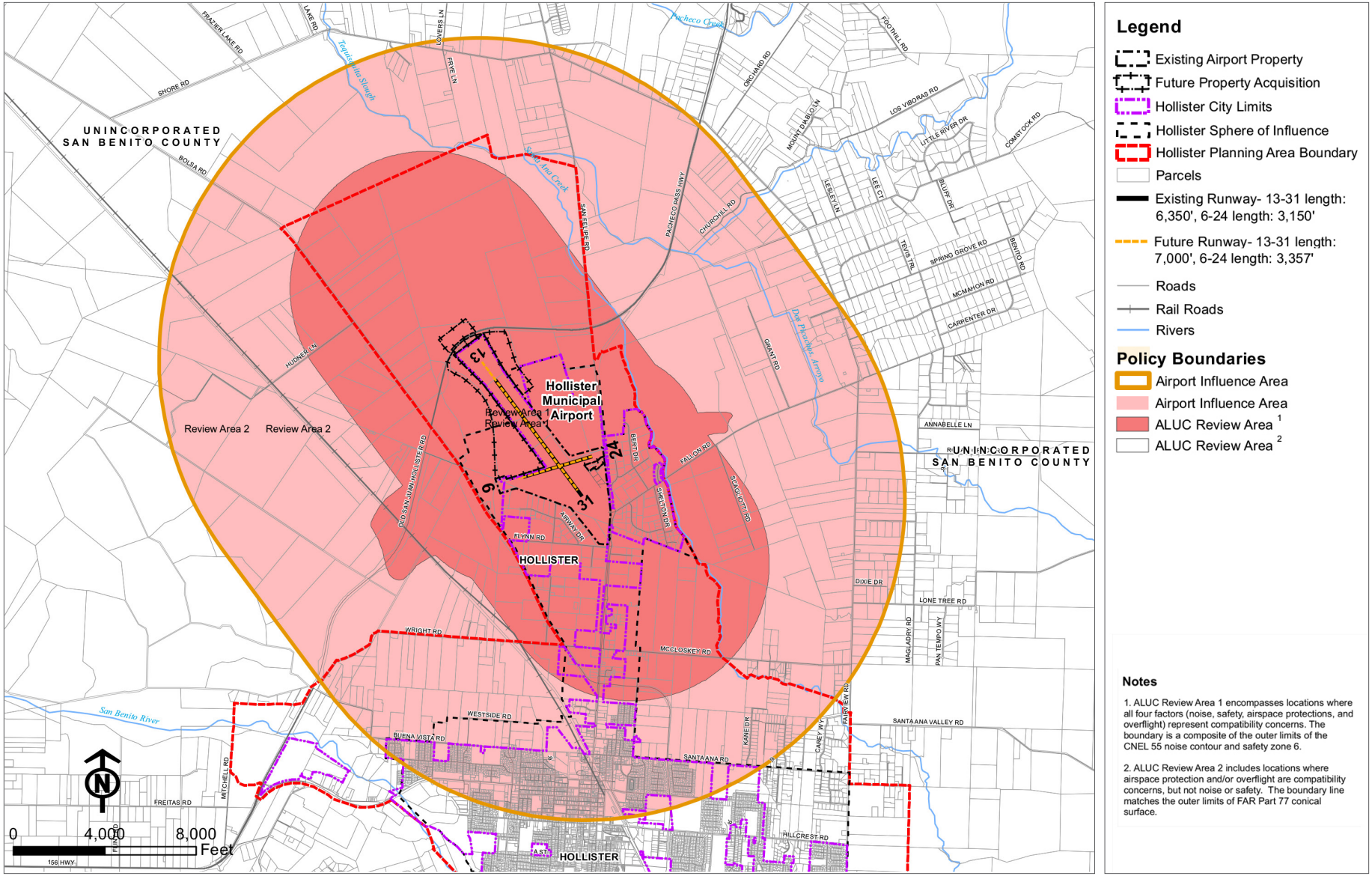
1. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.
2. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment.

[15] County of San Benito, March 2015, *2035 San Benito County General Plan Update Revised Draft EIR*, State Clearinghouse No. 2011111016, Chapter 12, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, pages 12-14.

[16] City of Hollister, 2005, *City of Hollister General Plan*, page 4.11.

[17] San Benito County Airport Land Use Commission, June 21, 2012, *Hollister Municipal Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan*, pages 2-24 and 2-25.

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS



Source: San Benito County Airport Land Use Commission, Hollister Municipal Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, June 21, 2012, page 2-51. PlaceWorks, 2023.

Figure 4.9-2
Airport Influence Area

4. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25 miles of an existing or proposed school.
5. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous material sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.
6. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area.
7. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.
8. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to hazards and hazardous materials.

4.9.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

HAZ-1	**Implementation of the proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.**

2040 General Plan

Implementation of the proposed project would facilitate potential new development, including residential, mixed-use, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and recreational uses, within Hollister. Hazardous materials would be routinely used, transported, and handled throughout Hollister. Residential land uses could use common cleaning products, building maintenance products, paints and solvents, fertilizers and pesticides used in landscaping and yard care, along with other similar items. In general, these potentially hazardous materials would not be of the type to occur in sufficient quantities to pose a significant hazard to public health and safety or to the environment.

Companies in the Industrial or Commercial land use designation of the proposed 2040 General Plan could use, store, or generate hazardous materials for research, manufacturing, cleaning, or other commercial uses, and the proposed 2040 General Plan would include agricultural uses within the EIR Study Area that may also use or transport hazardous materials such as pesticides. These commercial, industrial, and agricultural activities are subject to a variety of federal, state, and local laws, policies, and regulations, as described in Section 4.9.1.1, *Regulatory Framework*. All hazardous materials to be transported must remain in compliance with DOT regulations. Potential future development in the EIR Study Area would be subject to regulatory programs such as those overseen by RWQCB and DTSC. Nonresidential development that would require the use of hazardous materials regulated by federal, state, regional, and local agencies would issue permits for the use of the hazardous materials, which would be monitored and routinely updated by the responsible agency depending on the type of material. These agencies also require applicants for development of potentially contaminated properties to perform investigation and cleanup if the site is found to be contaminated with hazardous substances. In addition, San Benito County Health

Department has responsibility in Hollister for the implementation and enforcement of hazardous material regulations as a CUPA. The San Benito County Health Department also enforces additional hazardous materials storage requirements in accordance with San Benito County Hazardous Materials Storage Ordinance and Toxic Gas Ordinance.

Potential future development that would introduce hazardous materials to a site, or that would generate hazardous waste, would be regulated pursuant to federal, state, regional, and local laws. Compliance with these regulations would minimize the potential for a significant adverse effect on the environment due to the routine use, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials. In addition, the proposed Health and Safety Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to require best practices for the handling of hazardous materials as part of development. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to further minimize exposure to hazardous materials from routine transport, use, or disposal in the EIR Study Area and ensure that new development would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through routine transport, use, or handling of hazardous materials:

Goal HS-1: Protect community health and safety from natural and human-caused hazards. (Goal HS1)

- Policy HS-1.2: Safety Considerations in Development Review. Require appropriate studies to assess identified hazards and ensure that impacts are adequately mitigated. (Policy HS1.2)
- Policy HS-1.3: Coordination with San Benito County and Other Agencies on Safety Matters. Cooperate with the County of San Benito and other government agencies in all matters related to safety, hazardous waste management, and emergency planning. (Policy HS1.3)

Goal HS-7: Protect the community's health, safety, and welfare relating to the use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials. (new)

- Policy HS-7.1: Hazardous Waste Management. Support measures to responsibly manage hazardous waste to protect public health, safety, and the environment, and support state and federal safety legislation to strengthen requirements for hazardous materials transport. (Policy HS1.13)
- Policy HS-7.2: Hazardous Materials Storage and Disposal. Require proper storage and disposal of hazardous materials to prevent leakage, potential explosions, fires, or the escape of harmful gases, and to prevent individually innocuous materials from combining to form hazardous substances, especially at the time of disposal. Provide the public, industry, agriculture, and local government with the available information needed to enable them to take rational and cost- effective actions to minimize, recycle, treat, dispose of, or otherwise manage hazardous wastes within the Hollister Planning Area. (Policy HS1.14)
- Policy HS-7.3: Potential Hazardous Soils Conditions. Evaluate new development prior to development approvals on sites that may contain hazardous materials. (Policy HS1.12)
- Policy HS-7.4: Clean-up of Sites with Hazardous Soils. Require clean-up of sites within Hollister that are contaminated with hazardous substances be cleaned through decontamination of soils and filtration of groundwater. (Implementation Measure HS.R)

- Action HS-7.1: San Benito County on Hazardous Waste Management Planning Coordination. Cooperate with the County of San Benito in implementation of the Hazardous Waste Management Plan. (Implementation Measure HS.I)
- Action HS-7.2: Travel routes for Hazardous Materials. Establish, in coordination with the County of San Benito and other government agencies, designated travel routes through Hollister for vehicles transporting hazardous materials, in accordance with state and federal regulations. (Implementation Measure HS.A)

As part of the City's project approval process, potential future development and redevelopment would be required to comply with existing federal, state, regional, and local regulations, including the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions that have been prepared to minimize impacts related to hazardous materials. Compliance with these regulations would minimize the risk of an adverse effect on the environment, through the routine use, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials, and therefore impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 Climate Action Plan (2023 CAP) is a strategic plan focused on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new hazards or hazardous materials, implementation of the proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP) is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new hazards or hazardous materials, implementation of the proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

HAZ-2	**Implementation of the proposed project would not 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.**

2040 General Plan

The proposed project would facilitate potential future development, including residential, mixed-use, and commercial uses, within Hollister. Some of the new development could occur on properties that possibly are contaminated and undergoing evaluation, and/or undergoing corrective action, as indicated in Table 4.9-1. Construction of new buildings and improvements could have the potential to release potentially hazardous soil-based materials into the environment during site grading and excavation operations. Likewise, demolition of existing structures could potentially result in release of hazardous building materials (e.g., asbestos, lead paint) into the environment. Use of hazardous materials on newly developed properties after construction could potentially include cleaning solvents, fertilizers, pesticides, and other materials used in the regular maintenance and operation of the proposed uses. In addition, as described under Impact Discussion HAZ-1, companies in the Industrial or Commercial land use designation of the proposed 2040 General Plan could use, store, or generate hazardous materials for research, manufacturing, cleaning, or other commercial uses, and the proposed 2040 General Plan would allow agricultural uses within the EIR Study Area that may also use or transport hazardous materials such as pesticides.

Potential future development as a result of the proposed project would be required to comply with existing regulations as part of the City's project approval process, as described in Section 4.9.1.1, *Regulatory Framework*, and compliance with the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan and Best Management Practices required for the proposed project (see Chapter 4.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, for additional details), as well as the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions listed under Impact Discussion HAZ-1, would ensure potential future development under the proposed 2040 General Plan would not 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; therefore, impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new hazards or hazardous materials, implementation of the proposed project would not 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 and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new hazards or hazardous materials, implementation of the proposed project would not 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 and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

HAZ-3 Implementation of the proposed project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25 miles of an existing or proposed school.

2040 General Plan

Hollister School District and San Benito High School District have public schools throughout the city and there are a number of other private schools dispersed throughout the city. Accordingly, it is possible that implementation of the proposed project could result in potential future development that would involve hazardous materials, either through construction or operation of new development, within 0.25 miles of an existing or proposed school. In terms of new public schools that may result from implementation of the proposed project, DTSC's School Property Evaluation and Cleanup Division is responsible for assessing, investigating, and cleaning up proposed school sites. The Division's goal is to ensure that proposed school properties are 'free' of contamination or that they have been 'cleaned' to a level that protects the students and staff who will occupy the new school. School sites that will receive State funding for acquisition or construction are required to go through an environmental review and cleanup process under DTSC's oversight.

As described under Impact Discussions HAZ-1 and HAZ-2, while some potential future development under the proposed 2040 General Plan could be reasonably expected to handle hazardous materials or generate hazardous emissions, the storage, use, and handling of these materials would be subject to existing federal, state, and local regulations. Potential future development would be required to comply with existing regulations, as described in Section 4.9.1.1, *Regulatory Framework*, and reiterated under Impact Discussions HAZ-1 and HAZ-2, including the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions that have been prepared to minimize impacts as a result of hazardous materials. These regulations would ensure requirements regarding use or transport of hazardous materials are met prior to construction, which includes buffer zones between schools and hazardous materials sites. Therefore, impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new hazards or hazardous materials, implementation of the proposed project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25 miles of an existing or proposed school and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new hazards or hazardous materials, implementation of the proposed project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25 miles of an existing or proposed school and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

HAZ-4	**Implementation of the proposed project would be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous material sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.**

2040 General Plan

As discussed in Section 4.9.1.2 *Existing Conditions*, *Existing Hazardous Material Sites and Status Types*, there are four active hazardous materials sites within the EIR Study Area that are listed on databases complied pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. Other EnviroStor and GeoTracker sites within the EIR Study Area are listed as "closed" or "completed – case closed," indicating that they have been investigated and/or remediated to the satisfaction of the lead responsible agency (i.e., RWQCB, DTSC, San Benito County Health Department) based on land use at the time of closure.

The proposed project would facilitate new development and redevelopment, including residential, mixed-use, commercial, parks, and recreational open spaces, within Hollister. Some of the potential future development could occur on properties that are included in the databases listed in Table 4.9-1 and shown on Figure 4.9-1. As discussed under Impact Discussions HAZ-1 through HAZ-3, construction on a site listed in the database could result in the release of potentially hazardous soil-based materials into the environment during site grading and excavation operations. Further, demolition of existing structures could potentially result in the release of hazardous building materials (e.g., asbestos, lead-based paint)

into the environment. Use of hazardous materials on newly developed properties after construction could potentially include cleaning solvents, fertilizers, pesticides, and other materials used in the regular maintenance and operation of future development.

As described under Impact Discussions HAZ-1 through HAZ-3, potential future development that would occur under implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan would be required to comply with all federal, state, regional, and local regulations regarding the safe handling, transport, disposal, and use of hazardous materials. Further, the proposed 2040 General Plan includes goals, policies, and actions that would require land planning and development decisions to reduce the impacts that potential future development with known hazardous materials, or the use of such materials, could have on the environment and the public. However, because hazardous materials sites exist in the EIR Study Area, as indicated in Table 4.9-1, it is possible that future development could occur on a designated hazardous materials site, which could result in the direct contact, inhalation, or ingestion of hazardous materials that could potentially cause adverse health impacts to construction workers, future site inhabitants, and nearby sensitive receptors. The preparation of project-specific management plans and studies would require mitigation that would protect construction workers, future site inhabitants, and nearby sensitive receptors.

The severity of health effects would depend on the contaminant(s), concentration, use of personal protective equipment during construction, and duration of exposure. Site-specific Environmental Site Management Plans (ESMP) for locations with known contamination would summarize soil and groundwater analytical data collected on the project site during past investigations; identify management options for excavated soil and groundwater, if contaminated media are encountered during deep excavations; and identify monitoring, irrigation, or other wells requiring proper abandonment in compliance with local, state, and federal laws, policies, and regulations. The ESMP would include measures for identifying, testing, and managing soil and groundwater suspected of or known to contain hazardous materials. The ESMP would:

- Provide procedures for evaluating, handling, storing, testing, and disposing of soil and groundwater during project excavation and dewatering activities, respectively;
- Describe required worker health and safety provisions for all workers potentially exposed to hazardous materials in accordance with state and federal worker safety regulations; and
- Designate personnel responsible for implementation of the ESMP.

For sites with potential residual contamination in soil or groundwater that are planned for redevelopment with an overlying occupied building, a soil vapor intrusion assessment would indicate the potential for significant vapor intrusion into an occupied building, project design shall include vapor controls or source removal, as appropriate, in accordance with regulatory agency requirements. Soil vapor mitigations or controls could include vapor barriers, passive venting, and/or active venting.

The proposed 2040 General Plan Policy HS-6.3, listed under Impact Discussion HAZ-1, would require the evaluation of new development prior to development approvals on sites that may contain hazardous materials through the completion of Phase I or Phase II hazardous materials studies for each identified site as part of the design phase for each project. The completion of these studies would result in site-specific mitigation as required, including preparing ESMPs and soil vapor intrusion assessments.

Compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations regarding cleanup and reuse of a listed hazardous materials site described in Section 4.9.1.1, *Regulatory Framework*, and the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions listed under Impact Discussion HAZ-1, would ensure potential future development under the proposed 2040 General Plan would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment; therefore, impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new hazards or hazardous materials, implementation of the proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new hazards or hazardous materials, implementation of the proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

HAZ-5	**Implementation of the proposed project would not, for a project located within an airport land use plan, or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area.**

2040 General Plan

A large portion of the EIR Study Area is within the AIA of the HMA, which is on the north side of Hollister. The airport is operated by the City of Hollister, and is used for general aviation, which includes all aviation activities other than commercial passenger flights, commuter/air taxi, and military uses. General aviation activity typically includes single-engine and small twin-engine aircraft holding six or fewer people. The HMA is the largest and most active airport in the county.

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The AIA includes all areas surrounding the airport that are affected by noise, height, and safety considerations. All development projects within the AIA must be reviewed by the San Benito County ALUC to ensure consistency with the ACLUP. The ACLUP establishes height and use restrictions for structures within the parts of the EIR Study Area that extend into the AIA. Portions of the EIR Study Area are within the airport's noise contours and safety zones.

In addition, the proposed Health and Safety Element contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to require best practices that would not result in incompatible land uses with airport operations. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to further minimize exposure to airport hazards in the EIR Study Area:

Goal HS-1: Protect community health and safety from natural and human-caused hazards. (Goal HS-1)

- Policy HS-1.4: Airport Safety. Avoid residential dwellings in the Aircraft Flight Zones and establish compatible land use zones around the airport consistent with Hollister Municipal Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. (Policy HS1.11)
- Action HS-1.2: Development Review for Compatibility with the Hollister Municipal Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. Review all development proposals within the Airport Influence Area to verify that the proposed development would not conflict with the land use guidelines established in the Hollister Municipal Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan or subsequent updates. (Implementation Measure HS.U)

Goal HS-8: Achieve noise levels consistent with acceptable standards and reduce or eliminate objectionable noise sources. (Goal HS3)

- Policy HS-8.6: Airport Noise. Review all proposed development within the Airport Influence Area to ensure that it will be compatible with operations at the Hollister Municipal Airport and applicable noise standards and regulations. (Policy HS3.7)

Goal HS-9: Protect the public's health and safety and ensure compatible land uses with Hollister Municipal Airport operations. (new)

- Policy HS-9.1: Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. Work closely with appropriate agencies, including the San Benito County Airport Land Use Commission, to ensure compatibility of land uses with airport facilities and operations. (new)
- Policy HS-9.2: Airspace Protection. Limit building heights for airspace protection in accordance with Federal Aviation Regulations Part 77. (new)

The proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions listed would serve to further ensure that development would not interfere with any airport land use plan or otherwise create an airport-related safety hazard in the EIR Study Area. Therefore, risk to people residing or working in the EIR Study Area would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new hazards or hazardous materials, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new hazards or hazardous materials, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

HAZ-6 Implementation of the proposed project would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

2040 General Plan

As discussed in Section 4.9.1.1, *Regulatory Framework*, 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 Hollister Fire Department. The San Benito County Sheriff's Department and San Benito County Fire Department are responsible for emergency response services in the unincorporated areas surrounding the city. The San Benito County EOP establishes policy direction for emergency planning, mitigation, response, and recovery activities within the city. The San Benito County EOP addresses interagency coordination, procedures to maintain communications with county and state emergency response teams, and methods to assess the extent of damage and management of volunteers.

Compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations regarding emergency response or emergency evacuation, as described in Section 4.9.1.1, *Regulatory Framework*, would ensure potential future development under the proposed 2040 General Plan would not interfere with an adopted emergency response plan, or emergency evacuation plan. In addition, the proposed Health and Safety Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to emergency response plans or emergency evacuation plans.

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to minimize impairment or interference of emergency plans:

Goal HS-1: Protect community health and safety from natural and human-caused hazards. (Goal HS1)

- Policy HS-1.1: Location of Future Development. Permit development only in areas where potential danger to the health, safety, and welfare of the community can be adequately mitigated. This includes prohibiting development that would be subject to severe flood damage or geological hazard due to its location and/or design and that cannot be mitigated to safe levels.

  Development also shall be prohibited where emergency services, including fire protection, cannot be provided. (Policy HS1.1)

- Policy HS-1.3: Coordination with San Benito County and Other Agencies on Safety Matters. Cooperate with the County of San Benito and other government agencies in all matters related to safety, hazardous waste management, and emergency planning. (Policy HS1.3)

Goal HS-6: Minimize potential damage to life, environment, and property through timely, well-prepared, and well-coordinated emergency preparedness response plans and programs. (new)

- Policy HS-6.1: Emergency Planning Document Coordination. Pursue integration of the City's safety and emergency management documents, including this Health and Safety Element, the San Benito County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, and other related documents. (new)
- Policy HS-6.2: San Benito County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Incorporate the current San Benito County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan into this Safety Element by reference, as permitted by California Government Code Section 65302.6 to ensure that emergency response and evacuation routes are accessible throughout the city. (new)
- Policy HS-6.3: Emergency Infrastructure and Equipment. Ensure the emergency operations center maintains a full functional state of readiness. (Policy HS2.2)
- Policy HS-6.4: Neighborhood Disaster Preparedness. Neighborhoods with potential for being isolated due to road closures or Public Safety Power Shutoff events in an emergency should have a volunteer center for emergency coordination. (Policy HS2.5)
- Policy HS-6.5: Local Utility Cooperation. Work with local utility operators to identify if and when a Public Safety Power Shutoff event may be necessary to reduce hazard risks in Hollister and/or the surrounding area and provide due notice and resources to residents in the city to help them prepare. (new)
- Policy HS-6.6: Disaster Recovery. Ensure that the City government continues to operate during and after hazard events and is able to provide resources and guidance to people and institutions in Hollister to aid them in recovery and reconstruction following the end of the hazard event. (new)
- Policy HS-6.7: Access for Emergency Vehicles. Provide adequate access for emergency vehicles and equipment, including providing a second means of ingress and egress to all development. (Policy HS2.4)

- Policy HS-6.8: Emergency Management Coordination. Coordinate and share experience and strategies with other emergency management agencies and the private sector in state or regional efforts on disaster preparedness coordination and disaster response procedures. (new)
- Policy HS-6.9: Emergency Alerts. Continue to work with the County of San Benito to participate in providing alerts about potential, developing, and ongoing emergency situations through extensive early-warning and notification systems that convey information to all residents, in multiple languages and formats, to ensure it is widely accessible. (new)
- Policy HS-6.10: Communication Systems. Ensure that communication systems used by emergency responders and key City staff have sufficient redundancy and resiliency to meet City needs during and after a hazard event. (new)
- Policy HS-6.11: Energy Backups. As feasible, install solar energy and battery backup systems at critical public and private facilities to ensure continuation of services if the power grid is disrupted. (new)
- Policy HS-6.12: Public Information on Safety and Emergency Preparedness Issues. Support public education programs for the public and City staff in emergency preparedness and disaster response in cooperation with the County of San Benito. (new)
- Action HS-6.2: Resilient Power Systems. Explore the feasibility of microgrids and portable batteries to provide localized energy supplies to neighborhood blocks to reduce reliance on regional power infrastructure in case of a hazard-caused power outage. (new)
- Action HS-6.3: Emergency Evacuation Routes. Conduct education and outreach in conjunction with the County of San Benito, through multiple formats and media, to make evacuation routes known to the public. (Implementation Measure HS.M)
- Action HS-6.4: County Emergency Plan Update. Coordinate with the County of San Benito to prepare a Hollister Emergency Operations Plan as an annex to the County's Emergency Operations Plan, and coordinate updates no less than every five years. (Implementation Measure HS.S)
- Action HS-6.5: Periodic Emergency Preparedness Exercises. Participate with the County of San Benito in disaster preparedness planning and exercises. Continue providing emergency preparedness trainings to maintain and expand existing Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs). (Implementation Measure HS.J)
- Action HS-6.6: Emergency Centers. Collaborate with property owners of privately owned community gathering places (e.g., meeting houses, lodges, faith-based buildings, community centers) to evaluate which of these facilities could become cooling centers, resilience hubs, or emergency shelters that provide safe places for residents during hazard events or emergency conditions. Cooling centers and emergency shelters shall remain operational both during and after the hazard event, as needed. (new)
- Action HS-6.7: Emergency Operations Center. Maintain the local government's emergency operations center in a full functional state of readiness. (new)
- Action HS-6.8: Back-up Emergency Operations Center. Designate a back-up Emergency Operations Center with communications redundancies. (new)

- Action HS-6.9: Emergency Infrastructure. Ensure that traffic lights at major intersections continue to function in the event of localized power outage. Repair any damaged sets of infrastructure or equipment as needed to continue City operations. (new)
- Action HS-6.10: Disaster Preparedness Training and Planning. Continue to provide essential emergency public services during natural catastrophes. Undertake disaster preparedness training and planning in cooperation with other public agencies and appropriate public-interest organizations, ensuring that all training is provided in English, Spanish, and other relevant languages in the community. (new)
- Action HS-6.11: Hazard Awareness. Publicize disaster plans and promote resident awareness and caution regarding hazards, including soil instability, earthquakes, flooding, and fire. (new)

Compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations regarding emergency response or emergency evacuation, as described in Section 4.9.1.1, *Regulatory Framework*, and the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions listed would ensure future development under the proposed 2040 General Plan would not interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new hazards or hazardous materials, implementation of the proposed project would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new hazards or hazardous materials, implementation of the proposed project would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

HAZ-7	**In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to hazards and hazardous material.**

2040 General Plan

As discussed in Chapter 4, *Environmental Evaluation*, this EIR takes into account potential future development under the proposed project, in combination with impacts from projected growth in San Benito County. This chapter analyzes potential cumulative hazardous impacts that could arise from a combination of the development of the proposed project together with the regional growth in the immediate vicinity of the EIR Study Area.

As discussed previously, development allowed by the proposed project would not result in significant impacts from the increased use of hazardous household materials. The proposed project would not interfere with implementation of emergency response plans. In addition, potential project-level impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials would be further reduced through compliance with the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions, and other local, regional, state, and federal regulations. Since impacts associated with hazardous materials and wildland fire, are, by their nature, focused on specific sites or areas, the less-than-significant impacts within the EIR Study Area from the proposed project would not contribute to a cumulative increase in hazards in the immediate vicinity of the EIR Study Area or throughout the region. Therefore, the potential for cumulative impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new hazards or hazardous materials, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to hazards and hazardous materials.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new hazards or hazardous materials, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to hazards and hazardous materials.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

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4.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

This chapter describes the potential hydrology and water quality impacts associated with the approval and implementation of the proposed project. This chapter also describes the regulatory framework and existing conditions, identifies criteria used to determine impact significance, provides an analysis of the potential hydrology and water quality impacts, and identifies policies that could minimize any potentially significant impacts.

4.10.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.10.1.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Federal Regulations

Clean Water Act

The federal Water Pollution Control Act (or Clean Water Act [CWA]) is the principal statute governing water quality. It establishes the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States and gives the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)—or in the case of California, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs)—authority to implement pollution control programs. The statute's goal is to restore, maintain, and preserve the integrity of the nation's waters. CWA regulates direct and indirect discharge of pollutants; sets water quality standards for all contaminants in surface waters; and makes it unlawful for any person to discharge any pollutant from a point source into navigable waters unless a permit is obtained under its provisions. The CWA mandates permits for wastewater and stormwater discharges; requires states to establish site-specific water quality standards; and regulates other activities that affect water quality, such as dredging and the filling of wetlands. The CWA also funded the construction of sewage treatment plants and recognized the need for planning to address nonpoint sources of pollution. Section 402 of the CWA requires a permit for all point source (a discernible, confined, and discrete conveyance, such as a pipe, ditch, or channel) discharges of any pollutant into waters of the United States.

Under federal law, the USEPA has published water quality regulations under Volume 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). Section 303 of the CWA requires states to adopt water quality standards for all surface waters of the United States. As defined by the CWA, water quality standards consist of two elements: (1) designated beneficial uses of the water body in question and (2) criteria that protect the designated uses. Section 304(a) requires the USEPA to publish advisory water quality criteria that accurately reflect the latest scientific knowledge on the kind and extent of all effects on health and welfare that may be expected from the presence of pollutants in water. Where multiple uses exist, water quality standards must protect the most sensitive use.

In California, the authority to either grant water quality certification or waive the requirement is delegated by the SWRCB to its nine RWQCBs. Additionally, the SWRCB and its RWQCBs are the designated authority to identify beneficial uses and adopt applicable water quality objectives. When water quality does not meet CWA standards and compromises designated beneficial uses of a receiving water body, Section

303(d) of the CWA requires that water body be identified and listed as "impaired." Once a water body has been designated as impaired, a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) must be developed for the impairing pollutant(s). A TMDL is an estimate of the total load of pollutants from point, nonpoint, and natural sources that a water body may receive without exceeding applicable water quality standards, with a factor of safety included. Once established, the TMDL allocates the loads among current and future pollutant sources to the water body.

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program was established by the CWA to regulate municipal and industrial discharges to surface waters of the United States, including discharges from municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s). Federal NPDES permit regulations have been established for broad categories of discharges, including point-source municipal waste discharges and nonpoint-source stormwater runoff. NPDES permits generally identify effluent and receiving water limits on allowable concentrations and/or mass emissions of pollutants contained in the discharge; prohibitions on discharges not specifically allowed under the permit; and provisions that describe required actions by the discharger, including industrial pretreatment, pollution prevention, self-monitoring, and other activities.

Under the NPDES program, all facilities that discharge pollutants into waters of the U.S. are required to obtain an NPDES permit. Requirements for stormwater discharges are also regulated under this program. In California, the NPDES permit program is administered by the SWRCB through the nine RWQCBs. The City of Hollister lies within the jurisdiction of the Central Coast RWQCB (Region 3) and is subject to the waste discharge requirements of the General Permit for Stormwater Discharges for Phase II Small MS4s Order No. 2013-0001-DWQ (as amended by Order No. WQ 2015-0133-EXEC, Order No. WQ 2016-0069-EXEC, Order No. WQ 2017-XXXX-DWQ, Order No. WQ 2018-0001-EXEC, and Order No. WQ 2018-0007-EXEC). The City of Hollister is a traditional small MS4.

Under Provision E.12 of the NPDES permit, the co-permittees use their planning authorities to include appropriate source control, site design, and stormwater treatment measures in new development and redevelopment projects to address both soluble and insoluble stormwater runoff pollutant discharges and prevent increases in runoff flows from new development and redevelopment projects. This goal is to be accomplished primarily through the implementation of low-impact development techniques.

National Flood Insurance Program

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administers the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to provide subsidized flood insurance to communities that comply with FEMA regulations limiting development in floodplains. FEMA also issues Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) that identify which land areas are subject to flooding. These maps provide flood information and identify flood hazard zones in the community. The design standard for flood protection is established by FEMA. FEMA's minimum level of flood protection for new development is the 100-year flood event, also described as a flood that has a 1-in-100 chance of occurring in any given year. According to FEMA maps, there are several portions of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Study Area within a 100-year floodplain.

Additionally, FEMA has developed requirements and procedures for evaluating earthen levee systems and mapping the areas affected by those systems. Levee systems are evaluated for their ability to provide protection from 100-year flood events, and the results of this evaluation are documented in the FEMA Levee Inventory System. Levee systems must meet minimum freeboard standards and must be maintained according to an officially adopted maintenance plan. Other FEMA levee system evaluation criteria include structural design and interior drainage.

As required by the FEMA regulations, all development constructed within the 100-year floodplain (as delineated on the FIRM) must be elevated so that the lowest floor is at or above the base flood elevation level. The term "development" is defined by FEMA as any human-made change to improved or unimproved real estate, including, but not limited to, buildings, other structures, mining, dredging, filling, grading, paving, excavation or drilling operations, and storage of equipment or materials. Per these regulations, if development in these areas occurs, a hydrologic and hydraulic analysis must be performed prior to the start of development and must demonstrate that the development does not cause any rise in base flood elevation levels, because no rise is permitted within regulatory floodways. Following completion of any development that changes existing 100-year floodplain boundaries, the NFIP directs all participating communities to submit the appropriate hydrologic and hydraulic data to FEMA for a FIRM revision, as soon as practicable, but not later than six months after such data become available.

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act

The Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act provides the basic authority for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to evaluate impacts to fish and wildlife from proposed water resource development projects. This act requires that all federal agencies consult with the USFWS, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and state wildlife agencies (i.e., the California Department of Fish and Wildlife [CDFW]) for activities that affect, control, or modify waters of any stream or bodies of water. Under this act, the USFWS has responsibility for reviewing and commenting on all water resources projects. For example, the USFWS would provide consultation to the USACE regarding issuance of a Section 404 permit.

If a project may result in the "incidental take" of a listed species, an incidental take permit is required. An incidental take permit allows a developer to proceed with an activity that is legal in all other respects but that results in the "incidental taking" of a listed species. A Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) must also accompany an application for an incidental take permit. The purpose of an HCP is to ensure that the effects of the permitted action or listed species are adequately minimized and mitigated.

State Regulations

Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Water Code Sections 13000 et seq.) is the basic water quality control law for California. This act established the SWRCB and divided the state into nine regional basins, each under the jurisdiction of a RWQCB. The SWRCB is the primary state agency responsible for the protection of California's water quality and groundwater supplies. The RWQCBs carry out the regulation, protection, and administration of water quality in each region. Each regional board is required to adopt a water quality control plan or basin plan that recognizes and reflects the regional differences in

existing water quality, the beneficial uses of the region's ground and surface water, and local water quality conditions and problems. As described previously, Hollister is within the jurisdiction of the Central Coast RWQCB (Region 3).

The Porter-Cologne Act also authorizes the SWRCB and RWQCBs to issue and enforce waste discharge requirements (WDRs), NPDES permits, Section 401 water quality certifications, or other approvals. Other State agencies with jurisdiction over water quality regulation in California include the California Department of Health Services (DHS) for drinking water regulations, the CDFW, and the Office of Environmental Health and Hazard Assessment (OEHHA).

State Water Resources Control Board

In California, the SWRCB has broad authority over water quality control issues. The SWRCB is responsible for developing statewide water quality policy and exercises the powers delegated to the State by the federal government under the CWA. Other State agencies with jurisdiction over water quality regulation in California include the DHS for drinking water regulations, the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR), CDFW, and OEHHA.

Regional authority for planning, permitting, and enforcement is delegated to the nine RWQCBs. The regional boards are required to formulate and adopt water quality control plans for all areas in the region and establish water quality objectives in the plans. The Central Coast RWQCB regulates surface water and groundwater quality in Region 3.

State Water Resources Control Board Construction General Permit

In California, the SWRCB has broad authority over water quality control issues for the state. The SWRCB is responsible for developing statewide water quality policy and exercises the powers delegated to the State by the federal government under the CWA.

Construction activities that disturb one or more acres of land that could impact hydrologic resources must comply with the requirements of the SWRCB Construction General Permit (Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ), which was adopted on September 8, 2022, and will become effective on September 1, 2023. Under the terms of the permit, applicants must file Permit Registration Documents (PRD) with the SWRCB prior to the start of construction. The PRDs include a Notice of Intent, risk assessment, site map, Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), annual fee, and a signed certification statement. The PRDs are submitted electronically to the SWRCB via the Stormwater Multiple Application and Report Tracking System (SMARTS) website.

Applicants must also demonstrate conformance with applicable best management practices (BMPs) and prepare a SWPPP containing a site map that shows the construction site perimeter, existing and proposed buildings, lots, roadways, stormwater collection and discharge points, general topography both before and after construction, and drainage patterns across the project site. The SWPPP must list BMPs that would be implemented to prevent soil erosion and discharge of other construction-related pollutants that could contaminate nearby water resources. Additionally, the SWPPP must contain a weekly visual monitoring program and BMP inspections prior to, during, and after qualifying precipitation events. Water quality monitoring is also required with a schedule based on the risk level of the site.

State Water Resources Control Board Industrial General Permit

The Statewide General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Industrial Activities, Order No. 2014-0057-DWQ and amended by 2015-0122-DWQ (2018), implements the federally required stormwater regulations in California for stormwater associated with industrial activities that discharge to waters of the United States. This regulation covers facilities that are required by federal regulations or by the RWQCBs to obtain an NPDES permit. Dischargers are required to eliminate non-stormwater discharges, develop SWPPPs that include BMPs, conduct monitoring of stormwater runoff, and submit all compliance documents via the SWRCB's SMARTS program.

State Water Resources Control Board Trash Amendments

On April 7, 2015, the SWRCB adopted an amendment to *The Water Quality Control Plan for Ocean Waters of California* to control trash. In addition, the Water Quality Control Plan for Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries of California added the section, Part 1, Trash Provisions. Together, they are collectively referred to as "the Trash Amendments." The purpose of the Trash Amendments is to provide statewide consistency for the RWQCBs in their regulatory approach to protect aquatic life, public health beneficial uses, and reduce environmental issues associated with trash in state waters, while focusing limited resources on high trash-generating areas.[1]

The Trash Amendments apply to all Phase I and II permittees under the NPDES MS4 permits. Compliance with the Trash Amendments requires municipalities to install certified trash treatment control systems on all catch basins no later than December 2, 2030.[2]

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014

In the midst of a major drought, a three-bill legislative package consisting of Assembly Bill (AB) 1739, Senate Bill (SB) 1168, and SB 1319, collectively known as the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) was signed into law on September 16, 2014.[3] The Governor's signing message states "a central feature of these bills is the recognition that groundwater management in California is best accomplished locally." Under SGMA, in groundwater basins that are designated as medium and high priority, local public agencies and groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs) must assess conditions in their local groundwater basins and then prepare groundwater sustainability plans (GSPs). Hollister is within the Gilroy-Hollister Valley, North San Benito Subbasin, which has been designated as a medium-priority groundwater basin and not in critical overdraft.[4]

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[1] State Water Resources Control Board, 2015. *Amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan for the Ocean Waters of California to Control Trash and Part 1 Trash Provisions of the Water Quality Control Plan for Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries of California*, dated April 7, 2015.

[2] State Water Resources Control Board, 2022. *Storm Water Program - Trash Implementation Program,* https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/trash_implementation.html, accessed December 22, 2022.

[3] Department of Water Resources, 2022. Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) information, https://water.ca.gov/programs/groundwater-management/sgma-groundwater-management, accessed December 22, 2022.

[4] Department of Water Resources, 2022. Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Data Viewer, https://sgma.water.ca.gov/webgis/?appid=SGMADataViewer#boundaries, accessed December 27, 2022.

The GSAs for the North San Benito Subbasin are the San Benito County Water District (SBCWD) and Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water). A GSP for the group was prepared in November 2021 and has been adopted.[5] The Department of Water Resources (DWR) is currently reviewing the plan for adequacy.[6]

California Water Code Section 13751: Water Wells

Section 13751 of the Water Code requires a well completion report (WCR) to be completed by each person who digs, bores, or drills a water well, cathodic protection well, groundwater monitoring well, or geothermal heat exchange well or abandons or modifies an existing well. The WCR should be filed with DWR within 60 days of the date that construction, alteration, abandonment, or destruction of a well is completed.[7] Completed WCRs are sent to and maintained at the DWR regional office that serves the area where the well is located.

California Fish and Game Code

CDFW protects streams, water bodies, and riparian corridors through the streambed alteration agreement process under Sections 1600 to 1616 of the California Fish and Game Code. The Fish and Game Code stipulates that it is "unlawful to substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow or substantially change the bed, channel or bank of any river, stream or lake" without notifying the CDFW, incorporating necessary mitigation, and obtaining a streambed alteration agreement.[8] CDFW's jurisdiction extends to the top of banks and often includes the outer edge of riparian vegetation canopy cover.

Water Conservation in Landscaping Act of 2006

The Water Conservation in Landscaping Act includes the State of California's Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELO), which requires cities and counties to adopt landscape water conservation ordinances. The MWELO was revised in July 2015 via Executive Order B-29-15 to address the ongoing drought and to build resiliency for future droughts. State law requires all land use agencies, which includes cities and counties, to adopt a WELO that is at least as efficient as the MWELO prepared by DWR. The 2015 revisions to the MWELO improve water savings in the landscaping sector by promoting efficient landscapes in new developments and retrofitted landscapes. The revisions increase water-efficiency standards for new and retrofitted landscapes through more efficient irrigation systems, greywater usage, and on-site stormwater capture, and by limiting the portion of landscapes that can be covered in turf. New development projects that include landscape areas of 500 square feet or more are subject to the MWELO. Rehabilitated landscape projects with an area equal to or greater than 2,500 square feet are also

[5] Todd Groundwater, 2021. *North San Benito Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan.* Dated November 2021.

[6] California Department of Water Resources, 2022. Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Portal https://sgma.water.ca.gov/portal/gsp/all, accessed December 27, 2022.

[7] California Department of Water Resources, 2022. Well Completion Reports, https://water.ca.gov/Programs/Groundwater-Management/Wells/Well-Completion-Reports, accessed December 27, 2022.

[8] California Fish and Game Code Section 1602.

subject to the MWELO. This applies to residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional projects that require a permit, plan check, or design review.[9]

The City of Hollister adopts the MWELO Ordinance in the Hollister Municipal Code (HMC) Chapter 15.22, *Water-Efficient Landscape*.

Regional Regulations

Central Coastal Basin Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan)

The City of Hollister is within the jurisdiction of the Central Coast RWQCB (Region 3). The Central Coast RWQCB addresses region-wide water quality issues through the creation and triennial update of the *Water Quality Control Plan* for the Central Coastal Basin (Basin Plan). The Basin Plan was adopted in 1975 and most recently amended in 2019. The Basin Plan designates beneficial uses, establishes water quality objectives, and contains implementation programs and policies to achieve those objectives for all waters designated in the Basin Plan.[10] The Central Valley RWQCB also administers the Phase II Small MS4 permit for San Benito County and the municipalities within the county, including the City of Hollister. Additional information regarding this permit is provided in the previous NPDES section under *Federal Regulations*.

Central Coast RWQCB Post-Construction Stormwater Management Requirements

The Central Coast RWQCB Post-Construction Stormwater Management Requirements for Development Projects in the Central Coast Region (Resolution No. R3-2013-0032) provide site-specific design and runoff-reduction measures in addition to water quality treatment measures for projects that create and/or replace 2,500 square feet or more of impervious surface. [11] The primary objective of the post-construction requirements is to ensure development projects reduce pollutant discharges to the maximum extent practicable and to prevent stormwater discharges from causing or contributing to water quality standard violations under the Phase II Small MS4 permit.

North San Benito Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan

Two GSAs, SBCWD and Valley Water, collaborated in the preparation for the GSP for the North San Benito Subbasin. The subbasin, which encompasses Hollister, is designated as a medium-priority basin and is not in critical overdraft. The GSP, adopted in November 2021 and currently under DWR review for adequacy, describes groundwater sustainability goals for current and future uses in the subbasin to provide long-

[9] California Department of Water Resources, 2015. Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance, https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Document/IBBC3BC2E5B6E11EC9451000D3A7C4BC3?viewType=FullText&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=CategoryPageItem&contextData=(sc.Default), accessed December 27, 2022.

[10] Central Coast RWQCB, 2019. *Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan) for the Central Coastal Basin*, https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/publications_forms/publications/basin_plan/, accessed December 22, 2022.

[11] Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, 2013. *Post-Construction Stormwater Management Requirements.* http://hollister.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/CCRWQCB-R3-2013-0032-Post-Construction-Regulation.pdf, accessed May 1, 2020.

term, reliable, and efficient groundwater supplies to agricultural, domestic, and municipal and industrial uses.[12]

Pajaro River Watershed Integrated Regional Water Management Plan

The Pajaro River Watershed Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, updated in 2014, was developed by a joint partnership formed by the SBCWD, the SCVWD, and the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency (PVWMA). The partnership's mission is to preserve the economic and environmental wealth for the Pajaro River watershed through management of water resources in a responsible manner. The plan lays out goals and objectives regarding water supply, water quality, flood management, and environmental enhancement for the Pajaro River watershed and the strategies to meet those objectives. Strategies include water-use efficiency conveyance, recycled water, surface storage, groundwater, pollution prevention, watershed management, flood risk management, and urban runoff management. The City of Hollister is one of the stakeholders that participates in planning and project generation.

Local Regulations

Hollister Municipal Code

The HMC includes various directives to minimize impacts to hydrology and water quality in Hollister. The HMC is organized by title, chapter, and section. Most provisions related to stormwater impacts are included in Title 13, *Public Services;* Title 15, *Buildings and Construction;* and Title 17, *Zoning*:

- Chapter 13.16, *Storm Drainage Fees*. This chapter states that storm drainage fees are required to be paid by all landowners and are used for the construction and maintenance of the City's storm drain system. Storm drainage fees are required to be paid prior to the issuance of a building permit or the filing of a parcel map. The collected funds are part of the development impact fees and are used solely for the construction, reconstruction, and acquisition of land for the storm drainage system.
- Chapter 15.20, *Flood Damage Prevention Regulations*. This chapter describes the City's rules and requirements to minimize public and private losses due to flood conditions in specific areas.
- Chapter 15.22, *Water Efficient Landscape*. This chapter establishes the State MWELO requirements which increase water-efficiency standards for new and rehabilitated landscapes through more efficient irrigation systems, recycled water usage, and stormwater management.
- Chapter 15.24, *Grading and Stormwater Best Management Practices Control*. This chapter describes the City's rules and regulations to minimize land disturbance during construction, erosion and sediment control, and construction stormwater control plan (CSCP).
- Section 17.16.140, *Stormwater Management*. This section states that all new development and redevelopment is subject to the Small MS4 General Permit Order No. 2013-0001-DWQ and subsequent amendments. This section includes measures for drainage, stormwater quality, obtaining a grading permit for land disturbance, and compliance with BMPs per federal, state, regional, or City requirements.

[12] Todd Groundwater, 2021, November. *North San Benito Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan.*

Greater Hollister Area Draft Stormwater Resource Plan

The Stormwater Resource Plan (SWRP) is a planning document for the City of Hollister, City of San Juan Baptista, and San Benito County to identify and prioritize stormwater and dry weather runoff projects and programs, based on a watershed approach to stormwater management.[13] Proposed projects within the City of Hollister include:

- Stormwater upgrades at the industrial wastewater treatment plant (IWTP) to convert Pond 2 into a stormwater detention pond and construct new storm drain infrastructure to divert stormwater runoff from Apricot Lane to the IWTP, including a trash capture system.
- Construct new storm drain infrastructure to split flows at the existing manhole at Nash Road and Homestead Avenue to divert stormwater flows to the IWTP during the 95th percentile storm.
- Construct new storm drain infrastructure to split flows at the existing manhole at San Benito Street and Bundeson Drive to divert stormwater runoff to the IWTP during the 95th percentile storm event.
- Install a full-capture trash system to separate debris, sediment, and hydrocarbons from stormwater at the Bridge Road outfall. This would significantly reduce the amount of pollutants that reach the San Benito River.
- Construct a new underground stormwater retention/detention facility at the city ballpark on Powell Street and 7th Street to reduce flooding at Powell Street and South Street and improve stormwater quality. The project would also reduce sanitary sewer overflows at this location.
- Expand the City's trash capture system to comply with the State's Trash Amendments by installing full capture trash units upstream of outfalls to the San Benito River or Santa Ana Creek.
- Increase participation in the Stormwater Information Network (SIN), which is a regional group of MS4 stormwater program managers that meet routinely to participate in regional efforts, such as public education programs and pesticide/herbicide education and reduction.
- Join the Central Coast Ambient Monitoring Program, which is the Central Coast RWQCB's water quality monitoring and evaluation program. The City's goal is to reduce fecal coliform concentrations in its runoff by 10 percent over the next five years of the permit cycle and improve water quality impacts to the San Benito River and Santa Ana Creek.

Hollister MS4 Guidance Document

The City's MS4 Guidance Document serves to guide the City of Hollister's stormwater pollution prevention program under the Small MS4s Permit No. CAS000004 (Order No. 2013-0001-DWQ, as amended in 2015, 2016, and 2018).[14] The guidance document serves as the City's stormwater management plan and details the City's adopted stormwater BMPs and measurable goals, which are more protective of water quality than the minimum requirements in the Small MS4 Permit. BMPs include construction site stormwater control, post-construction stormwater management, permittee staff training, public education and outreach, public involvement, and storm drain mapping.

[13] Wallace Group, 2021, July. *Greater Hollister Area Draft Storm Water Resource Plan.*
[14] City of Hollister, 2014, April 24. *City of Hollister MS4 Guidance Document*

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Hollister Storm Drain Master Plan

The City's Storm Drain Master Plan (SDMP) was prepared in 2011 and provides a summary of existing facilities and stormwater flows, identifies system capacity deficiencies, recommends capital improvement projects (CIPs), and conformance with existing and potential future NPDES regulations. The future system improvements described in the SDMP include pipe upgrades, new detention/retention basins, and studies of infiltration rates at existing detention ponds and stormwater basins. The plan also determines cost estimates for each of the CIPs and operation and maintenance activities.

Hollister Design Standards

The construction of storm drain systems within the City's service area shall conform to the City's requirements per Section 4 of the City's Design Standards. The design standards require that runoff from storms up to the 100-year return frequency are conveyed through storm drains in a manner that protects the public from flooding hazards. Projects of 50 acres or less shall convey the 10-year storm without surcharging, flood waters shall be confined to the streets, and the 100-year storm shall be contained within the right-of-way. Drainage ponds shall conform to the City's Ordinance No. 1177 and comply with the current RWQCB permit. The design standards also include the drainage calculation methods for the design storms, stormwater runoff quantities, and hydraulic storm drain capacities.[15]

Hollister Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination Plan

The Hollister Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) Plan was prepared in 2015 and is pursuant to Section E.9.d, IDDE Source Investigation and Corrective Actions, and Section E.9.e, Spill Response Plan, of their Small MS4 Permit.[16] The IDDE plan summarizes the City's requirements to develop source investigation and clean-up procedures for illicit spills and discharges to the City's MS4.

4.10.1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

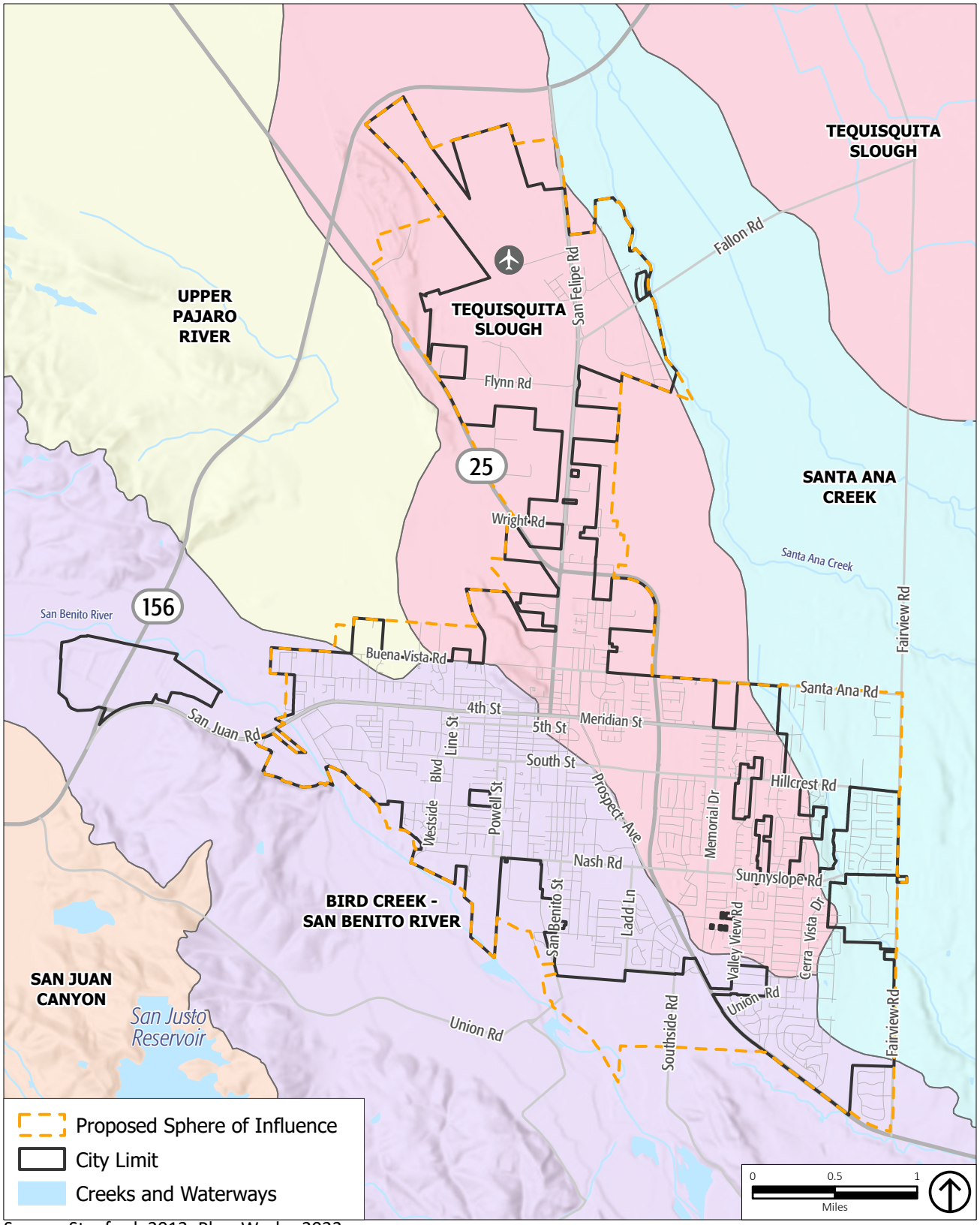
Regional Hydrology

Hollister is in the Pajaro Watershed (also known as the Pajaro River Watershed), which covers approximately 1,300 square miles and ultimately flows to Monterey Bay. Several subwatersheds of the Pajaro Watershed are within the EIR Study Area, as shown on Figure 4.10-1, *Subwatersheds*.

Most of the city and EIR Study Area are within the Tequisquita Slough subwatershed and the Bird Creek-San Benito River subwatershed. A small portion of the city and EIR Study Area is within the Upper Pajaro River subwatershed to the northwest and the eastern portion of the city and EIR Study Area is within the Santa Ana Creek subwatershed.

[15] City of Hollister, November 2019. *City of Hollister Design Standards/Standard Specifications, Standard Plans,* http://hollister.ca.gov/government/city-departments/engineering/engineering-standards/, accessed January 6, 2023.

[16] City of Hollister, 2015. *Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination Plan.* Dated October 9, 2015.



Source: Stanford, 2013; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.10-1
Subwatersheds

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

The Pajaro River is the largest coastal stream between San Francisco Bay and the Salinas River.[17] Tributaries to the Pajaro River include the San Benito River, which flows along the western edge of the city and Santa Ana Creek, which flows along the eastern edge of the city. These waterways serve as the major routes for surface flow and drainage throughout the watershed. The flow direction is to the northwest and these creeks eventually discharge into Pajaro Creek, which flows to Monterey Bay approximately 20 miles west of Hollister.

Local Hydrology

The EIR Study Area is characterized by relatively flat land, generally sloping toward the north and northwest. The City's storm drainage system consists of multiple networks of inlets, pipes, and detention basins that flow to the San Benito River, Santa Ana Creek, or to retention basins that percolate runoff into the groundwater basin. [18] Over 59 miles of storm drainpipes flow to one of the 20 river outfalls or to one of the three terminal retention basins in the City's system. The City's system does not include any stormwater pumping stations. The City also owns and operates an industrial wastewater treatment plant along the San Benito River that receives wastewater from the San Benito Foods tomato cannery in the summer and fall. During the winter, the facility is a stormwater retention pond for runoff from a 238-acre portion of the city. A more detailed discussion of the storm drain system is provided in Chapter 4.17, *Utilities and Service Systems*, of this Draft EIR.

Groundwater Basin

The EIR Study Area is within the Hollister Management Area of the North San Benito Groundwater Basin. The Hollister Management Area includes the Hollister Valley and adjacent uplands and includes intensive agricultural areas, rangeland, residential, and industrial uses. [19] The northern portion is drained toward Monterey Bay by the Pajaro River and its tributaries. The southern portion is drained by the San Benito River and its tributaries. Most recharge to the Hollister Management Area is derived from rainfall and streamflow from creeks entering the basin, including releases from Hernandez and Paicines Reservoirs to the San Benito River and releases from Pacheco Reservoir to Pacheco Creek. [20]

The SBCWD has regional responsibility and authority to manage groundwater. SBCWD, working collaboratively with other agencies, has eliminated historical overdraft through importation of Central Valley Project (CVP) water, developing and managing multiple sources of supply to address drought, establishing an active water conservation program, initiating programs to protect water quality, and improving delivered water quality to municipal customers.[21] According to the 2021 GSP, groundwater conditions are sustainable in the North San Benito Groundwater Basin. [22] The City uses groundwater and imported water from the CVP for its public water supply. In 2020, groundwater accounted for

[17] Pajaro River Watershed Collaborative, 2014, August. *Pajaro River Watershed Integrated Regional Water Management Plan*.

[18] Wallace Group, 2011. *City of Hollister Storm Drain Master Plan*.

[19] Todd Groundwater, 2021, November. *North San Benito Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan.*

[20] Todd Groundwater, 2021, November. *North San Benito Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan.*

[21] Todd Groundwater, 2019. December 2019. *San Benito County Water District Annual Groundwater Report 2019.*

[22] Todd Groundwater, 2021. *North San Benito Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan.* Dated November 2021.

approximately 32 percent of the total water supply.[23] For further discussion on water supply, please refer to Chapter 4.17, *Utilities and Service Systems.*

Climate

The EIR Study Area experiences a semi-arid, Mediterranean climate, which consists of hot, dry summers with low humidity and very mild winters. The EIR Study Area receives about 13 inches of rain annually, which typically occurs during the five-month stretch between November and April. The winter average low temperature is about 48 degrees Fahrenheit, and the average summer high temperature is about 86 degrees Fahrenheit. [24]

Water Quality

Surface water quality is affected by point source and nonpoint source pollutants. Point source pollutants are those emitted at a specific point, such as a pipe, while nonpoint source pollutants are typically generated by surface runoff from diffuse sources, such as streets, paved areas, and landscaped areas. Point source pollutants are controlled with pollutant discharge regulations or water discharge requirements. Nonpoint-source pollutants are more difficult to monitor and control, although they are important contributors to surface water quality in urban areas.

Stormwater runoff pollutants vary based on land use, topography, the amount of impervious surface, and the amount and frequency of rainfall and irrigation practices. Runoff in developed areas typically contains oil, grease, and metals accumulated in streets, driveways, parking lots, and rooftops, as well as pesticides, herbicides, particulate matter, nutrients, animal waste, and other oxygen-demanding substances from landscaped areas. The highest pollutant concentrations usually occur at the beginning of the wet season during the “first flush,” when early rainfall flushes out pollutants that have accumulated on hardscape surfaces during the preceding dry months.

The Central Coast RWQCB monitors surface water quality through implementation of the Basin Plan and designates beneficial uses for surface water bodies and groundwater. The potential and beneficial uses of the surface water bodies to which stormwater from the EIR Study Area would be discharged are listed in Table 4.10-1, *Designated Beneficial Uses of Surface Waters Near the EIR Study Area*.

[23] Todd Groundwater, 2021. *2020 Hollister Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan.* Dated July 2021.
[24] Todd Groundwater, 2021. *2020 Hollister Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan.* Dated July 2021.

TABLE 4.10-1 DESIGNATED BENEFICIAL USES OF SURFACE WATERS NEAR THE EIR STUDY AREA

Water Body	Designated Beneficial Use
San Benito River	MUN, AGR, PROC, IND, GWR, REC1, REC2, WARM, SPWN, FRESH, COMM
San Felipe Lake	MUN, AGR, GWR, REC1, REC2, WILD, COLD, WARM, MIGR, FRESH, NAV, COMM
Pajaro River	MUN, AGR, IND, GWR, REC1, REC2, WILD, COLD, WARM, MIGR, SPWN, FRSH, COMM
Pajaro River Estuary	REC1, REC2, WILD, COLD, WARM, MIGR, SPWN, BIOL, RARE, EST, COMM, SHELL

Note: Designated Beneficial Use abbreviations:
AGR – Agricultural supply
COLD – Cold freshwater habitat
COMM – Commercial and sport fishing
FRSH – Freshwater replenishment
GWR – Groundwater recharge
IND – Industrial service supply
MIGR – Fish migration
MUN – Municipal and domestic supply
PROC – Industrial process supply
RARE – Preservation of rare and endangered species
REC-1 – Water contact recreation
REC-2 – Non-contact water recreation
SPWN – Fish spawning
WARM – Warm freshwater habitat
WILD – Wildlife habitat
(P) = Potential beneficial use, all others are existing beneficial uses.

Source: Central Valley RWQCB, June 2019. *Water Quality Control Plan*.

In addition to the establishment of beneficial uses and water quality objectives, another approach to improve water quality is a watershed-based methodology that focuses on all potential pollution sources and not just those associated with point sources. If a body of water does not meet established water quality standards under traditional point source controls, it is listed as an impaired water body under Section 303(d) of the CWA. For 303(d) listed water bodies, a limit is established that defines the maximum amount of pollutants that can be received by that water body. Listed impaired water bodies in the EIR Study Area and their associated pollutants of concern are presented in Table 4.10-2, *Listed Impaired Water Bodies in EIR Study Area.*

TABLE 4.10-2 LISTED IMPAIRED WATER BODIES IN EIR STUDY AREA

Name	Pollutants of Concern
San Benito River	Sedimentation/Siltation, pH, Boron, E. Coli, Fecal Coliform, Specific Conductivity

Source: State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), 2018. Integrated Report Map. Accessed December 29, 2022, https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/water_quality_assessment/2018_integrated_report/2018IR_map.html.

Once a water body has been placed on the 303(d) list of impaired waters, states are required to develop a TMDL threshold to address each pollutant causing impairment. A TMDL defines how much of a pollutant a water body can tolerate and still meet water quality standards. A TMDL has been approved by the USEPA for sedimentation/siltation and for fecal coliform in San Benito River.

Poor groundwater quality can lead to major health problems affecting both individuals and their environment. The quality of groundwater supplied to Hollister is highly mineralized and of marginal quality for drinking and agricultural purposes.[25] Because of this less-than-desirable water quality, groundwater is blended with CVP supply to reduce total dissolved solids and enhance water quality.[26] In recent years, the percentage of groundwater supplied to the Hollister Urban Service Area has decreased from over 60 percent of the total water supply in 2015 to 32 percent of the total water supply in 2020. [27, 28]

[25] Todd Groundwater, 2021. *2020 Hollister Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan.* Dated July 2021.
[26] Todd Groundwater, 2021. *2020 Hollister Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan.* Dated July 2021.
[27] Todd Groundwater, 2016. *2015 Hollister Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan.* Dated July 2016.
[28] Todd Groundwater, 2021. *2020 Hollister Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan.* Dated July 2021.

Flood Hazards

Flood Zones

FEMA identifies floodplain zones to assist cities with mitigating flooding hazards through land use planning. FEMA also outlines specific regulations for any construction within a 100-year floodplain. The 100-year floodplain is defined as an area that has a 1 percent chance of being inundated in any given year.

A map of the locations that are within the mapped FEMA 100-year floodplain is shown on Figure 4.10-2, *FEMA 100-Year Flood Zones*. As shown, the western boundary of the city is within the 100-year floodplain of the San Benito River and the northeastern area of the city east of the Hollister Municipal Airport is within the 100-year floodplain of Santa Ana Creek. In addition, there are areas immediately adjacent to Santa Ana Creek in the eastern portion of the city that are within the 100-year floodplain.

There also are two locations within the EIR Study Area where there are levees along the eastern side of the San Benito River. One reach is approximately 3,500 feet long and is between State Route 156 and Apricot Lane. The second levee reach is about 680 feet long and is located between Cienega Road and Hospital Road on the east side of the channel.[29] Although these locations along the east side of San Benito County are protected from flooding by levees, FEMA's policy is to disregard any flood protection benefit provided by a levee if that levee is not certified as meeting NFIP standards for freeboard and geotechnical stability.[30] There are no levees within the EIR Study Area that are currently certified.

Dam Inundation

The southwestern portion of the EIR Study Area is within the dam inundation zones for Hernandez Reservoir, which is approximately 47 miles to the southwest and Paicines Reservoir, which is about eight miles to the southwest.[31] The inundation zones of these dams follow the course of the San Benito River and are shown on Figure 4.10-3, *Dam Inundation Zones*.[32] The nearest body of water is the San Justo Reservoir, approximately two miles to the southwest. However, the inundation zone for this reservoir flows to the west and then northwest and is not within the EIR Study Area.[33]

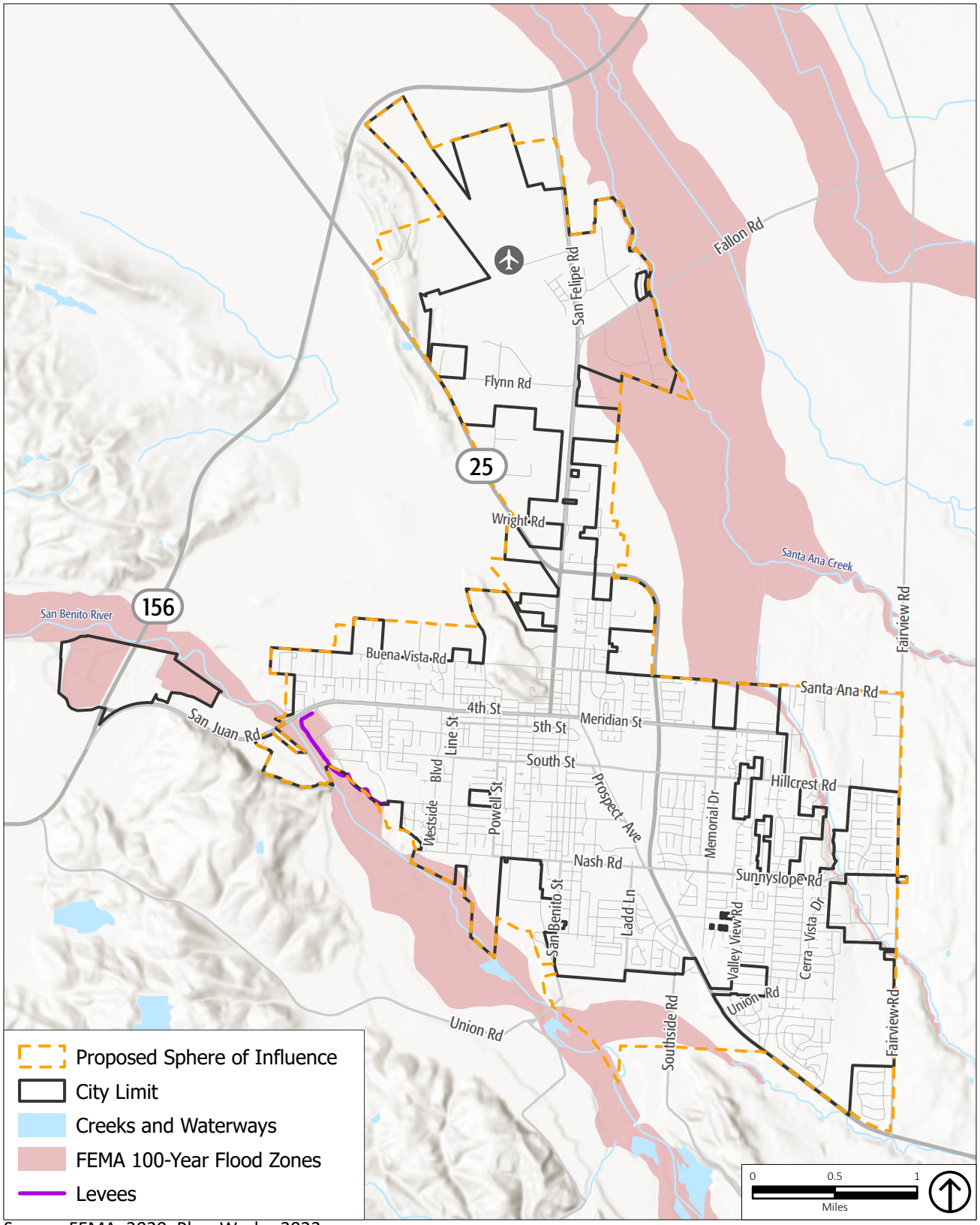
[29] County of San Benito, 2015. *Multi-Jurisdiction Local Hazard Mitigation Plan for County of San Benito Operational Area.* Dated August 2015

[30] FEMA, 2015. *Levee Certification vs. Levee Accreditation.* https://www.mvk.usace.army.mil/Portals/58/docs/LSAC/LeveeCertification.pdf, accessed February 22, 2023.

[31] California Department of Water Resources, 2022. California Dam Breach Inundation Maps, https://fmds.water.ca.gov/maps/damim/, accessed December 29, 2022.

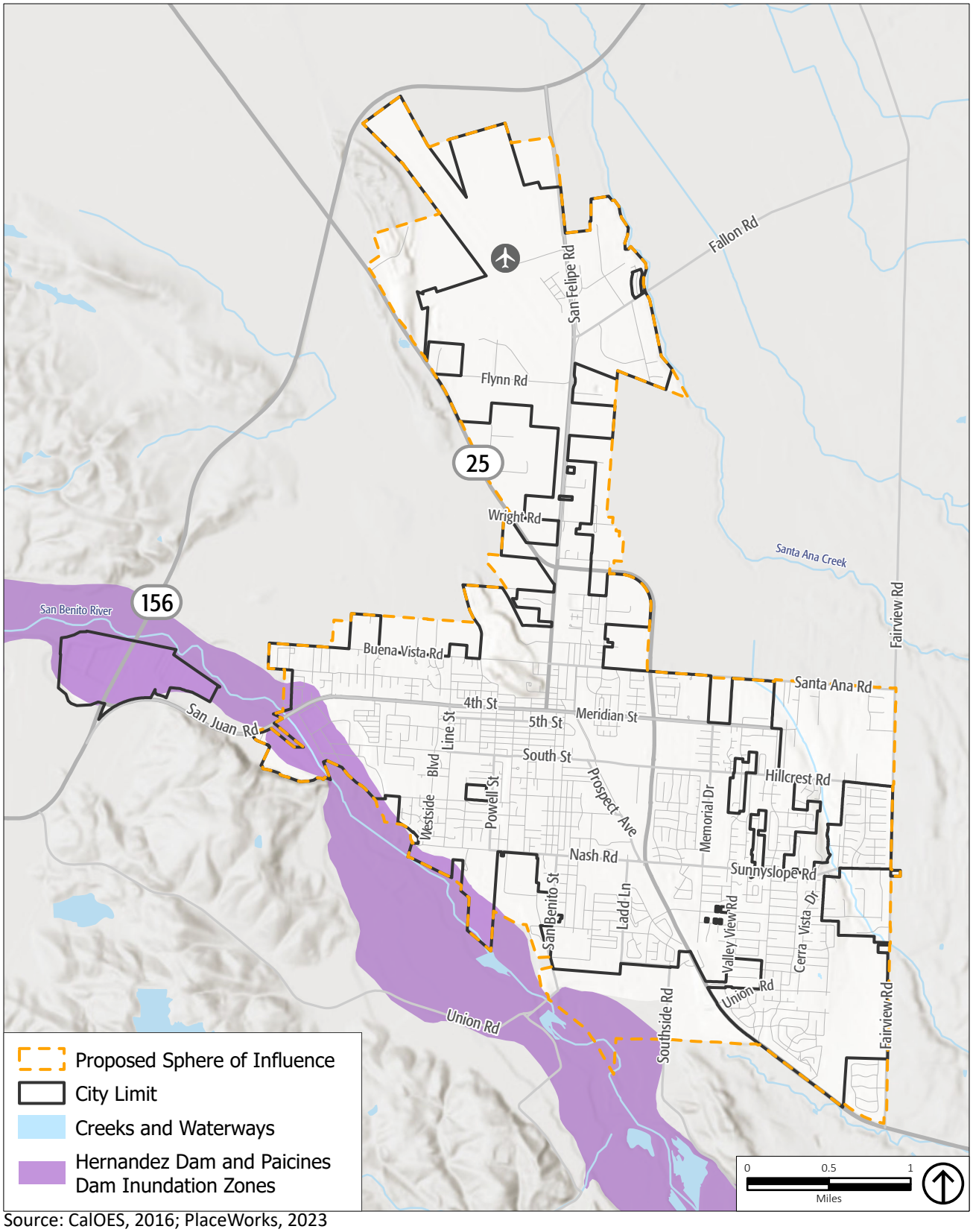
[32] The inundation zone for the Hernandez Dam encompasses the smaller Paicines Dam inundation area. Therefore, only the inundation zone for the Hernandez Dam is depicted on Figure 4.10-3, *Dam Inundation Zones*.

[33] County of San Benito, 2015. *Multi-Jurisdiction Local Hazard Mitigation Plan for County of San Benito Operational Area.* Dated August 2015.



Source: FEMA, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.10-2
FEMA 100-Year Flood Zones



Source: CalOES, 2016; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.10-3
Dam Inundation Zones

There are no state or local restrictions for development in dam inundation zones; however, each dam owner is required to prepare an emergency action plan (EAP) and coordinate its response to a dam incident with local authorities. The EAP is required to include warning and notification procedures that would involve the Standard Emergency Management System (SEMS), the San Benito County Sheriff's Department, San Benito Office of Emergency Services, and the Hollister Fire Department.

Seiches

A seiche is an oscillation of a body of water in an enclosed or semi-enclosed basin, such as a reservoir, harbor, lake, or storage tank. Seiches can be created by winds, earthquakes, or tsunamis. Bodies of water such as reservoirs, ponds, lakes, or large aboveground storage tanks can experience seiche waves up to several feet in height during a strong earthquake. The water sloshes back and forth until the wave motion is dampened by friction.

There are no large open bodies of water within the EIR Study Area that could trigger a seiche. The City's water system includes two aboveground water tanks (2 million gallons and 3.5 million gallons) that could result in seiches in the event of an earthquake.[34] However, the tanks are constructed to withstand seismic events and would not result in failure that would cause significant flooding or result in the release of pollutants. The nearest body of water is the San Justo Reservoir, approximately two miles to the southwest. A seiche at San Justo Reservoir would cover a much smaller area than a catastrophic failure of the dam. Since the dam inundation zone for San Justo Reservoir does not reach the EIR Study Area, then a seiche associated with the San Justo Reservoir also would not impact the EIR Study Area.

Tsunami

A tsunami is a series of traveling ocean waves generated by a rare, catastrophic event, including earthquakes, submarine landslides, and submarine or shoreline volcanic eruptions. The EIR Study Area is approximately 20 miles from the ocean and therefore is not at risk of flooding from a tsunami.

4.10.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the proposed project would result in a significant hydrology and water quality impact if it would:

1. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality.
2. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin.
3. 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 that would:
    i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;

[34] City of Hollister, 2018. *Final Water Distribution System Master Plan*, prepared by Wallace Group. Dated August 2018.

ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;

iii) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or

iv) Impede or redirect flood flows.

4. Risk release of pollutants due to project inundation if in a flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones.
5. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan.
6. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to hydrology and water quality.

4.10.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

HYD-1	**Implementation of the proposed project would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality.**

2040 General Plan

Construction Impacts

Buildout of the proposed 2040 General Plan would involve soil disturbance that could generate pollutants affecting stormwater. Clearing, grading, excavation, and construction activities associated with the proposed project have the potential to impact water quality through soil erosion and increasing the amount of silt and debris carried in runoff. Additionally, the use of construction materials, such as fuels, solvents, and paints, may present a risk to surface water quality. Finally, the refueling and parking of construction vehicles and other equipment on-site during construction may result in oil, grease, or related pollutant leaks and spills that may discharge into the storm drain system.

To minimize these potential impacts, future development pursuant to the proposed 2040 General Plan that disturbs one or more acres of land would require compliance with the Construction General Permit (CGP) Water Quality Order 2022-0057-DWQ, which includes the preparation and implementation of a SWPPP. A SWPPP requires the incorporation of BMPs to control sediment, erosion, and hazardous materials contamination of runoff during construction and prevent contaminants from reaching receiving water bodies. The CGP also requires that prior to the start of construction activities, the project applicant must file PRDs with the SWRCB, which includes a Notice of Intent, risk assessment, site map, annual fee, signed certification statement, and a SWPPP. The PRDs are submitted electronically to the SWRCB via the SMARTS website.

The construction contractor is required to maintain a copy of the SWPPP at the site and implement all construction BMPs identified in the SWPPP during construction activities. Prior to the issuance of a grading permit, the project applicant is required to provide proof of filing of the PRDs with the SWRCB.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Categories of potential BMPs that would be implemented are described in Table 4.10-3, *Construction Best Management Practices to Prevent Erosion*.

TABLE 4.10-3 CONSTRUCTION BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TO PREVENT EROSION

Category	Purpose	Examples
Erosion Controls and Wind Erosion Controls	▪ Use project scheduling and planning to reduce soil or vegetation disturbance (particularly during the rainy season) ▪ Prevent or reduce erosion potential by diverting or controlling drainage ▪ Prepare and stabilize disturbed soil areas	Scheduling, preservation of existing vegetation, hydraulic mulch, hydroseeding, soil binders, straw mulch, geotextile and mats, wood mulching, earth dikes and drainage swales, velocity dissipation devices, slope drains, streambank stabilization, compost blankets, soil preparation/roughening, and non-vegetative stabilization
Sediment Controls	▪ Filter out soil particles that have been detached and transported in water	Silt fence, sediment basin, sediment trap, check dam, fiber rolls, gravel bag berm, street sweeping and vacuuming, sandbag barrier, straw bale barrier, storm drain inlet protection, manufactured linear sediment controls, compost socks and berms, and biofilter bags
Wind Erosion Controls	▪ Apply water or other dust palliatives to prevent or minimize dust nuisance	Dust control soil binders, chemical dust suppressants, covering stockpiles, permanent vegetation, mulching, watering, temporary gravel construction, synthetic covers, and minimization of disturbed area
Tracking Controls	▪ Minimize the tracking of soil offsite by vehicles	Stabilized construction roadways and construction entrances/exits, and entrance/outlet tire wash
Non-Stormwater Management Controls	▪ Prohibit discharge of materials other than stormwater, such as discharges from the cleaning, maintenance, and fueling of vehicles and equipment ▪ Conduct various construction operations, including paving, grinding, and concrete curing and finishing, in ways that minimize non-stormwater discharges and contamination of any such discharges	Water conservation practices, temporary stream crossings, clear water diversions, illicit connection/discharge, potable and irrigation water management, and the proper management of the following operations: paving and grinding, dewatering, vehicle and equipment cleaning, fueling and maintenance, pile driving, concrete curing, concrete finishing, demolition adjacent to water, material over water, and temporary batch plants
Waste Management and Controls (i.e., good housekeeping practices)	▪ Manage materials and wastes to avoid contamination of stormwater	Stockpile management, spill prevention and control, solid waste management, hazardous waste management, contaminated soil management, concrete waste management, sanitary/septic waste management, liquid waste management, and management of material delivery storage and use

Source: Compiled by PlaceWorks from information provided in the California Stormwater Quality Association's Construction Best Management Practices (BMP) Handbook.

Submittal of the PRDs and implementation of the SWPPP throughout the construction phase of development pursuant to the proposed 2040 General Plan will address anticipated and expected pollutants of concern from construction activities. Furthermore, future projects would abide by the

requirements of HMC Chapter 15.24 described in Section 4.10.1.1, *Regulatory Framework,* which describes the City's rules and regulations to control land disturbance, erosion and sediment control, and preparation of a construction stormwater control plan), which is prepared for review and approval by the City. As a result, water quality impacts associated with construction activities would be *less than significant*.

Operational Impacts

With the proposed land use changes, development resulting from implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan may result in long-term impacts to the quality of stormwater and urban runoff, subsequently impacting downstream water quality in San Benito River and/or Santa Ana Creek. Developments can potentially create new sources for runoff contamination through changing land uses. Therefore, development within the EIR Study Area as a whole may have the potential to increase the post-construction pollutant load of certain constituent pollutants associated with the proposed land uses and features, such as landscaping.

To help prevent long-term impacts associated with land use changes and in accordance with the requirements of the Phase II Small MS4 permit (Order No. 2013-0001-DWQ, last amended in 2018), new development and significant redevelopment projects must incorporate low-impact development (LID) site design and BMPs to address post-construction stormwater runoff. Projects that involve the creation and/or replacement of 2,500 square feet or more of impervious surfaces would trigger the implementation of site design measures to reduce stormwater runoff, pursuant to the City's MS4 Guidance Document. In addition, stormwater treatment measures are required to temporarily detain site runoff for regulated projects that create or replace 5,000 square feet or more of impervious surface. Stormwater treatment BMPs also provide water quality benefits by removing pollutants from stormwater runoff prior to discharge to the storm drain system.

Regulated projects would be required to submit a Stormwater Control Plan (SCP) to the City's Engineering Department prior to the issuance of grading permits. The SCP must comply with HMC Section 17.16.140, *Stormwater Management,* the requirements of the Phase II Small MS4 permit, and the City's MS4 Guidance Document. Since the proposed 2040 General Plan does not include specific or detailed development plans, SCPs are not required at this time but will be required as new development projects are undergoing City review.

As part of the statewide mandate to reduce trash within receiving waters, Hollister is required to adhere to the requirements of the California Trash Amendments. The requirements include the installation and maintenance of trash screening devices at all public curb inlets, grate inlets, and catch basin inlets. The trash screening devices must be approved by the local agency and consistent with the minimum standards of the trash TMDL.

Additionally, all development pursuant to the proposed 2040 General Plan shall comply with the requirements of the HMC and the IDDE Plan, which prohibits illicit connections to the storm drainage system and forbids prohibited discharges. All development that discharges stormwater associated with industrial activity shall also comply with the requirements of the General Industrial Permit (Order No. 2014-0057-DWQ, last amended in 2018). As stated previously, HMC Chapter 17.16 requires compliance

with BMPs for new or significant redevelopment projects, subject to approval by the City and in accordance with the Phase II Small MS4 Permit.

The proposed Community Services and Facilities (CSF), Natural Resources and Conservation (NRC), and Health and Safety (HS) Elements of the 2040 General Plan contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to water quality. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts on water quality and stormwater discharge.

Goal CSF-1: Provide an adequate level and maintenance of public services and facilities to ensure the continued health, education, welfare, and safety of all residents and businesses. (Goal CSF4)

- Policy CSF-1.3: Infrastructure Planning. Require the preparation of a specific plan, financing plan, development agreement, creation of a Communities Facilities District, or another similar document or financing vehicle, as a pre-condition to annexation or redesignations of land for new urban use.

  The plans shall identify means to ensure adequate funding to support construction of all needed public facilities, including water, sewer, storm drainage, roads, sidewalks, parks, and school facilities. (Policy CSF1.6)

Goal CSF-3: Provide adequate stormwater facilities. (Goal CSF3)

- Policy CSF-3.1: Adequate Drainage Facilities. Require project developers to provide adequate storm drains for storm water runoff. Proposed development projects must include adequate provisions to accommodate peak flows, shall not significantly impact downstream lands, and shall avoid impacts on riparian vegetation. (Policy CSF3.1)
- Action CSF-3.1: Identification of Drainage System Improvements. Establish a program for drainage system improvements that would include, but not be limited to, the following:

  1. Continual monitoring of areas with insufficient drainage and implementation of any necessary improvements.
  2. Construction of new system improvements to improve storm drainage performance.
  3. Evaluation of storm water volumes when replacing undersized or otherwise inadequate lines with larger or parallel lines.
  4. Establishing development guidelines to protect areas that are particularly susceptible to erosion and sediment loss.
  5. Compliance with the Storm Water National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements. (Implementation Measure CSF.P)

- Action CSF-3.2: Drainage Channels and Culverts. Create a program to inspect all active drainage channels and culverts associated with subdivisions and large-scale developments for accumulated sediment during construction, post-construction, and on an on-going basis. If the inspections indicate that sediment accumulation has occurred, then these drainage structures should be cleared of debris and sediment. (Implementation Measure CSF.HH)

Goal NRC-1: Ensure enhanced habitat for native plants and animals, and protection for culturally significant and special-status species. (Goal NRC1)

- Policy NRC-1.1: Protection of Environmental Resources. Protect or enhance environmental resources, such as wetlands, creeks and drainage-ways, sensitive natural communities, and habitat for special-status species. (Policy NRC1.1)
- Policy NRC-1.12: Riparian Habitat. Maintain existing riparian areas in their natural state to provide for wildlife habitat, groundwater percolation, water quality, aesthetic relief, and recreational uses that are environmentally compatible with wetland preservation. (Policy NRC1.5)
- Policy NRC-1.18: Enhancement of Creeks and Drainageways. Support enhancement of drainageways to improve their function as wildlife habitat, wildlife corridors, and storm drainage facilities. Require setbacks, creek enhancement, and associated riparian habitat restoration/creation for projects adjacent to creeks to maintain storm flows, reduce erosion and maintenance needs, and improve habitat values. Require all new structures and paved surfaces to be set back from wetlands and creeks. Exceptions may be granted under extenuating circumstances and if also approved by responsible resource agencies. (Policy NRC1.6)

Goal NRC-6: Protect and improve water quality in and around Hollister. (new)

- Policy NRC-6.1: Local, State, and Federal Standards for Water Quality. Continue to comply with local, state, and federal standards for water quality. (Policy CSF3.3)
- Policy NRC-6.2: Proper Disposal of Pollutants. Continue to promote proper disposal of pollutants to the sanitary sewer or hazardous waste facilities rather than to the storm drainage system. (Implementation Measure CSF.U)
- Policy NRC-6.3: Water Quality at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Monitor the wastewater treatment plant to ensure that the nitrate levels stay within legal limits. (Implementation Measure CSF.EE)
- Action NRC-6.1: Well and Ditch Tail Water Tests. Develop procedures requiring developers to conduct well and ditch tail water tests and to implement appropriate actions to protect public health and safety associated with the presence of herbicides, pesticides, and other chemicals that have the potential to pollute the groundwater and cause health risks. (Implementation Measure CSF.H)
- Action NRC-6.2: Pesticide and Fertilizer Management. Encourage the appropriate reduction of pesticides and fertilizers to the maximum extent feasible on City property. Ensure that the application of pesticides on City property is accomplished in accordance with all applicable rules and regulations. (Implementation Measure CSF.L)
- Action NRC-6.3: Water Quality Source Control Program. Develop guidelines for a water quality source control program that incorporates public education, planning, management, material use and disposal controls, spill prevention and cleanup, street sweeping, and sewer maintenance. (Implementation Measure CSF.S)
- Action NRC-6.4: Water Quality Education Programs. Develop a public information and education program to enhance water quality. Such a program may include storm drain stenciling, presentations to schools and community groups, and watershed planning efforts. (Implementation Measure CSF.T)
- Action NRC-6.5: Water Pollution Prevention Program. Develop an illicit discharge elimination program that will seek to eliminate illegal connections to the storm drain system and the illegal dumping of toxic materials into the storm drain system. Include requirements for contractors to comply with

accepted stormwater pollution prevention planning practices for all projects subject to erosion potential, and continue to require the proper use, storage, and disposal of on-site materials. (Implementation Measure CSF.U)

Although new storm drain facilities are planned with buildout of the 2040 General Plan, the construction of these facilities would not cause significant environmental impacts to water quality. Therefore, with the implementation of the 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions, in conjunction with state and local regulatory requirements and compliance of the City's MS4 Guidance Document, potential future development would not violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements for both construction and operational phases, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 Climate Action Plan (2023 CAP) focused on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan and includes policies and plans for reducing these emissions in the water and wastewater sectors. However, there are no sections in the proposed 2023 CAP that specifically address water quality other than policies to increase park space and tree plantings and vegetation, which will reduce the volume of stormwater runoff. Furthermore, the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new development that would affect hydrology and water quality. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would likely be beneficial and would result in a *less-than-significant* impact on water quality.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP) is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Conversion of agricultural lands to urban uses would involve soil disturbance that could generate pollutants affecting stormwater and impact water quality through soil erosion and increasing the amount of silt and debris carried in runoff. Any future development that converts more than one acre of agricultural land would require compliance with the CGP Water Quality Order 2022-0057-DWQ, which includes the preparation and implementation of a SWPPP. A SWPPP requires the incorporation of BMPs to control sediment, erosion, and hazardous materials contamination of runoff during construction and prevent contaminants from reaching receiving water bodies. Future projects would abide by the requirements of HMC Chapter 15.24, which describes the City's rules and regulations to control land disturbance, erosion and sediment control, and preparation of a construction stormwater control plan (i.e., SWPPP), which is prepared for review and approval by the City. As a result, water quality impacts associated with construction activities would be *less than significant*.

As discussed previously, all development in the EIR Study Area shall comply with the requirements of the HMC, the Phase II Small MS4 permit requirements, and the City's MS4 guidance document, which would result in less-than-significant impacts during the operational phases of these projects. Regulated projects would require submittal of an SCP that outlines the BMPs and LID features that would minimize stormwater runoff and enhance water quality.

Therefore, in conjunction with state and local regulatory requirements and compliance of the City's MS4 Guidance Document, the proposed project would not violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements for both construction and operational phases, and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

HYD-2 Implementation of the proposed project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin.

2040 General Plan

Implementation of the proposed project would result in a significant environmental impact if it would substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level. New development under the proposed 2040 General Plan could result in an increase in impervious surfaces, thus reducing groundwater recharge.

Groundwater Use

As described in Section 4.10.1.2, *Existing Conditions,* Hollister uses both imported water from CVP and groundwater from the San Benito Groundwater Basin for its public water supply. The primary source of water is imported water; groundwater accounted for about 32 percent of the water supply in 2020. According to the City's 2020 UWMP, the projected water supplies in 2040 can meet future water demand.

As described in Chapter 4.17, *Utilities and Service Systems* (Impact Discussion UTIL-1), the water demand for implementation of the 2040 General Plan was estimated to be an additional 1,776 acre-feet per year (AFY). Adding this increase to the existing demand results in a water demand of 6,861 AFY, which is less than the projected water demand presented in the 2020 UWMP of 9,944 AFY for the residential, commercial, and industrial land use categories.

As documented in the GSP, the San Benito Groundwater Basin is not in overdraft and even during the drought year of 2011-2022, groundwater levels and storage reserves were above the minimum thresholds that are protective of sustainable groundwater.[35] During the water year 2021-2022, municipal and

[35] San Benito County Water District, 2022. *San Benito County Water District Annual Groundwater Assessment*.

industrial groundwater pumping decreased by 4 percent during drought conditions. Therefore, development under the proposed 2040 General Plan would not significantly impact groundwater supplies.

Additionally, future development pursuant to the proposed 2040 General Plan would be required to implement the water-efficient requirements specified in the CALGreen and California Plumbing Codes and the MWELO requirements for water-efficient landscaping. Future projects under the 2040 General Plan that meet the criteria under California Water Code Section 10912 would be required to prepare a Water Supply Assessment (WSA) that demonstrates that project water demands would not exceed water supplies. In addition, residential, commercial, and industrial water usage can be expected to decrease in the future as a result of the implementation of water conservation practices through the extensive programs offered by the local water agencies.

Groundwater Recharge

According to the 2021 GSP, groundwater conditions are sustainable in the North San Benito Groundwater Basin.[36] The SBCWD, in collaboration with other water agencies, has eliminated historical overdraft of the groundwater basin through increased importation of CVP water and ongoing water conservation programs. As discussed previously, the latest SBCWD groundwater assessment shows that the North San Benito Groundwater Basin is meeting its groundwater sustainability goals, even in the midst of drought conditions.

New projects developed pursuant to the proposed 2040 General Plan will be required to implement BMPs and LID measures to improve groundwater recharge. The City's MS4 Guidance Document implements the E.12 Post-Construction Measures in the Phase II Small MS4 Permit requiring site design measures, source control measures, LID standards, and hydromodification measures that must be implemented and approved by the City. These measures would minimize the impact of impervious areas and increase the potential for groundwater recharge by including pervious pavements and drainage to landscaped areas and retention/detention areas in new development projects.

The proposed Community Services and Facilities (CSF), Natural Resources and Conservation (NRC), and Health and Safety (HS) Elements of the 2040 General Plan contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to hydrology and runoff. In addition to the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions listed under Impact Discussion HYD-1, the following 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would also serve to minimize potential adverse impacts to groundwater.

Goal CSF-1: Provide an adequate level and maintenance of public services and facilities to ensure the continued health, education, welfare, and safety of all residents and businesses. (Goal CSF4)

- Action CSF-1.4: Development Review Criteria for Public Services. Prior to granting approval, evaluate each new development in terms of the following criteria:

    1. The project shall share a common border with a property that has already been developed.

[36] Todd Groundwater, 2021. *North San Benito Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan.* Dated November 2021.

2. The project shall be adequately served by infrastructure (water, sewer, streets, schools, parks, etc.), which is already in place or mitigated.
3. The project shall be located within the existing service areas of local service providers (fire protection, police protection, solid waste disposal, schools, etc.), and not result in a reduction in their current capabilities. (Policy CSF1.7)
4. The project shall have adequate water supply of sufficient quantity and quality.
5. There shall be adequate sanitary sewer capacity and treatment capability that can be provided to service the proposed project.
6. There shall be adequate fire protection for the proposed project.
7. There shall be adequate level of police protection for the proposed project.
8. The proposed project shall result in no impact on local parks and recreational facilities or the applicant will provide the resources required to mitigate the impacts associated with the proposed development.
9. There shall be an adequate level of solid waste collection services and disposal capacity to serve the proposed project.
10. There shall be an appropriate level of utility services (gas, electric, and telephone) to serve the proposed project.
11. The project applicant shall finance the full costs associated with any drainage improvements necessary to accommodate peak flows due to the proposed project.
12. The proposed project shall not make a significant contribution to the emission of regional air pollutants.
13. There shall be adequate elementary, middle and high schools to serve the proposed project. (Implementation Measure CSF.D)

Goal CSF-2: Plan for adequate water and sewer facilities. (Goal CSF2)

- Policy CSF-2.1: Sewer and Water Facility Coordination. Coordinate with responsible districts and agencies to ensure that sewer and water facility expansion and/or improvements meet Federal and State standards and occur in a timely manner. (Policy CSF2.1)
- Policy CSF-2.2: Development Areas. Encourage development to occur in those portions of the Hollister Sphere of Influence which are already served by the local water supply and wastewater systems or to which water supply and wastewater systems can reasonably be extended. (Policy CSF2.4)
- Policy CSF-2.3: Costs of New Development. Ensure that the cost of providing sewer and water service to new development proposed outside of existing service areas should be borne solely by those proposing the development, thus eliminating any financial burden to existing customers for any required expansion of the sewer and water system network to serve such development. (Policy CSF2.5)
- Policy CSF-2.6: Water Supply Management. Manage the water supply in a way that is environmentally and economically sustainable by working with local, regional and statewide agencies to establish

policies that promote water use efficiency programs, including recycled water programs to support the expanded use of recycled water in Hollister. (new)

- Policy CSF-2.7: Provision of Water Service to New Development. Require developers who will require water service for their projects to apply to the City of Hollister for service. (Policy CSF2.6)
- Policy CSF-2.8: Water Conservation Measures. Require water-conserving practices and features, including water efficient fixtures, in all new construction in accordance with State law. (Policy CSF2.7)
- Policy CSF-2.9: Use of Recycled Water. Increase the use of recycled water in development projects and landscaping; implement best practices (e.g., dual plumbing) to expand recycled water use when safe, practical, and available. (new)
- Policy CSF-2.10: Water Resources Association of San Benito County Coordination. Coordinate with the Water Resources Association of San Benito County to identify and implement countywide strategies to conserve water. (Implementation Measure CSF.V)
- Policy CSF-2.11: Water Conservation Education. Educate the community about the challenges to the water supply system and the need for responsible water management. (new)
- Policy CSF-2.12: Water and Sewer Connections within City Limits. Require all development that will utilize City water and wastewater services to be located within the City Limits with the exception of a public health or safety threat in accordance with State law. (new)
- Policy CSF-2.13: Identification of Opportunities for Water Recycling. Support the extension of recycled water distribution infrastructure and identify opportunities for the use of recycled water where available. (Implementation Measure CSF.Q)
- Policy CSF-2.14: Urban Water Management Plans. Ensure that updates to the Urban Water Management Plan maximize water conservation and reuse in order to fulfill the City's water supply needs. Consider projected water supplies in updated Urban Water Management Plans as part of each Major Review of the 2040 General Plan. (new)
- Action CSF-2.1: Water Efficiency Strategies. Adopt citywide policies that encourage or require new and existing development to incorporate measures to reduce potable water demand and/or increase water efficiency. (new)
- Action CSF-2.2: Sunnyslope County Water District Coordination. In cooperation with the Sunnyslope County Water District, develop implementation plans to:

    1. Phase the construction of additional water storage reservoirs to match increases in local water demand.
    2. Add new wells in accordance with current capital improvement plans to ensure adequate safe pumping supply to meet peak day demand for water (Implementation Measure CSF.G)

- Action CSF-2.3: Water Resource Data Sharing. Exchange water resources data with the Sunnyslope County Water District to allow for responsible decisions regarding water supply development and land use planning. (Implementation Measure CSF.G)
- Action CSF-2.4: Requirements for Water Conservation in New Development. Identify, evaluate, and establish requirements for project developers to reduce water usage such as installing water efficient

fixtures, planting drought tolerant landscaping, including dual water lines for residential projects (one for clear water and the other for the recirculation of graywater), and limiting golf course irrigation (if applicable) to conserve water and prevent further groundwater drawdown. (Implementation Measure CSF.I)

- Action CSF-2.5: Hollister Urban Water and Wastewater Master Plans. Update the Urban Water and Wastewater Master Plans to be consistent with the population, employment, and other growth projections of this General Plan in compliance with State law requirements for future water supplies. (Implementation Measure CSF.F).
- Action CSF-2.6: Data on Sewer and Water System Capacity. Establish the extent and capacity of the existing water supply systems and the wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal system, and update this information on regular basis in coordination with the Sunnyslope County Water District and San Benito County Water District. This information is to be used by the Planning Commission and the City Council to evaluate the impacts on sanitary sewerage facilities, which would result from proposed development. (Implementation Measure CSF.DD)
- Action CSF-2.7: Landscape Water Conservation Education Program. Continue to work with the San Benito County Water Resources Association to educate property managers, homeowners, and designers, about water conserving landscaping and water-recycling best practices. (Implementation Measure CSF.M)

New policies enacted under the proposed 2040 General Plan include working with local water agencies and assessing growth projections to be consistent with the adopted UWMP. The Sunnyslope County Water District is working to implement projects that would increase groundwater storage to match increases in local water demand.

In summary, the proposed project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin. In addition, compliance with the HMC requirements for new construction and water-efficient landscaping and 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions listed would, with respect to groundwater recharge, result in *less-than-significant* impacts.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. The proposed 2023 CAP provides estimates of GHG emissions in the water and wastewater sectors and accounts for the increase in emissions with implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan as both residential and employment populations increase. It also provides reduction strategies to minimize this increase in GHG emissions through water conservation, water efficient retrofits, water-wise landscaping, and graywater and recycled water programs. Implementation of the proposed 2023 CAP would further reduce water demand as compared to the analysis provided above (and provided in Chapter 4.17, *Utilities and Service Systems*). Furthermore, the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new

development that would affect hydrology and water quality. Therefore, impacts to groundwater supply and recharge are *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. The conversion of agricultural land to urban land uses is accounted for in the water demand and supply analysis provided previously (and in Chapter 4.17, *Utilities and Service Systems*). The agricultural conservation easements would be supplied by irrigation water from the SBCWD's San Felipe Water, which is provided by the US Bureau of Reclamation. The irrigation water is not part of the City's or SSCWD's water distribution system and therefore would not impact local groundwater supply or recharge. Therefore, the impact of the proposed project is *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

HYD-3	**Implementation of the proposed project would not 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: (i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site; (ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site; (iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or (iv) impede or redirect flood flows.**

2040 General Plan

Erosion and Siltation

New development or redevelopment within the EIR Study Area and changes in land use could result in an increase in impervious surfaces. This, in turn, could result in an increase in stormwater runoff, higher peak discharges to storm drainage channels, and the potential to exacerbate creek bank erosion or cause destabilizing channel incision.

All potential future development pursuant to the proposed 2040 General Plan would be required to implement construction-phase BMPs as well as post-construction site design, source control measures, and treatment controls in accordance with the requirements of the CGP, the City's MS4 Guidance Document, the Greater Hollister Area SWRP currently in development, and the Phase II Small MS4 Permit. Typical construction BMPs include silt fences, fiber rolls, catch basin inlet protection, water trucks, street

sweeping, and stabilization of truck entrance/exits. Each new development or redevelopment project that disturbs one or more acre of land would be required to prepare and submit a SWPPP to the SWRCB that describes the measures to control discharges from construction sites. The SWPPP must list BMPs that would be implemented to prevent soil erosion and discharge of other construction-related pollutants that could contaminate nearby water resources.

Once potential future development projects have been constructed, there are Provision E.12 requirements in the Phase II Small MS4 permit for new development or redevelopment projects that must be implemented and include site design measures, source-control measures, LID, and treatment measures that address stormwater runoff and would reduce the potential for erosion and siltation. Site design measures include limits on clearing, grading, and soil compaction; minimizing impervious surfaces; conserving the natural areas of the site as much as possible; and protecting slopes and channels from erosion. LID measures include the use of permeable pavements, directing runoff to pervious areas, and the construction of bioretention areas. Compliance with these regional and local regulatory requirements will ensure that erosion and siltation impacts from new development and redevelopment projects would be *less than significant*.

Flooding On- or Off-Site

New development and/or redevelopment and changes in land uses could result in an increase in impervious surfaces, which in turn could result in an increase in stormwater runoff, higher peak discharges to the storm drain system, and the potential to cause nuisance flooding in areas without adequate drainage facilities. However, all potential future development must comply with the requirements of the Phase II MS4 Permit, City's MS4 Guidance Document, and the Greater Hollister Area SWRP currently in development. Regulated projects must implement BMPs, including LID BMPs and site design BMPs, which effectively minimize imperviousness, retain or detain stormwater on-site, decrease surface water flows, and slow runoff rates. Projects that create and/or replace one acre or more of impervious surfaces must implement hydromodification management, which requires that post-project runoff flow rates do not exceed the pre-project flow rate for the 2-year, 24-hour storm event. Adherence to these regulatory requirements would minimize the amount of stormwater runoff from new development and redevelopment within the EIR Study Area. Therefore, projects pursuant to the proposed 2040 General Plan would not result in flooding on- or off-site, and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Stormwater Drainage System Capacity

As stated in the impact discussions above, an increase in impervious surfaces with new development or redevelopment could result in increases in stormwater runoff, which in turn could exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems. The proposed land use changes in 2040 General Plan would primarily involve the conversion of agricultural land and open space to urban land uses, which would increase the amount of impervious surfaces.

Projects that involve the creation and/or replacement of 2,500 square feet or more of impervious surfaces would trigger the implementation of site design measures to reduce stormwater runoff, pursuant to the City's MS4 Guidance Document and the Phase II Small MS4 Permit requirements. Prior to the issuance of grading permits, the City will require completion and submittal of a Stormwater Management Post

Construction Requirements application to the City for review and approval to ensure that these requirements are met. In addition, stormwater treatment measures are required to temporarily detain site runoff for regulated projects that create or replace 5,000 square feet or more of impervious surface, using specific numeric sizing criteria based on volume and flow rate. Regulated projects would also be required to submit a SCP to the City for review and approval. Implementation of these stormwater measures will reduce the amount of stormwater runoff that is ultimately discharged to the drainage system. Projects that create and/or replace one acre or more of impervious surfaces must also adhere to the hydromodification requirements of the Phase II Small MS4 permit and demonstrate that post-project runoff does not exceed pre-project runoff for the 2-year, 24-hour storm event.

Regulated projects would be required to demonstrate that the regulatory requirements for the sizing and temporary on-site retention of stormwater runoff have been met by submitting the SCP and Stormwater Management Post Construction Requirements application to the City prior to the issuance of grading permits. This would minimize the amount of stormwater runoff from new development and redevelopment sites within the planning area. Also, as part of the permitting process, new development projects would be required to pay public utility fees, pursuant to HMC Title 13, Chapter 16, which finances improvements to the municipal storm drain system to accommodate increased flows.

The City is also planning to upgrade existing storm drains and build a new retention/detention facility to serve the buildout of the proposed 2040 General Plan, as described in the Storm Water Resources Plan currently being developed. The proposed projects in the Draft SWRP would reduce peak flows and improve water quality prior to discharge to the San Benito River, Santa Ana Creek, or retention basins.

Further, new development and redevelopment within the EIR Study Area would not create substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. During the construction phase, projects would be required to prepare SWPPPs, thus limiting the discharge of pollutants from the site. During operation, projects must implement BMPs and LID measures that minimize the amount of stormwater runoff and associated pollutants.

With implementation of these provisions for new development and redevelopment projects and the construction of regional detention basins, the proposed 2040 General Plan would not result in significant increases in runoff that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm drain facilities, and the impact is *less than significant.*

Redirecting Flood Flows

As shown on Figure 4.10-2, there are limited areas of the City that are located within 100-year flood zones, primarily along the western boundary next to the San Benito River, in the northeastern corner of the EIR Study Area, and along Santa Ana Creek. Thus, implementation of the proposed project could result in development in areas subject to flooding. The discussion above regarding on- and off-site flooding is also applicable to the analysis of impeding or redirecting flood flows. Since new development projects are required to comply with E.12 provisions of the Phase II Small MS4 Permit and retain stormwater on-site via the use of retention/detention facilities, peak stormwater flow rates would be attenuated, which would minimize the potential for flooding impacts.

Construction within flood hazard zones is governed by HMC Chapter 15.20, *Flood Damage Prevention Regulations.* Impact Discussion HYD-4 describes the potential for impeding or redirecting flood flows with development in areas within the 100-year floodplain. Based on these discussions, impacts related to impeding or redirecting flood flows would be *less than significant*.

In addition, the proposed Community Services and Facilities (CSF), Natural Resources and Conservation (NRC), and Health and Safety (HS) Elements of the 2040 General Plan contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to hydrology and runoff. In addition to Goal CSF-1 and Policy CSF-1.3; Goal CSF-3, Policy CSF-3.1 and Actions CSF-3.1 and 3.2; Goal NRC-1 and Policies NRC-1.1 and 1.18; and Goal NRC-8, Policies NRC-8.1, 8.2, and Actions NRC-8.3, 8.4, and 8.5 listed under Impact Discussion HYD-1, the following 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts to runoff and flooding.

Goal HS-1: Protect community health and safety from natural and human-caused hazards. (Goal HS1)

- Policy HS-1.1: Location of Future Development. Permit development only in areas where potential danger to the health, safety, and welfare of the community can be adequately mitigated. This includes prohibiting development that would be subject to severe flood damage or geological hazard due to its location and/or design and that cannot be mitigated to safe levels.

  Development also shall be prohibited where emergency services, including fire protection, cannot be provided. (Policy HS1.1)

- Action HS-1.1: Geologic, Flooding, Fire and Other Hazard Mapping. Upon each update of the Safety Element, update hazard maps for use in development review. Use this mapping data to inform decisions about existing risk and future land uses throughout the city. (Implementation Measure HS.G)

Goal HS-4: Protect the community from flooding hazards. (new)

- Policy HS-4.1: Flood Hazards. Review all development proposals to verify that either no portion of the proposed development lies within the 100-year floodplain or that the applicant has taken adequate measures to eliminate the risk of flood damage in a 100-year storm consistent with the City of Hollister Flood Damage Prevention Regulations as amended from time to time. (Policy HS1.9)
- Policy HS-4.2: Floodplain Uses. Encourage developers to dedicate identified lands in floodplains that are unsuitable for development to the City for use as parks or for preservation as open space, consistent with the City of Hollister Parks and Recreation Master Plan or other infrastructure plan developed for a given area. Development of these identified lands as community recreation amenities should be economically feasible to build and maintain. (Policy HS1.10)
- Policy HS-4.3: Flood Control Coordination. Coordinate with the San Benito County Water District and other state agencies to maintain flood-control infrastructure to minimize flood damage. (new)
- Action HS-4.1: Flood Control Requirements in New Development. Update and apply flood control requirements to regulate construction within flood zones. (Implementation Measure HS.H)
- Action HS-4.2: Areas of Poor Drainage. Identify areas of poor drainage and install new or upgrade existing drainage systems to accommodate drainage needs. Use natural infrastructure to the extent feasible. (new)

- Action HS-4.3: Flood Use Assessment. Identify those areas with natural hazards that are unsuitable for development, but which may be suitable for public recreational uses. (new)

With the implementation of regulatory requirements and the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies and actions listed above, these hydrology impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP focuses on the reduction of GHG emissions and includes policies and plans for reducing these emissions in the water and wastewater sectors. However, there are no sections in the proposed 2023 CAP that specifically address stormwater other than policies to increase park space and tree plantings and vegetation, which will reduce the volume of stormwater runoff. Furthermore, the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new development that would affect hydrology and water quality. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would have a *less than significant* effect on erosion or siltation, storm drain capacity, flooding on- or off-site, or impeding or redirecting flood flows.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Conversion of agricultural lands to urban uses would involve soil disturbance that could generate pollutants affecting stormwater and impact water quality through soil erosion and increasing the amount of silt and debris carried in runoff. Any future development that converts more than one acre of agricultural land would require compliance with the CGP Water Quality Order 2022-0057-DWQ, which includes the preparation and implementation of a SWPPP. Future projects would abide by the requirements of HMC Chapter 15.24 which describes the City's rules and regulations to control land disturbance, erosion and sediment control, and preparation of a construction stormwater control plan (i.e., SWPPP) which is prepared for review and approval by the City. As a result, erosion and siltation impacts associated with construction activities would be *less than significant.*

All development in the EIR Study Area which would convert agricultural lands to urban uses, as well as development pursuant to the proposed 2040 General Plan, shall comply with the requirements of the HMC and City's MS4 Guidance Document for new or significant redevelopment projects, subject to approval by the City and in accordance with the Phase II Small MS4 Permit.

Therefore, in conjunction with state and local regulatory requirements and compliance of the City's MS4 Guidance Document and SWRP currently in development, the proposed project would not result in substantial erosion or siltation and would not substantially increase the rate of surface runoff which would

result in flooding, impede or redirect flood flows, or exceed the capacity of the drainage system. Impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

HYD-4	**Implementation of the proposed project would not risk release of pollutants due to project inundation if in a flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones.**

2040 General Plan

Flood Hazard Zones

Buildout pursuant to the proposed 2040 General Plan could involve development of some projects in FEMA 100-year flood zones. As shown on Figure 4.10-2, the land next to the San Benito River, the northeastern corner of the EIR Study Area, and the land adjacent to Santa Ana Creek are within the 100-year floodplain.

The areas within the 100-year floodplain on the western edge of the City are zoned agricultural or open space and it is unlikely that new construction would occur at these locations. Most of the area within the 100-year floodplain at the northeastern corner of the EIR Study Area is zone agricultural; however, there is a small area east of the airport that is zoned industrial in the proposed 2040 General Plan. This area could result in future construction and new buildings.

Potential future development in 100-year flood zones would be subject to floodplain requirements listed in HMC Chapter 15.20, *Flood Damage Prevention Regulations*. Prior to the start of construction or development within a 100-year floodplain, the City requires project applicants to obtain a development permit from the City's Floodplain Administrator (i.e., the Planning Director) and construct new development in accordance with the standards provided in HMC Section 15.20.130, *Standards of Construction*. The standards of construction vary depending on the flood zone where the proposed structure is located and include provisions for flood risk reduction, including anchoring and flood-resistant materials and construction methods with the lowest floors elevated above the base flood elevation. Prior to occupancy of any building, proof that a Letter of Map Revision and an elevation certificate has been obtained from FEMA must be provided to the City. Compliance with FEMA's NFIP requirements and HMC requirements would reduce potential flood hazards and ensure that pollutants are not released during flood inundation. In addition, the 2040 General Plan policies and actions listed under Impact Discussion HYD-3 would reduce potential flood impacts.

As discussed in Section 4.10.1.1, *Existing Conditions,* there are no large open bodies of water within the EIR Study Area that would result in a seiche causing significant flooding. The City's water system includes two aboveground water tanks (2 million gallons and 3.5 million gallons) that could result in seiches in the event of an earthquake.[37] However, the tanks are constructed to withstand seismic events and would not

[37] City of Hollister, 2018. *Final Water Distribution System Master Plan*, prepared by Wallace Group. Dated August 2018.

result in failure that would cause significant flooding or result in the release of pollutants. The project site is inland and approximately 20 miles from the ocean and is not at risk of flooding due to tsunamis. However, there are several portions of the City within two dam inundation zones, as shown on Figure 4.10-3. The area impacted by the inundation zones for the Hernandez Dam and Paicines Dam is largely contained by the course of the San Benito River. The probability of dam failure is very low, and Hollister has never been impacted by a major dam failure. In addition, dam owners are required to maintain emergency action plans that include procedures for damage assessment and emergency warnings. An EAP identifies potential emergency conditions at a dam and specifies preplanned actions to help minimize property damage and loss of life should those conditions occur. EAPs contain procedures and information that instruct dam owners to issue early warning and notification messages to downstream emergency management authorities, such as the San Benito Office of Emergency Services and local fire departments. The County's emergency notification procedures are included in the multi-jurisdictional local hazard mitigation plan for the County. Because the likelihood of catastrophic dam failure is very low, impacts related to the release of pollutants due to dam inundation are considered less than significant.

Future projects would abide by the requirements of HMC Chapter 15.20 discussed in Section 4.10.1.2, *Existing Conditions*, which describe the City's rules and requirements to minimize public and private losses due to flood conditions in specific areas. The proposed Natural Resources and Conservation (NRC) and Health and Safety (HS) Elements of the 2040 General Plan contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to flood hazards. In particular, Goal NRC-1, Policies NRC-1.1 and 1.18; Goal NRC-8, Policies NRC-8.1, 8.2, and 8.3, and Actions NRC-8.2, 8.3, 8.4, and 8.5; Goal HS-1, Policy HS-1.1 and Action HS-1.1; and Goal HS-4, Policies HS-4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and Actions HS-4.1 and HS-4.3 listed under Impact Discussions HYD-1 and HYD-3 would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts to pollutant releases due to project inundation within flood hazard areas.

Therefore, impacts associated with the release of pollutants due to flooding from implementation of the proposed project would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. The proposed reduction strategies for GHG emissions do not specifically address flooding within the EIR Study Area. Furthermore, the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new development that would affect hydrology and water quality. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in any issues related to flooding and would have a *less than significant* impact.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural

land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Conversion of agricultural lands to urban uses would not have any impact on potential flood flows with respect to dam inundation or seiche flooding. Future projects that are built in 100-year floodplains would have to comply with the requirements of HMC Chapter 15.20, *Flood Damage Prevention Regulations*. As a result, compliance with these requirements would ensure that new construction does not impede or redirect flood flows or result in the release of pollutants during flooding. Therefore, the proposed project would not risk the release of pollutants due to project inundation and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

HYD-5 Implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan.

2040 General Plan

The City's groundwater supplies are extracted from the North San Benito Groundwater Subbasin, which has been designated as a medium priority groundwater basin and is not in critical overdraft. Two GSAs, SBCWD and Valley Water, prepared a GSP that was adopted in November 2021 and is currently under review by DWR for adequacy.

The results of the water demand and supply analyses as described in Chapter 4.17, *Utilities and Services Systems*, indicate that the proposed 2040 General Plan would result in an increased water demand of 1,776 AFY for a total projected water demand of 6,861 AFY in 2040. The water demand would be met by projected 2040 water Central Valley's Basin Plan supply of 9,944 AFY for residential, commercial and industrial land uses presented in the 2020 UWMP. Additionally, municipal groundwater withdrawal from the North San Benito Groundwater Subbasin has decreased over the past year even with an increase in population and drought conditions.[38] Therefore, implementation of the 2040 General Plan would not conflict or obstruct with a groundwater management plan.

Adherence to the State CGP, the HMC, the Phase II Small MS4 Permit, and the City's MS4 Guidance Document would ensure that surface and groundwater quality are not adversely impacted during construction and operation of new development pursuant to 2040 General Plan. As a result, site development will not obstruct or conflict with the implementation of the Central Coast Basin Plan.

Furthermore, the proposed Community Services and Facilities (CSF), Natural Resources and Conservation (NRC), and Health and Safety (HS) Elements of the 2040 General Plan contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to hydrology and runoff. In addition to Goal CSF-1, Policy CSF-1.3 and Action CSF-1.2; Goal CSF-2, Policies CSF-2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.11, and Actions CSF-2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, and 2.6; Goal NRC-1 and Policies NRC-1.1 and 1.18; and Goal NRC-

[38] San Benito County Water District, 2022. *San Benito County Water District Annual Groundwater Assessment*.

8, Policies NRC-8.1, 8.2, and Actions NRC-8.3, 8.4, and 8.5 listed under Impact Discussions HYD-1 and HYD-2 would minimize potential adverse impacts to groundwater.

Therefore, the proposed project would not obstruct or conflict with the RWQCB's Basin Plan or the North San Benito GSP and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. It also provides reduction strategies to minimize this increase in GHG emissions through water conservation, water efficient retrofits, water-wise landscaping, and graywater and recycled water programs. Furthermore, the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new development that would affect hydrology and water quality. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict or obstruct implementation of the Basin Plan or GSP, and impacts are considered *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. The conversion of agricultural land to urban land uses is accounted for in the water demand and supply analysis provided above (and in Chapter 4.17, *Utilities and Service Systems*) and the local water purveyors can meet projected 2040 water demand. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the Basin Plan or GSP. Impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

HYD-6	**In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to hydrology and water quality.**

2040 General Plan

The geographic context used for the cumulative assessment to hydrology, drainage, flooding, and water quality encompasses the subwatersheds within the EIR Study Area: Tequisquita Slough subwatershed, Bird Creek-San Benito River subwatershed, Upper Pajaro River subwatershed and the Santa Ana Creek subwatershed (see Figure 4.10-1). New development in these watersheds could increase impervious areas, thus increasing runoff and flows into the storm drainage systems. Potential future development

would be required to comply with the Phase II Small MS4 Permit, the City's MS4 Guidance Document, and the Greater Hollister Area Storm Water Resource Plan (currently in development). These requirements include the implementation of BMPs that direct drainage to landscaped areas and the integration of retention/detention facilities into the site design, both of which have a beneficial impact on water quality.

All projects would be required to comply with various HMC provisions and policies as well as numerous water quality regulations that control construction-related and operational discharge of pollutants into stormwater. The water quality regulations implemented by the Central Coast RWQCB take a basin wide approach and consider water quality impairment in a regional context. For example, the NPDES Construction Permit ties receiving water limitations and basin plan objectives to terms and conditions of the permit, and the Phase II Small MS4 Permit requires all the surrounding municipalities to manage stormwater systems and be collectively protective of water quality. Projects in these subwatersheds would implement structural and nonstructural source-control BMPs that reduce the potential for pollutants to enter runoff, and treatment control BMPs that remove pollutants from stormwater. Therefore, cumulative water quality impacts would be less than significant after compliance with these permit requirements, and impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

The area surrounding the EIR Study Area is primarily agricultural land and streets with no associated storm drain system. The Central Coast RWQCB regulates discharges from runoff or the leaching of irrigation water and/or stormwater from irrigated lands through the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. Therefore, the stormwater control program and storm drain improvements implemented by the City would not directly or adversely impact the surrounding area.

Projects in the subwatersheds may be constructed within 100-year flood zones or dam inundation zones. Such projects would be mandated to comply with NFIP requirements. In addition, other jurisdictions within these subwatersheds regulate development within flood zones in compliance with FEMA standards to limit cumulative flood hazard impacts. Therefore, cumulative impacts to hydrology, drainage, and flooding would be *less than significant*, and impacts of the proposed project would not be cumulatively considerable.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. As discussed previously, there are no sections in the CAP that specifically address hydrology or stormwater other than policies to increase park space and tree plantings and vegetation, which will reduce the volume of stormwater runoff. Furthermore, the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new development that would affect hydrology and water quality. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would have a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact on hydrology and water quality.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. As discussed previously, there is no direct impact on hydrology or water quality associated with implementation of this program because agricultural land does not discharge to the City's storm drain system. Therefore, cumulative impacts of the proposed project would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

4.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING

This chapter describes the potential land use and planning impacts associated with the approval and implementation of the proposed project. This chapter also describes the regulatory framework and existing conditions, identifies criteria used to determine impact significance, provides an analysis of the potential land use and planning impacts, and identifies policies that could minimize any potentially significant impacts.

4.11.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.11.1.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

State Regulations

California Housing Element Law

California Housing Element Law[1] includes provisions related to the requirements for housing elements of local government general plans. Among these requirements, some of the necessary parts include an assessment of housing needs and an inventory of resources and constraints relevant to the meeting of these needs. Additionally, to ensure that counties and cities recognize their responsibilities in contributing to the attainment of the State housing goals, this section of the Government Code calls for local jurisdictions to plan for and allow the construction of a share of the region's projected housing needs, known as the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). The City of Hollister 2015 to 2023 Housing Element was adopted in July 2016 and is incorporated into the proposed 2040 General Plan by reference.

San Benito County Local Agency Formation Commission

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 establishes a Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) in each county in California, and authorizes these commissions to review, approve, or deny proposals for boundary changes and incorporations for cities, counties, and special districts. The LAFCO establishes a Sphere of Influence (SOI) for cities within their jurisdiction that describes the city's probable future physical boundaries and service area. The Hollister SOI is regulated by the San Benito County LAFCO. The San Benito County LAFCO has a responsibility to exercise their independent judgement while making decisions concerning appropriate local governmental boundaries and service providers. As a regulatory agency, LAFCO is charged by the legislature with "discouraging urban sprawl and encouraging the orderly formation and development of local agencies" based on "local circumstances and conditions."

[1] California Government Code Sections 65580 – 65589.8.

Regional Regulations

AMBAG Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Community Strategy

Senate Bill (SB) 375 requires each metropolitan planning organization (MPO) to prepare a sustainable communities strategy (SCS) in its regional transportation plan (RTP). The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) is the federally designated MPO and Council of Governments (COG) for Monterey County, San Benito County, and Santa Cruz County. As the MPO, AMBAG carries out many planning functions for the tri-county area, including development and maintenance of the regional travel demand model (RTDM), long-range transportation planning, and programming and acting as a regional forum for dialogue on issues facing the region. Most of AMBAG's projects are carried out in support of these major functions, including, but not limited to, the regional growth forecasts, discussed more in Chapter 4.14, *Population and Housing*, of this Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). AMBAG develops the regional growth forecast with a horizon year that matches the planning timeline of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the model years for the RTDM. In addition to informing regional planning processes, the regional growth forecast is used by local jurisdictions and special districts to inform local and subregional planning, such as the City of Hollister General Plan. The 2045 MTP/SCS is the long-range SCS and RTP for the three counties and 18 local jurisdictions within the tri-county Monterey Bay region, including the City of Hollister. Adopted in 2022, these regional efforts, prompted by SB 375, which established new requirements for regional alignment of land use and transportation planning, the MTS/SCS guides transportation and land use decisions, coordinating transportation investments with land use patterns such that the region makes informed decisions with respect to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and subsequently improving air quality and ensuring efficient energy consumption. By considering the regional forecasts, and goals and policies of the AMBAG MTS/SCS, the City of Hollister General Plan can support these regional planning efforts. AMBAG is currently developing the 2050 MTP/SCS, which is scheduled for adoption in 2026.

San Benito County 2035 General Plan

The San Benito County 2035 General Plan sets the land use and policy direction for the County of San Benito. By considering the San Benito County General Plan as part of its planning process, the City of Hollister General Plan can align the County's regional planning efforts. The Guiding Principles in the San Benito County 2035 General Plan relevant to land use and planning include:

- Encourage new growth in existing unincorporated communities, new communities, or clustered developments to preserve prime farmland and rangeland; protect natural habitats; and reduce the financial, social, and environmental impacts of urban sprawl.
- Ensure that there is a mix of residential, commercial, employment, park, open space, school, and public land uses to create a sense of place by supporting condensed, pedestrian-accessible, and transit-oriented development.
- Promote higher residential densities in existing unincorporated urban areas and new communities while encouraging mixed-use development.
- Ensure new development complements and preserves the unique character and beauty of San Benito County.

- Establish defined boundaries to separate cities and unincorporated communities from prime agricultural land and important natural resources, using such features as agriculture buffers, greenbelts, open space, and parks.
- Protect productive agriculture lands and industries.
- Encourage future growth near existing transportation networks, such as major roadways, state highways, airports, rail corridors, and other major transportation routes.
- Encourage future growth near available water and sewer infrastructure to ensure improvements are economically feasible and can be supported by adequate, long-term access to water, sewer, electric, gas, and other utilities.
- Protect natural resources and open space areas from incompatible uses.

San Benito County Hollister Municipal Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan

San Benito County's Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) adopted the *Hollister Municipal Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan* (ALUCP) in 2012 to ensure land uses surrounding the Hollister Municipal Airport (HMA) are compatible with airport-serving uses. The creation of the ALUC and the preparation of the ALUCP are requirements of the California State Aeronautics Act.[2] Provisions for creation of ALUCs were first established under state law in 1967 and the fundamental purpose of ALUCs to protect public health, safety, and welfare by ensuring the orderly expansion of airports and the adoption of land use measures that minimize the public's exposure to excessive noise and safety hazards within areas around public airports to the extent that these areas are not already devoted to incompatible uses has remained unchanged. The ALUCP evaluates all surrounding land within the airport influence area, defined as any land on which current or future airport-related noise, overflight, safety, or airspace protection factors may impact existing land uses. The ALUCP requires that any proposed project, specific plan, general plan, zoning ordinance, or building regulation, proposed within the airport influence area, is reviewed by the ALUC to ensure consistency with the ALUCP. By considering the ALUCP, the City of Hollister General Plan can ensure it will not conflict with the policies and overall purpose of the ALUCP.

Local Regulations

While the City has other local regulations that regulate land use and guide land use decisions, all specific plans, master plans, and zoning in the city must be consistent with the General Plan. The General Plan is the community's overarching policy document that defines a vision for future change and sets the "ground rules" for: locating and designing new projects that enhance the character of the community, expanding the local economy, conserving and preserving environmental resources, improving public services and safety, minimizing hazards, and fostering community health. The General Plan, which includes a vision, goals, policies, and actions, functions as the City's primary land use regulatory tool. It provides a basis for judging whether specific development proposals and public projects are in harmony with General Plan policies. It is the constitution for future change in Hollister. The General Plan must be used as the basis for all planning-related decisions made by City staff, the Planning Commission, and the

[2] Public Utilities Code Section 21670 et seq.

City Council. Other decision-making bodies that rely on the General Plan to guide future decisions include the Airport Advisory Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Arts and Cultural Commission, Historic Resources Commission, and the Public Works Department.

4.11.1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The term "existing land use" refers to the existing built environment, which may be different from the General Plan or Zoning designations that the City applies for planning purposes. The current 2005 Hollister General Plan is the primary planning document for the City of Hollister and the proposed 2040 General Plan is intended to ensure consistency between the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and federal and state laws and regional plans. Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines, implementation of the proposed project has the potential to conflict with "land use" plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. For the purposes of this EIR, a "land use" plan is a policy or regulation that addresses how land is used. The land use plans adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect are described in Section 4.11.1.1, *Regulatory Framework*, and the evaluation for the potential to conflict with these land use plans is provided in Section 4.11.3, *Impact Discussion*.

4.11.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the proposed project would result in significant land use and planning impacts if it would:

1. Physically divide an established community.
2. Cause a 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.
3. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to land use and planning.

4.11.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

LU-1	**Implementation of the proposed project would not physically divide an established community.**

2040 General Plan

The physical division of an established community typically refers to the construction of a physical feature or the removal of a means of access that would impair mobility within an existing community or between a community and outlying areas.

Potential future development from implementation of the proposed project would not result in a change in land use or zoning that would cause the construction or removal of any physical features or means of access throughout the EIR Study Area or surrounding region. The proposed 2040 General Plan would

increase development potential in the EIR Study Area; however, potential future development would primarily occur in the form of infill/intensification on sites already developed and/or underutilized, and/or in close proximity to existing development and infrastructure. As described in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, of this Draft EIR, an objective of the proposed 2040 General Plan is to provide for balanced and sustainable growth by creating and maintaining a cohesive development pattern amidst the agriculture landscape, with clearly defined urban edges. An urban boundary is created to protect Hollister's surrounding lands from sprawl, reduce the cost of extending costly infrastructure, and enhance the visual character of the city's edge.

While the proposed 2040 General Plan does not prohibit development opportunities outside of infill locations, it does require the City to provide for orderly, well-planned, and balanced development as identified in the proposed 2040 General Plan Land Use (LU) Element in Goal LU-1. Policy LU-1.1, which supports Goal LU-1, requires the City to prioritize infill development over the annexation of properties for development. Additionally, the proposed 2040 General Plan maintains the existing roadway patterns and would not include any new major roadways or other physical features through existing neighborhoods that would create new physical barriers in the EIR Study Area. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not physically divide an established community. Impacts would be *less than significant* and no mitigation measures are required.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 Climate Action Plan (2023 CAP) is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan and does not involve any land use changes that would result in indirect growth or change in building density and intensity. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not physically divide an established community and there would be *less-than-significant* impacts.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP) is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would result in indirect growth or change in building density and intensity, implementation of the proposed project would not physically divide an established community and there would be *less-than-significant* impacts.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

LU-2	**Implementation of the proposed project would not cause a 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.**

2040 General Plan

While the proposed 2040 General Plan is the primary planning document for the City of Hollister and the proposed update is intended to ensure consistency between the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and federal and state laws, implementation of the proposed project has the potential to conflict with "land use" plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. For the purposes of this EIR, a "land use" plan is a policy or regulation that addresses how land is used. The following discusses the proposed project and its relationship to the land use plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect, as listed in Section 4.11.1.1, *Regulatory Framework*.

California Housing Element Law

The City of Hollister 2015 to 2023 Housing Element was adopted in July 2016. The next housing element update is currently underway in a separate process from that of the 2040 General Plan, with adoption before January 31, 2024. As described in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, of this Draft EIR, the 2015 to 2023 Housing Element has already undergone separate environmental review as part of its adoption process; however, the residential development that could occur under the Housing Element is incorporated into the residential development analyzed as part of this EIR. The proposed General Plan 2040 Land Use (LU) Element includes goals, policies, and actions that require decision makers to support adequate housing in Hollister.

Goal LU-1: Promote orderly and balanced growth within Hollister's planning area boundaries. (Goal LU6)

- Policy LU-1.4: Balance of Uses. The City shall strive to achieve a balance between residential, commercial, and industrial development to increase the City's jobs-to-employed resident ratio and ensure availability of local employment and housing. (new)

Goal LU-2: Promote diverse housing opportunities for existing and future residents. (new)

- Policy LU-2.1: Land Supply. Ensure that there is adequate land designated to meet the projected future housing needs of the City. (Policy LU7.3)
- Policy LU-2.2: Diverse Neighborhoods. Encourage the development of well-integrated neighborhoods consisting of both single-family and multi-family homes that include owner-occupied and rental housing units in single-use and mixed-use environments. (Policy LU7.5) Require for-sale detached residential development projects greater than 40 dwelling units to provide multifamily units equal to 20 percent of the total number of detached units. (new)
- Policy LU-2.4: Housing Types. Provide a variety of housing types that offer choices for residents and create complete, livable neighborhoods. Allow for a full range of housing types (i.e. small houses,

starter homes, cluster lot developments, condominiums, apartments, townhouses) to meet the needs of Hollister residents. (new)

- Policy LU-2.4: Planned Developments. Use the Planned Development process to allow and encourage residential developments which include a variety of types, densities, and size. (new)
- Action LU-2.1: Inclusionary Housing. Inclusionary Housing. Adopt an inclusionary housing ordinance that requires new residential developments to include 20 percent of the units as affordable housing. (new)

The proposed land use map, as shown in Figure 3-5, *2040 General Plan Land Use Map*, in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, includes enough land designated for housing to fulfill the City's 2023-2031 RHNA as well as future buffer sites pursuant to SB 166 identified through the upcoming Housing Element update. Accordingly, the proposed 2040 General Plan would not conflict with or be inconsistent with state Housing Law resulting in a significant environmental impact.

San Benito County Local Agency Formation Commission

The proposed Hollister SOI is regulated by the San Benito County LAFCO and any proposed jurisdictional boundary changes, including annexations and detachments of territory to and/or from the City, is subject to the San Benito County LAFCO review and approval. The San Benito County LAFCO also must review any contractual service agreements and determine the SOI. Although the City does not propose to annex or de-annex any areas of the SOI as part of the proposed project, annexation proposals could occur during the buildout horizon of the proposed 2040 General Plan. The proposed 2040 General Plan includes goals, policies, and actions that require the City to ensure the orderly annexation of land within the SOI.

The proposed 2040 General Plan Land Use and Community Design (LU) Element contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts from annexations from the SOI to the City Limits. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to minimize impacts from annexations and support the San Benito LAFCO mission to encourage the orderly growth of local communities and discourage urban sprawl:

Goal LU-1: Promote orderly and balanced growth within Hollister's planning area boundaries. (Goal LU6)

- Policy LU-1.1: Prioritize Infill Development. Ensure an orderly pattern of development in the city that prioritizes infill development over the annexation of properties. (new)
- Policy LU-1.4: Balance of Uses. The City shall strive to achieve a balance between residential, commercial, and industrial development to increase the city's jobs-to-employed resident ratio and ensure availability of local employment and housing. (new)
- Policy LU-1.11: Intergovernmental Coordination. Coordinate regional planning efforts with San Benito County, Caltrans, and other agencies. (Implementation Program LU.Q).
- Policy LU-1.5: Development Projects Outside of the City. The City shall not accept an application for any projects (subdivision, grading, development, etc.) for any land that has not been annexed into the City Limits. (new)

- Policy LU-1.6: Coordinated Annexation Requests. Encourage coordinated annexation of contiguous properties. (new)
- Policy LU-1.7: Specific Plans. Ensure the orderly development of large areas of land proposed for annexation through specific plans. Require a specific plan for annexation requests which are over 20 acres in size or include non-residential uses regardless of size. (new)
- Policy LU-1.8: Revenue Neutral. Require annexations to be revenue neutral and cover all costs related to public infrastructure, public facilities, and public services. (new)
- Policy LU-1.9: Contiguous Annexations. Prohibit any annexations of land that are not contiguous to City Limits. Annexation of land that would result in formation of a County "island" or irregular City boundary shall not be permitted. (new)
- Action LU-1.1: Sphere of Influence Amendment. Work with LAFCO to amend the Sphere of Influence as proposed in this General Plan. (new)
- Action LU-1.2: Annexation Process. Review City procedures related to annexations and update as needed to ensure an efficient and orderly review process. (new)
- Action LU-1.3: Annexation Strategy. Create an annexation prioritization strategy for areas outside the existing City Limits that identifies where and in what order the City should annex land outside the City Limits. The strategy should consider initiating the annexation of developed unincorporated areas adjacent to the city and in county "islands." Annexation should of these areas should occur if the annexation would facilitate infill development, improve service delivery, or create a more logical City boundary. (a rewrite of L-1.3) (new)
- Action LU-1.8: Infill Streamlining. Update the City's regulatory measures to make it easier to develop in infill areas than at other locations in the city. Infill development means those areas already surrounded by development. (new)

Goal LU-6: Support balanced growth and well-designed development patterns within Hollister's Special Planning Areas. (new)

- Policy LU-6.1: Special Planning Areas. Maintain and implement the Special Planning Areas shown in this General Plan for the North Gateway, West Gateway, Buena Vista Road, Downtown, "Old Town" Residential, Home Office, Meridian Street Extension and Union Road areas. (Policy LU1.7)

Accordingly, the proposed project would not conflict with or be inconsistent with the San Benito County LAFCO charge for orderly growth of local communities and discourage urban sprawl and the impact would be less than significant.

AMBAG Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Community Strategy

While AMBAG MTP/SCS is not intended to override local land use control, it provides guidance to the local agencies such as the City that focuses on achieving the State's GHG and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction goals by constructing more infill development in downtowns and centers in close proximity to jobs and services. As discussed in Section 4.11.1, *Regulatory Framework*, under the subheading "California Housing Element Law," the proposed 2040 General Plan Land Use and Community Design (LU) Element includes goals, policies, and actions that require decision makers to support adequate housing in Hollister, including infill housing that would support the charge of the AMBAG MTP/SCS. Additionally, the proposed 2040 General Plan includes Policy LU-1.4, which requires the City to coordinate regional planning efforts with San Benito County, Caltrans, and other agencies such as AMBAG. Accordingly, the proposed 2040 General Plan would not conflict with or be inconsistent with the AMBAG MTP/SCS, resulting in a significant environmental impact.

San Benito County 2035 General Plan

The proposed 2040 General Plan maintains consistency with the *San Benito County 2035 General Plan* through goals, policies, and actions that ensure land use planning decisions inside and adjacent to the Hollister City Limits do not conflict with one another. As discussed in Section 4.11.1, *Regulatory Framework*, under the subheading "San Benito County Local Agency Formation Commission," the proposed 2040 General Plan Land Use and Community Design (LU) Element includes goals, policies, and actions that require decision makers ensure a collaborative process as potential future development outside the Hollister City Limits occurs. Because land outside the City Limits is currently subject to San Benito County land use regulations and would only come under Hollister's land use jurisdiction upon annexation, only one set of land use policies apply at a given time, and there cannot be a conflict between the City and San Benito County General Plans. As a result, adoption and implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan would not conflict with or be inconsistent with the *San Benito County 2035 General Plan*, resulting in a less-than-significant impact.

San Benito County Hollister Municipal Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan

The HMA's Airport Influence Area (AIA) is within both City Limits and SOI. Land use compatibility with the airport is regulated by the San Benito County ALUCP. Pursuant to the California Public Utilities Code Section 21676, development of land and changes in land use around the HMA must be consistent with the ALUCP. The proposed 2040 General Plan Health and Safety (HS) Element ensures consistency with the Hollister ALUCP through the following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions that would serve to minimize impacts from development in close proximity to the HMA:

Goal HS-1. Protect community health and safety from natural and human-caused hazards. (Goal HS1)

- Policy HS-1.4: Airport Safety. Avoid residential dwellings in the Aircraft Flight Zones and establish compatible land use zones around the Airport consistent with Hollister Municipal Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. (Policy HS1.11)
- Action HS-1.2: Development Review for Compatibility with the Hollister Municipal Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. Review all development proposals within the airport influence area to verify that

the proposed development would not conflict with the land use guidelines established in the Hollister Municipal Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan or subsequent updates. (Implementation Measure HS.U)

Goal HS-8. Achieve noise levels consistent with acceptable standards and reduce or eliminate objectionable noise sources. (Goal HS3)

- Policy HS-8.6: Airport Noise. Review all proposed development within the Airport Influence Area to ensure that it will be compatible with operations at the Hollister Municipal Airport and applicable noise standards and regulations. (Policy HS3.7)

Goal HS-9: Protect the public's health and safety, ensure compatible land uses with Hollister Municipal Airport operations. (new)

- Policy HS-9.1: Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. Work closely with appropriate agencies, including the San Benito County Airport Land Use Commission, to ensure compatibility of land uses with airport facilities and operations. (new)
- Policy HS-9.2: Airspace Protection. Limit building heights for airspace protection in accordance with Federal Aviation Regulations Part 77. (new)

Implementation of these proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would ensure that potential future development near the HMA would be consistent with the San Benito County ALUCP. Therefore, adoption and implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan would not conflict with the San Benito County ALUCP and impacts would be less than significant.

Summary

In summary, the proposed 2040 General Plan is the primary planning document for the City of Hollister. The proposed update is intended to ensure consistency between the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and federal and state laws. Because the proposed 2040 General Plan is the overriding planning document for the City, and because the proposed project involves amending the current General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance, the impact would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan and does not involve any land use changes that would result in indirect growth or change in building density and intensity. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not cause a 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 and there would be *less-than-significant* impacts.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would result in indirect growth or change in building density and intensity, implementation of the proposed project would not cause a 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 and there would be *less-than-significant* impacts.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

LU-3 In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to land use and planning.

2040 General Plan

As discussed in Chapter 4.0, *Environmental Analysis*, the geographic context for the cumulative land use and planning effects occurs from potential future development under the proposed project combined with impacts from the projected growth in the rest of San Benito County and the surrounding region, as forecast by AMBAG. The land use analyses find that the proposed project would not divide an established community or conflict with established plans, policies, and regulations, in or outside the City of Hollister, adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. Potential future development that may occur from implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan would not create substantial land use impacts. Development is likely to continue to occur in the San Benito County region. However, such development is taking place in already urbanized areas as infill development and would not require significant land use changes that would create land use conflicts, nor would they divide communities. Growth from new development in the region is expected to align with projected growth forecast by AMBAG and as required by the RHNA required for each jurisdiction. As discussed under Impact Discussion LU-2, the proposed 2040 General Plan includes goals, policies, and actions that would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts on future growth. Additionally, the proposed project would accommodate future growth by providing for infrastructure and associated public services to accommodate the projected growth of the city. All potential future development would be required to comply with any required site-specific infrastructure improvements and to pay any project-specific impact fees. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to cumulative impacts related to land use changes and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP

does not involve any land use changes that would result in indirect growth or change in building density and intensity, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to land use and planning.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would result in indirect growth or change in building density and intensity, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to land use and planning.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

4.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

This chapter describes the potential mineral resource impacts associated with the approval and implementation of the proposed project. This chapter also describes the regulatory framework and existing conditions, identifies criteria used to determine impact significance, provides an analysis of the potential mineral resource impacts, and identifies policies that could minimize any potentially significant impacts.

4.12.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.12.1.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

State Regulations

State regulations require the preservation of mineral resource sites and ensure that nearby land uses are compatible with extraction. The California Department of Conservation, Geological Survey (California Geological Survey) is the State agency responsible for inventorying and mapping mineral resources in California. Regulations pursuant to the California Geological Survey mineral resource determinations are generally linked with county general plan land use elements and other types of local and regional development rules. The California State Mining and Geology Board (SMGB) maintains information on mineral deposits of statewide or regional significance.

The California Geological Survey classifies lands into Aggregate and Mineral Resource Zones (MRZs) based on guidelines adopted by the SMGB, as mandated by the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975. Cities and counties are required to incorporate MRZs delineated by the State into their general plans.[1] The MRZs identify whether known or inferred significant mineral resources are present in areas. MRZs are grouped by the State into four categories based on geologic factors, with MRZ-2 lands having the greatest importance. MRZ-2 sites are underlain by demonstrated mineral resources considered important to the region or the State as a whole. The other categories include MRZ-3 areas of undetermined mineral resource significance, MRZ-4 areas of unknown mineral resource potential , and MRZ-1 areas where geologic information indicates no significant mineral deposits are present. The SMGB also divides aggregate resources (MRZ-2 areas) into regions and resource sectors. Hollister is in the Monterey Bay Region. The resource sectors areas judged to contain a significant deposit of construction quality aggregate that is available, from a land-use perspective, to meet future needs of the region. These areas are currently permitted for mining and found to have land uses compatible with possible mining. Pursuant to the California Code of Regulations, the Monterey Bay Production-Consumption (P-C) Region is made up of resource Sectors A through U, with resource Sector E being relevant to San Benito County. Sector E is

[1] Public Resources Code, General Provisions, Division 2, *Geology, Mines, and Mining*, Chapter 9, S*urface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975*, Article 4, S*tate Policy for the Reclamation of Mined Lands*, Section 2762(a)(1).

defined as the channel and floodplain deposits in a long portion of the San Benito River extending from lower Tres Pinos Creek west to State Highway 101 in central San Benito County.[2]

Regional Regulations

San Benito County 2035 General Plan

The San Benito County 2035 General Plan is the overarching planning document for unincorporated land within San Benito County, which includes agricultural lands adjacent to and within the unincorporated portions of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Study Area. The Natural and Cultural Resources (NCR) Element of the San Benito County General Plan encourages the efficient use of economically important mineral and aggregate extraction, while also protecting the community from the adverse effects of toxic historic mining.[3] Goals and policies of the San Benito County General Plan related to mineral resources include:

Goal NCR-5: To protect and support economically viable mineral resource extraction while avoiding land use conflicts and environmental impacts from current and historical mining activities.

- Policy NCR-5.1: Mineral Resource Preservation. The County shall preserve for future use areas with potentially-important mineral resources by limiting residential or urban uses that would be incompatible with mining operations.
- Policy NCR-5.2: Significant Mineral Resources. The County shall recognize areas classified Mineral Resource Zone 2 (MRZ-2) or Scientific Zone (SZ) pursuant to the Guidelines for Classification and Designation of Mineral Lands as mineral resources of statewide and regional significance and shall protect these mineral resources from premature development incompatible with mining.
- Policy NCR-5.3: Notice of Nearby Mineral Resources. The County shall require a notice explaining the location of important mineral resources to be recorded on any parcel within one-half mile of an MRZ 2 or SZ designation.
- Policy NCR-5.7: Mining Reclamation Program. The County shall require mining operators to prepare reclamation plans and implement reclamation programs to restore land for alternative uses consistent with: the Land Use Diagram; policies for wildlife, flood, and erosion protection; and the California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA).
- Policy NCR-5.8: Mining Site Reclamation. The County shall implement State requirements for reclamation of mining sites to occur concurrently with extraction activities rather than after extraction has been completed. Additionally, the County shall ensure that reclamation is achieved in a manner that will protect public safety and enable lands to be put to subsequent beneficial use.

[2] California Code of Regulations, Title 14, *Natural Resources,* Division 2, *Department of Conservation,* Chapter 8 , *Mining and Geology,* Subchapter 1, *State Mining and Geology Board*, Article 2, *Areas Designated to Be of Regional Significance,* Section 3550.12, *Construction Aggregate Resources, Monterey Bay Region.*

[3] County of San Benito, July 21, 2015. *San Benito County 2035 General Plan, Section 8, Natural and Cultural Resources Element*, https://www.cosb.us/home/showpublisheddocument/5859/637347294134470000, accessed June 3, 2022.

- Policy NCR-5.12: Mineral Resource Zoning. The County shall continue to apply "MR" zoning to selected mineral resource areas determined by the Board of Supervisors to require a special level of protection as an additional method of avoiding land use conflicts between mineral extraction and other incompatible uses with the following criteria: a) Lands classified as MRZ-2 or SZ by the State of California Division of Mines and Geology qualify for the "MR" zoning designation and/or; b) Evidence of the location, extent, and depth, and quality of mineral resources shall be submitted as part of the MR overlay zoning application. The material shall be reviewed by a geologist selected by the County for accuracy. The County shall deny MR overlay zoning requests that do not provide evidence of significant mineral resources on site.
- Policy NCR-5.14: Conservation Easements. The County shall allow the use of voluntary conservation easements on mineral lands and contiguous properties to protect significant resources.

4.12.1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

As described in Section 4.12.1.1, *Regulatory Framework,* the EIR Study Area is in the SMGB Monterey Bay Region and includes portions of aggregate materials sectors of the Monterey Bay P-C Region. As shown on Figure 4.12-1, *Regionally Significant Construction Aggregate Resources Areas,* Sector E follows the southwest boundaries of the EIR Study Area and includes construction aggregate deposits (sand, gravel, and crushed rock) of regional significance (i.e., MRZ-2 sites). Sector E is defined as the channel and floodplain deposits in a long portion of the San Benito River extending from lower Tres Pinos Creek west to State Highway 101 in central San Benito County.[4] These resources may be needed to meet future demands in the region. The properties controlled by aggregate producers are also shown on Figure 4.12-1. According to the California Department of Conservation, these sites within the Sector E boundaries are recognized mining operations that are classified as MRZ-2.

According to the California Department of Conservation, Division of Mine Reclamation, there are three mines within the EIR Study Area, described herein:

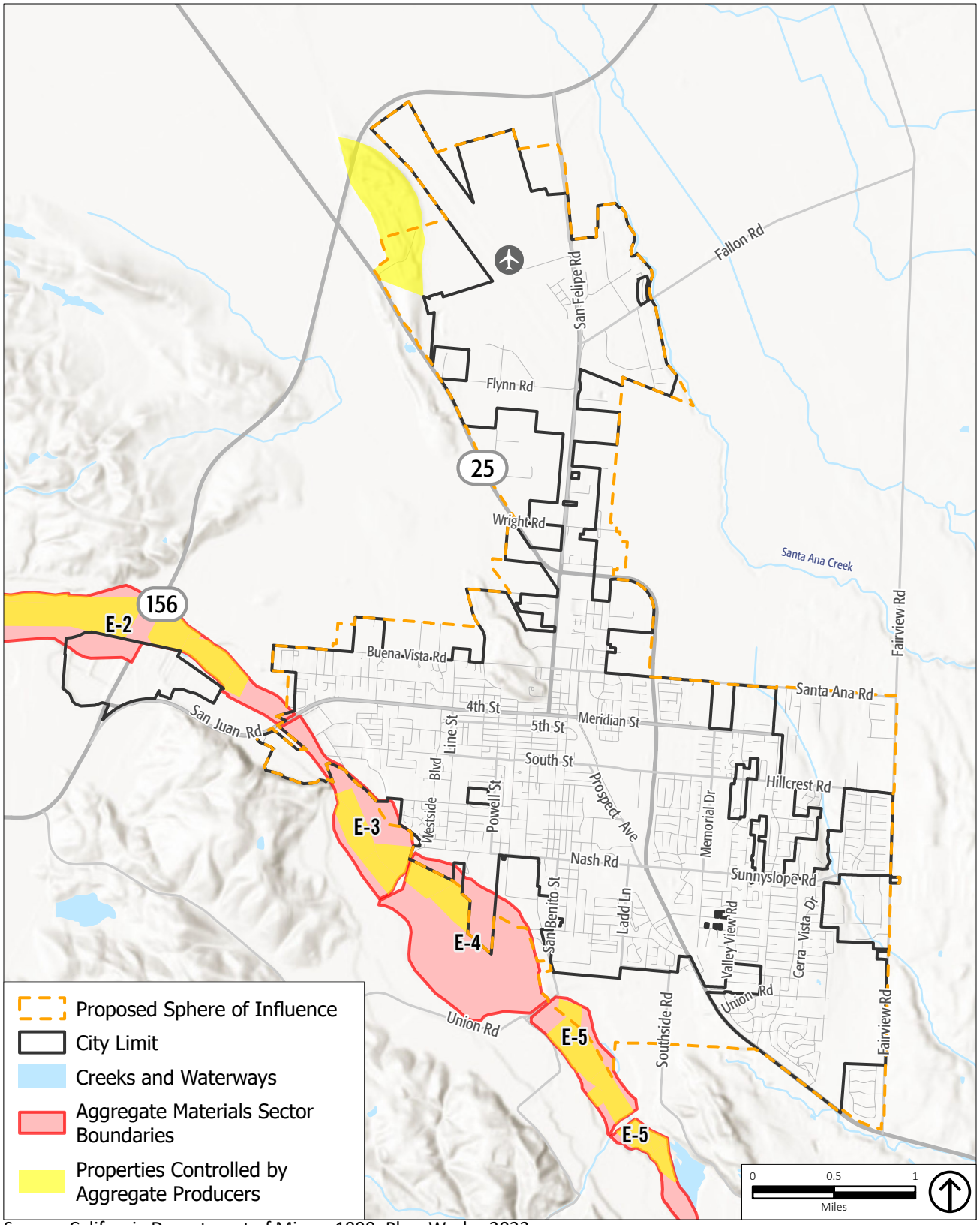
- Plant 25 (Mine ID: 91-35-0004). Plant 25 is in northeastern Hollister, east of the Hollister Municipal Airport, and is shown on Figure 4.12-1 as a property controlled by aggregate producers. This location is also known as the San Lorenzo Lumber Company (SLC)/Plant 25/Don Chapin site. The lead agency for this operation is the County of San Benito. This is an active mine and the operation type is open pit. The primary product is sand and gravel and other products include fill soil.[5, 6] The facility is operated by the Don Chapin Company at 2735 Bolsa Road.[7] See Figure 4.12-2, *Plant 25 (Mine ID: 91-35-0004)*.

[4] California Code of Regulations, Title 14, *Natural Resources,* Division 2, *Department of Conservation,* Chapter 8 , *Mining and Geology,* Subchapter 1, *State Mining and Geology Board*, Article 2, *Areas Designated to Be of Regional Significance,* Section 3550.12, *Construction Aggregate Resources, Monterey Bay Region.*

[5] County of San Benito, November 18, 2022. San Benito County, 2020 Active Mine Update, https://sanbenito.novusagenda.com/agendapublic/AttachmentViewer.ashx?AttachmentID=10932&ItemID=5668, accessed June 3, 2022.

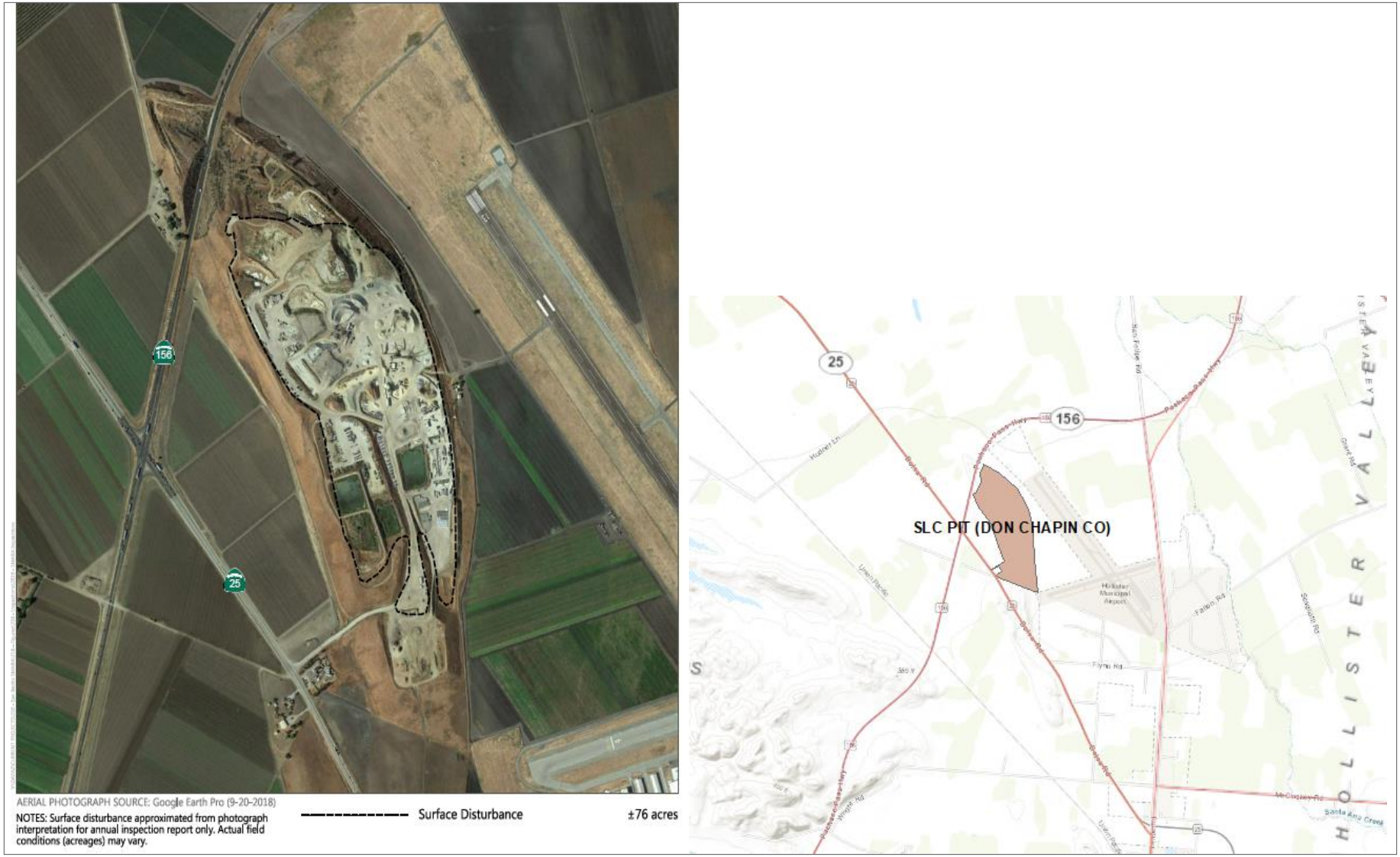
[6] California Department of Conservation, Division of Mine Reclamation, Mines Online, https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/mol/?query=MOLMinesNoAB_759_5356_160_7492_277,Mine_ID,91-35-0004, accessed June 3, 2022.

[7] Don Chapin Company, Home, https://www.donchapin.com/, accessed June 3, 2022.



Source: California Department of Mines, 1999; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.12-1
Regionally Significant Construction Aggregate Resources Areas



Source: From San Benito County, 2020 Active Mine Update, prepared by Arielle Goodspeedand Benchmark Resources, 2020.

Figure 4.12-2
Plant 25 (Mine ID: 91-35-0004)

- Sandman, Inc. (Mine ID: 91-35-0015). Sandman, Inc. is in southwestern Hollister near the Nash Road/Westside Road intersection and is within the E-3 Sector shown on Figure 4.12-1. The lead agency for this operation is the County of San Benito. This is not currently an active mine and is subject to an interim management plan approved by the San Benito County Planning Commission in June 2021. The past operation type was quarry and the primary product was sand and gravel. As of January 2022, Sandman, Inc. has applied to the County of San Benito to reinitiate the sand and gravel mining within and adjacent to the San Benito River channel on a 131-acre site north (downstream) of the Nash Road Bridge in unincorporated San Benito County, adjacent to Hollister. [8, 9, 10] See Figure 4.12-3, *Sandman, Inc. (Mine ID: 91-35-0015)*.
- San Benito Sand Plant (Mine ID: 91-35-0011). San Benito Sand Plant is in southwestern Hollister west of Southside Road and is within the E-5 Sector shown on Figure 4.12-1. This location is formally known as the Gillio site. The lead agency for this operation is the County of San Benito. This is not currently an active mine and as of 2020, the County is completing the process of reviewing the application and completing environmental analysis to amend the reclamation plan and close the site. The past operation type was streambed or gravel bar skimming and pitting and the primary product was sand and gravel.[11, 12,] See Figure 4.12-4, *San Benito Sand Plant (Mine ID: 91-35-0011)*.

4.12.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the proposed project would result in significant impacts to mineral resources if it would:

1. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state.
2. Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan.
3. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to mineral resources.

[8] California Department of Conservation, Division of Mine Reclamation, Mines Online, https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/mol/?query=MOLMinesNoAB_759_5356_160_7492_277,Mine_ID,91-35-0015, accessed June 3, 2022.

[9] County of San Benito, November 18, 2022. San Benito County, 2020 Active Mine Update, https://sanbenito.novusagenda.com/agendapublic/AttachmentViewer.ashx?AttachmentID=10932&ItemID=5668, accessed June 3, 2022.

[10] San Benito County, Resources Management Agency, Mine ID# 91-35-0015: Nash Road Quarry (Sandman) Reclamation Plan Amendment, https://www.cosb.us/departments/resource-management-agency/planning-and-land-use-division/nash-road-quarry-reclamation-plan, accessed June 3, 2022.

[11] California Department of Conservation, Division of Mine Reclamation, Mines Online, https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/mol/?query=MOLMinesNoAB_759_5356_160_7492_277,Mine_ID,91-35-0004, accessed June 3, 2022.

[12] County of San Benito, November 18, 2022. San Benito County, 2020 Active Mine Update, https://sanbenito.novusagenda.com/agendapublic/AttachmentViewer.ashx?AttachmentID=10932&ItemID=5668, accessed June 3, 2022.

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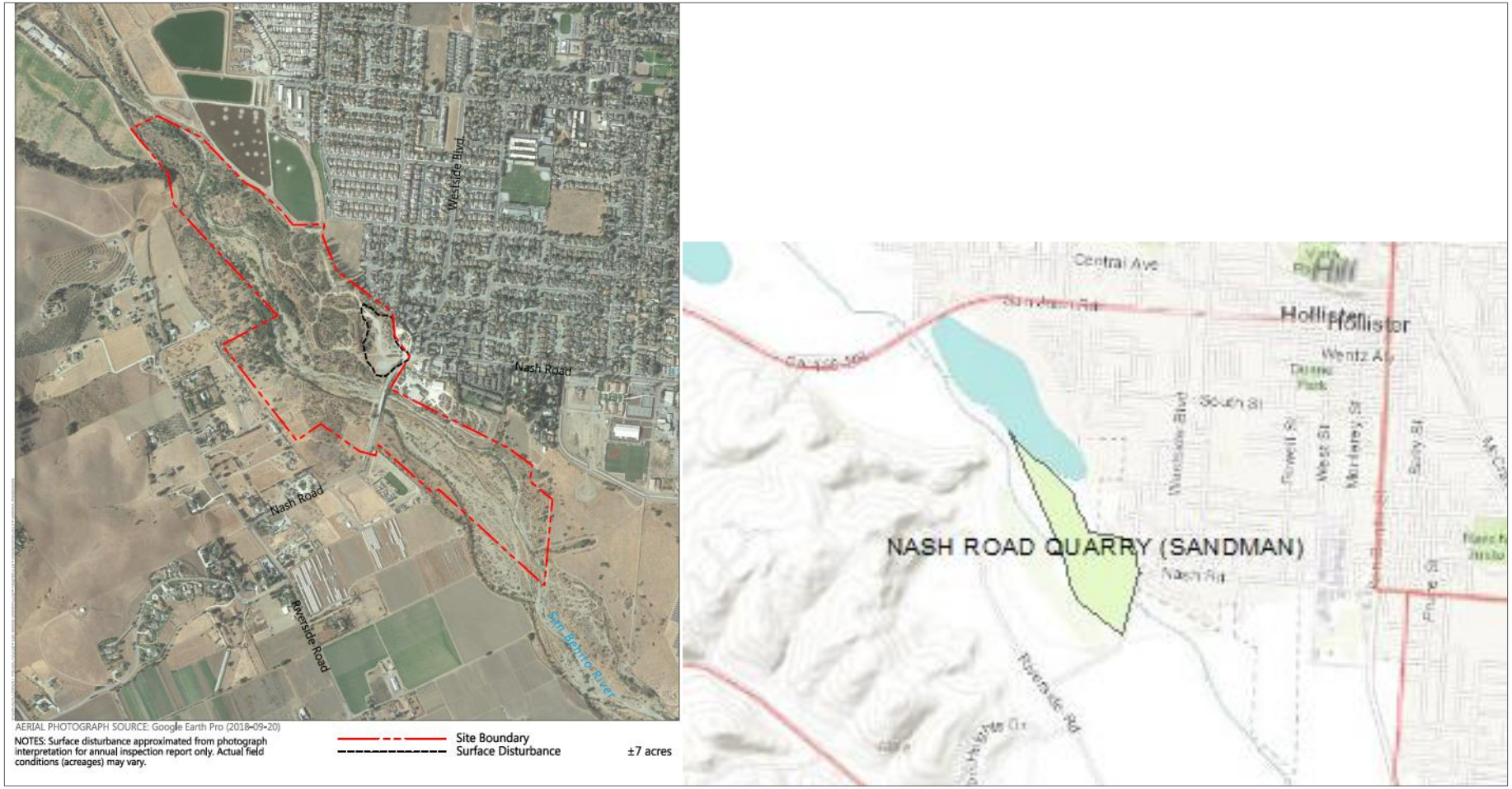
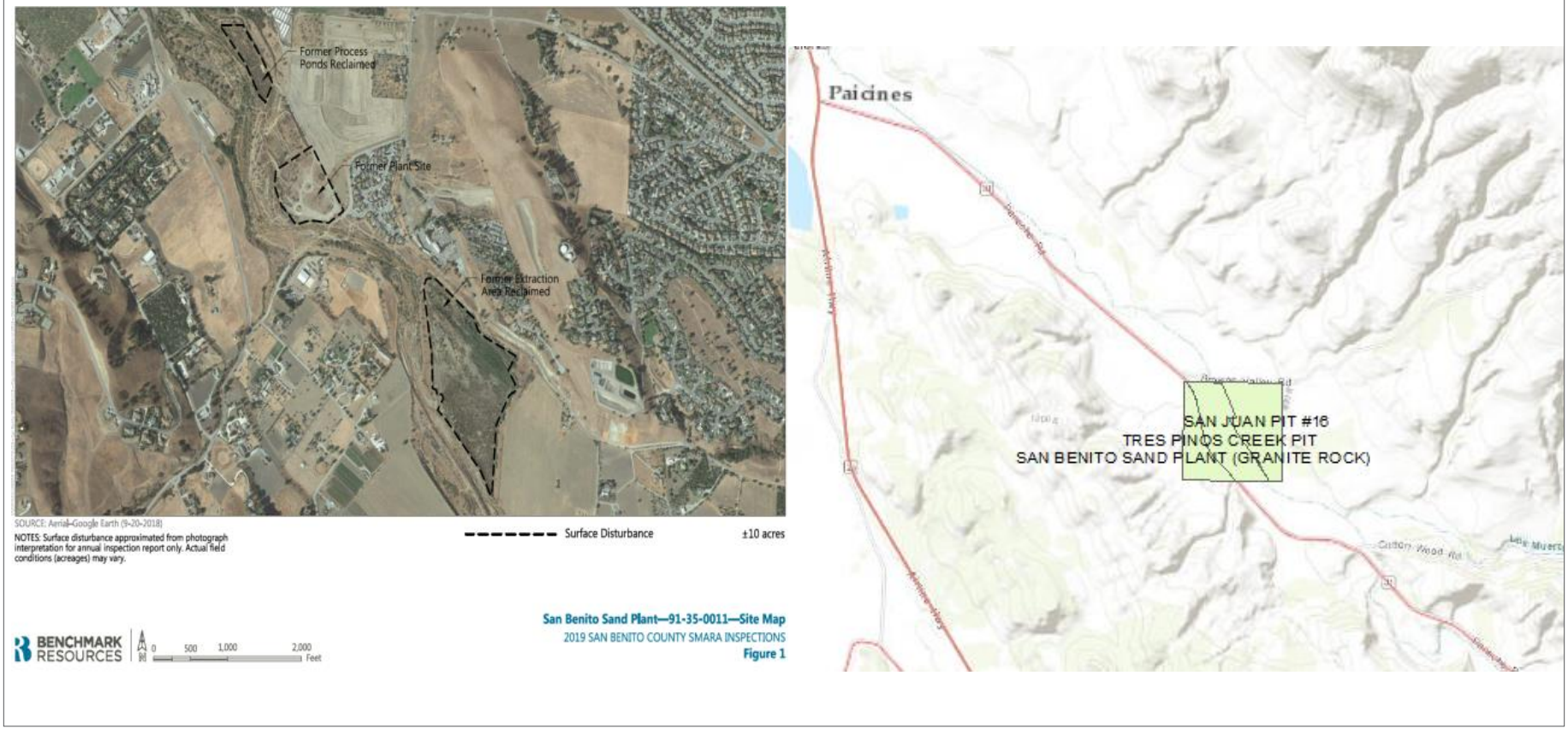


Source: From San Benito County, 2020 Active Mine Update, prepared by Arielle Goodspeedand Benchmark Resources, 2020.

Figure 4.12-3
Sandman, Inc. (Mine ID: 91-35-0015)



Source: From San Benito County, 2020 Active Mine Update, prepared by Arielle Goodspeedand Benchmark Resources, 2020.

Figure 4.12-4
San Benito Sand Plant (Mine ID: 91-35-0011)

4.12.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

MIN-1	**Implementation of the proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state.**

2040 General Plan

As described under Section 4.12.1.2, *Existing Conditions*, the EIR Study Area includes lands that are recognized by the State as having regionally significant aggregate resources. While the majority of these sites are outside of the current and proposed sphere of influence (SOI), thereby indicating they are not subject to annexation into the City Limits over the course of the General Plan buildout horizon, portions of these properties are in the existing and proposed SOI, as shown on Figure 4.12-1. As the only active mine in the EIR Study Area, the Plant 25 site would retain its industrial land use designation under the proposed 2040 General Plan. The Sandman site would have open space and agricultural land use designations, and the San Benito Sand Plant site would have an agricultural land use designation under the proposed 2040 General Plan. SMGB policy states that land uses that require a high public or private investment in structures, land improvements, and landscaping, or that would otherwise prevent mining (i.e., high-density residential development, public facilities, intensive industrial and commercial uses) are inherently incompatible with the conservation and extraction of mineral resources. Those land uses that require a low public or private investment in structures, land improvements, and landscaping that would allow mining (i.e., extensive industrial, recreation, agricultural, and open space uses) could be compatible. Therefore, the proposed land use designation of the mining sites would be compatible with the conservation and extraction of mineral resources.

As described in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, of this Draft EIR, an objective of the proposed 2040 General Plan is to provide for balanced and sustainable growth by creating and maintaining a cohesive development pattern amidst the agriculture landscape, with clearly defined urban edges. An urban boundary is created to protect Hollister's surrounding lands from sprawl, reduce the cost of extending costly infrastructure, and enhance the visual character of the city's edge. Land use policies are enacted to reduce incompatible land uses and ensure developments pay for their share of infrastructure, public facilities, and any environmental costs they might impose. Accordingly, the potential future development is expected to occur in existing urban areas and would be in the form of infill/intensification on sites already developed and/or underutilized and/or near existing residential and residential-serving development. These urbanized areas do not have known mineral resources of value to the region or the state.

The proposed Natural Resources and Conservation (NRC) Element and Open Space and Agricultural (OS) Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to mineral resources. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals and policies would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts on mineral resources:

Goal NRC-7: Protect the current and future extraction of mineral resources in Hollister while minimizing impacts of this use on the public and the environment. (new)

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- Policy NRC-7.1: Mineral Resource Conservation. Use land use controls and other appropriate measures to preserve regionally significant mineral resources in the Planning Area identified by the State Division of Mining and Geology. (new)
- Policy NRC-7.2: Mineral Resource Management. Manage mineral resource extraction to ensure that this activity results in the fewest possible environmental impacts. Require preparation and assured implementation of a rehabilitation plan for mineral extraction sites as a condition of mining approval. The mineral resource extraction plan shall address the protection and restoration of biotic resources. (new)
- Policy NCR-7.3: Expansion of Mining Sites. New or expanded mining operations within the Hollister Planning Area shall adhere to the following guidelines:
  - Demonstrate no significant adverse impacts from the mining operations on adjoining areas and uses, including, but not limited to, those associated with noise, dust, and vibration.
  - Demonstrate no substantial increase in hazards to neighboring uses, water quality, air quality, agricultural resources, or biological resources.
  - Demonstrate that the proposed plan complies with existing applicable County and State waste management standards.
  - Incorporate sufficient buffering between mining operations and adjacent non-mining uses to minimize noise.
  - Incorporate landscaping buffers and other measures to minimize visual impacts to the extent possible. (new)
- Policy NCR-7.4: Land Use Compatibility. Restrict permitted uses on lands containing important mineral resources to those compatible with mineral extraction, except in cases where such uses offer public benefits that outweigh those of resource extraction. (new)
- Policy NCR-7.5: Reclamation of Mining Sites. Reclaim former mining sites to a condition which is readily adaptable for alternative land uses, consistent with the Land Use Map and other applicable policies, in accordance with the California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA). (new)
- Policy NCR-7.6: Union Road Mineral Resources. Preserve aggregate mineral resources located within the Union Road Special Planning Area that are of known value to the region. (new)

Goal OS-2: Preserve viable agricultural activities and lands. (Goal OS2)

- Action OS-2.3: Urban Growth Boundary. Work with the County of San Benito and the City of San Juan Bautista to establish and maintain an Urban Growth Boundary that delineates future urbanization areas from areas in which urbanization will not occur, so as to protect agricultural and open space uses. Lands outside of the Urban Growth Boundary shall only be designated for agriculture, park, open space, public facility, and utility uses. When establishing the Urban Growth Boundary, the following qualities should be taken into consideration: access to infrastructure, public services, transit, healthcare, and commercial uses; preserving farmland; and establishing a buffer between urban and rural uses. (new)

Additionally, the San Benito County 2035 General Plan includes Policies NCR-5.2 and NCR-5.12, discussed in Section 4.12.1, *Regulatory Framework*, which protect mineral resources from premature development incompatible with mining. Therefore, through land use compatibility under the SMGB policy and compliance with the proposed 2040 General Plan policies and existing San Benito County General Plan policies, implementation of the proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 Climate Action Plan (2023 CAP) is a strategic plan focused on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect mineral resources, implementation of the proposed project would not directly result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP) is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. The Plant 25 site would retain its industrial land use designation under the proposed 2040 General Plan, making it ineligible for dedication. The Sandman site would have open space and agricultural land use designations, and the San Benito Sand Plant site would have an agricultural land use designation under the proposed 2040 General Plan. SMGB policy states that land uses that require a high public or private investment in structures, land improvements, and landscaping, or that would otherwise prevent mining (i.e., high-density residential development, public facilities, intensive industrial and commercial uses) are inherently incompatible with the conservation and extraction of mineral resources. Those land uses that require a low public or private investment in structures, land improvements, and landscaping that would allow mining (i.e., extensive industrial, recreation, agricultural, and open space uses) could be compatible. Therefore, since the mines are designated as open space and agriculture under the proposed 2040 General Plan, dedication of these lands as an agricultural conversion easement under the proposed ALPP would not directly result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

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MIN-2	**Implementation of the proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan.**

2040 General Plan

As discussed is Impact Discussion MIN-1, the proposed 2040 General Plan, as well as the San Benito County 2035 General Plan, include policies to minimize the potential impacts on mineral resources. Furthermore, the proposed land use designations under the 2040 General Plan for the mining sites would be compatible with the conservation and extraction of mineral resources, according to SMGB policy. Therefore, implementation of the proposed the project would not result in loss of any locally important mineral resource recovery sites, and the impact would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect mineral resources, implementation of the proposed project would not directly result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. As discussed under Impact Discussion MIN-1, the proposed land use designations under the 2040 General Plan for the mining sites would be compatible with the conservation and extraction of mineral resources, according to SMGB policy. Therefore, dedication of these lands as an agricultural conversion easement under the proposed ALPP would not directly result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan, and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

MIN-3	**Implementation of the proposed project, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, would not result in significant cumulative impacts with respect to mineral resources.**

2040 General Plan

As discussed in Chapter 4, *Environmental Analysis*, the geographic scope of the cumulative analysis for mineral resources of statewide importance considers the surrounding incorporated and unincorporated land, the region, and the state. Future development throughout the state could result in the loss of mineral resources that are of value to the region and the residents of the state, and therefore impacts could be significant.

The proposed land use designations under the 2040 General Plan for the mining sites would be compatible with the conservation and extraction of mineral resources, according to SMGB policy. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to cumulative impacts related to the conversion of resources, and the impact would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would affect mineral resources, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to mineral resources.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. As discussed under Impact Discussions MIN-1 and MIN-2, the proposed land use designations under the 2040 General Plan for the mining sites would be compatible with the conservation and extraction of mineral resources, according to SMGB policy. Therefore, dedication of these lands as an agricultural conversion easement under the proposed ALPP would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to mineral resources.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

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4.13 NOISE

This chapter describes the potential noise and vibration impacts associated with the approval and implementation of the proposed project. This chapter describes the regulatory framework and existing conditions, identifies criteria used to determine impact significance, provides an analysis of the potential noise and vibration impacts, and identifies policies and feasible mitigation measures, if required, that could minimize any potentially significant impacts.

4.13.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.13.1.1 TERMINOLOGY

The following are brief definitions of terminology used in this section:

- **Sound.** A disturbance created by a vibrating object, which when transmitted by pressure waves through a medium such as air, is capable of being detected by the human ear or a microphone.
- **Noise.** Sound that is loud, unpleasant, unexpected, or otherwise undesirable.
- **Decibel (dB).** A measure of sound on a logarithmic scale.
- **A-Weighted Decibel (dBA).** An overall frequency-weighted sound level in decibels that approximates the frequency response of the human ear.
- **Equivalent Continuous Noise Level (L_{eq}).** The mean of the noise level, energy averaged over the measurement period.
- **L_{max}.** The maximum root-mean-square noise level during a measurement period.
- **Statistical Sound Level (L_n).** The sound level that is exceeded "n" percent of time during a given sample period. For example, the L_{50} level is the statistical indicator of the time-varying noise signal that is exceeded 50 percent of the time (during each sampling period). This is also called the "median sound level." The L_{10} level, likewise, is the value that is exceeded 10 percent of the time (i.e., near the maximum) and this is often known as the "intrusive sound level." The L_{90} is the sound level exceeded 90 percent of the time and is often considered the "effective background level" or "residual noise level."
- **Day-Night Sound Level (L_{dn} or DNL).** The energy-average of the A-weighted sound levels occurring during a 24-hour period, with 10 dBA added to the sound levels occurring during the period from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.
- **Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL).** The energy-average of the A-weighted sound levels occurring during a 24-hour period, with 5 dBA added to the levels occurring during the period from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and 10 dBA added to the sound levels occurring during the period from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. Note: For general community/environmental noise, CNEL and L_{dn} values rarely differ by more than 1 dBA. As a matter of practice, L_{dn} and CNEL values are considered to be equivalent/interchangeable.
- **Peak Particle Velocity (PPV).** The peak rate of speed at which soil particles move (e.g., inches per second) due to ground vibration.

- Vibration Decibel (VdB). A unitless measure of vibration, expressed on a logarithmic scale and with respect to a defined reference vibration velocity. In the United States, the standard reference velocity is 1 micro-inch per second (1x10-6 in/sec).
- Noise-Sensitive Receptor. Noise- and vibration-sensitive receptors include land uses where quiet environments are necessary for enjoyment and public health and safety. Residences, schools, motels and hotels, libraries, religious institutions, hospitals, and nursing homes are examples.

4.13.1.2 SOUND FUNDAMENTALS

Sound is a pressure wave transmitted through the air. It is described in terms of loudness or amplitude (measured in decibels), frequency or pitch (measured in Hertz [Hz] or cycles per second), and duration (measured in seconds or minutes). The standard unit of measurement of the loudness of sound is the decibel (dB). Changes of 1 to 3 dBA are detectable under quiet, controlled conditions and changes of less than 1 dBA are usually indiscernible. A 3 dBA change in noise levels is considered the minimum change that is detectable with human hearing in outside environments. A change of 5 dBA is readily discernable to most people in an exterior environment, and a 10 dBA change is perceived as a doubling (or halving) of the sound.

The human ear is not equally sensitive to all frequencies. Sound waves below 16 Hz are not heard at all and are "felt" more as a vibration. Similarly, while people with extremely sensitive hearing can hear sounds as high as 20,000 Hz, most people cannot hear above 15,000 Hz. In all cases, hearing acuity falls off rapidly above about 10,000 Hz and below about 200 Hz. Since the human ear is not equally sensitive to sound at all frequencies, a special frequency dependent rating scale is usually used to relate noise to human sensitivity. The A-weighted decibel scale (dBA) performs this compensation by weighting frequencies in a manner approximating the sensitivity of the human ear.

Noise is defined as unwanted sound and is known to have several adverse effects on people, including hearing loss, speech and sleep interference, physiological responses, and annoyance. Based on these known adverse effects, the federal government, the State of California, and many local governments have established criteria to protect public health and safety and to prevent disruption of certain human activities.

Sound Measurement

Sound pressure is measured through the A-weighted measure to correct for the relative frequency response of the human ear. That is, an A-weighted noise level de-emphasizes low and very high frequencies of sound similar to the human ear's de-emphasis of these frequencies.

Unlike linear units such as inches or pounds, decibels are measured on a logarithmic scale, representing points on a sharply rising curve. On a logarithmic scale, an increase of 10 dBA is 10 times more intense than 1 dBA, while 20 dBA is 100 times more intense, and 30 dBA is 1,000 times more intense. The decibel system of measuring sound gives a rough connection between the physical intensity of sound and its perceived loudness to the human ear. Ambient sounds generally range from 30 dBA (very quiet) to 100 dBA (very loud).

Sound levels are generated from a source and their decibel level decreases as the distance from that source increases. Sound dissipates exponentially with distance from the noise source. This phenomenon is known as "spreading loss." For a single point source, sound levels decrease by approximately 6 dBA for each doubling of distance from the source. This drop-off rate is appropriate for noise generated by on-site operations from stationary equipment or activity at a project site. If noise is produced by a line source, such as highway traffic, the sound decreases by 3 dBA for each doubling of distance in a hard site environment. Line source noise in a relatively flat environment with absorptive vegetation decreases by 4.5 dBA for each doubling of distance.

Time variation in noise exposure is typically expressed in terms of a steady-state energy level equal to the energy content of the time varying period (called Leq), or alternately, as a statistical description of the sound level that is exceeded over some fraction of a given observation period. For example, the L_{50} noise level represents the noise level that is exceeded 50 percent of the time. Half the time the noise level exceeds this level and half the time the noise level is less than this level. This level is also representative of the level that is exceeded 30 minutes in an hour. Similarly, the L_2, L_8 and L_{25} values represent the noise levels that are exceeded 2, 8, and 25 percent of the time, or 1, 5, and 15 minutes per hour. These "L_n" values are typically used to demonstrate compliance for stationary noise sources with a city's noise ordinance, as discussed subsequently.

Psychological and Physiological Effects of Noise

Physical damage to human hearing begins at prolonged exposure to noise levels higher than 85 dBA. Exposure to high noise levels affects our entire system, with prolonged noise exposure in excess of 75 dBA increasing body tensions, and thereby affecting blood pressure, functions of the heart and the nervous system. In comparison, extended periods of noise exposure above 90 dBA could result in permanent hearing damage. When the noise level reaches 120 dBA, a tickling sensation occurs in the human ear even with short-term exposure. This level of noise is called the threshold of feeling. As the sound reaches 140 dBA, the tickling sensation is replaced by the feeling of pain in the ear. This is called the threshold of pain. Table 4.13-1, *Typical Noise Levels*, shows typical noise levels from familiar noise sources.

TABLE 4.13-1 TYPICAL NOISE LEVELS

Common Outdoor Activities	Noise Level (dBA)	Common Indoor Activities
Onset of physical discomfort	120+	
	110	Rock Band (near amplification system)
Jet Flyover at 1,000 feet		
	100	
Gas Lawn Mower at three feet		
	90	
Diesel Truck at 50 feet, at 50 mph		Food Blender at 3 feet
	80	Garbage Disposal at 3 feet
Noisy Urban Area, Daytime		
	70	Vacuum Cleaner at 10 feet

TABLE 4.13-1 TYPICAL NOISE LEVELS

Common Outdoor Activities	Noise Level (dBA)	Common Indoor Activities
Commercial Area		Normal speech at 3 feet
Heavy Traffic at 300 feet	60	
		Large Business Office
Quiet Urban Daytime	50	Dishwasher Next Room
Quiet Urban Nighttime	40	Theater, Large Conference Room (background)
Quiet Suburban Nighttime		
	30	Library
Quiet Rural Nighttime		Bedroom at Night, Concert Hall (background)
	20	
		Broadcast/Recording Studio
	10	
Lowest Threshold of Human Hearing	0	Lowest Threshold of Human Hearing

Source: Caltrans 2013. *Technical Noise Supplement ("TeNS").*

4.13.1.3 VIBRATION FUNDAMENTALS

Vibration is an oscillating motion. Like noise, vibration is transmitted in waves, but in this case through earth or solid objects. Unlike noise, vibration is typically felt rather than heard. Vibration can be either natural as in the form of earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, landslides, or man-made as from explosions, heavy machinery or trains. Both natural and man-made vibration may be continuous such as from operating machinery, or impulsive as from an explosion.

Vibration amplitudes are usually described in terms of either vibration decibels (VdB) or peak particle velocity (PPV). Table 4.13-2, *Human Reaction to Typical Vibration Levels in Peak Particle Velocity,* and Table 4.13-3, *Human Reaction to Typical Vibration Levels in Vibration Decibels*, present the human reaction to various levels of PPV and VdB, respectively.

TABLE 4.13-2 HUMAN REACTION TO TYPICAL VIBRATION LEVELS IN PEAK PARTICLE VELOCITY

Vibration Level Peak Particle Velocity (in/sec)	Human Reaction	Effect on Buildings
0.006 to 0.019	Threshold of perception, possibility of intrusion	Vibrations unlikely to cause damage of any type
0.08	Vibrations readily perceptible	Recommended upper level of vibration to which ruins and ancient monuments should be subjected
0.10	Level at which continuous vibration begins to annoy people	Virtually no risk of "architectural" (i.e., not structural) damage to normal buildings
0.20	Vibrations annoying to people in buildings	Threshold at which there is a risk to "architectural" damage to normal dwelling (houses with plastered walls and ceilings)

TABLE 4.13-2 HUMAN REACTION TO TYPICAL VIBRATION LEVELS IN PEAK PARTICLE VELOCITY

Vibration Level Peak Particle Velocity (in/sec)	Human Reaction	Effect on Buildings
0.4 to 0.6	Vibrations considered unpleasant by people subjected to continuous vibrations and unacceptable to some people walking on bridges	Vibrations at a greater level than normally expected from traffic, but would cause "architectural" damage and possibly minor structural damage

Source: Caltrans 2020. *Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual*.

TABLE 4.13-3 HUMAN REACTION TO TYPICAL VIBRATION LEVELS IN VIBRATION DECIBELS

Vibration Velocity Level	Human Reaction
65 VdB	Approximate threshold of perception for many humans.
75 VdB	Approximate dividing line between barely perceptible and distinctly perceptible. Many people find transit vibration at this level annoying.
85 VdB	Vibration tolerable only if there are an infrequent number of events per day.

Source: Federal Transit Administration, 2018. *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessmen*t.

4.13.1.4 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Federal Regulations

Federal Highway Administration

Proposed federal or federal-aid highway construction projects at a new location, or the physical alteration of an existing highway that significantly changes either the horizontal or vertical alignment, or increases the number of through-traffic lanes, requires an assessment of noise and consideration of noise abatement pursuant to 23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 772, *Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise*. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has adopted noise abatement criteria for sensitive receivers such as picnic areas, recreation areas, playgrounds, active sport areas, parks, residences, motels, hotels, schools, churches, libraries, and hospitals when "worst-hour" noise levels approach or exceed 67 dBA L_{eq}. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has further defined approaching the noise abatement criteria to be 1 dBA below the noise abatement criteria for noise sensitive receivers identified as Category B activity areas (e.g., 66 dBA L_{eq} is considered approaching the noise abatement criteria).[1]

United States Environmental Protection Agency

In addition to FHWA standards, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has identified the relationship between noise levels and human response. The USEPA has determined that over a 24-hour period, a L_{eq} of 70 dBA will result in some hearing loss. Interference with activity and annoyance will

[1] Caltrans Division of Environmental Analysis, 2020, *Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol.*

not occur if exterior levels are maintained at a L_{eq} of 55 dBA and interior levels at or below 45 dBA. While these levels are relevant for planning and design and useful for informational purposes, they are not land use planning criteria because they do not consider economic cost, technical feasibility, or the needs of the community.

The USEPA has set 55 dBA L_{dn} as the basic goal for exterior residential noise intrusion. However, other federal agencies, in consideration of their own program requirements and goals, as well as difficulty of actually achieving a goal of 55 dBA L_{dn}, have settled on the 65 dBA L_{dn} level as their standard. At 65 dBA L_{dn}, activity interference is kept to a minimum, and annoyance levels are still low. It is also a level that can realistically be achieved.

Occupational Health and Safety Administration

The federal government regulates occupational noise exposure common in the workplace through the Occupational Health and Safety Administration under the USEPA. Such limitations would apply to the operation of construction equipment and could also apply to any proposed industrial land uses. Noise exposure of this type is dependent on work conditions and is addressed through a facility's Health and Safety Plan and is therefore not addressed further in this analysis.

United States Department of Housing and Urban Development

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has set a goal of 65 dBA L_{dn} as a desirable maximum exterior standard for residential units developed under HUD funding. (This level is also generally accepted within the State of California.) While HUD does not specify acceptable interior noise levels, standard construction of residential dwellings typically provides in excess of 20 dBA of attenuation with the windows closed. Based on this premise, the interior L_{dn} should not exceed 45 dBA.

Aircraft Noise Standards

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Advisory Circular Number 150 5020 2, entitled "Noise Assessment Guidelines for New Helicopters" recommends the use of a cumulative noise measure, the 24-hour equivalent sound level [$L_{eq}(24)$], so that the relative contributions of the heliport and other sound sources within the community may be compared. The $L_{eq}(24)$ is similar to the L_{dn} used in assessing the impacts of fixed wing aircraft. The helicopter $L_{eq}(24)$ values are obtained by logarithmically adding the single-event level (SEL) values over a 24-hour period.

Public Law 96 193 also directs the FAA to identify land uses which are "normally compatible" with various levels of noise from aircraft operations. Because of the size and complexity of many major hub airports and their operations, Federal Aviation Regulation Part 150 identifies a large number of land uses and their attendant noise levels. These recommended noise levels are included in Table 4.13-4, *Normally Compatible Community Sound Levels*.

TABLE 4.13-4 NORMALLY COMPATIBLE COMMUNITY SOUND LEVELS

Type of Area	$L_{eq}(24)$
Residential	
Suburban	57
Urban	67
City	72
Commercial	72
Industrial	77

Notes: The L_{eq} is the equivalent continuous noise level, which describes sound levels that vary over time, resulting in a single decibel value that takes into account the total sound energy over the period of time of interest.
Source: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Advisory Circular Number 150 5020 2, 1983.

State Regulations

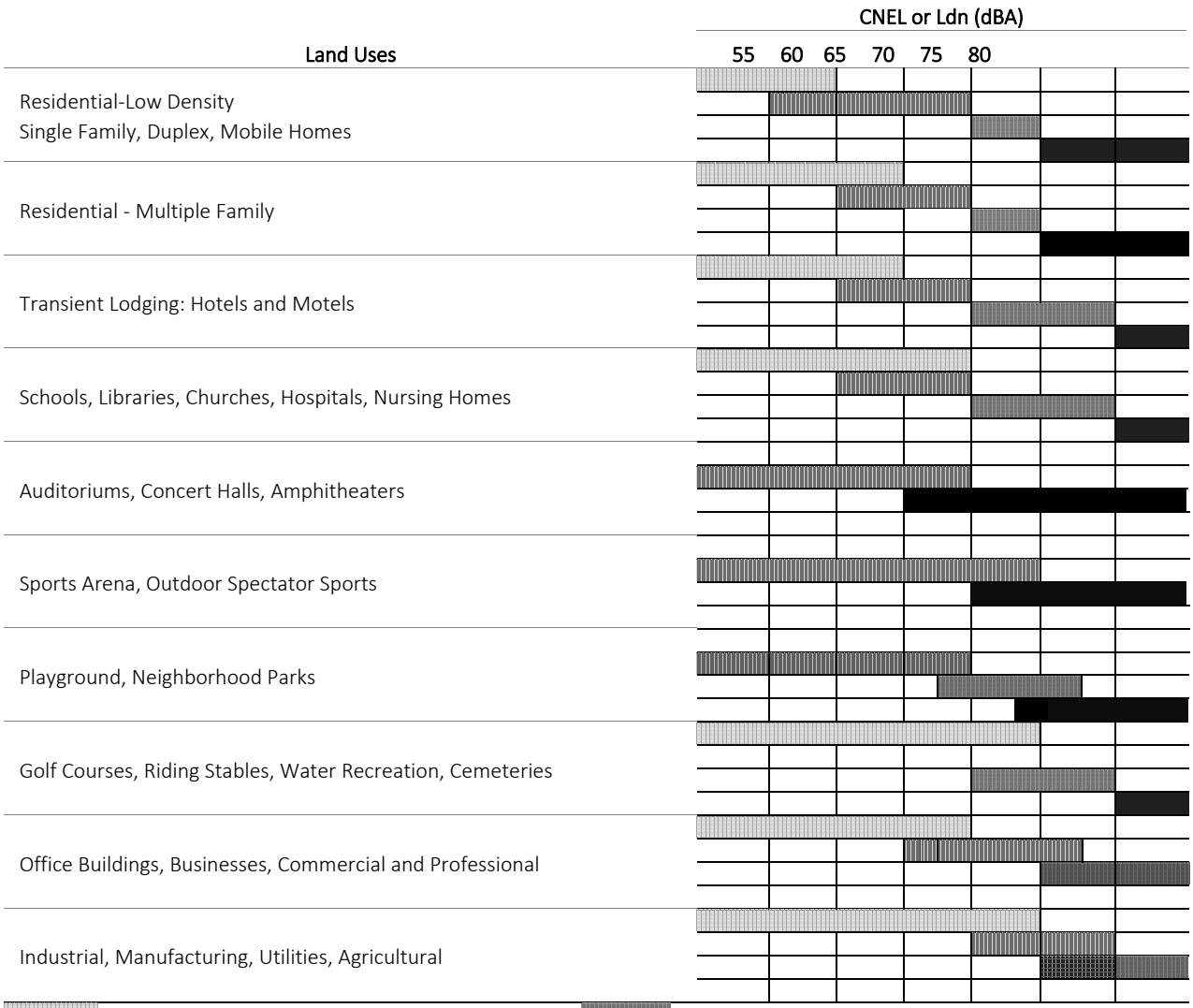
General Plan Guidelines

The State of California, through its General Plan Guidelines, discusses how ambient noise should influence land use and development decisions and includes a table of normally acceptable, conditionally acceptable, normally unacceptable, and clearly unacceptable uses at different noise levels, expressed in CNEL. A conditionally acceptable designation implies new construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements for each land use and needed noise insulation features are incorporated in the design. By comparison, a normally acceptable designation indicates that standard construction can occur with no special noise reduction requirements. The general plan guidelines provide cities with recommended community noise and land use compatibility standards that can be adopted or modified at the local level based on conditions and types of land uses specific to that jurisdiction. The City of Hollister has not adopted its own noise and land use compatibility guidelines. Therefore, the State of California's guidelines are used (shown in Table 4.13-5, *State Community Noise and Land Use Compatibility*).

California Building Code

The California Building Code, Title 24, Part 2, Volume 1, Chapter 12, Section 1207.11.2, *Allowable Interior Noise Levels*, requires that interior noise levels attributable to exterior sources shall not exceed 45 dB in any habitable room. The noise metric is evaluated as either the L_{dn} or the CNEL, consistent with the noise element of the local general plan.

TABLE 4.13-5 STATE COMMUNITY NOISE AND LAND USE COMPATIBILITY



Normally Acceptable:
Specified land use is satisfactory, based on the assumption that any buildings are of normal conventional construction, without any special noise insulation requirements.

Conditionally Acceptable:
New construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of noise reduction requirements is made and needed noise insulation features included in design. Conventional construction, but with closed windows and fresh air supply systems or air conditioning, will normally suffice.

Normally Unacceptable:
New construction or development should generally be discouraged. If new construction or development does proceed, a detailed analysis of noise reduction requirements must be made and needed noise insulation features included in design.

Clearly Unacceptable:
New construction or development should generally not be undertaken.

Source: Governor's Office of Planning and Research. 2017. *State of California General Plan 2017 Guidelines*, Appendix D.

California Building Code: CALGreen

The State of California's noise insulation standards are codified in the California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 11, *California Green Building Standards Code* (CALGreen). CALGreen noise standards are applied to new or renovation construction projects in California to control interior noise levels resulting from exterior noise sources. Proposed projects may use either the prescriptive method (Section 5.507.4.1) or the performance method (Section 5.507.4.2) to show compliance. Under the prescriptive method, a project must demonstrate transmission loss ratings for the wall and roof-ceiling assemblies and exterior windows when located within a noise environment of 65 dBA CNEL or higher. Under the performance method, a project must demonstrate that interior noise levels do not exceed 50 dBA $L_{eq(1hr)}$.

Airport Noise Standards

California Code of Regulations Title 21, Subchapter 6, *Airport Noise Standards*, establishes 65 dBA CNEL as the acceptable level of aircraft noise for persons living in the vicinity of airports. Noise-sensitive land uses in locations where the aircraft exterior noise level exceeds 65 dBA CNEL are generally incompatible, unless an aviation easement for aircraft noise has been acquired by the airport proprietor, or the residence is a high-rise apartment or condominium that has an interior CNEL of 45 dBA or less in all habitable rooms despite aircraft noise, and an air circulation or air conditioning system, as appropriate. Assembly Bill 2776 requires any person who intends to sell or lease residential properties within an airport influence area to disclose that fact to the person buying the property.

Regional Regulations

San Benito County Hollister Municipal Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan

San Benito County's Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) adopted the *Hollister Municipal Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan* (ALUCP) in 2012 to ensure land uses surrounding the Hollister Municipal Airport (HMA) are compatible with airport-serving uses. The creation of the ALUC and the preparation of the ALUCP are requirements of the California State Aeronautics Act.[2] Provisions for creation of ALUCs were first established under State law in 1967, and their fundamental purpose is to protect public health, safety, and welfare by ensuring the orderly expansion of airports and the adoption of land use measures that minimize the public's exposure to excessive noise and safety hazards within areas around public airports to the extent that these areas are not already devoted to incompatible uses. The ALUCP evaluates all surrounding land within the airport influence area, defined as any land on which current or future airport-related noise, overflight, safety, or airspace protection factors may impact existing land uses. The ALUCP requires that any proposed project, specific plan, general plan, zoning ordinance, or building regulation proposed within the airport influence area be reviewed by the ALUC to ensure consistency with the ALUCP. By considering the ALUCP, the City of Hollister General Plan can ensure it will not conflict with the policies and overall purpose of the ALUCP.

[2] Public Utilities Code Section 21670 et seq.

Local Regulations

Hollister Municipal Code

The City of Hollister Municipal Code (HMC) includes various directives pertaining to noise and vibration. The HMC is organized by Title, Chapter, and Section. Most provisions related to aesthetics impacts are included in Title 8, *Health and Safety;* Title 10, *Vehicles and Traffic;* and Title 17, *Zoning*.

- Chapter 8.28, *Noise*. This chapter provides general policies prohibiting noise sources, for the peace, health, comfort, safety and welfare of its citizens from excessive, unnecessary or unusually loud noises and vibrations from any and all sources in the community. Specific interior and exterior standards are not provided, but exemptions to the standards in Chapter 8.28 are identified. Chapter 8.28 generally prohibits any excessive, unnecessary, or unusually loud noises from any person. Excessive, unnecessary or unusually loud noise is defined as a noise disturbance at any time of the day that, because of volume, duration, or character annoys, disturbs, injures, or endangers the comfort, repose, health, peace, or safety of any reasonable person of normal sensitivity residing in the area.

  For any kind of noise, regardless of the time of day, the standards that shall be considered in determining whether a violation exists may include, but shall not be limited to:

  - The volume or intensity of the noise.
  - Citizen complaints.
  - The proximity of the noise to residential properties.
  - The nature and zoning of the area within which the noise emanates.
  - The time and/or day of the week the noise occurs.
  - The duration of the noise.
  - Whether the noise is recurrent, intermittent, or constant.
  - Whether the noise is produced by a commercial or noncommercial activity.
  - A noise level in residential districts exceeding 55 dBA during daylight hours, and 50 dBA after sunset, measured at the property line of the complaining party or inside an affected multiple-dwelling unit.
- Section 10.36.060, *Noise*. This section prohibits noise-producing work, whether routine maintenance or major repairs before 8:00 am or after 9:00 pm on any day.
- Section 17.10.040, *Industrial Zoning District Performance Standards*. This section states that no approved land use shall generate ground vibration perceptible without instruments at any point along or outside the property line of the use, except for motor vehicle operations.
- Section 17.12.040, *Airport and Airport Support Zone*. This section provides standards to ensure land use compatibility with the Hollister Municipal Airport related to noise and vibration under parts D and G. Part D states that no approved land use shall generate vibration perceptible without instruments at any point along or outside of the property line of the use, except for operational motor

vehicles. Part G states that office buildings, motels, hotels, and schools shall be designed to include noise attenuation measures to maintain an interior noise level not to exceed 55 dB CNEL.

- Chapter 17.16.100, *Noise*. This chapter provides noise-related limits on commercial construction contiguous to residential properties to the hours of 7:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 6:00 pm Saturdays, and prohibited Sundays and federal holidays.

  Noise-generating commercial landscaping activities with a duration of one-half hour or less shall be limited to the hours of 8:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Saturday and prohibited Sundays and federal holidays.

  Noise-generating commercial landscaping activities with a duration of one hour or more, shall be limited to the hours of 8:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Saturdays, and prohibited Sundays and federal holidays.

  This section does not apply to construction, landscaping, or grounds maintenance by the occupants of residential property for personal, noncommercial use.

Hollister Municipal Airport Master Plan

The HMA Master Plan identifies and plans for the future facility needs of the HMA through 2025. The primary objective of the HMA Master Plan is to provide guidelines for the maintenance, development, and operation of the HMA as expansion occurs. The HMA Master Plan also preserves areas surrounding the existing footprint of the HMA to ensure that land is available for future improvements.

4.13.1.5 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Primary noise sources in the EIR Study Area include traffic from surrounding highways, major roadways, residential streets, HMA, local railroad activity, and outdoor recreational uses. In commercial and retail areas, truck loading docks can be a source of localized noise.

Noise-Sensitive Receptors

Certain land uses, such as residences, schools, and hospitals, are particularly sensitive to noise and vibration. Noise sensitive receptors within the EIR Study Area include residences, senior housing, schools, places of worship, and recreational areas. These uses are regarded as sensitive because they are where citizens most frequently engage in activities that are likely to be disturbed by noise, such as reading, studying, sleeping, resting, or otherwise engaging in quiet or passive recreation. Commercial and industrial uses are not particularly sensitive to noise or vibration.

Ambient Noise Measurements

Ambient noise monitoring was conducted within the EIR Study Area by PlaceWorks in January 2022 to determine a baseline noise level at different environments. Measurements were made during weekday periods when the EIR Study Area is expected to be most active. Long-term (24-hour) measurements were conducted at three locations within the EIR Study Area, and short-term (15 minute) measurements were conducted at six locations in the EIR Study Area. All measurements were conducted from Monday, January

24, through Tuesday, January 25, 2022. Short-term measurements were generally made during afternoon (3:00 to 7:00 pm) peak commute hours.

Meteorological conditions during the measurement periods were favorable for outdoor sound measurements and were noted to be representative of the typical conditions for the season. All sound level meters were equipped with a windscreen during measurements.

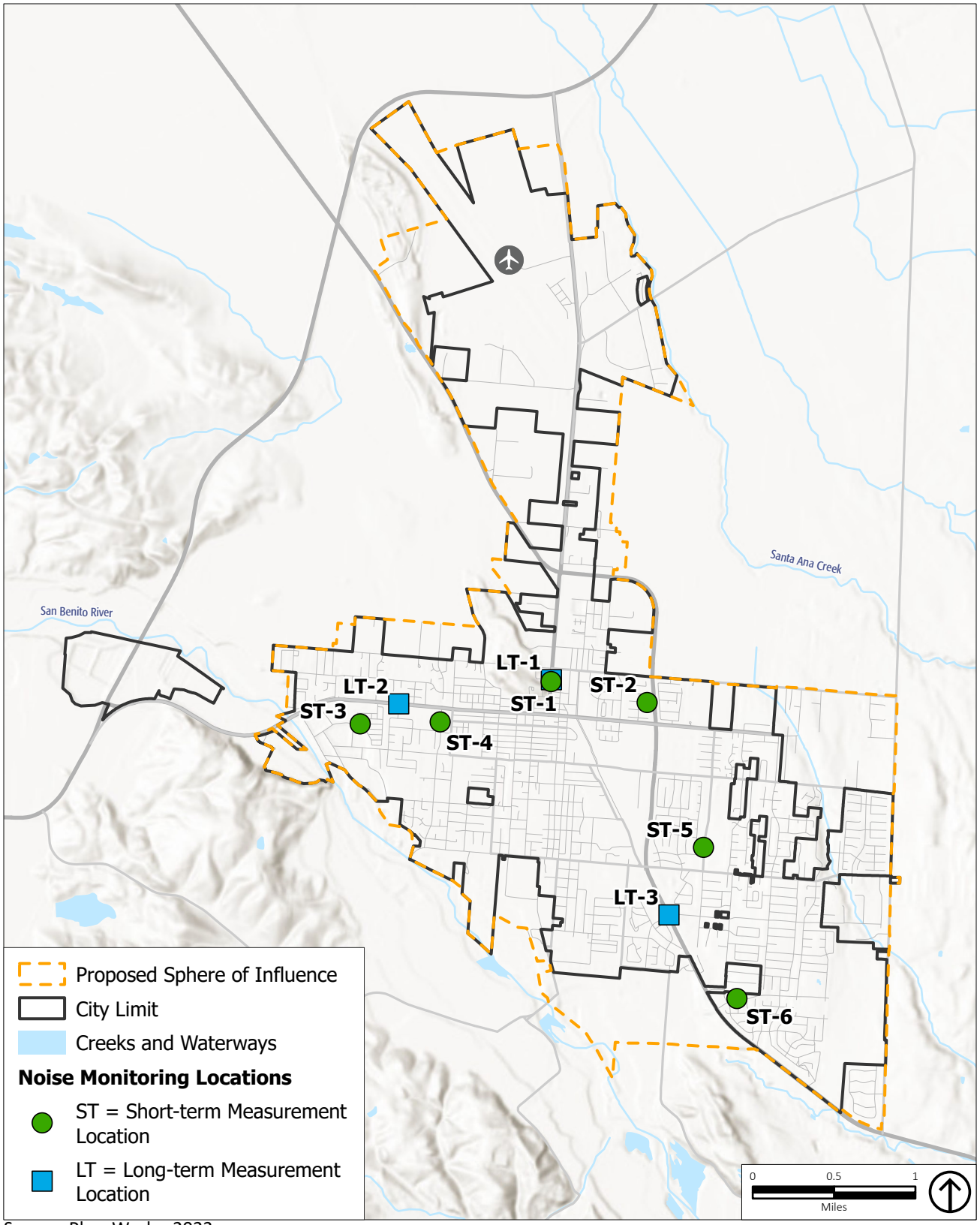
All sound level meters used for noise monitoring (Larson Davis model LxT) satisfy the American National Standards Institute standard for Type 1 instrumentation. The sound level meters were set to "slow" response and "A" weighting (dBA). The meters were calibrated prior to and after the monitoring period. All measurements were at least five feet above the ground and away from reflective surfaces. Noise measurement locations are described below and shown on Figure 4.13-1, *Approximate Noise Monitoring Locations*.

Long-Term Noise Monitoring Locations

- Long-Term Location 1 (LT-1) was at the 1st Street and San Benito Street intersection. The measurement location was approximately 15 feet east of the nearest San Benito Street northbound travel lane centerline. A 24-hour noise measurement was conducted, beginning at the 1:00 pm hour on Monday, January 24, 2022. The noise environment of this site is characterized primarily by local traffic and railroad activity on the Union Pacific Hollister Industrial Lead, which runs diagonally through the intersection.
- Long-Term Location 2 (LT-2) was on SR-156B/4th Street east of Rajkovich Way. The measurement location was approximately 60 feet south of the nearest 4th Street eastbound travel lane centerline. A 24-hour noise measurement was conducted, beginning at the 2:00 pm hour on Monday, January 24, 2022. The noise environment of this site is characterized primarily by local traffic.
- Long-Term Location 3 (LT-3) was on SR-25 south of Sunnyslope Road. The measurement location was approximately 30 feet west of the nearest SR-25 southbound travel lane centerline. A 24-hour noise measurement was conducted, beginning at the 2:00 pm hour on Monday, January 24, 2022. The noise environment of this site is characterized primarily by local traffic and retail activity.

Short-Term Noise Monitoring Locations

- Short-Term Location 1 (ST-1) was near the 1st Street and San Benito Street intersection and rail crossing. The noise measurement at ST-1 captured a freight train switching cars by first going through the intersection and then reversing. A 15-minute noise measurement was conducted, beginning at 1:07 pm on Monday, January 24, 2022. Crossing-bell noise levels were measured at 71 dBA. When the train was moving, it generated noise levels of approximately 80 dBA. The sounding of the horn produced noise levels of up to 100 dBA.
- Short-Term Location 2 (ST-2) was at the eastern dead end of Verona Place. An approximately 10- to 12-foot masonry wall separates the residential property line to the east from SR-25. A 15-minute noise measurement was conducted, beginning at 4:24 pm on Monday, January 24, 2022. The noise environment of this site is characterized primarily by traffic on SR-25, neighborhood dogs, and an occasional aircraft overflight.



Source: PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.13-1
Approximate Noise Monitoring Locations

- **Short-Term Location 3 (ST-3)** was at the playground in the Mission Oaks Mobile Home Park. A 15-minute noise measurement was conducted, beginning at 3:32 pm on Monday, January 24, 2022. The noise environment of this site is characterized primarily by distant traffic as well as distant backup alarms, trucks moving, tools, and brake discharge at the industrial truck lot to the south. Residential activity in the mobile home park and occasional aircraft overflights also contribute to the ambient noise environment. Activity at the industrial truck lot to the south generated noise levels of up to 48 dBA.
- **Short-Term Location 4 (ST-4)** was in front of Gateway Palms Apartments at 455 Westside Boulevard. The measurement location was approximately 20 feet east of the nearest Westside Boulevard northbound travel lane centerline. A 15-minute noise measurement was conducted, beginning at 3:57 pm on Monday, January 24, 2022. The noise environment of this site is characterized primarily by local traffic.
- **Short-Term Location 5 (ST-5)** was on Memorial Drive north of Sunnyslope Road across from Veterans Memorial Park and Sunnyslope Elementary School. The measurement location was approximately 15 feet west of the nearest Memorial Drive southbound travel lane centerline. A 15-minute noise measurement was conducted, beginning at 4:49 pm on Monday, January 24, 2022. The noise environment of this site is characterized primarily by local traffic.
- **Short-Term Location 6 (ST-6)** was on Union Road east of Valley View Road. The measurement location was approximately 15 feet south of the nearest Union Road eastbound travel lane centerline. An approximately 6-foot masonry wall is along the residential property line to the south. A 15-minute noise measurement was conducted, beginning at 5:13 pm on Monday, January 24, 2022. The noise environment of this site is characterized primarily by local traffic and birds.

Long-Term Noise Monitoring Results

During the ambient noise survey, the Ldn noise levels at monitoring locations ranged from 72 to 76 dBA Ldn. The long-term noise measurement results are summarized in Table 4.13-6, *Long-Term Noise Measurement Summary (dBA)*. A summary of the daily trend of long-term noise measurement results are shown in Appendix E, *Noise Data*.

TABLE 4.13-6 LONG-TERM NOISE MEASUREMENT SUMMARY (DBA)

Monitoring Location	Description	Ldn	Lowest L_{eq}, 1-Hour	Highest L_{eq}, 1-Hour
LT-1	1st Street/San Benito Street	76	60	78
LT-2	SR-156B	72	59	72
LT-3	SR-25	73	59	73

Source: PlaceWorks, 2022.

Short-Term Noise Monitoring Results

The short-term noise measurement results are summarized in Table 4.13-7, *Short-Term Noise Measurement Summary (dBA)*.

TABLE 4.13-7 SHORT-TERM NOISE MEASUREMENT SUMMARY (DBA)

		Noise Level, dBA		
Monitoring Location	Description	L_{min}	L_{eq}	L_{max}
ST-1	1st St./San Benito St. Rail Activity – 1:07 pm, 1/24/2022	64.8	82.0	100.0
ST-2	Verona Place – 4:24 pm, 1/24/2022	39.8	49.3	61.3
ST-3	Mission Oaks Mobile Home Park – 3:32 pm, 1/24/2022	39.2	48.9	69.3
ST-4	Westside Blvd. – 3:57 pm, 1/24/2022	48.2	66.1	76.6
ST-5	Memorial Drive – 4:49 pm, 1/24/2022	45.1	65.6	81.7
ST-6	Union Road – 5:13 pm, 1/24/2022	48.1	68.9	91.6

Source: PlaceWorks,2022.

Vehicle Noise

On-road vehicles represent the most prominent source of noise in Hollister. Traffic noise levels were estimated using the FHWA Highway Traffic Noise Prediction Model and traffic data provided by Kimley-Horn. The FHWA model predicts noise levels through a series of adjustments to a reference sound level. These account for distances from the roadway, traffic volumes, vehicle speeds, car/truck mix, number of lanes, and road width. Roadway and highway 60, 65, and 70 dBA CNEL noise contours are shown in Table 4.13-8, *Existing Traffic Noise Levels,* and on Figure 4.13-2, *Existing Transportation Noise Contours*.

TABLE 4.13-8 EXISTING TRAFFIC NOISE LEVELS

		Distance to Noise Contour, feet		
Roadway Segment	Ldn dBA at 50 feet	70+ dBA Ldn	65 dBA Ldn	60 dBA Ldn
San Felipe Rd – north of Flynn Road	72.2	74	160	345
San Felipe Rd – Wright Rd/McCloskey Rd to Flynn Rd	68.9	44	96	206
San Felipe Rd –Wright Rd/McCloskey Rd to SR-25/ Bolsa Rd	69.5	49	105	227
San Felipe Rd – south of SR-25/Bola Road	70.1	54	116	250
San Felipe Rd – south of North Street/Santa Ana Rd	65.0	24	53	113
San Benito Street – north of Nash Road/ Tres Pinos Rd	65.7	27	59	128
San Benito St – south of Nash Rd/ Res Pinos Rd	64.9	24	52	113
SR-25/ Bolsa Rd – west of San Felipe Rd	74.4	102	220	475
SR-25 – west of San Felipe Rd	74.1	97	210	452
SR-25 – Santa Ana Rd to Meridian St	72.2	73	157	338
SR-25 – Meridian Street to Hillcrest Rd	72.6	77	167	360
SR 25/Airline Hwy – north of Union Rd	74.6	105	226	487
SR 25/Airline Hwy – Union Rd to Enterprise Rd	72.4	75	162	348
SR 25/Airline Hwy – south of Enterprise Rd	71.6	67	145	311
Buena Vista Rd – west of Beresini Ln	60.2	12	26	55
Buena Vista Rd – west of Miller Rd	61.1	13	29	63
Buena Vista Rd – west of Westside Rd	60.2	12	26	55
Buena Vista Rd – east of Westside Rd	61.7	15	32	69

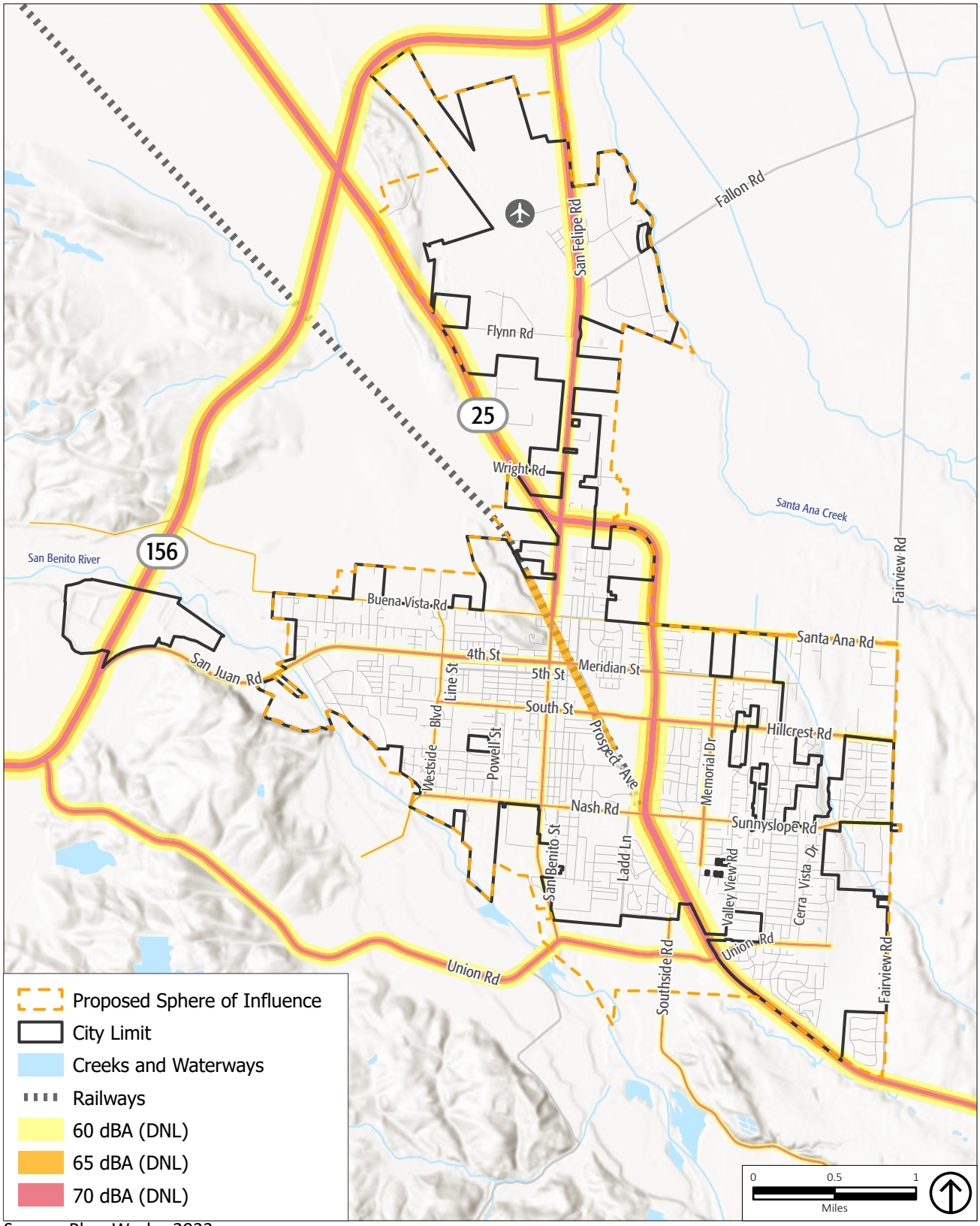
TABLE 4.13-8 EXISTING TRAFFIC NOISE LEVELS

Roadway Segment	Ldn dBA at 50 feet	Distance to Noise Contour, feet		
		70+ dBA Ldn	65 dBA Ldn	60 dBA Ldn
Santa Ana Rd – east of San Felipe Rd/San Benito St	53.9	4	10	21
Santa Ana Rd – east of SR-25	66.7	32	68	147
4th St – west of Felice Dr	68.5	42	90	194
San Juan Roadd – east of Westside Blvd	67.5	36	78	168
Meridian St – west of SR-25	64.7	24	51	109
Meridian St – west of Felice Dr	60.7	13	27	59
Hillcrest Rd – east of Westside Blvd	66.4	31	66	142
Hillcrest Rd – west of Memorial Dr	67.3	35	76	163
Nash Rd – west of Westside Blvd	62.4	17	36	77
Nash Rd – west of San Benito St	65.8	28	60	130
Nash Rd – east of San Benito St	64.4	23	49	105
Union Rd – west of San Benito St	71.1	63	136	293
Union Rd – west of Southside Rd	71.0	61	132	285
Union Rd – west of SR-25/Airline Hwy	69.3	48	102	221
Union Rd- east of SR-25/Airline Hwy	65.6	27	58	125
SR-156 – north of Buena Vista Rd	74.4	102	220	473
SR-156 – south of Buena Vista Rd	74.2	99	214	461
Westside Blvd East – south of Central Ave	61.4	14	31	66
Westside Blvd East – south of San Juan Rd/4th Street	64.0	21	45	97
San Juan Rd / 4th St – west of Westside Blvd	65.6	27	58	126
Meridian St – east of Memorial Drive	64.6	23	50	108
Memorial Dr – south of Meridian St	63.3	19	41	87
Memorial Dr – south of Hillcrest Rd	66.2	30	64	137
Hillcrest Rd – east of Memorial Dr	66.6	32	68	147
Southside Rd – south of Union Rd	64.2	22	47	102

Source: Calculated using the FHWA RD-77-108 model based on traffic data provided by Kimley Horn. For traffic data provided by Kimley Horn and traffic noise calculations, see Appendix F, Transportation Data.

Aircraft Noise

The 343-acre HMA, in the northern portion of the city, is the only airport in the EIR Study Area and is owned and operated by the City of Hollister. The HMA is classified as a general utility airport, which means that it accommodates most general aviation aircraft. HMA's airfield consists of two intersecting runways equipped with standard identification lights. The HMA has two types of aircraft hangars, conventional and T-hangars, totaling approximately 153,100 square feet. Six conventional hangars accommodate 16 aircraft and 9 separate T-hangar buildings accommodate 75 aircraft.



Source: PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.13-2
Existing Transportation Noise Contours

In addition to general aviation and aircraft storage, operations at the airport include aircraft maintenance, supplies, flight instruction, commercial scenic flights, and repairs.[3] Operations at the HMA are overseen by a five-member Hollister Airport Commission and a part-time airport manager.[4] Land uses surrounding the HMA include light industrial to the south and west and agricultural rangeland to the north and east. Airport noise contours from the *Hollister Municipal Airport Master Plan* (see Figure 4.13-3, *Hollister Municipal Airport 2025 Noise Contours*) do not extend much beyond the runway and do not substantially affect nearby sensitive receptors.

Train Noise

Railroad operations in the EIR Study Area are also a substantial source of noise in areas nearest railroad crossings. Day-night average noise levels vary throughout the community depending on the number of trains operating along a given rail line per day, the timing and duration of train pass-by events, and whether or not trains must sound their warning whistles near "at-grade" crossings. When railroad trains approach a passenger station or at-grade crossing, they are required to sound their warning whistle within 0.25 miles. Trains are required to sound a long signal followed by a short signal when approaching stations, curves, or other points where view may be obscured, and when approaching passenger or freight trains. When passing a standing train, the moving train is required to sound two long signals followed by a short signal followed by a long signal, the same requirement when signaling for at-grade crossings. Train warning whistles typically generate maximum noise levels of approximately 105 dBA at 100 feet.

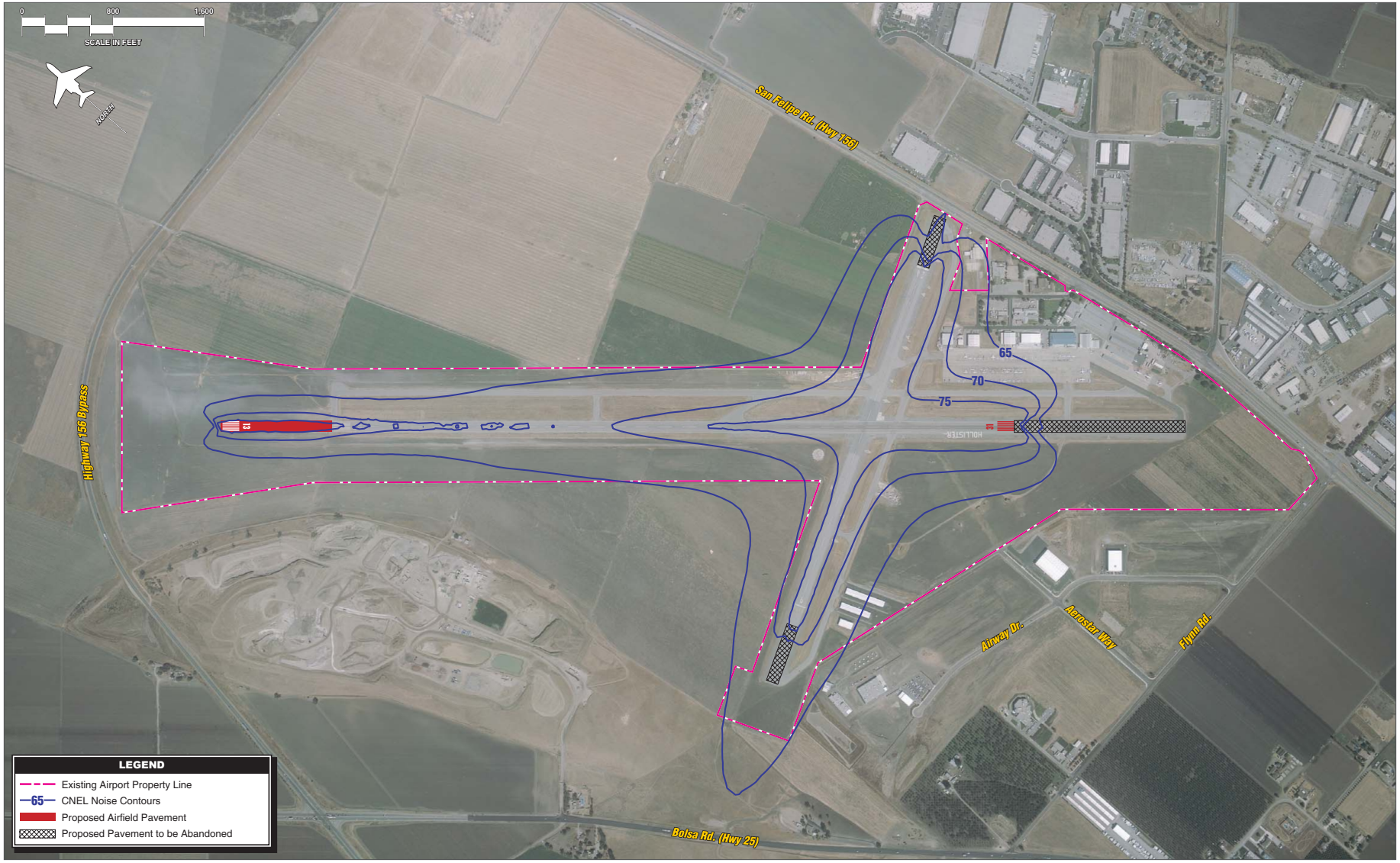
Hollister has one rail line, owned San Benito Railroad LLC (as of 2013), that runs roughly through the center of the northern half of the city. The rail line is operated by Union Pacific and serves the Hollister Industrial Lead. It is a 12-mile long rail line from Carnadero, outside of Gilroy, to Hollister. On average, trains have two locomotives and eight cars traveling 10 miles per hour. Currently, local trains run two times a week, Tuesday and Thursday, servicing San Benito Foods. This rail line has seven at-grade crossings: North Street, 1st Street, 2nd Street, East Street, 3rd Street, 4th Street, and South Street, and none are "quiet zones."[5]

Existing railroad noise levels were calculated using the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) CREATE rail noise model and the Federal Rail Administration (FRA) Grade Crossing Horn Model, the average number of pass-bys, time of day, number of locomotives and type, number of rail cars and type, and speed. Table 4.13-9, *Existing Railroad Noise Levels*, includes the calculated distances to the 65 dBA CNEL contours from existing railroad noise, both from the main line and within 0.25 miles of the seven at-grade crossings where horn warnings are required.

[3] County of San Benito, March 2015, *2035 San Benito County General Plan Update Revised Draft EIR*, State Clearinghouse No. 2011111016, Chapter 12, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, pages 12-14.

[4] City of Hollister, 2005, *City of Hollister General Plan*, page 4.11.

[5] Quiet Zone: A quiet zone is a zone where railroads have been directed to cease the routine sounding of their horns when approaching public highway-rail grade crossings. Train horns may still be used in emergency situations.



Source: Hollister Municipal Airport, Airport Plans. PlaceWorks, 2023.

0 1,600
Scale (Feet)

Figure 4.13-3
Hollister Municipal Airport 2025 Noise Contours

TABLE 4.13-9 EXISTING RAILROAD NOSIE LEVELS

Operator	Subdivision	Distance (feet) to 65 dBA CNEL Contour (Mainline)	Distance (feet) to 65 dBA CNEL Contour (within 0.25 miles of grade crossing)
Union Pacific	Hollister Industrial Lead	7	143

Source: Calculated using the FTA CREATE Model and FRA Grade Crossing Horn Model. See Appendix E, *Noise Data*.

Stationary Noise Sources

Stationary sources of noises may occur from all types of land uses. Residential uses generate noise from landscaping, maintenance activities, and air conditioning systems. Commercial uses generate noise from heating, ventilation, air conditioning (HVAC) systems, generators, loading docks, rail yards and other sources. Industrial uses may generate HVAC systems, loading docks, and possibly machinery. Noise generated by residential or commercial uses are generally short and intermittent. Industrial uses may generate noise on a more continual basis due to the nature of the activities. Nightclubs, outdoor dining areas, gas stations, car washes, fire stations, drive-throughs, swimming pool and hot tub pumps, school playgrounds, athletic and music events, and public parks are other common noise sources.

Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area

The Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area is a state park in the Gabilan Mountains, approximately five miles south of the center of Hollister. Hollister Hills encompasses an area of over 6,800 acres and provides access to activities such as hiking, bicycling, horseback riding and off-roading, including the use of motorbikes and all-terrain vehicles. Activities in the state park, specifically use of off-highway vehicles, are a major component to noise in the state park and surrounding sensitive receptors.

Vibration

Existing sources of operational vibration in the EIR Study Area include vehicle traffic on roadways. Caltrans has studied the effects of propagation of vehicle vibration on sensitive land uses and notes that "heavy trucks, and quite frequently buses, generate the highest earthborne vibrations of normal traffic." Caltrans further notes that the highest traffic-generated vibrations are along freeways and state routes. Their study finds that "vibrations measured on freeway shoulders (five meters from the centerline of the nearest lane) have never exceeded 0.08 in/sec, with the worst combinations of heavy trucks and poor roadway conditions (while such trucks were moving at freeway speeds). This level coincides with the maximum recommended safe level for ruins and ancient monuments (and historic buildings)."[6] In addition, future sensitive receptors could be placed within close proximity to existing railroad lines through buildout in the EIR Study Area.

4.13.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the proposed project would result in significant noise impacts if it would:

[6] Caltrans, 2013, *Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual.*

1. Result in 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 other applicable local, state, or federal standards.
2. Result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.
3. 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.
4. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to noise and vibration.

4.13.2.1 CONSTRUCTION NOISE

The City does not have established noise thresholds for construction noise. Therefore, the FTA construction noise criterion of 80 dBA $L_{eq(8hr)}$ for will be used in this analysis to assess construction noise impacts at sensitive receptors. Since this is a programmatic EIR, project-level analysis of construction noise would be speculative and is therefore not presented. Potential future impacts from construction noise are addressed qualitatively and include program-level mitigation measures.

4.13.2.2 STATIONARY NOISE

The HMC provides noise standards in Chapter 8.28, *Noise,* for stationary sources that would be analyzed at the project level. The noise level limit in residential districts is 55 dBA during daylight hours and 50 dBA after sunset, measured at the property line of the sensitive receptor.

4.13.2.3 VIBRATION

As described in Section 4.13.1.3, *Vibration Fundamentals*, vibration-related impacts can occur during the construction and operational phases, and are measured in PPV or VdB. The City does not have quantified limits for vibration.

The FTA criteria to evaluate the potential damage to buildings susceptible to architectural damage are shown in Table 4.13-10, *Building Architectural Vibration Damage Limits*. For example, for Category III, (nonengineered timber and masonry buildings), a threshold of 0.2 in/sec PPV would apply.

TABLE 4.13-10 BUILDING ARCHITECTURAL VIBRATION DAMAGE LIMITS

Building Category	PPV (in/sec)
Category I. Reinforced concrete, steel, or timber, (no plaster)	0.5
Category II. Engineered Concrete and masonry (no plaster)	0.3
Category III. Non-engineered timber and masonry buildings	0.2
Category IV. Buildings extremely susceptible to vibration damage	0.12

Note: PPV = peak particle velocity; in/sec = inches per second
Source: Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 2018. *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual*.

The FTA criteria for acceptable levels of groundborne vibration based on typical human response are shown in Table 4.13-11, *FTA Groundborne Vibration Potential Annoyance Criteria*. For example, a 72 VdB threshold will be used for potentially annoying groundborne vibration at residential buildings and other buildings where people normally sleep, and a 65 VdB threshold will be used for buildings containing vibration-sensitive equipment (such as laboratories with microscopes).

TABLE 4.13-11 FTA GROUNDBORNE VIBRATION POTENTIAL ANNOYANCE CRITERIA

Building Category	VdB re 1 micro in/sec
Category I. Buildings where vibration would interfere with interior operations	65 VdB [a, b]
Category II. Residences and buildings where people normally sleep	72 VdB [a]

Notes: Vibration Decibel (VdB). A unitless measure of vibration, expressed on a logarithmic scale and with respect to a defined reference vibration velocity. In the U.S., the standard reference (re) velocity is one microinch per second ($1x10^{-6}$ in/sec).
a. Frequent Events: more than 70 events per day.
b. This criterion limit is based on levels that are acceptable for most moderately vibrations-sensitive equipment (such as laboratories with microscopes).
Source: Federal Transit Administration (FTA). 2018, September. *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment*.

4.13.2.4 MOBILE NOISE

In the EIR Study Area the primary sources of mobile noise are vehicles, aircraft, and trains. A project will normally have a significant effect on the environment related to noise if it will substantially increase the ambient noise levels in the areas around the project. Most people can detect changes in sound levels of approximately 3 dBA under normal, quiet conditions, and changes of 1 to 3 dBA are detectable under quiet, controlled conditions. Changes of less than 1 dBA are usually indiscernible. A change of 5 dBA is readily discernible to most people in an exterior environment. Based on the proposed 2040 General Plan Policy HS-8.1, *Protection of Residential Areas from Unacceptable Noise Levels*, a project would have a significant impact if it causes a 3 dBA L_{dn} increase and the resulting ambient is 60 dBA L_{dn} and higher; or where a new road would result in a future ambient of 60 dBA L_{dn} or higher.

4.13.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

NOI-1 **Implementation of the proposed project would result in the generation of substantial temporary and permanent increases in ambient noise levels in the EIR Study Area in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or in other applicable local, state, or federal standards.**

2040 General Plan

Construction Noise

Since this is a programmatic EIR, project-level conclusions of construction noise would be speculative and are therefore not presented in this analysis. Potential future impacts from construction noise are addressed qualitatively and include program-level mitigation measures.

Future potential development in the EIR Study Area could result in two types of temporary noise impacts during construction. First, the transport of workers and movement of materials to and from the site could incrementally increase noise levels along local access roads. Second, noise would be generated from activities related to demolition, site preparation, grading, and/or physical construction. Construction is performed in distinct steps, each of which has its own mix of equipment, and, consequently, its own noise characteristics. Table 4.13-12, *Typical Construction Equipment Noise Emission Levels*, lists typical construction equipment noise levels recommended for noise-impact assessments, based on a distance of 50 feet between the equipment and noise receptor.

TABLE 4.13-12 TYPICAL CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT NOISE EMISSION LEVELS

Construction Equipment	Typical Max Noise Level (dBA Lmax) [a]	Construction Equipment	Typical Max Noise Level (dBA Lmax) [a]
Air Compressor	81	Pile-Driver (Impact)	101
Backhoe	80	Pile-Driver (Sonic)	96
Ballast Equalizer	82	Pneumatic Tool	85
Ballast Tamper	83	Pump	76
Compactor	82	Rail Saw	90
Concrete Mixer	85	Rock Drill	98
Concrete Pump	71	Roller	74
Concrete Vibrator	76	Saw	76
Crane, Derrick	88	Scarifier	83
Crane, Mobile	83	Scraper	89
Dozer	85	Shovel	82
Generator	81	Spike Driver	77
Grader	85	Tie Cutter	84
Impact Wrench	85	Tie Handler	80
Jack Hammer	88	Tie Inserter	85
Loader	85	Truck	88
Paver	89		

Notes:
[a] Measured 50 feet from the source.
Source: Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 2018. *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual*.

As described in Section 4.13.2.1, *Construction Noise*, the City does not have established noise thresholds for construction noise, and the FTA construction noise criterion of 80 dBA $L_{eq(8hr)}$ was applied in this analysis to assess construction noise impacts at sensitive receptors. As shown in Table 4.13-12, construction equipment generating high levels of noise from 81 dBA to 101 dBA exceed the applied standard. Construction of potential future development projects associated with implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan, which would most likely have multiple pieces of construction equipment operating at once, would temporarily increase the ambient noise environment and would have the potential to affect noise-sensitive land uses in the vicinity of the potential future development projects.

Implementation of the proposed project anticipates an increase in development intensity to accommodate new population and employment growth. Construction noise levels are highly variable and dependent upon the specific locations, site plans, and construction details of individual projects.

NOISE

Significant noise impacts may occur from operation of heavy earth-moving equipment and truck haul operations associated with construction of individual development projects, particularly if construction techniques such as impact or vibratory pile driving are proposed. The time of day that construction activity is conducted would also determine the significance of each project, particularly during the more sensitive nighttime hours. However, construction would be localized and would occur intermittently for varying periods of time.

The proposed Health and Safety (HS) Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals and policies that require local planning and development decisions to consider noise-related impacts, including during construction. The following proposed General Plan goals, policies, and actions would minimize potential adverse construction noise-related impacts.

Goal HS-8: Achieve noise levels consistent with acceptable standards and reduce or eliminate objectionable noise sources. (Goal HS3)

- Policy HS-8.3: Construction Noise. Regulate construction activity to reduce noise as established in the Hollister Noise Ordinance. (Policy HS3.3)
- Action HS-8.1: Review New Development for Potential Noise Impacts. Review all development proposals to verify that the proposed development would not significantly increase noise beyond current ambient levels and that it would not generate noise that would be incompatible with existing uses in the vicinity of the proposed development. (Implementation Measure HS.T)
- Action HS-8.6: Periodic Updates to Noise Ordinance. Revise the Noise Ordinance to incorporate the noise-related policies presented in the Hollister General Plan and to develop a procedure for handling noise complaints. (Implementation Measure HS.O)
- Action HS-8.8: Noise and Vibration Thresholds. Adopt noise and vibration thresholds applied in the General Plan EIR into the Noise Ordinance. For noise thresholds, this includes the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) criteria for acceptable levels of construction noise as well as Construction Equipment Noise Emission Levels based on a distance of 50 feet between the equipment and noise receptor.

  For vibration thresholds, this includes FTA criteria for acceptable levels of groundborne vibration during operation of commercial or industrial uses and groundborne vibration for various types of construction equipment. If vibration levels exceed the FTA limits for construction, alternative methods/equipment shall be used. (new)
- Action HS-8.9: Construction Best Management Practices. Adopt construction best management practices outlined in the General Plan EIR into the Noise Ordinance to minimize construction noise to the extent feasible. (new)

In most cases, construction of individual developments associated with implementation of the proposed project would temporarily increase the ambient noise environment in the vicinity of each individual project, potentially affecting existing and future nearby sensitive uses. The implementation of construction best management practices throughout the entire active construction period would also help to ensure that construction noise is minimized to the extent feasible. Some common construction best management practices include requiring projects to:

- Use the best-available noise control techniques (e.g., improved mufflers, use of intake silencers, ducts, engine enclosures, and acoustically attenuating shields or shrouds) wherever feasible on equipment and trucks used for project construction.
    - Require the contractor to use impact tools (e.g., jack hammers and hoe rams) that are hydraulically or electrically powered wherever possible. Where the use of pneumatic tools is unavoidable, an exhaust muffler on the compressed air exhaust shall be used along with external noise jackets on the tools.
    - Locate stationary equipment such as generators and air compressors as far as feasible from nearby noise-sensitive uses.
    - Locate stockpiling as far as feasible from nearby noise-sensitive receptors.
    - Limit construction traffic—to the extent feasible—to haul routes approved in advance of issuing building permits by the City.
    - Require the telephone numbers of the authorized representatives for the City and the contractor that are assigned to respond in the event of a noise or vibration complaint to be displayed on construction signs posted at the construction site. If the authorized contractor's representative receives a complaint, he/she shall investigate, take appropriate corrective action, and report the action to the City.
    - Post signs at the job site entrance(s), within the on-site construction zones, and along queueing lanes (if any) to reinforce the prohibition of unnecessary engine idling. All other equipment shall be turned off if not in use for more than 5 minutes.
    - Require that noise-producing signals, including horns, whistles, alarms, and bells, be used for safety warning purposes only, to the extent feasible. The construction manager shall use smart back-up alarms, which automatically adjust the alarm level based on the background noise level, or switch off back-up alarms and replace with human spotters in compliance with all safety requirements and laws.
- Erect temporary noise barriers (at least as high as the exhaust of equipment and breaking line-of-sight between noise sources and sensitive receptors), as necessary and feasible, to maintain construction noise levels at or below the performance standard of 80 dBA $L_{eq(8hr)}$ and/or when the anticipated construction duration is greater than is typical (two years or greater). Barriers shall be constructed with a solid material that has a density of at least 4 pounds per square foot with no gaps from the ground to the top of the barrier.

The proposed 2040 General Plan Policy HS-8.3 is required to regulate construction activity to reduce noise as established in the Hollister Noise Ordinance, which prohibits excessive or unusually loud noises and vibrations from any and all sources in the community. Furthermore, Action HS-8.1 requires the City to review all development proposals to verify that the proposed development would not significantly increase noise beyond current ambient levels in the vicinity of the proposed development. Actions HS-8.8 and HS-8.9 require the City to adopt noise and vibration thresholds based on the FTA criteria for acceptable levels of construction noise applied in the General Plan EIR (i.e., 80 dBA $L_{eq(8hr)}$), the Construction Equipment Noise Emission Levels based on a distance of 50 feet between the equipment and noise receptor, and the construction best management practices outlined above. Due to the unknown

nature of project-level details and the combination of construction equipment used, the temporary program-level construction noise impacts associated with implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan are considered potentially *significant.*

Impact NOI-1.1: Construction activities associated with potential future development could expose sensitive receptors in close proximity to a construction site to excessive noise from construction equipment.

Significance without Mitigation: In most cases, construction of individual developments associated with implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan would temporarily increase the ambient noise environment in the vicinity of each individual project, potentially affecting existing and future nearby sensitive uses. Because construction activities associated with any individual development may occur near noise-sensitive receptors and because—depending on the project type, equipment list, time of day, phasing and overall construction durations—noise disturbances may occur for prolonged periods of time, during the more sensitive nighttime hours, or may exceed 80 dBA $L_{eq(8hr)}$ even with future project-level mitigation, construction noise impacts associated with implementation of the proposed project are considered *significant and unavoidable*. Due to the programmatic nature of this EIR, project-level conclusions of construction noise would be speculative; however, the identification of this program-level impact does not preclude the finding of less-than-significant impacts for subsequent projects analyzed at the project level that do not exceed the noise thresholds.

Operational Noise

Vehicular Noise

Future development under implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan would cause increases in vehicle traffic along local roadways. Vehicle traffic noise levels were estimated using the FHWA Highway Traffic Noise Prediction Model. Vehicle traffic volumes for existing and 2040 conditions were obtained from Kimley-Horn (see Appendix E, *Noise Data*). The FHWA model predicts noise levels through a series of adjustments to a reference sound level. These adjustments account for distances from the roadway, vehicle traffic volumes, vehicle speeds, car/truck mix, number of lanes, and road width.

Table 4.13-13, *Vehicle Traffic Noise Increases in the EIR Study Area*, presents the noise level increases on roadways over existing conditions at 50 feet from the centerline of the nearest travel lane. In addition, the proposed project would construct and add new roadways, which are shown at the end of the table. Figure 4.13-4, *2040 Transportation Noise Contours*, shows the 60, 65, and 70 dBA L_{dn} noise contours from roadways and highways. As shown in Table 4.13-13, traffic noise increases along three existing segments and numerous proposed new roadway segments would exceed 60 dBA L_{dn}. Vehicle traffic noise increases along all other roadway study segments would not exceed the 60 dBA L_{dn} standard.

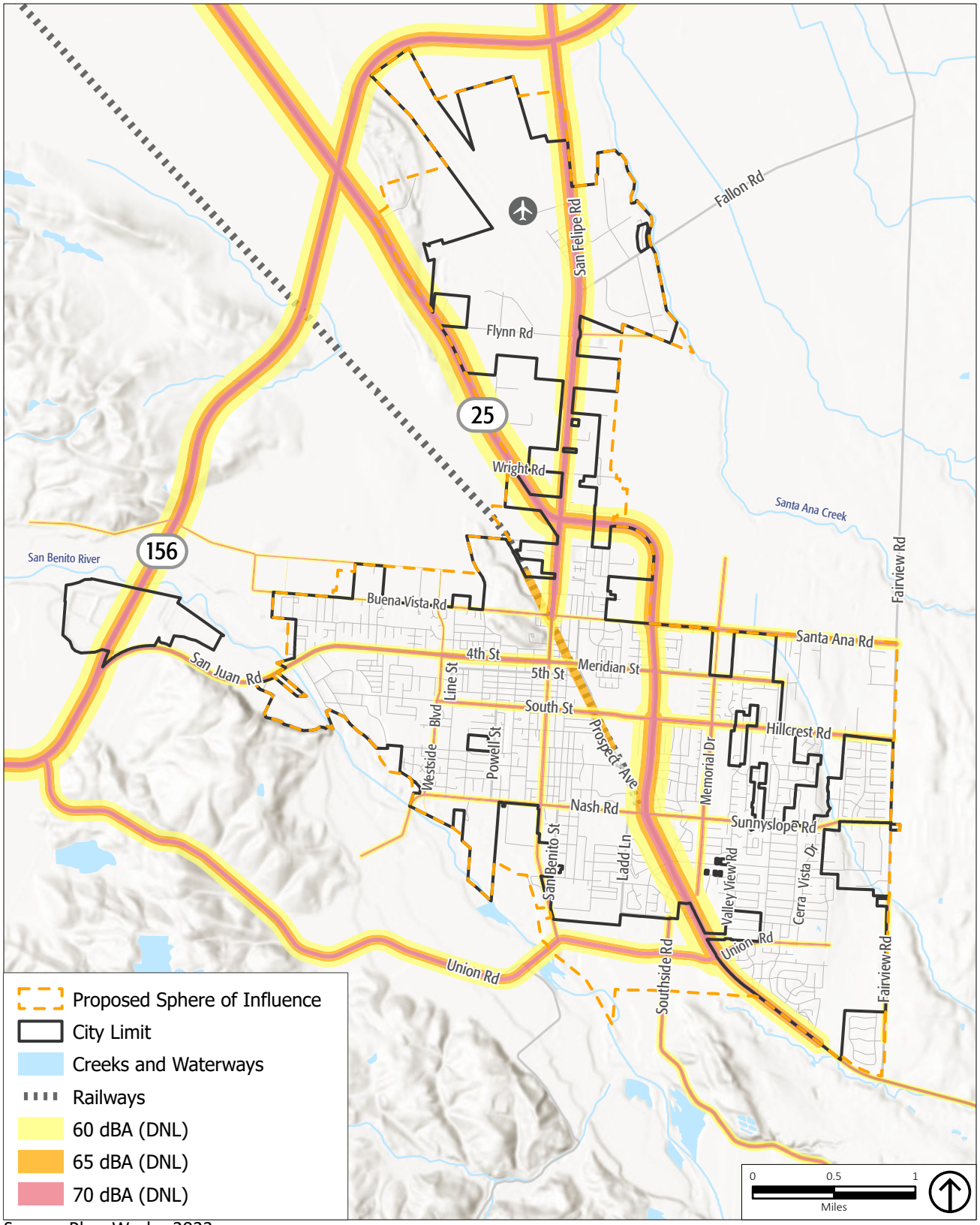
TABLE 4.13-13 VEHICLE TRAFFIC NOISE INCREASES IN THE EIR STUDY AREA

Roadway	Segment	Existing Ldn (dBA) at 50 Feet	2040 General Plan Ldn (dBA) at 50 Feet	Increase	Threshold	Significant?
San Felipe Rd	N of Flynn Rd	72.2	74.5	2.3	3	No
San Felipe Rd	N of Wright Rd/McCloskey Rd	68.9	71.8	2.9	3	No
San Felipe Rd	S of Wright Rd/McCloskey Rd	69.5	71.6	2.1	3	No
San Felipe Rd	S of SR 25/Bolsa Rd	70.1	73.2	**3.1**	3	Yes
San Felipe Rd	S of North St/Santa Ana Rd	65.0	65.2	0.2	3	No
San Benito St	N of Nash Rd/Tres Pinos Rd	65.7	66.7	0.9	3	No
San Benito St	S of Nash Rd/Tres Pinos Rd	64.9	65.7	0.8	3	No
SR 25/Bolsa Rd	W of San Felipe Rd	74.4	76.6	2.2	3	No
SR 25	N of Santa Ana Rd	74.1	75.5	1.4	3	No
SR 25	Santa Ana Rd to Meridian St	72.2	73.3	1.1	3	No
SR 25	Meridian St to Hillcrest Rd	72.6	73.8	1.3	3	No
SR 25/Airline Hwy	N of Union Rd	74.6	76.4	1.8	3	No
SR 25/Airline Hwy	Union Rd to Enterprise Rd	72.4	72.6	0.2	3	No
SR 25/Airline Hwy	S of Enterprise Rd	71.6	64.6	-7.0	3	No
Buena Vista Rd	W of Beresini Ln	60.2	62.2	2.0	3	No
Buena Vista Rd	W of Miller Rd	61.1	61.1	0.1	3	No
Buena Vista Rd	W of Westside Rd	60.2	60.9	0.7	3	No
Santa Ana Rd	E of San Felipe Rd/San Benito St	53.9	62.6	**8.7**	3	Yes
Santa Ana Rd	E of SR 25	66.7	68.7	2.0	3	No
4th St	W of Felice Dr	68.5	69.1	0.6	3	No
San Juan Rd	E of Westside Blvd	67.5	69.5	2.0	3	No
Meridian St	W of SR 25	64.7	66.5	1.8	3	No
Meridian St	W of Memorial Dr	60.7	65.5	**4.9**	3	Yes
Hillcrest Rd	W of SR 25	66.4	67.7	1.3	3	No
Hillcrest Rd	W of Memorial Dr	67.3	69.4	2.0	3	No
Nash Rd	W of Westside Blvd	62.4	64.2	1.8	3	No
Nash Rd	W of San Benito St	65.8	65.0	-0.8	3	No
Nash Rd	E of San Benito St	64.4	65.6	1.2	3	No
Union Rd	W of San Benito St	71.1	72.2	1.1	3	No
Union Rd	W of Southside Rd	71.0	72.0	1.0	3	No
Union Rd	W of SR 25/Airline Hwy	69.3	71.8	2.5	3	No
Union Rd	E of SR 25/Airline Hwy	65.6	64.5	-1.1	3	No
SR 156	N of Buena Vista Rd	74.4	75.0	0.7	3	No

TABLE 4.13-13 VEHICLE TRAFFIC NOISE INCREASES IN THE EIR STUDY AREA

Roadway	Segment	Existing Ldn (dBA) at 50 Feet	2040 General Plan Ldn (dBA) at 50 Feet	Increase	Threshold	Significant?
SR 156	S of Buena Vista Rd	74.2	75.0	0.8	3	No
Westside Blvd East	S of Central Ave	61.4	61.5	0.0	3	No
Westside Blvd East	S of San Juan Rd/4th St	64.0	64.7	0.8	3	No
San Juan Rd / 4th St	W of Westside Blvd	65.6	67.2	1.6	3	No
Meridian St	E of Memorial Dr	64.6	66.9	2.3	3	No
Memorial Dr	S of Meridian St	63.3	65.5	2.2	3	No
Memorial Dr	S of Hillcrest Rd	66.2	67.1	0.9	3	No
Hillcrest Rd	E of Memorial Dr	66.6	67.9	1.2	3	No
Southside Rd	S of Union Rd	64.2	66.9	2.7	3	No
New Roadway	**Segment**	**Existing Ldn (dBA) at 50 Feet**	**2040 General Plan Ldn (dBA) at 50 Feet**	**Future Ambient Ldn (dBA)**	**Threshold**	**Significant?**
Flynn Rd	E of San Felipe Rd	NA	62.7	**62.7**	60	Yes
Westside Blvd	E of Buena Vista Rd	NA	60.8	**60.8**	60	Yes
Beresini Ln	N of Buena Vista Rd	NA	49.4	49.4	60	No
Miller Rd	N of Buena Vista Rd	NA	55.2	55.2	60	No
Westside Blvd	E of Miller Rd	NA	54.2	54.2	60	No
Westside Rd	N of Buena Vista Rd	NA	56.2	56.2	60	No
Westside Blvd	N of Central Ave	NA	61.4	**61.4**	60	Yes
Memorial Dr	N of Santa Ana Rd	NA	65.2	**65.2**	60	Yes
Memorial Dr	N of Meridian St	NA	62.8	**62.8**	60	Yes
Westside Blvd	S of Nash Rd	NA	49.7	49.7	60	No
Union Rd	E of Cerra Vista Dr	NA	57.7	57.7	60	No
Fairview Rd	N of Union Rd	NA	65.1	**65.1**	60	Yes
Fairview Rd	S of Union Rd	NA	65.0	**65.0**	60	Yes
San Felipe Rd	N of E-W Connector to SR 25	NA	74.5	**74.5**	60	Yes
San Felipe Rd	S of Pacific Way	NA	73.0	**73.0**	60	Yes
Buena Vista Rd	W of Westside Rd	NA	53.3	53.3	60	No
Buena Vista Rd	W of College St/Locust Ave	NA	63.4	**63.4**	60	Yes
Buena Vista Rd	E of College St/Locust Ave	NA	64.4	**64.4**	60	Yes
Santa Ana Rd	E of Memorial Dr	NA	67.1	**67.1**	60	Yes
4th St	W of New Driveway near S&S	NA	67.5	**67.5**	60	Yes

Source: Based on FHWA's traffic noise prediction model methodology using roadway volumes, vehicle mix, time of day splits, and number of lanes provided by Kimley-Horn 2022 (see Appendix F, *Transportation Data*).
Notes: **Bold** = Significant increase.
NA = Not applicable.



Source: PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.13-4
2040 Transportation Noise Contours

NOISE

The proposed Health and Safety (HS) Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider noise-related impacts from vehicle traffic. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would minimize potential adverse traffic noise-related impacts.

Goal HS-8: Achieve noise levels consistent with acceptable standards and reduce or eliminate objectionable noise sources. (Goal HS3)

- Policy HS-8.4: Vehicle Noise. Strive to reduce traffic noise levels, especially as they impact residential areas, and continue enforcement of vehicle noise standards through noise readings and enforcement actions. In particular, strive to minimize truck traffic in residential areas and ensure enforcement of Vehicle Code provisions that prohibit alteration of vehicular exhaust systems in a way that increases noise emissions. (Policy HS3.4)
- Policy HS-8.5: Site Planning and Design. Require attention to site planning and design techniques other than sound walls to reduce noise impacts, including: (a) installing earth berms, (b) increasing the distance between the noise source and the receiver; (c) using non-sensitive structures, such as parking lots, utility areas, and garages to shield noise-sensitive areas; (d) orienting buildings to shield outdoor spaces from the noise source; and (e) minimizing the noise at its source. (new)
- Policy HS-8.7: Techniques to Reduce Traffic Noise. Use roadway design, traffic signalization, and other traffic planning techniques (such as limiting truck traffic in residential areas) to reduce noise caused by speed or acceleration of vehicles. Work with the State to address noise impacts from highway traffic. (Policy HS3.5)
- Action HS-8.5: Traffic Noise Mitigation. Continue to enforce City Ordinances, which restrict through truck traffic to approved truck routes only and prohibit the parking and maintenance of trucks in residential districts. (Implementation Measure HS.N)

Implementation of proposed 2040 General Plan Policy HS-8.7—use roadway design, traffic signalization, and other traffic planning techniques (such as limiting truck traffic in residential areas) to reduce noise caused by speed or acceleration of vehicles, and work with the State to address noise impacts from highway traffic—would reduce traffic noise. Roadway design could include installing and maintaining noise barriers and/or rubberized or special asphalt paving, such as open grade asphalt concrete, along roadway segments with significant noise increases that are adjacent to sensitive receptors. Notable reductions in tire noise have been achieved via the implementation of special paving materials, such as rubberized asphalt or open-grade asphalt concrete overlays. For example, Caltrans conducted a study of pavement noise along I-80 in Davis, California, and found an average improvement of 6 to 7 dBA compared to conventional asphalt overlay with only minimal noise increases over a ten-year period.[7] However, as shown in Table 4.13-13, traffic noise increases along some of the proposed new roadway segments would exceed 60 dBA L_{dn} by up to 14.5 dBA L_{dn}. With traffic noise increases along three existing segments as well that would exceed 60 dBA L_{dn}, impacts at these locations are potentially *significant.*

[7] California Department of Transportation, May 13, 2011, *I-80 Davis OGAC Pavement Noise Study: Traffic Noise Levels Associated With Aging Open Grade Asphalt Concrete Overlay*.

Impact NOI-1.2: Operational vehicle traffic noise increases would exceed the City's significance threshold with implementation of the proposed project.

Significance without Mitigation: Implementation of proposed 2040 General Plan Policy HS-8.7—use roadway design, which could include installing and maintaining noise barriers and/or rubberized or special asphalt paving such as open grade asphalt concrete along roadway segments with significant noise increases that are adjacent to sensitive receptors, and work with the State to address noise impacts from highway traffic—would reduce traffic noise. As described, notable reductions in tire noise have been achieved via the implementation of special paving materials, such as rubberized asphalt or open-grade asphalt concrete overlays.[8] These quieter pavement types can be used alone or in combination with noise barriers, which are common throughout the city. However, barriers may not be feasible in all cases if they would prevent access to driveways or properties. Since noise barriers and/or quieter pavement technologies may not be feasible or reduce vehicle traffic noise below significance thresholds in all cases, this impact is conservatively considered *significant and unavoidable*. The identification of this program-level impact does not preclude the finding of less-than-significant impacts for subsequent projects analyzed at the project level that do not exceed the noise thresholds.

Railroad Noise

As discussed in Section 4.13.1.5, *Existing Conditions*, the City of Hollister has one rail line that runs roughly through the center of the northern half of the city, with trains averaging two locomotives and eight cars and traveling 10 miles per hour. Currently, local trains run two times a week, Tuesday and Thursday, servicing San Benito Foods. This rail line has seven at-grade crossings in Hollister, none of which are "quiet zones."[9] There are no plans for an increase in freight traffic on this line as a result of the proposed project or otherwise, since there is only one customer. Therefore, future rail noise levels are anticipated to be similar to those previously shown in Table 4.13-9, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Stationary Source Noise

Stationary sources of noises may occur on all types of land uses. Residential uses generate noise from landscaping, maintenance activities, and air conditioning systems. Commercial uses generate noise from HVAC systems, loading docks, and other sources. Industrial uses may generate noise from HVAC systems, loading docks, and possibly machinery. Noise generated by residential or commercial uses is generally short and intermittent. Industrial uses may generate noise on a more continual basis. Nightclubs, outdoor dining areas, gas stations, car washes, fire stations, drive-throughs, swimming pool pumps, school

[8] California Department of Transportation, May 13, 2011, *I-80 Davis OGAC Pavement Noise Study: Traffic Noise Levels Associated With Aging Open Grade Asphalt Concrete Overlay*.

[9] Quiet Zone: A quiet zone is a zone where railroads have been directed to cease the routine sounding of their horns when approaching public highway-rail grade crossings. Train horns may still be used in emergency situations.

playgrounds, athletic and music events, and public parks are other common noise sources. Stationary noise sources are controlled by HMC Chapter 8.28, *Noise*.

The proposed Health and Safety (HS) Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider noise-related impacts from stationary sources. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would minimize potential adverse noise-related impacts from stationary noise.

Goal HS-8: Achieve noise levels consistent with acceptable standards and reduce or eliminate objectionable noise sources. (Goal HS3)

- Policy HS-8.2: Noise Source Control. Work with property owners to control noise at its source, maintaining existing noise levels and ensuring that noise levels do not exceed acceptable noise standards as established in the Hollister Noise Ordinance. (Policy HS3.2)
- Action HS-8.1: Review of New Development for Potential Noise Impacts. Review all development proposals to verify that the proposed development would not significantly increase noise beyond current ambient levels and that it would not generate noise that would be incompatible with existing uses in the vicinity of the proposed development. (Implementation Measure HS.T)
- Action HS-8.2: Periodic Noise Monitoring. Amend the Noise Ordinance to require periodic monitoring of residential noise generators. The Noise Ordinance shall identify who is responsible for the noise monitoring and require property owners to develop noise reduction and abatement measures that can be applied to limit noise, phasing in appropriate mitigation measures. (Implementation Measure HS.K)
- Action HS-8.4: Noise Complaint Enforcement. Develop capabilities to compile data as part of the Code Enforcement/Police records on noise-related complaints. (Implementation Measure HS.F)
- Action HS-8.6: Periodic Updates to Noise Ordinance. Revise the Noise Ordinance to incorporate the noise-related policies presented in the Hollister General Plan and to develop a procedure for handling noise complaints. (Implementation Measure HS.O)
- Action HS-8.7: Staff Training on Noise Enforcement. Train Police, Public Works, and Development Services Department personnel as needed in the use of noise measurement equipment to enforce the Noise Ordinance and vehicular noise standards, and to monitor noise levels throughout the city. (Implementation Measure HS.P)

Compliance with HMC Chapter 8.28, *Noise*, and implementation of the listed General Plan goals, policies, and actions would ensure that noise-related impacts from stationary noise would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Land Use Compatibility

The proposed 2040 General Plan Health and Safety (HS) Element aims to limit the exposure of the community to excessive noise levels by guiding decisions concerning land use in relation to substantial noise sources. While the City has not adopted its own noise and land use compatibility guidelines, it uses

the State of California's guidelines, previously shown in Table 4.13-5 in Section 4.13.1.4, *Regulatory Framework*, as a tool to gauge the compatibility of land uses relative to existing and future noise level.

As a result of the Supreme Court decision regarding the assessment of the environment's impacts on projects (*California Building Industry Association v. Bay Area Air Quality Management District*, 62 Cal. 4th 369 (No. S 213478), December 17, 2015), it is generally no longer the purview of the CEQA process to evaluate the impact of existing environmental conditions on any given project. As a result, though the noise from existing sources is taken into account as part of the baseline, the direct effects of exterior noise from nearby noise sources on land use compatibility as a result of the proposed 2040 General Plan buildout is typically no longer a required topic for impact evaluation under CEQA. Generally, no determination of significance is required with the exception of certain school projects, projects affected by airport noise, and projects that would exacerbate existing conditions (i.e., projects that would have a significant operational impact).

The proposed 2040 General Plan Health and Safety (HS) Element contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider noise and land use compatibility. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would minimize potential adverse noise-related impacts.

Goal HS-8: Achieve noise levels consistent with acceptable standards and reduce or eliminate objectionable noise sources. (Goal HS3)

- Policy HS-8.2: Noise Source Control. Work with property owners to control noise at its source, maintaining existing noise levels and ensuring that noise levels do not exceed acceptable noise standards as established in the Hollister Noise Ordinance. (Policy HS3.2)
- Policy HS-8.7: Techniques to Reduce Traffic Noise. Use roadway design, traffic signalization, and other traffic planning techniques (such as limiting truck traffic in residential areas) to reduce noise caused by speed or acceleration of vehicles. Work with the State to address noise impacts from highway traffic. (Policy HS3.5)
- Action HS-8.1: Review of New Development for Potential Noise Impacts. Review all development proposals to verify that the proposed development would not significantly increase noise beyond current ambient levels and that it would not generate noise that would be incompatible with existing uses in the vicinity of the proposed development. (Implementation Measure HS.T)

As required by proposed 2040 General Plan Action HS-8.1, noise and land use compatibility would be a factor in land use decisions, to verify that the proposed development would not significantly increase noise beyond current ambient levels and that it would not generate noise that would be incompatible with existing uses in the vicinity of the proposed development. Accordingly, impacts associated with land use compatibility would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 Climate Action Plan (2023 CAP) is a strategic plan focused on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new sources of noise or vibration, implementation of the proposed project would not result in the generation of substantial temporary and permanent increases in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the EIR Study Area in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or in other applicable local, state, or federal standards, and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP) is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new sources of noise or vibration, implementation of the proposed project would not result in the generation of substantial temporary and permanent increases in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the EIR Study Area in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or in other applicable local, state, or federal standards, and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

NOI-2 Implementation of the proposed project would result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.

2040 General Plan

Construction Vibration

Construction of future projects in the EIR Study Area would generate varying degrees of ground vibration that may cause human reactions (annoyance) and effects on buildings (damage), depending on the construction procedures and equipment. The use of construction equipment generates vibration that spreads through the ground and diminishes with distance from the source. The effect on sensitive buildings in the vicinity of a construction site varies depending on soil type, ground strata, and the type of construction equipment used. The results from vibration can range from no perceptible effects at the lowest vibration levels, to low rumbling sounds and perceptible vibrations at moderate levels, to slight structural damage at the highest levels. Vibration from construction activities rarely reaches the levels that can damage structures, but can achieve the audible and perceptible ranges in buildings close to a

construction site. Table 4.13-14, *Reference Vibration Levels for Construction Equipment*, lists typical vibration levels for construction equipment in PPV and VdB.

TABLE 4.13-14 REFERENCE VIBRATION LEVELS FOR CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT

Equipment	Approximate Vibration Level at 25 feet, PPV in/sec [a]	Approximate Vibration Level at 25 feet, VdB re 1 micro-in/sec [b]
Pile Driver, Impact (Upper Range)	1.518	112
Pile Driver, Impact (Typical)	0.644	104
Pile Driver, Sonic (Upper Range)	0.734	105
Pile Driver, Sonic (Typical)	0.170	93
Vibratory Roller	0.210	94
Large Bulldozer	0.089	87
Caisson Drilling	0.089	87
Loaded Trucks	0.076	86
Jackhammer	0.035	79
Small Bulldozer	0.003	58

Notes:
a. Peak Particle Velocity (PPV) = The peak rate of speed at which soil particles move (e.g., inches per second) due to ground vibration.
b. Vibration Decibel (VdB) = A unitless measure of vibration, expressed on a logarithmic scale and with respect to a defined reference vibration velocity. In the U.S., the standard reference velocity is one microinch per second ($1x10^{-6}$ in/sec).
Source: Federal Transit Administration, 2018, *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment*.

As described in Section 4.13.2.3, *Vibration*, the City does not have established thresholds for construction vibration and the FTA vibration thresholds of significance were applied to this analysis for architectural damage or for buildings where vibration could interfere with interior operations of off-site receptors. As shown in Table 4.13-14, vibration generated by construction equipment has the potential to be substantial, since it has the potential to exceed the FTA criteria for architectural damage—i.e., 0.12 in/sec PPV for fragile or historical resources, 0.2 in/sec PPV for nonengineered timber and masonry buildings, and 0.3 in/sec PPV for engineered concrete and masonry.

The proposed Health and Safety (HS) Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals and policies that require local planning and development decisions to consider noise-related impacts, including those from vibration-causing equipment used during construction. The following proposed General Plan goals, policies, and actions would minimize potential adverse construction impacts, including those from vibration.

Goal HS-8: Achieve noise levels consistent with acceptable standards and reduce or eliminate objectionable noise sources. (Goal HS3)

- Policy HS-8.3: Construction Noise. Regulate construction activity to reduce noise as established in the Hollister Noise Ordinance. (Policy HS3.3)
- Action HS-8.1: Review New Development for Potential Noise Impacts. Review all development proposals to verify that the proposed development would not significantly increase noise beyond current ambient levels and that it would not generate noise that would be incompatible with existing uses in the vicinity of the proposed development. (Implementation Measure HS.T)

- Action HS-8.6: Periodic Updates to Noise Ordinance. Revise the Noise Ordinance to incorporate the noise-related policies presented in the Hollister General Plan and to develop a procedure for handling noise complaints. (Implementation Measure HS.O)
- Action HS-8.8: Noise and Vibration Thresholds. Adopt noise and vibration thresholds applied in the General Plan EIR into the Noise Ordinance. For noise thresholds, this includes the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) criteria for acceptable levels of construction noise as well as Construction Equipment Noise Emission Levels based on a distance of 50 feet between the equipment and noise receptor.

  For vibration thresholds, this includes FTA criteria for acceptable levels of groundborne vibration during operation of commercial or industrial uses and groundborne vibration for various types of construction equipment. If vibration levels exceed the FTA limits for construction, alternative methods/equipment shall be used. (new)

In most cases of individual developments associated with implementation of the proposed project, construction that requires the use of vibration-causing construction equipment, such as pile driving, caisson drilling, vibratory roller, or a large bulldozer, would temporarily increase the ambient noise environment in the vicinity of the individual project, potentially affecting existing and future nearby sensitive users. The use of alternate methods/equipment for construction throughout the entire active construction period would help to ensure that construction noise from vibration is minimized to the extent feasible. Some common alternate methods/equipment used for construction include, but are not limited to:

- For pile driving, the use of caisson drilling (drill piles), vibratory pile drivers, oscillating or rotating pile installation methods, pile pressing, "silent" piling, and jetting or partial jetting of piles into place using a water injection at the tip of the pile.
- For paving, use of a static roller in lieu of a vibratory roller.
- For grading and earthwork activities, off-road equipment limited to 100 horsepower or less.

The proposed 2040 General Plan Policy HS-8.3 is required to regulate construction activity to reduce noise as established in the Hollister Noise Ordinance, which prohibits noise sources from excessive or unusually loud noises and vibrations from any and all sources in the community. And proposed 2040 General Plan Action HS-8.1 requires the City to review all development proposals to verify that the proposed development would not significantly increase noise beyond current ambient levels in the vicinity of the proposed development. Action HS-8.8 requires the City to adopt vibration thresholds based on the FTA criteria for acceptable levels of groundborne vibration for various types of construction equipment. Should the FTA criteria be exceeded, a list of alternate methods/equipment shall be established, as provided above. This would ensure that construction vibration impacts would remain less than significant because alternate methods/equipment with less or no vibration, such as those shown in Table 4.13-14, would meet the thresholds. Furthermore, HMC Section 17.10.040, *Industrial Zoning District Performance Standards*, requires the City to not approve any land use that generates ground vibration perceptible without instruments at any point along or outside the property line of the use, except for motor vehicle operations. Therefore, the temporary program-level construction vibration impacts associated with implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan are considered *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Operational Vibration

Commercial and industrial operations in the EIR Study Area would generate varying degrees of ground vibration, depending on the operational procedures and equipment. Such equipment-generated vibrations would spread through the ground and diminish with distance from the source. The effect on buildings in the vicinity of the vibration source varies depending on soil type, ground strata, and receptor-building construction. The results from vibration can range from no perceptible effects at the lowest vibration levels, to low rumbling sounds and perceptible vibrations at moderate levels, to slight structural damage at the highest levels. In addition, future sensitive receptors could be placed within close proximity to the existing railroad line through buildout in the EIR Study Area.

Like construction vibration, the City does not have any adopted standards for operational vibration. As discussed above, Action HS-8.8 requires the City to adopt vibration thresholds based on the FTA criteria. Section 4.13.2.3, *Vibration*, establishes vibration limits from operational activities in order for impacts to be less than significant on a project-by-project basis. For vibration annoyance from operational sources, the FTA recommends the following criteria for frequent events: 65 VdB for highly sensitive uses with vibration-sensitive equipment (e.g., microscopes in hospitals and research facilities) and 72 VdB for residences. Therefore, with implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan Action HS-8.8, vibration from operation impacts are considered *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new sources of noise or vibration, implementation of the proposed project would not result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels, and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new sources of noise or vibration, implementation of the proposed project would not result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels, and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

NOI-3	**Implementation of the proposed project would not expose people residing or working within two miles of a private airstrip or airport to excessive noise levels.**

2040 General Plan

As discussed in Section 4.12.1.5, *Existing Conditions,* HMA in the northern portion of the city is the only airport in the EIR Study Area and is owned and operated by the City of Hollister. Furthermore, there are no private airstrips in the vicinity of where future development could occur as a result of the proposed project. As shown on Figure 4.13-2, the airport noise contours from the *Hollister Municipal Airport Master Plan* do not extend much beyond the runway and would not affect nearby noise-sensitive receptors.

The proposed Health and Safety Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals and policies that would require local planning and development decisions to consider noise-related impacts from the Hollister Municipal Airport. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals and policies would minimize potential adverse noise-related impacts.

Goal HS-8: Achieve noise levels consistent with acceptable standards and reduce or eliminate objectionable noise sources. (Goal HS3)

- Policy HS-8.6: Airport Noise. Review all proposed development within the Airport Influence Area to ensure that it will be compatible with operations at the Hollister Municipal Airport and applicable noise standards and regulations. (Policy HS3.7)

Because the project would not cause a direct increase in flights and proposed 2040 General Plan Policy HS-8.6 would require that all future development be compatible with operations of the HMA, impacts from future potential projects in the EIR Study Area would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new sources of noise or vibration, implementation of the proposed project would not expose people residing or working within two miles of a private airstrip or airport to excessive noise levels, and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes

that would introduce new sources of noise or vibration, implementation of the proposed project would not expose people residing or working within two miles of a private airstrip or airport to excessive noise levels, and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

NOI-4	**Implementation of the proposed project would, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in significant cumulative impacts with respect to noise and vibration.**

2040 General Plan

The analysis of the proposed project addresses cumulative impacts with regard to noise, groundborne noise, and vibration. Although multiple simultaneous nearby noise sources may, in combination, result in higher overall noise levels, this effect is captured and accounted for by the ambient noise level metrics that form the basis of the thresholds of significance for noise analysis. Any measurement of sound or ambient noise, whether for the purpose of evaluating land use compatibility, establishing compliance with exterior and interior noise standards, or determining point-source violations of a noise ordinance, necessarily will incorporate noise from all other nearby perceptible sources.

Additionally, although noise attenuation is influenced by a variety of topographical, meteorological, and other factors, noise levels decrease rapidly with distance, and vibration impacts decrease even more rapidly. Therefore, site-level cumulative noise or vibration impacts across city boundaries occur only infrequently. The City of Hollister shares borders with other development in unincorporated San Benito County, which makes cross-border cumulative noise and vibration impacts possible. Nevertheless, given the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions and HMC requirements, it is unlikely that stationary source noise would, in combination with noise sources from adjacent communities, result in cumulative noise impacts. Additionally, because any noise measurements taken in conjunction with the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions or HMC requirements would necessarily account for noises received from outside the boundaries of Hollister, the ongoing implementation of these goals, policies, actions, and regulations under the proposed project would prevent site-based cumulative noise impacts.

Similarly, the noise contours and traffic-related noise levels developed for the proposed project include and account for regional travel patterns as they affect traffic levels in Hollister. Noise contours were based on both existing and projected future traffic volumes that incorporate cumulative regional effects and trends. Existing noise contours were derived from traffic volumes based on counts of current traffic, and these traffic counts inherently include cumulative traffic, as generated by regional trips. With regard to future noise, projected noise contours were determined using projected 2040 traffic volumes; these data account for growth in Hollister under the proposed project as well as anticipated regional growth. The future noise modeling that served as the foundation for the overall project analysis was therefore based on future, cumulative conditions. Accordingly, no additional cumulative impact related to vehicle traffic noise would occur beyond what is described in Impact Discussion NOI-1 and concluded in Impact NOI-1.2.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new sources of noise or vibration, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to noise and vibration.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would introduce new sources of noise or vibration, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to noise and vibration.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

4.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

This chapter describes the potential population and housing impacts associated with the approval and implementation of the proposed project. This chapter describes the regulatory framework and existing conditions, identifies criteria used to determine impact significance, provides an analysis of the potential population and housing impacts, and identifies policies that could minimize any potentially significant impacts.

4.14.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.14.1.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

State Regulations

California Housing Element Law (California Government Code Sections 65580 through 65589.8) includes provisions related to the requirements for housing elements of local government general plans. Requirements include an assessment of housing needs and an inventory of resources and constraints relevant to the meeting of these needs. Additionally, to ensure that counties and cities recognize their responsibilities for contributing to the attainment of the State housing goals, the Government Code calls for local jurisdictions to plan for and allow the construction of a share of the region's projected housing needs.

Regional Regulations

Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments Projections

The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) is the official comprehensive planning agency for Monterey County, San Benito County, and Santa Cruz County. AMBAG is responsible for taking the overall regional housing needs allocation (RHNA) provided by the State and preparing a formula for allocating that housing need by income level across its jurisdiction. AMBAG produces growth projections on four-year cycles so that other regional agencies, including the San Benito County Council of Governments, can use the forecast to make project funding and regulatory decisions. AMBAG projections have practical consequences that shape growth and environmental quality, and the general plans, zoning regulations, and growth management programs of local jurisdictions inform the AMBAG projections. The AMBAG projections are also developed to reflect the impact of "smart growth" policies and incentives that could be used to shift development patterns from historical trends toward a better jobs-housing balance, increased preservation of open space, and greater development and redevelopment in urban core and transit-accessible areas throughout the AMBAG region.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan / Sustainable Community Strategy

As the metropolitan planning organization for the tri-county area, AMBAG carries out many planning functions, including development and maintenance of the regional travel demand model, long-range transportation planning and programming, and acting as a regional forum for dialogue on issues facing the region. Most of AMBAG's projects are carried out in support of these major functions, including the

regional growth forecast discussed above. AMBAG develops the regional growth forecast with a horizon year that matches the planning timeline of the metropolitan transportation plan (MTP) and the model years for the regional travel demand model. In addition to informing regional planning processes, the regional growth forecast is used by local jurisdictions and special districts to inform local and subregional planning. The 2045 MTP/Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) is the long-range SCS and regional transportation plan for the 3 counties and 18 local jurisdictions in the Monterey Bay Region, including the City of Hollister. Adopted in 2022, these regional efforts were prompted by Senate Bill 375, which established new requirements for regional alignment of land use and transportation planning. The MTP/SCS guides transportation and land use decisions, coordinating transportation investments with land use patterns so that the region makes informed decisions with respect to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving air quality, and ensuring efficient energy consumption. AMBAG is currently developing the 2050 MTP/SCS, which is scheduled for adoption in 2026.

Local Regulations

Hollister General Plan Housing Element

One of the required elements of the General Plan is the Housing Element, which is not being updated as part of the proposed project. The most recent Hollister Housing Element (2015-2023) was adopted in April 2016. The 2016-2023 Housing Element includes a housing needs assessment that identifies current and projected housing needs in Hollister and has policies to accommodate future housing development that will be diverse and affordable to a range of household types and income ranges. Although the current Housing Element is being updated through a separate process, relevant goals, policies, and actions are described in Section 4.14.3, *Impact Discussion*.

Hollister Municipal Code

The Hollister Municipal Code (HMC) includes various directives to minimize adverse impacts related to population and housing in Hollister. The HMC is organized by title, chapter, and section. Most provisions related to population and housing are in Title 16, *Subdivisions*. Specifically, Chapter 16.64, *Growth Management Program,* recognizes that the City's General Plan includes policies that require the city to limit development to what can be supported by adequate water supply, adequate sanitary sewer and treatment capacity, adequate fire and police protection, adequate transportation system meeting the prescribed levels of service, and other services that are required to maintain the desired goals of the city. This chapter is intended to encourage a rate of residential growth in the city that will:

- Not exceed the City's ability to provide adequate and efficient public services, including sewer, water, police, fire, streets, parks, general administration, and maintenance of public facilities
- Not exceed the ability of the local economy, including the City's financial capacity, to support such growth.
- Maintain and improve the quality of the environment considering the city's natural setting, including water courses, viable agricultural/open lands, recreational, historic, and scenic areas.
- Encourage and promote a balanced community with adequate housing to meet the needs of local employment and residents.
- Encourage the construction of an appropriate share of the regional need for housing.

- Encourage and promote housing programs and activities to enable the City to meet the needs of all economic segments of the community, including the provision of adequate levels of rental housing
- Provide and maintain a sound economic base for the City.

The General Plan requires that development, including residential development, be located and designed to ensure that the public is safe from flooding and earthquake hazards, and that development is in conformance with federal, state and local regulatory programs designed to protect the historical and biological environments of the city and the surrounding planning area, and that there are adequate park and recreational facilities available to serve city residents. The City has adopted a fiscal neutrality policy requiring new residential development to provide adequate revenues to fund the cost of the services required by the development.

In order to implement the General Plan and to protect the health, welfare and safety of the city's population, the City has adopted regulatory ordinances such as the city zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance. The adopted zoning and subdivision regulations alone are insufficient to provide for comprehensive development review and approval procedures, including review and approval procedures for residential development that will accommodate various levels of housing needs while ensuring the availability of adequate municipal services and facilities in the context of environmental, safety, and infrastructural constraints. The City therefore adopted a growth management program to implement the policies and objectives of the General Plan and to protect and promote the public health, safety and welfare. The provision of special needs housing, including affordable, below market rate, senior, and rental housing, is necessary for the economic and social well-being of the community and is necessary to implement the housing policies of the General Plan. The City's growth management program identifies categories of special needs housing and is intended to provide for adequate levels of affordable, senior, and rental housing within any adopted growth limit.

4.14.1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section describes existing population and housing conditions in Hollister and San Benito County to provide context for the implications for the proposed 2040 General Plan. The following text provides an overview of population, housing, and employment trends in Hollister and the San Benito County region.

Population

The majority of San Benito County’s population is in Hollister and unincorporated areas of the county, while the remaining population is in the City of San Juan Bautista. Hollister has the largest population, approximately twice the size of that of unincorporated San Benito County. As shown in Table 4.14-1, *Total Population, 2010 to 2019*, the city’s population grew by approximately 13 percent, higher than the level of population growth in San Benito County as a whole, which was 11 percent during the same period. This level of growth was similar to the growth in San Juan Bautista and greater than in the unincorporated areas of San Benito County.

POPULATION AND HOUSING

TABLE 4.14-1 TOTAL POPULATION, 2010 TO 2019

	2010	2019	Total Change	Total Percent Change
Hollister	34,900	38,900	4000	13%
San Juan Bautista	1,900	2,120	220	12%
Unincorporated San Benito County	18,500	19,160	660	4%
Total San Benito County	55,300	61,440	6,100	11%

Sources: 2019 demographic numbers are from US Census, the Department of Finance, and the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG); 2010 data are from the State of California, Department of Finance, *E-5 Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State, January 1, 2010-2021*. Numbers are rounded.

Housing

Between 2010 and 2019, Hollister experienced steady housing growth. As shown in Table 4.14-2, *Housing Units, 2010 to 2019*, the city's number of housing units grew by approximately 8 percent; this growth was higher than the level of housing growth in San Benito County as a whole, which was 6 percent during the same period. This level of growth was also higher than in the City of San Juan Bautista and the unincorporated areas of San Benito County.

TABLE 4.14-2 HOUSING UNITS, 2010 TO 2019

	2010	2019	Total Change	Total Percent Change
Hollister	10,400	11,185	785	8%
San Juan Bautista	750	800	50	7%
Unincorporated San Benito County	6,720	7,020	648	5%
Total San Benito County	17,870	19,005	1,135	6%

Source: 2019 demographic numbers are from US Census, the Department of Finance, and the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG); and 2010 data is from the State of California, Department of Finance, *E-5 Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State, January 1, 2010-2021*. Numbers are rounded.

Employment

According to data from the California Employment Development Department, Hollister had 20,700 residents in the labor force in 2019, and 19,600 of them were employed, as shown in Table 4.14-3, *Employment Among Residents, 2019*. At 5.6 percent, the unemployment rate in Hollister was higher than the countywide unemployment rate of 5.0 percent.

TABLE 4.14-3 EMPLOYMENT AMONG RESIDENTS, 2019

	Number of Workers		
Geography	Employed	In Labor Force	Unemployment Rate
Hollister	19,600	20,700	5.6%
San Juan Bautista	1,000	1,000	3.1%
Total San Benito County	30,700	32,300	5.0%

Note: Data are not seasonally adjusted.
Source: California Employment Development Department, Annual Averages 2019, https://labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/file/lfhist/19aasub.xls, accessed February 24, 2023.

Growth Projections

Growth forecasts for Hollister and San Benito County, based on the AMBAG regional growth forecasts, are shown in Table 4.14-4, *Regional Growth Projections, 2019 to 2040*. The data in Table 4.14-4 compare existing 2019 conditions to the AMBAG 2040 growth forecasts.

TABLE 4.14-4 REGIONAL GROWTH PROJECTIONS, 2019 TO 2040

	2019	2040	Total Change	Total Percent Change
Hollister				
Population	38,900	45,350	6,450	17%
Housing Units	11,185	14,050	2,865	26%
Jobs	14,270	17,120	2,850	20%
San Benito County				
Population	61,440	80,790	19,790	31%
Housing Units	19,005	25,450	6,445	34%
Jobs	17,000	25,470	8470	50%

Note: Numbers are rounded.
Sources: 2019 demographic numbers are from US Census, the Department of Finance, and the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG); and 2040 projects are from Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, *2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy*, Appendix A, *Regional Growth Forecasts*. Numbers are rounded.

4.14.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the proposed project would result in significant population and housing impacts if it would:

1. Induce substantial unplanned population growth or growth for which inadequate planning has occurred, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure).
2. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.
3. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to population and housing.

4.14.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

POP-1 Implementation of the proposed project would not include substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure).

2040 General Plan

The proposed 2040 General Plan is a high-level policy document that will replace the existing 2005 General Plan as the overarching policy document that defines a vision for future change and sets the land use and policy framework for growth in Hollister. The proposed 2040 General Plan considers growth over a 20-year period but does not include specific development proposals. The General Plan is the policy document that plans ahead to accommodate the amount of reasonably foreseeable growth given past growth trends and the ability of existing services and infrastructure to support future growth. Therefore, the proposed General Plan 2040 would not induce substantial, unplanned population growth directly or indirectly in any particular location but includes policy guidance for expected incremental growth through 2040.

The City of Hollister has a population of approximately 38,900, with 11,185 housing units as of 2019. The proposed 2040 General Plan estimates an overall increase of 6,455 housing units and 21,635 residents in the EIR Study Area by 2040. As shown in Table 4.14-5, *Proposed 2040 General Plan Growth Projections,* this equates to a 56 percent increase in total population and 58 percent increase in housing units over the 20-year horizon of the proposed project.

TABLE 4.14-5 PROPOSED 2040 GENERAL PLAN GROWTH PROJECTIONS

	Existing Conditions 2019 [a]	Proposed General Plan (2040)	Hollister Projected Growth 2019 to 2040 (Proposed Project)	Total Percent Change
Population	38,900	60,535	21,635	56%
Housing Units	11,185	17,640	6,455	58%

Sources: 2019 demographic numbers are from US Census, the Department of Finance, and the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG).
Note: Numbers are rounded.

Approximately 65 percent of the projected residential growth for the proposed project comes from the City's 2023–2031 RHNA allocation of 4,163 units,[1] which is dictated by the California Housing Law and not by the City. The 4,163 units required for the 2023-2031 Housing Element represent a 32 percent increase over the 2015-2023 RHNA, which was 1,316 units. Although the RHNA allocation is not a requirement to build units, the State legislature has enacted increasingly stringent requirements on cities to ensure they are doing everything possible to remove common barriers to housing construction. Furthermore,

[1] San Benito County Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan, 2022, Table 1: 6th Cycle RHNA Allocation, by Income Level, for San Benito County, page 4. October.

pursuant to Senate Bill 166, Housing Elements are required to include a "buffer" of additional sites to ensure that if the sites listed in the housing opportunity sites inventory are developed without housing, or are developed with less than the full amount of housing claimed in the inventory, there is remaining capacity to ensure an ongoing supply of sites for the full RHNA during the eight years of the Housing Element cycle. The California Department of Housing and Community Development recommends a buffer of least 15 to 30 percent, but many jurisdictions provide a buffer of up to 50 percent. The proposed land use map, as shown in Figure 3-5, *2040 General Plan Land Use Map*, in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, includes enough land designated for housing to fulfill the City's 2023-2031 RHNA as well as future buffer sites identified through the upcoming Housing Element update.

The regional projections for Hollister anticipate a 17 percent increase in population and a 26 percent increase in housing units, as shown in Table 4.14-6, *Buildout Comparison of the Proposed 2040 General Plan to Regional Growth Projections*. However, the table also shows that the regional forecasts do not accommodate the City's fair share of 4,163 housing units for the 2023–2031 Housing Element. Though the RHNA methodology considered the AMBAG 2022 Regional Growth Forecast, the forecast data were accepted for planning purposes by AMBAG Board of Directors in November 2020 and did not consider the 2023-2031 RHNA allocations, which were finalized in 2022.[2] Accordingly, this indicates that the City needs to plan for development that exceeds the AMBAG 2040 regional growth forecasts, and the City is appropriately planning in order to provide its fair share of regional housing as part of the future Housing Element 2023-2031.

TABLE 4.14-6 BUILDOUT COMPARISON OF THE PROPOSED 2040 GENERAL PLAN TO REGIONAL GROWTH PROJECTIONS

	Existing Conditions 2019 [a]	Regional Projections 2040	AMBAG Projected Growth 2019 to 2040	Total Percent Change
Population	38,900	45,350	6,450	17%
Housing Units	11,185	14,050	2,865	26%

Source: 2019 demographic numbers are from US Census, the Department of Finance, and the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG); 2040 data from the *Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments* 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) Appendix A, Regional Growth Forecasts.
Note: Numbers are rounded.

The proposed Land Use and Community Design (LU) Element and the Open Space and Agriculture (OS) Element of the 2040 General Plan contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts from potential future growth. The proposed goals, policies, and actions support orderly growth and sustainable development patterns, and require infrastructure in place prior to development. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would minimize potential adverse impacts on future growth.

Goal LU-1: Promote orderly and balanced growth within Hollister's planning area boundaries. (Goal LU6)

- Policy LU-1.1: Prioritize Infill Development. Ensure an orderly pattern of development in the city that prioritizes infill development over the annexation of properties. (new)

[2] Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, February 2022, Frequently Asked Questions About RHNA, https://www.ambag.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/RHNA%20FAQs_February%202022_PDFA_0.pdf, accessed February 28, 2023.

- Policy LU-1.7: Specific Plans. Ensure the orderly development of large areas of land proposed for annexation through specific plans. Require a specific plan for annexation requests which are over 20 acres in size or include non-residential uses regardless of size. (new)
- Policy LU-1.12: Application Review of County Projects. Actively participate in development review for projects outside the City Limits but within Hollister's Planning Area for consistency with land use policies outlined in this General Plan. (Implementation Program LU.Q).
- Policy LU-1.11: Intergovernmental Coordination. Coordinate regional planning efforts with San Benito County, Caltrans, and other agencies. (Implementation Program LU.Q).
- Action LU-1.1: Sphere of Influence Amendment. Work with LAFCO to amend the Sphere of Influence as proposed in this General Plan. (new)
- Action LU-1.3: Annexation Strategy. Create an annexation prioritization strategy for areas outside the existing City Limits that identifies where and in what order the City should annex land outside the City Limits. The strategy should consider initiating the annexation of developed unincorporated areas adjacent to the city and in county "islands." Annexation should of these areas should occur if the annexation would facilitate infill development, improve service delivery, or create a more logical City boundary. (a rewrite of L-1.3) (new)
- Action LU-1.8: Infill Streamlining. Update the City's regulatory measures to make it easier to develop in infill areas than at other locations in the city. Infill development means those areas already surrounded by development. (new)

Goal LU-2: Promote diverse housing opportunities for existing and future residents. (new)

- Policy LU-2.1: Land Supply. Ensure that there is adequate land designated to meet the projected future housing needs of the City. (Policy LU7.3)

Goal OS-2: Preserve viable agricultural activities and lands. (Goal OS2)

- Action OS-2.3: Urban Growth Boundary. Work with the County of San Benito and the City of San Juan Bautista to establish and maintain an Urban Growth Boundary that delineates future urbanization areas from areas in which urbanization will not occur, so as to protect agricultural and open space uses. Lands outside of the Urban Growth Boundary shall only be designated for agriculture, park, open space, public facility, and utility uses. When establishing the Urban Growth Boundary, the following qualities should be taken into consideration: access to infrastructure, public services, transit, healthcare, and commercial uses; preserving farmland; and establishing a buffer between urban and rural uses. (new)

In addition, as described in Section 4.14.1.1, *Regulatory Framework,* HMC Chapter 16.64, *Growth Management Program,* requires the City to encourage a rate of residential growth in the city that will not exceed the city's ability to provide adequate and efficient public services or the ability of the local economy to support such growth. The proposed project would accommodate future growth by providing for infrastructure and associated public services to accommodate the projected growth of the city (see also Chapter 4.15, *Public Services and Recreation*; Chapter 4.16, *Transportation*; and Chapter 4.17, *Utilities and Service Systems*). All potential future development would be required to comply with any required site-specific infrastructure improvements and to pay any project-specific impact fees. Buildout in

accordance with the proposed 2040 General Plan would accommodate expected population, housing, and job growth in the city, and this growth would not represent unplanned population growth for which inadequate planning has occurred, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 Climate Action Plan (2023 CAP) is a strategic plan focused on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan and does not involve any land use changes that would result in indirect growth or change in building density and intensity. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not directly result in substantial unplanned population growth in an area and there would be *less-than-significant* impacts.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP) is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALLP does not involve any land use changes that would result in indirect growth or change in building density and intensity, implementation of the proposed project would not directly result in substantial unplanned population growth in an area and there would be *less-than-significant* impacts.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

POP-2 Implementation of the proposed project would not displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

2040 General Plan

One of the purposes of proposed 2040 General Plan is to adequately plan and accommodate future growth through the distribution, location, balance, and extent of land uses. Implementation of the General Plan would accommodate population growth through land use designations, goals, policies, and actions that provide a vision and guide growth in the city. Land use changes under the proposed land use map would increase opportunities for housing in the city. The proposed land use map would provide land use designations for a variety of housing types and provide for additional residential opportunities throughout Hollister.

The proposed Land Use and Community Design (LU) Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts from

potential future growth. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts on future growth that may lead to displacement.

Goal LU-2: Promote diverse housing opportunities for existing and future residents. (new)

- Policy LU-2.1: Land Supply. Ensure that there is adequate land designated to meet the projected future housing needs of the City. (Policy LU7.3)
- Policy LU-2.2: Diverse Neighborhoods. Encourage the development of well-integrated neighborhoods consisting of both single-family and multi-family homes that include owner-occupied and rental housing units in single-use and mixed-use environments. (Policy LU7.5) Require for-sale detached residential development projects greater than 40 dwelling units to provide multifamily units equal to 20 percent of the total number of detached units (new)
- Action LU-2.1: Inclusionary Housing. Adopt an inclusionary housing ordinance that requires new residential developments to include 20 percent of the units as affordable housing. (new)

In addition, as described in Section 4.14.1.1, *Regulatory Framework,* HMC Chapter 16.64, *Growth Management Program,* identifies categories of special needs housing, and is intended to provide for adequate levels of affordable, senior, and rental housing within any adopted growth limit. Potential future development as a result of implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan is anticipated to increase density and use of infill or underutilized sites in existing urban areas in the EIR Study Area. Therefore, redevelopment could potentially result in the displacement of people. However, displacement in the EIR Study Area would only be considered substantial in cases where major development such as a freeway or a large-scale redevelopment would result in the displacement of large amounts of existing housing. While the proposed 2040 General Plan focuses on infill development, which may occur as redevelopment, and other types of development that is not infill may also occur, the proposed 2040 General Plan does not include any large-scale development that could result in substantial displacement of existing housing. Further, any small levels of displacement that may occur would be addressed through compliance with proposed goals, policies, and actions. Therefore, any potential displacement of persons in the EIR Study Area would not be substantial in number, and the impact would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan and does not involve any land use changes that would result in indirect growth or change in building density and intensity. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not directly result in the displacement of substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere, and there would be *less-than-significant* impacts.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALLP does not involve any land use changes that would result in indirect growth or change in building density and intensity, implementation of the proposed project would not directly result in the displacement of substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere, and there would be *less-than-significant* impacts.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

POP-3 In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to population and housing.

2040 General Plan

The context for the cumulative population and housing impacts would be potential future development under the proposed project combined with projected growth in the rest of San Benito County and the surrounding region, as forecast by AMBAG. As described under Impact Discussions POP-1 and POP-2, implementation of the proposed project would not induce a substantial amount of unplanned population growth or growth for which inadequate planning has occurred, or displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. The proposed and existing General Plan goals, policies, and actions would provide adequate planning to accommodate the proposed increase in growth within the City's planning boundaries. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to population and housing, and cumulative impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would result in indirect growth or change in building density and intensity, implementation of the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to population and housing.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALLP does not involve any land use changes that would result in indirect growth or change in building density and intensity, implementation of the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to population and housing.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

4.15 PUBLIC SERVICES AND RECREATION

This chapter describes the potential impacts to public services (fire, police, schools, and libraries) and parks and recreation associated with the approval and implementation of the proposed project. This chapter describes the regulatory framework and existing conditions, identifies criteria used to determine impact significance, provides an analysis of the potential impacts to public services and parks and recreation, and identifies policies that could minimize potentially significant impacts.

4.15.1 FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

4.15.1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Regulatory Framework

State Regulations

California Government Code

Section 65302 of the California Government Code requires General Plans to include a Safety Element, which must include an assessment of wildland and urban fire hazards. The Health and Safety Element of the proposed 2040 General Plan satisfies this requirement.

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is dedicated to the fire protection and stewardship of over 31 million acres of California's wildlands. The Office of the State Fire Marshal supports CAL FIRE's mission to protect life and property through fire prevention engineering programs, law and code enforcement, and education.

California Building Code

The State of California provides a minimum standard for building design through the California Building Code (CBC) in Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), Part 2. The CBC is updated every three years. It is generally adopted by individual jurisdictions, subject to further modification based on local conditions. Commercial and residential buildings are plan checked by City building officials for compliance with the CBC. Typical fire safety requirements of the CBC include the installation of sprinklers; the establishment of fire resistance standards in high fire hazard severity zones; requirements for smoke-detection systems and exiting requirements; and the clearance of debris.

California Fire Code

The California Fire Code (CFC) incorporates, by adoption, the International Fire Code of the International Code Council, with California amendments. This is the official fire code for the State and all political subdivisions. It is found in CCR Title 24, Part 9, and like the CBC is revised and published every three years

by the California Building Standards Commission. Also like the CBC, the CFC is effective statewide, but a local jurisdiction may adopt more restrictive standards based on local conditions.

The CFC includes provisions and standards for emergency planning and preparedness, fire service features, fire protection systems, hazardous materials, fire flow requirements, and fire hydrant locations and distribution. Typical fire safety requirements include installation of sprinklers in all high-rise buildings; the establishment of fire resistance standards for fire doors, building materials, and particular types of construction; and the clearance of debris and vegetation within a prescribed distance from occupied structures in wildfire hazard areas.

The Mello-Roos Communities Facilities Act of 1982

The Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act, Government Code Section 53311 et seq., provides an alternative method of financing certain public capital facilities and services through special taxes. This State law empowers local agencies to establish community facilities districts (CFD) to levy special taxes for facilities such as fire protection facilities.

Regional Regulations

San Benito Emergency Operations Plan

The San Benito County Emergency Operations Plan, adopted August 2015, is designed to set the foundation for emergency management to reduce the county's vulnerabilities to both natural and man-made disasters. The plan provides basic guidance related to earthquakes, flooding, fires, landslides, severe weather, pandemics and epidemics, and hazardous material emergencies. Guidance is presented in the form of mitigation programs, which are split into three categories: emergency prevention and protection; response concept of operations; and recovery concept of operations. The City of Hollister does not have an Office of Emergency Services or an assigned emergency planner. Therefore, responsibility for preparation and response to a disaster is enforced by the San Benito County Office of Emergency Services.[1]

San Benito County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan

The purpose of hazard mitigation planning is to reduce the loss of life and property by minimizing the impact of disasters. The *San Benito County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan* (MJHMP), updated in 2022 in accordance with the Federal Disaster Mitigation Action of 2000 (DMA 2000), provides an assessment of natural hazards in the county and a set of short-term mitigation actions to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to people and property from these hazards. The Hollister Jurisdictional Annex of the MJHMP provides an assessment and mitigation actions for Hollister specifically while considering the results from the countywide effort. In the context of an MJHMP, mitigation is an action that reduces or eliminates long-term risk to people and property from hazards, including wildfire. Mitigation actions related to wildfire in Appendix G of the MJHMP include promoting home hardening, defensible space, and

[1] San Benito County Office of Emergency Services, August 2015, San Benito County Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan, http://www.cosb.us/wp-content/uploads/SBC-EOP-2015.pdf, accessed on April 25, 2020.

increased use of fire-resistant materials in new developments and working with property owners to manage dead vegetation in flood control facility footprints, railroad right-of-way, parks, and open spaces.

The MJHMP must be reviewed and approved by FEMA every five years to maintain eligibility for disaster relief funding. As part of this process, the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services reviews all local hazard mitigation plans in accordance with DMA 2000 regulations and coordinates with local jurisdictions to ensure compliance with FEMA's Local Mitigation Plan Review Guide. As part of the proposed project, the MJHMP is adopted in its entirety into the proposed Health and Safety Element by reference.

Local Regulations

Hollister Municipal Code

The Hollister Municipal Code (HMC) includes various directives to minimize adverse impacts to fire protection. The HMC is organized by title, chapter, and section. Most provisions related to fire protection impacts are in Title 3, *Revenue and Finance*; Title 15, *Buildings and Construction;* Title 16, *Subdivisions*; and Title 17, *Zoning*.

- Chapter 3.16, Article II, ***Fire Protection Impact Fees***. This article deems it necessary to establish a fee for fire facilities to serve proposed development in the City. Fire protection impact fees shall be fixed by the city council from time to time, by resolution. Fire protection impact fees shall be paid prior to the issuance of a building permit or the filing of a parcel or final map, whichever shall first occur. All fire protection fees collected pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 3.16, *Police and Fire Protection Impact Fees*, shall be placed in a special fund which is created and established for such purposes and which shall be known as the fire protection fee fund. Revenue deposited into said fund shall be used for the hiring of new personnel and procurement of equipment associated with new personnel.
- Chapter 3.20, ***Public Safety Tax***. This chapter requires revenue raised through the public safety tax on each parcel of real property or building to be placed in a special fund to be used only for the purposes of obtaining, furnishing, providing, operating, and maintaining fire protection, prevention, or suppression services and police protection services, including, but not limited to, the supplying of apparatus or equipment therefor, the payment of salaries and benefits of fire and police personnel, and other necessary fire protection, prevention, or suppression and police protection expenses of the city.
- Chapter 15.04, ***Hollister Building Code***. This chapter adopts the CBC and CFC into the HMC Section 15.04.050, *Construction Codes Adopted by Reference*.
- Section 16.24.050, ***Underground Utilities***. This section requires subdivisions to underground utility distribution facilities, including electric, communication and television lines.
- Section 16.48.010, ***Site Reservation Requirements***. This section states that as a condition of approval of a map, the subdivider shall reserve sites appropriate in area and location for parks, recreational facilities, fire stations, library, or other public uses, according to the standards and formula in Chapter 16.48, *Site Reservations*, of the HMC.

- Section 16.48.020, *Standards and Formula for Reservation of Land*. This section states that where a park, recreational facility, fire station, library, or other public use is shown on an adopted specific plan or adopted general plan containing a community facilities element, recreation and parks element, and/or a public building element, a subdivider may be required by the City to reserve sites as so determined by the City in accordance with the definite principles and standards contained in the above specific plan or general plan. The reserved area must be of such size and shape as to permit the balance of the property within which the reservation is located to develop in an orderly and efficient manner. The amount of land to be reserved shall not make development of the remaining land held by the subdivider economically infeasible. The reserved area shall conform to the adopted specific plan or general plan and shall be in such multiples of streets and parcels as to permit an efficient division of the reserved area in the event that it is not acquired within the prescribed period.
- Section 17.04.280, *Development Incentives or Concessions*. This section allows for application to defer development impact fees until occupancy (e.g., park fees, fire fees, sanitary sewer trunk line fees, storm drain trunk line fees, street tree fees, library fees, or traffic impact fees).

Existing Conditions

Fire services in the EIR Study Area are provided by the Hollister Fire Department (HFD). Preventing and extinguishing structural fires, protecting life and property safety, and reducing fire losses is an essential part of HFD's mission. The HFD provides fire protection, emergency medical services, rescue, and fire prevention services within the city limits as well as to the City of San Juan Bautista and unincorporated areas of San Benito County.

HFD has two automatic aid agreements, with the South Santa Clara County Fire District (SSCCFD) and Aromas Tri-County Fire District (ATCFD).[2] Both SSCCFD and ATCFD have contracted with CAL FIRE for service, and both automatic aid agreements encompass reciprocal responses. Agencies in California must provide mutual aid assistance to each other when requested and available. This agreement only allows for assistance for a specific period of time, and the requesting agency may be charged for service, but it increases aid during fire emergencies across the county.

In addition, HFD and CAL FIRE San Benito-Monterey Unit (BEU), which services the state responsibility areas (SRA) in San Benito County and Monterey County, have an established annual operating plan (AOP) that delegates operation responsibilities, relationships, and expectations at the field-unit level.[3] CAL FIRE BEU does not operate year-round, so the AOP clearly designates both agencies' service responsibilities and fire operations in San Benito County. During operation, CAL FIRE BEU has responsibility for the SRA for wildland fires, and HFD has responsibility for the local responsibility areas. When CAL FIRE BEU is not in

[2] Martin Del Campo, Bob. Fire Chief, Hollister Fire Department. Personal communication with PlaceWorks. May 27, 2020.

[3] CAL FIRE identifies lands in California as falling within one of the following management areas: Local Responsibility Area (LRA), State Responsibility Area (SRA), and Federal Responsibility Area (FRA). Within each of these areas, a single agency has direct responsibility: in LRAs, local fire departments or fire protection districts are responsible; in SRAs, CAL FIRE is responsible; in FRAs, federal agencies such as the United States Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, United States Department of Defense, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and Department of the Interior are responsible.

operation, HFD assumes full responsibility of fire protection services. Refer to Chapter 4.18, *Wildfire*, for detailed information on fire hazard severity zones and wildfire prevention in the EIR Study Area.

Staffing

The HFD employs 41 uniformed emergency personnel, in addition to a fire chief and a fire marshal. The HFD Fire Marshal works closely with the City's Code Enforcement to ensure all structures meet CFC standards. The HFD also provides fire response and rescue services for both urban and wildland fires throughout San Benito County. The HFD reports that personnel are highly skilled and qualified, but the current level of staffing is inadequate to meet the current demands for fire protection services in the service area.[4]

The HFD administrative facilities are located at Fire Station 1 on 110 Fifth Street. There are 13 firefighters on duty daily, dispersed among four stations, and each station has at least one engine company, one captain, one engineer, and one firefighter on duty at all times. The HFD reports that the current ratio of 0.69 firefighter for every 1,000 people in the county is not adequate. Low staff levels are due to limited budget and ongoing staff attrition (i.e., employees leave HFD for similar, higher-paying positions in other jurisdictions). While there is no standard established locally, the HFD reports that a generally accepted ratio should be 1 firefighter for every 1,000 people. Furthermore, the HFD anticipates that there will not be enough staff to meet the growing population in Hollister and the surrounding unincorporated county.Error! Bookmark not defined.

Facilities

There are three HFD fire stations in the city limits and one fire station in the unincorporated area of San Benito County. The HFD anticipates construction of two additional fire stations in San Benito County within the next ten years to serve the growing population development in the areas surrounding Hollister. One station is planned near the San Juan Oaks Golf Course southwest of the EIR Study Area, and the other station is approximately five miles south of the city limits. The HFD reports that efforts in recent years to update antiquated equipment have been largely successful, but there are a few outstanding equipment needs to maintain an acceptable level of service. The HFD needs one Type 3 wildland engine, a ladder firetruck, and a water tender.

HFD intends to establish a critical infrastructure building at Station 3, making it a fully functioning Emergency Operations Center and warming center. HFD notes that, if service continues to the future planned developments southwest of Hollister, a fifth station would be needed for adequate fire protection services.[5]

Response Times and Performance

During 2019, the HFD responded to 33 grass fires and 22 building fires. It also responded to 21 vehicle fires, 18 brush or brush-and-grass mixture fires, 17 trash/rubbish fires, and 12 cooking fires. In the

[4] Martin Del Campo, Bob. Chief of Fire, Hollister Fire Department. Personal communication with PlaceWorks. June 2020.
[5] Martin Del Campo, Bob. Chief of Fire, Hollister Fire Department. Personal communication with PlaceWorks. June 2020.

General Plan Planning Area, there were 4,245 calls for service, including 2,550 for EMS, ambulances, and similar services. There were also 282 false alarms, malfunctions, or unintentional calls and 1,413 other incidents (animal rescue, hazardous waste, smoke, etc.).

The HFD's Insurance Service Office has a rating of Class 3 in the city and 3X for the unincorporated county, which is on the scale of 1 to 10. Class 1 generally represents superior property fire protection, and Class 10 indicates that the area's fire suppression program does not meet ISO's minimum criteria. The HFD has a response time goal to be on scene within 5 minutes following a call for service, which is consistent with the National Fire Protection Association Standard 1710. The HFD reports that its current response time is approximately 5 to 7 minutes in the city, but response times vary within their 1,400-square-mile service area because its size and rural or inaccessible terrain. The HFD strives to improve response time with strategic engine placement, more station locations, increased staffing, and equipment updates.[6]

Budget

The Hollister Municipal General Fund supports essential City services, including fire protection. In fiscal year 2021 to 2022, fire services accounted for roughly 30 percent of the City's Municipal General Fund expenditures, which included funding for employee salaries, purchasing fire suppression equipment, and various other basic funding needs.[7] The County of San Benito also contributes to the budget for the provision of countywide fire services.

Voters approved Measure E in November 2012, which committed the City to maintaining operations at all current Hollister fire stations and rapid emergency response times. Measure E also funds other essential City services such as major capital public safety improvements and road maintenance. Measure W, approved by voters in 2016, extended the 1 percent sales tax enacted by Measure E for an additional 20 years. Although Measure W is more recent, the City budget still categorizes the tax revenue as "Measure E funds." Measure E revenues have raised approximately $4.5 million per fiscal year, which has been the funding source for multiple essential facility upgrades in Hollister.

Other funds for the HFD also come from the Mello-Roos District Fund, the Panoche Valley Fund, and development impact fees. CFD 5, with boundaries that mirror the city limits, funds the Mello-Roos District that covers the salaries of three fire staff personnel. CFD 5 was created in 2018 to replace the tax rate levied by the previous CFD 2 for the provision of police and fire services to new development, based on a revised financial study. The Panoche Valley Fund finances HFD service to the Panoche Valley Solar Farm during the construction phase and the salaries of three fire staff personnel. Development impact fees are levied against all new development in the city to pay for the construction or improvement of fire facilities as a result of city growth.

[6] Hollister Fire Department, 2020. Count of Incidents by Incident Type by Incident Status for Date Range Report.

[7] City of Hollister, 2022, Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Annual Budget, http://hollister.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/FY-21-22-BUDGET-SUMMARY.pdf, accessed on March 15, 2022.

4.15.1.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the proposed project would have a significant impact related to fire protection services if it would:

1. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the need for new or physically altered fire protection facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for fire protection services.
2. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to fire protection services.

4.15.1.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

PS-1	**Implementation of the proposed project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered fire protection facilities, need for new or physically altered fire protection facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives.**

2040 General Plan

New development in the EIR Study Area would be served by the HFD. A significant impact to the HFD would result if, in order for the HFD to adequately serve the area, increased demand in the EIR Study Area would require the construction of new facilities or the expansion of existing facilities, the construction or operation of which would cause significant environmental impacts.

The proposed project would allow for increased development within the EIR Study Area, which would increase the service population of the HFD above existing conditions. Development allowed by the proposed 2040 General Plan would include new housing and nonresidential development, with associated increases to resident and employee population. As described in Section 4.15.1.1, *Environmental Setting*, the HFD current level of staffing is inadequate to meet the current demands for fire protection services in the service area. Therefore, the HFD anticipates the construction of two additional fire stations in San Benito County to meet existing and future demand. These two stations will provide key support to areas near the San Juan Oaks Golf Course southwest of the EIR Study Area and southwest Hollister, approximately five miles from the City Limits.[8] If service continues to the future planned developments southwest of Hollister, a fifth station would be needed for adequate fire protection services.[9]

The proposed Community Services and Facilities (CSF) and Health and Safety (HS)Elements of the proposed 2040 General Plan contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and

[8] Martin Del Campo, Bob. Chief of Fire, Hollister Fire Department. Personal communication with PlaceWorks. June 2020.
[9] Martin Del Campo, Bob. Chief of Fire, Hollister Fire Department. Personal communication with PlaceWorks. June 2020.

development decisions to consider and mitigate impacts that potential future development could have on fire protection service facilities. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to reduce impacts to fire protection service facilities and services.

Goal CSF-1: Provide an adequate level and maintenance of public services and facilities to ensure the continued health, education, welfare, and safety of all residents and businesses. (Goal CSF4)

- Policy CSF-1.1: New Development Requirements for Public Services. Ensure that future growth does not create demands that exceed the capabilities and capacity of local public services, including police and fire services, by requiring new development applications to identify the impacts that the proposed development would have on the provision of public services. Approve only development applications that can mitigate impacts or contribute a proportional fair share so that local public services can be maintained at an acceptable level. (Policy CSF1.2)
- Policy CSF-1.2: Coordination of Facilities and Services Planning. Cooperate and coordinate with the County of San Benito, LAFCO, and other local agencies in the provision of infrastructure and services within the Hollister Planning Area. (Policy CSF1.4)
- Policy CSF-1.3: Infrastructure Planning. Require the preparation of a specific plan, financing plan, development agreement, creation of a Communities Facilities District, or another similar document or financing vehicle, as a pre-condition to annexation or redesignations of land for new urban use.

  The plans shall identify means to ensure adequate funding to support construction of all needed public facilities, including water, sewer, storm drainage, roads, sidewalks, parks, and school facilities. (Policy CSF1.6)
- Policy CSF-1.4: Development Review Criteria for Public Services. Prior to granting approval, evaluate each new development in terms of the following criteria:
  1. The project shall share a common border with a property that has already been developed.
  2. The project shall be adequately served by infrastructure (water, sewer, streets, schools, parks, etc.), which is already in place or mitigated.
  3. The project shall be located within the existing service areas of local service providers (fire protection, police protection, solid waste disposal, schools, etc.), and not result in a reduction in their current capabilities. (Policy CSF1.7)
  4. The project shall have adequate water supply of sufficient quantity and quality.
  5. There shall be adequate sanitary sewer capacity and treatment capability that can be provided to service the proposed project.
  6. There shall be adequate fire protection for the proposed project.
  7. There shall be adequate level of police protection for the proposed project.
  8. The proposed project shall result in no impact on local parks and recreational facilities or the applicant will provide the resources required to mitigate the impacts associated with the proposed development.
  9. There shall be an adequate level of solid waste collection services and disposal capacity to serve the proposed project.
  10. There shall be an appropriate level of utility services (gas, electric, and telephone) to serve the proposed project.
  11. The project applicant shall finance the full costs associated with any drainage improvements necessary to accommodate peak flows due to the proposed project.

12. The proposed project shall not make a significant contribution to the emission of regional air pollutants.
13. There shall be adequate elementary, middle and high schools to serve the proposed project. (Implementation Measure CSF.D)

- Policy CSF-1.6: Development Fees. Review the existing development fee structure, including the infrastructure connection fees, every two years and restructure as needed. (Policy LU2.1)
- Policy CSF-1.7: Capital Improvements Maintenance and Replacement. Ensure that the City's Capital Improvement Program is coordinated with responsible districts and agencies and provides for ongoing, preventative maintenance of infrastructure facilities and the replacement of City equipment. (Policy CSF1.5)
- Policy CSF-1.8: Capital Improvements Program. Conduct reviews of the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) at least every five years and add budget for transportation, infrastructure, and public facility improvements as funding sources are identified. (Implementation Measure LU.P)
- Action CSF-1.2: Public Facilities Impact Fee. Regularly review the public facilities impact fee to ensure development fund its fair share of new community and public facilities, including public safety facilities, required to serve new residents and employees in Hollister. (Implementation Measure LU.S)

Goal CSF-6: Provide adequate fire and police services to serve existing and new development. (new)

- Policy CSF-6.2: Fire Safety. Ensure that development within the Hollister Planning Area does not exceed the capability of the Hollister Fire Department and the San Benito County Fire Department to provide an adequate level of fire protection. (Policy CSF4.8)
- Policy CSF-6.3: Fire Protection Mitigation. Require individual project developers to negotiate with the Hollister Fire Department to determine additional mitigation for proposed projects prior to the issuance of building permits. Such mitigation may include the payment of impact fees, the development of new fire protection facilities and/or the provision of firefighting equipment. (Implementation Measure CSF.JJ)
- Policy CSF-6.4: Fire and Police Project Review. Ensure that the responsible fire protection agency and law enforcement agency reviews all development proposals within the Hollister Planning Area to ensure that the project provides adequate fire protection and addresses crime prevention concerns. (Implementation Measure CSF.II and CSF.KK)
- Action CSF-6.1: Public Service Master Plans. Require City departments to update their public service master plans in conformance with the amount and type of development specified in this General Plan to ensure that the City maintains an adequate number of public safety workers, including police officers and fire fighters. (Implementation Measure LU.D)
- Action CSF-6.2: Facilities for Fire and Police Services. Create a plan for new Police and Fire facilities, including identification of opportunities for shared use of facilities by the Police and Fire Departments. (Implementation Measure CSF.X)
- Action CSF-6.3: Fire Protection Master Plan Update. Update the City's Fire Protection Master Plan. Include consideration of a fire protection expansion plan to fund and operate additional fire stations in the City, including the Airport area and the southeastern section of the Hollister Planning Area. As

part of this Update and in coordination with the County of San Benito and/or the California Department of Forestry, investigate fire and emergency service consolidation as a means of expanding and improving service in the Hollister Planning Area. (Implementation Measures CSF.B, CSF.E and CSF.N)

Goal HS-1: Protect community health and safety from natural and human-caused hazards. (Goal HS1)

- Policy HS-1.1: Location of Future Development. Permit development only in areas where potential danger to the health, safety, and welfare of the community can be adequately mitigated. This includes prohibiting development that would be subject to severe flood damage or geological hazard due to its location and/or design and that cannot be mitigated to safe levels.

  Development also shall be prohibited where emergency services, including fire protection, cannot be provided. (Policy HS1.1)

- Policy HS-1.3: Coordination with San Benito County and Other Agencies on Safety Matters. Cooperate with the County of San Benito and other government agencies in all matters related to safety, hazardous waste management, and emergency planning. (Policy HS1.3)

Goal HS-3: Protect the community from seismic and geologic hazards. (new)

- Policy HS-3.4: High-Occupancy Structures. High-occupancy structures (such as schools, hospitals, office buildings, and multifamily housing) or critical emergency facilities (such as fire and police stations, emergency relief storage facilities, and water storage tanks) should not be located within an active fault's "zone of potential surface deformation." In addition, high-occupancy structures should be designed or redesigned to protect human life to the highest degree possible during the "maximum probable event" of seismic activity. Existing and new high-occupancy structures should also have emergency plans approved by the City. (Policy HS2.1)

Goal HS-5: Maintain adequate fire and life safety protection from wildland and urban fires. (new)

- Policy HS-5.1: Wildland-Urban Interface. Coordinate between the Building and Fire Departments to ensure that new development in the wildland-urban interface is in full compliance with all applicable sections of the Building Code. (new)
- Policy HS-5.2: Firefighting Infrastructure. Ensure adequate firefighting infrastructure, including water supply pressure, road and building clearance for firefighting vehicles, and clear and legible street signage are available throughout the community. (new)
- Policy HS-5.3: Fire Protection Master Plan. Ensure that all new development will be adequately designed to minimize risks to life and property through the implementation of the Fire Protection Master Plan. (Policy CSF4.12)
- Policy HS-5.4: Fire Safety Requirements. Require new development to be protected from fire hazards through the provision of peak load water supply systems capable of providing the flow required for fire suppression, the design of roads with adequate widths and turning radii, and adequate separation between buildings, prior to project approval. (Policy CSF4.12)

- Policy HS-5.5: Facilities Planning. Place all new public facilities outside of identified fire hazard risk areas as feasible. Appropriately retrofit or, if necessary, relocate existing public facilities outside of identified fire hazard areas. (new)
- Policy HS-5.6: Land Use Management for Fire Risks. Maintain all City-owned public lands to clear them of fuel loads, establish appropriately placed fire breaks, and educate all property owners in the city on proper landscape maintenance and fire-scaping standards to reduce the risk of fire hazards. (new)
- Policy HS-5.7: Retrofitting of Existing Buildings. Encourage the retrofitting of older buildings to current safety standards in coordination with proposed major remodeling or additions. (new)
- Policy HS-5.8: Mutual Aid Agreements. Maintain inter-jurisdictional cooperation and coordination, including automatic-aid agreements with fire protection/suppression agencies in San Benito County. (new)
- Action HS-5.1: Requirements for Development in High Fire Hazard Areas. Require project-level development in the High Fire Hazard Zone within the Planning Area to occur in accordance with the California Building Standards Code to provide needed safeguards and facilities to control the spread of fire in any fire hazardous area. Provisions may include, but are not limited to, the following: (a) require spark arresters for any chimney; (b) prohibit open-flame devices; (c) clear brush or vegetative growth 30 feet from structures; and (d) clear brush 10 feet from roadways. (new)
- Action HS-5.2: Tree Trimming. Trim all public trees and other vegetation in Hollister on a regular basis to clear them of any loose branches or debris that could serve as fuel in a fire event. (new)
- Action HS-5.3: Pilot Clean Air Center Program. Implement the State's Wildfire Smoke Clean Air Centers for Vulnerable Populations Incentive Pilot Program and apply for grants to retrofit ventilation systems at certain public buildings to provide refuge for residents during periods of unhealthy air quality caused by excessive smoke from wildfires. (new)
- Action HS-5.4: Fire Safety Education. Develop new and expand existing public fire safety education programs (including disaster preparedness) and continue to be proactive in public safety education. (new)

Goal HS-6: Minimize potential damage to life, environment, and property through timely, well-prepared, and well-coordinated emergency preparedness response plans and programs. (new)

- Policy HS-6.1: Emergency Planning Document Coordination. Pursue integration of the City's safety and emergency management documents, including this Health and Safety Element, the San Benito County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, and other related documents. (new)
- Policy HS-6.2: San Benito County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Incorporate the current San Benito County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan into this Safety Element by reference, as permitted by California Government Code Section 65302.6 to ensure that emergency response and evacuation routes are accessible throughout the city. (new)
- Policy HS-6.3: Emergency Infrastructure and Equipment. Ensure the emergency operations center maintains a full functional state of readiness. (Policy HS2.2)

- Policy HS-6.6: Disaster Recovery. Ensure that the City government continues to operate during and after hazard events and is able to provide resources and guidance to people and institutions in Hollister to aid them in recovery and reconstruction following the end of the hazard event. (new)
- Policy HS-6.7: Access for Emergency Vehicles. Provide adequate access for emergency vehicles and equipment, including providing a second means of ingress and egress to all development. (Policy HS2.4)
- Policy HS-6.10: Communication Systems. Ensure that communication systems used by emergency responders and key City staff have sufficient redundancy and resiliency to meet City needs during and after a hazard event. (new)
- Action HS-6.4: County Emergency Plan Update. Coordinate with the County of San Benito to prepare a Hollister Emergency Operations Plan as an annex to the County's Emergency Operations Plan, and coordinate updates no less than every five years. (Implementation Measure HS.S)

In addition to the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions listed above, see Chapter 4.18, *Wildfire*, for a complete list of proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions that would minimize risk of wildfire, thereby reducing demand on HFD fire services. Potential future development that may occur due to implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan would be required to comply with Title 24 of the CCR, adopted by the City through HMC Section 15.04.050. Compliance with the State's Title 24 would ensure any new development proposed in the EIR Study Area meets the most current building and fire codes, thereby increasing safety of the buildings and reducing the likelihood of a fire emergency, subsequently reducing demand on HFD fire services. In addition, new development under the proposed 2040 General Plan would be required to pay the City's fire protection impact fees and public safety tax that are adopted at the time of future project approval for new development.

While the proposed project would increase demand on fire protection services, growth would most likely occur incrementally over the lifetime of the proposed project, and it would be unlikely that the magnitude of increased demands as a result of the full buildout potential of the proposed 2040 General Plan would be placed on facilities immediately at the time of adoption. Individual project plan review by the HFD; payment of fire protection impact fees and public safety tax; consistency with the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions; and compliance with the regulations described above would ensure that the HFD is involved as future development is allowed under the proposed 2040 General Plan. Furthermore, future construction of new fire stations would be subject to separate project-level CEQA review in order to identify potential environmental impacts and mitigation measures as needed, and would also be subject to the mitigation measures contained throughout this Draft EIR to reduce potential environmental impacts. Therefore, impacts on fire protection facilities would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 Climate Action Plan (2023 CAP) is a strategic plan focused on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would require expanded fire protection services, implementation of the proposed project would not result in

substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered fire protection facilities, need for new or physically altered fire protection facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP) is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALLP does not involve any land use changes that would require expanded fire protection services, implementation of the proposed project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered fire protection facilities, need for new or physically altered fire protection facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

PS-2	**In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to fire protection services.**

2040 General Plan

As discussed in Chapter 4, *Environmental Evaluation*, this EIR takes into account growth from development under the proposed 2040 General Plan within the City combined with the estimated growth in the service areas of each service provider. In the case of fire protection, this would be the service area of the HFD. As discussed in Section 4.15.1.1, *Environmental Setting*, the HFD partners with the SSCCFD and ATCFD to provide reciprocal responses with each agency. These agencies must provide mutual aid assistance to each other when requested and available. As described under Impact Discussion PS-1, the HFD has identified the need for additional fire stations to adequately serve future growth in the EIR Study Area and plans for two new stations. As the HFD requires new equipment or staffing, the funds for such improvements would be provided through required payment of fire protection impact fees and public safety tax.

Compliance with State and local regulations described under Section 4.15.1.1*, Environmental Setting*, and the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions listed under Impact Discussion PS-1, would ensure that fire protection services continue to adequately serve the EIR Study Area. Likewise, the San Benito County General Plan EIR concluded that while fire protection facilities would be constructed over the lifetime of the San Benito County 2035 General Plan, their applicable General Plan policies would

minimize the number of these facilities necessary to maintain adequate levels of service as well as reduce environmental effects coupled with subsequent site-specific environmental review of future facilities.[10] Similar to growth in the county, potential future development that may occur within and adjacent to the EIR Study Area would occur incrementally over the proposed 2040 General Plan's 20-year buildout horizon, and therefore is not anticipated to substantially increase the population, thereby reducing the ability for fire districts and departments within the county to adequately serve residents. Further, because the proposed project is program level, and because potential future development under the proposed 2040 General Plan would be required to undergo project review at the time of project application, each potential future development would be assessed for impacts to fire protection services. With adequate planning in place in both the city and the unincorporated San Benito County service area, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to fire protection services, and cumulative impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance Without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would require expanded fire protection services, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to fire protection services.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALLP does not involve any land use changes that would require expanded fire protection services, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to fire protection services.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

[10] County of San Benito Planning and Building Department, March 16, 2015, *Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report: 2035 San Benito County General Plan Update*.

4.15.2 POLICE SERVICES

4.15.2.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Regulatory Framework

State Regulations

The Mello-Roos Communities Facilities Act of 1982

The Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act, Government Code Section 53311 *et seq.*, provides an alternative method of financing certain public capital facilities and services through special taxes. This State law empowers local agencies to establish CFDs to levy special taxes for facilities such as fire protection facilities.

Local Regulations

Hollister Municipal Code

The HMC includes various directives to minimize adverse impacts to police protection. Most provisions relating to police services are included in Title 2, *Administration and Personnel*, and Title 3, *Revenue and Finance*, as follows:

- Chapter 2.40, *Police Reserve*. This chapter creates the position of the Chief of Police Services, responsible for the management, administration, and provision of the Police Services Division. The Chief of Police reports to the City Manager. Other regulations pertaining to police services are contained throughout the Municipal Code, such as in Title 4, Public Safety, which, among other regulations, grants emergency authority of police and fire to direct traffic, and code enforcement (e.g., apprehension and prosecution of those who commit vandalism, etc.).
- Chapter 3.16, Article I, *Police Protection Impact Fees*. This chapter deems it necessary to establish a fee for police facilities to serve proposed development in the City. Police protection impact fees shall be fixed by the city council from time to time, by resolution. Police protection impact fees shall be paid prior to the issuance of a building permit or the filing of a parcel or final map, whichever shall first occur. All police protection fees collected pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 3.16, *Police and Fire Protection Impact Fees*, shall be placed in a special fund which is created and established for such purposes and which shall be known as the police protection fee fund. Revenue deposited into said fund shall be used for the hiring of new personnel and procurement of equipment associated with new personnel.
- Chapter 3.20, *Public Safety Tax*. This chapter requires revenue raised through the public safety tax on each parcel of real property or building to be placed in a special fund to be used only for the purposes of obtaining, furnishing, providing, operating and maintaining fire protection, prevention or suppression services and police protection services, including, but not limited to, the supplying of apparatus or equipment therefor, the payment of salaries and benefits of fire and police personnel and other necessary fire protection, prevention or suppression and police protection expenses of the city.

Existing Conditions

Police services in the EIR Study Area are provided by the Hollister Police Department (HPD), the San Benito County Sheriff's Office, and the California Highway Patrol. The HPD has primary responsibility for areas within the City Limits. The San Benito County Sheriff's Office provides services to unincorporated areas within the EIR Study Area and the California Highway Patrol provides traffic enforcement on State and local freeways. Mutual aid agreements between these agencies allow for joint responses to emergency situations that warrant additional personnel.

Staffing and Facilities

The national staffing average for cities with populations comparable to Hollister is 17.0 sworn personnel per 10,000 residents and 21.2 total personnel per 10,000 residents.[11] HPD has a goal of staffing 15 to 17 sworn officers per 10,000 residents. HPD has a total of 37 full-time sworn officers and 12 full-time non-sworn personnel, for a total staff of 49 personnel. This equates to 12.5 sworn officers per 10,000 residents and 16.5 total personnel per 10,000 residents, which is below the national staffing average for cities with populations of comparable size. The HPD also has 8 positions within the Animal Care and Services division. This suggests that HPD is understaffed for a city of Hollister's size, and a recent staffing study recommended adding an additional 11 positions to the HPD.[12]

The HPD is organized into two divisions: the Operations Division and the Support Services Division. The Operations and Support Services Divisions are commanded by Lieutenants who report directly to the Captain. The Captain is responsible for the administration and management of the HPD and reports to the Chief of Police. The Chief of Police has overall command of the entire HPD and is responsible for the administration of the HPD. The Operations Division is commanded by a Lieutenant whose primary responsibility is to provide general management direction and control for that division. The Operations Division consists of Patrol, Reserves, and SWAT. The Support Services Division, also called the Investigation Division, is commanded by a Lieutenant whose primary responsibility is to provide general management direction and control for the Investigation Division. This Division consists of Investigations, Volunteers, Records, Parking Enforcement, Property/Evidence, Personnel and Community Services, and Animal Control. Some police services are provided with field patrols on a geographic (or "beat") basis and other functions are organized on a citywide basis. Citywide services include crime prevention, investigations, community engagement, and traffic patrols. The HPD divides the city into separate beats. Officers traditionally switch beats every day of their work week to keep them knowledgeable of each beat's unique issues and qualities. HPD has designed their beats to reflect a more balanced call volume between beats.

The HPD headquarters is located at 395 Apollo Way in northeast Hollister. The HPD is gradually outgrowing its existing facilities and is in need of a new storage room, women's locker room, gas pumps, and other general facilities. Following recommendations from a recent staffing study, the HPD plans to expand its headquarters to the adjoining lot, and construct a new, larger training facility and

[11] *Governing* calculations of 2016 FBI UCR data, https://www.governing.com/gov-data/safety-justice/police-officers-per-capita-rates-employment-for-city-departments.html, accessed March 29, 2022.

[12] Reynoso, Carlos. Interim Chief of Police, Hollister Police Department. Personal communication with PlaceWorks. June 10, 2020.

administration office, along with a dispatch center. The current building will house the expanded patrol and investigations units.Error! Bookmark not defined.

Response Times and Performance

In 2019, HPD received 2,628 calls to 9-1-1. This equates to an average of 219 calls per month, or about 7.2 per day. In addition, HPD received 17,609 administrative calls and 9,982 officer-initiated calls in 2019.[13]

HPD reported an average response time of 6 to 7 minutes for high priority calls in both 2018 and 2019. Mid-level priority calls had an average response time of 9 to 12 minutes in 2018 and 2019, and low-priority calls had an average response time of 20 to 27 minutes. The HPD does not have an adopted response time. The proximity of the police department to call locations correlates to response times and performance, according to HPD. Headquarters sit at the most northern edge of the city, well outside of the center, so this adds to longer response times. A more centralized police department or even large substation for patrol could aid in response time reduction.Error! Bookmark not defined.

Budget

The HPD is funded by the City's Municipal General Fund, which supports essential City services such as police and fire protection, building and street maintenance, libraries, recreation, parks and open space maintenance. In fiscal year 2019 to 2020, police services accounted for roughly 31 percent of the City's Municipal General Fund expenditures, which funded employee salaries, police equipment, and other needs.[14] HPD also receives funding from a Homeland Security Grant, managed through the County, which is used to purchase anti-terrorism equipment. Additional police expenses are paid for by the Measure E fund as described above.

Funds for the HPD also come from:

- State Supplemental Law Enforcement Services Funds which finances capital police projects.
- State-endowed Office of Traffic Safety Fund which supplements traffic-related programs like DUI checks and motor safety.
- COPS More Fund, a federal program that supports School Resources Officer programs at local schools from federal monies.
- CFDs 2 and 5 Mello Roos District Fund, as described above, which funds the salaries of three police staff personnel.
- Development Impact Fees which help fund the construction of new police facilities. HPD anticipates a need to increase impact fees to anticipate new growth in the city over the next 20 years.Error! Bookmark not defined.

[13] Olson, Eric. Lieutenant, Hollister Police Department. Personal communication with PlaceWorks. June 27, 2020.

[14] City of Hollister, 2018, Fiscal Year 2018-2020 Bi-Annual Budget, http://hollister.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/BUDGET-FY-18-19-19-20-pt-1.pdf, accessed on June 1, 2020.

4.15.2.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the proposed project would have a significant impact related to police protection services if it would:

3. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered police protection facilities, need for new or physically altered police protection facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for police protection services.
4. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to police protection services.

4.15.2.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

PS-3	**Implementation of the proposed project would not result in the need for new or physically altered police facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives.**

2040 General Plan

New development in the EIR Study Area would be served by the HPD. A significant impact would result if increased demand would require the construction of new facilities or the expansion of existing facilities in order for the HPD to adequately serve the EIR Study Area, the construction or operation of which would cause significant environmental impacts.

As described in Section 4.15.2.1, *Environmental Setting*, the HPD does not meet the national staffing level average for cities with populations of comparable size and a staffing study recommended the addition of 11 positions.[15] Increased population and demand on HPD resources would exacerbate this. However, while staffing would need to increase to meet desired levels of service and proportionally as population grows, the HPD plans to expand their headquarter to the adjoining lot, and construct a new, larger training facility and administrative office, along with a dispatch center. The current building will house the expanded patrol and investigations units.[16]

The proposed Community Services and Facilities (CSF) and Health and Safety (HS) Elements of the 2040 General Plan contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider and mitigate impacts that potential future development could have on police protection service

[15] Reynoso, Carlos. Interim Chief of Police, Hollister Police Department. Personal communication with PlaceWorks. June 10, 2020.

[16] Reynoso, Carlos. Interim Chief of Police, Hollister Police Department. Personal communication with PlaceWorks. June 10, 2020.

facilities. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to reduce impacts to police service facilities and services:

Goal CSF-1: Provide an adequate level and maintenance of public services and facilities to ensure the continued health, education, welfare, and safety of all residents and businesses. (Goal CSF4)

- Policy CSF-1.1: New Development Requirements for Public Services. Ensure that future growth does not create demands that exceed the capabilities and capacity of local public services, including police and fire services, by requiring new development applications to identify the impacts that the proposed development would have on the provision of public services. Approve only development applications that can mitigate impacts or contribute a proportional fair share so that local public services can be maintained at an acceptable level. (Policy CSF1.2)
- Policy CSF-1.2: Coordination of Facilities and Services Planning. Cooperate and coordinate with the County of San Benito, LAFCO, and other local agencies in the provision of infrastructure and services within the Hollister Planning Area. (Policy CSF1.4)
- Policy CSF-1.3: Infrastructure Planning. Require the preparation of a specific plan, financing plan, development agreement, creation of a Communities Facilities District, or another similar document or financing vehicle, as a pre-condition to annexation or redesignations of land for new urban use.

  The plans shall identify means to ensure adequate funding to support construction of all needed public facilities, including water, sewer, storm drainage, roads, sidewalks, parks, and school facilities. (Policy CSF1.6)
- Policy CSF-1.4: Development Review Criteria for Public Services. Prior to granting approval, evaluate each new development in terms of the following criteria:
  1. The project shall share a common border with a property that has already been developed.
  2. The project shall be adequately served by infrastructure (water, sewer, streets, schools, parks, etc.), which is already in place or mitigated.
  3. The project shall be located within the existing service areas of local service providers (fire protection, police protection, solid waste disposal, schools, etc.), and not result in a reduction in their current capabilities. (Policy CSF1.7)
  4. The project shall have adequate water supply of sufficient quantity and quality.
  5. There shall be adequate sanitary sewer capacity and treatment capability that can be provided to service the proposed project.
  6. There shall be adequate fire protection for the proposed project.
  7. There shall be adequate level of police protection for the proposed project.
  8. The proposed project shall result in no impact on local parks and recreational facilities or the applicant will provide the resources required to mitigate the impacts associated with the proposed development.
  9. There shall be an adequate level of solid waste collection services and disposal capacity to serve the proposed project.
  10. There shall be an appropriate level of utility services (gas, electric, and telephone) to serve the proposed project.
  11. The project applicant shall finance the full costs associated with any drainage improvements necessary to accommodate peak flows due to the proposed project.

12. The proposed project shall not make a significant contribution to the emission of regional air pollutants.
13. There shall be adequate elementary, middle and high schools to serve the proposed project. (Implementation Measure CSF.D)

- Policy CSF-1.6: Development Fees. Review the existing development fee structure, including the infrastructure connection fees, every two years and restructure as needed. (Policy LU2.1)
- Policy CSF-1.7: Capital Improvements Maintenance and Replacement. Ensure that the City's Capital Improvement Program is coordinated with responsible districts and agencies and provides for ongoing, preventative maintenance of infrastructure facilities and the replacement of City equipment. (Policy CSF1.5)
- Policy CSF-1.8: Capital Improvements Program. Conduct reviews of the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) at least every five years and add budget for transportation, infrastructure, and public facility improvements as funding sources are identified. (Implementation Measure LU.P)
- Action CSF-1.2: Public Facilities Impact Fee. Regularly review the public facilities impact fee to ensure development fund its fair share of new community and public facilities, including public safety facilities, required to serve new residents and employees in Hollister. (Implementation Measure LU.S)

Goal CSF-6: Provide adequate fire and police services to serve existing and new development. (new)

- Policy CSF-6.1: Police Services. Ensure that development within the Hollister Planning Area does not exceed the capability of the Hollister Police Department and the San Benito County Sheriff's Department to provide an adequate level of police protection. (Policy CSF4.7)
- Policy CSF-6.4: Fire and Police Project Review. Ensure that the responsible fire protection agency and law enforcement agency reviews all development proposals within the Hollister Planning Area to ensure that the project provides adequate fire protection and addresses crime prevention concerns. (Implementation Measure CSF.II and CSF.KK)
- Action CSF-6.1: Public Service Master Plans. Require City departments to update their public service master plans in conformance with the amount and type of development specified in this General Plan to ensure that the City maintains an adequate number of public safety workers, including police officers and fire fighters. (Implementation Measure LU.D)
- Action CSF-6.2: Facilities for Fire and Police Services. Create a plan for new Police and Fire facilities, including identification of opportunities for shared use of facilities by the Police and Fire Departments. (Implementation Measure CSF.X)

Goal HS-1: Protect community health and safety from natural and human-caused hazards. (Goal HS1)

- Policy HS-1.1: Location of Future Development. Permit development only in areas where potential danger to the health, safety, and welfare of the community can be adequately mitigated. This includes prohibiting development that would be subject to severe flood damage or geological hazard due to its location and/or design and that cannot be mitigated to safe levels.

  Development also shall be prohibited where emergency services, including fire protection, cannot be provided. (Policy HS1.1)

- Policy HS-1.3: Coordination with San Benito County and Other Agencies on Safety Matters. Cooperate with the County of San Benito and other government agencies in all matters related to safety, hazardous waste management, and emergency planning. (Policy HS1.3)

Goal HS-3: Protect the community from seismic and geologic hazards. (new)

- Policy HS-3.4: High-Occupancy Structures. High-occupancy structures (such as schools, hospitals, office buildings, and multifamily housing) or critical emergency facilities (such as fire and police stations, emergency relief storage facilities, and water storage tanks) should not be located within an active fault's "zone of potential surface deformation." In addition, high-occupancy structures should be designed or redesigned to protect human life to the highest degree possible during the "maximum probable event" of seismic activity. Existing and new high-occupancy structures should also have emergency plans approved by the City. (Policy HS2.1)

Goal HS-6: Minimize potential damage to life, environment, and property through timely, well-prepared, and well-coordinated emergency preparedness response plans and programs. (new)

- Policy HS-6.1: Emergency Planning Document Coordination. Pursue integration of the City's safety and emergency management documents, including this Health and Safety Element, the San Benito County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, and other related documents. (new)
- Policy HS-6.2: San Benito County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Incorporate the current San Benito County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan into this Safety Element by reference, as permitted by California Government Code Section 65302.6 to ensure that emergency response and evacuation routes are accessible throughout the city. (new)
- Policy HS-6.3: Emergency Infrastructure and Equipment. Ensure the emergency operations center maintains a full functional state of readiness. (Policy HS2.2)
- Policy HS-6.6: Disaster Recovery. Ensure that the City government continues to operate during and after hazard events and is able to provide resources and guidance to people and institutions in Hollister to aid them in recovery and reconstruction following the end of the hazard event. (new)
- Policy HS-6.7: Access for Emergency Vehicles. Provide adequate access for emergency vehicles and equipment, including providing a second means of ingress and egress to all development. (Policy HS2.4)
- Policy HS-6.10: Communication Systems. Ensure that communication systems used by emergency responders and key City staff have sufficient redundancy and resiliency to meet City needs during and after a hazard event. (new)
- Action HS-6.4: County Emergency Plan Update. Coordinate with the County of San Benito to prepare a Hollister Emergency Operations Plan as an annex to the County's Emergency Operations Plan, and coordinate updates no less than every five years. (Implementation Measure HS.S)

In addition to the above goals, policies, and actions of the proposed 2040 General Plan, potential future development that may occur due to implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan would be required to comply with City's Building Code (LBMC, Title 8, Chapter 1) and pay their fair share of the cost associated with expanded police services and facilities in accordance with payment of police protection

impact fees and public safety tax, as outlined in Section 4.15.2.1, *Environmental Setting*, based on the fees that are adopted at the time of future project approval for new development.

Similar to Impact Discussion PS-1, while the proposed project would increase demand on police protection services, growth would most likely occur incrementally over the lifetime of the project, and it would be unlikely that the magnitude of increased demands as a result of the full buildout potential of the proposed 2040 General Plan would be placed on facilities within the immediate timeframe or all at once. Payment of police protection impact fees and public safety tax, consistency with the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions, and compliance with the regulations described above would ensure that the HPD is involved as future development is allowed under the proposed project. Furthermore, future construction of new police stations would be subject to separate project-level environmental review pursuant to CEQA, as required, to identify potential environmental impacts and mitigation measures as needed and would also be subject to the mitigation measures contained throughout this Draft EIR to reduce potential environmental impacts. Therefore, impacts on police service facilities would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would require expanded police protection services, implementation of the proposed project would not result in the need for new or physically altered police facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP) is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would require expanded police protection services, implementation of the proposed project would not result in the need for new or physically altered police facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

PS-4 **In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to police services.**

2040 General Plan

As discussed in Chapter 4, *Environmental Analysis*, this EIR takes into account growth from development under the proposed project within the city combined with the estimated growth in the service areas of each service provider. In the case of police, this would be the service area of the HPD. As described under Impact Discussion PS-3, the proposed project encourages collaboration with surrounding emergency service providers on safety matters and emergency planning. Compliance with State and local regulations described under Section 4.15.2.1*, Environmental Setting*, and the proposed General Plan goals, policies, and actions listed under Impact Discussions PS-3, would ensure that police services continue to adequately serve the EIR Study Area. Likewise, San Benito 2035 County General Plan EIR concluded that while police facilities would be constructed over the lifetime of the San Benito 2035 County General Plan, their applicable General Plan policies would minimize the number of these facilities necessary to maintain adequate levels of service as well as reduce environmental effects coupled with subsequent site-specific environmental review of future facilities.[17] Similar to growth in the County, potential future development that may occur within and adjacent to the EIR Study Area would occur incrementally over the proposed 2040 General Plan's 20-year buildout horizon, and therefore is not anticipated to substantially increase the population, thereby reducing the ability for the police/sheriff departments within the county to adequately serve residents. Further, because the proposed project is program level, and because potential future development under the proposed 2040 General Plan would be required to undergo project review at the time of project application, each potential future development would be assessed for impacts to police services. With adequate planning in place in both the city and the unincorporated San Benito County service area, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to police services and cumulative impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would require expanded police protection services, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to police protection services.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

[17] County of San Benito Planning and Building Department, March 16, 2015, *Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report: 2035 San Benito County General Plan Update*.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would require expanded police protection services, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to police protection services.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

4.15.3 SCHOOLS

4.15.3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Regulatory Framework

State Regulations

Senate Bill (SB) 50

Senate Bill (SB) 50, funded by Proposition 1A, approved in 1998, limits the power of cities and counties to require mitigation of school facilities impacts as a condition of approving new development and provides instead for a standardized developer fee. SB 50 also provides for three levels of statutory impact fees. In setting the fees, school districts must prepare nexus studies to demonstrate a reasonable connection between new development and the need for school improvements. The fees may only be used to finance the construction or modernization of school facilities. The fee application level depends on whether State funding is available, whether the school district is eligible for State funding and whether the school district meets certain additional criteria involving bonding capacity, year-round school, and the percentage of moveable classrooms in use.

California Government Code and Education Code

SB 50 amended California Government Code Section 65995 and is commonly referred to as this legislative bill number, contains limitations on Education Code Section 17620, the statute that authorizes school districts to assess development fees within school district boundaries. Government Code Section 65995(b)(3) requires the maximum square footage assessment for development to be increased every two years, according to inflation adjustments. The State Allocation Board (SAB) approves the allowable amount of statutory school facilities fees (Level I School Fees) for residential development and commercial/industrial development. According to California Government Code Section 65995(3)(h), the payment of statutory fees is "deemed to be full and complete mitigation of the impacts of any legislative or adjudicative act, or both, involving, but not limited to, the planning, use, or development of real property, or any change in governmental organization or reorganization on the provision of adequate school facilities." Each school district is responsible for implementing the specific methods for mitigating school impacts under the Government Code.

Mitigation Fee Act (California Government Code 66000-66008)

AB 1600, the Mitigation Fee Act, requires a local agency establishing, increasing, or imposing an impact fee as a condition of development to identify the purpose of the fee and the use to which the fee is to be put.[18] The agency must also demonstrate a reasonable relationship between the fee and the purpose for which it is charged, and between the fee and the type of development project on which it is to be levied. This Act became effective on January 1, 1989.

The Mello-Roos Communities Facilities Act of 1982

The Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act, Government Code Section 53311 *et seq.*, provides an alternative method of financing certain public capital facilities and services through special taxes. This law empowers local agencies to establish CFDs to levy special taxes for facilities such as public schools.

Local Regulations

Hollister Municipal Code

The HMC, includes various directives to ensure public schools are adequate to serve school-age children in Hollister. Most provisions related to public schools are included in Title 16, *Subdivisions,* as follows:

- Section 16.56.010, ***Condition of approval of final map.*** This section states that as a condition of approval of the final map, a subdivider who develops or completes the development of one or more subdivisions within the Hollister elementary school district shall dedicate to the school district such lands as the council shall deem to be necessary for the purpose of constructing hereon schools necessary to assure the residents of the subdivision adequate elementary school service.
- Section 16.56.020, ***Procedure.*** This section states that the requirement of dedication shall be imposed at the time of approval of the tentative map. If within 30 days after the requirement of dedication is imposed by the city council, the school district does not offer to enter into a binding commitment with the subdivider to accept the dedication, the requirement shall be automatically terminated. The required dedication may be made any time before, concurrently with or up to 60 days after the filing of the final map on any portion of the subdivision.
- Section 16.56.030, ***Payments to subdivider.*** This section states the school district shall, if it accepts the dedication, repay to the subdivider or the subdivider's successors the original cost to the subdivider or the subdivider's successors of the dedicated land, plus a sum equal to the total of the following amounts:
  - The cost of any improvements to the dedicated land since acquisition by the subdivider;
  - The taxes assessed against the dedicated land from the date of the school district's offer to enter into the binding commitment to accept the dedication;
  - Any other costs incurred by the subdivider in maintenance of such dedicated land, including interest costs incurred on any loan covering such land.

[18] California Legislative Information, California Law, Code Section Group, Government Code Sections 66000-66008, https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&division=1.&title=7.&part=&chapter=5.&article= accessed on April 8, 2020.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND RECREATION

Existing Conditions

The EIR Study Area is served by four school districts: the Hollister School District (HSD), Southside Elementary School District (SESD), North Joint Union Elementary School District (NJUESD), and the San Benito High School District (SBHSD). The HSD, for students in grades kindergarten (K) through eighth grade, also serves unincorporated areas of San Benito County surrounding the City Limits. SBHSD, for students in grades nine through twelve, is the high school district for both the city and most of unincorporated San Benito County. Both SESD and NJUESD are single-school elementary school districts located in unincorporated San Benito County but within the EIR Study Area. The names, locations, and grades of each school in the four school districts are shown in Table 4.15-1, *Hollister School Districts and Schools*.

TABLE 4.15-1 HOLLISTER SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS

School Name	Location	Grade	Capacity	2020-2021 Enrollment
Hollister School District				
Accelerated Achievement Academy [a]	1151 Buena Vista Rd	K-5	250	213
Calaveras Elementary School [a]	1151 Buena Vista Rd	K-5	550	493
Cerra Vista Elementary	2151 Cerra Vista Dr	K-5	700	534
Hollister Dual Language Academy [a]	921 Santa Ana Rd	K-5	900 [b]	801
Ladd Lane Elementary School	161 Ladd Lane	K-5	750	665
Marguerite Maze Middle School	900 Meridian St	6-8	800	585
Rancho San Justo Middle School	1201 Rancho Dr	7-8	800	738
Rise Academy	Virtual	K-8	n/a	n/a
R.O. Hardin Elementary School	881 Line St	K-5	700	438
Sunnyslope Elementary School	1475 Memorial Dr	K-5	700	563
Rancho Santana School [b]	1454 Santa Ranch Dr	K-8	850	n/a
Southside Elementary School District				
Southside Elementary School	4991 Southside Rd	K-8	n/a	205
North Joint Union Elementary School District				
Spring Grove Elementary School	500 Spring Grove Rd	K-8	n/a	728
San Benito High School District				
San Benito High School	1220 Monterey St	9-12	3,437	3,285

Notes.
a. This campus contains both a traditional school and a magnet school.
b. Acreage is a general estimate.
Source: EdData. 2022. http://www.ed-data.org/.

Hollister School District

The HSD consists of seven K-5 grade schools, two K-8 schools, and two middle schools. Two of the elementary schools, Calaveras Elementary School and Gabilan Hills Elementary School, share a campus with two magnet schools, the Accelerated Achievement Academy and the Hollister Dual Language Academy, respectively.

In 2020, total capacity was 4,500 students for the HSD elementary schools, 1,600 for the HSD middle schools, and 850 for the HSD K-8 grade schools. The total number of K thru eighth grade children attending public school in the EIR Study Area in the 2020-2021 school year was 5,963 students. All the schools are operating within the existing capacity for the 2020-2021 school year.

Funded by Measure M, HSD performed facility upgrades at multiple schools starting in 2014. R.O. Hardin Elementary School and Rancho San Justo Middle School both underwent modernization projects. Sunnyslope Elementary School carried out Phase I of their Master Plan to upgrade classrooms, restrooms, black top, and administration offices. Ladd Lane Elementary School underwent a re-roofing. The Cerra Vista Elementary School and the Calaveras Elementary/Accelerated Achievement Academy campus both had HVAC upgrade projects.

The operating budget for HSD was $59.3 million for the 2019-2020 school year. HSD funds primarily come from the State Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), property taxes, federal revenue, other State revenue, Measures V and M, and other local revenue.[19] In 2019, HSD charged impact fees of $3.33 per square foot of residential development and $0.56 per square foot of commercial development.[20] These help fund constructing and rehabilitating school facilities.

Southside Elementary School District

SESD includes one elementary school, Southside Elementary School, approximately 1.5 miles south of the City Limits. The SESD serves students from K to 8th grade, with 213 students enrolled for the 2018-2019 school year.[21]

The current campus was constructed in 1978 and contains 11 classrooms with 15.5 staff members (9.5 teachers, five classified staff, and one administrator).[22] Facility improvements are identified through an annual site report and grounds inspections, and no major improvements are anticipated at this time. The school is currently in the process of repainting, and the well water pump was replaced in 2018.

For the 2019-2020 school year, SESD had a budget of approximately $1.29 million, comprised of LCFF funds, LCFF supplemental and concentration funds, lottery, Title II, other supplemental and concentration funds, the Friends of Southside School Endowment fund, the "Bumpy" Picetti Southside School Fund, and other sources.**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

North County Joint Union School District

The NCJUSD encompasses approximately 190 square miles in northern unincorporated San Benito County, and includes one school, Spring Grove Elementary School, located approximately 2.3 miles northeast of

[19] Hollister School District. 2020. District Reports, https://www.hesd.org/district-reports, accessed August 18, 2020.

[20] Chadwell, John. 2019. *HSD Trustees Receive Report on Developer Fees*. BenitoLink,https://benitolink.com/hsd-trustees-receive-report-on-developer-fees/, accessed June 10, 2020.

[21] California Department of Education, Data Reporting Office, https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus, accessed August 18, 2020.

[22] Southside Elementary School District, *2019-20 Local Control and Accountability Plan*, https://www.ssesd.org/view/85.pdf, accessed August 18, 2020.

the City Limits. Grades offered range from K through 8th, and approximately 720 students were enrolled for the 2018-2019 school year.Error! Bookmark not defined.

The current campus was built in 1975, and there are 60 certificated teachers and classified employees.[23] The district does not anticipate major improvements in the foreseeable future but maintains funds for deferred maintenance for classroom and campus improvements. In 2018, for example, Spring Grove Elementary School used those annual funds to replace carpet and tiles in various campus facilities. NCJUSD also recently dedicated funds for a new school bus and has plans to purchase one in the next year.

For the 2020-2021 school year, NCJUSD had a budget of approximately $7.2 million, comprised of LCFF funds, LCFF supplemental and concentration funds, lottery, federal funds for special purpose programs, other state revenues, local science camp revenues, pre-kindergarten costs, fees for facility use, Special Education Local Plan Area transfer, and other local funds.[24]

San Benito High School District

San Benito High School is the only school in the SBHSD. In the 2018-2019 school year, there were 3,005 students enrolled at San Benito High School. The school campus has the capacity to accommodate 3,437 students, and projected enrollment by 2022-2023 will be 3,404. The SBHSD reports that new facilities will need to be constructed to accommodate additional students beyond the 2022-2023 school year.[25]

Funded by Measures G and U, the SBHSD completed extensive campus improvements and infrastructure upgrades such as new classrooms, PE/athletic areas including tennis courts, a multi-use field, a softball field and stadium, and Baler Aquatics Complex. Other projects included construction of a new career technical education (CTE) building, a new science and robotics building, a new communications and public address system, and a new visual and performing arts and academic building. Classrooms throughout the campus were modernized, and a new solar photovoltaic system was installed. Unfunded projects include a new multi-purpose building, relocating the maintenance building, and abasement and demolition of the old CTE building. In anticipation of increased student enrollment, the SBHSD anticipates needing to construct a new, smaller high school in the next few years. The estimated cost of the new high school is approximately $165 million. The SBHSD reports needing City support to encourage developers to negotiate voluntary mitigation agreements that call for alternative financing mechanisms for the new high school, and notes a new CFD could help achieve this goal.

The operating budget for SBHSD was $38.8 million for the 2019-2020 school year. SBHSD funding primarily come from the State Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), LCFF supplemental/concentration grants,

[23] North County Joint Union School District, *2019-20 Local Control and Accountability Plan*, https://www.ncjusd.org/content/uploads/2019_Local_Control_and_Accountability_Plan__Annual_Update_Spring_Grove_Elementary_School_201905181.pdf, accessed August 18, 2020.

[24] North County Joint Union School District, Resolution #19/20 – 13. https://www.ncjusd.org/content/uploads/Regular_Board_Meeting_Packet_June_25_2020.pdf, accessed August 18, 2020.

[25] San Benito High School District. 2020. Draft Facility Master Plan.

federal revenue, other State revenue, and other local revenue.[26] The development impact fees for SBHSD as of 2020 were $1.43 per square foot for most residential development and $0.21 per square foot for commercial development.[27] These fees contribute to SBHSD's the construction and rehabilitation of school facilities. In total, the SBHSD has authorized two bond measures over the past six years, Measures G and U, to fund facility upgrades totaling $102.5 million.

Gavilan College

Gavilan College, established in 1919 as San Benito Junior College and renamed in 1963, offers associates degrees in a variety of fields, as well as other academic programming. The college serves approximately 6,886 students with a main campus in Gilroy and satellite campuses in Hollister and Morgan Hill.[28] Classes are held in the day and evening in a variety of formats, including on campus and online, to accommodate students' diverse schedules.

The Hollister satellite campus of Gavilan College is located in the Briggs Building at 365 Fourth Street, in Downtown Hollister. This campus offers general education courses, librarian services, academic counseling, tutoring, a computer drop-in lab, and more. Classes include, but are not limited to, English, Computer Science, Political Science, English as a Second Language, Communications, Child Development, Math, Psychology, History, Art, Spanish, and Sociology.[29] In addition, the college plans to expand services, and the district has purchased 80 acres of land in the General Plan Planning Area to build a permanent educational center there long-term.Error! Bookmark not defined.

4.15.3.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the proposed project would have a significant impact related to public school services if it would:

5. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered school facilities, need for new or physically altered school facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, or other performance objectives for public school services.
6. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to public school services.

[26] San Benito High School District. 2020. 2020-2021 Proposed Budget and 2019-20 Estimated Actuals, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZBWU2PFYfpLtO7yZRdqO4RqdQ8Csf3MX/view, accessed July 7, 2020.

[27] San Benito High School District. 2019. Finance and Operations: Developer Fee Information. https://sbhsd.k12.ca.us/content/finance-operations, accessed June 10, 2020.

[28] Gavilan College, 2017, Education Master Plan, https://www.gavilan.edu/administration/budget/EducationMasterPlanFlipbook.php, accessed August 18, 2020.

[29] Gavilan College, Hollister Site, https://www.gavilan.edu/about/hollister.php, accessed August 18, 2020.

4.15.3.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

PS-5	**Implementation of the proposed project would not result in the need for new or physically altered school facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, or other performance objectives.**

2040 General Plan

A significant impact would result if, in order for the school districts to adequately serve the EIR Study Area, increased school enrollment would require the construction of new facilities or the expansion of existing schools, the construction or operation of which would cause significant environmental impacts.

The proposed 2040 General Plan forecasts an increase of student population over the next 20 years. However, the full projected increase students across the EIR Study Area would likely be gradual for the duration of the proposed project as more housing units are added to the EIR Study Area. The public school districts that serve the EIR Study Area would continue to collect the development impact fees, which each district has adopted, throughout implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan. Therefore, potential future development would incrementally pay for any needed facility upgrades and expansions, which, pursuant to California Government Code Section 65995 (SB 50), has been deemed sufficient to provide full and complete school facilities mitigation for the impacts from the proposed 2040 General Plan, regardless of whether the fees are adequate to fully fund the expansion or construction of needed facilities. Additionally, in the case of proposed subdivisions, which tend to generate families with school-aged children, HMC Section 16.56.010, *Condition of Approval of Final Map*, requires that as a condition of approval of the final map, a subdivider who develops or completes the development of one or more subdivisions within the HSD shall dedicate to the school district such lands as the council shall deem to be necessary for the purpose of constructing hereon schools necessary to assure the residents of the subdivision adequate elementary school service. Any future construction of new schools would be subject to separate project-level environmental review pursuant to CEQA, as required, to identify potential environmental impacts and mitigation measures as needed, and would also be subject to the mitigation measures contained throughout this Draft EIR to reduce potential environmental impacts. Moreover, the proposed Community Services and Facilities (CSF) and Health and Safety (HS) Elements of the 2040 General Plan contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider and mitigate impacts that potential future development could have on school service facilities. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to reduce impacts to schools and education services:

Goal CSF-1: Provide an adequate level and maintenance of public services and facilities to ensure the continued health, education, welfare, and safety of all residents and businesses. (Goal CSF4)

- Policy CSF-1.4: Development Review Criteria for Public Services. Prior to granting approval, evaluate each new development in terms of the following criteria:
  1. The project shall share a common border with a property that has already been developed.
  2. The project shall be adequately served by infrastructure (water, sewer, streets, schools, parks, etc.), which is already in place or mitigated.

3. The project shall be located within the existing service areas of local service providers (fire protection, police protection, solid waste disposal, schools, etc.), and not result in a reduction in their current capabilities. (Policy CSF1.7)
4. The project shall have adequate water supply of sufficient quantity and quality.
5. There shall be adequate sanitary sewer capacity and treatment capability that can be provided to service the proposed project.
6. There shall be adequate fire protection for the proposed project.
7. There shall be adequate level of police protection for the proposed project.
8. The proposed project shall result in no impact on local parks and recreational facilities or the applicant will provide the resources required to mitigate the impacts associated with the proposed development.
9. There shall be an adequate level of solid waste collection services and disposal capacity to serve the proposed project.
10. There shall be an appropriate level of utility services (gas, electric, and telephone) to serve the proposed project.
11. The project applicant shall finance the full costs associated with any drainage improvements necessary to accommodate peak flows due to the proposed project.
12. The proposed project shall not make a significant contribution to the emission of regional air pollutants.
13. There shall be adequate elementary, middle and high schools to serve the proposed project. (Implementation Measure CSF.D)

Goal CSF-7: Support high quality education for Hollister's students. (new)

- Policy CSF-7.1: New School Funding Incentives. Consider incentives, such as density bonuses and waiver or reductions of development standards, when a proposed project voluntarily provides school fee contributions beyond their fair share for new school facilities. (new)
- Policy CSF-7.2: Coordination with School Districts. Encourage joint planning with local school districts in determining the location of educational facilities. (Policy CSF4.2)
- Policy CSF-7.3: School Development Impact Fees. Require all new development to mitigate its fair share of the impact of such development on school facilities to the maximum extent permitted under state law. (Policy CSF4.2)
- Policy CSF-7.4: Community Use of School Facilities. Collaborate with schools to enter into joint use agreements to provide access to school facilities for neighborhood, community, and recreational activities. (Policy CSF4.2)
- Policy CSF 7.5: Construction of a Second High School. Support the San Benito High School District's efforts to construct a new high school. (Implementation Measure CSF.NN)

Goal HS-3: Protect the community from seismic and geologic hazards. (new)

- Policy HS-3.4: High-Occupancy Structures. High-occupancy structures (such as schools, hospitals, office buildings, and multifamily housing) or critical emergency facilities (such as fire and police stations, emergency relief storage facilities, and water storage tanks) should not be located within an active fault's "zone of potential surface deformation." In addition, high-occupancy structures should be designed or redesigned to protect human life to the highest degree possible during the "maximum

probable event" of seismic activity. Existing and new high-occupancy structures should also have emergency plans approved by the City. (Policy HS2.1)

In addition to the mandatory payment of developer impact fees for new development pursuant to California Government Code Section 65995 (SB 50), the proposed 2040 General Plan policies work to ensure there are adequate school facilities during the buildout horizon of the General Plan. Specifically, as listed: Policy CSF-1.4 requires that prior to granting approval, each new development shall be evaluated to ensure it would be adequately served by schools that are already in place or mitigated and that projects shall be located within the existing service areas of local schools and not result in a reduction in their current capabilities; Policy CSF-7.1 requires the consideration of incentives, such as density bonuses and waiver or reductions of development standards, when a proposed project voluntarily provides school fee contributions beyond their fair share for new school facilities, would support providing adequate school facilities to accommodate additional students through 2040; and, Policy CSF-7.3 requires all new development to mitigate its fair share of the impact of such development on school facilities to the maximum extent permitted under state law. Accordingly, with the required payment of developer impact fees for new development pursuant to California Government Code Section 65995 (SB 50) and the implementation of the proposed General Plan goals, policies, and actions that support school facilities in the EIR Study Area, impacts to the public school districts that serve the EIR Study Area would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than Significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would require new or expanded schools, implementation of the proposed project would not result in the need for new or physically altered school facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, or other performance objectives and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would require new or expanded schools, implementation of the proposed project would not result in the need for new or physically altered school facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, or other performance objectives and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

PS-6	**In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to school services.**

2040 General Plan

As discussed in Chapter 4, *Environmental Evaluation*, this EIR takes into account growth from development under the proposed project within the City combined with the estimated growth in the service areas of each service provider. In the case of schools, this would be the service area of the school districts within the EIR Study Area. As described under Impact Discussion PS-5, the proposed project would contribute to increased population that is served by various school districts, and would require expansion of school facilities. Through the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions and school impact fees, the proposed project would not result in significant impact to schools. Any development that would affect school capacity such as that within the EIR Study Area would be subject to school impact fees. Pursuant to California Government Code Section 65995 (SB 50), the payment of impact fees is deemed to fully mitigate the impacts of new development on school facilities. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to school facilities would also be *less than significant*.

Significance Without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would require new or expanded schools, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to schools.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would require new or expanded schools, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to schools.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

4.15.4 LIBRARIES

4.15.4.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Regulatory Framework

State Regulations

The Mello-Roos Communities Facilities Act of 1982

The Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act, Government Code Section 53311 *et seq.*, provides an alternative method of financing certain public capital facilities and services through special taxes. This State law empowers local agencies to establish CFDs to levy special taxes for facilities such as libraries.

Regional Regulations

San Benito County Free Library Strategic Plan, 2011

The 2011 *San Benito County Free Library Strategic Plan*, prepared by the San Benito County Free Library (SBCFL), which sets forth goals and objectives for a 5-year horizon. The goals and objectives identify ways to improve the libraries existing services by providing customer-focused service, building community ties, enhancing technology, and optimizing space.[30]

Local Regulations

Hollister Municipal Code

The HMC includes various directives to ensure public schools are adequate to serve school-age children in Hollister. Most provisions related to libraries are included in Title 16, *Subdivisions,* and Title 17, *Zoning,* as follows:

- Section 16.48.010, ***Site reservation requirements.*** This section states that as a condition of approval of a map, the subdivider shall reserve sites appropriate in area and location for parks, recreational facilities, fire stations, library or other public uses, according to the standards and formula contained in Chapter 16.48, *Site Reservations*, of the HMC.
- Section 16.48.020, ***Standards and formula for reservation of land.*** This section states that where a park, recreational facility, fire station, library or other public use is shown on an adopted specific plan or adopted general plan containing community facilities element, recreation and parks element and/or a public building element, subdivider may be required by the city to reserve sites as so determined by the city in accordance with the definite principles and standards contained in the above specific plan or general plan. The reserved area must be of such size and shape as to permit the balance of the property within which the reservation is located to develop in an orderly and efficient manner. The amount of land to be reserved shall not make development of the remaining land held

[30] San Benito County Free Library, 2011, San Benito County Free Library Strategic Plan.

by the subdivider economically infeasible. The reserved area shall conform to the adopted specific plan or general plan and shall be in such multiples of streets and parcels as to permit an efficient division of the reserved area in the event that it is not acquired within the prescribed period.

- Section 17.04.280, *Development incentives or concessions*. This section allows for application of the deferral until occupancy of development impact fees (including, but not limited to, park fees, fire fees, sanitary sewer trunk line fees, storm drain trunk line fees, street tree fees, library fees, or traffic impact fees).

Existing Conditions

Facility and Services

The SBCFL, located at 470 5th Street, is the only public library in the county. To supplement the main facility, the SBCFL operates a mobile "Bookmobile" that travels throughout the county to supply unincorporated areas with direct access to library resources. The Bookmobile has a fixed schedule with visits to rural schools during the school year and a summer schedule. Library materials can be checked out from and returned to the Bookmobile.

Existing Facility and Service Demands

In 2019, there were over 98,000 library visits to the SBCFL and 21,000 program participants. Demand for library services and programs is high, but the SBCFL reports that access to these services, programs, and resources is limited due to lack of space, safety concerns such as maximum capacity limitations, and limited parking at their Hollister facility.

The existing library facility lacks adequate space, which inhibits the library's ability to meet the community's library needs. Specifically, the library has a need, but not space, for adult, teen, and children's spaces, collections, study spaces, conference/meeting rooms, a multi-purpose community room, computer labs for both adults and youth, law library resources, and a digital library with a teleworking center.

Facility Needs

The existing library facility also lacks sufficient working space for employees and volunteers. Existing workspaces and computer workstations are shared amongst many employees, making access to email and other technology difficult and inhibits ongoing logistics and system processes. The library also needs storage space, which adds to the overcrowding of staff work areas. SBCFL also reports that outdoor space and public art spaces, while important to modern libraries, are deficient. Given the library facility's status as a hub of the community, the SBCFL reports there is demand for an on-site cafe.

The current library facility also needs modern digital and technological infrastructure. There are insufficient electrical outlets and poor network connections. In addition, the telephone network is

inadequate and there are several plumbing issues, which have interrupted library service to the community and incurred costs for the County.[31]

The SBCFL conducted a needs assessment in 2016, which identified the need for a new 60,000 square foot library. Modern industry standard for public libraries is 1 square foot per capita with infrastructure. Libraries typically accommodate new technology, study areas, meeting rooms, library collections, and community programs and classes to address the informational, technological, and educational needs of the multi-cultural, multi-lingual, diverse community. For San Benito County, this industry standard would dictate a library building of at least 60,000 square feet.[32] Built in 1960, the current 15,000 square foot library facility has a public service area of just over 7,000 square feet. Using the 1 square foot of library space per resident, the SBCFL only has capacity for 12 percent of the county's population. In addition, 4,435 square feet of the original 15,000 square foot library is dedicated to the sole use of the San Benito County Office of Education.Error! Bookmark not defined.

Library Staffing

Current library staffing includes one full-time County Librarian and 5.5 full-time library staff. SBCFL reports that the existing staff level is inadequate to meet current and future community needs. To maintain library safety, the SBCFL requires at least three staff members on the public floor, including one permanent, benefited supervisor available during all hours of public operation, including night and weekend hours. A greater level of security is needed during busier times, which are more frequent due to increased library usage. In addition to the main library facility staffing needs, at least two staff members must board the bookmobile during bookmobile runs. There is often only one staff member available at the main library facility, and one volunteer typically provides additional support.Error! Bookmark not defined.

Library Funding

In 2017-2018, San Benito County provided funding for 87 percent of the SBCFL's budget. The County of San Benito collects library facilities impact fees for new residential development within the unincorporated area of San Benito County. The City of Hollister also collects library impact fees for new residential development within the City Limits.

Additional funding comes from contributions of library partners and internal library revenue, which accounts for approximately 8 and 7 percent of the SBCFL budget respectively. Partners include the Friends of the Library, the California State Library, the City of Hollister, the Community Foundation, the United Way, San Francisco State University, Gavilan College, Youth Alliance, LULAC, First 5 San Benito, and local schools, businesses, and individual community volunteers.[33]

[31] Conte, Nora. County Librarian, San Benito County Free Library. Personal communication with PlaceWorks. June 2, 2020.

[32] There are approximately 60,000 residents in San Benito County. 1 square foot x 60,000 residents = 60,000 square feet of library space is needed to meet the modern industry standard.

[33] San Benito County Free Library. 2019. SBCFL 2018-2019 Statistics. http://sbcfl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/SBCFL-2019-2019-Statistics.pdf, accessed June 2, 2020.

4.15.4.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the proposed project would have a significant impact related to library services if it would:

7. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered library facilities, need for new or physically altered library facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios or other performance objectives for library services.
8. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to library services.

4.15.4.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

PS-7	**Implementation of the proposed project would not result in the need for new or physically altered library facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, or other performance objectives.**

2040 General Plan

A significant impact would result if, in order for the library system to adequately serve the city, increased demand in the EIR Study Area would require the construction of new facilities or the expansion of existing library facilities, the construction or operation of which would cause significant environmental impacts. It is projected that by 2040, the horizon year of the proposed 2040 General Plan, 6,455 new housing units would be developed, and the population would increase by 21,635 new residents. New residents would utilize library services, which could impact library facilities.

As discussed in Section 4.15.4.1, *Environmental Setting*, demand for library services and programs is high but the existing library facility lacks adequate space, which inhibits the library's ability to meet the community's library needs. In 2016, the SBCFL conducted a needs assessment, which identified the need for a new 60,000 square foot library. Using the 1 square foot of library space per resident, the SBCFL only has capacity for 12 percent of the county's population. In addition, 4,435 square feet of the original 15,000 square foot library is dedicated to the sole use of the San Benito County Office of Education.Error! Bookmark not defined. .

The proposed Community Services and Facilities (CSF) Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider and mitigate impacts that potential future development could have on libraries. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to reduce impacts to libraries and library services:

PUBLIC SERVICES AND RECREATION

Goal CSF-1: Provide an adequate level and maintenance of public services and facilities to ensure the continued health, education, welfare, and safety of all residents and businesses. (Goal CSF4)

- Policy CSF-1.4: Development Review Criteria for Public Services. Prior to granting approval, evaluate each new development in terms of the following criteria:
  1. The project shall share a common border with a property that has already been developed.
  2. The project shall be adequately served by infrastructure (water, sewer, streets, schools, parks, etc.), which is already in place or mitigated.
  3. The project shall be located within the existing service areas of local service providers (fire protection, police protection, solid waste disposal, schools, etc.), and not result in a reduction in their current capabilities. (Policy CSF1.7)
  4. The project shall have adequate water supply of sufficient quantity and quality.
  5. There shall be adequate sanitary sewer capacity and treatment capability that can be provided to service the proposed project.
  6. There shall be adequate fire protection for the proposed project.
  7. There shall be adequate level of police protection for the proposed project.
  8. The proposed project shall result in no impact on local parks and recreational facilities or the applicant will provide the resources required to mitigate the impacts associated with the proposed development.
  9. There shall be an adequate level of solid waste collection services and disposal capacity to serve the proposed project.
  10. There shall be an appropriate level of utility services (gas, electric, and telephone) to serve the proposed project.
  11. The project applicant shall finance the full costs associated with any drainage improvements necessary to accommodate peak flows due to the proposed project.
  12. The proposed project shall not make a significant contribution to the emission of regional air pollutants.
  13. There shall be adequate elementary, middle and high schools to serve the proposed project. (Implementation Measure CSF.D)

Goal CSF-8: Support the provision of library services to meet the informational and educational needs of Hollister. (new)

- Policy CSF-8.1: County Partnership. Partner with the San Benito County Free Library to maximize public use of libraries for community cultural and educational events and classes, particularly to support youth, seniors, job training, adult education, technology, literacy, and English as a second language. (new)
- Action CSF-8.1: Library Service Expansion Study. Conduct a study to investigate the needs and funding mechanisms to expand library services in the Hollister Planning Area. (Implementation Measure CSF.J)

Based on the increased projected buildout and population growth of Hollister by 2040 under the proposed 2040 General Plan, the SBCFL would likely need to expand to accommodate potential new users. Future construction of new libraries would be subject to separate project-level environmental review pursuant to CEQA, as required, to identify potential environmental impacts and mitigation measures as needed, and would also be subject to the mitigation measures contained throughout this Draft EIR to reduce potential environmental impacts.

While there are no set limitations to when growth occurs, due to the programmatic nature of the proposed 2040 General Plan, it is expected that new growth under the proposed project would most likely occur incrementally over the next 20 years and not all at once. Proposed General Plan Policy CSF-1.4 requires that prior to granting approval, each new development shall be evaluated to ensure it would be adequately served by public services, which includes public libraries, that are already in place or mitigated and that projects shall be located within the existing service areas of local schools and not result in a reduction in their current capabilities. Proposed General Plan Action CSF-8.1 requires the City to conduct a study to investigate the needs and funding mechanisms to expand library services in the Hollister Planning Area. The potential need for future library facility expansions would be assessed as development occurs. Adherence to the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, polices, and actions listed above, as well as mitigation measures for future development under the proposed 2040 General Plan included throughout this EIR, would ensure that there is a *less-than-significant* impact relating to the provision of new or physically altered library facilities.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would require new or expanded libraries, implementation of the proposed project would not result in the need for new or physically altered library facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, or other performance objectives and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would require new or expanded libraries, implementation of the proposed project would not result in the need for new or physically altered library facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, or other performance objectives and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

PS-8 In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to libraries.

2040 General Plan

As discussed in Chapter 4, *Environmental Evaluation*, this EIR takes into account growth from development under the proposed project within the City combined with the estimated growth in the service areas of each service provider. As described in Section 4.15.4.1, *Environmental Setting*, the SBCFL in Hollister is the only public library in the county. New development in the EIR Study Area under the proposed 2040 General Plan would be served by the SBCFL.

As explained in the San Benito County 2035 General Plan EIR, the County plans for future population growth within the unincorporated county that could result in substantial changes to existing library services, requiring the construction of new or physically altered library facilities. Similar to development in Hollister, San Benito County 2035 General Plan policies to minimize the number of new or expanded facilities necessary and to reduce or avoid environmental effects coupled with required site-specific environmental review would work to minimize environmental impacts to or from library facilities for San Benito County.[34] Similar growth in incorporated cities throughout the county would also be subject to their own local policies for ensuring a reduction of impacts to library facilities. For potential future development in Hollister, compliance with the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions listed under Impact Discussion PS-7, would ensure that library services are adequate to serve the EIR Study Area. With adequate planning in place in both the city and the unincorporated San Benito County service area, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to library services and cumulative impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance Without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would require new or expanded libraries, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to libraries.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural

[34] County of San Benito Planning and Building Department, March 16, 2015, *Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report: 2035 San Benito County General Plan Update*.

land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would require new or expanded libraries, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to libraries.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

4.15.5 PARKS AND RECREATION

4.15.5.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Regulatory Framework

State Regulations

The Quimby Act

The 1975 Quimby Act (California Government Code Section 66477) authorizes cities and counties to adopt ordinances requiring developers to set aside land, donate conservation easements, or pay fees for park improvements. Revenues generated through the Quimby Act cannot be used for operation and maintenance of park facilities.[35] A 1982 amendment (AB 1600) requires agencies to clearly show a reasonable relationship between the public need for the recreation facility or parkland and the type of development project upon which the fee is imposed. Cities with a high ratio of park space to inhabitants can set a standard of up to 5 acres per 1,000 persons for new development. Cities with a lower ratio can only require the provision of up to 3 acres of park space per 1,000 persons. The calculation of a city's park space to population ratio is based on a comparison of the population count of the last federal census to the amount of city-owned parkland.

Regional Regulations

San Benito County Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan

San Benito County developed the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan to:

- Define a 20-year vision for parks and recreation in San Benito County for the next 20 years and beyond.
- Develop a realistic implementation program to achieve the vision.
- Define the County's role and responsibilities to maintain and enhance countywide parks and recreation.

Goals from the San Benito County Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan include, but are not limited to:

[35] Westrup, Laura, 2002, Quimby Act 101: An Abbreviated Overview, Sacramento: California Department of Parks and Recreation.

- Encouraging and developing access and connections between parklands through an expanded alternative transportation network.
- Locating parks with active recreation facilities near urban centers.
- Establishing greenbelts around urban development areas.
- Protecting natural, historic, and cultural resources.
- Coordinating parkland locations and facilities to diversity their geographic distribution.

The San Benito County Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan recommends the following capital projects in Hollister on County-owned land or through partnerships with the City in the near and long term:

- San Benito River Parkway: interim trails, community or regional park, and dog park.
- Community Cultural Center.
- Existing Park Improvements: Veterans Memorial Park improvements, BBQ pit installations, entrance signage.
- Existing School Improvements: McCarthy Park playground, Marguerite Maze Middle School, San Benito High School.

San Benito River Parkway Master Plan

San Benito County adopted the San Benito River Parkway Master Plan in 2013 to develop a 20-mile contiguous park along the San Benito River and a segment of Tres Pinos Creek through the county. The plan provides opportunities for nature education, bird watching, hiking, biking, and horseback riding through the park. The parkway is directly adjacent to Hollister's Water Reclamation Recreational Facility, which is slated for park improvements by the City, discussed further below. The San Benito River Parkway Master Plan proposes a link between the City's park and the regional park to facilitate park accessibility and encourage park use.

Local Regulations

Hollister Municipal Code

The HMC includes various directives to ensure library facilities are adequate to serve the residents of Hollister. Most provisions related to parks and recreation are included in Title 3, *Revenue and Finance,* and Title 16*, Subdivisions,* as follows:

- Chapter 3.12, *Park Development Fees*. This chapter requires all park development fees collected to be placed in a master park development fund. Funds within such account shall be used exclusively for the acquisition and development of new and existing parks and recreational facilities within the city.
- Section 16.24.080, *Recreation facilities*. This section states that recreation facilities shall be provided as required by the planning commission to achieve the living environment appropriate to the type of development.
- Chapter 16.55, *Park and Recreation Area Dedication and Fees.* This chapter requires a subdivider to dedicate land and provide recreational improvements to the dedicated land, pay a fee in lieu of dedicating land and recreational improvements, or a combination of both, at the option of the City,

for park or recreation purposes as a condition of approval of a final map or a parcel map at the time and according to the standards and formula contained in the chapter.

Hollister Park Facility Master Plan

Hollister's 2019 Park Facility Master Plan (PFMP) assesses existing City parks and recreation facilities and recommends future priority projects and potential funding mechanisms. Recommendations regarding future parks and joint use agreements to maximize City facilities focus on:

- Future park and trail projects:
  - McCarthy Park Development with expanded amenities;
  - Dog Park at Valley View Park following park expansion;
  - Pedestrian connection via footbridge to the Water Reclamation Recreational Facility;
  - Leatherback Property recreational development;
  - Hollister Fire Station No. 2 Neighborhood Park and outdoor fitness park; and
  - Santa Ana Creek Linear Trail connector.
- Development of an aquatic facility via joint use agreement with a school district.
- Adoption of formal dual use flood control basin/park design typology to ensure adequate recreational usage in the event of inundation.
- Revision of development in-lieu fees to require 5 acres of park land per 1,000 population.
- New amenities to be added to Dunne Park, Jerry Gabe Memorial Park, Las Brisas Park, Tony Aguirre Memorial Park, and Valley View Park.

Existing Conditions

Although both open space and parks provide open space benefits, these two types of land provide differing benefits. Open space refers to space managed for resource conservation, hazard reduction, and scenic value, while parks refer to land that has been improved in such a way to support active recreation. Typical park improvements include sports fields, playgrounds, picnic areas, tennis courts, running tracks, recreation centers, and basketball courts. Larger parks support programmed services such as classes, swim and tennis lessons, activities for children and seniors, and league sports. Programs and other recreational services are coordinated by the City's Recreation Department.

The City of Hollister Recreation Department is one of several park service providers in the EIR Study Area. Other service providers include San Benito County, the HSD, and the SBHSD. Public park services are supplemented by private facilities such as swim and fitness clubs, and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). Private golf courses and swimming and tennis facilities are located in surrounding unincorporated land south of Hollister.

Park Facilities

The City of Hollister classifies parks into three categories:

- Pocket Parks (Less than 2.5 acres)
- Neighborhood Parks and Neighborhood/School Parks (Between 2.5 and 10 acres)
- Community Parks (Greater than 10 acres)

PUBLIC SERVICES AND RECREATION

The City's 2018 PFMP assessed existing facilities and resources and recommended future priority projects. The existing parks and recreation facilities in the City Limits owned or leased by the City are shown in Table 4.15-2, *City-Owned or City-Leased Parks in Hollister*.

TABLE 4.15-2 CITY-OWNED OR CITY-LEASED PARKS IN HOLLISTER

Community Parks	
Water Reclamation Recreational Facility	49.7 acres
Neighborhood Parks	
Allendale Park	6.3 acres
Dunne Park	4.8 acres
Frank Klauer Memorial Park	4.8 acres
Santa Ana Park	3.0 acres
Valley View Park	2.7 acres
Vista Park Hill	5.0 acres
Pocket Parks	
Apricot Park	2.0 acres
Jerry Gabe Memorial Park	2.0 acres
John Z. Hernandez Memorial Park	0.2 acres
Las Brisas Park	1.0 acres
McCarthy Park	1.5 acres
Mirabella Park	0.4 acres
Nora Drive Park	0.1 acres
Tony Aguirre Memorial Park	1.0 acres
Joint-Use Parks	
Neighborhood/School Parks (School District Property)	
Calaveras School Park	5.0 acres
Cerra Vista School Park	7.0 acres
Ladd Lane School Park	4.3 acres
Marguerite Maze Sports Complex	11.0 acres
Rancho San Justo Sports Complex	9.2 acres
R.O. Hardin School Park	6.3 acres
San Benito High School Tennis Courts	0.8 acres
County Parks (Leased Acreage)	
Hollister Skate Park (within Veterans Memorial Park)	1.3 acres
Hollister Softball Fields (within Veterans Memorial Park)	2.3 acres
Total	**131.7 acres**

Source: City of Hollister, 2020, Hollister Park Facility Master Plan.

The PFMP also prioritized future park locations to address "blank spots" in the City not within easy walking distance of a City park. Priority locations identified within the City Limits include:

- Proximate to new developments in south Hollister (Homestead neighborhood area);
- North of Maple Street and east of San Felipe Road;
- Area near Airline Highway and Union Road (vicinity of Hollister Fire Station No. 2); and

- The neighborhoods immediately surrounding San Benito High School.

Parkland owned exclusively by the City of Hollister totals 84.25 acres. All parks and recreational facilities within the City Limits either owned by the City or leased by the City under joint-use agreements totals 131.7 acres. All other parks and recreational facilities in the City Limits owned by the County or private developers, including school district-owned recreational areas and County-owned Veterans Memorial Park, are not included in the parkland total but contribute an additional 37 acres of parkland for community use.

The proposed San Benito River Parkway of the PFMP sits immediately adjacent to the City's Water Reclamation Recreational Facility, which is planned for future integration to the 20-mile regional park corridor. Priority locations for future park development outside City Limits but within the EIR Area include:

- West Hollister, north of Buena Vista Road
- East Hollister, north of Santa Ana Road
- Southeast Hollister, east of Fairview Road
- North-Central Hollister, immediately south of the airport on Flynn Road, adjacent to the County Jail
- East Hollister, west of Fairview Road, north of Hillcrest, east of Santa Ana Creek

Joint Use Agreements

The City holds joint use agreements with the HSD and SBHSD to make school district-owned properties available for public use. Similarly, the City leases property from San Benito County's Veterans Memorial Park to provide tournament softball and skate park amenities to the public.

Service Standards

Quimby Act fee calculations count areas of parkland, provided they are publicly accessible for community and neighborhood recreation. Therefore, the parkland ratio of the EIR Study Area is approximately 3.5 acres per 1,000 residents, including the acreage from joint-use parks.

To meet the City's goal of 5 acres of parks per 1,000 residents, the PFMP recommends increasing in-lieu fees to finance the construction of new parks. The PFMP would ultimately like to achieve providing 5 acres of parks per 1,000 residents.

Recreational Programs

The City of Hollister Recreation Division offers youth and adult sports and summer and special population programs throughout the year. Youth sports include soccer, flag football, basketball, volleyball, and running, and baseball and tennis are offered in partnership with San Benito County. Adult sports leagues typically include softball and basketball.

Summer programs offered by the Recreation Division include Kids at the Park, Movies Under the Stars, Art in the Park, Science in the Park, 4th of July Kiddie Parade, and the Hollister Recreation 5k Fun Run. Seasonal and holiday events include fun runs, children's fall crafting events, an annual Trick or Treat Street, and an annual Breakfast with Santa.

4.15.5.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the proposed project would have a significant impact to parks and recreation if it would:

9. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered parks and recreational facilities, need for new or physically altered parks and recreation facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives.
10. Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated.
11. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.
12. Result in significant cumulative impacts with respect to parks and recreation services.

4.15.5.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

PS-9	**Implementation of the proposed project would not result in the need for new or physically altered park facilities or other recreational facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, or other performance objectives.**

2040 General Plan

As discussed in Section 4.15.5.1, *Environmental Setting*, the EIR Study Area currently provides approximately 3.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, including the acreage from join-use parks, and does not meet the City's goal of 5 acres of parks per 1,000 residents. Implementation of the proposed project could introduce up to 21,635 new residents, which would increase the demand for parks and recreational facilities.

The proposed Community Services and Facilities (CSF), Open Space and Agriculture (OS), and Health and Safety (HS) Elements of the 2040 General Plan contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider and mitigate impacts that potential future development could have on parks and recreation facilities. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to reduce impacts to schools and education services:

Goal CSF-1: Provide an adequate level of public services and facilities to ensure the continued health, education, welfare and safety of all residents and businesses. (Goal CSF4)

- Policy CSF-1.3: Infrastructure Planning. Require the preparation of a specific plan, financing plan, development agreement, creation of a Communities Facilities District, or another similar document or financing vehicle, as a pre-condition to annexation or redesignations of land for new urban use.

The plans shall identify means to ensure adequate funding to support construction of all needed public facilities, including water, sewer, storm drainage, roads, sidewalks, parks, and school facilities. (Policy CSF1.6)

- Policy CSF-1.4: Development Review Criteria for Public Services. Prior to granting approval, evaluate each new development in terms of the following criteria:
  1. The project shall share a common border with a property that has already been developed.
  2. The project shall be adequately served by infrastructure (water, sewer, streets, schools, parks, etc.), which is already in place or mitigated.
  3. The project shall be located within the existing service areas of local service providers (fire protection, police protection, solid waste disposal, schools, etc.), and not result in a reduction in their current capabilities. (Policy CSF1.7)
  4. The project shall have adequate water supply of sufficient quantity and quality.
  5. There shall be adequate sanitary sewer capacity and treatment capability that can be provided to service the proposed project.
  6. There shall be adequate fire protection for the proposed project.
  7. There shall be adequate level of police protection for the proposed project.
  8. The proposed project shall result in no impact on local parks and recreational facilities or the applicant will provide the resources required to mitigate the impacts associated with the proposed development.
  9. There shall be an adequate level of solid waste collection services and disposal capacity to serve the proposed project.
  10. There shall be an appropriate level of utility services (gas, electric, and telephone) to serve the proposed project.
  11. The project applicant shall finance the full costs associated with any drainage improvements necessary to accommodate peak flows due to the proposed project.
  12. The proposed project shall not make a significant contribution to the emission of regional air pollutants.
  13. There shall be adequate elementary, middle and high schools to serve the proposed project. (Implementation Measure CSF.D)

Goal CSF-5: Provide for high-quality neighborhood and community parks to meet the recreational, open space, leisure, and play needs of existing and future residents. (Part of Policy CSF4.4).

- Policy CSF-5.1: Parks and Recreational Facilities Standard. Provide five acres of developed parks and recreational facilities for every 1,000 residents within the City Limits to improve the 2018 service ratio of 3.5 acres of park space per 1,000 people. New residential or mixed use developments containing a residential component shall be required to provide park land, or pay in-lieu fees, in this ratio as directed by the City. Private parks and open space that is counted toward the City's park requirement shall be publicly accessible. (Policy CSF4.4)
- Policy CSF-5.2: Access to Parks and Recreation Facilities. Ensure an equitable distribution of parks and recreational facilities throughout the city. Strive to improve, operate, maintain, and rehabilitate existing parks, facilities and other public amenities. (Policy CSF4.5)
- Policy CSF-5.3: Hollister Parks Facility Master Plan. Prioritize the implementation of the recommendations from the 2018 Hollister Parks Facility Master Plan. (new)

- Policy CSF-5.4: Park Design and Review Process. Design all new parks to follow the best practices outlined in the Hollister Parks Facility Master Plan. Require all new park and recreation facilities to receive a recommendation from the Parks Commission prior to approval. (Policy CSF4.5)
- Policy CSF-5.5: High Quality Facilities and Recreational Programs. Promote and provide high-quality facilities and recreation programs to meet the recreational and cultural needs and desires of existing and future residents of all groups, ethnicities, and income levels. (Policy CSF4.6)
- Policy CSF-5.6: Public Information Campaigns. Collaborate with schools, governmental agencies, and community organizations to expand existing programs and establish new outreach campaigns to promote physical activity and nutritious meals. (Policy CSF4.15)
- Policy CSF-5.7: Park Access. Work with local community-based organizations to expand and increase park access throughout the city. (new)
- Action CSF-5.1: Park and Recreational Standard Plan. Develop and implement a plan to achieve the City's standard of provide five acres of developed parks and recreational facilities for every 1,000 residents within the City Limits. (new)
- Action CSF-5.2: Trail Master Plan. Develop and adopt a Trail Master Plan for the city that includes a gap-analysis of existing parks, trails, and open spaces. Future improvements identified in the trail master plan shall prioritize access and equity. (new)
- Action CSF-5.4: Park Grant Funding. Pursue grant funding to improve existing parks and develop new City parks. (new)
- Action CSF-5.5: All Abilities Playground. Develop and adopt a plan to create an all abilities playground. (new)
- Action CSF-5.6: Community Engagement on Park Improvements. Hold meetings with the community at the outset of planning for new parks or park improvements. (new)
- Action CSF-5.7: Developer Provided Parks. Establish incentives to encourage developers to build parks beyond City requirements. (new)

Goal OS-1: Preserve and protect open space and the natural environment for all to enjoy. (Goal OS1)

- Policy OS-1.1: Open Space Preservation. Retain and protect open space areas through the protection of prime farmlands, the prevention of new development in areas subject to natural and human-caused hazards, that serve as wildlife habitat or as visual assets for the community, and where the development of additional parks and trails is possible. Open space areas can also function as connections between neighborhoods, for example with the creation of pedestrian pathways in environmentally appropriate areas. (Policy OS1.1)
- Policy OS-1.5: Open Space Use. Protect and preserve the natural value of open space and wildlife habitat areas while permitting educational and recreational uses compatible with these resources. Uses of open space areas shall be secondary to open space preservation. (Policy OS1.5)

Goal HS-4: Protect the community from flood hazards. (new)

- Policy HS-4.2: Floodplain Uses. Encourage developers to dedicate identified lands in floodplains that are unsuitable for development to the City for use as parks or for preservation as open space,

consistent with the City of Hollister Parks and Recreation Master Plan or other infrastructure plan developed for a given area. Development of these identified lands as community recreation amenities should be economically feasible to build and maintain. (Policy HS1.10)

- Action HS-4.3: Floodplain Use Assessment. Identify those areas with natural hazards that are unsuitable for development, but which may be suitable for public recreational uses. (new)

The proposed 2040 General Plan would maintain the current parkland goal of 5 acres per 1,000 residents. To meet this goal, the City would need a total of 302.7 acres of parkland to serve the project buildout of 60,535 total residents by 2040 under the proposed 2040 General Plan. The City currently has 131.7 acres of parkland, including the acreage from join-use parks. The difference between the future need of 302.7 acres and the existing 131.7 acres is 171 net new acres needed. As shown in the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions listed above, the City would be required to seek funding and partnerships to acquire and develop new parks in Hollister over the 20-year buildout horizon. Furthermore, pursuant to HMC Chapter 16.*55, Park and Recreation Area Dedication and Fees,* new residential development would be required to dedicate land and provide recreational improvements to the dedicated land, pay a fee in lieu of dedicating land and recreational improvements, or a combination of both.

As indicated above, new residents from development allowed by the proposed 2040 General Plan would increase the demand for recreational facilities, and recreational facility standards would require the construction of new or expanded recreation facilities. The estimated timing or location of such facilities or the exact nature of these facilities are not known, so project-specific environmental impacts that would occur from their construction and operation cannot be determined at this time. However, depending on the type, size, and location of new parks, the construction of new parks would be subject to environmental review and the mitigating polices and mitigation measures described in this Draft EIR to ensure the impacts from the construction would be less than significant. The construction of project-specific parks would require permitting and review in accordance with City standards, which would ensure that any environmental impacts are disclosed and mitigated to the extent possible. Therefore, the impact is considered *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would require new or expanded park or recreation facilities, implementation of the proposed project would not result in the need for new or physically altered park facilities or other recreational facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, or other performance objectives and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would require new or expanded park or recreation facilities, implementation of the proposed project would not result in the need for new or physically altered park facilities or other recreational facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, or other performance objectives and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

PS-10 Implementation of the proposed project would not 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.

2040 General Plan

Future development in Hollister would result in increased population, which would increase demands for parks and recreational facilities in the EIR Study Area and could cause physical deterioration of park facilities. The proposed 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions listed under Impact Discussion PS-9 would support parkland goals, and HMC Chapter 16.55, *Park and Recreation Area Dedication and Fees,* establishes parkland dedication and/or fee requirements for new residential development, helping to ensure that individual park and recreation facilities are not overburdened by use. As discussed in the Section 4.15.5.1, *Environmental Setting,* the 2018 PFMP has many planned improvements for parks. These include specific projects for future park and trail projects and addition of new amenities.

The proposed Community Services and Facilities (CSF), Open Space and Agriculture (OS), and Health and Safety (HS) Elements of the 2040 General Plan contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider and mitigate impacts that potential future development could have on parks and recreation facilities. Several proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions, as listed under Impact Discussion PS-9, ensure that parks, recreational facilities, and open space are adequately maintained and protect the public's investment in park and recreation facilities. While potential future development under implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan would result in an increased population with an increased demand for parks and recreational facilities, buildout would occur incrementally throughout the 20-year horizon, and future development would be subject to the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and programs listed under Impact Discussion PS-9; therefore, impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would require new or expanded park or recreation facilities, implementation of the proposed project would not 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, and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would require new or expanded park or recreation facilities, implementation of the proposed project would not 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, and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

PS-11	**Implementation of the proposed project would not include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.**

2040 General Plan

A significant impact would result if the proposed project would result in the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. As discussed under Impact Discussion PS-9, the City currently does not meet its parkland goal of 5 acres per 1,000 residents. Therefore, additional parks or recreational facilities would be needed to meet park demand from new residents from development allowed by the proposed 2040 General Plan.

The proposed Community Services and Facilities (CSF), Open Space and Agriculture (OS), and Health and Safety (HS) Elements of the 2040 General Plan contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider and mitigate impacts that potential future development could have on parks and recreation facilities. Several proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions, as listed under Impact Discussion PS-9, ensure that park and recreational facility goals are met, and that facilities are maintained. While potential future development under implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan would result in an increased population with an increased demand for parks

and recreational facilities, buildout would occur incrementally throughout the 20-year horizon, and future development would be subject to the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and programs listed under Impact Discussion PS-9; therefore, impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance Without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would require new or expanded park or recreation facilities, implementation of the proposed project would not include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would require new or expanded park or recreation facilities, implementation of the proposed project would not include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

PS-12 In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to parks and recreations.

2040 General Plan

As discussed in Chapter 4, *Environmental Evaluation*, this EIR takes into account growth from development under the proposed 2040 General Plan within the City combined with the estimated growth in the service areas of each service provider. Parks and recreation services in the EIR Study Area are provided by the City and County.

Future growth in the area would result in increased demand for park and recreational facilities throughout the city. As a result, and as described under Impact Discussion PS-9 and PS-10, the City would need to expand and construct additional parks and other recreational facilities to meet the increased demand and maintain existing service levels. State law allows jurisdictions to require additional development to fund

park improvements, and the City requires new residential development to pay development impact fees to help fund parks and recreation. Proper implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions listed under Impact Discussion PS-9 would also help ensure the provision of adequate parklands along with new development. The final location and size of additional facilities would be determined as part of future development activity, and as specific parkland expansion or improvement projects are identified, additional project-specific, environmental analysis would be completed. As a result, the cumulative impact associated with parks and recreational facilities would be *less than significant.*

Significance Without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would require new or expanded park or recreation facilities, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to parks and recreation.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would require new or expanded park or recreation facilities, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to parks and recreation.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND RECREATION

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4.16 TRANSPORTATION

This chapter describes the potential transportation impacts associated with the approval and implementation of the proposed project. This chapter describes the regulatory framework and existing conditions, identifies criteria used to determine impact significance, provides an analysis of the potential transportation impacts, and identifies policies and feasible mitigation measures, if required, that could mitigate any potentially significant impacts.

4.16.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.16.1.1 TERMINOLOGY

The following are definitions for terms used in this chapter.

- Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). A measure of network use or efficiency that accounts for the number of daily vehicle trips generated, times the length or distance of those trips. VMT is generally expressed as VMT per capita for a typical weekday.
- Greenhouse gases (GHG). Gases in the atmosphere that absorb infrared light, thereby retaining heat in the atmosphere and contributing to a greenhouse effect.

4.16.1.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Federal Regulations

Applicable federal regulations pertaining to transportation are addressed in other chapters of this EIR, including Chapter 4.3, *Air Quality*; Chapter 4.8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*; and Chapter 4.9, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*. The federal Clean Air Act, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act may have some relevance or influence for individual projects or actions as part of potential future projects in the environmental impact report (EIR) Study Area. Additionally, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the agency of the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) responsible for the federally funded roadway system, including the interstate highway network and portions of the primary state highway network, State Route (SR) 25 and SR 156.

State Regulations

Senate Bill 743

With the passage of Senate Bill (SB) 743 (September 2013), which was codified in Public Resources Code Section 21099, and the subsequent adoption of revised California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (December 2018), level of service, also referred to as LOS, can no longer be used as a criterion for identifying significant transportation impacts for most projects under CEQA. Level of service is the measure of the average amount of delay experienced by vehicle drivers at an intersection or along a road segment during the most congested time of day, while the new CEQA metric (VMT) measures the total number of daily miles traveled by vehicles on the roadway network and thereby the impacts on the environment from those miles traveled. Level of service is a measure of local vehicle congestion at an

intersection or on a road segment, and VMT is a measure of the total miles of vehicle travel measured at an area-wide or project-level scale. In other words, SB 743 changed the focus of transportation impact analysis in CEQA from measuring quality-of-life impacts *to* drivers, to measuring the physical impacts *of* driving on the environment.

According to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA* (Technical Advisory),[1] land use projects with one or more of the following characteristics would generate lower VMT than conventional development:

- Higher land use densities
- Mix of project uses
- Support of a citywide jobs-housing balance (i.e., provide housing in a job rich area, or vice versa)
- Proximity to the core of a region
- Proximity to high-quality transit service
- Located in highly walkable or bikeable areas

This shift in transportation impact criteria is expected to better align transportation impact analysis and mitigation outcomes with the State's goals to reduce GHG emissions, encourage infill development, and improve public health through more active transportation. Specific to SB 743, CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(c) states that, "a lead agency may elect to be governed by the provisions of this section immediately. Beginning on July 1, 2020, the provisions of this section shall apply statewide." However, CEQA Section 21099(b)(2) states that, "upon certification of the guidelines by the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency pursuant to this section, automobile delay, as described solely by level of service or similar measures of vehicular capacity or traffic congestion, shall not be considered a significant impact on the environment pursuant to this division, except in locations specifically identified in the CEQA Guidelines."

Although the OPR provides recommendations for adopting new VMT analysis guidelines, lead agencies have the final say in designing their methodology. Lead agencies must select their preferred method of estimating and forecasting VMT, their preferred significance thresholds for baseline and cumulative conditions, and the mitigation strategies they consider feasible. Lead agencies must prove that their selected analysis methodology aligns with SB 743's goals to promote infill development, reduce GHGs, and reduce VMT.

California Complete Streets Act of 2008

Originally passed in 2008, California's Complete Streets Act (Assembly Bill 1358) came into effect in 2011 and requires local jurisdictions to plan for land use transportation policies that reflect a "complete streets" approach to mobility. "Complete streets" comprises a suite of policies and street design guidelines that provide for the needs of all road users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit operators and riders, children, the elderly, and the disabled. From 2011 onward, any local jurisdiction—county or city—that undertakes a substantive update of the circulation element of its general plan must plan for a balanced,

[1] *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA*, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, April 2018.

multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users of streets, roads, and highways, (i.e., consider "complete streets" and incorporate corresponding policies and programs).[2]

California Department of Transportation

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is the primary state agency responsible for transportation issues. One of its duties is the construction and maintenance of the state highway system. Caltrans approves the planning, design, and construction of improvements for all State-controlled facilities, including SR 25 and SR 156, and the associated interchanges for these facilities in the EIR Study Area. Caltrans has established standards for roadway traffic flow and developed procedures to determine if State-controlled facilities require improvements. For projects that may physically affect facilities under its administration, Caltrans requires encroachment permits before any construction work may be undertaken. For projects that would not physically affect facilities but may influence traffic flow and levels of service at such facilities, Caltrans may recommend measures to mitigate the traffic impacts of such projects.

The following Caltrans procedures and directives are relevant to the proposed General Plan, particularly to state roadway facilities:

- Vehicle Miles Traveled-Focused Transportation Impact Study Guide. The Caltrans *Vehicle Miles Traveled-Focused Transportation Impact Study Guide* (TISG), dated May 20, 2020, was prepared to provide guidance to Caltrans districts, lead agencies, tribal governments, developers, and consultants regarding Caltrans' review of VMT impact analysis for land use projects and land use plans. Caltrans seeks to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips, provide a safe transportation system, reduce per capita VMT, increase accessibility to destinations via cycling, walking, carpooling, and transit, and reduce GHG emissions. The TISG notes that, for land use projects and plans, automobile delay (the level of service metric) is no longer considered a significant impact on the environment under CEQA. Caltrans' primary review focus for a land use project's transportation impacts is now VMT. The TISG generally endorses the OPR *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA* (Technical Advisory), including the thresholds in that document. Caltrans may review VMT thresholds, methodology, and mitigations.
- Interim Land Development and Intergovernmental Review Safety Review Practitioners Guidance. The Interim Land Development and Intergovernmental Review (LDIGR) Safety Review Practitioners Guidance (July 2020) was developed to provide immediate direction about the safety review while final guidance is being developed. The Interim LDIGR Safety Review Practitioners Guidance does not establish thresholds of significance for determining safety impacts under CEQA. The Interim LDIGR Safety Review Practitioners Guidance states that the significance of impacts should be determined with careful judgment on the part of a public agency and based, to the greatest extent possible, on scientific and factual data consistent with Caltrans' CEQA guidance contained in Caltrans' Standard Environmental Reference. The Interim LDIGR Safety Review Practitioners Guidance states that Caltrans' traffic safety staff will use available data to determine if the proposed project may influence

[2] California Government Code Section 65302(b)(2)

or contribute to locations identified by traffic safety investigations generated by network screening or initiated by Caltrans.

- Deputy Directive 64-RI: Complete Streets – Integrating the Transportation System. This directive requires Caltrans to provide for the needs of travelers of all ages and abilities in all planning, programming, design, construction, operations, and maintenance activities and products on the state highway system. Caltrans supports bicycle, pedestrian, and transit travel with a focus on "complete streets" that begins early in system planning and continues through project construction and maintenance and operations.
- Director's Policy 22. This policy establishes support for balancing transportation needs with community goals. Caltrans seeks to involve and integrate community goals in the planning, design, construction, and maintenance and operations processes, including accommodating the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians. Director's Policy 22 recognizes that "in towns and cities across California, the State highway may be the only through street or may function as a local street," that "these communities desire that their main street be an economic, social, and cultural asset as well as provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods," and that "communities want transportation projects to provide opportunities for enhanced non-motorized travel and visual quality." Director's Policy 22 acknowledges that addressing these needs will ensure that transportation solutions meet more than just traffic and operational objectives.

Caltrans recognizes four classifications of bicycle facilities.

- Class I. Commonly referred to as a bike path or bikeway, Class I facilities are separated from automobile traffic for the exclusive use of bicyclists.
- Class II. Commonly referred to as bike lanes, Class II facilities are dedicated for bicyclists immediately adjacent to automobile traffic.
- Class III. Commonly referred to as bike routes, Class III facilities are on-street routes where bicyclists and automobiles share the road.
- Class IV. Commonly referred to as cycle tracks or protected bike lanes, Class IV facilities combine elements of Class I and Class II facilities to offer an exclusive bicycle route immediately adjacent to a roadway, similar to a Class II facility, but includes a physical separation from traffic with raised curbs, plastic delineators, or parked automobiles.

Regional Regulations

Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments

The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) is the transportation planning, coordinating, and financing agency for the Monterey Bay Area, which includes Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties. AMBAG is primarily funded from state and federal transportation funds and planning grants. AMBAG is a federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and is required to produce certain documents that maintain the region's eligibility for federal transportation assistance. Among AMBAG's many functions, it also authors the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS) with Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPA),

transit providers, Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD), state and federal governments, and organizations involved in transportation planning. The Council of San Benito County Governments (SBCOG) is the RTPA for San Benito County and is responsible for the county-wide Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which includes Hollister. AMBAG also maintains the region's Travel Demand Model (RTDM), which incorporates regional housing, population, and employment forecasts.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy

AMBAG adopted the 2045 MTP/SCS in June 2022 with a framework of goals and policy objectives to address the mobility and accessibility needs of the region.[3] As the MPO, AMBAG updates the MTP/SCS every four years through a bottom-up process involving numerous stakeholders to develop a new growth and updated multimodal transportation network with the available revenues.

The 2045 MTP/SCS must comply with specific state and federal mandates, including the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (generally known by its legislative bill number SB 375). SB 375 promotes the coordination of transportation investments with land use patterns, such that the region makes informed decisions to reduce GHG emissions by providing more direct access to destinations as well as by providing alternative transportation options. Promotion of non-motorized modes of transportation is essential to reduce GHG emissions and reduce roadway congestion. Overall, the investments identified in the 2045 MTP/SCS are expected to result in significant benefits to the region, not only with respect to transportation and mobility, but also economic activity, air quality, safety, and social equity.

The MTP/SCS, a living document that must be updated to reflect the most current information and conditions and remain relevant and useful. Updating the MTP/SCS requires an examination of the progress the region is making, not just in terms of delivering projects, but also in terms of meeting the region's vision, goals, and objectives. The MTP/SCS further specifies a detailed set of investments and strategies throughout the region to maintain, manage, and improve the surface transportation system, specifying how anticipated federal, state, and local transportation funds will be spent. Projects funded all or in part with regional funds (e.g., federal funds, State Transportation Improvement Program funds, bridge tolls) must consider the accommodation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, as described in Caltrans Deputy Directive 64. These recommendations do not replace locally adopted policies regarding transportation planning, design, and construction. Instead, these recommendations facilitate the accommodation of pedestrians, wheelchair users, and bicyclists into all projects where doing so would be consistent with current adopted regional and local plans. Transportation projects that use regional funds in the EIR Study Area are subject to this policy.

San Benito Regional Transportation Plan

As previously stated, SBCOG is San Benito County's RTPA that prepares the RTP. The current 2020-2045 San Benito RTP is a 25-year planning document that guides the development of the transportation system

[3] Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), 2022. *2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan & the Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS*). https://www.ambag.org/plans/2045-metropolitan-transportation-plan-sustainable-communities-strategy, accessed November 28, 2022.

in the San Benito region, including Hollister. The San Benito RTP presents a blueprint for addressing region-wide issues, presently and into the future. The San Benito RTP identifies the existing transportation conditions and plans future improvements based on growth, approved plans, public input, stakeholder collaboration, and SBCOG board of directors' direction. The San Benito RTP is required by state law, is comprehensively updated every four years, an includes long- and short-term programs of strategies and actions that lead to the development of an integrated intermodal transportation system that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods. The RTP was developed based on the unique needs and characteristics of the San Benito region and helps shape the economy, environment, and social future, and communicates regional issues and vision to the State of California and federal government. The San Benito RTP also serves as a guide for achieving public policy decisions that will result in balanced investments for a wide range of multimodal transportation improvements. An RTP communicates the vision of a community and looks into the future. Specifically, the San Benito RTP considers the potential impacts of projected housing, population, and employment growth on the transportation network and identifies solutions to meet the increased demand on all modes, including highways, local roads, bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit, among others.

San Benito County Transit Network Expansion

The San Benito County Local Transportation Authority (LTA) prepared the *Analysis of Public Transit Network Expansion Projects for Congestion Relief of Highway 25 Corridor* in June 2020. This analysis evaluated three scenarios to improve transit options for those traveling between Hollister and areas to the north, including Gilroy and the Bay Area, using the SR 25/rail corridor. The scenarios were:

- Bus-On-Shoulder. This scenario would improve SR 25 to enhance the shoulders to accommodate buses, allowing them to by-pass traffic congestion, making the service more convenient for commuters looking for a faster, less stressful trip.
- Bus-Beside-Rail. This scenario would provide a new facility exclusive for buses beside the rail corridor.
- Passenger Rail. This scenario would include a new rail station in Hollister with train service to the Gilroy station, directly connecting with Caltrain.

The study evaluated a number of benefits and the costs of each scenario to determine which investment would provide the most cost-effective opportunities. At this time, there is no funding in place for these improvements. SBCOG will now pursue grant funding opportunities to conduct a detailed operational analysis.

San Benito County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

The SBCOG adopted the *San Benito County Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plan* (San Benito Bike and Pedestrian Plan) in 2009. The San Benito Bike and Pedestrian Plan, developed in collaboration with the Cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista, County of San Benito, and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, guides the future development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities within San Benito County through 2030. The purpose of the San Benito Bike and Pedestrian Plan is to expand the existing networks, connect gaps, address constrained areas, provide greater connectivity, educate, encourage, and maximize funding sources. The San Benito Bike and Pedestrian Plan will satisfy requirements of the California Bicycle

Transportation Account (BTA) and other state and federal funding programs that Caltrans oversees and reviews.

The San Benito Bike and Pedestrian Plan outlines a range of recommendations developed to reflect public input, existing conditions, and future plans. The recommendations, which serve as guidelines to those responsible for implementation, include bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements, safety and education programs, funding and implementation strategies, and design and policy recommendations.

The bicycle facility recommendations for the Hollister area include the following.

- Class I Multi-Use Path Projects for Hollister. These facilities connect Hollister with recreational opportunities in the unincorporated county. As shown in Table 6-4, *Hollister Class I Multi-Use Path Projects*, of the San Benito Bike and Pedestrian Plan, there are approximately two miles of recommended improvements throughout the city. The San Benito River Bike Trail would circle Hollister from San Juan Road to Airline Highway. In total, the Union Pacific Rail Road (UPRR) path would provide nearly nine miles of recreation from Hollister north to the county line. The Bicycle Pedestrian Bridge across the San Benito River at San Juan Road will connect the city to Riverside Park.
- Class II Bike Lanes for Hollister. These facilities are recommended where there is available right-of-way and where traffic volumes require channelization of users. As shown in Table 6-5, *Hollister Class II Bike Lane Projects*, of the San Benito Bike and Pedestrian Plan, there are approximately 30 miles of Class II Bike Lanes recommended throughout the city.
- Class III Bike Routes for Hollister. These facilities are appropriate where there is little available right-of-way for a dedicated lane or shoulder widening but the route is an integral part of the bicycle network. As shown in Table 6-6, *Hollister Class III Bike Route Projects*, of the San Benito Bike and Pedestrian Plan, there are approximately nine miles of recommended improvements throughout the city. These improvements include a bicycle boulevard with traffic-calming measures, speed limits from 20 to 25 miles per hour (MPH), stop signs that favor bicyclists, and a pilot project recommended for Monterey Street. A Class III bike route on Sally Street from 3rd Street to Nash Road is also recommended.

The pedestrian facility recommendations for the Hollister area include the following.

- Infill Sidewalk Gaps. Sidewalk gaps are areas where there is pedestrian demand but no walkway, or the walkway ends abruptly, resulting in a discontinuous network. As shown in Table 7-1, *Priority Sidewalk Gap Improvements*, of the San Benito Bike and Pedestrian Plan, there are approximately five miles of recommended improvements throughout the city. Some of these include improvements on the south side of Buena Vista Road, north and south side of Hillcrest Road, and the north side of Santa Ana Road.
- Signalized Intersection Improvements. As shown in Table 7-2, *Recommended Crosswalk Improvements at Signalized Intersections*, of the San Benito Bike and Pedestrian Plan, there are 11 identified recommended improvements throughout the city. Other improvements include countdown signals, signal timing, and audible signals.
- Unsignalized Crosswalk Improvements. Infrastructure improvements at unsignalized crosswalk locations can help increase the visibility of pedestrians to motorists and improve pedestrian walking experiences. As shown in Table 7-3, *Recommended High Visibility Crosswalk Improvements at*

Unsignalized Intersections, of the San Benito Bike and Pedestrian Plan, there are 22 identified recommended improvements throughout the city. As shown in Table 7-4, *Pedestrian Railroad Improvement Locations*, of the San Benito Bike and Pedestrian Plan, there are seven identified recommended improvements to railroad crossings throughout the city. Other recommendations include curb extensions.

- Curb Ramp Improvements. These improvements include truncated domes to act as cues to visually-impaired pedestrians and perpendicular curb ramps that are designed so there are two ramps at intersection corners. Corners at major intersections in high pedestrian zones like in Downtown Hollister should have perpendicular ramps where there is adequate right-of-way.
- Multi-Use Path Projects. There are several potential Multi-Use Path projects that could increase pedestrian activity in Hollister and help connect pedestrians with various land uses and serve recreational activity. As shown in Table 7-5, *Multi-Use Path Projects,* of the San Benito Bike and Pedestrian Plan, there are approximately 28 miles of recommended improvements and roughly two miles are in the city. These include the San Benito River Trail, San Benito River Bicycle Pedestrian Bridge, and the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) path.

The San Benito Bike and Pedestrian Plan recognizes that the 2008 Hollister Downtown Plan, which was not adopted by the City, includes many pedestrian improvements for San Benito Street in Hollister and San Benito Bike and Pedestrian Plan includes these same recommendations. The 2008 Hollister Downtown Plan has more details relating to pedestrian amenity recommendations, such as the type of sidewalk lighting, street trees, and newspaper racks. The San Benito Bike and Pedestrian Plan recommends that these same themes should be applied throughout Hollister where appropriate.

Monterey Bay Area Complete Streets Guidebook

The *Monterey Bay Area Complete Streets Guidebook,* adopted by AMBAG in 2013, was developed to address complete streets on local and regional scales. In addition to addressing regional complete streets issues, the *Monterey Bay Area Complete Streets Guidebook* is a tool to help jurisdictions meet State complete streets requirements and benefits the entire region by encouraging bicycle, pedestrian, and transit usage.

The purpose of the *Monterey Bay Area Complete Streets Guidebook* is to provide resources and a procedure to local jurisdictions for developing streets in the Monterey Bay Area that meet the needs of all users, including non-drivers of all ages and abilities, and help reduce GHG emissions by encouraging bicycle, pedestrian, and transit usage. Lack of sufficient or perceived safe bicycle and pedestrian facilities are reasons many streets are “incomplete” in the Monterey Bay Area. In recognizing that roadways have primarily been designed to serve the automobile, the guidebook addresses bicycle and pedestrian access as an essential design objective. The policy guidance and recommendations included in the *Monterey Bay Area Complete Streets Guidebook* can be adopted by jurisdictions, including the City of Hollister, to address the following needs:

- Comply with California Complete Streets Act of 2008, which requires that any major revision of a jurisdiction's General Plan include modification to the circulation element to plan for a balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users of streets, roads, and highways;[4]
- Ensure that roadways function well for all roadway users;
- Adopt a planning process in which all stakeholders (motorists, cyclists, pedestrians, transit and school bus riders, delivery and service personnel, freight haulers, and emergency responders) are considered;
- Pursuant to the Strategic Growth Council grant, meet SCS requirements in state law;
- Reduce VMT and reach regional GHG targets pursuant to California law (SB 375); and
- Achieve objectives identified in local Climate Action Plans (CAPs).

Local Regulations

Hollister Municipal Code

The Hollister Municipal Code (HMC) includes various directives to regulate transportation in Hollister. The HMC is organized by title, chapter, and section. Provisions related to vehicle and traffic regulations are included in Title 10, *Vehicles and Traffic*; Title 12, *Streets, Sidewalks and Public Places;* and Title 17, *Zoning*, as follows:

- Title 10, *Vehicles and Traffic.* This title establishes the City's vehicle and traffic regulations, including traffic control, speed limits, authority to designate truck routes, and bicycle regulations.

  Title 12, *Streets, Sidewalks, and Public Places.* This title establishes guidelines for street names and number, plan lines, encroachments, obstructions, street trees, parks and recreation use regulations, and public assemblies.

- Title 17, Zoning. This title includes several provisions for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
  - Section 17.04.030, *Residential General Development Standards.* This section states that there should be pedestrian connectivity between neighborhoods with a grid or loop street network. Where this is not possible, 20-foot-wide pedestrian/bicycle/transit connection shall be integrated into cul-de-sacs and subdivision designs.
  - Section 17.08.040, *NG North Gateway District Supplemental Standards.* This section requires a street network and bikeway plan with prezoning or Site and Architectural Review application is required to facilitate coordinated safe multi-modal access and associated funding for transportation improvements to properties that may be confined by SR 25, the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks and San Felipe Road and Class II Bicycle lanes are required on the frontage of all interior roads in the North Gateway district and a Class I Bicycle lane is required on the west side of San Felipe Road and on city arterials.

[4] California Government Code Section 65302(b)(2)

- Section 17.10.040, *Industrial Zoning District Performance Standards.* This section requires that new industrial subdivisions shall include provision for passive and active recreation, including Class II bicycle paths with the road improvements, integration of shade trees along sidewalk frontages.
- Chapter 17.18, *Pedestrian and Bicycle Parking and Loading Standards.* This chapter establishes off-street parking and loading requirements for vehicles and bikes, including requirements for the number of spaces based on the use and/or location, parking and loading space standards, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Section 17.18.030, *General Pedestrian, Bicycle and Parking Regulations,* requires a circulation plan for vehicular and pedestrian access and parking facilities shall be required for new development, a building addition(s) or a change of use that the Engineering Department determines substantially increases the off-street parking requirements.

Hollister Resolution No. 2019-75

Resolution No. 2019-75, which was adopted by the City Council on April 15, 2019, has established that roundabouts may be considered at some intersections as it may improve intersection operations to increase pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle safety.

Hollister Complete Streets Plan

Initiated in the fall of 2019, the final, but not adopted, 2020 *Complete Streets Plans to Remove Safety and Cultural Barriers for Transitioning Neighborhoods* (Hollister Complete Streets Plan) identifies future design and implementation strategies that can be used, but are not required, to plan, design, and maintain streets that are safe for users of all ages and abilities.

The Hollister Complete Streets Plan recognizes that Hollister is likely to see a continued population growth as the regional demand for housing continues to intensify and that the growth that has occurred has transformed the city from its original, relatively compact and walkable scale to one that increasingly reflects a more suburban pattern of wide streets and disconnected land uses that favor the automobile over pedestrian and other active forms of mobility. The Hollister Complete Streets Plan focuses primarily on the Buena Vista Road, Santa Ana Road, Meridian Street and Memorial Drive corridors that have experienced much of Hollister's growth over recent years. The Hollister Complete Streets Plan seeks to improve these corridors by putting forth future "complete street" strategies that can either be incorporated as new developments are added along the corridors or undertaken as part of a City-driven capital improvement effort. Additionally, the Hollister Complete Streets Plan takes a comprehensive look at a future green street network that can promote walking and biking connections to local schools, parks, and other community services. The Hollister Complete Streets Plan establishes three goals that are used as the overall organizing framework for the document as well as described herein:

- Goal One: Safe, Comfortable, and Inviting Streets for All Users. Provide an integrated multi-modal transportation network that meets the needs of vehicles, transit, bicycle, and pedestrians throughout Hollister. This section under this goal targets opportunities and constraints within each of the four corridors and identifies both near- and long-term plans for how the corridors may be improved to achieve the goal of making them safe, comfortable, and inviting.

- Goal Two: Compact and Walkable Neighborhoods. Create a comprehensive set of design guidelines that govern the design and layout of new locally controlled streets, blocks, and development projects to ensure that future growth allows for and promotes a healthy, sustainable, and walkable community. This goal includes guidelines for both the public right-of-way and future project developments. The public right-of-way guidelines cover such topics as lane widths, bikeways, curb extensions, and sidewalk improvements that collectively contribute to a safer and more comfortable walking and biking experience. The guidelines for project developments focus on topics such as block size, building orientation, density, and on-site parking that further enrich the experience of someone walking and biking.
- Goal Three: Network of Public, Green Spaces. Build connectivity and accessibility to public green spaces that will link homes, community destinations, and parks to create a healthy green network. This goal includes a series of potential local streets and paths that connected together with the four corridors can establish a network of public, green spaces. Future improvements could include such enhancements as bulb-outs, chicanes, and street trees.

Hollister Downtown Design Guidelines

In 2008, the City prepared the Hollister Downtown Plan for Downtown Hollister, a revitalization plan with a series of visions to help the City's downtown area evolve over time with specific projects that was not formally adopted by City Council. Section 7, *Design Guidelines*, of the Hollister Downtown Plan, herein referred to as the Downtown Design Guidelines, is used by the City for redevelopment and new development. The Downtown Design Guidelines include these bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements:

- Promote multi-floor buildings and mixed-use development to encourage walking and increase the downtown residential population.
- Encourage compatible and complimentary uses in close proximity to one another to encourage walking and minimize vehicular trips.
- Provide amenities for pedestrians and bicyclists, such as benches, plazas, bike racks/lockers, and showers for employees and bicycle commuters. Amenities should be conveniently located and easily accessible.
- Illuminate areas used by pedestrians, such as sidewalks, walkways, and plazas at night to ensure safety.
- Landscape and regularly maintain sidewalks to be free of weeds, overgrown vegetation, and litter.

Hollister Park Facility Master Plan

Hollister's 2018 Park Facility Master Plan (PFMP) assesses existing City parks and recreation facilities and recommends future priority projects and potential funding mechanisms. The PFMP includes recommendations for planning for non-motorized transportation, including sidewalks and walking paths, and recognizes the importance of maintaining connectivity of pedestrian and bicycle routes as areas within the Hollister Sphere of Influence are annexed into the city. The PFMP includes the option for a non-vehicular bridge to connect the Water Reclamation Recreational Facility with Hollister neighborhoods across the river. New development across the San Benito River and the recently constructed Apricot Park may be linked with a pedestrian bridge to the Water Reclamation Recreational Facility, increasing

residents' ability to access the amenities at West Hollister Community without being required to drive. The connection would provide a valuable amenity for neighborhoods in south Hollister and demonstrate the City's investment in creating an active, healthy community. Moreover, the creation of a pedestrian bridge here could link park users to future development of the San Benito River Parkway.

4.16.1.3 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Roadway Network

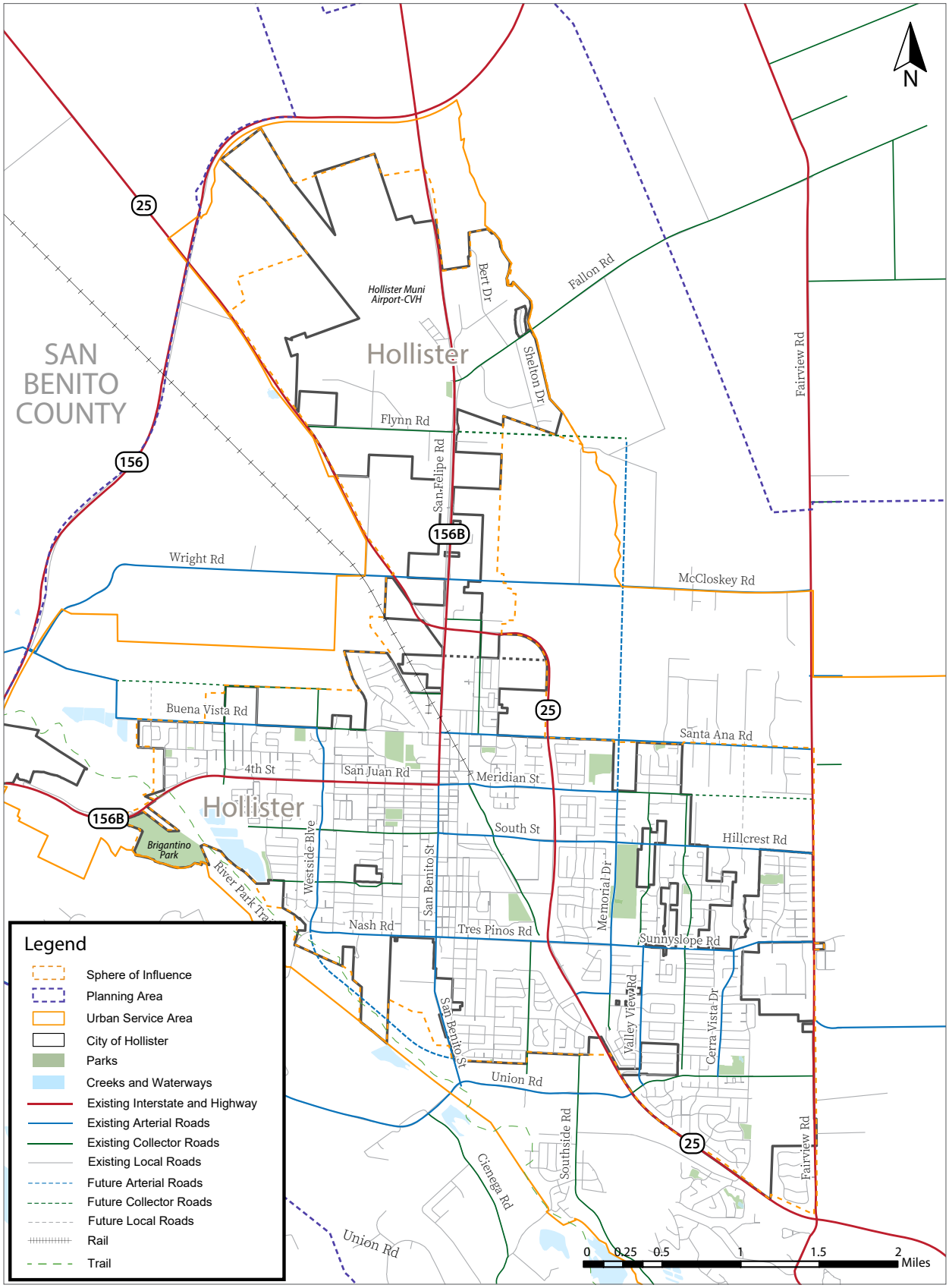
Hollister is served by an extensive roadway network of freeways, arterials, and local roads. These roadways provide access to the surrounding municipalities and to local destinations, such as employment areas, shopping centers, schools, recreational opportunities, and residential communities.

The City of Hollister is responsible for planning, constructing, and maintaining local roadways within the City Limits. The County of San Benito has similar responsibility for roads in unincorporated areas and expressways throughout San Benito County.

Functional Roadway Classifications

Roads are typically classified and defined by their function. The classification of roadways in the city are shown on Figure 4.16-1, *Roadway Classifications,* and described herein:

- Freeways. Operated and maintained by Caltrans, these facilities are designed as high-volume, high-speed facilities for intercity and regional traffic. Access to these facilities (access points) is limited and only available via ramps and mobility (speeds) is high. No freeways are within Hollister's City Limits. The nearest freeway to the city is US Highway 101 and is in San Benito County, approximately 9 miles to the west of the western City Limits. US Highway 101 is the primary access road to Silicon Valley and the greater San Francisco Bay Area, where many Hollister residents work.
- Highways. Operated and maintained by Caltrans within Hollister, these facilities are designed as high-volume, high-speed facilities for intercity and regional traffic. Access to these facilities (access points) is limited and mobility (speeds) is high. Unlike freeways, highways can be accessed via signal control or stop sign-controlled access points. SR 25 and SR 156 are examples of highways within and near the City Limits.
- Arterials. These facilities make up the principal network for through traffic within a community and often between communities. Arterials often have between four and eight traffic lanes and provide connections between residential neighborhoods, shopping areas, places of employment, parks and recreational facilities, and other places of assembly. Access to arterials is higher than freeways, but mobility is lower.
- Collectors. Typically, collectors (two-lane facilities) function as the main interior streets within neighborhoods and business areas and are designed to carry traffic between local roads and arterials. Collectors provide higher access than freeways and arterials, but lower mobility.
- Local. These are two-lane neighborhood streets that could be located in residential, commercial, industrial, and rural areas. Local roadways provide the highest access, but lowest mobility.



Source: Kimley Horn, 2020. PlaceWorks, 2023.

Figure 4.16-1
Roadway Classifications

TRANSPORTATION

Rail

Hollister has one rail line that runs roughly through the center of the northern half of the City Limits. The rail line runs parallel to Prospect Avenue in a southeast-northwest orientation. The rail line is the Union Pacific Hollister Industrial Lead. It is a 12-mile-long rail line from Carnadero, California, to Hollister. On average, trains have two locomotives and eight cars traveling 10 MPH. Currently, there are local trains that run two times a week, Tuesday and Thursday, carrying goods to/from San Benito Foods.

There is no commuter rail in Hollister. The nearest connection to commuter rail service is in Gilroy, with service to Santa Clara County and points north. The City of Hollister has been interested in trying to extend commuter rail or other commuter transit service into Hollister to connect to commuter rail in Gilroy.

Bus Transit

The San Benito County LTA, established in 1990, administers and operates public transportation services (including maintenance and administration) in the county. Public bus service within San Benito County is supplied to the communities of Hollister, San Juan Bautista, and Gilroy by the San Benito County Express (County Express) transit system. The County Express offers several types of services that are provided on fixed routes, which are shown on Figure 4.16-2, *County Express Fixed-Route Map,* and non-fixed routes. A description of the bus services are provided herein:

- Local fixed-route. This bus service has three established routes that run on timed schedules within Hollister. These include the Green Line, Blue Line, and Red Line. A route map showing the routes is included on Figure 4.16-2, *County Express Fixed Route Map*.
- On-demand. This bus service is a curb-to-curb bus service that offers flexible routing and scheduling. With the on-demand, shared-ride, public transit service within the City of Hollister, riders can book a trip through the County Express "app" or call dispatch and ride in the ADA-accessible vehicles with trained drivers at a fraction of the cost of traditional rideshare apps.
- Tripper. This bus service serves Hollister's students by providing a discounted bus service route to many of the schools during peak travel demand associated with local school bell schedules. This service is provided on the Blue and Green Line routes.
- Paratransit. This bus service for ADA-certified travelers that are unable to ride fixed-route service due to physical or cognitive disabilities. The service is available for trips within 0.75 miles of fixed-route service.
- Dial-a-Ride. This is a complementary bus service. Service is available within Hollister City Limits, San Juan Bautista, and as far as Tres Pinos. Weekday rides may be scheduled up to two weeks in advance or on the day of the ride. Saturday rides may only be scheduled between Monday at 9:30 a.m. and Friday at 4:00 p.m. the week of. The pick-up time and pick-up location are negotiated and all rides are subject to availability. Riders should allow 30 minutes to be picked up and another 30 minutes to reach the destination during weekdays and up to an hour for weekends.
- Intercounty. This bus service to Gilroy's Caltrain and Greyhound Stations, and Gavilan College with connecting service to the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) bus system.

Source: Kimley Horn, 2020. PlaceWorks, 2023.

Figure 4.16-2
County Express Fixed Route Map

Bicycle and Pedestrian Network

Bicycle Facilities

While there are currently limited bicycle facilities in Hollister, the bicycle facilities that are available are provided throughout the city. These are on most arterials and major collectors, as illustrated in Figure 4.16-3, *Existing and Planned Bicycle Facilities*. As previously described Section 4.16.1.2, *Regulatory Framework*, Caltrans recognizes four classifications of bicycle facilities Class I, Class II, Class III, and Class IV. As shown on Figure 4.16-3, a half-mile, Class I multi-use path is beside McCray Street between Tres Pinos Road and Hillcrest Road and the remainder of facilities are Class II bike lanes throughout the city.

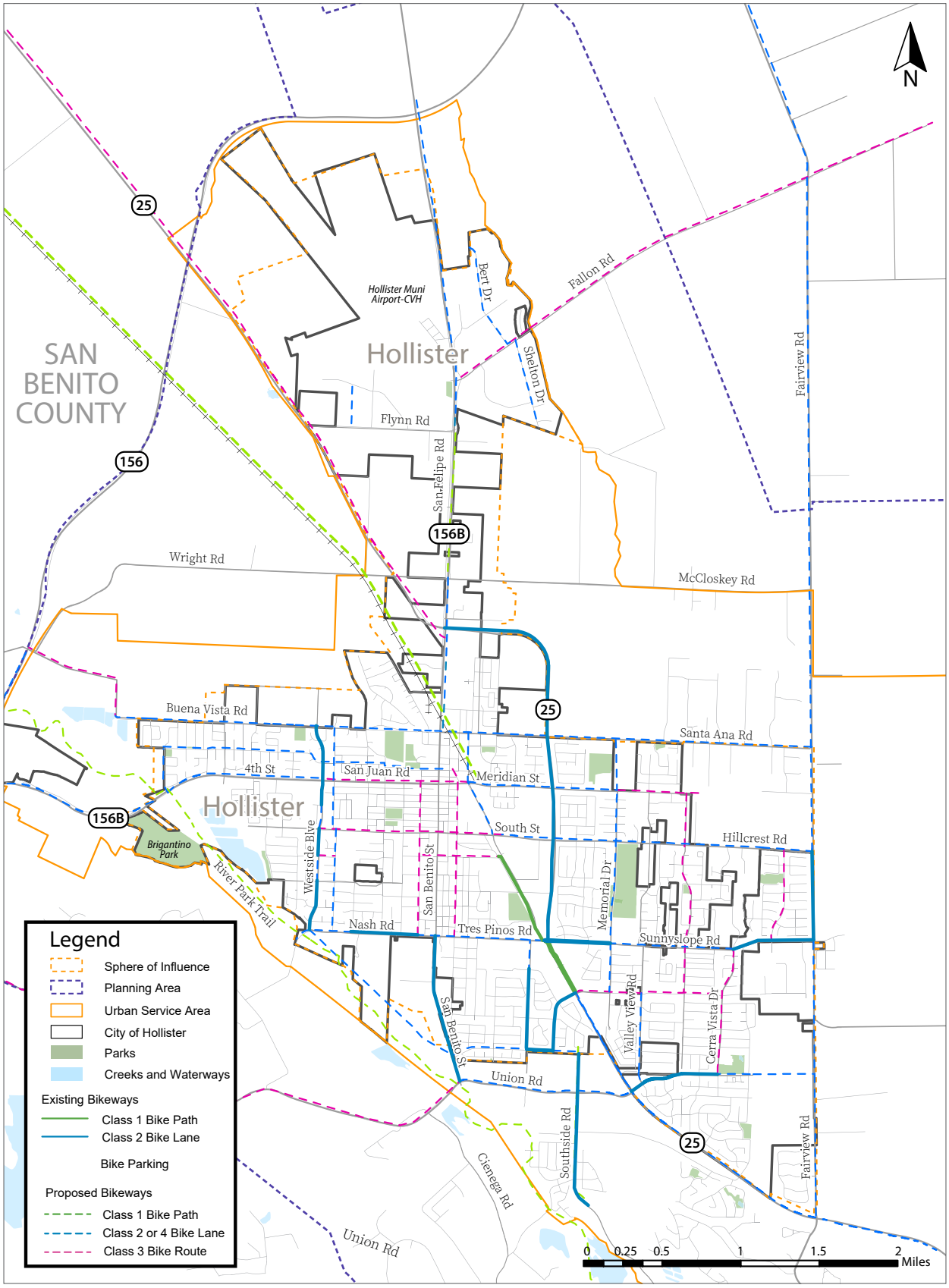
Pedestrian Facilities

The pedestrian network includes sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signals, and off-street paths. Sidewalks with raised curbs and gutters are typically provided along arterials and collectors, as well as in newer residential developments. Most major intersections in the city have marked crosswalks and countdown pedestrian crossing signals that can be activated by pedestrians. Minimum sidewalk widths of five feet are required to meet ADA requirements. Depending on the land use type, wider sidewalks may be provided. Narrower sidewalks are allowed for residential areas as compared to commercial districts. Nonetheless, a five-foot minimum of clear, uninterrupted area is required.

Planned and Pending Transportation Projects

The 2017 *Transportation Impact Mitigation Fee Nexus Study* identifies planned network improvements within the county, as well as the City of Hollister. The following list identifies improvements planned within the EIR Study Area:

- Memorial Drive South Extension: Meridian Street to Santa Ana Road
- Airline Highway/SR 25 Widening: Sunset Drive to Fairview Road
- Westside Boulevard Extension: Nash Road to San Benito Street
- North Street (Buena Vista), between College Street and San Benito Street
- Fairview Road Widening: McCloskey to SR 25
- Union Road Widening (East): San Benito Street to SR 25
- Union Road Widening (West): San Benito Street to SR 156
- Meridian Street Extension to Fairview Road: 185 feet east of Clearview to Fairview
- SR 25 Four-Lane Widening: Phases I and II (San Felipe Road to Santa Clara County Line)
- Memorial Drive North Extension: Santa Ana Road to Flynn Road/Shelton Road Intersection
- Flynn Road Extension: San Felipe Road to Memorial Drive north extension
- Pacific Way Extension (new road east-west collector): San Felipe Road to Memorial Drive



Source: Kimley Horn, 2020. PlaceWorks, 2023.

Figure 4.16-3

Existing and Planned Bicycle Facilities

4.16.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the proposed project would result in a significant transportation impact if it would:

1. Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.
2. Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b).[5]
3. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment).
4. Result in inadequate emergency access.
5. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to transportation.

4.16.2.1 CITY OF HOLLISTER VMT SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

The SB 743 Implementation Guidelines[6] that were prepared for the City by Kimley Horn, were updated in March 2023. OPR Guidance advises jurisdictions set VMT thresholds at 15 percent below the average for the defining area. Pursuant to the OPR Guidance, the City has established the following thresholds:

- Residential. For residential projects, a project would cause substantial additional VMT if it exceeds existing county-wide average home-based VMT per capita minus 15 percent, which is 18.8 VMT per capita.
- Office. For office projects, a project would cause substantial additional VMT if it exceeds existing county-wide average work-based VMT per Employee (Office) minus 15 percent, which is 20.6 work VMT per Employee (Office).
- Other Employment. For all other employment-based VMT projects besides office employment, a project would cause substantial additional VMT if it exceeds existing county-wide average work VMT per Employee (Other) for similar land uses minus 15 percent, which is 20.6 work VMT per Employee (Other).
- Retail. For regional retail and other customer-based VMT projects where the primary source of VMT is not primarily employees, but customers, a project would cause substantial VMT if it results in a net regional change using the county as the basis or other area as determined appropriate by the City of Hollister. The Hollister SB 743 Implementation Guidelines apply the general threshold of 50,000 square feet of retail uses as an indicator to whether a retail store can be considered local serving or not and thus would not result in a significant impact. Consistent with OPR Guidelines, local-serving retail does not contribute to VMT and would not result in a significant impact.

[5] CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b) refers to the discontinuation of vehicle level of service (LOS) as an impact metric for transportation analysis and instead recommends the use of vehicle miles traveled (VMT); this section gives lead agencies discretion to choose the most appropriate methodology to evaluate a project's VMT.

[6] City of Hollister. 2023. *DRAFT SB 743 Implementation Guidelines,* March 14.

4.16.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

TRANS-1 Implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.

2040 General Plan

As discussed in Section 4.16.1.2, *Regulatory Framework*, programs, plans, and policies addressing circulation in EIR Study Area include the Complete Streets Act, AMBAG's 2045 MTP/SCS, and the San Benito Bike and Pedestrian Plan. In general, the overarching goals of these policy documents are to ensure a safe, efficient, and accessible multi-modal transportation network for all users that also reduces VMT to improve air quality and reduce GHG emissions.

As shown in Chapter 4.8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions,* 59 percent of GHG emissions in Hollister originate from vehicle trips generated by Hollister residents and businesses (i.e., the transportation sector). The California Air Resources Board recognizes that reducing VMT is a key objective to meeting California's GHG emission-reduction goals. The greatest potential for reducing GHG emissions in Hollister is to reduce transportation-related emissions through measures that help to reduce vehicular trips and increase use of non-automobile modes of transportation (i.e., transit, bicycle, and pedestrian modes).

Bus Transit

As described in Section 4.16.1.3, *Existing Conditions*, transit services in the EIR Study Area are provided by the County Express. Future potential development under the proposed 2040 General Plan would contribute to an increased use of transit in the EIR Study Area due to growth in population and employment.

While growth within the EIR Study Area would contribute to an increased use of transit, the proposed Circulation (C) Element contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to transit. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would directly and indirectly result in improving the transit network and support an increase in transit use, thus supporting regional goals to reduce VMT and GHG emissions, as well as support programs, plans, ordinances, or policies addressing the circulation system:

Goal C-1: Provide for a healthy, active community based on complete streets, reflecting a balanced, safe, multimodal transportation system for all users, where pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities will be emphasized along with vehicular facilities. (new)

- Policy C-1.1: Sustainable Transportation. Reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from transportation by increasing mode shares for sustainable travel modes such as walking, bicycling, and public transit. (new)
- Policy C-1.2: Complete Streets. Apply complete streets design standards to future projects in the public rights-of-way. Complete streets are streets designed to facilitate safe, comfortable, and efficient

travel for all users regardless of age or ability or whether they are walking, bicycling, taking transit, or driving. (new)

- Policy C-1.5: Public Transit Regional Coordination. Cooperatively work with Council of San Benito County Governments, Caltrans, and San Benito County to develop, implement, and maintain public transit services. (Policy C4.2)
- Policy C-1.6: Public Transit Improvements. Promote public realm improvements that support increased use of public transit, including inviting sidewalks, ADA-compliant curb ramps, signal priorities, and amenities such as sidewalks, benches, bus stop shelters, signage, street lighting, and real-time schedule systems on key routes. (new)
- Policy C-1.7: Future Passenger Rail Service. Maintain an interest in and actively participate in planning for future rail service to Hollister as outlined in the Council of San Benito County Government's *June 2020 Analysis of Public Transit Network Expansion Projects for Congestion Relief of the Highway 25 Corridor* study. Participate in future planning processes for the potential rail service. (new)
- Policy C-1.8: Park and Ride Facilities. Cooperatively work with Council of San Benito County Governments, Caltrans, and San Benito County to develop, implement and maintain park and ride facilities. (Policy C4.3)
- Action C-1.3: Complete Streets Plan. Create and adopt a citywide Complete Streets Plan. (new)
- Action C-1.5: Passenger Rail Service Planning. Update this Circulation Element to identify future train stops and the passenger rail alignment should funding be secured to provide passenger rail service to Hollister. (new)

Implementation of these proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would improve the transit network and support programs to increase travel by transit. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in conflicts with adopted policies, plans, or actions or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of transit facilities or services.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Future potential development from implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan would contribute to and increase use of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the EIR Study Area. The purpose of the adopted San Benito Bike and Pedestrian Plan is to improve safety, act on community needs, and improve mobility options for Hollister residents, workers, and visitors. As stated in the adopted San Benito Bike and Pedestrian Plan, the use of the plan will help increase the number of people in Hollister that travel in the city by walking or bicycling. As described in Section 4.15.1.2, *Regulatory Setting*, the San Benito Bike and Pedestrian Plan provides a prioritized list of projects to improve the bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the city. Figure 4.16-3 presents the proposed bicycle and pedestrian network.

While growth within the EIR Study Area would contribute to and increase use of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, the proposed Circulation (C) Element contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would directly and indirectly result in improving the bicycle and pedestrian network and support an increase in bicycle and pedestrian travel, thus

supporting regional goals to reduce VMT and GHG emissions, as well as programs, plans, ordinances, or policies addressing the circulation system:

Goal C-3: Build and maintain a safe, connected, and equitable pedestrian, bicycle and micromobility network that provides access to community destinations such as employment centers, transit, schools, shopping, and recreation. (new)

- Policy C-3.1: Pedestrian and Bicycle Network. Create and maintain a pedestrian- and bike-friendly environment in Hollister and increase the number of people who choose to walk and bike. (new)
- Policy C-3.2: Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections. Work with local businesses, private developers, and public agencies to ensure provision of safe pedestrian pathways and bicycle connections to major public facilities, schools, and employment centers. Require new development to provide internal pedestrian connections and linkages to adjacent neighborhoods and community facilities. (Policy C2.3)
- Policy C-3.3: Pedestrian Right-of-Way Improvements. Require new developments to construct or contribute to improvements that enhance the pedestrian experience including human-scale lighting, streetscaping, crosswalk striping, crossing lights, wayfinding signage, and accessible sidewalks adjacent to the site. (new)
- Policy C-3.4: Pedestrian Connectivity. Incorporate design for pedestrian connectivity across intersections in transportation projects to improve visibility at cross walks for pedestrians and provide safe interaction with other modes. Design improvements should focus on increasing sight lines and removing conflicts at cross walks. (new)
- Policy C-3.5: Bicycle Improvements. Require new developments to construct or contribute to improvements that enhance the cyclist experience, including bike lanes and bicycle parking. (new)
- Policy C-3.6: Bicycle Facilities. Cooperatively work with Council of San Benito County Governments, Caltrans, and San Benito County to develop, implement and maintain bicycle facilities providing direct access to major public facilities, schools and employment centers as described in the San Benito County Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plan. (Policy C2.1)
- Policy C-3.7: Bicycle and Shared Mobility Related Technology. Explore ways to use technology to improve bicycle and shared mobility safety and connectivity. (new)
- Action C-3.1: Pedestrian Master Plan. Prepare and adopt a Pedestrian Master Plan that identifies citywide pedestrian network improvements. (new)
- Action C-3.2: Pedestrian Amenities. Study the feasibility of installing pedestrian amenities such as trees, lighting, recycling and refuse containers, benches, art, etc. in the pedestrian areas along public frontages and in public rights-of-way. (new)
- Action C-3.3: Bicycle Master Plan. Prepare and adopt a Bicycle Master Plan that identifies citywide bicycle network improvements. (new)
- Action C-3.4: Implement Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements. Prioritize implementation of goals, programs, and projects that improve the comfort, safety, and connectivity of the pedestrian and bicycle network. (new)

- Action C-3.5: Pedestrian and Bicycle Trails and Routes Awareness. Increase awareness of existing pedestrian and bicycle trails and routes by working with outside agencies and developers to promote these amenities to residents. Collaborate with the County on development of the trail network. (new)
- Action C-3.6: Walkability Through Design Review. Adopt objective standards for appropriate sidewalk and pedestrian trail design in new development projects. (Implementation Measure C.G)

Implementation of these goals, policies, and actions of the proposed 2040 General Plan would improve the bicycle and pedestrian network and support programs to increase bicycle and pedestrian travel. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in conflicts with adopted policies, plans, or actions or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of bicycle or pedestrian facilities.

Roadway

Future potential development and the planned expansion of the roadway system under the proposed 2040 General Plan would contribute to an increase in VMT in the EIR Study Area. See Impact Discussion TRANS-2 for further discussion of VMT with respect to the proposed project's ability to meet the VMT threshold of significance. The proposed 2040 General Plan is generally consistent with and would not obstruct the transportation-related goals and policies in the AMBAG 2045 MTP/SCS as it continues to encourage a shift away from drive-alone commute vehicle trips, which are a primary contributor to commute GHG emissions and localized transportation impacts. As described in Section 4.16.1.2, *Regulatory Framework*, the AMBAG 2045 MTP/SCS seeks to reduce GHG emissions from transportation sources in San Benito County through funding transportation improvements.

While growth within the EIR Study Area would contribute to and increase use of roadway facilities from automobiles, the proposed Economic Development (ED), Land Use and Community Design (LU), and the Circulation (C) Elements contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider these impacts. The proposed 2040 General Plan Land Use Map designates substantial land with the Downtown Commercial and Mixed Use, Home Office, West Gateway Mixed Use, North Gateway Commercial, and General Commercial and Industrial land use designations to drive job growth in Hollister and reduce the need for Hollister residents to commute out of the city for work. In addition to the General Plan goals, polices, and actions previously listed to promote safety and provide sufficient transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, which also serve to reduce automobile use and decrease VMT, the following General Plan goals, policies, and actions would also directly and indirectly result in reducing VMT by bringing jobs and services to Hollister and locating them in close proximity to residential areas, and thus would support regional goals to reduce VMT and GHG emissions, as well as support programs, plans, ordinances, or policies addressing the circulation system.

Goal ED-1: Increase overall economic development in Hollister. (new)

- Policy ED-1.1: Economic Development Programs and Strategies. Make economic development a critical function and focus of City operations.
  - Implement economic development programs.
  - Assist with business attraction and retention.
  - Initiate other economic development strategies. (new)

- Action ED-1.1: Economic Development Staff. Identify City or grant funding to support dedicated City staff to implement economic development programs. (new)

Goal ED-2: Ensure the City has sufficient sites and infrastructure to accommodate business expansion. (new)

- Policy ED-2.1: City Infrastructure Maintenance. Maintain and upgrade necessary City infrastructure to support new commercial and industrial development. (new)
- Policy ED-2.2: Business Retention, Attraction, and Expansion. Attract projects that would support business retention and expansion in Hollister. (new)
- Action ED-2.1: Infrastructure Study to Support Businesses. Conduct a study to determine needs, costs, and potential funding mechanisms for upgrades to infrastructure in Hollister to support business attraction and expansion. The study should include:
  - Roads
  - Sewer
  - Water
  - Broadband internet
  - Electrical service (new)
- Action ED-2.2: Commercial and Industrial Sites Database. Create and maintain a database of commercial and industrial sites and buildings that are available to accommodate business growth. The database should ideally include the characteristics of each individual site and target high-opportunity sites for City-led efforts that can help make them shovel ready for development. The database should include:
  - Site topography
  - Land use designation and zoning
  - Existing infrastructure connections
  - Environmental remediation / mitigation requirements (new)

Goal ED-3: Attract new retail business to Hollister. (new)

- Policy ED-3.1: Retail Business Expansion. Support retail business expansion and attraction through marketing vacant retail spaces and sites throughout the city. (new)
- Policy ED-3.2: Retail Business Attraction. Support the attraction of new retail categories/businesses that are desired by Hollister residents. (new)
- Policy ED-3.3: Retail Development in West Gateway District. Require the provision of retail space, either within horizontally or vertically integrated mixed-use developments, within the West Gateway District instead of solely residential development in this area to create a more vibrant retail environment in this part of Hollister. (new)
- Action ED-3.3: Advertisement of Retail Sites. Advertise vacant retail sites and buildings on the City's website to attract retail developers and businesses. (new)

- Action ED-3.4: Retail Market Studies. Conduct or commission a study to document new retail facilities desired by Hollister residents and the demographic and economic characteristics required by various retail businesses (e.g., population densities, projected housing growth, household incomes). As part of this study, develop strategies to make Hollister a more appealing location for these businesses. (new)

Goal ED-4: Make downtown Hollister the retail, cultural, and social center of the community. (new)

- Policy ED-4.1: Inactive Storefronts in Downtown. Reduce the number of inactive storefronts within the downtown to improve the pedestrian environment by incentivizing downtown property owners to attract active uses to ground floor spaces. (new)
- Action ED-4.1: Incentives to Revitalize Downtown. Establish land use policies and incentive programs to minimize the number of inactive storefronts in downtown and convert those storefronts to active uses. (new)

Goal ED-5: Add more jobs in Hollister. (new)

- Action ED-5.1: Business Attraction Program. Develop a program to identify potential businesses interested in locating in Hollister, and market the city to them as a business location. (new)
- Action ED-5.2: Marketing and Branding Materials. Create marketing materials about Hollister for distribution to businesses, developers, and brokers. (new)
- Action ED-5.3: Promoting Hollister as a Business Destination. Attend regional and national conferences to promote Hollister as a destination for business location. (new)

Goal LU-3: Encourage mixed-use development projects that create vibrant, walkable districts and contain residential and community serving commercial uses. (new)

- Policy LU-3.2: Mixed-Use Design. Encourage new mixed-use development and intensification of existing mixed-use properties. Mixed Use developments should include integrated commercial uses located in front of and below residential uses, and active connections to the street through windows, signage, doors, and sidewalk connections. (new)

Goal C-1: Provide for a healthy, active community based on complete streets, reflecting a balanced, safe, multimodal transportation system for all users, where pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities will be emphasized along with vehicular facilities. (new)

- Policy C-1.2: Complete Streets. Apply complete streets design standards to future projects in the public rights-of-way. Complete streets are streets designed to facilitate safe, comfortable, and efficient travel for all users regardless of age or ability or whether they are walking, bicycling, taking transit, or driving. (new)
- Policy C-1.3: Multimodal Safety. Use a systemic safety approach for transportation planning, street design, operations and maintenance that proactively identify opportunities to improve safety where conflicts between street users exist. (new)
- Policy C-1.9: Local Schools. Coordinate with local school districts to improve bicycle, pedestrian, and traffic flow around school sites. (new)
- Policy C-1.10: “Safe Routes to School” Program. Work cooperatively with local school districts to develop, implement and maintain the "Safe Routes to School" program. (Policy C2.2)

- Action C-1.3: Complete Streets Plan. Create and adopt a citywide Complete Streets Plan. (new)
- Action C-1.4: Safe Routes to School. Fund and implement continuous Safe Routes to School engagement and improvements to elementary, middle, and high schools, and provide support to increase number of students walking and bicycling to school. (new)

Goal C-2: Design and implement the City's circulation system to serve the planned residential and economic growth specified in the General Plan. (Goal C-1)

- Policy C-2.1: Circulation Element Improvements. Implement Circulation Element improvements summarized in Tables C-3 and C-4 and illustrated in Figure C-4 prior to deterioration in levels of service below the stated standard. (new)
- Policy C-2.2: Development's Fair Share. Continue to collect traffic impact fees and require other site related transportation improvements from private developers to ensure implementation of transportation system improvements to local and regional facilities attributable to proposed development. (Policy C3.1)
- Policy C-2.3: Roadway Classification. Protect needed rights-of-way for future roadway widenings through the use of City Council adopted plan lines. (Implementation Measure C.A)
- Policy C-2.4: Multimodal Improvements. Prioritize the planning and implementation of street improvement projects that incorporate multimodal features along major travel corridors in the city. (new)
- Policy C-2.5: Street Repair Improvements. Use the adopted Pavement Condition Evaluation to prioritize street improvements and funding for road repair projects based on their disrepair category. (new)
- Policy C-2.6: Regional Transportation Improvements. Cooperate with Caltrans, the Council of San Benito County Governments, the County of San Benito and any other regional transportation authorities to ensure the funding and implementation of the transportation improvements specified in the San Benito County Regional Transportation Plan and in this General Plan, particularly Table C-4. (Goal C-3)
- Policy C-2.7: Intergovernmental Coordination. Actively participate in development review for circulation projects outside the City Limits but within Hollister's Planning Area. (Implementation Measure C.C)
- Action C-2.1: Public Facilities Fees. Adopt a citywide public facilities impact fee ordinance to fund new circulation improvement projects required to serve new residents and employees in Hollister. (Implementation Measure C.D)
- Action C-2.2: Meridian Street Extension. Study the cost of extending Meridian Street to add a connection between Clearview Drive and Fairview Road. Identify a fee structure to fund this improvement. (new)

Goal C-5: Provide for safe, efficient goods movement within Hollister that supports the local economy. (new)

- Policy C-5.1: Rail Corridor Planning. Require coordination with appropriate agencies to ensure that development projects planned adjacent to or near the rail corridor will be planned with safety of the rail corridor in mind. (Policy C3.2)

- Policy C-5.2: Goods Receiving and Shipping. Ensure commercial and industrial projects that produce and receive goods identify and mitigate their traffic impacts and are located in areas with access to the regional transportation network. (new)
- Policy C-5.3: Trucks to Avoid Residential Areas. Discourage or prohibit the movement and parking of large trucks within residential neighborhoods. (Policy C4.1)
- Action C-5.1: Truck Routes. Develop truck routes in coordination with COG, Caltrans, and San Benito County and include enforcement mechanisms to encourage the appropriate routes. (Implementation Measure C.B)
- Action C-5.1: Rail Safety. Partner with Rail Safety Partners to improve the rail corridor safety. (new)

Implementation of these proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would improve the support programs to reduce VMT. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in conflicts with adopted policies, plans, or actions or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of roadway facilities or services.

Summary

In summary, the proposed 2040 General Plan supports public transit, bicycle improvements, and improvements to pedestrian facilities, and it would promote and direct the City to (1) expand the pedestrian, bicycle, and transit network; (2) close gaps in the network; and (3) coordinate with regional agencies to improve the transit network. The proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions listed support the regulatory programs that address the circulation system in the EIR Study Area. The proposed project supports the implementation of the AMBAG 2045 MTP/SCS by promoting a range of jobs and services in Hollister and by ensuring that shopping, schools, parks, and civic uses are located in each neighborhood so residents don't have to drive to reach these daily destinations. The proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions also promote bringing jobs to Hollister so employed residents who currently commute elsewhere can work in Hollister to support the reduction of VMT. The proposed 2040 General Plan also designates land for residential development at a range of densities, and it requires new neighborhoods to include a mix of housing types, so that there is housing affordable to all income levels in Hollister, and lower-wage workers can find housing in Hollister and avoid long commutes to local jobs. As such, the proposed project is consistent with the existing adopted policies, plans, and programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities and consequently reducing VMT and GHG emissions. Accordingly, impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. The proposed 2023 CAP was prepared concurrently with the proposed 2040 General Plan to ensure consistency between the two plans. Therefore, because the 2040 General Plan would not conflict with the existing adopted policies, plans, and programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, as discussed above in the

2040 General Plan section under Impact Discussion TRANS-1, the 2023 CAP would also be consistent with existing adopted policies, plans, and programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP) is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would involve transportation, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

TRANS-2 Implementation of the proposed project could conflict with or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b).

2040 General Plan

As previously discussed, CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b) states for land use projects, "Vehicle miles traveled exceeding an applicable threshold of significance may indicate a significant impact." CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b)(4) states, "A lead agency has discretion to choose the most appropriate methodology to evaluate a project's vehicle miles traveled, including whether to express the change in absolute terms, per capita, per household or in any other measure." The City of Hollister's VMT impact thresholds and analysis guidelines were used as the basis of the analysis prepared for the proposed project by Kimley Horn and Associates, which is provided in Appendix F, *Transportation Data*, of this Draft EIR. VMT is measured by VMT per Capita (Residential), VMP per Employee (Office), and VMT per Employee (Industrial) for four scenarios: 2019 Existing (No Project), 2019 Existing Plus Project, 2040 MTP (No Project), and 2040 Plus Project. For Residential, Industrial, and Office land uses, the AMBAG RTDM was used as the primary tool to determine VMT. The AMBAG RTDM contains a base year of 2015 and future year of 2040, both of which were used to determine the VMT impact of the proposed Residential, Office, and Industrial land uses. Because Retail land uses typically redistribute shopping trips rather than generate new trips, VMT from Retail was analyzed qualitatively. A complete description of the methodology is provided in Appendix F, *Transportation Data*, of this Draft EIR.

Residential, Office, and Industrial VMT

Table 4.16-1, *VMT by Land Use and Scenario*, summarizes the VMT scenarios that were prepared for the proposed project. As shown in Table 4.16-1, implementation of the proposed project would exceed the

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City's VMT threshold of significance for VMT per Capita (Residential), VMT per Employee (Office), and VMT per Employee (Other).

TABLE 4.16 -1 VMT BY LAND USE AND SCENARIO

Scenario	VMT/Capita (Residential)	VMT/Employee (Office)	VMT/Employee (Other)
City Threshold	18.8	20.6	20.6
2019 Existing (No Project)	20.7	19.8	19.8
2019 Existing Plus Project [a]	16.8	14.2	22.1
2040 MTP (No Project) [a]	24.6	20.1	22.6
2040 Plus Project [a]	22.7	20.7	28.7
Over Threshold?			
2019 Existing (No Project)	Yes	No	No
2019 Existing Plus Project	No	No	Yes
2040 MTP (No Project)	Yes	No	Yes
2040 Plus Project	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note:
a. Calculated by using the weighted average of land use growth for each land use category.
Source: Kimley-Horn, 2023.

With respect to Retail VMT, local-serving retail primarily serves pre-existing needs (i.e., they do not generate new trips because they meet existing demand). Because of this, local-serving retail uses can be presumed to reduce trip lengths when a new store is proposed. Essentially, the assumption is that someone will travel to a newly constructed, local-serving store because of its proximity, rather than the proposed retail store fulfilling an unmet need (i.e., the person had an existing need that was met by the retail further away and is now traveling to the new retail use because it is closer to the person's origin location). This results in a trip on the roadway network becoming shorter, rather than a new trip being added to the roadway network, which would result in an impact to the overall transportation system. Conversely, Residential and Office land uses often drive new trips given that they introduce new participants to the transportation system. The City's SB 743 Implementation Guidelines provides for a general threshold of 50,000 square feet as an indicator as to whether a retail store can be considered local serving or not. Accordingly, potential future retail projects that are 50,000 square feet or less would not result in a significant VMT impact. As described in Section 4.16.1.2, *Regulatory Setting*, the threshold for significance for Retail VMT for projects greater than 50,000 square feet is any net increase over existing conditions. Therefore, if a proposed retail development is over 50,000 square feet and results in any additional VMT over the existing condition, the proposed retail project would result in a significant impact.

The proposed Circulation (C) Element contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider VMT. In addition to the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions listed under the Transit and Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities sections of Impact Discussion TRANS-1, which would serve to promote alternative modes of transportation, indirectly reducing VMT, the following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would also serve to minimize VMT impacts.

Goal C-1: Provide for a healthy, active community based on complete streets, reflecting a balanced, safe, multimodal transportation system for all users, where pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities will be emphasized along with vehicular facilities. (new)

- Policy C-1.4: Transportation Demand Management. Reduce single-occupant vehicle usage using Transportation Demand Management strategies. (new)
- Action C-1.1: Performance and Monitoring. Monitor the City's mode split progress on reducing VMT, and reducing GHG emissions from VMT, as data is available. (new)
- Action C-1.2: VMT Mitigation Banking Fee Program. Establish a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Mitigation Banking Fee Program. This program shall fund the construction of facilities throughout Hollister that support active transportation (cycling and walking) and transit ridership to mitigate VMT impacts from new development. (new)

Goal C-4: Implement a uniform set of standards for Hollister's transportation system including standard rights-of-way and typical sections. These standards may be amended as necessary in response to changes in technology and industry design standards. (Goal C-4)

- Policy C-4.6: TDM Requirements. Require new or existing developments that meet specific size, capacity, and/or context conditions to implement Transportation Demand Management strategies and other single vehicle occupancy reduction methodologies. Comply with tiered trip reduction and VMT reduction targets and monitoring that are consistent with the targets of the City's VMT CEQA thresholds. (new)

Given the lack of project-level specifics that are available at the proposed 2040 General Plan level, it is not possible to fully account for the effect of project-specific design principles, policies, and improvements that will reduce VMT as part of this program analysis. However, these VMT-reduction approaches, listed herein, are still important considerations in evaluating the results of this VMT analysis and as appropriate they should be accounted for in subsequent VMT evaluations of specific projects as they are proposed within the City of Hollister.

- VMT-Reducing Design Principles. Design elements of the proposed project that are VMT reducing may reduce project VMT. The following are considerations consistent with the proposed 2040 General Plan: compactness of design/transit-oriented development, a range of housing options, mixed uses, walkable community, a variety of transportation options, and the preservation of open space.
- Transit-Oriented Development. Potential transit improvements are planned along the SR 25 corridor with bus along the existing rail corridor, and commuter rail to accommodate future development projects. These transit services would help alleviate congestion along SR 25 by providing more efficient and reliable transit services to commuters.
- Mixed-Use Specific Principles. Mixed-Use combines two or more types of land uses into a building or set of buildings that are physically or functionally integrated. Mixed use, as planned for the General Plan, seeks to promote smart growth principles, including diversity and appropriate mix of uses, pedestrian orientation, community focal point, excellence in design, coordination of development strategies, and sustainability. The proposed 2040 General Plan includes guidance for specific use types (e.g., commercial, residential) and based on location (e.g., downtown, mixed-use/commercial areas) that contribute to favorable conditions for active transportation through denser development. As the

AMBAG RTDM does not include specific functionality to reflect the impact of many of the design principles outlined and the exact nature, location, and timing of these VMT-reducing considerations is not known, the additional impact of these design features will need to be evaluated at the individual project level rather than at the programmatic level. However, it should be noted that these considerations will have a material impact on development project analysis although it will vary on the location and design features selected.

- VMT-Reducing Policies and Improvements. Establish a framework for a programmatic approach to policies and improvements that respond to the need for feasible VMT mitigation within Hollister. Identified VMT mitigation opportunities for the City include:
  - Transportation Demand Measures (TDM). The following TDMs were identified as part of the preparation of the Hollister SB 743 Implementation Guidance as the potential basis for a programmatic approach to TDM implementation within Hollister: reduce parking supply, transit stops, mandatory travel behavior change program, promotions and marketing, emergency ride home program, bike share, implement on-street and on-site pedestrian facilities, implement/improve on-street and on-site bicycle facilities, and traffic-calming improvements.
  - Implementation of AMBAG's SB 375 Measures. Some of the key strategies identified in the AMBAG RTP/SCS that would apply to the Hollister General Plan include land use strategies, such as improve job-housing balance in the region, focus new growth around transit; and transportation strategies such as improve transit network, promote and improve active transportation, and promote shared mobility.
  - Multimodal Improvements. In terms of transit, the AMBAG model currently includes the Gilroy-Hollister Commuter Rail. It is reasonable to assume that at a minimum of a 4 percent mitigation effect would result if a supporting transit infrastructure, as are being planned along this route. It is likely the potential impact of transit may be higher given that SR 25 is not planned to be improved in the future and growth will continue to occur as shown in the AMBAG model.
  - Participation in a Predefined VMT Mitigation Bank. Programmatic approaches that rely on collectively funding larger infrastructure projects appear to hold great promise for VMT mitigation as they allow a project to obtain an amount of mitigation commensurate with their impact, include only a single payment without the complexity of ongoing management, and do not require ongoing mitigation monitoring. Programmatic approaches can also provide a public benefit in terms of funding transportation improvements that would not otherwise be constructed, resulting in improvements to congestion, GHG emissions, increased transportation choices, and additional opportunities for active transportation.

    Under a Predefined VMT Mitigation Program framework, a fixed set of VMT reducing projects are grouped together and their associated VMT reductions are monetized in the form of credits. These credits are then purchased for the purposes of mitigating VMT in excess of determined impact thresholds. The underlying projects may be either regionally or locally beneficial to the area in which the project is located. However, once the total amount of VMT available has been purchased by development projects, the program must be replenished with new projects and the cost per VMT is recalculated producing a new Predefined VMT Mitigation Program.

The City has started developing its own Predefined VMT Mitigation Program that will provide meaningful opportunities for development projects that might otherwise not have the ability to mitigate their impact. The Predefined VMT Mitigation Program will fund the construction of facilities that support active transportation (cycling and walking) and transit ridership to mitigate VMT impacts from new development. The set of facilities included in the program are fixed and include both bike trails, bike lanes, and mobility hubs. The projects included in this program focus on providing alternative mobility options throughout the City of Hollister to reduce vehicle trips. The program relies on a nexus evaluation to support the basis of the Predefined VMT Mitigation Program's development and monetization of the projects that are identified as part of this program. Once operational, a set amount of VMT is able to be purchased on a per VMT basis by development projects seeking to mitigate their VMT impact. Once the total amount of VMT has been purchased, or once the City determines the need to add additional projects to the program, the program will be replenished with new projects and the cost per VMT will be recalculated producing a new version of the City's Predefined VMT Mitigation Program.

While implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions, as well as the VMT-reduction approaches previously listed, would support VMT reduction, the buildout of the proposed project is anticipated to generate VMT in excess of the City's draft threshold. For the purposes of the EIR, the VMT impacts for the proposed 2040 General Plan are based on the 2040 Plus Project scenario. Accordingly, as shown in Table 4.16-1, impacts related to VMT per Capita (Residential), VMT per Employee (Office), and VMT per Employee (Other) would be potentially *significant*, as would Retail VMT, where potential future retail projects exceed 50,000 square feet.

Impact TRANS-2: Implementation of the proposed project would result in a significant vehicle miles traveled (VMT) impact for VMT per Capita (Residential), VMT per Employee (Office), VMT per Employee (Other), and Retail VMT over 50,000 square feet, due to forecasted land use growth through 2040, based on a comparison of the VMT rate increment for VMT to the corresponding average baseline rates for the San Benito County region.

Significance without Mitigation: Implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would ensure that VMT are reduced to the degree feasible. Policy C-1.4 requires the City to reduce single-occupant vehicle usage using TDM strategies. Action C-1.1 requires the City to monitor mode split progress on reducing VMT, and reducing GHG emissions from VMT, as data is available. Action C-1.2 requires the City to establish a VMT Mitigation Banking Fee Program to fund the construction of facilities that support active transportation and transit ridership to mitigate VMT impacts from new development. Policy C-4.6 requires new or existing developments that meet specific size, capacity, and/or context conditions to implement TDM strategies and other single-occupancy vehicle reduction methodologies. Compliance with tiered trip reduction and VMT reduction targets and monitoring that are consistent with the targets of the City's VMT CEQA thresholds is also required. In addition, as listed under Impact Discussion TRANS-1, the City has numerous policies to promote safe and user-friendly transit and improve the bicycle and pedestrian network in Hollister, all which would serve to promote alternative forms of transportation and reduce VMT.

Furthermore, as previously described, given the lack of specifics that are available for this program-level EIR, it is not possible to fully account for the effect of specific design principles, policies, and improvements that will reduce VMT as part of this analysis. Although many of the VMT-reducing design principles, policies, and improvements that are described in the prior section may ultimately mitigate and/or potentially reduce the VMT impacts outlined in this evaluation, necessary details to ensure implementation and appropriately evaluate their effect are not yet available. While some of the approaches to VMT reduction described in the prior section are supportive of existing City policies and guidelines, the VMT-reducing approaches cited would require further planning and development as well as committed funding sources, including those from participants in the development community (many of which may not be identified yet as large areas of land may be further subdivided into specific projects and developments). As such, it is reasonable to conclude that the findings of this analysis reflect a worst-case scenario for this program EIR. This program-level land use impact for VMT does not preclude the finding of less-than-significant impacts for subsequent development projects that achieve applicable VMT thresholds of significance. However, due to the programmatic nature of the proposed project, no additional mitigation measures are available, and the impact is considered *significant and unavoidable*.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. The proposed 2023 CAP includes Strategy 10, which directs the City to decrease community-wide VMT and associated transportation-related emissions through implementing certain actions. The proposed Strategy 10 Actions would encourage use of alternative modes of transportation and overall reduce trips and associated VMT. Thus, implementation of the proposed 2023 CAP would result in beneficial impacts towards VMT reduction. Because the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land uses changes that would result in an increase in VMT, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b), and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would involve transportation, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b), and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

TRANS-3	**Implementation of the proposed project would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment).**

2040 General Plan

Future potential development under the proposed 2040 General Plan would modify the existing transportation network to accommodate existing and future users that could change existing travel patterns or traveler expectations. The proposed project includes recommendations to widen Sunnyslope Road, Union Road, SR 25, and Fairview Road and extend Westside Boulevard, Westside Road, Memorial Drive, Pacific Way, Flynn Road, Meridian Street, and Beresini Lane. The City requires the modification of existing public facilities or that the construction of new facilities comply with the applicable design standards contained in the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and the California Highway Design Manual, which have been developed to minimize the potential for conflicts or collisions.

Roadway hazards are typically assessed at the project level. Potential hazards associated with future development projects under the proposed 2040 General Plan would be analyzed and evaluated in detail through the project-specific environmental review process or during project application review. Prior to the construction of streets, highways, alleys, traffic signals, and related public improvements, the City of Hollister Public Works Department is to review and approve plans according to construction standards and specifications.

While growth within the EIR Study Area would result in changes to the existing transportation network, the proposed Circulation (C) Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to transportation facilities. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would support the design of a transportation system that is safe for all modes of travel.

Goal C-1: Provide for a healthy, active community based on complete streets, reflecting a balanced, safe, multimodal transportation system for all users, where pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities will be emphasized along with vehicular facilities. (new)

- Policy C-1.2: Complete Streets. Apply complete streets design standards to future projects in the public rights-of-way. Complete streets are streets designed to facilitate safe, comfortable, and efficient travel for all users regardless of age or ability or whether they are walking, bicycling, taking transit, or driving. (new)
- Policy C-1.6: Public Transit Improvements. Promote public realm improvements that support increased use of public transit, including inviting sidewalks, ADA-compliant curb ramps, signal priorities, and amenities such as sidewalks, benches, bus stop shelters, signage, street lighting, and real-time schedule systems on key routes. (new)
- Action C-1.3: Complete Streets Plan. Create and adopt a citywide Complete Streets Plan. (new)

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Goal C-3: Build and maintain a safe, connected, and equitable pedestrian, bicycle and micromobility network that provides access to community destinations such as employment centers, transit, schools, shopping, and recreation. (new)

- Policy C-3.2: Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections. Work with local businesses, private developers, and public agencies to ensure provision of safe pedestrian pathways and bicycle connections to major public facilities, schools, and employment centers. Require new development to provide internal pedestrian connections and linkages to adjacent neighborhoods and community facilities. (Policy C2.3)
- Policy C-3.3: Pedestrian Right-of-Way Improvements. Require new developments to construct or contribute to improvements that enhance the pedestrian experience including human-scale lighting, streetscaping, crosswalk striping, crossing lights, wayfinding signage, and accessible sidewalks adjacent to the site. (new)
- Policy C-3.4: Pedestrian Connectivity. Incorporate design for pedestrian connectivity across intersections in transportation projects to improve visibility at cross walks for pedestrians and provide safe interaction with other modes. Design improvements should focus on increasing sight lines and removing conflicts at cross walks. (new)
- Policy C-3.5: Bicycle Improvements. Require new developments to construct or contribute to improvements that enhance the cyclist experience, including bike lanes and bicycle parking. (new)
- Action C-3.1: Pedestrian Master Plan. Prepare and adopt a Pedestrian Master Plan that identifies citywide pedestrian network improvements. (new)
- Action C-3.2: Pedestrian Amenities. Study the feasibility of installing pedestrian amenities such as trees, lighting, recycling and refuse containers, benches, art, etc. in the pedestrian areas along public frontages and in public rights-of-way. (new)
- Action C-3.3: Bicycle Master Plan. Prepare and adopt a Bicycle Master Plan that identifies citywide bicycle network improvements. (new)
- Action C-3.4: Implement Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements. Prioritize implementation of goals, programs, and projects that improve the comfort, safety, and connectivity of the pedestrian and bicycle network. (new)
- Action C-3.6: Walkability Through Design Review. Adopt objective standards for appropriate sidewalk and pedestrian trail design in new development projects. (Implementation Measure C.G)

Goal C-4: Implement a uniform set of standards for Hollister's transportation system including standard rights-of-way and typical sections. These standards may be amended as necessary in response to changes in technology and industry design standards. (Goal C4)

- Policy C-4.1: LOS C or Better Arterial Roads. Ensure, to the maximum extent feasible, that the designated arterial roadway system is planned to operate at Level of Service (LOS) C or better during peak and off-peak hours as of the horizon year of the adopted General Plan except for the Downtown where LOS can be lower than LOS C, airport/industrial area, SR 25 corridor, and the intersection of San Benito Street and Nash Road/Tres Pinos Road near San Benito High School. (Policy C1.1)

- Policy C-4.2: Downtown LOS. There is no LOS standard in most of the Downtown area, as mapped in Figure C-5, so as to encourage a walkable, vibrant Downtown. However, a standard of LOS D shall be applied at the following locations:
  - 4th Street and Monterey Street
  - 4th Street and San Benito Street
  - 4th Street and Sally Street
  - South Street and San Benito Street (new)
- Policy C-4.3: North Industrial Area LOS. LOS D is allowable in the northern industrial area, as mapped in Figure C-6, so as to facilitate the City's goal of increasing local jobs and strengthening the local economy. (new)
- Policy C-4.4: State Route 25 Corridor LOS. LOS D is allowable for intersections along the State Route 25 corridor because the high volumes of interregional traffic make it very difficult to maintain a higher LOS on this highway. However, a standard of LOS E shall be applied at North Street/Santa Ana Road and San Felipe Road/San Benito Street and a standard of LOS F shall be applied at SR 25 and San Felipe Road and SR 25 and Union Road. (new)
- Policy C-4.5: Intersection of San Benito Street and Nash Road/Tres Pinos Road LOS. LOS D is acceptable at the intersection of San Benito Street and Nash Road/Tres Pinos Road, due to high volumes of traffic associated with San Benito High School. (new)
- Policy C-4.6: TDM Requirements. Require new or existing developments that meet specific size, capacity, and/or context conditions to implement Transportation Demand Management strategies and other single vehicle occupancy reduction methodologies. Comply with tiered trip reduction and VMT reduction targets and monitoring that are consistent with the targets of the City's VMT CEQA thresholds. (new)
- Policy C-4.7: Roundabouts. Encourage the use of roundabouts at existing intersections with capacity, efficiency, or safety problems, as feasible, as a strategy to improve street safety and traffic flow. Where feasible, prioritize roundabouts over stoplights. (new)
- Action C-4.1: LOS Levels. Monitor the LOS for intersections along the arterial roadways at least once every two years to ensure compliance with the City's LOS standards. This information shall be presented to the City Council for their use in evaluating amendments to the City's transportation plan. (Implementation Measure C.E)

Implementation of these proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would promote the design of improvements to the transportation network that are safe for all modes of travel. Compliance with state regulations on roadway and facility design, materials, and signage would further minimize this impact. Implementation of the proposed project would not substantially increase hazards due to a design feature or incompatible uses that may have a significant impact on the environment and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. The proposed 2023 CAP includes Strategy 11, which directs the City to ensure the community has safe and connected opportunities for bicycling and walking and Strategy 12, which directs the City to support regional agencies in ensuring that K-12 students in Hollister have pollution-free, safe, and accessible modes to get to and from school. The proposed Strategy 11 Actions would ensure safe design of bicycle and pedestrian facilities and the proposed Strategy 12 Actions would ensure safe routes to get to and from school. Thus, implementation of the proposed 2023 CAP would result in beneficial impacts to transportation design. Because the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would negatively impact transportation design or uses, implementation the proposed project would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible uses and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would involve transportation, implementation of the proposed project would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible uses and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

TRANS-4 Implementation of the proposed project would not result in inadequate emergency access.

2040 General Plan

Future potential development that could occur during the buildout of the proposed 2040 General Plan would alter land use patterns and increase travel demand on the transportation network that may influence emergency access. Like roadway hazards, emergency access is typically assessed at the project level, and potential impacts to emergency access associated with future development projects would be analyzed and evaluated in detail through the environmental review process or during project application review. Prior to the construction of streets, highways, alleys, traffic signals, and related public improvements, the City of Hollister Public Works Department reviews and needs to approve plans according to construction standards and specifications to ensure adequate emergency access.

While growth within the EIR Study Area would result in changes to land use and the existing transportation network, the Health and Safety (HS) Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals and

policies that require local planning and development decisions to consider improvements to transportation efficiency, mobility, and access, including developing and updating emergency response plans. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to minimize impacts to emergency access.

Goal HS-1: Protect community health and safety from natural and human-caused hazards. (Goal HS1)

- Policy HS-1.1: Location of Future Development. Permit development only in areas where potential danger to the health, safety, and welfare of the community can be adequately mitigated. This includes prohibiting development that would be subject to severe flood damage or geological hazard due to its location and/or design and that cannot be mitigated to safe levels.

  Development also shall be prohibited where emergency services, including fire protection, cannot be provided. (Policy HS1.1)

Goal HS-6: Minimize potential damage to life, environment, and property through timely, well-prepared, and well-coordinated emergency preparedness response plans and programs. (new)

- Policy HS-6.1: Emergency Planning Document Coordination. Pursue integration of the City's safety and emergency management documents, including this Health and Safety Element, the San Benito County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, and other related documents. (new)
- Policy HS-6.2: San Benito County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Incorporate the current San Benito County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan into this Safety Element by reference, as permitted by California Government Code Section 65302.6 to ensure that emergency response and evacuation routes are accessible throughout the city. (new)
- Policy HS-6.7: Access for Emergency Vehicles. Provide adequate access for emergency vehicles and equipment, including providing a second means of ingress and egress to all development. (Policy HS2.4)
- Action HS-6.3: Emergency Evacuation Routes. Conduct education and outreach in conjunction with the County of San Benito, through multiple formats and media, to make evacuation routes known to the public. (Implementation Measure HS.M)
- Action HS-6.4: County Emergency Plan Update. Coordinate with the County of San Benito to prepare a Hollister Emergency Operations Plan as an annex to the County's Emergency Operations Plan, and coordinate updates no less than every five years. (Implementation Measure HS.S)

Implementation of these goals, policies, and actions would address emergency access by considering access routes, developing and updating emergency response plans, and incorporating emergency access considerations in the design of future street improvements. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in inadequate emergency access that may have a significant impact on the environment and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Since the proposed 2023 CAP does not involve any land use changes that would alter emergency access roads, implementation of the proposed project would not result in inadequate emergency access and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would involve transportation, implementation of the proposed project would not result in inadequate emergency access and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

TRANS-5 Implementation of the proposed project could, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to transportation.

2040 General Plan

The context of the impact evaluation described under Impact Discussions TRANS-1 through TRANS-4 are described in the cumulative context of the region and no further discussion of cumulative impacts is required. As described, impacts related to bus transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and roadways in the EIR Study Area would be less than significant, as would those associated with emergency access and roadway hazards. However, impacts associated with regional VMT would be significant and unavoidable. Future potential development under the proposed 2040 General Plan would contribute to an increase in VMT in the EIR Study Area, as shown in Table 4.16-1. Therefore, the impact on VMT would be cumulatively considerable.

Impact TRANS-5: Implementation of the proposed project would cumulatively contribute to regional vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

Significance without Mitigation: Even with the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions described under Impact Discussion TRANS-2, the effectiveness of VMT-reduction strategies is not certain. As such, the cumulative impact on VMT is considered *significant and unavoidable.*

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. As discussed under Impact Discussions TRANS-2 and TRANS-3, the proposed 2023 CAP includes Strategies 10, 11, and 12, which would support VMT reduction and safe transportation design. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to transportation.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP does not involve any land use changes that would not involve transportation, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to transportation.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

TRANSPORTATION

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4.17 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

This chapter describes the potential impacts to the utilities and service system associated with the approval and implementation of the proposed project. Specifically, water supply, wastewater, stormwater, solid waste, and energy infrastructure are each addressed in separate sections of this chapter. This chapter describes the regulatory framework and existing conditions, identifies criteria used to determine impact significance, provides an analysis of the potential utilities and service system impacts, and identifies General Plan policies that could minimize any potentially significant impacts. Impacts related to energy supply and demand are addressed in Chapter 4.6, *Energy*, of this Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

4.17.1 WATER

4.17.1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Regulatory Framework

Federal Regulations

Federal Safe Drinking Water Act

The Safe Drinking Water Act, the principal federal law intended to ensure safe drinking water to the public, was enacted in 1974 and has been amended several times. The Safe Drinking Water Act authorizes the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to set national standards for drinking water, called the National Primary Drinking Water Regulations, to protect against both naturally occurring and human-made contaminants. These standards set enforceable maximum contaminant levels in drinking water and require all water providers in the United States to treat water to remove contaminants, except for private wells serving fewer than 25 people. In California, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) conducts most enforcement activities. If a water system does not meet standards, it is the water supplier's responsibility to notify its customers.

America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018

America's Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA), signed into law on October 23, 2018, authorizes federal funding for water infrastructure projects, expands water storage capabilities, assists local communities in complying with the Safe Drinking Water Act and Clean Water Act (CWA), reduces flooding risks for rural, western, and coastal communities, and addresses significant water infrastructure needs in tribal communities.[1] Additionally, AWIA requires that drinking water systems that serve more than 3,300 people develop or update risk assessments and emergency response plans. Risk assessments and emergency response plans must be certified by the USEPA within the deadline specified by the AWIA.

[1] John Barasso, October 10, 2018, *Congress Passes America's Water Infrastructure Act*, https://www.barrasso.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/10/congress-passes-america-s-water-infrastructure-act.

State Regulations

Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, which was passed in California in 1969 and amended in 2013, is the basic water quality control law for California. Under this Act, the SWRCB has authority over State water rights and water quality policy. This Act divided the state into nine regional basins, each under the jurisdiction of a Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) to oversee water quality on a day-to-day basis at the local and regional level. RWQCBs engage in a number of water quality functions in their respective regions. RWQCBs regulate all pollutant or nuisance discharges that may affect either surface water or groundwater. Hollister is within the jurisdiction of the Central Coast RWQCB (Region 3).

California Urban Water Management Planning Act

The California Urban Water Management Planning Act and Section 10620 of the California Water Code requires all urban water suppliers in California that provide water for municipal purposes to more than 3,000 customers or supply more than 3,000 acre-feet[2] of water annually must prepare and adopt an urban water management plan (UWMP) and update it every five years. This act is intended to support conservation and efficient use of urban water supplies at the local level. The UWMP describes the service area of the water supplier; projected 20-year water supply and demand for the service area in normal years, dry years and multiple dry years; and water recycling strategies.

Senate Bills 610 and 221

Senate Bill (SB) 610 and SB 221 amended State law to ensure better coordination between local water supply and land use decisions and confirm that there is an adequate water supply for new development. Specific projects are required to prepare a water supply assessment (WSA). The WSA is composed of information regarding existing and forecast water demands as well as information pertaining to available water supplies for the new development. The following projects that are subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) are required to prepare a WSA:

- Residential developments consisting of more than 500 dwelling units.
- Shopping center or business establishment employing more than 1,000 persons or having more than 500,000 square feet of floor space.
- Commercial office building employing more than 1,000 persons or having more than 250,000 square feet of floor space.
- Hotel or motel, or both, having more than 500 rooms.
- Industrial, manufacturing, or processing plant or industrial park planned to employ more than 1,000 persons, occupying more than 40 acres of land, or having more than 650,000 square feet of floor area.
- Mixed-use project that includes one or more of the projects specified above.

[2] 1 acre-foot is the amount of water required to cover 1 acre of ground (43,560 square feet) to a depth of 1 foot.

- Project that would demand an amount of water equivalent to, or greater than, the amount of water required for 500 dwelling units.

SB 221 requires written verification that there is sufficient water supply available for new residential subdivisions that include over 500 dwelling units. The verification must be provided before commencement of construction for the project.

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014

On September 16, 2014, a three-bill legislative package was signed into law, composed of AB 1739, SB 1168, and SB 1319, collectively known as the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.[3] The Governor's signing message states "a central feature of these bills is the recognition that groundwater management in California is best accomplished locally." Under the roadmap laid out by the legislation, local and regional authorities in medium and high priority groundwater basins must form groundwater sustainability agencies that oversee the preparation and implementation of groundwater sustainability plans.

Hollister is within the North San Benito Subbasin, which has been designated a medium priority groundwater basin and is not in critical overdraft. A groundwater sustainability plan for the North San Benito Subbasin was prepared in 2021 by the San Benito County Water District (SBCWD) and Valley Water, who are the designated groundwater sustainability agencies. The Department of Water Resources (DWR) is currently reviewing the plan for adequacy.

Water Conservation in Landscaping Act of 2006

The Water Conservation in Landscaping Act of 2006 (Assembly Bill [AB] 1881) required the DWR to update the State Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELO) by 2009. The State's model ordinance was issued on October 8, 2009. Under AB 1881, cities and counties are required to adopt a State updated model landscape water conservation ordinance by January 31, 2010, or to adopt a different ordinance that is at least as effective in conserving water as the updated MWELO.

The MWELO was revised in July 2015 via Executive Order B-29-15 to address the ongoing drought and to build resiliency for future droughts. The 2015 revisions to the MWELO increased water efficiency standards for new and retrofitted landscapes through more efficient irrigation systems, greywater usage, and on-site stormwater capture and by limiting the portion of landscapes that can be covered in turf.

The City adopts the MWELO, as specified in Chapter 15.22, *Water Efficient Landscape*, of the Ordinance Code. The City requires completion of a water efficient landscape application for any new construction with 500 square feet or more of landscape, or rehabilitated landscape of 2,500 square feet or more that requires a building permit, plan check, or design review. The Hollister Planning Division reviews all landscape plans to verify compliance with the code requirements.

[3] Department of Water ResourcesSGMA Data Viewer, https://sgma.water.ca.gov/webgis/?appid=SGMADataViewer#gwlevels, accessed on January 5, 2023.

California Building Code: CALGreen

The California Building Standards Commission adopted the California Green Building Standards Code, also known as CALGreen. As part of the California Building Code, CALGreen is in California Code of Regulations, Part 11 of Title 24. CALGreen establishes building standards for sustainable site development, including water efficiency and water conservation measures. New residential and non-residential development must install water conserving plumbing fixtures and fittings and comply with the MWELO for outdoor water use. The building efficiency standards are enforced through the local building permit process. The mandatory provisions of CALGreen became effective January 1, 2011.

In addition, pursuant to CALGreen Section 5.408, at least 65 percent of the nonhazardous construction and demolition waste from residential and nonresidential construction operations must be recycled and/or salvaged for reuse. The City has regularly adopted each new CALGreen update under the Hollister Municipal Code (HMC), Title 15, Buildings and Construction, Chapter 15.04, *Hollister Building Code*. CALGreen is updated on a three-year cycle.

Recycled Water Regulations

Two State agencies have primary responsibility for regulating the application and use of recycled water: the California Department of Public Health and the SWRCB. Planning and implementing water recycling projects entail numerous interactions with these regulatory agencies prior to project approval. The California Department of Public Health establishes the statewide effluent bacteriological and treatment reliability standards for recycled water uses in California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 4, Environmental Health. Title 22 establishes standards for each general type of use based on the potential for human contact with recycled water. The SWRCB is responsible for establishing and enforcing requirements for the application and use of recycled water within California. Permits are required from the SWRCB for a water recycling operation. As part of the permit application process, applicants are required to demonstrate that the proposed recycled water operation would not exceed the ground and surface water quality objectives in the basin management plan and that the operation is compliant with Title 22 requirements. A small amount of recycled water (100 acre-feet per year [afy] in 2020) for landscape irrigation is attributed to land uses from the city of Hollister.

California Health and Safety Code

A portion of the California Health and Safety Code is dedicated to water issues, including testing and maintenance of backflow prevention devices, coloring of pipes carrying recycled water, and programs addressing cross-connection control by water users.

California Plumbing Code

The California Plumbing Code was adopted as part of the California Building Code (CBC) and specifies technical standards of design, materials, workmanship, and maintenance for plumbing systems. The CBC is updated on a three-year cycle; the latest edition is dated 2022 and is effective as of January 1, 2023. One of the purposes of the plumbing code is to prevent conflicting plumbing codes within local jurisdictions. Among many topics covered in the code are water fixtures, potable and nonpotable water systems, and

recycled water systems. The City of Hollister adopts the California Plumbing Code under HMC Section 15.04.050, *Construction Codes Adopted by Reference.*

California Water Code

The California Water Code states that the water resources of the State must be put to beneficial use and that waste or unreasonable use of water should be prevented. The Water Code contains statutes regarding various water-related issues, including flood control, water rights, riparian rights, water quality, and the formation of municipal water districts.

Water Conservation Act of 2009

The Water Conservation Act of 2009 (SB X7-7) requires all water suppliers to increase water use efficiency. The legislation set an overall goal of reducing per capita water use by 20 percent by 2020, with an interim goal of a 10 percent reduction in per capita water use by 2015. Effective in 2016, urban retail water suppliers who do not meet the water conservation requirements established by this bill are not eligible for State water grants or loans. SB X7-7 requires that urban water retail suppliers determine baseline water use and set reduction targets according to specified standards.

2018 Water Conservation Legislation

In 2018, the California Legislature enacted two policy bills (SB 606 and AB 1668) to establish long-term improvements in water conservation and drought planning to adapt to climate change and longer and more intense droughts in California. The DWR and the SWRCB will develop new standards for:

- Indoor residential water use
- Outdoor residential water use
- Commercial, industrial, and institutional (CII) water use for landscape irrigation with dedicated meters
- Water loss

Urban water suppliers would be required to stay within annual water budgets, based on their standards for their service areas, and to calculate and report their urban water use objectives in an annual water use report. For example, the bills define a daily standard for indoor residential use of 55 gallons per person until 2025, when it decreases to 52.5 gallons and further decreases to 50 gallons by 2030. The legislation also includes changes to UWMP preparation requirements.

Mandatory Water Conservation

Following the declaration of a state of emergency on July 15, 2014, due to drought conditions, the SWRCB adopted Resolution No. 2014-0038 for emergency regulation of statewide water conservation efforts. These regulations, which went into effect on August 1, 2014, were intended to reduce outdoor urban water use and have all California households voluntarily reduce their water consumption by 20 percent. Water companies with 3,000 or more service connections were required to report monthly water consumption to the SWRCB. Most recently, Executive Order N-7-22 was issued by the State in March 2022 to adopt emergency water conservation regulations that include the following:

- Each urban water supplier shall submit to DWR an annual water supply and demand assessment.

- Urban water suppliers shall implement Level 2 restrictions from their water shortage contingency plans for water savings up to 20 percent.
- A ban on watering of nonfunctional turf shall be implemented in the commercial, industrial, and institutional sectors.
- A county, city, or public agency shall not approve a permit for a new groundwater well in a basin that is classified as medium or high priority under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act without obtaining written verification from the Groundwater Sustainability Agency, and shall determine that the proposed extraction would not interfere with existing nearby wells and would not likely cause subsidence. This does not apply to domestic wells that provide less than 2 afy of groundwater or wells that exclusively provide groundwater to public water supply systems.

SWRCB Division of Drinking Water

The California Division of Drinking Water regulates public water systems within California; oversees water recycling projects; permits water treatment devices; and supports and promotes water system security. The Division of Financial Assistance provides funding opportunities for drinking water system improvements; provides support for small water systems and for improving technical, managerial, and financial capacity; and certifies drinking water treatment and distribution operators. The Field Operations Branch of the Division of Drinking Water is responsible for the enforcement of the federal and California Safe Drinking Water Acts and the regulatory oversight of approximately 7,500 public water systems to ensure the delivery of safe drinking water to all Californians. In this capacity, Field Operations Branch staff perform field inspections, issue operating permits, review plans and specifications for new facilities, take enforcement actions for noncompliance with laws and regulations, review water quality monitoring results, and support and promote water system security.

Regional Regulations

Water Resources Association San Benito County

The Water Resources Association of San Benito County (WRA) is a non-profit corporation that represents the City of Hollister, City of San Juan Bautista, Sunnyslope County Water District (SSCWD), and the SBCWD by providing water conservation and water resource protection programs. The WRA uses these tools to assist in lowering water use:

- Incentives. Toilet replacement program (rebates and free toilets), landscape irrigation hardware rebates, turf removal program, free water-wise landscape plans, water softener assistance and rebate program, free conservation devices, and home water checkups.
- Education. Newspaper articles on conservation, flyers and brochures in water bills, water conservation website, school programs that includes field trips to a water treatment plant and wastewater facility, and a Water Awareness Festival in May.

Memorandum of Understanding Between the City, County, SBCWD, and SSCWD

In 2004, the City of Hollister, County of San Benito, and SBCWD entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to coordinate and address water and wastewater management. In 2008, the MOU

was updated and the SSCWD also became a partner in the agreement. The 2008 MOU set the foundation for the 2008 *Hollister Urban Area Water and Wastewater Master Plan* (WWMP) and included goals to enhance water supply/quality and coordinate water and wastewater improvements. The MOU also provided a framework for the partners to coordinate with one another on future growth and regional issues. The WWMP was updated in 2017 and provides a long-term vision for water, wastewater, and recycled water management actions and infrastructure improvements to ensure good water quality and reliability. A new MOU was issued in 2021, which now includes the City of San Jan Bautista, to prepare a water supply master plan update to ensure the successful development and implementation of future water projects in San Benito County.[4] SBCWD will continue to be the lead agency responsible for providing water supply to meet future urban demands.

Local Regulations

Hollister Municipal Code

The HMC includes directives to ensure the efficient use of water within the city. The HMC is organized by title, chapter, and section. Most provisions related to water supply and conservation are included in Title 8, *Health and Safety*; Title 13, *Public Services*; and Title 15, *Buildings and Construction.*

- Chapter 8.38, ***Water Softeners***. This chapter states that it is unlawful to install or replace a self-regenerating water softener that removes calcium and magnesium salts by using an ion-exchange resin that uses sodium chloride or potassium chloride.
- Chapter 13.06, ***Hollister Water Reclamation Facility***. The chapter establishes rules and regulations by which the discharge of hauled liquid waste shall be permitted at the Hollister Water Reclamation Facility. It also provides requirements governing the use and distribution of recycled water, as per the City of Hollister Recycled Water Use Manual and Rules of Service and establishes the procedure for determining recycled water rates.
- Chapter 13.08, ***Water Service System***. This chapter provides the fees for water service and installation of water meters, the cost of extensions, requirements to prevent cross-connections and backflow, and water use regulations to prevent the nonessential and wasteful use of water within the city.
- Chapter 15.04, ***Hollister Building Code***. The City adopts the latest California Plumbing Code and Green Building Standards Code by reference.
- Chapter 15.22, ***Water Efficient Landscaping***. In compliance with the State's MWELO requirements, this chapter specifies the City's requirements for new and rehabilitated landscape projects. Projects that meet the square footage requirements must submit a landscape application package to the City that includes a water efficient landscape worksheet, soil management report, landscape design plan, irrigation design plan, and grading design plan for review and approval prior to the start of construction.

[4] City of Hollister, 2021. Resolution No. 2021-162. Memorandum of Understanding, San Benito County Urban Area Water Supply Master Plan.

UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Hollister Urban Area 2020 Urban Water Management Plan

Based on State regulations (see above), all water suppliers must submit a UWMP every five years to the California DWR in accordance with California Water Code requirements. The 2020 Hollister Urban Area UWMP (2020 UWMP) was prepared as a collaborative effort between the City of Hollister, the SSCWD, and the SBCWD. The 2020 UWMP was prepared in accordance with the Urban Water Management Planning Act and guidelines prepared by the DWR. The 2020 UWMP is intended to help guide the area's future water management efforts.[5] The 2020 UWMP describes water demands, available water supply sources, and supply reliability for its service area in five-year increments for normal years, single-dry years, and multiple-dry years up to year 2040. The 2020 UWMP also provides a water shortage contingency plan, demand management measures to increase water use efficiency, and current and planned water conservation efforts.

Hollister Water Distribution System Master Plan

The Water Distribution System Master Plan provides an overview of the City's existing water distribution system, the City's service and EIR Study Area boundaries, land uses, existing and future population projections, and the City's existing and projected water demands. The Water Distribution System Master Plan also provides a hydraulic model to evaluate the water distribution system and storage facilities and recommends a capital improvement program to address existing deficiencies and future needs.[6]

City of Hollister Design Standards

The construction of water systems within the City's service area shall conform to the City's requirements pursuant to Section 6 of the City's Design Standards. The design standards require calculations for pressure in the system, corrosive soil determination, pipe materials, cover requirements, valves, fire hydrants, and backflow prevention devices. All improvements, including extensions, replacements, and repairs, shall also conform to these design standards.[7]

Sunnyslope County Water District Water Construction Details and Standards

For areas of the city served by the SSCWD, new water systems must comply with design standards specified in the "Water Construction Notes" document. The document includes construction materials of water main pipes and the design details for meter boxes, fire hydrants, water service, backflow prevention devices, and water main tie-ins. All water system extensions, replacements, and repairs shall also conform to these standards.

[5] Todd Groundwater, 2021. *2020 Hollister Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan.* Dated July 2021.

[6] Wallace Group, 2018*. City of Hollister Final Water Distribution System Master Plan*, http://hollister.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/City-of-Hollister-Water-Distribution-System-Master-Plan.pdf accessed January 6, 2023.

[7] City of Hollister, November 2019. *City of Hollister Design Standards/Standard Specifications, Standard Plans,* http://hollister.ca.gov/government/city-departments/engineering/engineering-standards/, accessed January 6, 2023.

Hollister Domestic Water Reclamation Facility Waste Discharge Requirements

Wastewater discharge requirements for the City's Domestic Water Reclamation Facility, operated by Veolia, are detailed in the RWQCB's Order No. R3-2008-0069, issued in 2008. The order contains restrictions on individual pollutants (turbidity and total coliform concentrations) and monitoring and reporting requirements. The permit also requires preparation and implementation of a nutrient management plan, a long-term salinity management program, and procedures for individual recycled water use permits.[8]

Existing Conditions

There are two municipal water purveyors that serve the EIR Study Area: the City of Hollister and the SSCWD. The City of Hollister provides water to the western and northern portion of the EIR Study Area; the SSCWD provides water to the eastern portion of the EIR Study Area. The SBCWD is the wholesale water provider to the City of Hollister and SSCWD and supplies surface water from the Central Valley Project (CVP). The SBCWD also has the responsibility and authority to manage groundwater in San Benito County. In addition, the WRA coordinates and conducts water conservation programs for the member agencies within the EIR Study Area.

Water Distribution System

The City of Hollister and SSCWD provide water to the city and the surrounding area via two separate water distribution systems, as shown in Figure 4.17-1, *Water Service Areas.* The City supplies water service and fire suppression to approximately half of the Hollister residents in the western and northern portions of the city. The existing water distribution system is shown on Figure 4.17-3, *Water Distribution System Major Facilities.* The water distribution system consists of three distribution zones, three potable water storage tanks, one booster station, five pressure reducing valves that serve the three distribution zones, and one additional pressure reducing valve that serves Riverview Estates south of the city limits. The City owns and operates approximately 90 miles of water mains for transmission and distribution. Water main diameters range from 4 to 18 inches and are constructed of cast iron and PVC. The City maintains eight groundwater wells, three of which are inactive. Three groundwater wells operate within the city limits, and two groundwater wells feed the Cienega Valley south of the city limits.[9]

The City's water storage facilities include two water storage tanks at Park Hill with a total capacity of 5.5 million gallons (MG). The City also owns and operates the 0.5 MG Sally Flats Reservoir located south of the City's boundary that serves Riverview Estates. There is also a 0.5 MG clearwell at SSCWD's West Hills water treatment plant that provides additional storage.[10]

[8] Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, December 2008, *Master Reclamation Requirements for the City of Hollister Domestic Water Recycling Facility,* https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_decisions/adopted_orders/2008/2008_0069_master_wrr.pdf, accessed January 6, 2023.

[9] Wallace Group, August 2018, *Final Water Distribution System Master Plan*, accessed January 6, 2023.

[10] Wallace Group, August 2018. *Final Water Distribution System Master Plan*.

SSCWD provides water service to residences on the eastern side of Hollister and some of the surrounding areas of unincorporated San Benito County. The SSCWD serves over 6,400 connections, primarily residential (98 percent), and operates five active wells that extract groundwater from the North San Benito Groundwater Subbasin.[11] The City and SSCWD share six intertie connections, which allow flow from the City's distribution system to SSCWD and vice versa.[12]

Water Supply Sources

The City of Hollister and SSCWD rely on both local groundwater and imported water from the CVP for municipal water supply. The SBCWD purchases water from the CVP, which is conveyed through the Hollister Conduit to San Justo Reservoir, southwest of the City. The SBCWD is the imported water wholesaler for Zone 6, which includes the EIR Study Area. In 2020, the SBCWD provided 4,391 acre-feet (AF) of surface water to the city of Hollister and SSCWD.

Water treatment of the CVP surface water is provided by the Lessalt Water Treatment Plant (WTP) and West Hills WTP. The two WTPs are owned by SBCWD and operated under contract by the SSCWD. The Lessalt WTP treats CVP water obtained from the Hollister Conduit. It was upgraded in 2015 and consists of membrane filtration, granular activated carbon filtration, treatment to remove iron and manganese, and disinfection. The Lessalt WRP operational capacity is approximately 2.0 million gallons per day (mgd) or 2,240 afy.[13]

The West Hills WTP also treats CVP surface water obtained from the San Justo Reservoir and is then supplied to the City and SSCWD. The West Hills WTP, constructed in 2017, consists of ballasted flocculation, dual media gravity filtration, and disinfection treatment. The treated surface water is blended into the City's distribution system at City Well No. 4 South and City Well No. 5 Nash.[14] The treatment capacity is 4.5 mgd, or approximately 7,280 afy. The WTP has the capacity to expand to treat up to 9 mgd.

The SBCWD also manages San Justo Reservoir as storage for imported CVP water. During periods when the allocation is greater than the demand, the SBCWD can take delivery of additional CVP water to put into storage and use as a supplemental supply during dry years. The SBCWD planned reserve is 5,000 acre-feet plus additional CVP transfers and exchanges, which would be sufficient to provide supply (in addition to groundwater) for up to five years.[15]

Since the initiation of CVP-imported surface water, the expansion of the Lessalt WTP, and the recent completion of the West Hill WTP, the use of groundwater for municipal and industrial supply has declined. In 2020, groundwater pumped by the City of Hollister and SSCWD totaled 1,919 acre-feet, with each agency pumping about half of the total. This is approximately 32 percent of the total water supplied in 2020.

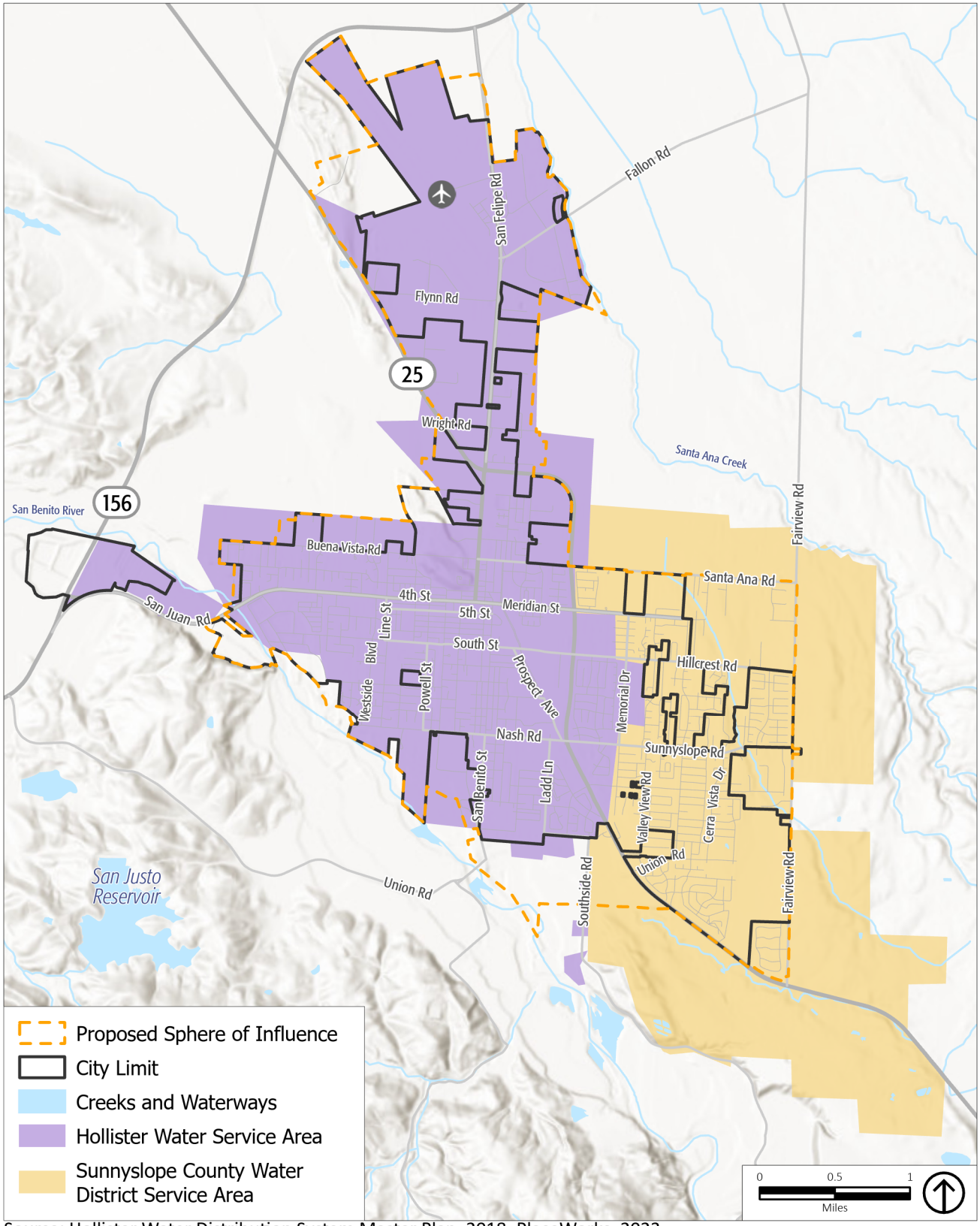
[11] State Water Resources Control Board, 2023, *2035 CA Drinking Water Watch, Water System Details.*, https://sdwis.waterboards.ca.gov/PDWW/JSP/WaterSystemDetail.jsp?tinwsys_is_number=3739&tinwsys_st_code=CA&wsnumber=CA3510003 accessed January 6, 2023.

[12] Wallace Group, August 2018, *Final Water Distribution System Master Plan*, accessed January 6, 2023.

[13] Wallace Group, August 2018, *Final Water Distribution System Master Plan*, accessed January 6, 2023

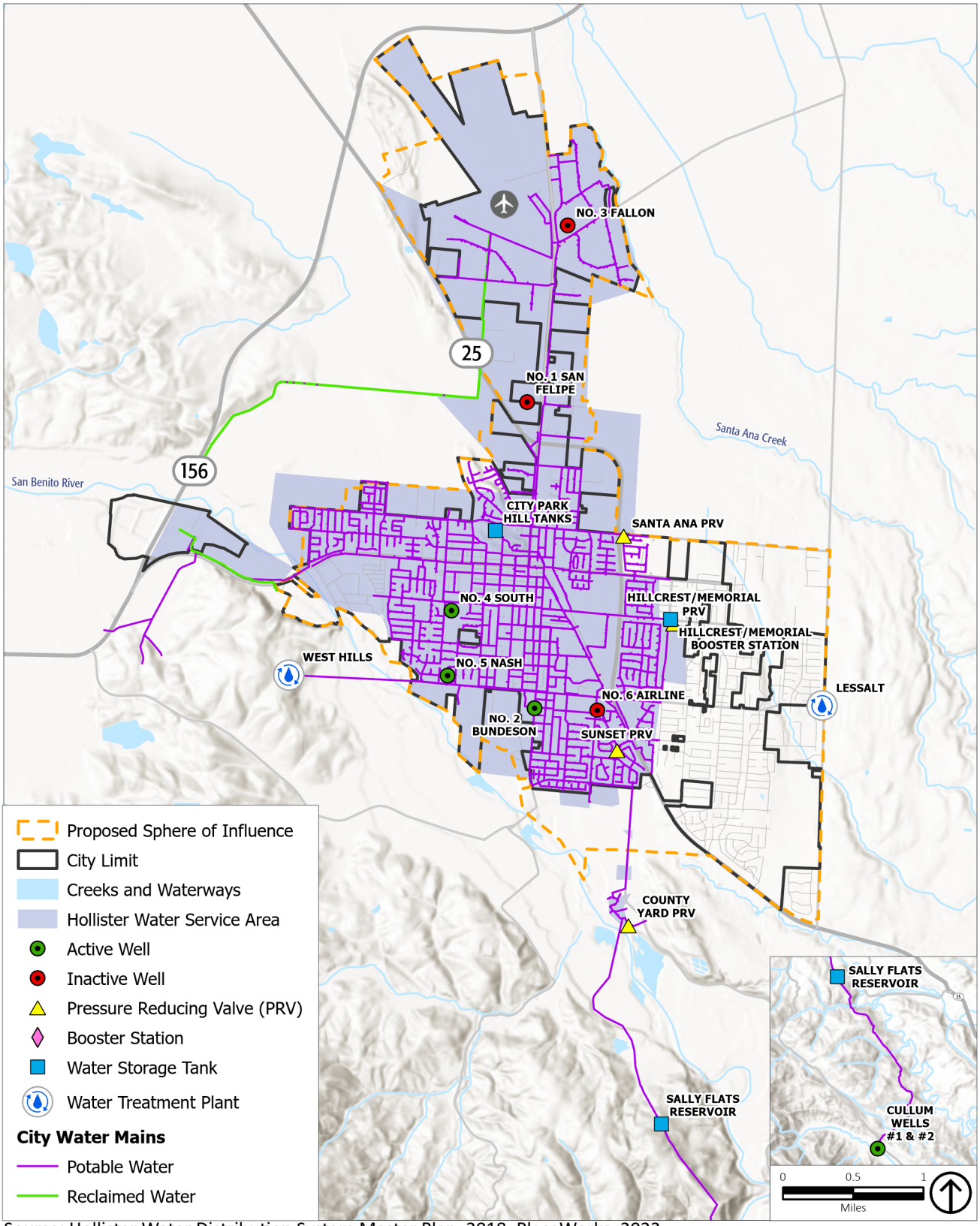
[14] Wallace Group, August 2018, *Final Water Distribution System Master Plan*, accessed January 6, 2023

[15] Todd Groundwater, July 2016, 2015 *Hollister Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan*



Source: Hollister Water Distribution System Master Plan, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.17-1
Water Service Areas



Source: Hollister Water Distribution System Master Plan, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.17-2
Water Distribution System Major Facilities

There also is a limited use of recycled water within the EIR Study Area for landscape irrigation. In 2020, approximately 100 acre-feet of recycled water was delivered to Brigantino Park, and an additional 428 acre-feet was delivered to agricultural customers outside of the EIR Study Area. There are no plans to expand the use of recycled water for landscape irrigation within the City of Hollister or SSCWD's service area in the future. The focus has shifted to providing additional recycled water to agricultural users. outside of the EIR Study Area.[16] A summary of the existing and future sources of water for the City and SSCWD is provided in Table 4.17-1, *Hollister USA Existing and Future Water Supplies (in acre-feet)*.

TABLE 4.17-1 HOLLISTER AND SSCWD EXISTING AND FUTURE WATER SUPPLIES (IN ACRE-FEET)

	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Surface Water (CVP)	3,992	4,949	5,388	5,388	5,388
Groundwater	1,919	1,919	2,661	3,996	5,369
Recycled Water	100	100	100	100	100
Total	**6,011**	**6,968**	**8,149**	**9,484**	**10,857**

Source: Todd Groundwater, July 2021, 2020 Hollister urban Area Urban Water Management Plan.

Existing Water Demand

Table 4.17-2, *Hollister and SSCWD 2020 Existing Water Demand (in acre-feet)*, presents the water demand for 2020, as presented in the 2020 UWMP for the EIR Study Area. Single-family homes represent most of the 2020 total demand at 64 percent. Multifamily homes and commercial uses consist of 8 to 9 percent of total demand. Other uses, including industrial and dedicated landscape irrigation, represent a combined 11 percent of total demand.[17] In addition, the City of Hollister used 100 acre-feet of recycled water in 2020 for irrigation of Brigantino Park; SSCWD does not provide recycled water.

TABLE 4.17-2 HOLLISTER AND SSCWD 2020 EXISTING WATER DEMAND (IN ACRE-FEET)

Land Use	Hollister	Sunnyslope	Total
Single Family	1,805	2,101	3,906
Multi-Family	322	210	532
Commercial	480	9	489
Industrial	126	32	158
Landscape	278	128	406
Other	28	2	30
Other – non-potable irrigation	100	__	100
Losses	265	92	357
Recycled Water	100	__	100
Total	**3,506**	**2,579**	**6,085**

Source: Todd Groundwater, July 2021, 2020 Hollister Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan.

Water agencies must also demonstrate compliance with their established water use targets, pursuant SB X7-7. The calculated water use targets for Hollister and SSCWD are 119 gallons per capita per day (gpcd)

[16] Todd Groundwater, July 2021, 2020 *Hollister Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan*
[17] Todd Groundwater, July 2021, 2020 *Hollister Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan*

and 135 gpcd, respectively. The actual 2020 demands for Hollister and SSCWD were 114 gcpd and 119 gpcd, respectively. Thus both the City and SSCWD successfully met the 2020 targets.

Water Supply Reliability

Table 4.17-3, *Hollister and SSCWD Projected Normal, Dry, and Multiple Dry Year Supply and Demand (in acre-feet)*, provides the projected water demand and supply in the Hollister and SSCWD service areas for a normal year, a single dry year, and multiple dry-year events from 2025 through 2040.

TABLE 4.17-3 HOLLISTER AND SSCWD PROJECTED NORMAL, DRY, AND MULTIPLE DRY YEAR SUPPLY AND DEMAND (IN ACRE-FEET)

	2025	2030	2035	2040
Normal Year				
Supply Total	6,968	8,149	9,484	10,857
Demand Total	6,968	8,149	9,484	10,857
Difference	0	0	0	0
Single Dry Year[a]				
Supply Total	6,271	7,334	8,536	9,771
Demand Total	6,271	7,334	8,536	9,771
Difference	0	0	0	0
Multiple Dry Years[a]				
First Year				
Supply Total	6,271	7,334	8,536	9,771
Demand Total	6,271	7,334	8,536	9,771
Difference	0	0	0	0
Second Year				
Supply Total	6,271	7,334	8,536	9,771
Demand Total	6,271	7,334	8,536	9,771
Difference	0	0	0	0
Third Year				
Supply Total	6,271	7,334	8,536	9,771
Demand Total	6,271	7,334	8,536	9,771
Difference	0	0	0	0
Fourth Year				
Supply Total	6,271	7,334	8,536	9,771
Demand Total	6,271	7,334	8,536	9,771
Difference	0	0	0	0
Fifth Year				
Supply Total	6,271	7,334	8,536	9,771
Demand Total	6,271	7,334	8,536	9,771
Difference	0	0	0	0

[a] Single and multiple dry years assume implementation of WSCP Stage 1 reductions of 10 percent.
Source: Todd Groundwater, July 2021, 2020 Hollister Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan.

In single and multiple dry years, the Water Shortage Contingency Plan (WSCP) would be triggered, resulting in a 10 percent reduction in water demand and supply. However, if restrictions in WSCP Stage 1 do not meet the required 10 percent decrease in demand, Stage 2 or greater would be implemented.

Hollister Urban Area Water and Wastewater Master Plan Update

The WWMP provides a comprehensive plan and implementation program to meet the existing and future water resource needs of the EIR Study Area. The WWMP is a collaborative effort between the City of Hollister, the SBCWD, and the SSCWD.[18] The WWMP update includes a recommended implementation program through the year 2035 for water supply, recycled water facilities, water system operations, and institutional agreements.

The recommended priorities for long-term water supply are to increase high-quality water required to ensure compliance with the California Hexavalent Chromium regulations and to meet the total dissolved solids (TDS) and hardness goals for the Hollister and SSCWD service areas. Level one priority projects include the addition of local wells to supply the northern part of the combined city and SSCWD water distribution system, expanding recycled water use for agricultural irrigation, and developing the North County Groundwater project. The North County Groundwater consists of the Pacheco, eastern portion of the Bolsa, and northern portions of the Hollister East groundwater subbasins, as defined by SBCWD. The North County Groundwater project involves the development of wells in these subbasins to provide low-TDS groundwater to the City and SSCWD. The WWMP also recommends the expansion of the West Hills WTP and improving the efficiency of the City's domestic wastewater recycling facility (DWRF) by the year 2025.

The 2017 WWMP update also includes recommendations for institutional agreements between agencies that would be required to implement projects providing joint benefits. These agreements would be similar to the memoranda of understanding developed for previously completed projects, such as the Lessalt and West Hills WTPs and agricultural use of recycled water. Multiple institutional agreements may be needed to implement the North County Groundwater project. For the DWRF improvements, an agreement between the City and SBCWD would be required to recognize the multiple benefits provided by this facility.

[18] HDR, June 2017, *Hollister Urban Area Water and Wastewater Master Plan*

4.17.1.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the proposed project would result in significant water supply impacts if it would:

1. Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects.
2. Not have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years.
3. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to water supply and facilities.

4.17.1.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

UTIL-1	**Implementation of the proposed project would not require or result in the construction of new water facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which would cause significant environmental effects.**

2040 General Plan

Implementation of the proposed project would have a significant impact if it would result in the construction of new water treatment facilities or the expansion of existing facilities that would have a significant effect on the environment. Under the proposed project, water demand would increase throughout the EIR Study Area due to increases in population and employment.

A general plan is not considered a project under SB 610 that requires preparation of a WSA. Instead, a general plan relies on information prepared by the water supplier in the UWMP to demonstrate that the proposed population increase would not create a water demand that would exceed the supply in normal, dry, and multiple dry years, as discussed in the following paragraphs. Future projects under the proposed 2040 General Plan that meet the criteria under California Water Code Section 10912 would be required to prepare a WSA.

The current and projected water demands from the 2020 UWMP are provided in Tables 4.17-2 and 4.17-3. The population and employment increases that would occur with the implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan were incorporated into the 2020 UWMP.

The projections in Table 4.17-3 are conservative because they do not account for water conservation measures that would result from the ongoing WRA's conservation program. This approach, while conservative, safeguards against potential future shortages by projecting the highest level of demand. Therefore, any potential shortages could be alleviated by active and passive conservation measures.[19]

[19]Todd Groundwater, July 2021, 2020 *Hollister Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan*

The buildout of the proposed 2040 General Plan would result in new residences and new commercial and industrial buildings that fully comply with the more stringent requirements of CALGreen, California Plumbing Code, and the City's MWELO. Only 16 percent of the current residences were built after 2010, when the CALGreen Building Code was first implemented and the installation of water-conserving plumbing fixtures and fittings was mandated. Therefore, it is assumed that the new construction of both residences and commercial land uses would achieve a reduction in water usage rates of 20 percent through compliance with these regulations.[20]

Water Demand Analysis

Buildout of the proposed 2040 General Plan would include 6,455 new dwelling units. Assuming a vacancy rate of 3.7 percent, this would result in 6,215 new households. The water demand for these additional units was calculated based on the numbers provided in the 2020 UWMP of 0.33 afy for single-family dwellings. The proposed project would include a diversity of housing types, so some future housing would be multifamily residential. However, for this analysis, it was conservatively assumed that all future housing would be single-family residences, which results in a higher water demand than multifamily residences.

The water demand for the commercial and industrial land use categories was obtained from the City's 2018 Water Distribution System Master Plan. The water demand for commercial land use of 1,455 gpd/acre was converted to 0.03 gpd/sf, and the water demand for industrial land use of 369 gpd/acre was converted to 0.01 gpd/sf.

Since all the new residential and commercial construction would require compliance with the CALGreen Building Code and MWELO, a 20 percent reduction in water demand as compared to existing conditions was included in the calculations. The analysis also conservatively assumes that water demand for existing uses would remain the same over time, although it is expected that existing commercial and residential water users would replace old fixtures with newer, more efficient fixtures over time.

The projected increase in water demand with implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan is provided in Table 4.17-4, *Water Demand Increase: Proposed 2040 General Plan.* Since the 2020 UWMP reports that the other land use categories would remain constant from 2025 to 2040, this evaluation focuses on the projected increases in water demand with implementation of the proposed project to the single-family residential, commercial, and industrial land use categories.

TABLE 4.17-4 WATER DEMAND INCREASE: PROPOSED 2040 GENERAL PLAN

Category	Existing Conditions [a] (afy)	Increase with 2040 GP [b] (afy)	2040 Total Water Demand (afy)	2040 Projected Water Demand from UWMP (afy)
Single and Multifamily Residential	4,438	1,704	6,142	9,126
Commercial	489	40	529	660

[20] Todd Groundwater, July 2021, 2020 *Hollister Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan*

TABLE 4.17-4 WATER DEMAND INCREASE: PROPOSED 2040 GENERAL PLAN

Category	Existing Conditions [a] (afy)	Increase with 2040 GP [b] (afy)	2040 Total Water Demand (afy)	2040 Projected Water Demand from UWMP (afy)
Industrial	158	32	190	158
Total	5,085	1,776	6,861	9,944

Notes: AFY = acre feet per year
a. Numbers from 2020 UWMP, the single-family and multifamily categories for Hollister and SSCWD are combined.
b. Assumes all new households are single-family at 0.33 afy per du and includes a reduction of 20 percent for new residential construction with compliance with CALGreen and MWELO requirements. Commercial and industrial water demands were obtained from City of Hollister Water Distribution Master Plan and demands of 1,455 gpd/acre for commercial land use and 369 gpd/acre for industrial land use converted to 0.03 gpd/sf and 0.01 gpd/sf, respectively. Buildout numbers are 1,179,750 sf for commercial and 2,858,700 sf for industrial.
Source: 2020 UWMP, 2021; PlaceWorks, 2023.

As shown in Table 4.17-4, the incremental water demand associated with buildout of the proposed 2040 General Plan is estimated to be 1,776 afy. It is assumed that the development rate would be constant over the 20-year buildout period. Adding the incremental water demand to the existing water demand estimate provides the total water demand for the project at buildout. The existing 2020 water demand of 5,085 afy from the 2020 UWMP, plus an additional 1,776 afy for buildout under the proposed project, results in a total water demand of 6,861 afy in 2040 for these land use categories. This is less than the 9,944 afy accounted for in the 2020 UWMP for the year 2040.

The two water treatment plants (Lessalt WTP and West Hills WTP) have a total current capacity of 6.5 mgd, which equates to 7,280 afy. Also, the West Hills WTP has the capacity to expand its capacity to treat up to 9 mgd. The actual volume of CVP water provided to the two WTPs for treatment in 2020 was 3,992 acre-feet. Therefore, the WTPs are currently operating at about 55 percent of their capacities.

According to the 2020 UWMP, the SBCWD is planning to provide 5,388 afy to the City and other agencies from 2025 through 2040. Therefore, the existing WTPs have the capacity to treat this volume of water, and no new water facilities or expansion of existing facilities would be required.

The Hollister Water Distribution System Master Plan determined that the existing infrastructure would be adequate to supply future water demands, except for deficiencies in fire flows in certain areas. The plan recommended a capital improvement program to replace water mains that were greater than 75 years old and upgrade pipelines with deficiencies in fire flows. Several of these infrastructure improvements were included in the City's 5-year Capital Improvement Program (FY 2017/2018 to 2021/2022).

In addition, the proposed Community Services and Facilities (CSF) and Natural Resources and Conservation (NRC) Elements of the 2040 General Plan contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to water supplies and resources. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts to water supplies with future development:

Goal CSF-1: Provide an adequate level and maintenance of public services and facilities to ensure the continued health, education, welfare, and safety of all residents and businesses. (Goal CSF4)

- Policy CSF-1.1: New Development Requirements for Public Services. Ensure that future growth does not create demands that exceed the capabilities and capacity of local public services, including police

and fire services, by requiring new development applications to identify the impacts that the proposed development would have on the provision of public services. Approve only development applications that can mitigate impacts or contribute a proportional fair share so that local public services can be maintained at an acceptable level. (Policy CSF1.2)

- Policy CSF-1.2: Coordination of Facilities and Services Planning. Cooperate and coordinate with the County of San Benito, LAFCO, and other local agencies in the provision of infrastructure and services within the Hollister Planning Area. (Policy CSF1.4)
- Policy CSF-1.3: Infrastructure Planning. Require the preparation of a specific plan, financing plan, development agreement, creation of a Communities Facilities District, or another similar document or financing vehicle, as a pre-condition to annexation or redesignations of land for new urban use.

  The plans shall identify means to ensure adequate funding to support construction of all needed public facilities, including water, sewer, storm drainage, roads, sidewalks, parks, and school facilities. (Policy CSF1.6)
- Policy CSF-1.4: Development Review Criteria for Public Services. Prior to granting approval, evaluate each new development in terms of the following criteria:
  1. The project shall share a common border with a property that has already been developed.
  2. The project shall be adequately served by infrastructure (water, sewer, streets, schools, parks, etc.), which is already in place or mitigated.
  3. The project shall be located within the existing service areas of local service providers (fire protection, police protection, solid waste disposal, schools, etc.), and not result in a reduction in their current capabilities. (Policy CSF1.7)
  4. The project shall have adequate water supply of sufficient quantity and quality.
  5. There shall be adequate sanitary sewer capacity and treatment capability that can be provided to service the proposed project.
  6. There shall be adequate fire protection for the proposed project.
  7. There shall be adequate level of police protection for the proposed project.
  8. The proposed project shall result in no impact on local parks and recreational facilities or the applicant will provide the resources required to mitigate the impacts associated with the proposed development.
  9. There shall be an adequate level of solid waste collection services and disposal capacity to serve the proposed project.
  10. There shall be an appropriate level of utility services (gas, electric, and telephone) to serve the proposed project.
  11. The project applicant shall finance the full costs associated with any drainage improvements necessary to accommodate peak flows due to the proposed project.
  12. The proposed project shall not make a significant contribution to the emission of regional air pollutants.
  13. There shall be adequate elementary, middle and high schools to serve the proposed project. (Implementation Measure CSF.D)
- Policy CSF-1.6: Development Fees. Review the existing development fee structure, including the infrastructure connection fees, every two years and restructure as needed. (Policy LU2.1)

- Policy CSF-1.7: Capital Improvements and Replacement. Ensure that the City's Capital Improvement Program is coordinated with responsible districts and agencies and provides for ongoing, preventative maintenance of infrastructure facilities and the replacement of City equipment. (Policy CSF1.5)
- Policy CSF-1.8: Capital Improvements Program. Conduct reviews of the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) at least every five years and add budget for transportation, infrastructure, and public facility improvements as funding sources are identified. (Implementation Measure LU.P)
- Action CSF-1.2: Public Facilities Impact Fee. Regularly review the public facilities impact fee to ensure development fund its fair share of new community and public facilities, including public safety facilities, required to serve new residents and employees in Hollister. (Implementation Measure LU.S)

Goal CSF-2: Plan for adequate water and sewer facilities. (Goal CSF2)

- Policy CSF-2.1: Sewer and Water Facility Coordination. Coordinate with responsible districts and agencies to ensure that sewer and water facility expansion and/or improvements meet Federal and State standards and occur in a timely manner. (Policy CSF2.1)
- Policy CSF-2.2: Development Areas. Encourage development to occur in those portions of the Hollister Sphere of Influence which are already served by the local water supply and wastewater systems or to which water supply and wastewater systems can reasonably be extended. (Policy CSF2.4)
- Policy CSF-2.3: Costs of New Development. Ensure that the cost of providing sewer and water service to new development proposed outside of existing service areas should be borne solely by those proposing the development, thus eliminating any financial burden to existing customers for any required expansion of the sewer and water system network to serve such development. (Policy CSF2.5)
- Policy CSF-2.4: Sewer Collection System Deficiencies. Prioritize implementation of the recommendations from the Sanitary Sewer Collection System Master Plan to address the deficiencies identified in the plan and ensure that the sewer system meets the City's performance standards for existing and future population wastewater flows. (new)
- Policy CSF-2.6: Water Supply Management. Manage the water supply in a way that is environmentally and economically sustainable by working with local, regional and statewide agencies to establish policies that promote water use efficiency programs, including recycled water programs to support the expanded use of recycled water in Hollister. (new)
- Policy CSF-2.7: Provision of Water Service to New Development. Require developers who will require water service for their projects to apply to the City of Hollister for service. (Policy CSF2.6)
- Policy CSF-2.8: Water Conservation Measures. Require water-conserving practices and features, including water efficient fixtures, in all new construction in accordance with State law. (Policy CSF2.7)
- Policy CSF-2.9: Use of Recycled Water. Increase the use of recycled water in development projects and landscaping; implement best practices (e.g., dual plumbing) to expand recycled water use when safe, practical, and available. (new)
- Policy CSF-2.10: Water Resources Association of San Benito County Coordination. Coordinate with the Water Resources Association of San Benito County to identify and implement countywide strategies to conserve water. (Implementation Measure CSF.V)

- Policy CSF-2.11: Water Conservation Education. Educate the community about the challenges to the water supply system and the need for responsible water management. (new)
- Policy CSF-2.12: Water and Sewer Connections within City Limits. Require all development that will utilize City water and wastewater services to be located within the City Limits with the exception of a public health or safety threat in accordance with State law. (new)
- Policy CSF-2.13: Identification of Opportunities for Water Recycling. Support the extension of recycled water distribution infrastructure and identify opportunities for the use of recycled water where available. (Implementation Measure CSF.Q)
- Policy CSF-2.14: Urban Water Management Plans. Ensure that updates to the Urban Water Management Plan maximize water conservation and reuse in order to fulfill the City's water supply needs. Consider projected water supplies in updated Urban Water Management Plans as part of each Major Review of the 2040 General Plan. (new)
- Action CSF-2.1: Water Efficiency Strategies. Adopt citywide policies that encourage or require new and existing development to incorporate measures to reduce potable water demand and/or increase water efficiency. (new)
- Action CSF-2.2: Sunnyslope County Water District Coordination. In cooperation with the Sunnyslope County Water District, develop implementation plans to:

  1. Phase the construction of additional water storage reservoirs to match increases in local water demand.

     Add new wells in accordance with current capital improvement plans to ensure adequate safe pumping supply to meet peak day demand for water. (Implementation Measure CSF.G)

- Action CSF-2.3: Water Resource Data Sharing. Exchange water resources data with the Sunnyslope County Water District to allow for responsible decisions regarding water supply development and land use planning. (Implementation Measure CSF.G)
- Action CSF-2.4: Requirements for Water Conservation in New Development. Identify, evaluate, and establish requirements for project developers to reduce water usage such as installing water efficient fixtures, planting drought tolerant landscaping, including dual water lines for residential projects (one for clear water and the other for the recirculation of graywater), and limiting golf course irrigation (if applicable) to conserve water and prevent further groundwater drawdown. (Implementation Measure CSF.I)
- Action CSF-2.5: Hollister Urban Water and Wastewater Master Plan. Update the Urban Water and Wastewater Master Plans to be consistent with the population, employment, and other growth projections of this General Plan in compliance with State law requirements for future water supplies. (Implementation Measure CSF.F)
- Action CSF-2.6: Data on Sewer and Water System Capacity. Establish the extent and capacity of the existing water supply systems and the wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal system, and update this information on regular basis in coordination with the Sunnyslope County Water District and San Benito County Water District. This information is to be used by the Planning Commission and

the City Council to evaluate the impacts on sanitary sewerage facilities, which would result from proposed development. (Implementation Measure CSF.DD)

- Action CSF-2.7: Landscape Water Conservation Education Program. Continue to work with the San Benito County Water Resources Association to educate property managers, homeowners, and designers, about water conserving landscaping and water-recycling best practices. (Implementation Measure CSF.M)

Goal NRC-6: Protect and improve water quality in and around Hollister. (new)

- Policy NRC-6.1: Local, State and Federal Standards for Water Quality. Continue to comply with local, State and Federal standards for water quality. (Policy CSF3.3)
- Policy NRC-6.3: Water Quality at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Monitor the wastewater treatment plant to ensure that the nitrate levels stay within legal limits. (Implementation Measure CSF.EE)
- Action NRC-6.1: Well and Ditch Tail Water Tests. Develop procedures requiring developers to conduct well and ditch tail water tests and to implement appropriate actions to protect public health and safety associated with the presence of herbicides, pesticides, and other chemical that have the potential to pollute the groundwater and cause health risks. (Implementation Measure CSF.H)
- Action NRC-6.2: Pesticide and Fertilizer Management. Encourage the appropriate reduction in pesticides and fertilizers to the maximum extent possible on City property. Ensure that the application of pesticides on City property is accomplished in accordance with all applicable rules and regulations. (Implementation Measure CSF.L)
- Action NRC-6.3: Water Quality Source Control Program. Develop guidelines for a water quality source control program which incorporates public education, planning, management, material use and disposal controls, spill prevention and cleanup, street sweeping and sewer maintenance. (Implementation Measure CSF.S)
- Action NRC-6.4: Water Quality Education Programs. Develop a public information and education program to enhance water quality. Such a program may include storm drain stenciling, presentations to schools and community groups, and watershed planning efforts. (Implementation Measure CSF.T)
- Action NRC-6.5: Water Pollution Prevention Program. Develop an illicit discharge elimination program, which NRC seek to eliminate illegal connections to the storm drain system and the illegal dumping of toxic materials into the storm drain system. Include requirements for contractors to comply with accepted storm water pollution prevention planning practices for all projects subject to erosion potential, and continue to require the proper use, storage and disposal of on-site materials. (Implementation Measure CSF.U)

In summary, no new water treatment facilities would be needed and the City would monitor and upgrade the water distribution system with projects described in the CIP to accommodate future development. In addition, compliance with the City's requirements for new construction and water-efficient landscaping and implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions listed would result in *less than significant* impacts with respect to the need for new and/or expanded water facilities.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 Climate Action Plan (2023 CAP) is strategic plan focused on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. The proposed 2023 CAP provides estimates of GHG emissions in the water and wastewater sectors and accounts for the increase in emissions with implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan as both residential and employment populations increase. It also provides reduction strategies to minimize this increase in GHG emissions through water conservation, water efficient retrofits, water-wise landscaping, and graywater and recycled water programs. Implementation of the proposed 2023 CAP would further reduce water demand as compared to the analysis provided above. Therefore, the proposed project would not require or result in the construction of new water facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which would cause significant environmental effects and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP) is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. The conversion of agricultural land to urban land uses is accounted for in the water demand and supply analysis provided above. The agricultural conservation easements would be supplied by irrigation water from the SBCWD's San Felipe Water, which is provided by the United States Bureau of Reclamation. The irrigation water is not part of the City's or SSCWD's water distribution system.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

UTIL-2 Implementation of the proposed project would have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years.

2040 General Plan

As shown in Table 3-3 in Chapter 3, *Project Description,* of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would result in 6,455 new dwelling units, 5,755 new jobs, and a population increase of 21,635. This is consistent with, and slightly less, than the projected population increase in the 2020 UWMP.[21]

As described under Impact Discussion UTIL-1, the water demand for implementation of the proposed project was estimated to be an additional 1,776 afy. Adding this increase to the existing demand results in a water demand of 6,861 afy. This is less than the projected water demand presented in the 2020 UWMP

[21] Todd Groundwater, July 2021, 2020 *Hollister Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan*

of 9,944 afy for the specified land use categories. As shown previously in Table 4.17-3, the 2020 UWMP projects that there is sufficient water supply to meet the demand for normal, single-dry, and five consecutive dry years.

Additionally, future development pursuant to the proposed 2040 General Plan would be required to implement the water-efficient requirements specified in the CALGreen and California Plumbing Codes and the MWELO requirements for water efficient landscaping. Future projects under the proposed 2040 General Plan that meet the criteria under California Water Code Section 10912 would be required to prepare a WSA that demonstrates that project water demands would not exceed water supplies. In addition, residential, commercial, and industrial water usage can be expected to decrease in the future as a result of the implementation of water conservation practices through the extensive programs offered by the WRA. In the case of a water shortage, the City would implement the WSCP, as outlined in the 2020 UWMP.

In addition, the Community Services and Facilities and Natural Resources and Conservation Elements of the 2040 contain goals, policies, and actions that are required for new construction and would reduce future water demands, as listed under Impact Discussion UTIL-1.

In summary, buildout associated with the proposed 2040 General Plan would not result in a shortage of water supplies. In addition, compliance with the City's code requirements for new construction and adherence to the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions, impacts associated with water supply would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. As described under Impact Discussion UTIL-1, the proposed 2023 CAP provides strategies that include water conservation, water efficient retrofits, water-wise landscaping, and graywater and recycled water programs that would reduce GHG emissions. Implementation of the proposed 2023 CAP would further reduce water demand as compared to the analysis provided under Impact Discussion UTIL-1. Therefore, the proposed project would have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. The conversion of agricultural land to urban land uses is accounted for in the water demand and supply analysis provided under Impact Discussion UTIL-1. Water

for the agricultural conservation easements would not be supplied by the City or SSCWD or would not be part of their water distribution systems. Irrigation water for agricultural land is under the purview of the SBCWD, which receives San Felipe Water provided by the US Bureau of Reclamation. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not impact the City or SSCWD's water supplies and the proposed project would have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years. Impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

UTIL-3	**In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to water supply and facilities.**

2040 General Plan

Other future projects within the EIR Study Area would result in increases in water demand. However, the 2020 UWMP states that it would have sufficient water supplies in its service area through 2040 for normal water years, single dry years, and multiple dry years. Projects that meet the SB 610 criteria, such as residential projects with more than 500 dwelling units, would be required to prepare WSAs. The City and SSCWD would review such projects for the adequacy of water supply and would update the UWMP every five years to ensure that there are adequate water supplies and contingency plans for future residents and customers. All new development in Hollister would be required to conserve water and implement water efficiency measures, as per the CALGreen Building Code and the MWELO irrigation requirements. Water supply deficits in dry years would be met by implementing the WSCP and other water conservation efforts. Existing regulations would result in a reduction in per capita water use over time, which would ensure than cumulative impacts with respect to water service would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. The proposed 2023 CAP describes water conservation measures that would reduce water consumption over time. In addition, the proposed 2023 CAP provides strategies for coordinating with the City, SSCWD, SBCWD, and the WRA to develop and implement water conservation plans. In accordance with SB 407, upon the sale of residential properties, a Plumbing Retrofit Water Conservation Certification must be obtained to ensure that the residences are retrofitted with water-efficient devices. Compliance with these measures would ensure the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to water service.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. As described under Impact Discussions UTIL-1 and UTIL-2, the agricultural conservation easements would not be supplied by water from the City or SSCWD. Irrigation of agricultural land is provided by SBCWD and uses San Felipe Water provided by the United States Bureau of Reclamation. Therefore, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to water service.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

4.17.2 WASTEWATER

4.17.2.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Regulatory Framework

Federal Regulations

Clean Water Act

The CWA of 1972 regulates the discharge of pollutants into watersheds throughout the nation. It is the primary federal law that governs water pollution and is implemented by the USEPA. Under the CWA, the USEPA sets wastewater standards and makes it unlawful to discharge pollutants from a point source into any navigable waters without obtaining a permit. Point sources include any conveyances, such as pipes and man-made drainage channels, from which pollutants may be discharged.

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program was established as part of the CWA to regulate municipal and industrial discharges to surface waters of the United States. Federal NPDES permit regulations have been established for broad categories of discharges, including point-source municipal waste discharges and nonpoint-source stormwater runoff. NPDES permits generally identify effluent and receiving water limits on allowable connections and/or mass emissions of pollutants contained in the discharge; prohibitions on discharges not specifically allowed under the permit; and provisions that describe required actions by the discharger, including industrial pretreatment, pollution prevention, self-monitoring, and other activities. Wastewater discharge is regulated under the NPDES permit program for direct discharges into receiving waters and by the National Pretreatment Program for indirect discharges to a wastewater (sewage) treatment plant.

State Regulations

State Water Resources Control Board: General Waste Discharge Requirements

On May 2, 2006 the SWRCB adopted Statewide General Waste Discharge Requirements (Order No. 2006-0003) and a monitoring and reporting program (Order No. WQ-2013-0058-EXEC) for all publicly owned sanitary sewer collection systems in California with more than one mile of sewer pipes. The order provides a consistent statewide approach to reducing sanitary sewer overflows (SSO). The Waste Discharge Requirements require public agencies that own or operate sanitary sewer systems to develop and implement sewer system management plans (SSMP) and report all SSOs to the SWRCB's online reporting system. The SWRCB has delegated authority to nine RWQCBs to enforce these requirements within their regions.

The Central Coast RWQCB (Region 3) issues and enforces NPDES permits in the area of the proposed project. NPDES permits allow the RWQCB to regulate where and how waste is disposed, including the discharge volume and effluent limits of waste and the monitoring and reporting responsibilities of the discharger. The RWQCB is also charged with conducting inspections of permitted discharges and monitoring permit compliance.

The SSMP evaluates existing sewer collection systems and provides a framework for minimizing the frequency and impact of SSOs. The SSMP includes an overflow emergency response plan; a fats, oil, and grease control program; scheduled inspections and condition assessment; design and construction standards; capacity assessment and management; and a monitoring program.

Sanitary District Act of 1923

The Sanitary District Act of 1923 (California Health and Safety Code Section 6400 et seq.) authorizes the formation of sanitation districts and enables the sanitation districts to construct, operate, and maintain facilities for the collection, treatment, and disposal of wastewater.

Local Regulations

Hollister Municipal Code

The HMC includes directives to ensure the appropriate design and installation of sewers within the City. The HMC is organized by title, chapter, and section. Most provisions related to wastewater and sewer infrastructure are included in Title 13, *Public Service,* as follows:

- Chapter 13.04, Sewer Service System. This chapter describes the materials that are prohibited to be discharged to the sewer system; sewer connection permits and construction standards; connection fees and sewer service charges; and the protocol for the City to suspend wastewater treatment service and/or wastewater discharge permits if the discharge poses an endangerment to the health and welfare of people or the environment or causes interference to the treatment plant. Also, Section 13.04.700 states that any user discharging industrial or commercial sewer effluent can request that the sewer service charges be based on metered sewage rather than on metered water use by installing a sewer flow meter.

Hollister NPDES Permit for Wastewater Treatment

The Central Coast RWQCB issued a NPDES permit and waste discharge requirements in 2008 for the City's domestic wastewater treatment plant (DWTP) and recycled water distribution system (Order No. R3-2008-0069). The order contains discharge limitations on specific pollutants, flow rate limitations to the percolation basins, and the amount of wastewater that can be diverted to the industrial wastewater treatment plant (IWTP). It also provides pollutant limitations for the recycled water distribution system and monitoring and reporting requirements.

Cielo Vista Estates Waste Discharge Requirements for Wastewater Treatment Plant

The Central Coast RWQCB issued Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. R3-87-115 to the Cielo Vista Estates Wastewater Treatment Plant. Cielo Vista Estates owns and operates a small community wastewater service system as County Service Area (CSA) No. 22. The wastewater system consists of a packaged treatment unit that treats about 20,000 gpd. The treated wastewater is conveyed to adjacent leach fields.

Hollister Urban Area Water and Wastewater Master Plan Update

The latest update to the WWMP is dated 2017 and is a collaboration between the City, SSCWD, and SBCWD to coordinate existing and future water and wastewater needs and infrastructure on a regional basis. The Master Plan addresses wastewater system improvements within the EIR Study Area, which includes all of Hollister and portions of San Benito County. The wastewater facilities evaluated in this update are the City's Water Reclamation Facility, the SSCWD Wastewater Treatment Plant, and the Cielo Vista Wastewater Treatment Plant. Some of the improvements identified in the Master Plan have been implemented, such as the expansion of the City's DTWP. As population increases, major infrastructure improvements identified in the Master Plan would be implemented, including increases in treatment and disposal capacities and reductions in effluent concentrations.

Hollister Sanitary Sewer Collection System Master Plan

The Sanitary Sewer Collection System Master Plan was originally completed in 2010 and was last updated in 2018. The master plan provides a summary of existing facilities, wastewater flows, identified system capacity deficiencies for existing and future conditions, recommended CIPs, recommended operation and maintenance (O&M) practices, and recommended inspection programs. The CIPs will be grouped into two categories: Near Term and Long Term. Near Term projects are required due to existing deficiencies and are prioritized based on need. Long Term projects are upgrades that are required due to future development. The plan also provides cost estimates for each of the CIPs and O&M activities.[22]

[22] City of Hollister, March 2018 , *Sanitary Sewer Collection System Master Plan Update*, http://hollister.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/1011-0003-03_FINAL-SSCSMP-Update-with-Sig-Page.pdf, accessed January 11, 2023.

Hollister Sewer System Management Plan

The City's latest SSMP is dated October 2022 and provides a plan and schedule for operating and maintaining all parts of the sanitary sewer system to reduce and prevent SSOs and mitigate any SSOs that do occur. As required by law, the SSMP must be updated every five years and must be developed in compliance with the requirements of the SWRCB Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. 2006-003-DWQ, Amended Monitoring and Reporting Program (MRP) Order No. WQ 2008-002-EXEC, and Order No. WQ 2013-0058-EXEC.

Hollister Design Standards

The construction of sewer collection systems within the City's service area shall conform to the City's requirements per Section 5 of the City's Design Standards. The design standards require calculations for design flows and pipe capacities, including upstream development flows, standards for pipe materials, pipe cover, and separation distances from water lines, laterals, manholes, and force mains. All improvements, including extensions, replacements, and repairs, shall also conform to these design standards.[23]

Existing Conditions

The wastewater service providers in the EIR Study Area include the City of Hollister and the Cielo Vista Estates CSA. The SSCWD only provides wastewater services to a small area that includes the Ridgemark Estates community, and the Quail Hollow and Oak Creek subdivisions. These areas are outside of the EIR Study Area and are south and southeast of Hollister.

The Cielo Vista CSA consists of approximately 1.2 miles of sewer collection pipelines and a small package wastewater treatment system with influent flows of about 20,000 gpd. There are future plans to incorporate the area served by this system into the City's sewer distribution system. There also are approximately 880 housing units within the EIR Study Area but in unincorporated San Benito County that rely on septic systems for wastewater disposal. These county "islands" are under the jurisdiction of San Benito County and are not served by the City's wastewater collection system.

Wastewater Treatment

The City of Hollister owns two wastewater treatment plants that serve the EIR Study Area. The City's DWRF collects and treats domestic, commercial, and industrial wastewater and produces Title 22 reclaimed water for agricultural irrigation and landscape irrigation at Riverside Park. The DWRF is currently operated by Veolia. The City's IWTP, which is also operated by Veolia, treats seasonal industrial wastewater from one of the local tomato canneries and also treats stormwater.[24]

[23] City of Hollister, November 2019. *City of Hollister Design Standards/Standard Specifications, Standard Plans,* http://hollister.ca.gov/government/city-departments/engineering/engineering-standards/, accessed January 6, 2023.

[24] Todd Groundwater, July 2021, 2020 *Hollister Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan*

The DWRF is along the western edge of the city at 2690 San Juan Hollister Road. The DWRF was constructed in 1980 and went through a series of upgrades; the latest upgrade included construction of the WRF and treatment to tertiary standards for recycled water use. The DWRF/WRF is permitted to treat up to 4 mgd for dry weather flows and 5 mgd for wet weather flows. The quantity of wastewater treated in 2020 was 2,658 acre-feet, or approximately 2.4 mgd. This is about 60 percent of the permitted treatment capacity.[25] The DWRF/WRF treats water to disinfected tertiary recycled water standards through the use of a membrane bioreactor. The DWRF/WRF is operated under the NPDES permit issued by the Central Coast RWQCB. The facility can be expanded to accommodate flows as the service population increases through the installation of additional membranes.

The IWTP began operation in 1971 and is currently operated by Veolia. It is on 78 acres approximately one mile east of the DWRF. It is a conventional aerated pond treatment system that produces secondary-treated effluent, which is discharge to evaporation and percolation ponds that recharge the groundwater basin. It has a capacity of up to 7.5 mgd. However, the current RWQCB permit limits flows to 3.5 mgd during the canning season (mid-June through mid-October) and 1.75 mgd of stormwater outside the canning season. It was originally constructed to treat effluent from local tomato canneries and stormwater. However, the number of industrial discharges has significantly declined over the last 30 years, and currently only one cannery, San Benito Foods, discharges to the IWTP.[26]

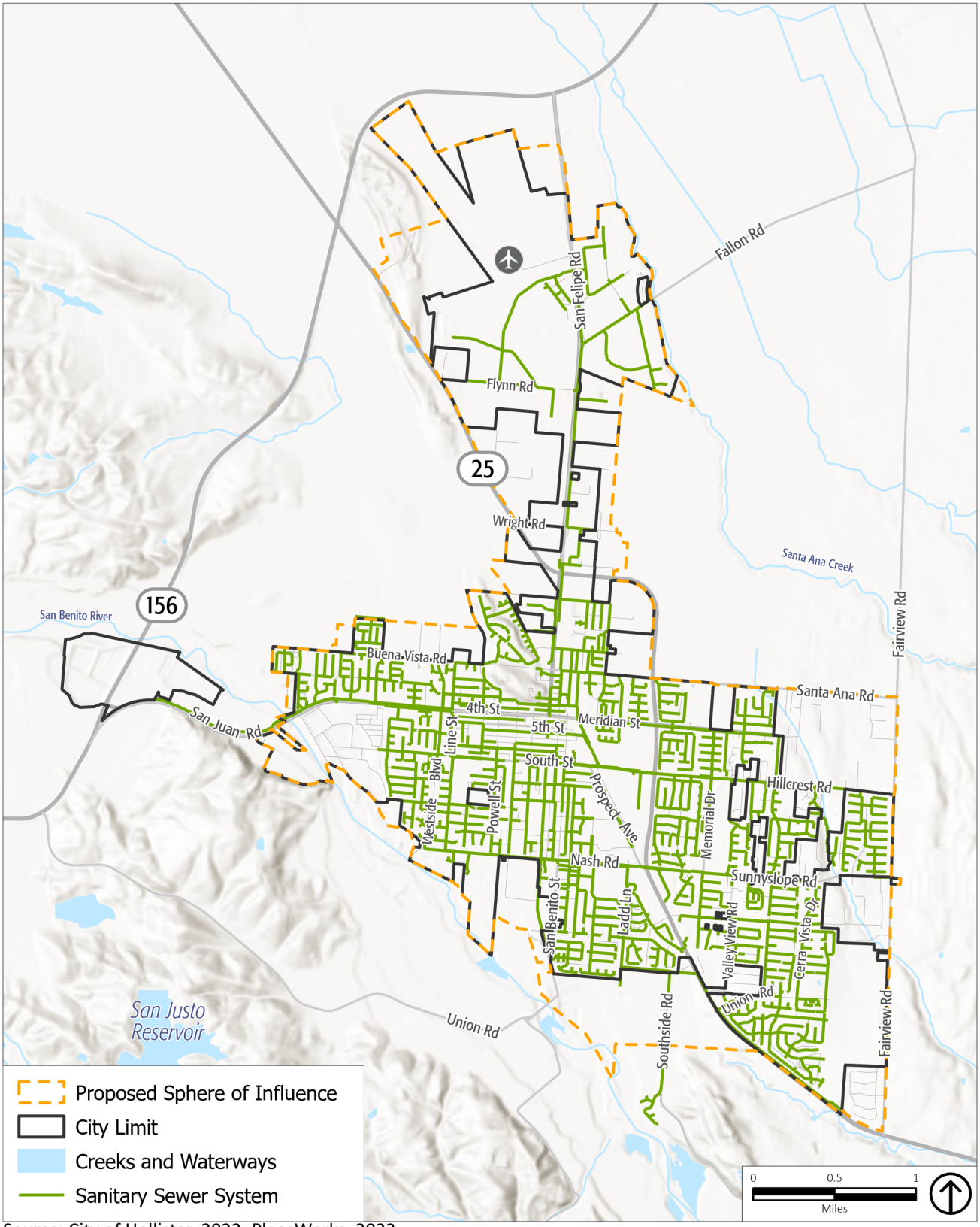
Wastewater from the Cielo Vista Estates in the southeast corner of the EIR Study Area is conveyed to the Cielo Vista Estates WWTP. Cielo Vista Estates was established as San Benito CSA No. 22, and the WWTP is operated by San Benito County. The subdivision consists of approximately 76 single-family residences. The wastewater treatment facility that services this area consists of an enclosed package sequencing batch reactor that has the capacity to treat up to 30,000 gpd of domestic wastewater. The average estimated influent wastewater flow to the facility is 20,000 gpd.[27] It is possible in the future that the Cielo Vista Estates WWTP would be decommissioned, and the wastewater from this subdivision would be conveyed to the DWTP/WRF.

Wastewater Collection System

The City's wastewater collection system consists of over 100 miles of gravity sewer pipes ranging in diameter from 4 inches to 36 inches. The City also has 2,110 manholes, four lift stations, and corresponding force mains. Most of the system consists of vitrified clay pipe, although some PVC pipe has been installed with newer construction.[28]

The City of Hollister currently provides sewer collection services within the city limits, commercial facilities on Highway 156 near the DWRF, a small housing development, the County public works/planning facility, and the labor camp south of the city near Hospital Road and Southside Road. Figure 4.17-3, *Hollister Sanitary Sewer System,* shows the City's service area and distribution system.

[25] Todd Groundwater, July 2021, 2020 *Hollister Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan*
[26] Todd Groundwater, July 2021, 2020 *Hollister Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan*
[27] EMC Planning Group Inc, 2015, *2035 San Benito County General Plan Update*
[28] City of Hollister, March 2018, *Sanitary Sewer Collection System Master Plan Update*



Source: City of Hollister, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.17-3
Hollister Sanitary Sewer System

Existing Wastewater Flows

The Sanitary Sewer Collection System Master Plan Update included an estimate of the existing average sewer daily flows, as shown in Table 4.17-5, *Existing Average Daily Sewer Flows by Land Use*. The data in this table are an average based on four years of flow data from 2013 to 2016. The 2020 UWMP reported a flow rate to the DWRF/WRF of 2.4 mgd in 2020, which is an increase of about 9 percent due to additional development between 2016 and 2020.

TABLE 4.17-5 EXISTING AVERAGE DAILY SEWER FLOWS BY LAND USE

Source of Flow	Quantity	Unit	Flow Factor (gal/day/unit)	Total Average Annual Flow (gal/day)
Residential	37,172	Persons	40	1,486,868
Corrections Facility	160	Persons	40	6,400
Hotel Rooms	196	Rooms	100	19,600
School	9,625	Students	20	192,500
Commercial	8,776,133	Square feet	0.06	526,568
			Existing Average Daily Flows	2,231,936

Source: City of Hollister, March 2018, Sanitary Sewer Collection System Master Plan Update.

Sewer Capacity Assessment

The Sanitary Sewer Collection Systems Master Plan Update identified several locations that did not meet the City's performance standards for depth of flow divided by the pipe diameter (d/D). The criteria are d/D = 0.5 for pipe diameters of 10 inches or less, and d/D = 0.67 for pipe diameters of 12 inches or greater. This means that if a 10-inch diameter pipe or less at peak flow conditions is more than half full, it would be deficient. And a 12-inch diameter pipe or greater flowing at more than 2/3 full would be deficient. The Master Plan Update identified recommended areas for pipe upgrades, as provided in Table 4.17-6, *Recommended Wastewater Capital Improvement Projects.* The projects are ranked in order of importance. Since the Master Plan update was prepared in 2018, the City has completed six of the nine recommended near-term capital improvement projects.

TABLE 4.17-6 RECOMMENDED WASTEWATER CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Ranking	Title	Street(s)	Status
1	Bridge Road Interconnect	Bridge Road	Completed
2	Powell Street Sewer Pipe Upgrade	Powell Street	Completed
3	West Street Sewer Pipe Upgrade	West Street	Not completed
4	Nash Road Sewer Pipe Upgrade	Nash Road, Tres Pinos Road, Sunnyslope Road	Completed
5	Sunset Drive Sewer Pipe Upgrade	Memorial Drive, Cedar Street, Iris Street, Valley View Drive, Sunset Drive, Ciera Vista Drive	Completed
6	GLP Lift Station Upgrades	Frontage Road	Completed
7	Line Street Near Term Sewer Pipe Upgrade	Line Street	Not completed
8	2nd and East Lift Station Upgrades	East Street	Not completed
9	Airport Lift Station Upgrades	San Felipe Road	Completed

Source: City of Hollister, March 2018, Sanitary Sewer Collection System Master Plan Update.

4.17.2.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the proposed project would result in significant wastewater-related impact if it would:

4. Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded wastewater treatment or facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects.
5. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments.
6. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to wastewater facilities.

4.17.2.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

UTIL-4	**Implementation of the proposed project would not require or result in the construction of new wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which would cause significant environmental effects.**

2040 General Plan

Implementation of the proposed project would have a significant impact if it would result in the construction of a new wastewater treatment plan or the expansion of existing plant, the construction of which would have a significant effect on the environment. As discussed below, future demands from the increased population and land use changes from implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan would not exceed the design or permitted capacity of the City's WWTP that serve the EIR Study Area.

Wastewater generated by the proposed project would be collected by the City's sanitary sewer system and conveyed to the City's DWRF/WRF for treatment. An estimate of the amount of additional wastewater generated by the proposed project was determined, as shown in Table 4.17-7, *Wastewater Increase: Proposed 2040 General Plan*. The wastewater generation factors were obtained from Table 4.17-5 for residential and commercial land uses. Since the City's Sanitary Sewer Collection System Master Plan Update did not have a land use category for industrial/warehousing land use, a factor of 0.03 gpd/sf was used from the City of Los Angeles Wastewater Generation Factors.[29]

[29] City of Los Angeles, 2019, Sewage Generation Factors, https://engpermitmanual.lacity.org/sites/default/files/documents/Sewage%20Generation%20Factors%20Chart.pdf accessed on January 17, 2023.

TABLE 4.17-7 WASTEWATER DEMAND INCREASE: PROPOSED 2040 GENERAL PLAN

Category	No. of DUs or Square Feet	Wastewater Generation Factor (gpd/du or gpd/sf)[a]	Increase in Wastewater Demand (gpd)
Single and Multi-Family Residential	6,455	140	903,700
Commercial	1,179,750	0.06	70,785
Industrial	2,858,700	0.03	85,761
Total			1,060,246

a. gpd/DU derived from factor of 40 gpcd x 3.5 people per DU for a total of 140 gpd/DU. Factor for commercial wastewater generation rate from City's Sanitary Sewer Collection System Master Plan Update. Factor for industrial wastewater generation rate for City of Los Angeles sewer generation rates.
Sources: City of Hollister, 2018; City of Los Angeles, 2019; PlaceWorks, 2023.

The projected increase in wastewater discharge at buildout of the proposed 2040 General Plan is estimated to be 1.06 mgd. The City's DTWF/WRF is permitted to treat up to 4.0 mgd, and as of 2020, the facility treated approximately 2.4 mgd. Therefore, there is a residual capacity of 1.6 mgd, and the DTWF/WRF would have the capacity to treat the wastewater at buildout without new or expanded facilities.

The City's Sanitary Sewer Collection System Master Plan Update predicts a future increase of 4.6 mgd with new development and septic system conversions within the City's service area. The report states that the increased flows can be accommodated with implementation of the Capital Improvement Projects listed in Table 4.17-6, some of which have already been completed. Also, the wastewater generation estimates in Table 4.17-7 do not consider the reduction in water demand and subsequent reduction in wastewater generation that results from compliance with CALGreen building codes for new construction and ongoing water conservation programs.

Also, all potential future development would be required to pay a sewer connection fee prior to the issuance of building permits as well as monthly wastewater collection fees, which are used to continually upgrade components of the wastewater collection and treatment systems through the CIP programs.

In addition, the proposed Community Services and Facilities (CSF) and Natural Resources and Conservation (NRC) Elements of the 2040 General Plan contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to wastewater resources. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts on future development and wastewater infrastructure.

Goal CSF-1: Provide an adequate level and maintenance of public services and facilities to ensure the continued health, education, welfare, and safety of all residents and businesses. (Goal CSF4)

- Policy CSF-1.1: New Development Requirements for Public Services. Ensure that future growth does not create demands that exceed the capabilities and capacity of local public services, including police and fire services, by requiring new development applications to identify the impacts that the proposed development would have on the provision of public services. Approve only development applications that can mitigate impacts or contribute a proportional fair share so that local public services can be maintained at an acceptable level. (Policy CSF1.2)

- Policy CSF-1.2: Coordination of Facilities and Services Planning. Cooperate and coordinate with the County of San Benito, LAFCO, and other local agencies in the provision of infrastructure and services within the Hollister Planning Area. (Policy CSF1.4)

  Policy CSF-1.3: Infrastructure Planning. Require the preparation of a specific plan, financing plan, development agreement, creation of a Communities Facilities District, or another similar document or financing vehicle, as a pre-condition to annexation or redesignations of land for new urban use. The plans shall identify means to ensure adequate funding to support construction of all needed public facilities, including water, sewer, storm drainage, roads, sidewalks, parks, and school facilities. (Policy CSF1.6)

- Policy CSF-1.4: Development Review Criteria for Public Services. Prior to granting approval, evaluate each new development in terms of the following criteria:
  1. The project shall share a common border with a property that has already been developed.
  2. The project shall be adequately served by infrastructure (water, sewer, streets, schools, parks, etc.), which is already in place or mitigated.
  3. The project shall be located within the existing service areas of local service providers (fire protection, police protection, solid waste disposal, schools, etc.), and not result in a reduction in their current capabilities. (Policy CSF1.7)
  4. The project shall have adequate water supply of sufficient quantity and quality.
  5. There shall be adequate sanitary sewer capacity and treatment capability that can be provided to service the proposed project.
  6. There shall be adequate fire protection for the proposed project.
  7. There shall be adequate level of police protection for the proposed project.
  8. The proposed project shall result in no impact on local parks and recreational facilities or the applicant will provide the resources required to mitigate the impacts associated with the proposed development.
  9. There shall be an adequate level of solid waste collection services and disposal capacity to serve the proposed project.
  10. There shall be an appropriate level of utility services (gas, electric, and telephone) to serve the proposed project.
  11. The project applicant shall finance the full costs associated with any drainage improvements necessary to accommodate peak flows due to the proposed project.
  12. The proposed project shall not make a significant contribution to the emission of regional air pollutants.
  13. There shall be adequate elementary, middle and high schools to serve the proposed project. (Implementation Measure CSF.D)

- Policy CSF-1.6: Development Fees. Review the existing development fee structure, including the infrastructure connection fees, every two years and restructure as needed. (Policy LU2.1)

- Policy CSF-1.7: Capital Improvements and Replacement. Ensure that the City's Capital Improvement Program is coordinated with responsible districts and agencies and provides for ongoing, preventative maintenance of infrastructure facilities and the replacement of City equipment. (Policy CSF1.5)

- Policy CSF-1.8: Capital Improvements Program. Conduct reviews of the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) at least every five years and add budget for transportation, infrastructure, and public facility improvements as funding sources are identified. (Implementation Measure LU.P)

- Action CSF-1.2: Public Facilities Impact Fee. Regularly review the public facilities impact fee to ensure development fund its fair share of new community and public facilities, including public safety facilities, required to serve new residents and employees in Hollister. (Implementation Measure LU.S)

Goal CSF-2: Plan for adequate water and sewer facilities. (Goal CSF2)

- Policy CSF-2.1: Sewer and Water Facility Coordination. Coordinate with responsible districts and agencies to ensure that sewer and water facility expansion and/or improvements meet Federal and State standards and occur in a timely manner. (Policy CSF2.1)
- Policy CSF-2.2: Development Areas. Encourage development to occur in those portions of the Hollister Sphere of Influence which are already served by the local water supply and wastewater systems or to which water supply and wastewater systems can reasonably be extended. (Policy CSF2.4)
- Policy CSF-2.3: Costs of New Development. Ensure that the cost of providing sewer and water service to new development proposed outside of existing service areas should be borne solely by those proposing the development, thus eliminating any financial burden to existing customers for any required expansion of the sewer and water system network to serve such development. (Policy CSF2.5)
- Policy CSF-2.4: Sewer Collection System Deficiencies. Prioritize implementation of the recommendations from the Sanitary Sewer Collection System Master Plan to address the deficiencies identified in the plan and ensure that the sewer system meets the City's performance standards for existing and future population wastewater flows. (new)
- Policy CSF-2.5: Development Outside of the Airport or Santa Ana Sewer Systems. Require those proposing development outside of the service areas of the Airport or Santa Ana sewer systems to develop plans for, finance, and install the sewer facilities required to serve the proposed development. (Policy CSF2.3)
- Policy CSF-2.12: Water and Sewer Connections within City Limits. Require all development that will utilize City water and wastewater services to be located within the City Limits with the exception of a public health or safety threat in accordance with State law. (new)
- Action CSF-2.3: Hollister Urban Water and Wastewater Master Plan. Update the Urban Water and Wastewater Master Plans to be consistent with the population, employment, and other growth projections of this General Plan in compliance with State law requirements for future water supplies. (Implementation Measure CSF.F)
- Action CSF-2.6: Data on Sewer and Water System Capacity. Establish the extent and capacity of the existing water supply systems and the wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal system, and update this information on regular basis in coordination with the Sunnyslope County Water District and San Benito County Water District. This information is to be used by the Planning Commission and the City Council to evaluate the impacts on sanitary sewerage facilities, which would result from proposed development. (Implementation Measure CSF.DD)

Goal NRC-6: Protect and improve water quality in and around Hollister. (new)

- Policy NRC-6.2: Proposer Disposal of Pollutants. Continue to promote proper disposal of pollutants to the sanitary sewer or hazardous waste facilities rather than to the storm drainage system. (Implementation Measure CSF.U)
- Policy NRC-6.3: Water Quality at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Monitor the wastewater treatment plant to ensure that the nitrate levels stay within legal limits. (Implementation Measure CSF.EE)
- Action NRC-6.3: Water Quality Source Control Program. Develop guidelines for a water quality source control program which incorporates public education, planning, management, material use and disposal controls, spill prevention and cleanup, street sweeping and sewer maintenance. (Implementation Measure CSF.S)

Implementation of the proposed project would not require the construction or expansion of the City's DTWF/WRF. Adherence to the City's municipal code requirements as well as the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions, would reduce wastewater generation rates over time, and therefore impacts associated with the sewer collection and treatment systems would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. The proposed 2023 CAP provides estimates of GHG emissions in the water and wastewater sectors and accounts for the increase in emissions with implementation of the proposed 2040 General Plan. It also provides reduction strategies to minimize GHG emissions through water conservation, water efficient retrofits, water-wise landscaping, and graywater and recycled water programs. Any reduction in indoor water demand would also result in a reduction in wastewater generation rates. Therefore, the proposed project would not require or result in the construction of new wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which would cause significant environmental effects, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. The agricultural lands do not generate wastewater that is treated by the City's DTWF/WRF nor are they connected to the City's sewer collection system. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not require or result in the construction of new wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which would cause significant environmental effects and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

UTIL-5	**Implementation of the proposed project would not result in the determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it does not have adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments.**

2040 General Plan

As described under Impact Discussion UTIL-4, the City's DTWF/WRF is permitted to treat up to 4.0 mgd and, as of 2020, the facility treated approximately 2.4 mgd. Therefore, there is a residual capacity of 1.6 mgd. Implementation of the proposed project would generate an additional 1.06 mgd, which can be accommodated by the existing treatment plant with a remaining residual capacity of 0.5 mgd. In addition, the plant can easily be expanded to accommodate flows as the service population increases through the installation of additional membranes to the existing treatment train, if needed. New projects within the EIR Study Area would be required to comply with the latest CALGreen and California Plumbing codes and implement active and passive water conservation measures. This would reduce wastewater discharge rates below that which was calculated in Table 4.17-7. Also, potential future development pursuant to the proposed 2040 General Plan would undergo City review and be required to comply with the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions listed under Impact Discussion UTIL-4.

With continued compliance with applicable regulations, wastewater generated by the proposed project would not exceed the capacity of the City's DTWF/WRF or the permitted capacities specified in the RWQCB's NPDES permit. Also, the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions listed under Impact Discussion UTIL-4 would ensure that potential future development would minimize impacts to wastewater collection and treatment capacity. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a determination by the wastewater treatment providers that they do not have adequate capacity to serve the EIR Study Area's projected demand in addition to their existing and future commitments, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. As described under Impact Discussion UTIL-4, the proposed 2023 CAP provides strategies to minimize water demands through water conservation, water efficient retrofits, water-wise landscaping, and graywater and recycled water programs. Any reduction in indoor water demand would also result in a reduction in wastewater generation rates. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in the determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it does not have adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. As described under Impact Discussion UTIL-4, existing and future agricultural lands within the City do not generate wastewater that is treated by the City's DTWF/WRF nor are they connected to the City's sewer collection system. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in the determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it does not have adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

UTIL-6 In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to wastewater facilities.

2040 General Plan

Buildout of the proposed 2040 General Plan would generate an increase in the volume of wastewater that requires treatment at the City's DTWF/WRF. The treatment plant receives and treats wastewater that originates within the EIR Study Area, as designated in the City's *Water and Wastewater Master Plan Update*. Therefore, the existing and future wastewater treatment service areas are essentially the same.

The DTWF/WRF has the capability to treat the 1.06 mgd of additional wastewater with buildout of the proposed 2040 General Plan and would still have a residual capacity of 0.5 mgd. Based on the current residual wastewater treatment capacity and the projected future wastewater demand within the EIR Study Area, cumulative wastewater treatment demand is less than the capacity of the DTWF/WRF. Because the cumulative demand would not substantially impact the existing or planned capacity of the wastewater treatment system, the construction of new wastewater treatment facilities would not be necessary.

Also, future development within the service area would be required to comply with all applicable regulations and ordinances issued by the City. Additionally, the City's *Water and Wastewater Master Plan Update* and *Sanitary Sewer Collection System Master Plan Update* account for increased demand with future development. All potential future development would be required to pay sewer connection fees and monthly wastewater collection fees, which are used by to continually upgrade components of the wastewater collection and treatment systems through the CIP programs.

Therefore, with continued compliance with applicable regulations and future reductions in wastewater demands with water conservative efforts, cumulative development would not exceed wastewater collection or treatment capacities. Accordingly, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact related to wastewater, and cumulative impacts would be *less than significant.*

UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. As discussed previously, the proposed 2023 CAP provides strategies to minimize water demands, which would also result in a reduction in wastewater generation rates. Therefore, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to wastewater impacts.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Existing and future agricultural lands within the City would not generate wastewater that is treated by the City's DTWF/WRF nor are they connected to the City's sewer collection system. Therefore, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to wastewater impacts.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

4.17.3 STORMWATER

4.17.3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Regulatory Framework

The regulatory framework for stormwater is described in detail in Chapter 4.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, of this Draft EIR. The regulatory requirements that pertain solely to storm drain systems are repeated below.

Federal Regulations

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

Under the NPDES program, all facilities that discharge pollutants into waters of the United States are required to obtain an NPDES permit. Requirements for stormwater discharges are also regulated under this program. As previously described, the study area lies within the jurisdiction of the Central Coast RWQCB (Region 3). The City is subject to the requirements of the General Permit for Storm Water Discharges for Phase II Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s) Order No. 2013-0001-DWQ (as amended by Order No. WQ 2015-0133-EXEC, Order No. WQ 2016-0069-EXEC, Order No. WQ 2017-

XXXX-DWQ, Order No. WQ 2018-0001-EXEC, and Order No. WQ 2018-0007-EXEC). The City of Hollister is a traditional small MS4.

Under Provision E.12 of the NPDES Permit, the permittees use their planning authorities to include appropriate source control, site design, and stormwater treatment measures in new development and redevelopment projects to address stormwater runoff pollutant discharges and prevent increases in runoff flows from new development and redevelopment projects. This goal is accomplished primarily through the implementation of low impact development techniques.

State Regulations

State Water Resources Control Board General Construction Permit

Construction activities that disturb one or more acres of land that could impact hydrologic resources must comply with the requirements of the SWRCB Construction General Permit (Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ), which was adopted in September 2022 and will become effective on September 1, 2023. Under the terms of the permit, applicants must file permit registration documents (PRD) with the SWRCB prior to the start of construction. The PRDs include a notice of intent, risk assessment, site map, Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), annual fee, and a signed certification statement. The PRDs are submitted electronically to the SWRCB via the Stormwater Multiple Application and Report Tracking System website.

Applicants must also demonstrate conformance with applicable best management practices (BMP) and prepare a SWPPP containing a site map that shows the construction site perimeter, existing and proposed buildings, lots, roadways, stormwater collection, and discharge points, general topography both before and after construction, and drainage patterns across the project site. The SWPPP must list BMPs that would be implemented to prevent soil erosion and discharge of other construction-related pollutants that could contaminate nearby water resources. Additionally, the SWPPP must contain a weekly visual monitoring program and BMP inspections prior to, during, and after qualifying precipitation events. Water quality monitoring is also required with the schedule based on the risk level of the project site.

State Water Quality Control Board's Trash Amendment

On April 7, 2015, the SWQCB adopted an amendment to *The Water Quality Control Plan for Ocean Waters of California* to control trash. In addition, the *Water Quality Control Plan for Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries of California* added the section, Part 1: Trash Provisions. Together, they are collectively referred to as "the Trash Amendments." The purpose of the Trash Amendments is to provide statewide consistency for the RWQCBs in their regulatory approach to protect aquatic life, public health beneficial uses, and reduce environmental issues associated with trash in State waters, while focusing limited resources on high trash generating areas.[30]

[30] State Water Resources Control Board, April 7, 2015, *Amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan for the Ocean Waters of California to Control Trash and Part 1 Trash Provisions of the Water Quality Control Plan for Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries of California*, https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/trash_implementation.html.

The Trash Amendments apply to all Phase I and II permittees under the NPDES municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4) permits. Compliance with the Trash Amendment requires municipalities to install certified trash treatment control systems on all catch basins no later than December 2, 2030.[31]

Regional Regulations

Central Coast RWQCB Post-Construction Stormwater Management Requirements

The Central Coast RWQCB Post-Construction Stormwater Management Requirements for Development Projects in the Central Coast Region (Resolution No. R3-2013-0032) provide site-specific design and runoff reduction measures in addition to water quality treatment measures for projects that create and/or replace 2,500 square feet or more of impervious surface. [32] The primary objective of the post-construction requirements is to ensure development projects reduce pollutant discharges to the maximum extent practicable and to prevent stormwater discharges from causing or contributing to water quality standard violations under the Phase II Small MS4 permit.

Local Regulations

Hollister Municipal Code

The HMC includes various directives to minimize impacts to the storm drain system in Hollister. The HMC is organized by title, chapter, and article. Most provisions related to stormwater impacts are in Title 13, *Public Services;* Title 15, *Buildings and Construction;* and Title 17, *Zoning.*

- Chapter 13.16, *Storm Drainage Fees*. This chapter states that storm drainage fees are required to be paid by all landowners and are used for the construction and maintenance of the City's storm drain system. Storm drainage fees are required to be paid prior to the issuance of a building permit or the filing of a parcel map. The collected funds are part of the development impact fees and are used solely for the construction, reconstruction, and acquisition of land for the storm drainage system.
- Chapter 15.24, *Grading and Stormwater Best Management Practices Control*. This chapter describes the City's rules and regulations to minimize land disturbance during construction, erosion and sediment control, and construction stormwater control plan.
- Chapter 17.16, *Performance Standards, Section 17.16.140, Stormwater Management*: This section states that all new development and redevelopment is subject to the Small MS4 General Permit Order No. 2013-0001-DWQ and subsequent amendments. This section includes measures for drainage, stormwater quality, obtaining a grading permit for land disturbance, and compliance with BMPs per federal, State, regional, or City requirements.

[31] State Water Resources Control Board, January 7, 2019, *Storm Water Program - Trash Implementation Program.* https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/trash_implementation.html.

[32] Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, 2013. *Post-Construction Stormwater Management Requirements.* http://hollister.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/CCRWQCB-R3-2013-0032-Post-Construction-Regulation.pdf, accessed January 21, 2023.

Greater Hollister Area Draft Storm Water Resource Plan

The Storm Water Resource Plan (SWRP) is a planning document for the City of Hollister, City of San Juan Baptista, and San Benito County to identify and prioritize stormwater and dry weather runoff projects and programs based on a watershed approach to stormwater management.[33] Proposed projects within the City of Hollister include:

- Stormwater upgrades at the IWTP to convert Pond 2 into a stormwater detention pond and construct new storm drain infrastructure to divert stormwater runoff from Apricot Lane to the IWTP, including a trash capture system.
- Construct new storm drain infrastructure to split flows at the existing manhole at Nash Road and Homestead Avenue to divert stormwater flows to the IWTP during the 95th percentile storm.
- Construct new storm drain infrastructure to split flows at the existing manhole at San Benito Street and Bundeson Drive to divert stormwater runoff to the IWTP during the 95th percentile storm event.
- Install a full capture trash system to separate debris, sediment, and hydrocarbons from the stormwater at the Bridge Road outfall. This would significantly reduce the amount of pollutants that reach the San Benito River.
- Construct a new underground stormwater retention/detention facility at the City ballpark on Powell Street and 7th Street to reduce flooding at Powell Street and South Street and improve stormwater quality. The project would also reduce sanitary sewer overflows at this location.
- Expand the City's trash capture system to comply with the State's Trash Amendments by installing full capture trash units upstream of outfalls to the San Benito River or Santa Ana Creek.
- Increase participation in the Stormwater Information Network, which is a regional group of MS4 stormwater program managers that meet routinely to participate in regional efforts, such as public education programs and pesticide/herbicide education and reduction.
- Join the Central Coast Ambient Monitoring Program, which is the Central Coast RWQCB's water quality monitoring and evaluation program. The City's goal is to reduce fecal coliform concentrations in its runoff by 10 percent over the next five years of the permit cycle and improve water quality impacts to the San Benito River and Santa Ana Creek.

Hollister MS4 Guidance Document

The City's MS4 Guidance Document serves to guide the City of Hollister's stormwater pollution prevention program under the Small MS4s Permit No. CAS000004 (Order No. 2013-0001-DWQ, as amended in 2015, 2016, and 2018).[34] The guidance document serves as the City's stormwater management plan and details the City's adopted stormwater BMPs and measurable goals, which are more protective of water quality than the minimum requirements in the Small MS4 Permit. BMPs include construction site stormwater control, post-construction stormwater management, permittee staff training, public education and outreach, public involvement, and storm drain mapping.

[33] Wallace Group, 2021. *Greater Hollister Area Draft Storm Water Resource Plan.* Dated July 2021.
[34] City of Hollister, 2014. *City of Hollister MS4 Guidance Document*. Last revision April 24, 2014.

Hollister Storm Drain Master Plan

The City's Storm Drain Master Plan was prepared in 2011 and provides a summary of existing facilities and stormwater flows, identifies system capacity deficiencies, recommends capital improvement projects, and conformance with existing and potential future NPDES regulations. The future system improvements described in the plan include pipe upgrades, new detention/retention basins, studies of infiltration rates at existing detention ponds, and stormwater basins. The plan also determines cost estimates for each of the CIPs and operation and maintenance (O&M) activities.

Hollister Design Standards

The construction of storm drain systems within the City's service area shall conform to the City's requirements per Section 4 of the City's Design Standards. The design standards require that runoff from storms up to the 100-year return frequency are conveyed through storm drains in a manner that protects the public from flooding hazards. Projects of 50 acres or less shall convey the 10-year storm without surcharging, flood waters shall be confined to the streets, and the 100-year storm shall be contained within the right-of-way. Drainage ponds shall conform to the City's Ordinance No. 1177 and comply with the current RWQCB permit. The design standards also include the drainage calculation methods for the design storms, stormwater runoff quantities, and hydraulic storm drain capacities.[35]

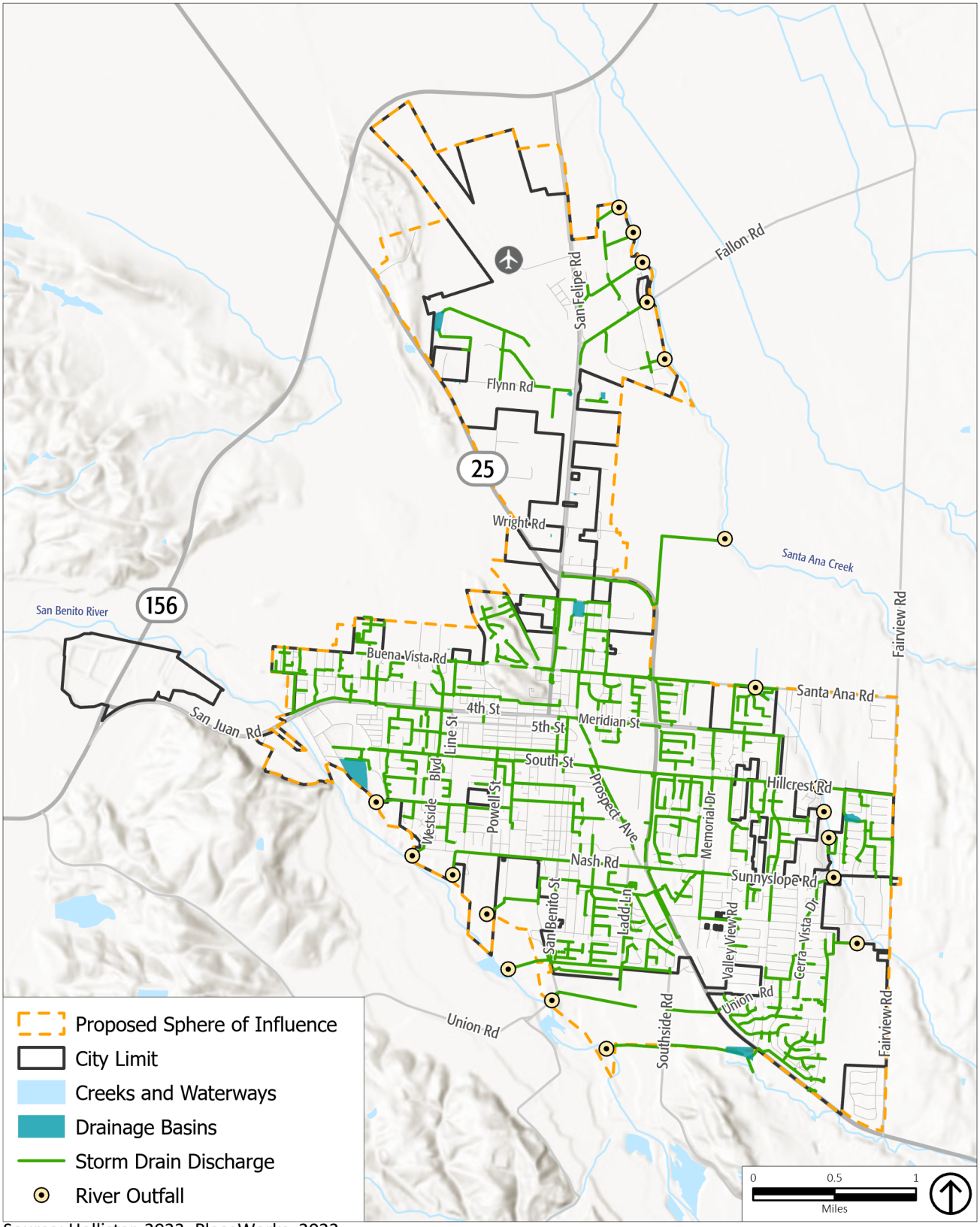
Existing Conditions

The City owns and maintains the storm drain system that is throughout the city. The storm drain system consists of a network of inlets and storm drains with eventual discharge into the San Benito River, Santa Ana Creek, and various detention/retention basins within the City Limits. The City also owns the IWTF that is permitted to collect stormwater during wet weather conditions.

The storm drain system consists of approximately 1,420 pipes ranging in size from 6 inches to 84 inches, with the majority of pipes being 18-inches in diameter. The system also has 1,235 manholes, 1,845 inlets, 4 detention basins (Citation Business Park, Enterprise Road, Frank Klauer Memorial, and Bridgevale), and 3 terminal retention basins (Airway, Rustic Street, and Flynn Road). The City's storm drain system has 20 river outfalls, 8 of which discharge to the San Benito River, and 12 that discharge to the Santa Ana Creek.[36] Figure 14.7-4, *Hollister Storm Drain Infrastructure*, provides an overview of the storm drain system infrastructure. In addition, San Benito County provides maintenance and operation of drainage facilities in the Cielo Vista Estates area (CSA No. 22).

[35] City of Hollister, November 2019. *City of Hollister Design Standards/Standard Specifications, Standard Plans,* http://hollister.ca.gov/government/city-departments/engineering/engineering-standards/, accessed January 6, 2023.

[36] Wallace Group, 2011. *City of Hollister Storm Drain Master Plan*.



Source: Hollister, 2023; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.17-4
Hollister Storm Drain Infrastructure

In general, the existing storm drain system has sufficient capacity to convey runoff generated during design storms. However, the 2011 Stormwater Master Plan stated that approximately 6 percent of the storm drain network does not have the capacity to convey future 10-year storm peak flows, and about 10 percent does not have the capacity to convey future 25-year storm peak flows.[37] Most of the priority projects identified in the Stormwater Master Plan were included in the City's Capital Improvement Program for FY 2017/2018 to 2021/2022.[38]

The IWTP currently has the capacity to store additional stormwater at its facility, as described above in the Storm Water Resource Plan discussion. The discharge of stormwater to the IWTP outside of canning season is currently limited to 1.75 mgd as per the Central Coast RWQCB's NPDES permit. An increase in stormwater flow to the IWTP would require approval by the Central Coast RWQCB and a modification to the existing NPDES permit.

The SWRCB, as the implementing agency for the Trash Amendments, mandates that all Small Phase II MS4 permittees, which includes the City of Hollister, must install certified trash treatment control systems on all catch basins no later than December 2, 2030.

4.17.3.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the proposed project would result in significant stormwater related impacts if it would:

7. Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded storm water drainage facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects.
8. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to stormwater facilities.

4.17.3.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

UTIL-7	**Implementation of the proposed project would not require or result in the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which would cause significant environmental effects.**

2040 General Plan

New development and/or redevelopment as part of the proposed 2040 General Plan and the change in land uses would result in an increase in impervious surfaces, which in turn could result in an increase in stormwater runoff, higher peak discharges to drainage channels, and the potential to cause nuisance flooding in areas without adequate drainage facilities. The proposed land use changes in the 2040 General Plan would primarily involve the conversion of agricultural land and open space, which would increase

[37] Wallace Group, 2011. *City of Hollister Storm Drain Master Plan*.

[38] City of Hollister, 2017. *City of Hollister 5-Year Capital Improvement Projects Program. Fiscal Years 2017-2018 to 2021/2022.*

impervious surfaces. However, the City's Storm Drainage Master Plan describes the improvements that are planned to accommodate future growth within the EIR Study Area, and the plan accounted for a larger population increase than is currently proposed for the 2040 General Plan. Existing storm drains would need to be upgraded and new detention basins would need to be built with future development. However, the construction of these facilities would not cause significant environmental effects.

In addition, all future development that involves the disturbance of one acre or more of land would be subject to NPDES construction permit requirements, including preparation of a SWPPP, which includes BMPs to limit the discharge of sediment and non-stormwater discharges from the site. Also, the Phase II Small MS4 permit requires an erosion and sediment control plan to be submitted to the City prior to issuing a grading or building permit.

In addition, potential future development that involves the creation and/or replacement of 2,500 square feet or more of impervious surfaces would trigger the implementation of site design measures to reduce stormwater runoff, per the Phase II Small MS4 Permit requirements and the Central Coast RWQCB Post-Construction Stormwater Management Requirements. Also, regulated projects that create or replace 5,000 square feet or more of impervious surface would be required to implement site design, source control, and stormwater treatment and runoff measures using specific numeric sizing criteria based on the volume and flow rate of stormwater that is generated. Each project undergoes review by City personnel to ensure that the regulatory requirements for temporary on-site stormwater runoff retention have been met. Also, new projects are subject to storm drainage impact fees, which are used to fund new storm drain infrastructure within the city.

With the implementation of these provisions for future development, there would not be significant increases in stormwater runoff to the City's storm drain system. The construction of new stormwater facilities through the CIP and storm drain impact fees, implementation of best management practices and on-site stormwater control measures, and preparation of the required documents and review by the City would serve to minimize any potential impacts associated with stormwater.

Also, the proposed Community Services and Facilities (CSF) Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to storm drain infrastructure. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts on stormwater discharge.

Goal CSF-1: Provide an adequate level and maintenance of public services and facilities to ensure the continued health, education, welfare, and safety of all residents and businesses. (Goal CSF4)

- Policy CSF-1.1: New Development Requirements for Public Services. Ensure that future growth does not create demands that exceed the capabilities and capacity of local public services, including police and fire services, by requiring new development applications to identify the impacts that the proposed development would have on the provision of public services. Approve only development applications that can mitigate impacts or contribute a proportional fair share so that local public services can be maintained at an acceptable level. (Policy CSF1.2)
- Policy CSF-1.2: Coordination of Facilities and Services Planning. Cooperate and coordinate with the County of San Benito, LAFCO, and other local agencies in the provision of infrastructure and services within the Hollister Planning Area. (Policy CSF1.4)

- Policy CSF-1.3: Infrastructure Planning. Require the preparation of a specific plan, financing plan, development agreement, creation of a Communities Facilities District, or another similar document or financing vehicle, as a pre-condition to annexation or redesignations of land for new urban use.

  The plans shall identify means to ensure adequate funding to support construction of all needed public facilities, including water, sewer, storm drainage, roads, sidewalks, parks, and school facilities. (Policy CSF1.6)

- Policy CSF-1.4: Development Review Criteria for Public Services. Prior to granting approval, evaluate each new development in terms of the following criteria:
  1. The project shall share a common border with a property that has already been developed.
  2. The project shall be adequately served by infrastructure (water, sewer, streets, schools, parks, etc.), which is already in place or mitigated.
  3. The project shall be located within the existing service areas of local service providers (fire protection, police protection, solid waste disposal, schools, etc.), and not result in a reduction in their current capabilities. (Policy CSF1.7)
  4. The project shall have adequate water supply of sufficient quantity and quality.
  5. There shall be adequate sanitary sewer capacity and treatment capability that can be provided to service the proposed project.
  6. There shall be adequate fire protection for the proposed project.
  7. There shall be adequate level of police protection for the proposed project.
  8. The proposed project shall result in no impact on local parks and recreational facilities or the applicant will provide the resources required to mitigate the impacts associated with the proposed development.
  9. There shall be an adequate level of solid waste collection services and disposal capacity to serve the proposed project.
  10. There shall be an appropriate level of utility services (gas, electric, and telephone) to serve the proposed project.
  11. The project applicant shall finance the full costs associated with any drainage improvements necessary to accommodate peak flows due to the proposed project.
  12. The proposed project shall not make a significant contribution to the emission of regional air pollutants.
  13. There shall be adequate elementary, middle and high schools to serve the proposed project. (Implementation Measure CSF.D)

- Policy CSF-1.6: Development Fees. Review the existing development fee structure, including the infrastructure connection fees, every two years and restructure as needed. (Policy LU2.1)

- Policy CSF-1.7: Capital Improvements and Replacement. Ensure that the City's Capital Improvement Program is coordinated with responsible districts and agencies and provides for ongoing, preventative maintenance of infrastructure facilities and the replacement of City equipment. (Policy CSF1.5)

- Policy CSF-1.8: Capital Improvements Program. Conduct reviews of the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) at least every five years and add budget for transportation, infrastructure, and public facility improvements as funding sources are identified. (Implementation Measure LU.P)

- Action CSF-1.2: Public Facilities Impact Fee. Regularly review the public facilities impact fee to ensure development fund its fair share of new community and public facilities, including public safety facilities, required to serve new residents and employees in Hollister. (Implementation Measure LU.S)

Goal CSF-3: Provide adequate stormwater facilities. (Goal CSF3)

- Policy CSF-3.1: Adequate Drainage Facilities. Require project developers to provide adequate storm drains for storm water runoff. Proposed development projects must include adequate provisions to accommodate peak flows, shall not significantly impact downstream lands, and shall avoid impacts on riparian vegetation. (Policy CSF3.1)
- Policy CSF-3.2: Stormwater Capture. Encourage stormwater capture and encourage, when feasible and cost-effective, on-site rainwater catchment for new and existing development. (new)
- Action CSF-3.1: Identification of Drainage System Improvements. Establish a program for drainage system improvements that would include, but not be limited to, the following:
    1. Continual monitoring of areas with insufficient drainage and implementation of any necessary improvements.
    2. Construction of new system improvements to improve storm drainage performance.
    3. Evaluation of storm water volumes when replacing undersized or otherwise inadequate lines with larger or parallel lines.
    4. Establishing development guidelines to protect areas that are particularly susceptible to erosion and sediment loss.
    5. Compliance with the Storm Water National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements. (Implementation Measure CSF.P)
- Action CSF-3.2: Drainage Channels and Culverts. Create a program to inspect all active drainage channels and culverts associated with subdivisions and large-scale developments for accumulated sediment during construction, post-construction, and on an on-going basis. If the inspections indicate that sediment accumulation has occurred, then these drainage structures should be cleared of debris and sediment. (Implementation Measure CSF.HH)

Compliance with and implementation of these proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions that ensure adequate infrastructure and the regulatory provisions in the Phase II Small MS4 permit that limit runoff from new development would ensure that the implementation of the proposed project would not result in significant increases in runoff and would not contribute to the construction of new storm drain facilities or expansion of existing facilities that would cause significant environmental impacts. In addition, the City would continue to repair, rehabilitate, and upgrade the storm drain system through implementation of the CIP program funded through the General Fund and Storm Drain Impact Fees Fund. Therefore, impacts with respect to stormwater infrastructure would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. The proposed 2023 CAP includes policies and plans for reducing these emissions in the water and wastewater sectors. However, there are no sections in the proposed 2023 CAP that specifically address stormwater other than policies to increase

park space and tree plantings and vegetation, which would reduce the volume of stormwater runoff. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not require or result in the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which would cause significant environmental effects and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since agricultural land does not discharge to the City's storm drain system, the proposed project would not require or result in the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which would cause significant environmental effects and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

UTIL-8	**In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to stormwater facilities.**

2040 General Plan

The analysis of cumulative storm drainage impacts considers future development within the EIR Study Area. The area surrounding the EIR Study Area is primarily agricultural land and streets with no associated storm drain system. The Central Coast RWQCB regulates discharges from runoff or leaching of irrigation water and/or stormwater from irrigated lands through the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. Therefore, the stormwater control program and storm drain improvements implemented by the City would not directly or adversely impact the surrounding area.

As discussed previously, development within the EIR Study Area would require conformance with State and local policies that would reduce hydrology and infrastructure construction impacts to less-than-significant levels. Any new development within the EIR Study Area would be subject to independent project review on a project-by-project basis as well as compliance with City policies and ordinances, design guidelines, zoning codes, and other applicable City requirements that reduce impacts related to hydrology and stormwater drainage facilities. More specifically, potential changes related to stormwater flows, drainage, impervious surfaces, and flooding would be minimized by the implementation of stormwater control measures, retention, infiltration, and LID measures and review by the City's Public Works Department to integrate measures to reduce potential stormwater drainage and flooding impacts.

In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, proposed development and redevelopment within the EIR Study Area would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to

stormwater infrastructure and cumulative impacts would be *less than significant* and no mitigation measures are required.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. As discussed previously, there are no sections in the proposed 2023 CAP that specifically address stormwater other than policies to increase park space and tree plantings and vegetation, which would reduce the volume of stormwater runoff. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to stormwater infrastructure.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. As discussed previously, there is no direct impact on stormwater infrastructure associated with implementation of this program because agricultural land does not discharge to the City's storm drain system. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to stormwater infrastructure.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

4.17.4 SOLID WASTE

4.17.4.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Regulatory Framework

Federal Regulations

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations), Part 258, contains regulations for municipal solid waste landfills and requires states to implement their own permitting programs incorporating the federal landfill criteria. The federal regulations address the location, operation, design (liners, leachate collection, run-off control, etc.), groundwater monitoring, and closure of landfills.

State Regulations

Assembly Bills 939, 341, and 1826

The Integrated Solid Waste Management Act of 1989 codified in Public Resources Code 40050 et seq. (AB 939) established an integrated waste-management system that focused on source reduction, recycling, composting, and land disposal of waste. AB 939 required every California city and county to divert 50 percent of its waste from landfills by the year 2000. Compliance with AB 939 is measured in part by comparing solid waste disposal rates for a jurisdiction with target disposal rates. Actual rates at or below target rates are consistent with AB 939. AB 939 also requires California counties to show 15 years of disposal capacity for all jurisdictions in the county or show a plan to transform or divert its waste.

Assembly Bill 341 (Chapter 476, Statutes of 2011) increased the statewide solid waste diversion goal to 75 percent by 2020. The law also mandates recycling for commercial and multifamily residential land uses as well as schools and school districts.

California Public Resources Code Sections 42649.8 et seq. (AB 1826) was signed into law in September 2014 and took effect in April 2016. It requires recycling of organic waste for all businesses and multifamily dwellings that consist of five or more units. Organic waste includes food waste, green waste, landscape and pruning waste, nonhazardous wood waste, and food-soiled paper waste that is mixed in with food waste.

Organic Waste Methane Emissions Reduction Act

In September 2016, the Organic Waste Methane Emissions Reduction Act (SB 1383) was signed into law establishing methane emissions reduction targets in a statewide effort to reduce emissions of short-lived climate pollutants in various sectors of California's economy. SB 1383 establishes goals to reduce the landfill disposal of organics by achieving a 50 percent reduction in the 2014 level of statewide disposal of organic waste by 2020 and a 75 percent reduction by 2025. SB 1383 grants CalRecycle the regulatory authority to achieve the organic waste disposal reduction targets and establishes an additional target that at least 20 percent of currently disposed edible food be recovered for human consumption by 2025. Methane emissions resulting from the decomposition of organic waste in landfills are a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions contributing to global climate change. Organic materials—including waste that can be readily recycled or composted—account for a significant portion of California's overall waste stream.

California Solid Waste Reuse and Recycling Access Act

The California Solid Waste Reuse and Recycling Access Act requires new commercial and multi-family development projects to set aside areas for collecting and loading recyclable materials. This act required CalRecycle to develop a model ordinance for adoption by any local agency that provides adequate areas for the collection and loading of recyclable materials for development projects. Local agencies are required to adopt the model, or an ordinance of their own, that establishes standards including space allocation for the collection and loading of recyclable materials.

CALGreen Building Code

CALGreen Sections 4.408 and 5.408, C*onstruction Waste Reduction Disposal and Recycling*, mandate that, in the absence of a more stringent local ordinance, a minimum of 65 percent of non-hazardous construction and demolition debris must be recycled or salvaged. CALGreen requires developers to prepare and submit a Construction and Demolition Recycling Plan for on-site sorting of construction debris, which is submitted to the City for approval. The Construction and Demolition Recycling Plan must:

- Identify the materials to be diverted from disposal by recycling, reuse on the project, or salvage for future use or sale.
- Specify if materials would be sorted on-site or mixed for transportation to a diversion facility.
- Identify the diversion facility where the material collected can be taken.
- Identify construction methods employed to reduce the amount of waste generated.
- Specify that the amount of materials diverted shall be calculated by weight or by volume but not both.

Regional Regulations

San Benito County Integrated Waste Management Agency

San Benito County Integrated Waste Management Agency (IWMA) administers recycling and waste reduction programs to meet CalRecycle waste mandates and increase sustainability measures for its members, which include the cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista. The IWM has a franchise agreement with Recology San Benito County to provide collection services for recyclables, organics, and solid waste. The IWMA also provides recycling guides and free technical support for city and county businesses to help them achieve their California Green Business Certification.

Local Regulations

Hollister Municipal Code

The HMC includes various directives that pertain to solid waste collection and disposal in Hollister. Most provisions related to solid waste impacts are included in Title 8, *Health and Safety;* Title 15, *Buildings and Construction;* and Title 17, *Zoning*.

- Chapter 8.12, ***Solid Waste Collection and Disposal***. This chapter states that every occupied property within the city must receive solid waste collection and disposal services, with associated billing. The chapter also provides the requirements for source separation of recyclables, garden waste, information on solid waste collection charges, prohibitions against littering, and times specified for setting out containers. The chapter also describes the edible food recovery program, as required by SB 1383 regulation and CalRecycle requirements.
- Section 15.04.045, ***Building and Demolition Permits***. This section of the Building Code states that no building or demolition permit shall be issued until a solid waste diversion plan has been submitted and approved by the City. No final inspection would be schedules and no occupancy permit would be issued until the permittee has submitted verifiable documentation from a California Integrated Waste

Management Board permitted disposal or recycling facility that the required diversions have been met.

- Chapter 17.16, *Performance Standards*. Article 17.16.130 provides the standards for the construction and operation of solid waste and recyclable material storage area in compliance with the California Solid Waste Reuse and Recycling Access Act. The minimum storage areas are provided for multifamily residential developments based on the number of units, and nonresidential developments based on the amount of square feet. The required locations, design, and construction of the storage areas are also provided in this article.

Existing Conditions

Solid Waste Collection

The San Benito County IWMA coordinates recycling and garbage services for all of San Benito County. The San Benito County IWMA has contracted with Recology, a private company, to provide waste collection services. Recology provides the following services in Hollister:

- Weekly curbside collection of waste headed for the landfill in a grey container, recyclables in a blue container, and organics (includes yard waste and food waste) in a green container.
- Curbside collection of bulky items (appliances, furniture, mattresses, tires, etc.) two times per year.
- Three times per year events where residents can pick-up compost for free.
- Three times per year events where residents can drop off old electronics to be recycled.
- Three times per year events where residents can have confidential documents shredded on-site for free.
- Recycling services at community events and public places (like parks).

Recyclable waste is delivered to the Monterey Regional Waste Management District in Marina, which has a materials recovery facility where recyclables are sorted and shipped to different markets for processing. Organic waste is transported to the South Valley Organics composting facility off Highway 152 near Gilroy where it is composted, and the finished product is marketed as landscape compost.[39] The San Benito County IWMA is currently applying for a rural jurisdiction exemption from the organics reduction act (SB 1383) because it does not have the existing infrastructure, composting, or anaerobic facilities to handle all of the organic waste produced in the county.[40]

[39] Recology, *FAQs,* https://www.recology.com/recology-san-benito-county/faq/#, accessed February 8.2023.

[40] San Benito County, 2023. *Resolution to Affirm an Exemption from the Requirements of Mandatory Organics Collection Services and SB 1383 Related Activities on Behalf of the San Benito County Integrated Waste Management Regional Agency. file:///C:/Users/cfitzgerald/Downloads/Resolution_No._2021-129-1.pdf* accessed February 9, 2023.

Landfills

In 2019, solid waste generated by the San Benito IWMA was delivered to 13 facilities and landfills for a total disposal rate of 88,184 tons. However, 91 percent of the solid waste was delivered to either the John Smith Road Landfill near Hollister (66,043 tons) or the Billy Wright Landfill near Los Banos (14,581 tons).[41]

The John Smith Road Landfill is owned by San Benito County and operated by Waste Solutions Group of San Benito. It is located at 2650 John Smith Road in Hollister. The landfill has a maximum permitted disposal date of 1,000 tons/day and has a remaining capacity of 1,921,000 cubic yards as of April 2021.[42] Prior to March 2022, 80 percent of the waste received by this landfill came from outside of San Benito County. As of March 30, 2022, acceptance of out-of-county waste was suspended per the Landfill Operating Agreement as the 15-year waste threshold was reached.

However, 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. The draft EIR for the expansion has been prepared, and the final EIR is expected to be available shortly. The proposed project would add 388 acres to increase the total landfill size, and the daily tonnage limit would increase to 2,300 tons/day.[43] With the proposed expansion, the landfill is projected to be able to receive both in-county and out-of-county waste until 2072.

The Billy Wright Landfill is owned and operated by Merced County Regional Waste Management Authority and is regulated under Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. R5-2011-0061. The landfill is at 17173 South Billy Wright Road, approximately 4.5 miles west of Los Banos. Approximately 172 acres are dedicated to landfill operations, with a maximum permitted throughput of 1,500 tons/day and a remaining capacity of 11 million tons. The estimated closure date is December 31, 2054. Table 4.17-8, *Landfills*, provides more information on landfill capacity and closing dates for the two primary landfill sites that receive solid waste from the San Benito IWMA.

AB 939 requires all counties to demonstrate that they have 15 years of available countywide solid waste landfill capacity, either in their jurisdiction or contracted with another entity. San Benito County IWMA has 15 years of available countywide solid waste landfill capacity at the Billy Wright Disposal Site and would also have more than 15 years at the John Smith Road Landfill once the expansion project is approved.

[41] CalRecylcle, 2023, *Jurisdiction Disposal and Alternative Daily Cover (ADC) Tons by Facility*, https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/LGCentral/DisposalReporting/Destination/DisposalByFacility, accessed February 8, 2023.

[42] CalRecycle, 2023. *SWIS Facility/Site Activity Details.* https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/SiteActivity/Details/2151?siteID=2583, accessed February 8, 2023.

[43] San Benito County, 2023. *JSRL Landfill Expansion*. https://www.cosb.us/departments/resource-management-agency/integrated-waste-management/jsl-landfill-expansion accessed February 8, 2023.

TABLE 4.17-8 LANDFILLS

Landfill Name and Location	Maximum Permitted Throughput, tons/day	Average Disposal, tons/day	Residual Disposal Capacity, tons/day	Remaining Capacity, cubic yards	Estimated Closing Year
John Smith Road Landfill 2650 John Smith Road Hollister, CA 95023	1,000	923	77	1,921,000	2037
John Smith Road Landfill Expansion Project	2,300	NA	NA	NA	2072
Billy Wright Disposal Site 17173 Billy Wright Road Los Banos , CA 93522	1,500	600	900	11,370,000	2054

Sources: CalRecycle 2023, SWIS Facility Detail John Smith Road Landfill (35-AA-0001); CalRecycle. 2019, SWIS Facility Detail Billy Wright Disposal Site (24-AA-0002); Douglas Environmental, 2022. Draft Environmental Impact Report for the John Smith Road Landfill Expansion Project.

Solid Waste Diversion and Recycling

Compliance with AB 939 is measured by comparing the CalRecycle target disposal rates for residents and employees to actual disposal rates. The latest reported 2020 target disposal rates for the San Benito IWMA, of which Hollister is a member, were 5.1 pounds per day (ppd) for residents and 18.3 ppd for employees. The actual disposal rates were 6.6 ppd for residents and 23.8 ppd for employees.[44] Therefore, the solid waste diversion goals for San Benito County have not been met. The increase in disposal rates in San Benito County in 2020 may be due in part to the COVID pandemic and people staying at home. The San Benito IWMA is working diligently to implement additional waste reduction and recycling programs to meet the AB 939 compliance requirements.

4.17.4.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the proposed project would result in significant impacts related to solid waste if it would:

9. Generate solid waste in excess of State and local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals.
10. Comply with federal, State, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste.
11. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to solid waste.

[44] CalRecycle, 2023. *Countywide, Regionwide, and Statewide Jurisdiction Diversion/Disposal Progress Report,* accessed at https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/LGCentral/AnnualReporting/DiversionDisposal on May 8, 2022.

4.17.4.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

UTIL-9 **Implementation of the proposed 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.**

2040 General Plan

The San Benito IWMA reports annual solid waste disposal rates for the County to CalRecycle. The IWMA does not differentiate the amount of solid waste generated by each city or town within its jurisdiction. The 2019 disposal rate for San Benito IWMA was 88,184 tons.[45] Approximately 91 percent of the total tonnage went to John Smith Landfill and Billy Wright Landfill, with the remainder shipped to various landfills and facilities in the Bay Area. According to the California Department of Finance, the population of San Benito County, which is the service area for San Benito IWMA, was 62,051 in 2019 and the population of Hollister was 38,900. Therefore, it is assumed for this analysis that the percentage of solid waste generated by the City of Hollister is 63 percent of the total, or approximately 55,556 tons/year. This is equivalent to 1.43 tons/year/person.

With implementation of the proposed project, the population is anticipated to increase by 21,635 residents, which would result in an increase in solid waste of 30,938 tons/year or approximately 85 tons/day. These numbers are conservative because, with continued recycling and waste reduction programs implemented by the City and San Benito IWMA, the waste generation rates would be reduced over time. As shown in Table 4.17-9, *Solid Waste Landfill Disposal Rates at Buildout,* this would result in a total solid waste disposal rate of 86,494 tons/year for Hollister, or approximately 237 tons/day that would be sent to the landfills.

TABLE 4.17-9 SOLID WASTE LANDFILL DISPOSAL RATES AT BUILDOUT

Area	2019 Hollister Population	Existing Solid Waste Generation (tons/year)	2040 Hollister Population	Solid Waste Generation at Buildout (tons/year)	Solid Waste Generation at Buildout (tons/day)
EIR Study Area	38,900	55,556	60.535	86,494	237

Note: The increase in population with implementation of the 2040 General Plan would be 21,635 people at a waste generation rate of 1.43 tons/year/person, resulting in an additional 30,938 tons/year. Adding to the existing disposal rate of 55,556, that would be 86,494 tons/year or a total of 237 tons/day.

With implementation of the proposed project, an increase of approximately 85 tons/day would be about 9 percent of the current excess capacity of 900 tons/day at Billy Wright Landfill. In addition, the expansion of John Smith Road Landfill would result in a disposal rate of 2,300 tons/day. Therefore, the landfills have the capacity to accept the solid waste associated with the proposed 2040 General Plan buildout.

[45] CalRecycle, 2023. *Jurisdictional Disposal by Facility.* https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/LGCentral/DisposalReporting/Destination/DisposalByFacility accessed February 11, 2023.

Furthermore, all new development pursuant to the proposed 2040 General Plan would need to comply with Division 4.4 of the 2022 CALGreen Building Code, which requires that at least 65 percent of nonhazardous construction and demolition waste from residential and nonresidential construction operations be recycled and/or salvaged for reuse. New development and redevelopment would also need to comply with the requirements of AB 341 that mandates recycling for commercial and multifamily residential land uses. Therefore, solid waste facilities would be able to accommodate project-generated solid waste, and impacts would be less than significant.

Also, the proposed Community Services and Facilities (CSF) Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to minimize impacts related to solid waste generation. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts on solid waste generation.

Goal CSF-1: Provide an adequate level and maintenance of public services and facilities to ensure the continued health, education, welfare, and safety of all residents and businesses. (Goal CSF4)

- Policy CSF-1.1: New Development Requirements for Public Services. Ensure that future growth does not create demands that exceed the capabilities and capacity of local public services, including police and fire services, by requiring new development applications to identify the impacts that the proposed development would have on the provision of public services. Approve only development applications that can mitigate impacts or contribute a proportional fair share so that local public services can be maintained at an acceptable level. (Policy CSF1.2)
- Policy CSF-1.2: Coordination of Facilities and Services Planning. Cooperate and coordinate with the County of San Benito, LAFCO, and other local agencies in the provision of infrastructure and services within the Hollister Planning Area. (Policy CSF1.4)
- Policy CSF-1.3: Infrastructure Planning. Require the preparation of a specific plan, financing plan, development agreement, creation of a Communities Facilities District, or another similar document or financing vehicle, as a pre-condition to annexation or redesignations of land for new urban use.

  The plans shall identify means to ensure adequate funding to support construction of all needed public facilities, including water, sewer, storm drainage, roads, sidewalks, parks, and school facilities. (Policy CSF1.6)
- Policy CSF-1.4: Development Review Criteria for Public Services. Prior to granting approval, evaluate each new development in terms of the following criteria:
  1. The project shall share a common border with a property that has already been developed.
  2. The project shall be adequately served by infrastructure (water, sewer, streets, schools, parks, etc.), which is already in place or mitigated.
  3. The project shall be located within the existing service areas of local service providers (fire protection, police protection, solid waste disposal, schools, etc.), and not result in a reduction in their current capabilities. (Policy CSF1.7)
  4. The project shall have adequate water supply of sufficient quantity and quality.
  5. There shall be adequate sanitary sewer capacity and treatment capability that can be provided to service the proposed project.
  6. There shall be adequate fire protection for the proposed project.
  7. There shall be adequate level of police protection for the proposed project.

8. The proposed project shall result in no impact on local parks and recreational facilities or the applicant will provide the resources required to mitigate the impacts associated with the proposed development.
9. There shall be an adequate level of solid waste collection services and disposal capacity to serve the proposed project.
10. There shall be an appropriate level of utility services (gas, electric, and telephone) to serve the proposed project.
11. The project applicant shall finance the full costs associated with any drainage improvements necessary to accommodate peak flows due to the proposed project.
12. The proposed project shall not make a significant contribution to the emission of regional air pollutants.
13. There shall be adequate elementary, middle and high schools to serve the proposed project. (Implementation Measure CSF.D)

- Policy CSF-1.6: Development Fees. Review the existing development fee structure, including the infrastructure connection fees, every two years and restructure as needed. (Policy LU2.1)
- Policy CSF-1.7: Capital Improvements and Replacement. Ensure that the City's Capital Improvement Program is coordinated with responsible districts and agencies and provides for ongoing, preventative maintenance of infrastructure facilities and the replacement of City equipment. (Policy CSF1.5)
- Policy CSF-1.8: Capital Improvements Program. Conduct reviews of the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) at least every five years and add budget for transportation, infrastructure, and public facility improvements as funding sources are identified. (Implementation Measure LU.P)
- Action CSF-1.2: Public Facilities Impact Fee. Regularly review the public facilities impact fee to ensure development fund its fair share of new community and public facilities, including public safety facilities, required to serve new residents and employees in Hollister. (Implementation Measure LU.S)

Goal CSF-4: Ensure adequate and sustainable solid waste management that meets the existing and future needs of the city and reduces disposable waste over time. (new)

- Policy CSF-4.1: Solid Waste Management. Coordinate with the County of San Benito in addressing solid waste management and landfill capacity needs consistent with this General Plan. (Policy CSF4.10)
- Policy CSF-4.2: Waste Reduction and Recycling. Comply with State laws to promote recycling, and divert recyclable materials from the landfill such as encouraging businesses to recycle building and other materials; promoting composting by restaurants, institutions, and residences; and supporting programs to promote recycling. Encourage residential, commercial and industrial customers to evaluate and reduce their waste streams and to participate in waste exchanges and used goods resale programs. (Policy CSF4.11)
- Policy CSF-4-4: Zero Waste Legislation. Support zero waste legislation locally, regionally, and statewide. (new)
- Policy CSF-4-5: Green Jobs. Support the development of green jobs through investment in zero waste programs and infrastructure. (new)
- Policy CSF-4-6: Litter and Illegal Dumping. Reduce litter and illegal dumping in Hollister. (new)

- Action CSF-4.1: Identification of Recycling Program Opportunities. Create a formal recycled product procurement program for the City, and work with local industry and commercial enterprises to encourage the purchase and use of recycled materials where possible. (Implementation Measure CSF.K)
- Action CSF-4.2: Zero Waste Goal. Prepare a zero-waste strategic plan to maximize solid waste diversion community-wide. (new)
- Action CSF-4.3: Reusable Foodware Ordinance. Develop and adopt a Resusable Foodware Ordinance that requires the use of reusable foodware when dining on-site at restaurants and the use of compostable or recyclable foodware containers for carryout orders. (new)
- Action CSF-4.4: Solid Waste Reduction Programs. Adopt and implement programs that reduce the amount of materials entering the solid waste stream. (new)

With continued compliance with the applicable regulations, leading to increased recycling and waste diversion, and adherence to the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions, anticipated rates of solid waste disposal from the proposed project would be less than significant with respect to permitted landfill capacity. In addition, the ban on accepting solid waste from areas outside of San Benito County by John Smith Road Landfill until the expansion project is approved would reduce the daily disposal rates significantly, since 80 percent of the solid waste is generated outside of the county. Therefore, the impact is *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. The proposed 2023 CAP has several policies for reducing GHG emissions by reducing the amount of waste produced by the community and capturing emissions released from landfills. This can include reducing the amount of packaging used in food service and retail products, as envisioned in Hollister 2040's Zero-Waste Community policy, and partnering with Recology, San Benito IWMA, and community partners to promote recycling and composting of organic materials. The City is in the process of developing an ordinance to prohibit single-use plastic bags for retail establishments and Styrofoam take-out containers and plastic food service ware for restaurants and caterers. Additional strategies to achieve waste reduction goals and increase recycling and organic waste collection are provided in the proposed 2023 CAP. Therefore, implementation of the proposed 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 impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural

land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Implementation of the proposed 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 because agricultural lands are not included in Recology San Benito County's waste collection program or the State's solid waste regulations. Therefore, impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

UTIL-10 Implementation of the proposed project would comply with federal, State, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

2040 General Plan

As previously discussed, Recology San Benito County, which serves the EIR study area, complies with State requirements to reduce the volume of solid waste through recycling and organic waste diversion. In addition, all development pursuant to the proposed 2040 General Plan would comply with Division 4.4*, Material Conservation and Resource Efficiency,* of the 2022 CALGreen, which requires that at least 65 percent of nonhazardous construction and demolition waste from nonresidential construction operations be recycled and/or salvaged for reuse. New development and redevelopment would also need to comply with the requirements of AB 341, which mandates recycling for commercial and multifamily residential land uses. Therefore, the City, Recology San Benito County, and the San Benito IWMA would comply with all applicable federal, State, and local solid waste regulations, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. As described under Impact Discussion UTIL-9, the proposed 2023 CAP provides many strategies to achieve waste reduction goals and increase recycling and organic waste collection. Therefore, the proposed project would comply with federal, State, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Implementation of the proposed project would comply with federal, State, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste, since agricultural lands are not

covered by the State and local regulations and are not part of Recology San Benito County's service area for solid waste collection. Therefore, impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

UTIL-11 In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to solid waste.

2040 General Plan

The area considered for cumulative impacts to solid waste disposal facilities is San Benito County. The San Benito IWMA, which has contracted with Recology San Benito County for solid waste collection services, serves the entire county. As reported by the California Department of Finance, the total population of San Benito County was 62,051 and the population was projected to increase to 70,866 by the year 2040.[46] Assuming that solid waste generation increases at the same rate as the population (14 percent), the amount of waste generated by San Benito County in 2040 would be 100,530 tons. This conservatively assumes no reduction in solid waste generation rates over time with increased recycling and organic waste diversion from the landfills.

The two landfills (Billy Wright Landfill and John Smith Road Landfill) receive 91 percent of the solid waste generated by the San Benito IWMA. Therefore, this analysis assumed that all of the waste generated by the San Benito IWMA would be delivered to these two landfills. Assuming 350 operational days per year, the 2040 total tonnage of 100,530 tons per year is equivalent to approximately 287 tons/day. The two landfills have a combined excess capacity of approximately 3,200 tons/day, assuming that the expansion of John Smith Road Landfill is approved. The Billy Wright Landfill alone has an excess capacity of 900 tons/day, which could easily accommodate the solid waste generated by San Benito County.

In addition, new development within San Benito County would comply with Division 4.4 of the 2022 CALGreen, which requires that at least 65 percent of nonhazardous construction and demolition waste from residential and nonresidential construction operations be recycled and/or salvaged for reuse. This would reduce the volume of solid waste transported to the landfills. Therefore, with continued compliance with the applicable regulations and an increase in recycling and landfill diversion rates, solid waste cumulative impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. As discussed previously, the

[46] California Department of Finance, 2023. *Estimated and Projected Population for California and Counties: July 1, 2010 to 2060.* https://dof.ca.gov/forecasting/demographics/projections/ accessed February 11, 2023.

proposed 2023 CAP provides policies, strategies, and actions to achieve waste reduction goals and increase recycling and organic waste collection. Therefore, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to solid waste.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. As discussed previously, agricultural lands are not covered by the State and local solid waste regulations and are not part of Recology San Benito County's service area for solid waste collection. Therefore, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to solid waste.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

4.17.5 ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

4.17.5.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Regulatory Framework

Federal Regulations

Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007

Signed into law in December 2007, the Energy Independence and Security Act contains provisions designed to increase energy efficiency and the availability of renewable energy. The Act contains provisions for increasing fuel economy standards for cars and light trucks, while establishing new minimum efficiency standards for lighting as well as residential and commercial appliance equipment.

Energy Policy Act of 2005

Passed by Congress in July 2005, the Energy Policy Act includes a comprehensive set of provisions to address energy issues. This Act includes tax incentives for energy conservation improvements in commercial and residential buildings, fossil fuel production and clean coal facilities, and construction and operation of nuclear power plants, among other things. Subsidies are also included for geothermal, wind energy, and other alternative energy producers.

National Energy Policy

Established in 2001 by the National Energy Policy Development Group, the National Energy Policy is designed to help the private sector and state and local governments promote dependable, affordable, and environmentally sound production and distribution of energy for the future. Key issues addressed by the

energy policy are energy conservation, repair and expansion of energy infrastructure, and ways of increasing energy supplies while protecting the environment.

National Gas Pipeline Safety Act of 1968

The Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Act of 1968 authorizes the United States Department of Transportation to regulate pipeline transportation of flammable, toxic, or corrosive natural gas and other gases as well as the transportation and storage of liquefied natural gas. The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration within the Department of Transportation develops and enforces regulations for the safe, reliable, and environmentally sound operation of the nation's 2.6-million-mile pipeline transportation system. The regulations enacted under this act have been updated several times. The latest revision, the PIPES Act of 2020, includes additional safety regulations for gas pipeline leak detection and gas distribution pipelines as well as additional inspection and maintenance procedures. The regulations are encoded in 49 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 192.

State Regulations

Warren-Alquist Act

Established in 1974, the Warren-Alquist Act created the California Energy Commission (CEC) in response to the energy crisis of the early 1970s and the state's unsustainable growing demand for energy resources. The CEC's core responsibilities include advancing State energy policy, encouraging energy efficiency, certifying thermal power plants, investing in energy innovation, developing renewable energy, transforming transportation, and preparing for energy emergencies. The Warren-Alquist Act is updated annually to address current energy needs and issues, and its latest edition was in January 2022.

California Public Utilities Commission Long Term Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan

Adopted in September 2008 and updated in January 2011, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Long Term Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan provides a framework for energy efficiency in California through the year 2020 and beyond. It articulates a long-term vision, as well as goals for each economic sector, identifying specific near-, mid-, and long-term strategies to assist in achieving these goals. The plan sets forth the following four goals, known as "Big Bold Energy Efficiency Strategies," to achieve significant reductions in energy demand:

- All new residential construction in California will be zero net energy by 2020.
- All new commercial construction in California will be zero net energy by 2030.
- Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning will be transformed to ensure that its energy performance is optimal for California's climate.
- All eligible low-income customers will be given the opportunity to participate in the low-income energy efficiency program by 2020.

The CPUC and CEC have adopted the following goals to achieve zero net energy levels by 2030 in the commercial sector:

- Goal 1: New construction will increasingly embrace zero net energy performance (including clean, distributed generation), reaching 100 percent penetration of new starts in 2030.
- Goal 2: 50 percent of existing buildings will be retrofit to zero net energy by 2030 through achievement of deep levels of energy efficiency and with the addition of clean distributed generation.
- Goal 3: Transform the commercial lighting market through technological advancement and innovative utility initiatives.

California Energy Code

The State of California provides a minimum standard for energy conservation through Title 24, Part 6 California Code of Regulations, commonly referred to as the California Energy Code. The California Energy Code was first adopted by the California Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission (now the CEC) in June 1977. The standards are updated on a three-year cycle to allow for consideration and possible incorporation of new energy efficiency technologies and methods. In August 2021, the CEC adopted the 2022 California Energy Code, which went into effect on January 1, 2023. The 2022 standards require mixed-fuel single-family homes to be electric ready to accommodate replacement of gas appliances with electric appliances. In addition, the new standards also include prescriptive photovoltaic systems and battery requirements for high-rise, multifamily buildings (i.e., more than three stories) and noncommercial buildings such as hotels, offices, medical offices, restaurants, retail stores, schools, warehouses, theaters, and convention centers.[47]

California Green Building Standards

On July 17, 2008, the California Building Standards Commission adopted the nation's first green building standards. CALGreen (24 California Code of Regulations, Part 11) was adopted as part of the California Building Standards Code. It includes mandatory requirements for new residential and nonresidential buildings throughout California. CALGreen is intended to (1) reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from buildings; (2) promote environmentally responsible, cost-effective, healthier places to live and work; (3) reduce energy and water consumption; and (4) respond to the directives by the governor. The latest 2022 CALGreen code became effective on January 1, 2023.

The CALGreen code is established to reduce construction waste, make buildings more efficient in the use of materials and energy, and reduce environmental impact during and after construction. CALGreen contains requirements for construction site selection, stormwater control during construction, construction waste reduction, indoor water use reduction, material selection, natural resource conservation, site irrigation conservation, etc. The code provides for design options, allowing the designer to determine how best to achieve compliance for a given site or building condition. The code also requires building commissioning, which is a process for verifying that all building systems (e.g., heating and cooling equipment and lighting systems) are functioning at their maximum efficiency.[48]

[47] California Energy Commission, 2021, Amendments to the Building Energy Efficiency Standards (2022 Energy Code) Draft Environmental Report. CEC-400-2021-077-D.

[48] California Building Standards Commission, 2022, 2022 California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 11, https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/CAGBC2022P1, accessed December 29, 2022.

2016 Appliance Efficiency Regulations

The 2016 Appliance Efficiency Regulations (Title 20, California Code of Regulations Sections 1601 through 1608), combined with federal standards, set minimum efficiency levels for energy and water consumption in products, such as consumer electronics, household appliances, and plumbing equipment. Twenty-three categories of appliances are included in the scope of these regulations. The standards within these regulations apply to appliances that are sold or offered for sale in California, except those sold wholesale in California for final retail sale outside the state, and those designed and sold exclusively for use in recreational vehicles or other mobile equipment. These regulations exceed the standards imposed by all other states and they reduce GHG emissions by reducing energy demand.

California Energy Benchmarking and Disclosure

The Building Energy Benchmarking Program is mandated under AB 802 and requires owners of large commercial and multifamily buildings to report energy use to the CEC by June 1 annually. This program applies to all buildings with more than 50,000 square feet of gross floor area and owners of multifamily residential building with more than 50,000 square feet and 17 or more utility accounts. The bill requires each utility, upon the request and authorization of the owner, owner's agent, or operator of a building covered under the regulation, to deliver or provide aggregated energy usage data for a covered building. The required energy usage shall be reported to the CEC through the Energy Star Portfolio Manager.

California Renewable Portfolio Standards

A major component of California's Renewable Energy Program is the renewables portfolio standard established under Senate Bills 1078 (Sher) and 107 (Simitian). The standard requires that a specified percentage of the electricity that utilities provide comes from renewable resources. Renewable sources of electricity include wind, small hydropower, solar, geothermal, biomass, and biogas. SB 1020, signed into law on September 16, 2022, requires renewable energy and zero-carbon resources to supply 90 percent of all retail electricity sales by 2035 and 95 percent by 2040. Additionally, SB 1020 requires all State agencies to procure 100 percent of electricity from renewable energy and zero-carbon resources by 2035.

CPUC Natural Gas Regulations

The CPUC regulates natural gas utility rates and services as well as the transportation of natural gas over the extensive transmission and distribution pipeline systems. The CPUC also regulates gas storage facilities. The Gas Safety and Reliability Branch of the CPUC ensures than natural gas pipeline systems are designed, constructed, operated, and maintained according to the safety standards set by the CPUC and the federal government. The regulations are provided in the CPUC General Order No. 112-E and the Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Act of 2011.

Local Regulations

Hollister Municipal Code

The HMC includes various directives that pertain to energy impacts in Hollister. Most provisions related to energy impacts are included in Title 13, *Public Services;* Title 15, *Buildings and Construction;* and Title 17, *Zoning*.

- Chapter 13.20, *Underground Utility Districts*. This chapter pertains to the establishment of underground utility districts if the council determines that overhead wires and structures within designated areas of the city should be removed, and the electric services, communication facilities, or similar services should be installed underground for health and safety reasons. The chapter also outlines the responsibilities of the utility companies and property owners to comply with the underground installation.
- Chapter 13.32, *Community Choice Aggregation Program*. In order to provide businesses and residents within the City of Hollister with a choice of power providers, the City implements a community choice aggregation program by participating in the Community Choice Aggregation Program of the Monterey Bay Community Power Authority. Under this program, cities and counties can buy or generate electricity for residences or businesses within their communities, and PG&E partners with each program to deliver the electricity through their transmission and distribution system.
- Chapter 15.04, *Hollister Building Code*. This chapter provides regulations for all new construction and any alterations, repairs, relocations, or reconstruction of any building. This chapter adopts the latest edition of the California Energy Code and the CALGreen Code by reference to ensure all buildings are energy efficient and up to code.
- Chapter 17.04, *Residential Zoning Districts*. This chapter defines the applicable regulations regarding development and new land uses in the residential zoning districts. More specifically, Section 17.04.030 establishes regulations for energy efficiency, in that solar access shall be maintained through the siting and orientation of buildings and two- and three-story residences.
- Chapter 17.10, *Industrial/Manufacturing Zones*. This chapter defines the regulations applicable to development and new land uses in the industrial zoning districts and establishes building regulations that are designed to conserve energy, such as passive solar or solar panels on roofs or in parking lots.
- Chapter 17.12, *Special Purpose Zones*. This chapter regulates development of new land uses in the special purpose zoning districts and encourages the use of solar panels on roofs or in parking lots to conserve energy.
- Chapter 17.16, *Performance Standards*. This chapter defines the performance standards for specific land uses, land use activities, and site-specific conditions. Section 17.16.120 establishes solar energy development standards that shall be incorporated in all new development.

Existing Conditions

Electricity

Two electricity providers, Central Coast Community Energy (CCCE) and Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E), serve the EIR Study Area.

The CCCE was created in 2018 as part of the Community Choice Energy model implemented by the State of California. CCCE is the default electricity provider for all communities in San Benito County, including Hollister, as well as for communities in Santa Cruz, Monterey, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo Counties. CCCE provides two plans for electricity customers.

The first plan, 3CE Choice, provides the following mix of electricity sources:

- 38.4 percent renewable, consisting mostly of solar and geothermal
- 11.8 percent large hydroelectric
- 49.8 percent unspecified power, defined as electricity purchases through open market transactions that are not traceable to a specific generation source

Customers also have the option of using the 3CPrime plan, which provides 100 percent renewable and carbon-free electricity.[49] Conversely, customers have the option to opt-out of CCCE renewable energy sources and receive their energy service from PG&E. PG&E is responsible for maintaining transmission lines, handling customer billing, and responding to new service requests and emergencies within the CCCE service area.

PG&E is a publicly traded utility company that generates, purchases, and transmits energy under contract with the CPUC. PG&E's service territory is 70,000 square miles, roughly extending north to south from Eureka to Bakersfield, and east to west from the Sierra Nevada to the Pacific Ocean.[50] PG&E's electricity distribution system consists of 106,681 circuit miles of electric distribution lines and 18,466 circuit miles of interconnected transmission lines with approximately 5.6 million electric customer accounts.

The electricity is generated by a combination of sources such as natural gas-fired power plants, nuclear power plants, and hydro-electric dams as well as newer sources of energy such as wind turbines and photovoltaic plants, also known as solar farms. The electric grid is a network of high-voltage transmission lines that link power plants with the PG&E system. The distribution system, comprised of lower voltage secondary lines, is at the street and neighborhood level and consists of overhead or underground distribution lines, transformers, and individual service "drops" that connect to the individual customer.

The power mix PG&E provided to customers in 2021 consisted of renewable resources (50 percent), nuclear (39 percent), natural gas plants (7 percent), and large hydroelectric facilities (4 percent). The

[49] Central Coast Community Energy (CCCE), 2021 Power Content Label, https://3cenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2021-PCL-Postcard-final.pdf, accessed January 9, 2023.

[50] PG&E, 2023, Company Info, http://www.pge.com/about/company/profile/, accessed February 18, 2023.

renewable resources include wind, geothermal, biomass, solar, and small hydro.[51] PG&E also has 600 megawatts of battery storage capacity already connected to the electric grid and has contracts for an additional 3,300 megawatts of capacity by 2024.

PG&E's projected average annual electricity demand growth (mid-demand forecast) between 2019 and 2035 is approximately 1.5 percent. Total mid-electricity consumption in PG&E's service area was 106,617 gigawatt-hours per year in 2019 and is forecast to increase to 133,893 gigawatt-hours in 2035.[52] PG&E is expected to meet its electricity demands in 2035 and is ahead of schedule on meeting California's GHG-free requirements.

Natural Gas

PG&E is also the natural gas service provider for the City of Hollister. The natural gas system includes approximately 50,000 miles of natural gas pipelines, including 6,700 miles of transmission pipelines and 42,000 miles of distribution pipelines.[53] The transmission pipelines move natural gas from compressor stations and storage facilities to regulator stations. At the regulator station, the pressure in the pipeline is reduced before gas enters the distribution system, which consists of smaller diameter pipelines that deliver gas to residences and businesses. PG&E has approximately 4.5 million natural gas customer accounts.

Natural gas demand statewide is projected to decline an average of 1.1 percent per year through 2035.[54] This is primarily due to the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the ordinances of some cities for new construction to be all electric. Gas demand is expected to decrease from 5,298 million cubic feet of gas per day in 2022 to 4,857 million cubic feet per day by 2035. California's gas storage facilities supplement pipeline gas supply during high demand periods and also provide supply reliability. The supplies of natural gas would meet the demand through year 2035.[55]

Telecommunications and Internet Providers

There are numerous telecommunication and internet providers that serve the Hollister area. Telecommunication providers include AT&T, T-Mobile, Verizon, and others. Internet providers include Spectrum, Xfinity, AT&T, T-Mobile, Earthlink, and others. There is infrastructure in place to serve existing and future customers in Hollister and the surrounding area.

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[51] PG&E, 2023, PG&E's 2021 Power Mix, https://www.pge.com/en_US/about-pge/environment/what-we-are-doing/clean-energy-solutions/clean-energy-solutions.page, accessed February 18, 2023.

[52] California Energy Commission, 2023. California Energy Demand Forecast, 2021-2035, https://www.energy.ca.gov/data-reports/reports/integrated-energy-policy-report/2021-integrated-energy-policy-report/2021-1, accessed February 18, 2023.

[53] PG&E, 2023. PG&E Natural Gas System. https://www.pge.com/en_US/safety/how-the-system-works/natural-gas-system-overview/natural-gas-system-overview.page accessed February 18, 2023.

[54] California Public Utilities Commission, 2022. 2022 California Gas Report. https://www.socalgas.com/sites/default/files/Joint_Utility_Biennial_Comprehensive_California_Gas_Report_2022.pdf accessed February 18, 2023.

[55] [55] California Public Utilities Commission, 2022. 2022 California Gas Report. https://www.socalgas.com/sites/default/files/Joint_Utility_Biennial_Comprehensive_California_Gas_Report_2022.pdf accessed February 18, 2023.

4.17.5.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the proposed project would result in significant impacts related to solid waste if it would:

12. Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects.
13. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities.

4.17.5.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

UTIL-12 **Implementation of the proposed project would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects.**

2040 General Plan

Electrical service to the EIR Study Area would be provided by PG&E and CCCE through connections to existing off-site electrical lines and new on-site infrastructure. As shown in Table 4.17-10, *Year 2040 Forecast Electricity Consumption,* implementation of the proposed project would require electrical services totaling an estimated 202,433,300 kilowatt-hours per year.

TABLE 4.17-10 YEAR 2040 FORECAST ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION

	Electricity Usage (kilowatt-hours/year)		
Land Use	Existing Conditions	Proposed 2040 General Plan	Net Change
City			
Residential	43,082,470	67,675,040	24,592,570
Nonresidential	94,633,440	133,023,990	38,390,550
SOI			
Residential	444,566	965,920	521,354
Nonresidential	714,895	768,350	53,455
Total	138,875,371	202,433,300	63,557,929

Note: Residential energy and nonresidential energy forecasts do not account for reductions due to increase in energy efficiency from compliance with the Building Energy Efficiency Standards and CALGreen.
Source: See Appendix B, *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data*.

As shown in Table 4.17-11, *Year 2040 Forecast Natural Gas Consumption*, natural gas use under the proposed project would total 10,023,060 therms annually. By 2040, natural gas use in the EIR Study Area would increase by 3,445,000 therms annually, or approximately 52 percent, from existing conditions.

TABLE 4.17-11 YEAR 2040 FORECAST NATURAL GAS CONSUMPTION

	Natural Gas Usage (therms per year)		
Land Use	Existing Conditions	Proposed 2040 General Plan	Net Change
City			
Residential	4,515,300	7,092,750	2,577,450
Nonresidential	2,001,050	2,812,830	811,780
SOI			
Residential	46,593	101,230	54,637
Nonresidential	15,117	16,250	1,133
Total	**6,578,060**	**10,023,060**	**3,445,000**

Note: Residential energy and nonresidential energy forecasts do not account for reductions due to increase in energy efficiency from compliance with the Building Energy Efficiency Standards and CALGreen.
Source: See Appendix B, *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data.*

These energy consumption rates are modest increases when considered in the context of PG&E's service territory. The electricity usage for the EIR Study Area is approximately 0.15 percent of PG&E's projected energy supply in 2035, and the natural gas consumption for the EIR Study Area is less than 0.05 percent of PG&E's natural gas supply.[56]

In addition, potential future development would be required to comply with the current and future updates to the California Energy Code and the CALGreen Code, which would contribute to reducing energy demands. New buildings would also use new energy-efficient appliances and equipment, pursuant to the Appliance Efficiency Regulations, which would ensure the use of efficient electricity and natural gas consumption. New and replacement buildings in compliance with these standards would generally have greater energy efficiency than existing buildings. Also, California is in the process of developing legislation to ban the sale of all new natural-gas-fired space heaters and water-heating appliances by 2030, which would further reduce natural gas demand.

The proposed Community Services and Facilities (CSF), Natural Resource and Conservation (NRC), and Health and Safety (HS) Elements of the 2040 General Plan contain goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to address efficient use of energy and energy conservation. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would further limit wasteful and unnecessary energy consumption.

Goal CSF-1: Provide an adequate level and maintenance of public services and facilities to ensure the continued health, education, welfare, and safety of all residents and businesses. (Goal CSF4)

- Policy CSF-1.4: Development Review Criteria for Public Services. Prior to granting approval, evaluate each new development in terms of the following criteria:
  1. The project shall share a common border with a property that has already been developed.
  2. The project shall be adequately served by infrastructure (water, sewer, streets, schools, parks, etc.), which is already in place or mitigated.

[56] PG&E's projected energy supplies for electricity and natural gas do not extend beyond 2035.

3. The project shall be located within the existing service areas of local service providers (fire protection, police protection, solid waste disposal, schools, etc.), and not result in a reduction in their current capabilities. (Policy CSF1.7)
4. The project shall have adequate water supply of sufficient quantity and quality.
5. There shall be adequate sanitary sewer capacity and treatment capability that can be provided to service the proposed project.
6. There shall be adequate fire protection for the proposed project.
7. There shall be adequate level of police protection for the proposed project.
8. The proposed project shall result in no impact on local parks and recreational facilities or the applicant will provide the resources required to mitigate the impacts associated with the proposed development.
9. There shall be an adequate level of solid waste collection services and disposal capacity to serve the proposed project.
10. There shall be an appropriate level of utility services (gas, electric, and telephone) to serve the proposed project.
11. The project applicant shall finance the full costs associated with any drainage improvements necessary to accommodate peak flows due to the proposed project.
12. The proposed project shall not make a significant contribution to the emission of regional air pollutants.
13. There shall be adequate elementary, middle and high schools to serve the proposed project. (Implementation Measure CSF.D)

- Policy CSF-1.5: Utility Provider Coordination. Coordinate land use planning activities with the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), San Benito County, internet, and other utility providers to ensure that utility systems are available for new development and are installed to meet the needs of new residents. Promote the availability and adequate delivery of reliable, modern, and competitively priced utilities necessary for businesses to prosper. (Implementation Measure CSF.MM)
- Policy CSF-1.9: Telecommunications and Technology. Ensure that residents, schools, businesses and organizations have access to reliable, modern, and cost-effective telecommunications. (Policy CSF4.14)
- Action CSF-1.1: Information Technology Plan. Develop and adopt an Information Technology Plan to guide investment in the City's hardware and software. (Implementation Measure CSF.A)

Goal NRC-4: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Hollister to meet or exceed state targets. (new)

- Policy NRC-4.3: Energy Use. Reduce energy use through use of energy efficient appliances, lighting, and materials in our homes, businesses, and City facilities and use education and incentives to promote and sustain energy conserving design and practices. (new)
- Policy NRC-4.8: Carbon Free Energy. Promote carbon free energy sources in new and existing developments. (new)
- Action NRC-4.2: Building Standards Code Efficiency Amendments. Conduct a study to explore opportunities to amend the Hollister Building Standards Code to improve building energy efficiency, transition to carbon-free energy sources, increase renewable energy supplies, and promote greater electric vehicle adoption. (new)

- Action NRC-4.4: Community Energy Efficiency Education Programs. Develop community education programs on energy efficiency and renewable energy, sustainable transportation options, waste reduction, and water conservation in partnership with regional agencies and community groups. (new)

Goal NRC-5: Promote energy efficiency and resilient design in the built environment. (Goal NRC3)

- Policy NRC-5.1: Development Practices to Conserve Resources. Promote development practices, which will result in the conservation of energy, water, minerals and other natural resources, and promote the use of renewable energy technologies (such as solar and wind) when possible. (Policy NRC3.1)
- Policy NRC-5.2: Resource Efficiency in Site Development. Encourage site planning and development practices that reduce energy demand and incorporate resource- and energy-efficient infrastructure. (Policy NRC3.3)
- Policy NRC-5.3: Resource-Efficient Building Design. Promote and encourage residences and businesses to be resource, energy and water efficient by creating incentives and removing obstacles to promote their use. Require those proposing new development to incorporate energy conservation measures in the design and construction of all proposed residential, commercial, industrial and public buildings. This would include:
  - Shading of parking lots and summertime shading of south-facing windows
  - Requiring those proposing new development to design all proposed commercial, office and industrial structures with high-efficiency heating-ventilation-air conditioning (HVAC) systems for maximum energy efficiency
  - Requiring those proposing new development to design all window systems to reduce thermal gain during warm weather and heat loss during cool weather
  - Encouraging the use of domestic solar energy. (Policy NRC3.4 & Implementation Measures NRC.S)
- Policy NRC-5.4: Efficiency in Government. Promote and serve as an effective leader in implementing conservation practices and incorporating resource-efficient alternatives in government facilities and services. (Policy NRC3.5)
- Policy NRC-5.5: Project Review for Energy Conservation Measures. Review all development proposals for energy efficiency and features, and conservation of water resources. Review impacts on mineral resources and other natural resources prior to the issuance of any building permit. (Implementation Measures NRC.W)
- Policy NRC-5.5: Title 24 Requirements. Require new development projects to meet or exceed Title 24 energy conservation requirements, and, where possible, require structural and landscaping design to make use of natural heating and cooling. Encourage the use of solar and alternative energy technologies to meet or exceed Title 24 requirements. (Implementation Measures NRC.J)
- Policy NRC-5.7: LEED Program. Encourage developers to use "Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design" Standards. (Implementation Measures NRC.O)

- Policy NRC-5.8: Solar Design. Promote the use of solar energy and develop design standards relating to solar orientation, including landscaping, and appropriate impervious surfaces. (Implementation Measures NRC.P)
- Policy NRC-5.9: Energy Providers Assistance. Obtain the assistance of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company and Central Coast Community Energy in reviewing proposals for commercial buildings and major subdivisions of more than 25 units during the design and approval process to ensure the incorporation of energy efficiency recommendations into the plans. (Implementation Measures NRC.C)

Goal HS-2: Develop a resilient community with the ability to adapt to climate change hazards. (new)

- Policy HS-2.5: Sustainability Features. Encourage new developments and existing property owners to incorporate sustainable, energy-efficient, and environmentally regenerative features into their facilities, landscapes, and structures to reduce energy demands and improve on-site resilience. Support financing efforts to increase community access to these features. (new)

Compliance with federal, state, and local regulations (e.g., Building Energy Efficiency Standards, CALGreen, and Renewables Portfolio Standards) would increase building energy efficiency and reduce building energy demands. Additionally, the proposed 2040 General Plan includes goals, policies, and actions related to land use, energy efficiency, and renewable energy generation that will contribute to minimizing building-related energy demands and demands on nonrenewable sources of energy. Implementation of proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions in conjunction with and complementary to regulatory requirements, would ensure that energy demand associated with growth under the proposed project would not be inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary, therefore avoiding the need for new or expanded electric power and natural gas facilities. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. Energy efficiency improvements described in the proposed 2023 CAP would reduce the heating and cooling requirements for buildings. These measures that increase energy efficiency, promote water conservation, and reduce energy demand would minimized energy demand and energy sector emissions. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects, and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed project does not involve land use changes that would significantly impact energy use, implementation of the proposed project would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects and impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

UTIL-13	**In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities.**

2040 General Plan

The area considered for cumulative impacts are the service areas of CCCE and PG&E for electricity and PG&E for natural gas. Other projects within the service areas would increase electricity and natural gas demands.

The CPUC has identified the Integrated Energy Policy Report as "the appropriate venue for considering issues of load forecasting, resource assessment, and scenario analyses, to determine the appropriate level and ranges of resource needs for load serving entities in California." The latest report shows that California's electricity sector is leading efforts to reduce GHG emissions and there has been an increase in electricity consumption of only 10 percent while California's economy grew by 54 percent between 2000 and 2018.[57] Natural gas consumption is expected to level out between 2020 and 2030 with no significant increase due to energy savings from new building standards and the implementation of city and county ordinances that require new construction to have all-electric appliances and heating.

In addition, all future projects developed within the CCCE and PG&E service areas would implement the requirements of the California Energy Code and CALGreen Building Code. New buildings would also use new energy-efficient appliances and equipment, pursuant to the Appliance Efficiency Regulations. Counties and cities review project design plans against these codes and ensure compliance before issuing construction permits. These measures would reduce the overall consumption of electricity and natural gas.

The energy providers and telecommunications providers that serve the EIR Study Area indicate that they have the capability to serve future increases in population within their service areas without significant

[57] California Energy Commission, 2020. Adopted 2019 Integrated Energy Policy Report.

changes to the existing infrastructure. In addition, the proposed 2040 General Plan includes goals, policies, and actions that would contribute to minimizing inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary energy consumption and ensure compliance with State, regional, or local plans for renewable energy, therefore avoiding the need for new or expanded electric power and natural gas facilities. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to electric power, natural gas, or telecommunication facilities and cumulative impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. As described under Impact Discussion UTIL-12, the proposed 2023 CAP contains policies and actions that would minimize GHG emissions and promote energy conservation. Therefore, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to electric power, natural gas, and telecommunications facilities.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. As described under Impact Discussion UTIL-12, the proposed ALPP does not have a direct impact on energy, since it involves the establishment of agricultural easements for projects that convert agricultural land to non-agricultural uses. Therefore, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to electric power, natural gas, and telecommunications facilities.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

4.18 WILDFIRE

This chapter describes the potential wildfire impacts associated with the approval and implementation of the proposed project. This chapter describes the regulatory framework and existing conditions, identifies criteria used to determine impact significance, provides an analysis of the potential wildfire impacts, and identifies policies that could minimize any potentially significant impacts.

4.18.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.18.1.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Federal Regulations

National Cohesive Wildfire Management Strategy

In the Federal Land Assistance, Management, and Enhancement Act of 2009, Congress mandated the development of a National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy for all lands in the United States. Wildfire management is guided by the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy, which has three primary goals—resilient landscapes, fire adapted communities, and safe and effective wildfire response.[1] These three goals enable land managers to manage vegetation and fuels; protect homes, communities, and other values at risk; manage human-caused ignitions; and effectively and efficiently respond to wildfires. California is part of the Western Regional Strategy Committee, chartered to support and facilitate the implementation of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Strategy.

National Fire Protection Association Standards

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) codes, standards, recommended practices, and guides are developed through a consensus standards development process approved by the American National Standards Institute. NFPA standards are recommended (advisory) guidelines for fire protection that are referenced in the California Fire Code (CFC), which is adopted by the City of Hollister every three years. Specific standards applicable to wildland fire hazards include, but are not limited to:

- NFPA 1141, Fire Protection Infrastructure for Land Development in Wildlands
- NFPA 1142, Water Supplies for Suburban and Rural Fire Fighting
- NFPA 1143, Wildland Fire Management
- NFPA 1144, Reducing Structure Ignition Hazards from Wildland Fire
- NFPA 1710, Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations

[1] US Department of the Interior and US Department of Agriculture (USDI and USDA). 2014. *The National Strategy: The Final Phase of Development of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy*. https://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/documents/strategy/strategy/CSPhaseIIINationalStrategyApr2014.pdf.

WILDFIRE

State Regulations

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is dedicated to the fire protection and stewardship of over 31 million acres of California's wildlands. CAL FIRE provides fire assessment and firefighting services for land in State Responsibility Areas (SRA), conducts educational and training programs, provides fire planning guidance and mapping, and reviews general plan safety elements to ensure compliance with State fire safety requirements. CAL FIRE staff, or a designee, also reviews building permit applications, parcel maps, and use permits for construction or development in SRAs and Local Responsibility Areas (LRA).

The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection is a government-appointed approval body within CAL FIRE. It is responsible for developing the general forest policy of the state, determining the guidance policies of CAL FIRE, and representing the state's interest in federal forestland in California. The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection also promulgates regulations and approves general plan safety elements that are adopted by local governments for compliance with State statutes.

The California Office of the State Fire Marshal supports the mission of CAL FIRE by focusing on fire prevention. These responsibilities include regulating buildings in which people live, congregate, or are confined; controlling substances and products that may, in and of themselves or by their misuse, cause injuries, death, and destruction by fire; providing statewide direction for fire prevention within wildland areas; regulating hazardous liquid pipelines; developing and renewing regulations and building standards; and providing training and education in fire protection methods and responsibilities. These are accomplished through major programs, including engineering, education, enforcement, and support from the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection. For jurisdictions in SRAs or very high fire hazard severity zones (FHSZ), the Land Use Planning Program division of the Office of State Fire Marshal reviews safety elements during the update process to ensure consistency with California Government Code, Section 65302(g)(3).

Together, the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, Office of State Fire Marshal, and CAL FIRE protect and enhance the forest resources of all wildland areas of California that are not under federal jurisdiction.

2021 California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan

The Governor's Forest Management Task Force developed California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan, which is a framework for establishing healthy and resilient forests that can withstand and adapt to wildfire, drought, and climate change. The Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan accelerates efforts to restore the health and resilience of California's forests, grasslands, and natural places; improves the fire safety of communities; and sustains the economic vitality of rural forested areas. CAL FIRE, in partnership with the US Forest Service, intends to scale up forest thinning and prescribed fire; integrate climate adaptation into the statewide network of regional forest and community fire resilience plans; improve the electricity grid resilience, and promote sustainable land use.

Fire Hazard Severity Zones and Responsibility Areas

CAL FIRE designates FHSZs as authorized under California Government Code Sections 51175 et seq. FHSZs may be designated Very High, High, or Moderate. CAL FIRE considers many factors when designating FHSZs, including fire history, existing and potential vegetation fuel, flame length, blowing embers, terrain, and weather patterns for the area. CAL FIRE designates FHSZs in two types of areas depending on which level of government is financially responsible for fire protection.

- Local Responsibility Area (LRA). Incorporated communities are financially responsible for wildfire protection.
- State Responsibility Area (SRA). CAL FIRE and contracted counties are financially responsible for wildfire protection.

State Responsibility Area and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone Fire Safe Regulations

California Code of Regulations Title 14, Division 1.5, Chapter 7, Subchapter 2, *SRA/Very High FHSZ Fire Safe Regulations*, establishes minimum wildfire protection standards for construction and development in the SRA and Very High FHSZ and requires CAL FIRE to review development proposals and enact recommendations that serve as conditions of approval in these zones. These standards include basic emergency access and perimeter wildfire protection measures; signing and building numbering; private water supply resources for emergency fire use; and vegetation modification. These regulations apply to all residential, commercial, and industrial buildings in the SRA and Very High FHSZs in the LRA, the siting of new mobile homes, all tentative and parcel maps, and applications for building permits approved before 1991 when these standards were not proposed. Fire Safe Regulations also include a minimum setback of 30 feet for all buildings from property lines and/or the center of a road. Section 1273.08, *Dead-End Roads*, of these standards provide regulations for the maximum lengths of single access roadways:

- Parcels zoned for less than one acre: 800 feet
- Parcels zoned for 1 acre to 4.99 acres: 1,320 feet
- Parcels zoned for 5 acres to 19.99 acres: 2,640 feet
- Parcels zoned for 20 acres or larger: 5,280 feet

Fire Safe Regulations, Section 1299.03, *Fire Hazard Reduction Around Buildings and Structure Requirements*, provides defensible space requirements for areas within 30 feet of a structure (Zone 1) and between 30 and 100 feet from a structure (Zone 2). In Zone 1, all dead and dying plants must be removed, as must any flammable vegetation that could catch fire. In Zone 2, horizontal and vertical spacing among shrubs and trees must be created and maintained.

Public Resources Code Section 4291

Public Resources Code Section 4291, *Mountainous, Forest-, Brush- and Grass-Covered Lands*, is intended for any person who owns, lease, controls, operates, or maintains a building or structure in a mountainous area, forest-covered lands, shrub-covered lands, grass-covered lands, or land that is covered with flammable material, regardless of whether the property is in an SRA or Very High LRA FHSZ. This section requires defensible space to be maintained within 100 feet from each side of a structure. An ember-

resistant zone is also required within 5 feet of a structure and more intense fuel reduction between 5 and 30 feet of a structure.

California Building Code

Building Design Standards

The California Building Code (CBC), Part 2 of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations, identifies building design standards, including those for fire safety. The CBC is updated on a three-year cycle. It is effective statewide, but a local jurisdiction may adopt more restrictive standards based on local conditions under specific amendment rules prescribed by the State Building Standards Commission. Commercial and residential buildings are plan-checked by local city and county building officials for compliance with the CBC and any applicable local edits. Typical fire safety requirements of the CBC include the installation of sprinklers in buildings and other facilities; the establishment of fire-resistance standards for fire doors, building materials, and particular types of construction in high FHSZs; requirements for smoke-detection systems; exiting requirements; and the clearance of debris. The City of Hollister regularly adopts each new CBC update under the Hollister Municipal Code (HMC) Section 15.04.050, *Construction Codes Adopted by Reference.*

Materials and Methods for Exterior Wildfire Exposure

Chapter 7A of the CBC, *Materials and Methods for Exterior Wildfire Exposure*, prescribes building materials and construction methods for new buildings in an FHSZ or Wildland Interface Fire Area. Chapter 7A contains requirements for roofing; attic ventilation; exterior walls; exterior windows and glazing; exterior doors; decking; protection of underfloor, appendages, and floor projections; and ancillary structures. Other requirements include vegetation management compliance, as prescribed in the CFC Section 4906 and Public Resources Code 4291 (previously described).

California Fire Code

The CFC incorporates, by adoption, the International Fire Code of the International Code Council, with California amendments. This is the official fire code for the State and all political subdivisions. It is found in California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 9, and, like the CBC, it is revised and published every three years by the California Building Standards Commission. Also like the CBC, the CFC is effective statewide, but a local jurisdiction may adopt more restrictive standards based on local conditions. The City of Hollister regularly adopts each new CFC update under HMC Section 15.04.050, *Construction Codes Adopted by Reference*. The CFC is a model code that regulates minimum fire safety regulations for new and existing buildings; facilities; storage; processes, including emergency planning and preparedness; fire service features; fire protection systems; hazardous materials; fire flow requirements; and fire hydrant locations and distribution. Typical fire safety requirements include: installation of sprinklers in all high-rise buildings; the establishment of fire resistance standards for fire doors, building materials, and particular types of construction; and the clearance of debris and vegetation within a prescribed distance from occupied structures in wildfire hazard areas.

Fire Safety During Construction and Demolition

Chapter 33 of the CFC, *Fire Safety During Construction and Demolition*, provides requirements for fire safety precautions during construction and demolition of a development project. The purpose of this chapter is to provide reasonable safety to life and property from fire during construction and demolition operations, including those in underground locations. Specific requirements include a prohibition of smoking on-site, except for in approved areas; management of combustible materials and debris; cutting and welding; electrical wiring; and cooking. Additional requirements include the preparation of site safety plans prior to building permit issuance, providing fire watch during nonworking hours, and maintaining water supply for fire protection as soon as combustible materials arrive on a project site.

Wildland-Urban Interface Areas

Chapter 49 of the CFC, *Requirements for Wildland Urban Interface Fire Areas*, applies to any geographical area identified as an FHSZ by CAL FIRE. It defines FHSZs, connects to the SRA/Very High FHSZ Fire Safe Regulation requirements for defensible space, and parallels requirements for wildfire protection buildings construction and hazardous vegetation fuel management in other sections of the California Code of Regulations and the Public Resources Code. Chapter 49 of the 2022 CFC includes a definition for the wildland-urban interface (WUI) and provides requirements for fire protection plans, landslide plans, long-term vegetation management, and creation and maintenance of defensible space for all new development within the WUI.

2019 Strategic Fire Plan for California

CAL FIRE produced the 2019 *Strategic Fire Plan for California*, which contains goals, objectives, and policies to prepare for and mitigate the effects of fire on California's natural and built environments. The 2019 *Strategic Fire Plan for California* focuses on fire prevention and suppression activities to protect lives, property, and ecosystems, in addition to providing natural resource management to maintain state forests as a resilient carbon sink to meet California's climate change goals. A key component of the 2019 *Strategic Fire Plan for California* is the collaboration between communities to ensure fire suppression and natural resource management is successful.[2]

California Public Utilities Commission

In 2007, wildfires in southern California were ignited by overhead utility power lines and aerial communication facilities near power lines. In response, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) began considering and adopting regulations to protect the public from fire hazards due to overhead power lines and nearby aerial communication facilities. The CPUC published a Fire-Threat Map under Rulemaking 15-05-006, following procedures in Decision 17-01-009, revised by Decision 17-06-024, which

[2] California State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, 2018, 2018 Strategic Fire Plan for California, http://cdfdata.fire.ca.gov/pub/fireplan/fpupload/fpppdf1614.pdf, accessed on April 27, 2020.

adopted a work plan for the development of a utility high fire-threat district where enhanced fire safety regulations in Decision 17-12-024 apply.[3] The fire regulations require electric utilities to:[4]

- Prioritize the correction of safety hazards.
- Correct nonimmediate fire risks in "Tier 2" (elevated fire threat) areas on the CPUC high fire-threat district within 12 months, and in "Tier 3" (extreme fire threat) areas within 6 months.
- Maintain increased clearances between vegetation and power lines within the high fire-threat district.
- Maintain stricter wire-to-wire clearances for new and reconstructed facilities in Tier 3 areas.
- Conduct annual inspections of overhead distribution facilities in rural areas of Tier 2 and Tier 3 areas.
- Prepare a fire prevention plan annually if overhead facilities exist in the high fire-threat district.

California Government Code

California Government Code Section 65302(g) and Section 65302.15 require that safety elements be reviewed and revised as needed with the revision of a housing element or local hazard mitigation plan, but no less than every eight years, to ensure the goals, policies, actions, mapping, and background content are consistent with State regulations and reflect the best available information for wildfire risks, climate adaptation and resiliency, and emergency evacuation routes for certain residential areas. Communities with local hazard mitigation plan updates after January 1, 2022, must also ensure their safety elements or local hazard mitigation plans include an assessment of evacuation routes and their capacity, safety, and viability as well as evacuation locations under a range of emergency scenarios.

For wildfire and evacuation purposes, a safety element must:

- Identify wildfire hazards with the latest fire severity zone maps from the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, US Geological Survey, and other sources.
- Consider guidance given by the Office of Planning and Research's Fire Hazard Planning document.
- Demonstrate that the jurisdiction or contract agency and associated codes satisfactorily address adequate water supply, egress requirements, vegetation management, street signage, land use policies, and other criteria to protect from wildfires.
- Establish in the safety element (and other elements that must be consistent with it) a set of comprehensive goals, policies, and feasible implementation measures for protection of the community from unreasonable risks of wildfire.
- Identify evacuation-constrained residential parcels in hazard-prone areas.

Governor's Office of Planning and Research Fire Hazard Technical Advisory

The Governor's Office of Planning and Research published the Fire Hazard Technical Advisory in 2015 and revised it in 2022 as a planning guide for addressing fire hazards, reducing risk, and increasing resilience across California's diverse communities and landscapes. The Fire Hazard Technical Advisory provides a

[3] California Public Utilities Commission, http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/firethreatmaps/, accessed on April 27, 2020.

[4] California Public Utilities Commission, press release: CPUC Adopts New Fire-Safety Regulations, http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M201/K352/201352402.PDF, accessed on April 27, 2020.

range of goals, policies, and programs for fire hazard prevention and mitigation, disaster preparedness, and emergency response and recovery. The 2022 update includes specific land use strategies to reduce fire risk to buildings, infrastructure, and communities.

California Environmental Quality Act

In November 2022 the California Attorney General issued the *Best Practices for Analyzing and Mitigating Wildfire Impacts of Development Projects Under the California Environmental Quality Act.* This guidance document was designed to help lead agencies comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq) when considering whether to approve projects in wildfire-prone areas. These areas are often in the WUI area—i.e., the area where the built environment meets or intermingles with the natural environment. This guidance provides suggestions for how best to comply with CEQA when analyzing and mitigating a proposed project's impacts on wildfire ignition risk, emergency access, and evacuation. The guidance is aimed at proposed development projects, such as residential, recreational, or commercial developments. The extent to which it applies will vary by project based on project design and location. It does not impose additional requirements on local governments or alter any applicable laws or regulations but is intended to provide guidance on some of the issues, alternatives, and mitigation measures that should be considered during the environmental review process.

Regional Regulations

Unit Strategic Fire Plan San Benito-Monterey

The Unit Strategic Fire Plan San Benito-Monterey (USFP) was adopted by CAL FIRE and updated in April 2018. The USFP is a multi-jurisdictional off-shoot of the 2019 *Strategic Fire Plan for California*, which provides region-specific guidance for fire response. The USFP for the San Benito-Monterey region meets several objectives, including collecting and analyzing data to assess communities at risk and in need of fuel reduction, working with grant writers to secure funding, utilizing CAL FIRE personnel and resources, educating the public on fire prevention, and incorporating fire resistant landscaping and construction as well as hazardous fuel reduction.[5]

San Benito County Community Wildfire Protection Plan

The San Benito County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), developed in 2010 by the San Benito Fire Safe Council, identifies and prioritizes prefire and postfire management strategies and tactics meant to reduce the loss of values at risk throughout the county. The San Benito County CWPP has been developed upon the priority goals and objectives identified by the San Benito Fire Safe Council, CAL FIRE, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, San Benito County, and local collaborators. The primary component of fire prevention in this plan is treatment of structural ignitability through defensible-space fuel treatments, indefensible-space fuel treatments, and fuel treatment prescription

[5] California State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, April 2018, Unit Strategic Fire Plan San Benito-Monterey, https://3d82c780-2a61-40e4-adf4-605487cebd0f.filesusr.com/ugd/076511_500bb92634e14e75bf5e394851700145.pdf, accessed on April 27, 2020.

recommendations. Additional methods to reduce wildfire hazards in this plan include long term maintenance and monitoring and public education and outreach. The strategies in this plan are implemented in cooperation with local fire departments and the San Benito Regional Fire Safe Council.

San Benito County Emergency Operations Plan

The San Benito County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), adopted August 2015, is designed to set the foundation for emergency management to reduce the county's vulnerabilities to both natural and man-made disasters. The EOP provides basic guidance related to earthquakes, flooding, fires, landslides, severe weather, pandemics and epidemics, and hazardous material emergencies. Guidance is presented in the form of mitigation programs, which are split into three categories: emergency prevention and protection, response concept of operations, and recovery concept of operations. The City of Hollister does not have an Office of Emergency Services or an assigned emergency planner. Therefore, responsibility for preparation and response to a disaster is enforced by the San Benito County Office of Emergency Services.[6]

San Benito County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan

The purpose of hazard mitigation planning is to reduce the loss of life and property by minimizing the impact of disasters. The *San Benito County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan* (MJHMP), updated in 2022 in accordance with the Federal Disaster Mitigation Action of 2000 (DMA 2000), provides an assessment of natural hazards in the county and a set of short-term mitigation actions to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to people and property from these hazards. The Hollister Jurisdictional Annex of the MJHMP provides an assessment and mitigation actions for Hollister specifically while considering the results from the countywide effort. In the context of an MJHMP, mitigation is an action that reduces or eliminates long-term risk to people and property from hazards, including wildfire. Mitigation actions related to wildfire in Appendix G of the MJHMP include promoting home hardening, defensible space, and increased use of fire-resistant materials in new developments, and working with property owners to manage dead vegetation in flood control facility footprints, railroad rights-of-way, parks, and open spaces.

The MJHMP must be reviewed and approved by FEMA every five years to maintain eligibility for disaster relief funding. As part of this process, the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services reviews all local hazard mitigation plans in accordance with DMA 2000 regulations and coordinates with local jurisdictions to ensure compliance with FEMA's Local Mitigation Plan Review Guide. As part of the proposed project, the MJHMP is adopted in its entirety into the proposed Safety Element by reference.

[6] San Benito County Office of Emergency Services, August 2015, San Benito County Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan, http://www.cosb.us/wp-content/uploads/SBC-EOP-2015.pdf, accessed on April 25, 2020.

Local Regulations

Hollister Municipal Code

The HMC regulates fire hazard reduction and evacuation in the city. The HMC is organized by title, chapter, and section. The provisions related to wildfire and evacuation impacts are included Title 13, *Public Services*, Title 15, *Buildings and Construction*, and Title 16, *Subdivisions*.

- Chapter 13.20, *Underground Utility Districts*. This chapter allows for the creation of underground utility districts in the city, which makes it unlawful for any person or utility to erect, construct, place, keep, maintain, continue, employ, or operate poles, overhead wires, and associated overhead structures in the district.
- Chapter 15.04, *Hollister Building Code*. This chapter adopts the CBC and CFC into HMC Section 15.04.050, *Construction Codes Adopted by Reference*.
- Chapter 15.20, *Flood Damage Prevention Regulations*. This chapter provides methods for reducing flood losses through restricting or prohibiting uses that could endanger the health, safety, and property in the city; requires that uses vulnerable to flooding be protected against flood damage; and regulates the construction of flood barriers that divert floodwaters or increase flood hazards.
- Chapter 15.24, *Grading and Stormwater Best Management Practices Control*. This chapter provides safe grading operations to safeguard life and property and to preserve and enhance the natural environment. This chapter also defines the regulations to control land disturbances, land cuts and fills, soil storage, and erosion and sedimentation resulting from clearing and grading activities on both private and public property.
- Section 16.24.050, *Underground Utilities*. This section requires subdivisions to underground utility distribution facilities, including electric, communication, and television lines.

4.18.1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Wildfire Background

The term “wildfire” refers to fires that usually result from the ignition of dry grass, brush, or timber. Historically, wildfires commonly occurred in steep or heavily vegetated areas, which makes suppression of the fire difficult. More recently, wildfires have been encroaching into more urban areas, that is, the WUI, threatening homes, businesses, and essential infrastructure. Though wildfires play an important role in the ecology of many natural habitats, risks to human safety and property increase as urban development moves into areas susceptible to wildfire hazards.

Types of Wildfires

There are three basic types of wildland fires:

- Crown fires burn trees to their tops; these are the most intense and dangerous wildland fires.

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- Surface fires burn surface litter and duff. These are the easiest fires to extinguish and cause the least damage to the forest. Brush and small trees enable surface fires to reach treetops and are thus referred to as *ladder fuels*.
- Underground fires occur underground in deep accumulations of dead vegetation. These fires move very slowly and can be difficult to extinguish.[7]

Wildfires burn in many types of vegetation—forest, woodland, scrub (including chaparral, sage scrub, and desert scrub), and grassland. Many species of native California plants are adapted to fire, and habitats such as chaparral and grasslands can recover from fire. For example, some species of chaparral plants, such as ceanothus, require intense heat for germination and therefore have flammable resins on leaves and roots that can quickly sprouts up in burned areas.[8] Between 2010 and 2017, wildfires in California burned about 265,000 acres of forest land, 207,000 acres of scrub vegetation, 99,000 acres of grassland, 18,000 acres of desert vegetation, and 14,000 acres of other vegetation types.[9] Wildfires have been observed to be more frequent and growing in intensity over the past several years, with 4,304,379 acres and 2,569,386 acres burning in 2020 and 2021, respectively.[10]

Wildfire Causes

Although the term *wildfire* suggests natural origins, a 2017 study that evaluated 1.5 million wildfires in the United States between 1992 and 2012 found that humans were responsible for igniting 84 percent of wildfires, accounting for 44 percent of acreage burned.[11] The three most common types of human-caused wildfires are debris burning (logging slash, farm fields, trash, etc.); arson; and equipment use.[12] Power lines can also ignite wildfires through downed lines, vegetation contact, conductors that collide, and equipment failures.[13] CAL FIRE determined that between 2017 and 2021, 1,344 fires and 639,437 acres were burned due to electrical power and distribution lines.[14] Lightning is the most common cause of nature-induced wildfire.[15]

[7] Natural Resources Canada, 2018, Fire Behavior, https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/forests/fire-insects-disturbances/fire/13145, accessed on May 4, 2020.

[8] National Park Service. 2018. "Wildland Fire in Chaparral: California and Southwestern United States." https://www.nps.gov/articles/wildland-fire-in-chaparral.htm.

[9] State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection and California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention, 2019, 2019 Strategic Fire Plan for California, https://www.fire.ca.gov/media/5504/strategicplan2019-final.pdf, accessed on May 4, 2020.

[10] CAL FIRE. 2022, October 6 (accessed). "Stats and Events." https://www.fire.ca.gov/stats-events/.

[11] Balch, Jennifer; Bradley, Bethany; Abatzoglou, John, et. al., March 2017, Human-Started Wildfires Expand the Fire Niche Across the United States. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences: Volume 114 No. 11, https://www.pnas.org/content/pnas/114/11/2946.full.pdf, accessed on May 4, 2020.

[12] Pacific Biodiversity Institute, 2007, Roads and Wildfires, http://www.pacificbio.org/publications/wildfire_studies/Roads_And_Wildfires_2007.pdf, accessed on May 4, 2020.

[13] Texas Wildfire Mitigation Project, 2018, How Do Power Lines Cause Wildfires? https://wildfiremitigation.tees.tamus.edu/faqs/how-power-lines-cause-wildfires, accessed on May 4, 2020.

[14] CAL FIRE. 2021. "Stats and Events." https://www.fire.ca.gov/stats-events/, accessed on January 4, 2023.

[15] Balch, Jennifer, et al. 2017, March 14. Human-Started Wildfires Expand the Fire Niche Across the United States. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) 114 No. 11. Accessed January 4, 2023. https://www.pnas.org/content/pnas/114/11/2946.full.pdf.

An analysis of US Forest Service wildfire data from 1986 to 1996 determined that 95 percent of human-caused wildfires and 90 percent of all wildfires, started within a half mile of a road; and that about 61 percent of all wildfires and 55 percent of human-caused wildfires started within approximately 650 feet (200 meters) of a road. The study concluded that the increase in human-caused ignition greatly outweighs the benefits of increased access for firefighters.[16]

There are three primary methods of wildfire spread:

- Embers. The most prolific cause of home ignition, at a rate of two out of every three homes destroyed. Embers are glowing or burning pieces of vegetation or construction debris that are lofted during the wildfire and can move up to a mile ahead of a firestorm. These small embers or sparks may fall on the vegetation near a home (on dry leaves, needles, or twigs on the roof) and subsequently ignite and burn down the home. Embers can travel several miles during high wind events, such as the Diablo winds, posing a potential risk to all structures without fire-resistant landscaping and construction within a mile of the fire.[17]
- Direct Flame Contact. Direct flame impingement refers to the transfer of heat by direct flame exposure. Direct contact will heat the building materials of the home; if the time and intensity of exposure is severe enough, windows will break and materials will ignite.
- Radiant Heat. A house can catch fire from the heat that is transferred from nearby burning objects, even in the absence of direct flames or embers. By creating defensible space around homes, the risk from radiant heat is significantly reduced.

Secondary Effects

Secondary effects of wildfire include additional hazards such as poor air quality, landslides, and power outages. This section describes potential secondary hazards.

After a high intensity wildfire is suppressed, the burn scar is typically bare of its vegetative cover, which had supported the hillsides and steeper slopes. As a result, rainstorms increase the possibility of severe landslides and debris flows in these areas. The intense heat from the fire can also cause a chemical reaction in the soil that makes it less porous, causing water to run off during precipitation events, which can lead to flooding downstream. As discussed in Chapter 4.7, *Geology and Soils*, the EIR Study Area is in the Hollister Valley, a largely flat region that abuts the Diablo and Gabilan Mountain Ranges to the west and southwest, respectively. However, the EIR Study Area is several miles from each mountain range and is immediately surrounded by flat agricultural land. Therefore, landslides and debris flow are not an environmental hazard to which the EIR Study Area would be susceptible after a wildfire event.

In addition to damaging natural environments, wildfires can injure and kill residents and firefighters as well as damage or destroy structures and personal property. Wildfires also deplete water reserves, down power lines, disrupt communication services, and block evacuation routes, which can isolate

[16] Pacific Biodiversity Institute, 2007, Roads and Wildfires, http://www.pacificbio.org/publications/wildfire_studies/Roads_And_Wildfires_2007.pdf, accessed on May 4, 2020.

[17] California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). 2022. "Fire Perimeters." Fire and Resource Assessment Program. https://frap.fire.ca.gov/mapping/gis-data/. Accessed January 4, 2023.

communities. Wildfires can also indirectly cause flooding if flood control facilities become inadequate to handle increases in stormwater runoff, sediment, and debris that are likely to be generated from burn scars.

Regionally, smoke from wildfires creates poor air quality that can last for days or weeks, depending on the scale of the wildfire and wind patterns. Smoke itself is made up of a complex mixture of gases and fine particles produced when wood and other organic materials burn. Health risks from smoke inhalation are largely from microscopic particles ($PM_{2.5}$) that can penetrate the lungs and cause a range of health problems, including chronic heart and lung diseases. Exposure to particulate pollution is even linked to premature death. There are some populations that are more sensitive than others to smoke—for instance, people with heart or lung diseases, the elderly, children, people with diabetes, people with compromised immune systems, and pregnant women.[18] Through observations of wildfires, experts have determined that wildfires which produce large plumes of smoke can result in that smoke and ash being carried thousands of miles from the burn area of the wildfire. Therefore, air pollution is a major secondary risk from wildfires in the region.[19]

Wildfire in Hollister

As shown on Figure 4.18-1, *Wildfire Responsibility and Fire Hazard Severity Zones*, the EIR Study Area is in an LRA, in lands designated Non-Wildland/Non-Urban. The majority of the land that surrounds the EIR Study Area is also designated Non-Wildland/Non-Urban. As shown on Figure 4.18-1, the southern EIR Study Area boundary is adjacent to SRA lands, which are designated Moderate FHSZ to the east as well as a small portion to the southwest.[20]

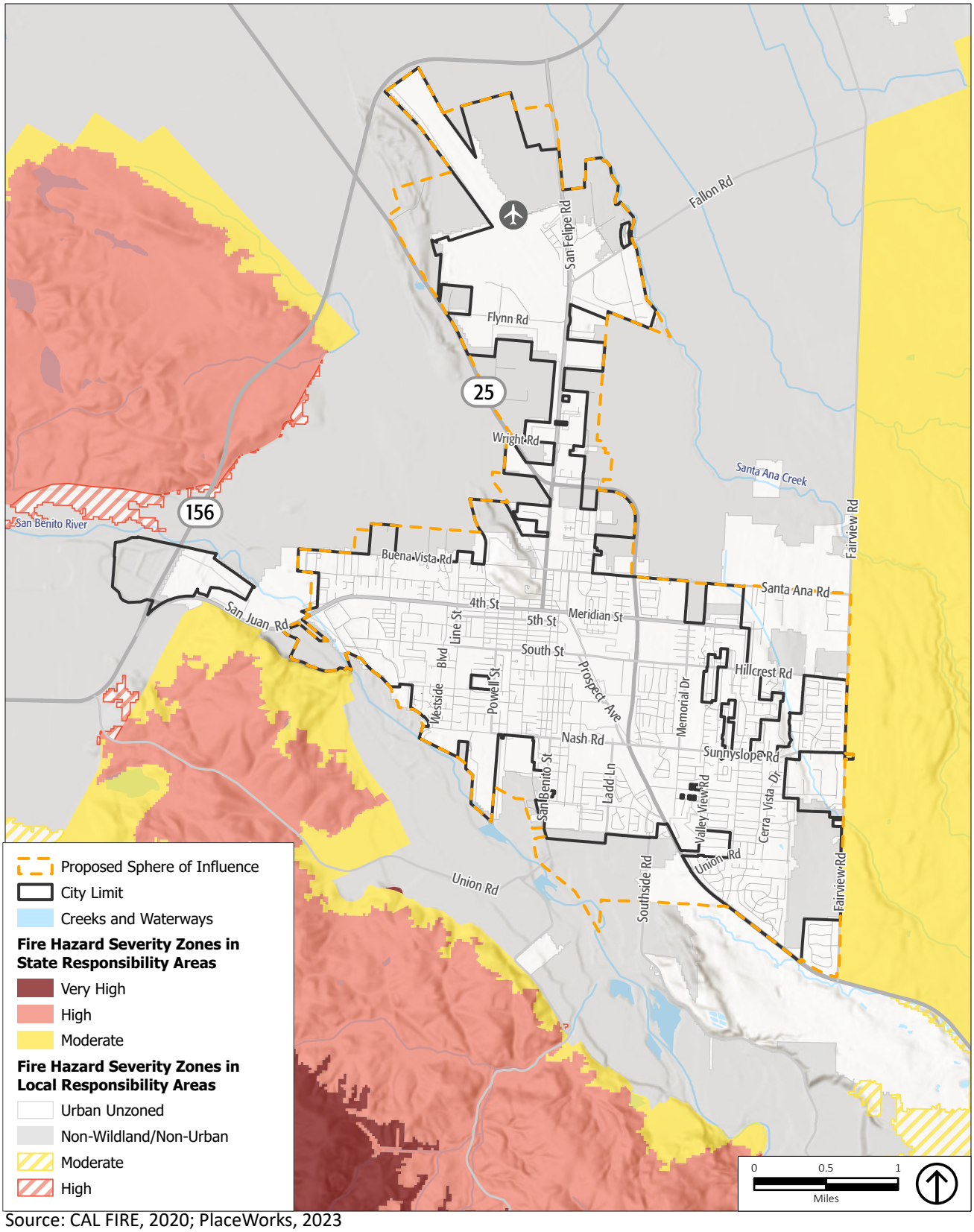
Although the EIR Study Area is on relatively flat land, the lower foothills to the east and west are High FHSZs, which means a large portion of the Hollister Valley Basin is in a WUI. As shown in Figure 4.18-2, *Wildland Urban Interface Areas*, much of the EIR Study Area is in the WUI. San Benito County rated all WUI land in the county as a moderate FHSZ.[21]

[18] US Geological Survey, 2018, How Smoke Fires Can Affect Your Health, https://www.epa.gov/pm-pollution/how-smoke-fires-can-affect-your-health, accessed on May 4, 2020.

[19] Nasa Earth Observatory, August 2018, Smoky Skies in North America, https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/92612/smoky-skies-in-north-america, accessed on May 4, 2020.

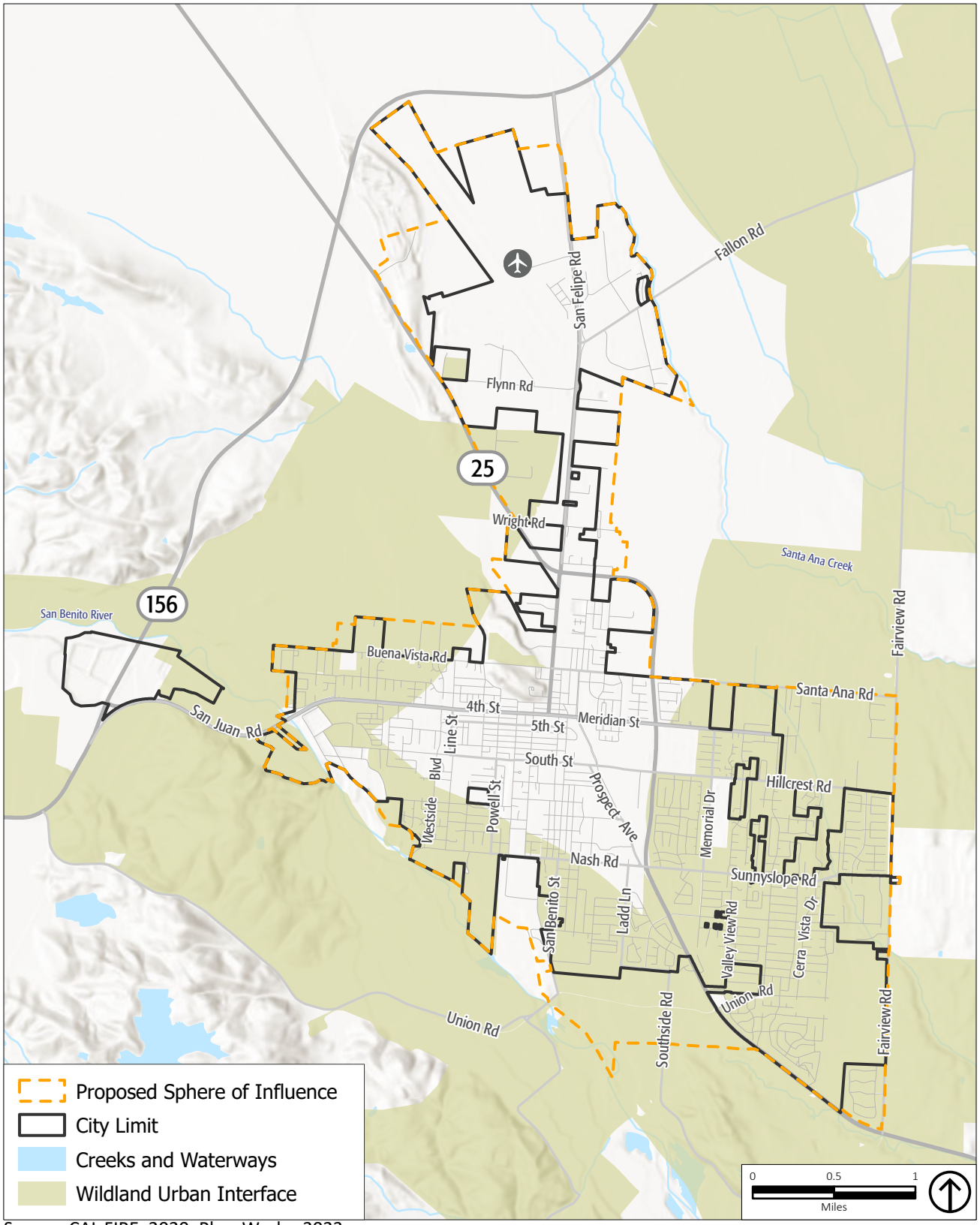
[20] California State Geoportal, January 2020, California Fire Hazard Severity Zone Viewer, https://gis.data.ca.gov/datasets/789d5286736248f69c4515c04f58f414, accessed on May 4, 2020.

[21] San Benito County, August 2015, County of San Benito Operation Area California, USA Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, http://www.cosb.us/wp-content/uploads/Local-Hazard-Mitigation-Plan-_-SBC-FEMA-Approved.pdf, accessed on May 4, 2020.



Source: CAL FIRE, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4-18.1
Wildfire Responsibility and Fire Hazard Severity Zones



Source: CAL FIRE, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.18-2
Wildland Urban Interface

According to the California Office of Emergency Services, a WUI is defined as any area where structures and other human development meet or intermingle within wildland vegetation.[22] According to CAL FIRE, the WUI is subdivided into the "interface" zone (housing adjacent to wildland vegetation, but not mingled with it), the "intermix" zone (where houses and wildland vegetation directly mingle), and the "influence" zone (areas of wildfire-susceptible vegetation surrounding the other zones). The interface and intermix zones carry the highest risk for wildfires affecting developed areas. Unlike wildfire in wildland areas, fires in WUI areas are more likely to damage or destroy buildings and infrastructure that support populations, the economy, and key services in the city.

Developments in the WUI exacerbate fire occurrence and fire spread in several ways, including:

- Increased numbers of human-caused wildfires.
- Wildfires become harder to fight.
- Firefighting resources are diverted from containing the wildfire to protecting lives and homes.
- Letting natural fires burn becomes impossible, leading to buildup of fuel and increasing wildfire hazard further.[23]

Increased fire frequency tends to eliminate and replace native shrubs with weedy, highly flammable annual grasslands.[24] The frequency of fire is anticipated to increase as dry conditions are exacerbated by climate change.

Wildfire History Near Hollister

There have been 28 wildfires recorded in San Benito County since the 1950s. Wildfires ranged in size from 35,380 acres with the Mack fire in 1950 near the San Benito and Fresno county lines, to the 236-acre Browns Valley fire in 2001.[25] One wildfire, the 1981 Herbert Fire, burnt 1,866 acres mostly to the west of the EIR Study Area, although a small portion of the fire was within the EIR Study Area.[26] The most recent wildfire, the Coyote Fire, was in July of 2020. Over 20 miles southeast of the EIR Study Area, the Coyote Fire burned approximately 1,500 acres.[27]

[22] California Office of Emergency Services, 2018, California State Hazard Mitigation Plan.

[23] Radeloff, Volker; Helmers, David; Kramer, H., et al., 2018, Rapid Growth of the US Wildland-Urban Interface Raises Wildfire Risk, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS): Volume 115 No. 13, https://www.pnas.org/content/pnas/115/13/3314.full.pdf, accessed on May 4, 2020.

[24] US Geological Survey, 2012, Why Are Biologists Studying Housing Loss from Wildfires? https://www.usgs.gov/center-news/why-are-biologists-studying-housing-loss-wildfires, accessed on May 4, 2020.

[25] San Benito County, August 2015, County of San Benito Operation Area California, USA Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, http://www.cosb.us/wp-content/uploads/Local-Hazard-Mitigation-Plan-_-SBC-FEMA-Approved.pdf, accessed on May 4, 2020.

[26] Cap Radio, 2018, A History of California Wildfires pre-1950 to 2018, https://projects.capradio.org/california-fire-history/#11.58/36.8562/-121.4191, accessed on May 5, 2020.

[27] Cal FIRE, 2020, Coyote Fire General Information, https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents/2020/7/15/coyote-fire/, accessed on August 28, 2020.

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Factors Influencing Wildfire

Weather

Prevailing winds are the wind pattern that is predominant at a place or season. Wind speed in the EIR Study Area ranges from seven- to ten-miles per hour. The direction of wind in the EIR Study Area trends from the northwest year-round.[28] Although severe windstorms are not frequent in the EIR Study Area, high winds do occur on occasion and may cause significant damage. Damage could include destabilizing dry brush that covers hillsides and land in the WUI, which in turn increases the risk of wildfire threat. Additional wind hazards can occur with destructive impacts to trees, power lines, and utility services, which could spark potential wildfires.[29]

Fuel

As described in more detail in Chapter 4.4, *Biological Resources*, and shown in Figure 4.4-1, *Land Cover*, the EIR Study Area includes 15 land cover types, 4 of which are considered natural vegetation communities.[30] These include evergreen forests, mixed conifer forests, grassland/herbaceous, and scrub. Forests make up less than 1 percent of the vegetation cover in the EIR Study Area. The majority of vegetation consists of grassland/herbaceous plants and scrub land, which together total more acreage than any other land cover type in the EIR Study Area. Grasslands occupy most of the undeveloped hillsides to the east, south, and southwest, and scrublands occur along the margins or just outside of the EIR Study Area.

Grasslands and scrublands are highly flammable, particularly leaf litter that is left to accumulate, ultimately dries, and provides fuel for potential fires. The fire risk in grassland and scrubland vegetation communities can be reduced through several tactics, primarily controlled burns and annual grazing.[31]

Topography

Slope is a measure of land steepness, and wildfire intensity and rate of spread increase as slope increases due to the tendency of heat from a fire to rise via convection. For example, as slope increases from 20 to 40 percent, flame heights can double and rates of fire spread can increase fourfold; from 40 to 60 percent, flame heights can become three times higher and rates of spread can increase eightfold. The arrangement of vegetation throughout a hillside can also contribute to increased fire activity on slopes. As mentioned in Chapter 4.7, *Geology and Soils*, the topography of the EIR Study Area is largely flat and mostly does not contain significant slopes. However, the surrounding foothills at the outskirts of the EIR Study Area include a varied, sloped terrain.

[28] San Benito County, August 2010, San Benito County General Plan Background Report, Chapter 11, Safety, page 11-52.

[29] San Benito County, August 2015, County of San Benito Operation Area California, USA Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, http://www.cosb.us/wp-content/uploads/Local-Hazard-Mitigation-Plan-_-SBC-FEMA-Approved.pdf, accessed on May 4, 2020.

[30] Natural vegetation communities do not include cultivated crop land, hay crops/pastures, water, or urban developed land.

[31] The Nature Conservancy, Restoring Fire to Native Grasslands, https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/minnesota/stories-in-minnesota/restoring-fire-to-native-grasslands/, accessed August 28, 2020.

Human Actions

Most wildfires are ignited by human action, the result of direct acts of arson, carelessness, or accidents. Many fires originate in populated areas along roads and around homes and are often the result of careless disposal of cigarettes, mowing of dead grass, electrical equipment malfunction, use of equipment, or burning of debris. Recreation areas with increased human activity that are in fire-prone areas also increase the potential for wildfires.

Climate Change

Climate change is likely to increase annual average maximum temperatures in Hollister from a historical 71.3 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) to 75.8 °F by 2050 and 78.7°F by 2100.[32] This will likely create warmer temperatures earlier and later in the year. Precipitation levels are projected to increase over the course of the century, changing from a historical annual average of 15.9 inches per year to an annual average of 17.2 inches by 2050 and an annual average of 19.1 inches by 2099.[33] Variations in precipitation patterns will also lead to an increase in frequency and intensity of heavy precipitation events as well as prolonged periods of drought. The combination of extreme heat and droughts can cause soils and vegetation to dry out, creating more fuel for wildfires. These factors are expected to increase wildfire conditions, creating the risk of more frequent and intense wildfires. Historically, an average of 286 acres burned annually in the city.[34] Wildfires are projected to increase to an annual average in the city of 307 acres burned annually by 2050 and decrease to an annual average of 262 acres burned annually by 2100.[35]

Fire Protection Resources

Fire protection services in Hollister are provided by the Hollister Fire Department (HFD), which provides both firefighting and development review services for the city. HFD has two automatic aid agreements, with the South Santa Clara County Fire District and Aromas Tri-County Fire District.[36] The HFD employs 41 uniformed emergency personnel, a fire chief, and a fire marshal. The HFD Fire Marshal works closely with the City's Building Department and Code Enforcement to ensure all structures meet CFC standards. There are three HFD fire stations in the city limits and one fire station in the unincorporated area of the county. The HFD anticipates constructing two additional fire stations in San Benito County within the next 10 years to serve the growing population development in the areas surrounding Hollister. During 2019, the HFD responded to 33 grass fires and 22 building fires. The HFD also responded to 21 vehicle fires, 18 brush or brush-and-grass mixture fires, 17 trash/rubbish fires, and 12 cooking fires. Chapter 4.15, *Public Services and Recreation,* provides additional details about fire protection resources and services in Hollister.

[32] Cal-Adapt. 2023. "Annual Averages". https://cal-adapt.org/tools/annual-averages, accessed January 25, 2023.
[33] Cal-Adapt. 2023. "Annual Averages". https://cal-adapt.org/tools/annual-averages, accessed January 25, 2023.
[34] Cal-Adapt. 2023. "Wildfire". https://cal-adapt.org/tools/wildfire, accessed January 25, 2023.
[35] Cal-Adapt. 2023. "Wildfire". https://cal-adapt.org/tools/wildfire, accessed January 25, 2023.
[36] Martin Del Campo, Bob. Fire Chief, Hollister Fire Department. Personal communication with PlaceWorks. May 27, 2020.

Evacuation and Access

Evacuation routes are designated roadways that allow many people to quickly leave an area due to a potential or imminent disaster. These routes should have sufficient capacity to accommodate the needs of the community, be safely and easily accessible, and allow people to travel far enough away to be safe from emergency conditions.

As shown in Figure 4.18-3, *Evacuation Routes*, primary evacuation routes roads and highways that traverse the city include the following roadways:

- State Route (SR) 25
- SR-156
- SR-156B
- Buena Vista Road
- Santa Ana Road
- Meridian Street
- Sunnyslope Road
- Nash Road
- Union Road South
- San Benito Street
- Westside Boulevard
- Fairview Road

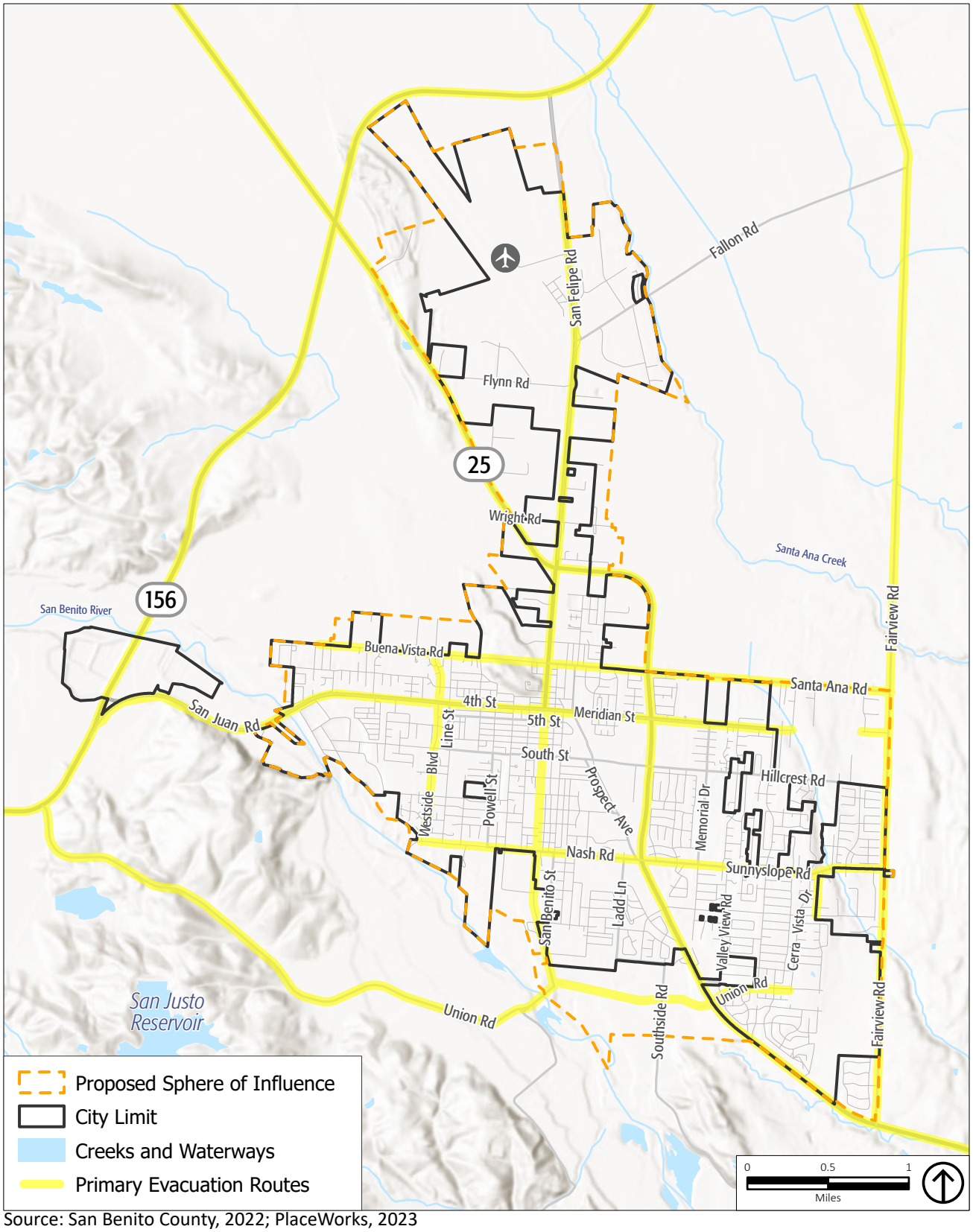
During emergencies, the Hollister Police Department coordinates evacuations warnings and orders. Evacuations are also coordinated through the Santa Cruz County "CodeRed" emergency notification system and the San Benito County Office of Emergency Services.

Several neighborhoods throughout the city have evacuation constraints, such as only one road in and out of a neighborhood. Figure 4.18-4, *Evacuation Constrained Residential Parcels*, shows identified evacuation-constrained residential areas throughout the city, some of which are near wildfire-prone areas pursuant to California Government Code Section 65302(g)(5).

4.18.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

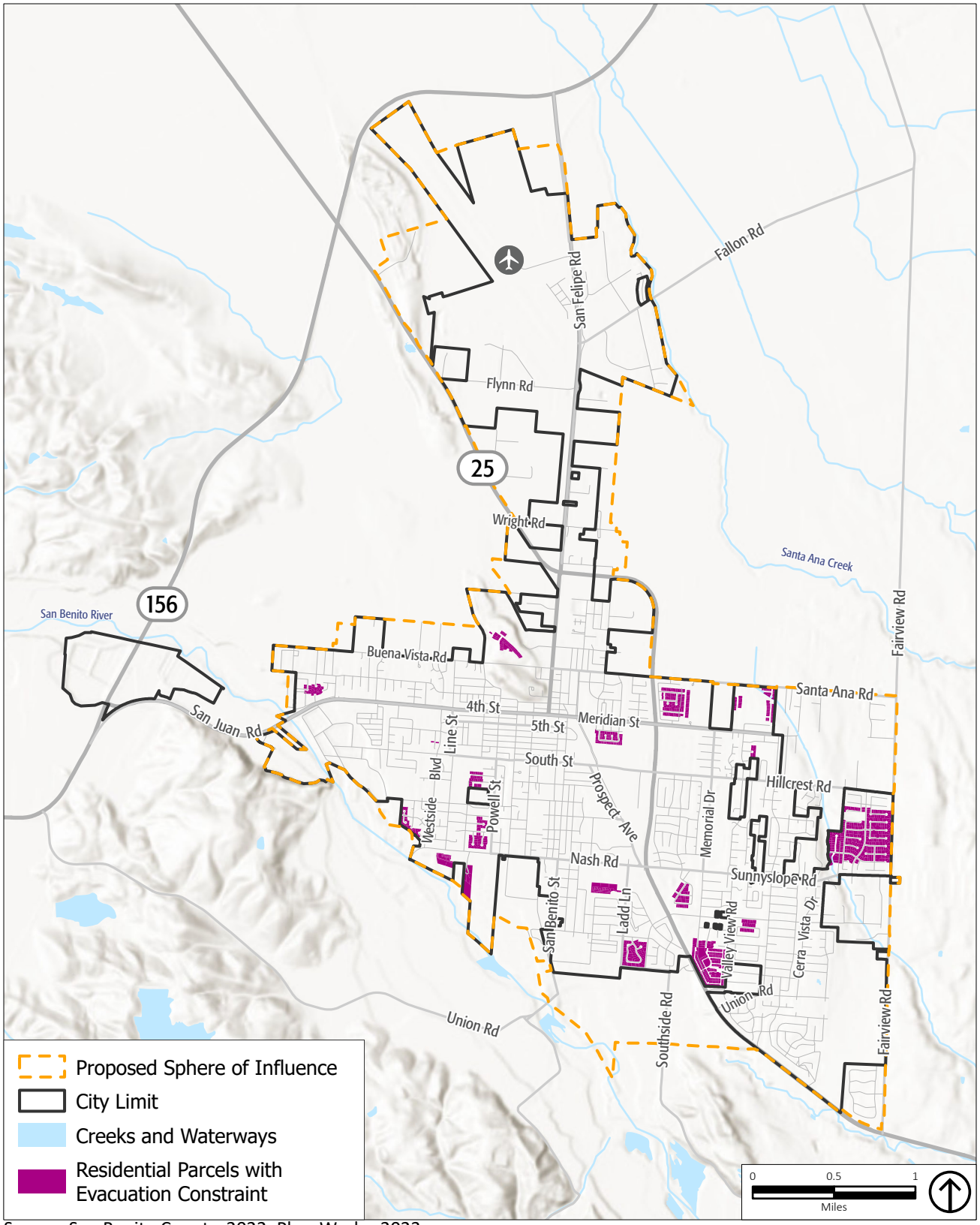
Implementation of the proposed project, if in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would result in significant wildfire impacts if it would:

1. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.
2. 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 a wildfire.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to wildfire.



Source: San Benito County, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.18-3
Evacuation Routes



Source: San Benito County, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2023

Figure 4.18-4
Evacuation Constrained Residential Parcels

4.18.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

FIRE-1 Implementation of the proposed project would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

2040 General Plan

Adopted emergency response plans and emergency evacuation plans include those discussed under Section 4.18.1.1, *Regulatory Framework*, such as the San Benito County EOP. The proposed project could result in a significant impact if it would substantially impair the implementation of this EOP. As discussed in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, the proposed project would increase development potential within the city, part of which is in the WUI.

Buildout under the proposed 2040 General Plan may result in changes to the circulation patterns or emergency access routes along Union Road in southern Hollister. However, any potential development under the proposed 2040 General Plan would be required to integrate the EOP as necessary into development to continue its facilitation in evacuating people in wildfire-prone areas. Additionally, future development in the WUI or Very High FHSZs would be required to comply with the SRA and Very High FHSZ Fire Safe Regulations, the CBC, the CFC, and the HMC, which have maximum requirements for lengths of single-access roads, minimum widths of roadways, and vegetation fuel management around roadways.

The proposed Health and Safety (HS) Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to emergency response and evacuation. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to prepare for and facilitate evacuations caused by wildfires and other hazards.

Goal HS-5: Maintain adequate fire and life safety protection from wildland and urban fires. (new)

- Policy HS-5.4: Fire Safety Requirements. Require new development to be protected from fire hazards through the provision of peak load water supply systems capable of providing the flow required for fire suppression, the design of roads with adequate widths and turning radii, and adequate separation between buildings, prior to project approval. (Policy CSF4.12)

Goal HS-6: Minimize potential damage to life, environment, and property through timely, well-prepared, and well-coordinated emergency preparedness response plans and programs. (new)

- Policy HS-6.4: Neighborhood Disaster Preparedness. Neighborhoods with potential for being isolated due to road closures or Public Safety Power Shutoff events in an emergency should have a volunteer center for emergency coordination. (Policy HS2.5)
- Policy HS-6.7: Access for Emergency Vehicles. Provide adequate access for emergency vehicles and equipment, including providing a second means of ingress and egress to all development. (Policy HS2.4)

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- Action HS-6.3: Emergency Evacuation Routes. Conduct education and outreach in conjunction with the County of San Benito, through multiple formats and media, to make evacuation routes known to the public. (Implementation Measure HS.M)
- Action HS-6.9: Emergency Infrastructure. Ensure that traffic lights at major intersections continue to function in the event of localized power outage. Repair any damaged sets of infrastructure or equipment as needed to continue City operations. (new)

Implementation of these proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would increase the effectiveness of the EOP, and therefore would not impair or conflict with the plan.

A temporary impact to emergency operations and evacuation under the proposed project could occur from construction of future development projects if they were to result in temporary lane closures that would alter evacuation routes. These would be limited to the duration of the construction period, and direct impacts of construction would be evaluated during the permit review process by the HFD and/or CAL FIRE. Potential future development in the WUI or a Very High FHSZ would also be required to comply with Very High FHSZ Fire Safe Regulations, the CBC, the CFC, and the HMC. Review and approval of temporary lane closures, if needed, for future development projects in the city would ensure that that no inconsistencies with emergency evacuation plans would occur.

As discussed in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, potential development under the proposed 2040 General Plan could occur in the WUI. Future development, regardless of whether it includes new development or redevelopment, is required to comply with adopted local, regional, and State plans and regulations addressing emergency access, response, and evacuation. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Thus, this impact is considered *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 Climate Action Plan (2023 CAP) is strategic plan focused on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. The proposed 2023 CAP does not include any specific projects or proposals that would directly conflict with the EOP. Projects and programs facilitated by the proposed 2023 CAP strategies may include activities that require construction or operation on major roadways or may require the closure of major roadways to facilitate construction activities. However, these would be limited to the duration of the construction period, and direct impacts of construction would be evaluated during the permit review process by the HFD, Caltrans, and/or CAL FIRE. Review and approval of temporary lane closures, if needed, for future development project in the city would ensure that no inconsistencies with emergency evacuation plans would occur. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP) is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Since the proposed ALPP would not affect evacuation capabilities or the implementation of the EOP, implementation of the proposed project would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

FIRE-2 Implementation of the proposed project would not, 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 a wildfire.

2040 General Plan

As discussed in Section 4.18.1.2, *Existing Conditions*, Hollister is prone to periods of high winds. These winds have high speeds and can shift suddenly, and they are often accompanied by low humidity. They create dangerous conditions for starting and spreading wildfires during the drier months of the year, and they also spread wildfire smoke hazards, as can prevailing winds.

Section 4.18.1.1, *Regulatory Framework*, describes plans, policies, regulations, and procedures that help to reduce wildfire risks. The 2019 Strategic Fire Plan for California, 2021 California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan, Unit Strategic Fire Plan for San Benito-Monterey, San Benito County CWPP, and San Benito County MJHMP are intended to reduce wildfire hazards and coordinate response to these hazards on a statewide and regional scale. In addition, the Monterey Air Resources District provides air quality alerts, advisories, and an interactive online map to view current air quality conditions in the region. Furthermore, the proposed 2040 General Plan includes Policy HS-2.10, which requires the City to establish equitably located resilience hubs that offer refuge from poor air quality due to regional wildfire smoke.

As discussed in Section 4.18.1.2, *Existing Conditions*, the topography of Hollister is largely flat and mostly does not contain significant slopes. Construction of potential future development throughout the city may require grading and site preparation; however, these activities would not significantly change the slope. All potential future development in Hollister would be required to comply with the CBC, CFC, and HMC requirements for grading, which would minimize the ignition and spread of wildfire due to slopes. Additionally, the proposed 2040 General Plan includes Policy HS-1.1 and Policy HS-1.2, which prevent future development from being in hazard-prone areas without appropriate hazard mitigation, and require studies to be conducted during development review to assess hazards and potential mitigation. Therefore, potential future development under the proposed 2040 General Plan would not expose people to the uncontrolled spread of wildfire or pollutant concentrations due to slope.

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Other factors, such as vegetation, have the potential to exacerbate wildfire risks. The grassland and brush areas of Hollister are easily ignited, especially during late summer and fall when temperatures and winds are high and relative humidity is low. During these conditions, grassland and brush vegetation can dry out, particularly in areas with unirrigated vegetation, becoming extremely flammable and increasing wildfire risks.

As described in Section 4.18.1.1, *Regulatory Framework*, the San Benito County MJHMP and the San Benito County CWPP contain several vegetation management, defensible space, fuel reduction, and fuel break projects to reduce the uncontrolled spread of wildfire due to vegetation. Additionally, all potential future development in wildfire-prone areas or the WUI in Hollister would be required to comply with Chapter 49 of the CFC, Public Resources Code Section 4291, and the HMC. These regulations have specific requirements for new and existing development to create defensible space and extensive fuel reduction within 100 feet of a structure, an ember-resistant zone within 5 feet of a structure, and the overall maintenance of properties to reduce the risk of uncontrolled fires or the spread of fires to other properties.

Furthermore, the proposed Health and Safety (HS) Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to wildfire risks. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to minimize wildfire risks associated with vegetation.

Goal HS-5: Maintain adequate fire and life safety protection from wildland and urban fires. (new)

- Policy HS-5.1: Wildland-Urban Interface. Coordinate between the Building and Fire Departments to ensure that new development in the wildland-urban interface is in full compliance with all applicable sections of the Building Code. (new)
- Policy HS-5.3: Fire Protection Master Plan. Ensure that all new development will be adequately designed to minimize risks to life and property through the implementation of the Fire Protection Master Plan. (Policy CSF4.12)
- Policy HS-5.6: Land Use Management for Fire Risks. Maintain all City-owned public lands to clear them of fuel loads, establish appropriately placed fire breaks, and educate all property owners in the city on proper landscape maintenance and fire-scaping standards to reduce the risk of fire hazards. (new)
- Action HS-5.1: Requirements for Development in High Fire Hazard Areas. Require project-level development in the High Fire Hazard Zone within the Planning Area to occur in accordance with the California Building Standards Code to provide needed safeguards and facilities to control the spread of fire in any fire hazardous area. Provisions may include, but are not limited to, the following: (a) require spark arresters for any chimney; (b) prohibit open-flame devices; (c) clear brush or vegetative growth 30 feet from structures; and (d) clear brush 10 feet from roadways. (new)
- Action HS-5.2: Tree Trimming. Trim all public trees and other vegetation in Hollister on a regular basis to clear them of any loose branches or debris that could serve as fuel in a fire event. (new)

These proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would ensure that fire hazard reduction measures are implemented and maintained, and that existing and new development would incorporate vegetation management measures. Adherence to the above building practices, fire safety regulations, and

vegetation fuel management requirements would reduce the potential for exacerbating wildfire risks. Therefore, potential future development under the proposed 2040 General Plan would not expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire. Thus, impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. The proposed 2023 CAP does not include any specific projects or proposals that would exacerbate wildfire risks and aims to increase the resilience of the community. Projects and programs facilitated by the proposed 2023 CAP strategies would be required to comply with CBC, CFC, Public Resources Code Section 4291, HMC, and proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions to reduce wildfire risks due to prevailing winds, topography, and other factors such as vegetation. Review of projects and programs for consistency with State and local regulations would ensure that the proposed 2023 CAP strategies would not exacerbate wildfire risks and expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or uncontrolled spread of a wildfire. Therefore, impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Because agricultural lands often create a buffer between wildland vegetation and developed areas, preserving the agricultural lands would further reduce wildfire risks.[37] Thus, implementation of the proposed ALPP would not exacerbate wildfire risks and expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

[37] Teri Shore, Advocacy Director, Greenbelt Alliance. 2021. *The Critical Role of Greenbelts in Wildfire Resilience*. https://www.greenbelt.org/research/the-critical-role-of-greenbelts-in-wildfire-resilience/

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FIRE-3	**Implementation of the proposed project would not require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) but would not exacerbate fire risk or result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment.**

2040 General Plan

Buildout under the proposed 2040 General Plan would require the installation of new roadways, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, transmission lines, and other utilities to serve future potential development in Hollister.

- Roadways. As shown in Figure C-4, *2040 General Plan Circulation Diagram,* of the proposed 2040 General Plan, proposed buildout of the 2040 General Plan would include new roadways to connect to new developments throughout the city. Potential future development under the proposed 2040 General Plan could also create new or expanded roadways in WUI areas of Hollister, including converting unpaved roads to paved access roads, developing roadways to new development, and expanding existing roads to accommodate new development and multimodal forms of transportation.
- Fuel Breaks. Proposed 2040 General Plan Policies HS-5.6 and HS-5.9 require establishing and maintaining fuel breaks and defensible space in both public and private developments. These activities would likely occur in WUI areas.
- Emergency Water Sources. Proposed 2040 General Plan Policies HS-5.2 and HS-5.4 ensure that existing and future development have sufficient water supplies for fire-fighting purposes and structural suppression, which would require the installation of new water conveyance infrastructure in new development or areas not served by adequate water supplies.
- Power Lines. Potential future development under the proposed 2040 General Plan would require electrical line installations and connections to provide power to buildings and infrastructure. Proposed 2040 General Plan Policy HS-1.5 and Actions HS-1.2 and HS-1.3 require continued collaboration with Pacific Gas & Electric to underground existing electrical transmission infrastructure throughout the city and encourage the undergrounding of utilities in new development.
- Other Utilities. Potential future development under the proposed 2040 General Plan would require the installation and maintenance of water systems, septic or sewer systems, internet infrastructure, and stormwater systems in wildfire-prone areas.

These types of improvements would involve temporary construction and result in changes to the existing built environment. The installation and operation of new, above-ground power transmission lines would create a higher risk of wildfire compared to other infrastructure. However, as stated above, the proposed project encourages the undergrounding of new and existing electrical transmission lines, which is consistent with HMC Section 16.24.050. Additionally, CPUC requires maintenance of vegetation around power lines, strict wire-to-wire clearances, and annual inspections of above-ground power lines. These measures would reduce the wildfire risks associated with the installation and maintenance of power lines.

Development in the WUI areas throughout the city would also be required to comply with building and design standards in the CBC and CFC, which include provisions for fire-resistant building materials, the clearance of debris, and fire safety requirements during demolition and construction activities. Additionally, Public Resources Code Section 4291 requires a defensible space within 100 feet of a structure and an ember-resistant zone within 5 feet of a structure. These measures, along with the proposed 2040 General Plan policies and actions for undergrounding of power lines, creation and maintenance of vegetation, and ensuring adequate water supplies, would minimize wildfire risks associated with the installation and maintenance of infrastructure.

Such infrastructure and maintenance activities would also be required to comply with the adopted State regulations, HMC standards, and the proposed 2040 General Plan policies and actions to mitigate the impact of infrastructure on the environment. Therefore, impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is a strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. The proposed 2023 CAP does not include any specific projects or proposals that would require the installation of infrastructure that would exacerbate fire risks or result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment. Projects and programs facilitated by the proposed 2023 CAP strategies would be required to comply with CBC, CFC, Public Resources Code Section 4291, HMC, and proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions to reduce wildfire risk, underground utilities, and ensure adequate emergency water supplies. Review of projects and programs for consistency with State and local regulations would ensure that the proposed 2023 CAP strategies would not exacerbate wildfire risks or result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment. Therefore, impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. As discussed under Impact Discussion FIRE-2, agricultural lands often create a buffer between wildland vegetation and developed areas, and therefore preserving the agricultural lands would further reduce wildfire risks.[38] Thus, implementation of the proposed ALPP would not exacerbate fire risks or result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

[38] Teri Shore, Advocacy Director, Greenbelt Alliance. 2021. *The Critical Role of Greenbelts in Wildfire Resilience*. https://www.greenbelt.org/research/the-critical-role-of-greenbelts-in-wildfire-resilience/

WILDFIRE

FIRE-4	**Implementation of the proposed project would not expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, postfire slope instability, or drainage changes.**

2040 General Plan

Wildfires, such as the 1981 Herbert Fire and the 2020 Coyote Fire, can create favorable conditions for other hazards, such as flooding and landslides during the rainy season. Wildfires on hillsides can burn the vegetation that stabilizes the slope and create hydrophobic conditions that prevent the ground from absorbing water. This can lead to landslides, debris flows, and flooding. A project would result in a significant impact if—due to slopes, drainage patterns, or postfire slope instability—it would expose people or structures to significant risks from landsides, debris flows, or flooding.

As discussed in Chapter 4.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, parts of Hollister are in floodplains. As shown in Figure 4.10-2, *Flood Zones,* in Chapter 4.10, areas adjacent to the San Benito River, Pacheco Creek, and Santa Ana Creek are in the flood zone.

As discussed in Chapter 4.7, *Geology and Soils*, the EIR Study Area is generally flat, and earthquake-caused landslides would only occur on Park Hill. However, due to the soil profile, these landslides or mudflows would be small.

Potential future development under the proposed 2040 General Plan would not contribute to postfire slope instability due to the flat nature of the topography but may contribute to drainage changes upstream. However, proposed 2040 General Plan Policy HS-4.1 requires the review of all new development to ensure that no portion of the development is within the 100-year floodplains or that adequate measures to eliminate the risk of flood damage have been taken, consistent with the Hollister Flood Damage Prevention Regulations. Proposed 2040 General Plan Policy HS-4.2 requires the City to identify areas of poor drainage and install new or upgraded drainage systems to accommodate drainage needs. Furthermore, all new development in the city is required to comply with State and local regulations, such as the CBC and HMC, both of which have provisions to reduce flooding and landslides in existing and new development. As described in Section 4.18.1.1, *Regulatory Framework*, HMC Chapters 15.20 and 15.24 provide regulations for existing and new development to reduce flooding potential downslope or downstream.

Furthermore, the proposed Health and Safety (HS) Element of the 2040 General Plan contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to runoff, slope, and drainage. The following proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would serve to minimize runoff and prevent flooding.

Goal HS-4: Protect the community from flood hazards. (new)

- Policy HS-4.2: Floodplain Uses. Encourage developers to dedicate identified lands in floodplains that are unsuitable for development to the City for use as parks or for preservation as open space, consistent with the City of Hollister Parks and Recreation Master Plan or other infrastructure plan

developed for a given area. Development of these identified lands as community recreation amenities should be economically feasible to build and maintain. (Policy HS1.10)

- Policy HS-4.3: Flood Control Coordination. Coordinate with the San Benito County Water District and other state agencies to maintain flood-control infrastructure to minimize flood damage. (new)
- Action HS-4.1: Flood Control Requirements in New Development. Update and apply flood control requirements to regulate construction within flood zones. (Implementation Measure HS.H)
- Action HS-4.3: Floodplain Use Assessment. Identify those areas with natural hazards that are unsuitable for development, but which may be suitable for public recreational uses. (new)

New development complying with these proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would not expose people or structures to downslope landslides or downstream flooding due to postfire hazards. Furthermore, as identified under Impact Discussions FIRE-1 and FIRE-2, development under proposed 2040 General Plan must also comply with best management practices regarding wildfire prevention, action, and recovery as outlined in the San Benito County EOP, San Benito MJHMP, and the San Benito County Community Wildfire Protection Plan. All future development, regardless of the location, is required to comply with adopted local, regional, and State plans and regulations addressing wildfire prevention, which would minimize risks of postfire hazards. Compliance with these policies and regulatory requirements would ensure that impacts from postfire instability would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. The proposed 2023 CAP does not include any specific projects or proposals that would expose people or structures to significant risks, including flooding or landslides as a results of postfire runoff or slope instability. Projects and programs facilitated by the proposed 2023 CAP strategies would be required to comply with CBC, CFC, Public Resources Code Section 4291, HMC, and proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions to reduce wildfire risk, geologic hazard risks, and flood risks. Review of projects and programs for consistency with State and local regulations would ensure that the proposed 2023 CAP strategies would not expose people or structures to significant postfire risks such as slope instability or increased runoff. Therefore, impacts would be *less than significant.*

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. As discussed under Impact Discussions FIRE-2 and FIRE-3, agricultural lands often create a buffer between wildland vegetation and developed areas, and therefore

preserving the agricultural lands further reduces wildfire risks.[39] Thus, implementation of the proposed program would not expose people or structures to postfire runoff, slope instability, or drainage changes, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

FIRE-5	**In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to wildfire impacts.**

2040 General Plan

The cumulative setting includes potential future development in the EIR Study Area and the surrounding region. Future development under the proposed 2040 General Plan would not impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan; would not exacerbate wildfire risks and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire of uncontrolled spread of wildfire; would not exacerbate wildfire risks due to the installation or maintenance of infrastructure; and would not cause downslope or downstream post-fire flooding or landslide hazards. Cumulative development in the surrounding unincorporated County, local jurisdictions, and State lands would be subject to the same State regulations.

Future potential development in the EIR Study Area and the surrounding region would be required to comply with the same State and regional regulations, such as SRA and Very High FHSZ Fire Safe Regulations, Public Resources Code Section 4291, CBC, CFC, and San Benito County EOP. Lands throughout San Benito County would also implement wildfire reduction strategies through implementation of the San Benito County CWPP and the San Benito County MJHMP. Therefore, cumulative conditions would not impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan; would not exacerbate wildfire risks and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire of uncontrolled spread of wildfire; would not exacerbate wildfire risks due to the installation or maintenance of infrastructure; and would not cause downslope or downstream postfire flooding or landslide hazards. These would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts when taken into consideration with the proposed project. Therefore, cumulative wildfire impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Climate Action Plan

The proposed 2023 CAP is strategic plan focused on GHG emissions reduction through recommended community-wide GHG reduction strategies and an implementation plan. The proposed 2023 CAP does not include any specific projects or proposals that would expose people or structures to significant wildfire risks or conflict with the EOP. Projects and programs facilitated by the proposed 2023 CAP strategies

[39] Teri Shore, Advocacy Director, Greenbelt Alliance. 2021. *The Critical Role of Greenbelts in Wildfire Resilience*. https://www.greenbelt.org/research/the-critical-role-of-greenbelts-in-wildfire-resilience/

would be required to comply with CBC, CFC, Public Resources Code Section 4291, HMC, and proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions to reduce wildfire risk and ensure adequate evacuation capabilities. The cumulative conditions of the proposed 2023 CAP would include the buildout of the proposed 2040 General Plan and development in surrounding areas. Therefore, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to wildfire.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

Agricultural Lands Preservation Program

The proposed ALPP is a program focused on mitigating the effects of agricultural land conversion through the dedication of eligible agricultural conservation easements at a rate of at least two acres of agricultural land for each one acre of agricultural land to be converted (2:1 ratio) for projects that would convert agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. As previously discussed, agricultural lands often create a buffer between wildland vegetation and developed areas, and therefore preserving the agricultural lands further reduces wildfire risks.[40] Therefore, the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to wildfire.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

[40] Teri Shore, Advocacy Director, Greenbelt Alliance. 2021. *The Critical Role of Greenbelts in Wildfire Resilience*. https://www.greenbelt.org/research/the-critical-role-of-greenbelts-in-wildfire-resilience/

WILDFIRE

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5. Alternatives to the Proposed Project

The following discussion is intended to inform the public and decision makers of feasible alternatives to the proposed project that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the proposed project. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines set forth the intent and extent of alternatives analysis to be provided in an environmental impact report (EIR). Section 15126.6(a) of the CEQA Guidelines states that:

> *An EIR shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives. An EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project. Rather it must consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives that will foster informed decision making and public participation. An EIR is not required to consider alternatives, which are infeasible. The lead agency is responsible for selecting a range of project alternatives for examination and must publicly disclose its reasoning for selecting those alternatives. There is no ironclad rule governing the nature or scope of the alternatives to be discussed other than the rule of reason*.

5.1 PURPOSE

The alternatives evaluated in this Draft EIR were developed consistent with Section 15126.6(b) of the CEQA Guidelines, which states that:

> *Because an EIR must identify ways to mitigate or avoid the significant effects that a project may have on the environment (Public Resources Code Section 21002.1), the discussion of alternatives shall focus on alternatives to the project or its location which are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives, or would be more costly.*

5.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

As stated, the range of potential alternatives to the proposed project shall include those that could feasibly accomplish most of the basic objectives of the proposed project. As listed in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, of this Draft EIR, the City has identified the following objectives, which build on the framework of the Vision and Values and reflect the community's desires for the future of Hollister and will serve as the project objectives for the EIR.

- Provide for balanced and sustainable growth. Create and maintain a cohesive development pattern amidst the agriculture landscape, with clearly defined urban edges. The General Plan land use map

focuses urban development within the Sphere of Influence (SOI) and protects Hollister's surrounding lands from sprawl, reduce the cost of extending costly infrastructure, and enhance the visual character of the city's edge. Land use policies are enacted to reduce incompatible land uses and ensure developments pay for their share of infrastructure, public facilities, and any environmental costs they might impose.

- Create new jobs to develop the local economy. Strive for more local, high-quality jobs and an improved jobs/housing ratio.
- Integrate neighborhoods and neighborhood centers. Build quality neighborhoods and maintain a quality urban environment. Balanced neighborhoods include a mix of residential types and intensities at all levels of affordability and include activities and facilities that are used on a frequent basis—such as schools, stores, and parks. Land uses are designated to ensure balanced neighborhood development with a mix of uses and housing types, provision of parks and schools, and easy access to commercial activity centers.
- Create a network of parks and open space. In addition to neighborhood and community parks, create a network of trails.
- Create a safe, efficient, and equitable circulation system for all users. Establish a well-integrated and coordinated transit network and safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle circulation.
- Provide ample retail and shopping opportunities. Create quality retail sites to ensure jobs and sales tax revenue that serve both local residents and a regional population.
- Plan for environmental justice. Senate Bill (SB) 1000, the Planning for Healthy Communities Act, was passed in 2016 and requires that General Plans address environmental justice for disadvantaged communities that exist within the planning area of the General Plan. California law defines "environmental justice" as the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.
- Respond to State law requirements. As previously described, the proposed 2040 General Plan builds off the current General Plan by incorporating similar topics and revising or adding new goals, policies, and actions that are required by State law. Table 3-1, *2040 General Plan Required by State Law*, in Chapter 3, *Project Description,* provides a list of the key State laws that are addressed in the 2040 General Plan, a summary of the purpose of the law, and the element that addresses the law.

5.3 SELECTION OF A REASONABLE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES

Section 15126.6(c) of the CEQA Guidelines states:

> *The range of potential alternatives to the proposed project shall include those that could feasibly accomplish most of the basic objectives of the project and could avoid or substantially lessen one or more of the significant effects. The EIR should briefly describe the rationale for selecting the alternatives to be discussed. The EIR should also identify any alternatives that were considered by the lead agency but were rejected as infeasible during the scoping process and briefly explain the reasons*

underlying the lead agency's determination. Additional information explaining the choice of alternatives may be included in the administrative record. Among the factors that may be used to eliminate alternatives from detailed consideration in an EIR are: (i) failure to meet most of the basic project objectives, (ii) infeasibility, or (iii) inability to avoid significant environmental impacts.

5.3.1 ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

Two project alternatives and the comparative merits of the alternatives are discussed in this section, in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines. All the potential environmental impacts associated with adoption and implementation of the proposed project were found to be either less than significant without mitigation or less than significant with mitigation, except for impacts to agricultural resources (AG), air quality (AIR), greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), noise (NOI), and transportation (TRAN), which were found to be significant and unavoidable with mitigation measures at the program level. Although the proposed 2040 General Plan results in significant and unavoidable impacts, the identification of these program-level impacts does not preclude the finding of less-than-significant impacts for subsequent development proposals analyzed at the project level that do not exceed the applicable project-level thresholds. The program-level significant and unavoidable impacts include the following:

- Impact AG-1: Implementation of the proposed project would result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland land to non-agricultural land uses.
- Impact AG-2: Implementation of the proposed project would result in the loss of agricultural land under the Williamson Act.
- Impact AG-4: The proposed project, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, could result in a significant cumulative impact with respect to the conversion of farmland of concern under CEQA and Williamson Act properties to non-agricultural uses.
- Impact AIR-1: Implementation of the proposed project would result in the generation of substantial operational (long-term) criteria air pollutant emissions that would exceed the Monterey Bay Air Resources District's (MBARD's) regional significance threshold for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) and would; therefore, not be considered consistent with the existing Air Quality Management Plan.
- Impact AIR-2a: Operation of development projects that could occur from implementation of the project would generate emissions that would exceed Monterey Bay Air Resources District's (MBARD's) regional significance thresholds for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), and Carbon Monoxide (CO).
- Impact AIR-2b: Construction activities that could occur over the buildout horizon of the proposed 2040 General Plan would generate substantial short-term criteria air pollutant emissions that would exceed Monterey Bay Air Resources District's (MBARD's) regional significance thresholds and cumulative contribute to the nonattainment designations of the North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB).
- Impact AIR-3a: Implementation of the proposed project could expose air quality sensitive receptors to substantial toxic air contaminant concentrations from non-permitted sources during operation.

- Impact AIR-3b: Construction activities associated with potential future development could expose nearby air quality sensitive receptors to substantial concentrations of toxic air contaminants during construction.
- Impact AIR-5: The emissions that could occur over the buildout horizon of the proposed 2040 General Plan could generate a substantial increase in emissions that exceeds the Monterey Bay Air Resources District's (MBARD's) significance thresholds and cumulatively contribute to the nonattainment designations and health risk in the North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB).
- Impact NOI-1.1: Construction activities associated with potential future development could expose sensitive receptors in close proximity to a construction site to excessive noise from construction equipment.
- Impact NOI-1.2: Operational vehicle traffic noise increases would exceed the City's significance threshold with implementation of the proposed project.
- Impact TRANS-2: Implementation of the proposed project would result in a significant vehicle miles traveled (VMT) impact for VMT per Capita (Residential), VMT per Employee (Office), VMT per Employee (Other), and Retail VMT over 50,000 square feet, due to forecasted land use growth through 2040, based on a comparison of the VMT rate increment for VMT to the corresponding average baseline rates for the San Benito County region.
- Impact TRANS-5: Implementation of the proposed project would cumulatively contribute to regional vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

The alternatives were selected because of their potential to further reduce and avoid these impacts. The alternatives to be analyzed in comparison to the proposed project include:

- Alternative A: No Project Alternative (Current General Plan)
- Alternative B: Focused Growth

The first alternative is the CEQA-required "No Project" Alternative, which assumes the current 2005 General Plan remains in effect and is not replaced by the proposed 2040 General Plan and that the 2023 Climate Action Plan (CAP) would not be adopted and the Zoning Ordinance would not be amended to include the Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP). Alternative B assumes the same amount of households, residential units, population, and jobs would occur as under the proposed project, but would allow for more dense housing in parcels within the Medium-Density Residential, High-Density Residential, Mixed-Use Commercial and Residential, and Downtown Commercial and Mixed Use land use designations and also increase the maximum floor-area ratios (FAR)[1] in the Mixed-Use Commercial and Residential and Downtown Commercial and Mixed Use land use designations when compared to the proposed project. In addition, Alternative B would maintain the currently adopted SOI thus encouraging more development and redevelopment in the City Limits and less growth on undeveloped land.

[1] FAR is a ratio of the building square footage permitted on a lot to the net square footage of the lot. For example, on a site with 10,000 square feet of net land area, a FAR of 1.0 will allow 10,000 square feet of building floor area to be built.

5.3.2 ASSUMPTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

The alternatives analysis is presented as a comparative analysis to the proposed project. The development intensity for the alternatives varies from the proposed project. The estimated growth under each alternative, as well as the proposed project, is provided in Table 5-1, *Forecasted Additional Growth for the Proposed Project and the Alternatives to the Proposed Project*.

TABLE 5-1 FORECASTED ADDITIONAL GROWTH FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT AND THE ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Category	Proposed Project	Alternative A: No Project	Alternative B: Focused Growth
Households	6,215	5,723 [a]	6,215
Residential Units	6,455	5,845 [b]	6,455
Population	21,635	20,779 [b]	21,635
Jobs	5,755	8,970 [b]	5,755

Notes:
a. The 2000 U.S. Census reported a vacancy rate of 2.1 percent for the City of Hollister (2005-2023 General Plan, page A.14.
b. See Table LU1, *City of Hollister Growth Projections through 2023,* of the 2005-2023 General Plan, page 2.4.
Source: City of Hollister, 2023.

The alternatives analysis assumes that all applicable mitigation measures recommended for the proposed project and the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would apply to Alternative B, but would not apply to Alternative A. The following discussion compares the environmental impacts of the alternatives with those of the proposed project for each of the environmental topics analyzed in detail in Chapter 4, *Environmental Analysis*, of this Draft EIR. The impacts of each alternative are classified as less than (<), similar or comparable to (=), or greater than (>) the level of impacts associated with the proposed project. Table 5-2, *Comparison of Impacts of the Project Alternatives and the Proposed Project*, summarizes the relative impacts of each of the alternatives compared to the proposed project.

TABLE 5-2 COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT ALTERNATIVES AND THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Topic	Proposed Project [a]	Alternative A: No Project	Alternative B: Focused Growth
Aesthetics	LTS	<	=
Agricultural Resources	SU	<	<
Air Quality	SU	<	<
Biological Resources	LTS	<	<
Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources	LTS	>	<
Energy	LTS	>	<
Geology and Soils	LTS	<	=
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	LTS	>	<
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	LTS	>	=
Hydrology and Water Quality	LTS	>	=
Land Use and Planning	LTS	<	=
Mineral Resources	LTS	>	<
Noise	SU	<	<
Population and Housing	LTS	>	=

TABLE 5-2 COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT ALTERNATIVES AND THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Topic	Proposed Project [a]	Alternative A: No Project	Alternative B: Focused Growth
Public Services and Recreation	LTS	<	=
Transportation	SU	>	<
Utilities and Service Systems	LTS	<	=
Wildfire	LTS	>	<

Notes:
[a] The impacts listed in this column represent the highest significance determination for each respective standard of significance.

LTS	Less Than Significant	<	Fewer impact in comparison to the proposed project
LTS/M	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	=	Similar impact in comparison to the proposed project
SU	Significant and Unavoidable	>	Greater impact in comparison to the proposed project

5.4 ALTERNATIVE A: NO PROJECT

5.4.1 DESCRIPTION

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(1), the No Project Alternative is required as part of the "reasonable range of alternatives" to allow decision makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed project with the impacts of taking no action or not approving the proposed project. Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(3)(A), when the project is the revision of a plan, as in this case, the no project alternative will be the continuation of the existing plan. Under Alternative A, potential future development in Hollister would continue to be subject to existing policies, regulations, development standards, and land use designations of the existing 2005 General Plan, the City would not adopt the proposed 2023 CAP or amend the Zoning Ordinance to incorporate the ALPP.

As described in Chapter 3, *Project Description,* of this Draft EIR, the existing 2005 General Plan was adopted in 2005 and included a horizon year of 2023. A number of State and federal laws guiding general plan policies have also been updated during this time.

Many of the community issues vetted in the 2005 General Plan are still relevant, well addressed, and do not require major changes. However, Alternative A would not incorporate new topics that are now required by State law, such as environmental justice, and would not revise relevant policies and actions to meet those requirements.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(3)(C), the City of Hollister, acting as the lead agency, should analyze the impacts of the No Project Alternative by projecting what would reasonably be expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the proposed project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services. Implementation of the No Project Alternative assumes that development growth throughout the city would remain unchanged until the buildout horizon year 2040, which is consistent with other regional plans, including Association of Monterey Bay Area Government's (AMBAG) *2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan & the Sustainable Communities Strategy* (2045 AMBAG MTP/SCS).

Future development permitted under the No Project Alternative would not increase development potential in Hollister beyond what was considered in the existing 2005 General Plan and analyzed in the associated EIR (State Clearinghouse No. 2004081147), but rather assumes the remaining development growth shown in Table 5-1 would occur through 2040. No General Plan land use designations changes would be required to accommodate these uses. Table 5-3, *2019 to 2040 Growth Under the Proposed Project and Alternative A*, shows the difference between 2019 to 2040 growth of the proposed project compared to Alternative A. As shown in Table 5-3, Alternative A would result in less residential growth and more job growth when compared to the proposed project.

TABLE 5-3 2019 TO 2040 GROWTH UNDER THE PROPOSED PROJECT AND ALTERNATIVE A

Category	Proposed Project	Alternative A: No Project [a]	Difference between the Proposed Project and Alternative A
Households	6,215	5,723 [a]	402 fewer households
Residential Units	6,455	5,845 [b]	610 fewer residential units
Population	21,635	20,779 [b]	859 fewer population
Jobs	5,755	8,970 [b]	3,215 more jobs

Notes:
a. The 2000 U.S. Census reported a vacancy rate of 2.1 percent for the City of Hollister (2005-2023 General Plan, page A.14.
b. See Table LU1, *City of Hollister Growth Projections through 2023,* of the 2005-2023 General Plan, page 2.4.
Source: City of Hollister, 2023.

Alternative A would include the SOI shown on the current General Plan Land Use Map. Alternative A would also not adopt the proposed 2023 CAP to serve as the strategic plan for how the City will reduce GHG emissions and foster a sustainable community through 2050 and beyond. The 32 reduction strategies and recommended implementation actions of the proposed 2023 CAP to help the City reduce GHG emissions to meet or exceed its targets would not be adopted.

Alternative A would also not amend HMC Title 17, *Zoning,* to add the proposed ALPP. As described in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, the purpose of the ALPP is to ensure the benefits of agricultural activities are maintained by requiring that activities that convert existing agricultural lands to urban uses directly address that loss through a program that funds agricultural conservation easements. None of the applicable mitigation measures recommended for the proposed project would apply to Alternative A.

5.4.2 IMPACT DISCUSSION

The potential environmental impacts associated with Alternative A when compared to the proposed project are described herein.

5.4.2.1 AESTHETICS

As described in Chapter 4.1, *Aesthetics*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would not result in any significant impacts related to aesthetics.

Like the proposed project, potential future development in the EIR Study Area under Alternative A is anticipated to occur in the form of infill/intensification on sites either already developed and/or underutilized, and/or in close proximity to existing development, where future development would have a

lesser impact on scenic vistas. The proposed 2040 General Plan reinforces existing uses, heights, and densities in most locations, with allowances for greater intensity only in a limited number of locations and therefore would not substantially increase building height beyond what is previously accounted for under the current 2005 General Plan.

There are no officially designated scenic view corridors or vistas within the EIR Study Area. Therefore, implementation of either scenario would have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista and impacts would be *similar*.

There are no State-designated scenic highways within, or in the vicinity of, the EIR Study Area. Therefore, implementation of either scenario would not damage existing scenic resources within a state scenic highway and impacts would be *similar.*

Applicable future projects under both scenarios would be subject to design review prior to project approval pursuant to Hollister Municipal Code (HMC) Section 17.24.190, *Site and Architectural Review*, and Section 17.24.140(E), *Design Review Procedures*, and comply with the various planning documents that govern scenic quality in the city, as described in Section 4.1.1.1, *Regulatory Framework*, in Chapter 4.1. However, Alternative A would not realize the new or modified 2040 General Plan goals, policies, or actions that were prepared as part of the proposed 2040 General Plan update. For example, a new policy requires the City develop city-wide design guidelines and/or objective design standards to cover residential, commercial, and industrial uses and include standards for streetscape improvements to make the right-of-ways more attractive and pedestrian friendly. Thus, unlike the proposed project, which includes these new policies, development under this alternative would not provide the same level of design consideration related to the visual character or quality of a project site and its surrounding; thus, aesthetic impacts related to these topics from potential development under Alternative A would be *greater* when compared to the proposed project.

Similar to the proposed project, Alternative A would result in new lighting sources that could result in sources of glare. Potential future development under both scenarios would be required to comply with best management practices in CALGreen and the Hollister Zoning Ordinance that ensure new land uses do not generate excessive light levels and reduce light and glare spillover from future development to surrounding land uses. Because Alternative A would result in less development than the proposed project, fewer new light and glare sources would be introduced, and impacts would be *less* when compared to the proposed project.

Overall, while Alternative A would not realize the new or modified 2040 General Plan goals, policies, or actions that were prepared as part of the proposed 2040 General Plan update, development in the EIR Study Area under Alternative A would be less and would be guided by the current policies and regulations that guide development in Hollister, and as such, impacts related to aesthetics would be ***fewer*** when compared to the proposed project.

5.4.2.2 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

As determined in Chapter 4.2, *Agricultural Resources*, the proposed project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts to agricultural resources despite implementation of the policies and actions proposed in the 2040 General Plan Open Space and Agriculture (OS) Element.

As discussed in Chapter 4.2, the EIR Study Area contains 1,314 acres of Prime Farmland, 312 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance, and 40 acres of Unique Farmland, and 21 acres of these lands are under Williamson Act contracts. Under both scenarios, Alternative A and the proposed project, there is the potential for these agricultural lands to be converted to non-agricultural uses. However, there is fewer development potential under Alternative A when compared to the proposed project; therefore, impacts would be ***fewer*** under Alternative A when compared to the proposed project.

5.4.2.3 AIR QUALITY

As described in Chapter 4.3, *Air Quality*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts even with implementation of proposed 2040 General Plan Policies NRC-3.14 and NRC-3.15.

As described in Chapter 4.3, implementation of the proposed project would conflict with the Monterey Bay Air Resource District (MBARD) clean air plans (see Section 4.3.2.3, *Regulatory Framework*, in Chapter 4.3, for the complete list of clean air plans), exceed MBARD regional significance thresholds, and expose nearby sensitive receptors to substantial concentrations of toxic air contaminants during construction, but would not generate any substantial odors. At a program level, implementation of the proposed project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts related to construction and operation of potential future development, as well as the cumulative contribution to the non-attainment designations of the North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB).

Alternative A would continue development as allowed under the current 2005 General Plan, which would result in less development in the EIR Study Area compared to the proposed project. Development under both scenarios would be subject to the MBARD Indirect Source Review Rule 9510 and would be required to prepare a detailed air quality impact assessment on a project-by-project basis. Additionally, future development under both scenarios could result in construction activities in close proximity to residential and other sensitive land uses, thus, temporarily elevating concentrations of toxic air contaminants in the vicinity of sensitive land uses. While the regulatory setting mitigating construction impacts is the same under both scenarios, less development would occur under Alternative A; therefore, construction impacts would be ***fewer*** when compared to the proposed project.

Under Alternative A, less development would occur; therefore, less direct and indirect criteria air pollutant emissions from energy (e.g., natural gas use), and area sources (e.g., aerosols and landscaping equipment) would occur. Under both scenarios, subsequent environmental review of applicable development projects would be required to assess potential impacts under MBARD project-level thresholds. As discussed in Chapter 4.14, *Population*, the expected buildout under the proposed 2040 General Plan would exceed the regional growth projections for 2040 for population, housing, and jobs. Therefore, growth accommodated by the proposed 2040 General Plan has the potential to generate

emissions that could exceed the emissions forecasts in MBARD's AQMP. While the growth accommodated by the current 2005 General Plan exceeds regional growth projections, it is a minor exceedance of less than one percent. Further, as described in Chapter 4.14, *Population and Housing*, the regional growth forecasts do not yet include the City's 2023–2031 Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA), which are included in the analysis for the proposed 2040 General Plan. Additionally, total VMT per service population would be less under existing conditions than the proposed project. Therefore, operational air quality impacts of Alternative A would be *less* when compared to the proposed project.

Due to the magnitude and intensity of development accommodated by the proposed 2040 General Plan, as well as regional air quality influences beyond the control of Hollister, impacts associated with consistency with the MBARD would remain significant and unavoidable at the program level. Because there is less development potential under Alternative A when compared to the proposed project, impacts under Alternative A when compared to the proposed project are considered to be *fewer* in this respect.

Like the proposed project, Alternative A is not the type of project that would result in significant impacts from odor and impacts would be *similar* under both scenarios.

Overall, air quality impacts under Alternative A would be ***fewer*** when compared to the proposed project.

5.4.2.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

As described in Chapter 4.4, *Biological Resources*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts to biological resources.

The EIR Study Area is not within any local, regional, or State Habitat Conservation Plan areas. Therefore, neither scenario would conflict with the conservation strategy in any Habitat Conservation Plan or Natural Community Conservation Plan and impacts would be *similar*.

The City of Hollister General Plan is the primary planning document for the City of Hollister. The current 2005 General Plan and the proposed revisions to policies and actions under the Natural Resource and Conservation (NRC) Element are intended to ensure consistency between the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance and would not conflict with local policies and ordinances protecting biological resources because the General Plan is the overriding planning document for Hollister. Accordingly, impacts to biological resources under Alternative A would be *similar* when compared to the proposed project.

Although potential future development under the proposed project could potentially affect animal and plant species identified as candidate, sensitive, or special-status species, proposed goals, policies, and actions; proposed mitigation measures; and adherence to all federal, state, and local regulations relating to biological resources would fully mitigate any potential impacts. The proposed project would also have a less-than-significant impact on riparian habitats, wetlands, and wildlife movement corridors because compliance with proposed goals, policies, and actions; proposed mitigation measures; and adherence to all federal, state, and local regulations relating to biological resources would fully mitigate any potential impacts. Further, potential future development under the proposed project would primarily occur as infill/intensification on sites either already developed and/or underutilized, and/or in close proximity to existing development, which reduces the likelihood that special-status plant and animal species could be

impacted. Infill development also reduces the likelihood that the riparian habitats, wetlands, and wildlife movement corridors could be impacted.

The current 2005 General Plan encourages development to occur in existing urbanized areas, which would mean that Alternative A would also reduce the likelihood of development in areas of the EIR Study Area that are more likely to cause an adverse impact to a sensitive riparian habitat, wetland, or wildlife movement corridor. New and modified 2040 General Plan policies and actions require project applicants to conduct a biological site assessment for proposed development on sites with natural habitat conditions that may support special-status species, sensitive natural communities, or regulated wetlands and waters and mitigate potential impacts on special-status species and sensitive habitat areas. Tree preservation would also be encouraged, and planting of invasive, non-native plant species would be prohibited. No similar requirement currently exists in the current 2005 General Plan conditions and these standards would not be realized under the Alternative A scenario; therefore, impacts would be *greater* when compared to the proposed project.

In summary, because there would be less development under Alternative A when compared to the proposed project and less opportunity to impact biological resources, impacts to biological resources from potential future development as allowed under Alternative A would be ***fewer*** when compared to the proposed project.

5.4.2.5 CULTURAL AND TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

As described in Chapter 4.5, *Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts to cultural and tribal cultural resources.

Under Alternative A, new development would continue throughout the city under existing plans and regulations. As explained in Chapter 4.5, there are existing prehistoric, architectural, historical, or archaeological resources in the EIR Study Area that could all be impacted by new demolition, inappropriate modification, or inappropriate new construction under the proposed project or Alternative A. Like the proposed project, Alternative A would be subject to the procedures of conduct following the discovery of human remains set forth in California Health and Safety Code, Public Resources Code and the California Code of Regulations. Because less development would occur under the Alternative A scenario, the potential to impact these resources would be *less* when compared to the proposed project. Additionally, the proposed project includes new and modified 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions in the Land Use and Community Design (LU) and Natural Resource and Conservation (NRC) Elements which require additional actions that would further protect cultural and tribal cultural resources in the EIR Study Area. For example, new Land Use and Community Design policies require the City to promote preservation, renovation, and rehabilitation of historic structures, allow adjacent and abutting properties to work together to meet requirements in rehabilitation and reuse projects of historic buildings, pursue historic preservation funding sources, evaluate alternatives, relocation, or other mitigation prior to approving alteration of historically significant buildings, and educate the public about Hollister's historic and cultural resources. Other new policies require the City to preserve areas that have identifiable and important tribal cultural resources, support the tribal consultation process, relationship building, and respect for tribal cultural resources, comply with state and federal standards to evaluate and mitigate impacts to tribal resources, and require preconstruction investigations of potential tribal cultural

resources and on-site mitigation for all developments. New actions include requiring the City to conduct a study to consider establishing incentives for property owners to rehabilitate or preserve historic and cultural resources and form a historic resources commission whose function would be to evaluate the proposed demolition or alteration of historic buildings or cultural resources to minimize development impact. Nonetheless, because there is less growth potential and therefore less development overall, there would be *less* likelihood of causing an impact to cultural resources in the EIR Study Area.

Under Alternative A, these goals, policies, and actions would not be adopted. Therefore, Alternative A would have ***greater*** impacts to cultural resources as compared to the proposed project when following common protocols.

5.4.2.6 ENERGY

As described in Chapter 4.6, *Energy*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would not result in any significant impacts related to energy.

All development that occurs in the State is required to comply with best management practices regulated in the California Green Building Code and Building and Energy Efficiency Standards, which ensure new development would not result in the wasteful or inefficient use of energy. Additionally, neither the proposed project nor Alternative A would introduce a level of development and population growth that would be anticipated to necessitate the construction of new energy supply facilities or transmission infrastructure.

Additionally, the proposed project includes new and modified 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions in the Natural Resource and Conservation (NRC) and Health and Safety (HS), and Circulation (C) Elements and the proposed 2023 CAP that require additional actions that would further ensure energy efficiency in the EIR Study Area. These include reducing energy use through energy-conserving design and practices, promoting carbon-free energy sources, encouraging incorporation of sustainable, energy-efficient, and environmentally regenerative features, increasing mode shares for sustainable travel, reducing single-occupant vehicle usage, monitoring mode split progress on reducing VMT, and improving the pedestrian and cyclist experience through Master Plan updates, improvements in comfort, safety, and connectivity of the network, and increased awareness of amenities. Because transportation is a leading source of energy use in Hollister, these new and modified goals, policies, and actions promote energy conservation from the transportation sector by increasing safe and sufficient transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities to reduce automobile use and VMT that would not be realized to the same level under Alternative A.

Less development would occur under the Alternative A scenario, so energy consumption from construction would be *less* when compared to the proposed project. Energy use from VMT would be less under Alternative A because there is less development potential when compared to the proposed project. Because the standard of significance for energy impact is focused on efficiency and not on amount, it is assumed that the net benefits from more compact development, the new 2040 General Plan policies, and the proposed 2023 CAP would result in more efficient and less wasteful energy use when compared to Alternative A that would not realize these policies and increased density in urbanized area. Therefore,

overall energy demand and consumption would be ***greater*** under Alternative A when compared to the proposed project.

5.4.2.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

As described in Chapter 4.7, *Geology and Soils*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts related to geology and soils.

Future development under both Alternative A and the proposed project would be subject to the same federal, state, and local regulations that address and prevent hazards associated with geology, soils, and seismicity. Both the current 2005 General Plan and proposed 2040 General Plan encourage development in urbanized settings where there is less likelihood for impacts from geologic hazards to occur. Although Alternative A would result in less overall development, compliance with existing regulations related to geologic and seismic safety would apply similarly to both future development under Alternative A and the proposed project.

While, as described above, state and local regulations to reduce hazards related to geology and soils would apply equally under both scenarios, there is less development potential under Alternative A and therefore greater risk. Thus, Alternative A would result in ***fewer*** impacts when compared to the proposed project.

5.4.2.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

As described in Chapter 4.8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts related to GHG emissions and consistency with applicable plan, policy, or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs.

The GHG emissions from new buildings constructed would be subject to the triennial updates to California's Building and Energy Efficiency Standards, which would presumably improve over time. While new buildings would be more energy efficient, there would be an overall increase in energy usage under the proposed project from construction due to the amount of proposed growth and construction energy use would be *less* under Alternative A when compared to the proposed project.

As described in the air quality discussion, the total VMT per service population would be *less* under existing conditions than the proposed project. However, Alternative A would not include the new and modified 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions, or land use mix of the proposed project, which would concentrate development in existing urban areas and therefore could lessen the net benefit gained from siting future development near public transit and existing services. Therefore, Alternative A would not necessarily reduce trips for these reasons and would also increase trips from more development, which are the major source of GHG emissions. Alternative A would also not adopt the proposed 2023 CAP to ensure the City is on target to meet its GHG emissions reduction goals. As described in Chapter 4.8, GHG emissions are reduced at 2040 buildout from existing conditions. Therefore, GHG emissions from the operation of these uses would be considered *greater* when compared to the proposed project.

Additionally, as described in the energy discussion, the proposed project includes new and modified 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions in the Natural Resource and Conservation (NRC) and Health and Safety (HS), and Circulation (C) Elements and the proposed 2023 CAP which require additional actions that would further ensure energy efficiency in the EIR Study Area which would reduce VMT and GHG emissions. Under Alternative A, the net benefits from the new and modified 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions and the proposed 2023 CAP would not be realized through 2040 buildout.

In summary, overall impacts from GHG emissions under Alternative A would be ***greater*** when compared to the proposed project because while there is less development potential under Alternative A, the net benefits of new and modified 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions, and the proposed 2023 CAP that improve energy efficiency and reduce VMT would not be realized.

5.4.2.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

As described in Chapter 4.9, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials.

As discussed in Chapter 4.9, there are sites within the EIR Study Area that are included on a list of hazardous materials sites. Impact Discussion HAZ-4 of this Draft EIR concluded that implementation of the proposed project could result in construction and operation activities on sites with known hazardous materials and, as a result, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment. Additionally, both scenarios would routinely transport, use, or disposal of hazardous waste, the release of hazardous waste, or the emitting of hazardous emissions or handling of hazardous materials in the proximity of an existing or proposed school. As further discussed in Chapter 4.9, the EIR Study Area is within an airport land use plan area.

Potential future development that could occur in the EIR Study Area from implementation of the proposed project or Alternative A would be required to comply with all federal, state, and local regulations pertaining to hazards and hazardous materials, and General Plan goals, policies, and actions that would further reduce impacts related to hazardous materials. Development that would occur under Alternative A would be required to comply with the same federal and state regulations and would be required to comply with policies in the current 2005 General Plan, which reduce impacts related to hazardous materials. The proposed project includes new goals, policies, and actions in the Health and Safety (HS) Element that protects the public's health and safety, ensure compatible land uses with Hollister Municipal Airport operations, and minimize potential damage to life, environment, and property through timely, well-prepared, and well-coordinated emergency preparedness response plans and programs. This includes working closely with appropriate agencies to ensure compatibility of land uses with airport facilities and operations and limiting building heights for airspace protection. Furthermore, the City is to pursue integration of the City's safety and emergency management documents, prepare for and coordinate emergency management, participate in providing widely accessible emergency alerts, ensure resilient communication and power systems, and coordinate with other emergency management agencies on disaster preparedness and response procedures.

Because there is less development potential under Alterative A, the risk associated with hazards and hazardous materials is *lesser*. However, the net benefits from the new 2040 General Plan goals, policies,

and actions to protect the public's health and safety, ensure compatible land uses with Hollister Municipal Airport operations, and minimize potential damage to life, environment, and property through timely, well-prepared, and well-coordinated emergency preparedness response plans and programs would not be realized throughout buildout. Therefore, Alternative A would have a ***greater*** impact when compared to the proposed project.

5.4.2.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

As described in Chapter 4.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality,* of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would not result in any significant impacts related to hydrology and water quality. Compliance with existing state and local regulations and procedures would ensure that pre- and post-construction impacts to water quality would be less than significant. These regulations and procedures would be maintained under Alternative A.

Alternative A would result in less development overall, future development would likely occur within previously urbanized areas and would connect to existing drainage systems already in place and be subject to the same existing federal, state, and local regulations relating to hydrology and water quality, similar to the proposed project. Compliance with existing regulations would ensure that pre- and post-construction impacts to water quality be minimized as future development occurs. However, the proposed project has updated and expanded the 2005 General Plan goals, policies, and actions related to hydrology and water quality to further minimize impacts. For example, new and modified 2040 General Plan policies and actions in the Community Services and Facilities (CSF) and Health and Safety (HS) Elements would require the City to manage water supply in an environmentally and economically sustainable manner, including ensuring that updates to the Urban Water Management Plant maximize water conservation and reuse, increasing the use of recycled water, implementing best practices, and educating the community about the challenges to the water supply system and need for responsible water management. The City is also to require all development that will utilize City water and wastewater services to be located within the City Limits and adopt citywide policies that encourage or require new and existing developments to incorporate measures to reduce potable water demand and/or increase water efficiency. Furthermore, the City is required to protect the community from flooding hazards by coordinating with the San Benito County Water District and other state agencies to maintain flood-control infrastructure, identify and correct areas of poor drainage, and identify areas with natural hazards that are unsuitable for development.

While Alternative A involves less development potential, would continue implementation of the 2005 General Plan, and would not implement the new and modified policies of the proposed 2040 General Plan to further minimize impacts related to hydrology and water quality, Alternative A would have ***greater*** impacts to hydrology and water quality when compared to the proposed project.

5.4.2.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING

As described in Chapter 4.11, *Land Use and Planning*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would not result in any significant impacts related to land use and planning.

ALTERNATIVES

The current 2005 General Plan was adopted with the purpose of harmonizing changes to existing developed areas to better serve community needs. While the proposed project would aim to improve connectivity and would not create physical barriers within existing communities, Alternative A would also support the integration of infill development and does not propose physical features that could divide a community. Accordingly, impacts would be *similar* under both scenarios.

Under Alternative A, development would continue to occur throughout the EIR Study Area under the current 2005 General Plan and Zoning Code and would not conflict with these already approved standards. However, Alternative A would not implement new and modified 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions, and the updated land use mix to guide future development in a more sustainable and efficient manner consistent with AMBAG 2045 MTP/SCS. Alternative A would also not adopt and implement the proposed 2023 CAP which further ensures consistency with the AMBAG 2045 MTP/SCS by ensuring the city is on a trajectory to meet its GHG reduction targets. Further, the proposed project includes forecasted housing projection that meets the City's 2023–2031 Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) to support the mandatory future Housing Element update. The proposed land use map, as shown in Figure 3-5, *2040 General Plan Land Use Map*, in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, includes enough land designated for housing to fulfill the City's 2023-2031 RHNA as well as future buffer sites pursuant to SB 166 identified through the upcoming Housing Element update. Continuing the use of the current 2005 General Plan would conflict with applicable land use plan adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect and impacts would be ***greater*** when compared to the proposed project.

5.4.2.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

As described in Chapter 4.12, *Mineral Resources*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would not result in any significant impacts related to mineral resources.

The proposed project includes new and modified 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions in the Natural Resources and Conservation (NRC) and Open Space and Agricultural (OS) Elements which include new policies and actions that would further protect mineral resources in the EIR Study Area. For example, new Natural Resources and Conservation policies require the City to preserve regionally significant mineral resources, manage mineral resource extraction to ensure the fewest possible environmental impacts, establish guidelines for new or expanded mining operations, ensure compatible land use on lands containing important mineral resources, and reclaim former mining sites to adopt for alternative land uses. New Open Space and Agricultural action requires the City to work with San Benito County and the City of San Juan Bautista to establish and maintain and Urban Growth Boundary to protect agricultural and open space land uses.

Although there would be no changes to the land use designations of the mining sites under Alternative A, the goals, policies, and actions of the proposed 2040 General Plan would not be adopted. Therefore, Alternative A would have ***greater*** impacts to mineral resources as compared to the proposed project.

5.4.2.13 NOISE

As described in Chapter 4.13, *Noise*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts related to generation of noise in exceedance of standards, despite implementation of proposed 2040 General Plan Policy HS-8.7.

Future development allowed under the proposed project would be subject to the standards of the HMC and current 2005 General Plan. As specific uses are proposed for particular sites, project-level design, permitting, and/or environmental review would serve to ensure that individual uses would comply with the noise regulations. Future development under Alternative A would also be subject to these applicable standards. Because less construction would occur, noise and vibration from construction would be *fewer* under Alternative A when compared to the proposed project.

The proposed 2040 General Plan also includes a new policy in the Health and Safety (HS) Element to further minimized the adverse effect from noise. Policy HS-8.5 requires the City to pay attention to site planning and design techniques other than sounds walls to reduce noise impacts.

Alternative A would result in less development and as previously described in the air quality discussion, would generate fewer trips from vehicles than with the proposed project, which potentially generate more mobile sources of noise. Because construction is temporary, the increased noise impacts from the operational phase would result in *fewer* noise impacts under Alternative A when compared to the proposed project.

5.4.2.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

As described in Chapter 4.14, *Population and Housing*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would not result in any significant impacts related to population and housing.

As described in Chapter 4.14, implementation of the proposed project would exceed current regional projections. However, the proposed project would include a slight increase in the projected growth of population and housing under the current 2005 General Plan (Alternative A). Further, the proposed project is the overriding policy document in the EIR Study Area, which has been updated to plan for population growth that is reasonably foreseeable through 2040.

Alternative A would not include the updated policy framework of the proposed project that ensure adequate planning occurs to accommodate the future population increase and future development to extended buildout year through 2040. Therefore, impacts under Alternative A would be *greater* when compared to those under the proposed project.

Although less than the proposed project, Alternative A would allow a net increase of residential and nonresidential uses in the EIR Study Area through 2040. Since implementation of Alternative A would result in a net increase in housing, like the proposed project, it would not require replacement housing outside the EIR Study Area. Therefore, impacts under Alternative A would be *similar* when compared to those of the proposed project.

In summary, while Alternative A would result in a different growth potential, impacts related to population and housing would be ***greater*** when compared to the proposed project as the current 2005 General Plan has not been updated to account for changes through 2040.

5.4.2.15 PUBLIC SERVICES AND RECREATION

As described in Chapter 4.15, *Public Services and Recreation*, of this Draft EIR, impacts under the proposed project to fire protection services, police services, parks, schools, and libraries were found to be less than significant. No mitigation measures are required.

Alternative A would result in less residents and jobs to the EIR Study Area, and therefore, would result in less demand on the public service providers that serve the EIR Study Area. Potential future development under Alternative A would be required to comply with all existing City regulations adopted to ensure that development pays its fair share of the cost of delivering services, providing park space and libraries, while payment of property taxes would ensure that future development pays its fair share towards schools. Overall, impacts under Alternative A would be ***fewer*** than those of the proposed project.

5.4.2.16 TRANSPORTATION

As described in Chapter 4.16, *Transportation*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts related to VMT generation of the proposed project exceeding the City's draft thresholds, despite implementation of new 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions that require the reduction of VMT. This significant and unavoidable impact is only related to the programmatic nature of the proposed project that precludes the availability of mitigation measures.

The proposed project would focus potential future development in existing urban areas. As such, the VMT generated by potential future development would be lower than if development were proposed in areas not served by public transportation and a network of sidewalks and bicycle facilities. The proposed project also includes new 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions and the proposed 2023 CAP that expand upon existing 2005 General Plan to ensure the transportation system in the EIR Study Area is multi-modal and designed to increase bicycle and pedestrian access and safety. For example, new policies require the City to increase mode shares for sustainable travel to reduce GHG emissions, apply complete streets standards to future projects in the public rights-of-way, actively participate in planning for future rail service in Hollister, promote multimodal safety, create and maintain pedestrian- and bike-friendly environment through design and improvements to facilities, and implement transportation demand management requirements. New actions requires the City to adopt a citywide Complete Streets Plan, Pedestrian Master Plan, and Bicycle Master Plan and increase awareness of existing pedestrian and bicycle trails and routes.

Impacts related to hazards from design features, emergency access, and conflicting with adopted plans or decrease performance standards, were found to be less than significant under the proposed project.

Alternative A would be implemented under the current 2005 General Plan, which does not include the new mix of land uses that increase density to reduce VMT. Therefore, Alternative A would result *greater* VMT impacts when compared to the proposed project.

Impacts to bicycles and pedestrians would be *greater* under Alternative A when compared to the proposed project since the proposed project's improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities, would not be implemented.

Alternative A would not include the multi-modal circulation policies and actions that are included in the proposed project and more development would result in greater vehicle trips. Overall, transportation impacts in the EIR Study Area under Alternative A would be ***greater*** when compared to the proposed project.

5.4.2.17 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

As described in Chapter 4.17, *Utilities and Service Systems*, of this Draft EIR, impacts to sanitary wastewater, solid waste and stormwater infrastructure, and solid waste, under the proposed project, were found to be less than significant with the compliance of all applicable regulations. No mitigation measures are required.

Demand and consumption trends generally demonstrate that advances in recycling and solid waste reduction requirements, water-efficient regulations in building and landscaping, and stricter stormwater retention requirements, would reduce impact from existing conditions. However, it is assumed that because Alternative A would result in less overall development than the proposed project, less overall water demand, and less wastewater and solid waste generation, impacts under Alternative A would be ***fewer*** than those of the proposed project.

5.4.2.18 WILDFIRE

As described in Chapter 4.18, *Wildfire*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would not result in significant impacts related to wildfire.

Chapter 4.18 determined that, due to compliance with applicable local, regional, and State regulations, the proposed project would not impair the implementation of an emergency response or emergency evacuation plan. Potential future development as a result of the proposed project would not be located in an area that would expose persons to wildfire or wildfire pollutants, nor would the project expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides. The proposed project would not result in the installation or maintenance of any infrastructure that could exacerbate fire risk or result in impacts to the environment. Furthermore, the proposed project includes new goals, policies, and actions in the Health and Safety (HS) Element that minimize potential damage to life, environment, and property through timely, well-prepared, and well-coordinated emergency preparedness response plans and programs and maintain adequate fire and life safety protection from wildland and urban fires. This includes ensuring traffic lights at major intersections continue to function in the event of localized power outage, maintaining all City-owned public lands to clear them of fuel loads and establish appropriately placed fire breaks, educating all property owners in the city on proper landscape maintenance and fire-scaping standards to reduce the risk of fire hazards, and trimming all public trees and other vegetation to clear them of any loose branches or debris that could serve as fuel in a fire event. Furthermore, the City would also require project-level development in the High Fire Hazard Zone or

wildland-urban interface to occur in accordance with the Building Code and coordinate between Building and Fire Departments to ensure so.

Alternative A would continue implementation of the current 2005 General Plan, which focuses development in urbanized areas similar to the proposed project. The current 2005 General Plan also does not include any infrastructure-related projects and would not conflict with an emergency response or emergency evacuation plan. As with the conclusion in the hazards and hazardous materials discussion, because there is fewer development potential under Alterative A, the risk associated with wildfire is lesser However, the net benefits from the new 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions to minimize potential damage to life, environment, and property through timely, well-prepared, and well-coordinated emergency preparedness response plans and programs and maintain adequate fire and life safety protection from wildland and urban fires would not be realized throughout buildout. Therefore, implementation of Alternative A would have ***greater*** impacts when compared to the proposed project.

5.4.3 RELATIONSHIP OF THE ALTERNATIVES TO THE OBJECTIVES

Under Alternative A, the proposed project would not be implemented; therefore, this alternative would not accomplish any of the project objectives.

5.5 ALTERNATIVE B: FOCUSED GROWTH

5.5.1 DESCRIPTION

Alternative B assumes the same amount of households, residential units, population, and jobs would occur as under the proposed project, but would allow for more dense housing in parcels within the Medium-Density Residential, High-Density Residential, Mixed-Use Commercial and Residential, and Downtown Commercial and Mixed Use land use designations and also increase the maximum floor-area ratios (FAR)[2] in the Mixed-Use Commercial and Residential and Downtown Commercial and Mixed Use land use designations when compared to the proposed project. In addition, Alternative B would maintain the currently adopted SOI thus encouraging more development and redevelopment in the City Limits and less growth on undeveloped land.

As previously described, the purpose of this alternative is to reduce the significant and unavoidable impacts associated with agricultural resources (AG), air quality (AIR), noise (NOI), and transportation (TRAN).

As described in Chapter 4.2, *Agricultural Resources*, the conversion of lands designated Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland, and lands under Williamson Act contracts to non-agricultural uses is a significant impact under CEQA. Accordingly, to reduce the potential for the conversion of agricultural lands, Alternative B would not propose to change the SOI as described in

[2] FAR is a ratio of the building square footage permitted on a lot to the net square footage of the lot. For example, on a site with 10,000 square feet of net land area, a FAR of 1.0 will allow 10,000 square feet of building floor area to be built.

Chapter 3, *Project Description*, but instead would maintain the current Hollister SOI. The current SOI is roughly 1,817 acres or about 2.8 square miles. As shown on Figure 3-7, *Existing and Proposed Sphere of Influence*, in Chapter 3, the proposed SOI would extend further north and south of the existing SOI, but would remain contiguous with the existing SOI border to the east and west. The proposed SOI would expand to Union Road between San Benito Street and Southside Road and to Enterprise Road between Southside Road and SR 25. As shown on Figure 4.2-1, *Important Farmland and Williamson Act Contracts*, in Chapter 4.2, *Agricultural Resources*, there is land designated as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland in this area. Therefore, when compared to the proposed SOI Alternative B would reduce the SOI where qualified farmland is located.

As described in Chapter 4.3, *Air Quality*, Chapter 4.8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, and Chapter 4.15, *Transportation*, there is a direct relationship to reducing air pollutants, including GHG emissions and VMT. Accordingly, this alternative maintains the same amount of households, residential units, population, and jobs as under the proposed project, but would change the mix of uses in some General Plan land use designations to allow residential and commercial uses in close proximity to increase walking, bicycling, and transit opportunities, and reduce VMT. Alternative B would allow for more dense housing in parcels within the Medium-Density Residential, High-Density Residential, Mixed-Use Commercial and Residential, and Downtown Commercial and Mixed Use land use designations and increase the maximum floor-area ratios (FAR)[3] in the Mixed-Use Commercial and Residential and Downtown Commercial and Mixed Use land use designations. By allowing increased intensities of development, Alternative B would accommodate the same amount of development as the proposed 2040 General Plan, but in a smaller footprint.

The alternatives analysis assumes that all applicable mitigation measures recommended for the proposed project and the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would apply to Alternative B.

5.5.2 IMPACT DISCUSSION

The potential environmental impacts associated with Alternative B when compared to the proposed project are described herein.

5.5.2.1 AESTHETICS

As described in Chapter 4.1, *Aesthetics*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would not result in any significant impacts related to aesthetics.

Alternative B does not propose any changes that would result in substantial differences from the proposed growth potential of the proposed project. Potential future development would still be anticipated to occur in the form of infill/intensification on sites either already developed and/or underutilized, and/or in close proximity to existing development, where future development would have a lesser impact on scenic vistas.

[3] FAR is a ratio of the building square footage permitted on a lot to the net square footage of the lot. For example, on a site with 10,000 square feet of net land area, a FAR of 1.0 will allow 10,000 square feet of building floor area to be built.

As discussed in Chapter 4.1, there are no officially designated scenic view corridors or vistas within the EIR Study Area. Therefore, overall impacts to scenic vistas would be the *same* under both scenarios.

Alternative B would benefit from the new and modified 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions. Alternative B would be required to comply with best management practices of CalGreen and the Hollister Zoning Ordinance that ensure new land uses do not generate excessive light levels and reduce light and glare spillover from future development to surrounding land uses. Therefore, impacts from light and glare under Alternative B would be *similar* when compared to the proposed project.

Overall, the same level of development with increased infill opportunities would be guided by the same regulations as the proposed project and would occur in the same development pattern, and would result in ***similar*** aesthetics impacts when compared to the proposed project.

5.5.2.2 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

As determined in Chapter 4.2, *Agricultural Resources*, the proposed project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts to agricultural resources despite implementation of the policies and actions proposed in the 2040 General Plan Open Space and Agriculture (OS) Element.

Alternative B allows for more intense infill development potential, reducing the amount of the lands designated Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland, and lands under Williamson Act contracts to be converted to non-agricultural uses. While the loss of any of these lands through the conversion to non-agricultural uses would result in a significant impact, because less qualifying agricultural lands could be converted, ***fewer*** overall impacts would occur under Alternative B when compared to the proposed project.

5.5.2.3 AIR QUALITY

As described in Chapter 4.3, *Air Quality*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts even with implementation of proposed 2040 General Plan Policies NRC-3.14 and NRC-3.15.

As described in Chapter 4.3, implementation of the proposed project would conflict with the Monterey Bay Air Resource District (MBARD) clean air plans (see Section 4.3.2.3, *Regulatory Framework*, in Chapter 4.3, for the complete list of clean air plans), exceed MBARD regional significance thresholds, and expose nearby sensitive receptors to substantial concentrations of toxic air contaminants during construction, but would not generate any substantial odors. At a program level, implementation of the proposed project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts related to construction and operation of potential future development, as well as the cumulative contribution to the non-attainment designations of the North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB).

Alternative B would continue development as allowed under the proposed project but with increased infill opportunities, which could result in more redevelopment in the EIR Study Area. Development under both scenarios would be subject to the MBARD Indirect Source Review Rule 9510 and would be required to prepare a detailed air quality impact assessment on a project-by-project basis. Additionally, future

development under both scenarios could result in construction activities in close proximity to residential and other sensitive land uses, thus, temporarily elevating concentrations of toxic air contaminants in the vicinity of sensitive land uses. Because the regulatory setting mitigating construction impacts is the same under both scenarios and the same development potential would occur under Alternative B, construction impacts would be *similar* when compared to the proposed project.

Due to the magnitude and intensity of development accommodated by the proposed 2040 General Plan, as well as regional air quality influences beyond the control of Hollister, impacts associated with consistency with the MBARD would remain significant and unavoidable at the program level. Under Alternative B, the same development would occur; therefore, the same direct and indirect criteria air pollutant emissions from energy (e.g., natural gas use), and area sources (e.g., aerosols and landscaping equipment) would occur. Under both scenarios, subsequent environmental review of applicable development projects would be required to assess potential impacts under MBARD project-level thresholds. When combined with increased opportunities for infill development, Alternative B would realize a greater net benefit from siting future development near public transit and existing services. Therefore, Alternative B would be more likely to reduce VMT when compared to the proposed project. Additionally, the development under Alternative B would include the new and modified 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions to minimize air quality impacts. Air quality impacts from Alternative B would be considered *less* when compared to the proposed project.

Like the proposed project, Alternative B is not the type of project that would result in significant impacts from odor and impacts would be *similar* under both scenarios.

Overall, because Alternative B would result in more infill development and would be expected to decrease the number and length of driving trips, there would be ***fewer*** air quality impacts under Alternative B when compared to the proposed project.

5.5.2.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

As described in Chapter 4.4, *Biological Resources*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts to biological resources.

Alternative B would result in the same level of growth as the proposed project but would be more compact and would potentially disturb less undeveloped land with the smaller SOI when compared to the proposed project. Under Alternative B, the same proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would apply. Therefore, while development would be more intensive in some land use designations under Alternative B, development would be concentrated in the same urban areas, potential future development under Alternative B would result in ***fewer*** impacts when compared to the proposed project.

5.5.2.5 CULTURAL AND TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

As described in Chapter 4.5, *Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts to cultural and tribal cultural resources.

Under Alternative B, new development would continue throughout the city under existing plans and regulations, and would be guided by the proposed new and modified 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions to further protect historic buildings. As explained in Chapter 4.5, there are existing prehistoric, architectural, historical, or archaeological resources in the EIR Study Area that could all be impacted by new demolition, inappropriate modification, or inappropriate new construction under the proposed project or Alternative B. Like the proposed project, Alternative B would be subject to the procedures of conduct following the discovery of human remains set forth in California Health and Safety Code, Public Resources Code and the California Code of Regulations. Alternative B would also include all new and modified 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions to further ensure the protection of historic resources. However, because the same development would occur under the Alternative B scenario, but in more compact lay out that could reduce the potential to disturb unknown archaeological resources, the potential to impact these resources would be *less* when compared to the proposed project. Overall, Alternative B would have ***fewer*** impacts to cultural resources when compared to the proposed project.

5.5.2.6 ENERGY

As described in Chapter 4.6, *Energy*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would not result in any significant impacts related to energy.

All development that occurs in the State is required to comply with best management practices regulated in the California Green Building Code and Building and Energy Efficiency Standards, which ensure new development would not result in the wasteful or inefficient use of energy. Additionally, neither the proposed project nor Alternative B would introduce a level of development and population growth that would be anticipated to necessitate the construction of new energy supply facilities or transmission infrastructure.

Additionally, Alternative B, like the proposed project, includes new and modified 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions in the Natural Resource and Conservation (NRC) and Health and Safety (HS), and Circulation (C) Elements which require additional actions that would further ensure energy efficiency in the EIR Study Area. These include reducing energy use through energy-conserving design and practices, promoting carbon-free energy sources, encouraging incorporation of sustainable, energy-efficient, and environmentally regenerative features, increasing mode shares for sustainable travel, reducing single-occupant vehicle usage, monitoring mode split progress on reducing VMT, and improving the pedestrian and cyclist experience through Master Plan updates, improvements in comfort, safety, and connectivity of the network, and increased awareness of amenities. Because transportation is a leading source of energy use in Hollister, these new and modified goals, policies, and actions promote energy conservation from the transportation sector by increasing safe and sufficient transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities to reduce automobile use and VMT.

The same amount of development would occur under the Alternative B scenario, so energy consumption from construction would be the *same* when compared to the proposed project. Energy use from VMT would be the less under Alternative B because the same level of development potential would occur when compared to the proposed project, but in a more compact and infill manner by intensifying development. Furthermore, under Alternative B, the net benefits from the new and modified 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would be realized through 2040 buildout. Therefore, because the

standard of significance for energy impact is focused on efficiency, it is assumed that the net benefits from more compact development, in addition to the new 2040 General Plan policies and the proposed 2023 CAP, would result in more efficient and less wasteful energy use when compared to proposed project and, the overall energy demand and consumption would be ***fewer*** when compared to the proposed project.

5.5.2.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

As described in Chapter 4.7, *Geology and Soils*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts related to geology and soils.

Future development under both Alternative B and the proposed project would occur in the same urban areas and would be subject to the same federal, state, and local regulations that address and prevent hazards associated with geology, soils, and seismicity. Although Alternative B would result in the same overall development, compliance with existing regulations related to geologic and seismic safety would apply similarly to both future development under Alternative B and the proposed project.

Since, as described above, State and local regulations to reduce hazards related to geology and soils would apply equally under both scenarios and the same development potential under Alternative B with greater potential for infill development would be realized through 2040 buildout, impacts would be ***similar*** when compared to the proposed project.

5.5.2.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

As described in Chapter 4.8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts related to GHG emissions and consistency with applicable plan, policy, or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs.

The GHG emissions from new buildings constructed would be subject to the triennial updates to California's Building and Energy Efficiency Standards, which would presumably improve over time. While new buildings would be more energy efficient, there would be an overall increase in energy usage under the proposed project from construction due to the amount of proposed growth. While the proposed development potential is the same under both scenarios, energy from construction would be *similar* under Alterative B when compared to the proposed project, but would be *less* from operation due to more opportunities for infill development.

As described in the air quality discussion, the total VMT per service population would be *less* under existing conditions than the proposed project. Alternative B would include the new and modified 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions, and the same land use mix of the proposed project, which would concentrate development in existing urban areas and therefore could lessen the net benefit gained from siting future development near public transit and existing services. However, Alternative B would allow for more infill development opportunities than the proposed project, reducing trips, which are the major source of GHG emissions. In addition, Alternative B would also adopt the proposed 2023 CAP to ensure the City is on target to meet its GHG emissions reduction goals. As described in Chapter 4.8, GHG emissions are reduced at 2040 buildout from existing conditions. Therefore, GHG emissions from the operation of these uses would be considered *less* when compared to the proposed project.

Additionally, as described in the energy discussion, the proposed project includes new and modified 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions in the Natural Resource and Conservation (NRC) and Health and Safety (HS), and Circulation (C) Elements which require additional actions that would further ensure energy efficiency in the EIR Study Area which would reduce VMT and GHG emissions. Under Alternative B, the net benefits from the new and modified 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would be realized through 2040 buildout, same as the proposed project.

In summary, overall impacts from GHG emissions under Alternative B would be ***fewer*** when compared to the proposed project because there is greater infill development opportunities under Alternative B and the net benefits of new and modified 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions that improve energy efficiency and reduce VMT would be realized.

5.5.2.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

As described in Chapter 4.9, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials.

As discussed in Chapter 4.9, there are sites within the EIR Study Area that are included on a list of hazardous materials sites. Impact Discussion HAZ-4 of this Draft EIR concluded that implementation of the proposed project could result in construction and operation activities on sites with known hazardous materials and, as a result, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment. Additionally, both scenarios would routinely transport, use, or disposal of hazardous waste, the release of hazardous waste, or the emitting of hazardous emissions or handling of hazardous materials in the proximity of an existing or proposed school. As further discussed in Chapter 4.9, the EIR Study Area is within an airport land use plan area.

Potential future development that could occur in the EIR Study Area from implementation of the proposed project or Alternative B would be required to comply with all federal, state, and local regulations pertaining to hazards and hazardous materials, and General Plan goals, policies, and actions that would further reduce impacts related to hazardous materials. The regulatory setting, including the proposed 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions would apply under both scenarios; therefore, impacts would be *similar* in this regard.

Overall, because there is the same amount of development potential under Alterative B although it has more opportunities for infill development with a mix of land uses, the risk associated with hazards and hazardous materials is the *same*. Therefore, Alternative B would have the ***same*** impact when compared to the proposed project.

5.5.2.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

As described in Chapter 4.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality,* of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would not result in any significant impacts related to hydrology and water quality. Compliance with existing State and local regulations and procedures would ensure that pre- and post-construction impacts to water quality would be less than significant. These regulations and procedures would be maintained under Alternative B.

Alternative B would result in the same amount of development overall, future development would likely occur within previously urbanized areas and would connect to existing drainage systems already in place and be subject to the same existing federal, state, and local regulations relating to hydrology and water quality, similar to the proposed project. Compliance with existing regulations would ensure that pre- and post-construction impacts to water quality be minimized as future development occurs. Additionally, future development under Alternative B would be subject to the updated and expanded 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions related to hydrology and water quality to further minimize impacts.

Under Alternative B, the same amount of groundwater would be pumped to serve urban development within Hollister City Limits as under the proposed project. Therefore, net groundwater use would be similar to that of under the proposed project, and Alternative B would have ***similar*** impacts to hydrology and water quality when compared to the proposed project.

5.5.2.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING

As described in Chapter 4.11, *Land Use and Planning*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would not result in any significant impacts related to land use and planning.

Like the proposed project, Alternative B would aim to improve connectivity and would not create physical barriers within existing communities. Implementation of Alternative B would result in a greater intensity of development, the integration of such development would be *similar* to that of the proposed project and does not propose physical features that could divide a community. Accordingly, impacts would be *similar* under both scenarios.

Under Alternative B, development would occur throughout the EIR Study Area under the proposed 2040 General Plan. Such development, but with greater infill opportunities, would be the same as under the proposed project and therefore implementation of either development scenario would not conflict with any applicable land use plan adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect and impacts would be ***similar*** when compared to the proposed project.

5.5.2.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

As described in Chapter 4.12, *Mineral Resources*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would not result in any significant impacts related to mineral resources.

Under Alternative B, new development would be guided by the proposed new and modified 2040 General Plan 2040 goals, policies, and actions to protect mineral resources. This includes requiring the City to preserve regionally significant mineral resources, manage mineral resource extraction to ensure the fewest possible environmental impacts, establish guidelines for new or expanded mining operations, ensure compatible land use on lands containing important mineral resources, reclaim former mining sites to adopt for alternative land uses, and establish and maintain and Urban Growth Boundary to protect agricultural and open space land uses.

However, because the same development would occur under the Alternative B scenario, but in more compact lay out that could reduce the potential to disturb mineral resources or mineral resource recovery

sites, the potential to impact these resources would be *less* when compared to the proposed project. Overall, Alternative B would have ***fewer*** impacts to mineral resources when compared to the proposed project.

5.5.2.13 NOISE

As described in Chapter 4.13, *Noise*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts related to generation of noise in exceedance of standards, despite implementation of proposed 2040 General Plan Policy HS-8.7.

Future development allowed under the proposed project would be subject to the standards of the HMC as well as goals, policies, and actions proposed in 2040 General Plan. As specific uses are proposed for particular sites, project-level design, permitting, and/or environmental review would serve to ensure that individual uses would comply with the noise regulations. Future development under Alternative B would also be subject to these applicable standards. Impacts would be *similar* under both scenarios in this regard.

Alternative B would result in more intense development opportunities, but would not increase overall development potential, which would result in the same construction but *less* VMT. Because construction is temporary, the reduced VMT from Alterative B would result in *less* noise from the operational phase and ***fewer*** noise impacts under Alternative B when compared to the proposed project.

5.5.2.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

As described in Chapter 4.14, *Population and Housing*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would not result in any significant impacts related to population and housing.

As described in Chapter 4.14, implementation of the proposed project would exceed current regional projections. However, implementation of the proposed project was found to have a less-than-significant impact due to the focus on infill development, which is in alignment with the regional planning framework of the 2045 AMBAG MTP/SCS. Further, the proposed project is the overriding policy document in the EIR Study Area which plans for population growth that is reasonably foreseeable through 2040.

Alternative B would result in the same population and housing, and jobs as the proposed project; thus, the regional projections would be the same as the proposed project. Alternative B would include the updated policy framework of the proposed project, which ensures adequate planning occurs to accommodate the future population increase and future development. Therefore, impacts under Alternative B would be *similar* to those under the proposed project.

Alternative B would allow for same level of residential and nonresidential development in the EIR Study Area through 2040. Alternative B would result in the same level of housing as the proposed project and as such, would not require replacement housing outside the EIR Study Area. Therefore, impacts under Alternative B would be *similar* to those of the proposed project.

In summary, while Alternative B would result in a different mix of development potential, impacts related to population and housing would be *similar* when compared to the proposed project.

5.5.2.15 PUBLIC SERVICES AND RECREATION

As described in Chapter 4.15, *Public Services and Recreation*, of this Draft EIR, impacts under the proposed project to fire protection services, police services, parks, schools, and libraries were found to be less than significant. No mitigation measures are required.

Alternative B would result in the same new residents and jobs in the EIR Study Area as the proposed project, and therefore, would result in the *same* demand on the public service providers that serve the EIR Study Area. Potential future development under Alternative B would be required to comply with all existing City regulations adopted to ensure that development pays its fair share of the cost of delivering services, providing park space and libraries, while payment of property taxes would ensure that future development pays its fair share towards schools. Overall, due to the same level of growth, when compared to the proposed project, impacts under Alternative B would be the *same* than those of the proposed project.

5.5.2.16 TRANSPORTATION

As described in Chapter 4.16, *Transportation*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts related to VMT generation of the proposed project exceeding the City's draft thresholds, despite implementation of new 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions that require the reduction of VMT. This significant and unavoidable impact is only related to the programmatic nature of the proposed project that precludes the availability of mitigation measures.

The proposed project would focus potential future development in existing urban areas. As such, the VMT generated by potential future development would be lower than if development were proposed in areas not served by public transportation and a network of sidewalks and bicycle facilities. The proposed project also includes new 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions that expand upon the current 2005 General Plan and to ensure the transportation system in the EIR Study Area is multi-modal and designed to increase bicycle and pedestrian access and safety. For example, new policies require the City to increase mode shares for sustainable travel to reduce GHG emissions, apply complete streets standards to future projects in the public rights-of-way, actively participate in planning for future rail service in Hollister, promote multimodal safety, create and maintain pedestrian- and bike-friendly environment through design and improvements to facilities, and implement transportation demand management requirements. New actions requires the City to adopt a citywide Complete Streets Plan, Pedestrian Master Plan, and Bicycle Master Plan and increase awareness of existing pedestrian and bicycle trails and routes. Alternative B would realize the new and expanded 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and actions.

Impacts related to hazards from design features, emergency access, and conflicting with adopted plans or decrease performance standards, were found to be less than significant under the proposed project.

Alternative B would include the new mix of land uses that increase density to reduce VMT, and would have greater infill opportunities to promote and increase walking, bicycling, and transit opportunities. As a

result of implementation of Alternative B result *fewer* VMT impacts when compared to the proposed project.

Impacts to bicycles and pedestrians would be the *same* under Alternative B when compared to the proposed project since the proposed project's improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities, would also be implemented.

Alternative B would include the multi-modal circulation policies and actions that are included in the proposed project and the same level of development, but with more compact infill, would be likely to result in *fewer* and shorter vehicle trips. Overall, transportation impacts in the EIR Study Area under Alternative B would be ***fewer*** when compared to the proposed project.

5.5.2.17 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

As described in Chapter 4.17, *Utilities and Service Systems*, of this Draft EIR, impacts to water supply, sanitary wastewater, stormwater infrastructure, and solid waste under the proposed project were found to be less than significant with the compliance of all applicable regulations. No mitigation measures are required.

Since Alternative B would result in the same level of development potential, and thus, the same water demand, wastewater and solid waste generation, impacts under Alternative B within the urbanized footprint of Hollister would be the same when compared to the proposed project. Therefore, impacts to water supplies would be ***similar*** when compared to the proposed project.

5.5.2.18 WILDFIRE

Chapter 4.18, *Wildfire*, of this Draft EIR determined that, due to compliance with applicable local, regional, and state regulations, the proposed project would not impair the implementation of an emergency response or emergency evacuation plan. Additionally, potential future development as a result of the proposed project would not be in an area that would expose persons to wildfire or wildfire pollutants, nor would the project expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides. Finally, the proposed project would not result in the installation or maintenance of any infrastructure that could exacerbate fire risk or result in impacts to the environment.

Alternative B would result in higher-density development that would be in the same locations as in the proposed project; would adopt the same goals, policies, and actions to reduce the risk of wildfire; and would reduce development potential outside of the city limit. Therefore, implementation of Alternative B would have ***fewer*** impacts when compared to the proposed project.

5.5.3 RELATIONSHIP OF THE ALTERNATIVES TO THE OBJECTIVES

As listed in Section 5.2, *Project Objectives,* the primary purposes of the proposed project are to plan for the growth and conservation of Hollister over a 20-year time horizon and to achieve a more equitable, sustainable, and prosperous future for all residents. This requires extending the buildout horizon to year 2040 and updating goals, policies, and actions so that they meet current State requirements and

community priorities. The objectives also include how to enhance Downtown as a vibrant center, build a diversified job base, provide sites for housing and mixed-use development, improve environmental justice and community health, and prepare for adaptation and resilience to a changing climate. As listed above, the City has identified seven key initiatives, which build upon the framework of the vision and goals of the existing 2005 General Plan and reflect the community's desires for the future of Hollister. Because Alternative B would increase opportunities for infill development to support the reduction of VMT and GHG emissions, and also reduce the amount of qualifying agricultural lands that could be converted to non-agricultural uses, Alternative B would meet all of the project objectives.

5.6 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

In addition to the discussion and comparison of impacts of the proposed project and the alternatives, Section 15126.6 of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an "environmentally superior" alternative be selected and the reasons for such a selection be disclosed. In general, the environmentally superior alternative is the alternative to the proposed project that would be expected to generate the least number of significant impacts. Identification of the environmentally superior alternative is an informational procedure and the alternative to the proposed project selected may not be the alternative to the proposed project that best meets the goals or needs of Hollister. Because CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(c) requires an evaluation of a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed project, the proposed project under consideration cannot be identified as the environmentally superior alternative. Additionally, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(2), if the environmentally superior alternative is the "No Project" alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives.

As shown in Table 5-2, Alternative B would, in comparison to the proposed project, result in reduced environmental impacts related to agricultural resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural and tribal cultural resources, GHG emissions, noise, transportation, and wildfire. Therefore, as shown in Table 5-2, Alternative B would be the environmentally superior alternative.

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6. CEQA Required Assessment

This chapter provides an overview of the impacts of the proposed project based on the analyses presented in Chapter 4, *Environmental Analysis*, and its subchapters 4.1 through 4.18 of this Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The topics covered in this chapter include impacts found not to be significant, growth-inducing impacts, and significant irreversible changes to the environment. For a more detailed analysis of the proposed project's environmental effects and the proposed mitigation measures to minimize significant impacts, see Chapter 4, *Environmental Analysis*, and its subchapters 4.1 through 4.18 of this Draft EIR.

6.1 IMPACTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15128, *Effects Not Found to Be Significant*, allows environmental issues to be "scoped out" if there is no likelihood of a significant impact, and they do not need to be analyzed further in the EIR. This section explains the reasoning for the determination that the proposed project would have no effect within an entire environmental topic or under specific criteria within an environmental topic. As shown herein, there would be no impacts to some of the criteria for aesthetics, forestry resources, and biological resources. These specific criteria are identified in the corresponding subsection of this chapter and are not required to be evaluated in this EIR.

6.1.1 AESTHETICS

Impacts to aesthetics are evaluated in Chapter 4.1. The following standard of significance is not evaluated in this EIR:

- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State Scenic Highway.

This standard has been screened out from further evaluation because Caltrans has not designated any highway within Hollister or the EIR Study Area as a State Scenic Highway. The nearest officially designated State Scenic Highway is in Merced County to the northeast and Monterey County to the southwest, neither of which are visible from the EIR Study Area due to the natural topography and distance.[1] Therefore, no impact would occur regarding substantial damage to scenic resources within a State Scenic Highway, and this issue is not discussed further in this EIR.

[1] California Department of Transportation, 2022, California Scenic Highway Mapping System, https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aacaa, accessed January 30, 2022.

6.1.2 FORESTRY RESOURCES

The following standards of significance are not evaluated in this EIR:

- Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forestland (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)).
- Involve other changes in the existing environment. which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

This EIR does not analyze impacts to forestry resources because the Hollister Municipal Code (HMC) does not contain a zoning district for forest land or timberland production. Further, there are no state or national forest lands in the EIR Study Area. Consequently, there would be no impacts to forestry resources, and this topic is not discussed further in this EIR.

6.1.3 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Impacts to biological resources are evaluated in Chapter 4.4. The following standard of significance is not evaluated in this EIR:

- Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan; Natural Community Conservation Plan; or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.

Because the EIR Study Area is outside of the area covered by the *Merced County Natural Community Conservation Plan*, and the San Benito County multi-species and multi-phased county-wide joint Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) called the San Benito County Conservation Plan (SBCCP) was initiated in July 2021,[2] the proposed project would not conflict with the provisions of an adopted habitat conservation plan or other approved conservation plan. Should the SBCCP become an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan over the course of the proposed buildout horizon (2040) of the Hollister General Plan, potential future projects would be required to be consistent with the adopted plan. Accordingly, this issue is not discussed further in this EIR.

6.2 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

Section 15126.2(b) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that "direct and indirect significant effects of the project on the environment shall be clearly identified and described, giving due consideration to both the short- and long-term effects." Chapter 2, *Executive Summary*, contains Table 2-1, *Summary of Significant Impacts, Mitigating Policies, and Mitigation Measures,* which summarizes the significant impacts, mitigation measures, and levels of significance with and without mitigation. While actions from the proposed project and mitigation measures, where feasible, would reduce the level of impact to less than

[2] San Benito County website, San Benito County Conservation Plan (SBCCP) General Information, https://www.cosb.us/departments/resource-management-agency/planning-and-land-use-division/san-benito-county-conservation-plan-sbccp/san-benito-county-conservation-plan-sbccp-general-information, accessed on May 15, 2023.

significant, the following impacts would remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation measures are applied. The identification of these program-level impact does not preclude the finding of less-than-

significant impacts for subsequent projects analyzed at the project level that do not exceed the thresholds of significance. As detailed in Chapter 4.2, *Agricultural Resources*, Chapter 4.3, *Air Quality*, Chapter 4.13, *Noise*, and Chapter 4.16, *Transportation*, of this Draft EIR, environmental impacts associated with the proposed project were found to be significant and unavoidable, as listed:

- Impact AG-1: Implementation of the proposed project would result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland land to nonagricultural land uses.
- Impact AG-2: Implementation of the proposed project would result in the loss of agricultural land under the Williamson Act.
- Impact AG-4: The proposed project, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, could result in a significant cumulative impact with respect to the conversion of farmland of concern under CEQA and Williamson Act properties to nonagricultural uses.
- Impact AIR-1: Implementation of the proposed project would result in the generation of substantial operational (long-term) criteria air pollutant emissions that would exceed Monterey Bay Air Resources District's (MBARD's) regional significance threshold for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) and would; therefore, not be considered consistent with the existing Air Quality Management Plan.
- Impact AIR-2a: Operation of development projects that could occur from implementation of the project would generate emissions that would exceed Monterey Bay Air Resources District's (MBARD's) regional significance thresholds for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), and Carbon Monoxide (CO).
- Impact AIR-2b: Construction activities that could occur over the buildout horizon of the proposed 2040 General Plan would generate substantial short-term criteria air pollutant emissions that would exceed Monterey Bay Air Resources District's (MBARD's) regional significance thresholds and cumulative contribute to the nonattainment designations of the North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB).
- Impact AIR-3a: Implementation of the proposed project could expose air quality sensitive receptors to substantial toxic air contaminant concentrations from non-permitted sources during operation.
- Impact AIR-3b: Construction activities associated with potential future development could expose nearby air quality sensitive receptors to substantial concentrations of toxic air contaminants during construction.
- Impact AIR-5: The emissions that could occur over the buildout horizon of the proposed 2040 General Plan could generate a substantial increase in emissions that exceeds the Monterey Bay Air Resources District's (MBARD's) significance thresholds and cumulatively contribute to the nonattainment designations and health risk in the North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB).
- Impact NOI-1.1: Construction activities associated with potential future development could expose sensitive receptors in close proximity to a construction site to excessive noise from construction equipment.

- Impact NOI-1.2: Operational vehicle traffic noise increases would exceed the City's significance threshold with implementation of the proposed project.
- Impact TRANS-2: Implementation of the proposed project would result in a significant vehicle miles traveled (VMT) impact for VMT per Capita (Residential), VMT per Employee (Office), VMT per Employee (Other), and Retail VMT over 50,000 square feet, due to forecasted land use growth through 2040, based on a comparison of the VMT rate increment for VMT to the corresponding average baseline rates for the San Benito County region.
- Impact TRANS-5: Implementation of the proposed project would cumulatively contribute to regional vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

6.3 GROWTH INDUCEMENT

Section 15126.2(d) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR discuss the ways in which a proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Typical growth-inducing factors might be the extension of urban services or transportation infrastructure to a previously unserved or under-served area, or the removal of major barriers to development.

This section evaluates the proposed project's potential to create such growth inducements. As CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d) requires, "[it] must not be assumed that growth in an area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment." In other words, negative impacts associated with growth inducement occur only where the projected growth would cause significant adverse environmental impacts.

Growth-inducing impacts fall into two general categories: direct or indirect. Direct growth-inducing impacts are generally associated with providing urban services to an undeveloped area. Indirect, or secondary growth-inducing impacts consist of growth induced in the region by additional demands for housing, goods, and services associated with the population increase caused by, or attracted to, a new project.

As discussed in detail in Chapter 4.14, *Population and Housing*, of this Draft EIR, the General Plan is the policy document that plans ahead to accommodate the amount of reasonably foreseeable growth given past growth trends and the ability of existing services and infrastructure to support future growth. Therefore, the proposed 2040 General Plan would not directly induce growth, but rather is a response to growth that is likely to occur whether the proposed General Plan is adopted or not. Because the proposed General Plan also includes recommendations for future roadway and infrastructure extension, as it is required to do by state law, it has the potential to indirectly induce growth. However, the proposed General Plan itself is the City's effort to adequately plan for this growth.

Additionally, this additional growth would likely occur incrementally over a period of approximately 20 years and a policy framework is in place to ensure adequate planning occurs to accommodate it regardless of the development timeline. The proposed project results in mixed-use development and

employment centers and implements energy and water conservation requirements related to existing and new development, thereby minimizing consumption of non-renewable resources to the extent practicable.

6.3.1 DIRECT IMPACTS

The proposed project is a plan-level document and does not propose any specific development; however, implementation of the proposed project would induce growth by increasing the development potential in the EIR Study Area, as shown in Table 3-3, *Proposed 2040 Buildout Projections in the EIR Study Area*, in Chapter 3, *Project Description*. As shown in Table 3-3, the 2040 forecast for the EIR Study Area is approximately 60,535 total population, 17,640 housing units, 16,985 households, and 20,025 jobs. State law requires the City to promote the production of housing to meet its fair share of the regional housing needs distribution made by AMBAG. While the City provides adequate sites to meet its fair-share housing obligations, the additional housing capacity provided by the project would meet the additional demand generated by new job growth. In addition, the proposed 2040 General Plan would result in regional benefits by promoting growth that encourages less automobile dependence, which could have associated air quality and GHG benefits. Encouraging infill growth in designated areas would help to reduce development pressures on lands outside the City Limits.

6.3.2 INDIRECT IMPACTS

The proposed project could be considered growth inducing because it includes policies and actions that encourage new growth in the urbanized areas of Hollister. Development in these areas would consist of infill development on underutilized sites, sites that have been previously developed, and that are vacant and have been determined to be suitable for development. However, infrastructure is largely in place and growth would be required to comply with the City's General Plan, zoning regulations, and standards for public services and utilities; secondary effects associated with this growth do not represent a new significant environmental impact that has not already been addressed in the individual resource chapters of this EIR. Additional population and employment growth would likely occur incrementally over a period of approximately 20 years and would be consistent with the regional planning objectives established for the San Benito County region.

6.4 SIGNIFICANT AND IRREVERSIBLE CHANGES

Section 15126.2(c) of the CEQA Guidelines requires an EIR to discuss the extent to which the proposed project would commit nonrenewable resources to uses that future generations would probably be unable to reverse. The three CEQA-required categories of irreversible changes are discussed herein.

6.4.1 CHANGES IN LAND USE THAT COMMIT FUTURE GENERATIONS

As described in detail in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project generally maintains the land use pattern of the existing General Plan. Development is encouraged in existing urban areas, and new development is required to be contiguous with the existing City Limits. The current

General Plan provided development allocations for buildout of the city through the year 2023. Some future development under the proposed project would be on land that is generally urbanized or on infill sites and sites in developed areas that are underutilized. However, some potential future development may occur on vacant non-urban sites that are already designated for development. Once future development under the proposed project occurs, it would not be feasible to return the developed land to its existing (pre-project) condition. Therefore, there is potential that some of the development allowed under the proposed project would lead to irreversible changes in land use.

6.4.2 IRREVERSIBLE DAMAGE FROM ENVIRONMENTAL ACCIDENTS

Irreversible changes to the physical environment could occur from accidental release of hazardous materials associated with development activities; however, compliance with the applicable regulations and General Plan goals, policies, and programs, as discussed in Chapter 4.9, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, irreversible damage is not expected to result from the adoption and implementation of the proposed project.

6.4.3 LARGE COMMITMENT OF NONRENEWABLE RESOURCES

Implementation of development allowed under the proposed project would result in the commitment of limited, renewable resources, such as lumber and water. In addition, development allowed by the proposed project would irretrievably commit nonrenewable resources for the construction of buildings, infrastructure, and roadway improvements. These nonrenewable resources include mined minerals, such as sand, gravel, steel, lead, copper, and other metals. Future buildout under implementation of the proposed project also represents a long-term commitment to the consumption of fossil fuels, natural gas, and gasoline. Increased energy demands would be used for construction, lighting, heating, and cooling of residences, and transportation of people within, to, and from Hollister. However, as shown in Chapter 4.6, *Energy,* and in Section 4.17.1, *Water*, and Section 4.17.4, *Solid Waste*, of Chapter 4.17, *Utilities and Service Systems*, of this Draft EIR, several regulatory measures and General Plan goals, policies, and actions encourage energy and water conservation, alternative energy use, waste reduction, alternatives to automotive transportation, and green building. Future development, as a result of increased development allocation under the proposed project, would be required to comply with all applicable building and design requirements, including those set forth in Title 24 relating to energy conservation. In compliance with CALGreen, the State's Green Building Standards Code, future development would be required to reduce water consumption by 20 percent, divert 50 percent of construction waste from landfills, and install low pollutant-emitting materials. Therefore, while the construction and operation of future development, as a result of increased development allocations under the proposed project, would involve the use of nonrenewable resources, compliance with applicable standards and regulations and implementation of General Plan goals, policies, and actions would reduce the use of nonrenewable resources to the maximum extent practicable; therefore, the proposed project would not represent a large commitment of nonrenewable resources in comparison to a business-as-usual situation.

7. Organizations and Persons Consulted

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared by the contributors listed herein and includes content and information provided by individuals with the lead agency, other agencies, service providers, consultants, and other contributors.

7.1 LEAD AGENCY

City of Hollister

David Mirrione ..... Acting City Manager
Christine Hopper ..... Development Services Director
Mary F. Lerner ..... City Attorney
Bob Martin Del Campo..... Fire Chief
Carlos Reynoso ..... Chief of Police
Eva Kelly ..... Interim Planning Manager
Ambur Cameron .....Senior Planner

7.2 PERSONS CONSULTED

Hollister Unified School District

Diego Ochoa.. .....Superintendent
Gabriel Moulaison ..... Assistant Superintendent, Business Services

San Benito High School District

Shawn Tennenbaum.....Superintendent
Carol Heiderich..... Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent

San Benito County Free Library

Nora Conte .....County Librarian

Native American Heritage Commission

Nancy Gonzalez-Lopez ..... Cultural Resources Analyst

Native American Tribes

Valentin Lopez .....Chairperson, Amah Mutsun Tribal Band
Irenne Zwierlein ..... Chairperson, Amah Mutsun Tribal Band of Mission San Juan Bautista
Ann Marie Sayers ..... Chairperson, Indian Canyon Mutsun Band of Costanoan
Karen White.....Chairperson, Xolon-Salinan Tribe

7.3 CONSULTANTS

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Environmental Collaborative: Biological Resources

James Martin.....Principal

Kimley Horn: Transportation

Frederik Venter..... Vice President

8. Common Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACRONYM/ ABBREVIATION	MEANING
AB	Assembly Bill
ACE	Affordable Clean Energy
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AFY	acre-feet per year
AIA	Airport Influence Area
ALPP	Agricultural Lands Preservation Program
ALUC	Airport Land Use Commission
ALUCP	*Hollister Municipal Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan*
AMBAG	Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments
APCD	air pollution control district
APN	Assessor's Parcel Number
AQMD	air quality management district
AWIA	America's Water Infrastructure Act
BERD	California Built Environment Resources Directory
BMP	best management practice
BTA	Bicycle Transportation Account
CAFÉ	Corporate Average Fuel Economy
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CalARP	California Accidental Release Prevention
CalEPA	California Environmental Protection Agency
CALGreen	California Green Building Standards
California Register	California Register of Historic Resources
CalOSHA	California Division of Occupational Safety and Health
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CAP	climate action plan
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CBC	California Building Code
CCCE	Central Coast Community Energy
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEC	California Energy Commission
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act

COMMON ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACRONYM/ ABBREVIATION	MEANING
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CFC	California Fire Code
CFGC	California Fish and Game Code
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CGP	Construction General Permit
CHP	California Highway Patrol
CIP	capital improvement project
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO_2	carbon dioxide
CO_2e	carbon dioxide equivalent
COG	Council of Governments
CPUC	California Public Utilities Commission
CSA	County Service Area
CSCP	construction stormwater control plan
CVP	Central Valley Project
CWA	Clean Water Act
CWPP	Community Wildfire Protection Plan
DHS	California Department of Health Services
DMA 2000	Federal Disaster Mitigation Action of 2000
DPR	California Department of Pesticide Regulation
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substance Control
DWR	Department of Water Resources
DWRF	domestic wastewater recycling facility
DWTP	domestic wastewater treatment plant
EAP	emergency action plan
EIR	environmental impact report
EO	Executive Order
EOP	emergency operations plan
EPCRA	Emergency Planning Community Right-to-Know Act
FAR	floor-area ratio
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FESA	federal Endangered Species Act
FHSZ	fire hazard severity zone
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FMMP	Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
GHG	greenhouse gas
gpcd	gallons per capita per day
gpd	gallons per day

COMMON ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACRONYM/ ABBREVIATION	MEANING
GSA	groundwater sustainability agency
GSP	groundwater sustainability plan
GWP	global warming potential
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan
HFD	Hollister Fire Department
HMA	Hollister Municipal Airport
HMC	Hollister Municipal Code
Hollister USA	Hollister Urban Service Area
HVAC	heating, ventilation, and air conditioning
IDDE	Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IWMA	integrated waste management agency
IWTP	industrial wastewater treatment plant
kW	kilowatt
kWh	kilowatt-hours
LAFCO	Local Agency Formation Commission
Land Trust	San Benito Agricultural Land Trust
LCFS	Low Carbon Fuel Standard
LDIGR	Land Development and Intergovernmental Review
LID	low-impact development
LOS	level of service
LRA	local responsibility area
LTA	local transportation authority
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
mgd	million gallons per day
MJHMP	Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan
MLD	Most Likely Descendant
MMRP	mitigation monitoring and reporting program
$MMTCO_2e$	million metric tons of CO_2e
MOU	memorandum of understanding
MPG	miles per gallon
MPO	metropolitan planning organization
MRZ	Mineral Resource Zone
MS4	municipal separate storm sewer system
$MTCO_2e$	metric ton of CO_2e
MTP	metropolitan transportation plan
MWELO	Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
National Register	National Register of Historic Places
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program

COMMON ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACRONYM/ ABBREVIATION	MEANING
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOP	notice of preparation
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
O&M	operation and maintenance
OEHHA	Office of Environmental Health and Hazard Assessment
OPR	Governor's Office of Planning and Research
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PFMP	park facility master plan
PG&E	Pacific Gas and Electric Company
ppd	pounds per day
PRC	Public Resources Code
PRD	permit registration documents
PVWMA	Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RHNA	Regional Housing Needs Allocation
RPS	renewables portfolio standard
RTAC	regional transportation advisory committee
RTDM	region travel demand model
RTP	regional transportation plan
RTPA	regional transportation planning agencies
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SAFE	Safer Affordable Fuel Efficient
SARA	Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act
SB	Senate Bill
SBCC	San Benito County Code
SBCOG	Council of San Benito County Governments
SBCWD	San Benito County Water District
SCH	State Clearinghouse
SCP	Stormwater Control Plan
SCS	sustainable communities strategy
SEMS	Standard Emergency Management System
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
SIN	Stormwater Information Network
SJHA	San Justo Homestead Association
SJVAPCD	San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District
SMARTS	Stormwater Multiple Application and Report Tracking System
SMGB	California State Mining and Geology Board
SMP	Storm Drain Master Plan

COMMON ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACRONYM/ ABBREVIATION	MEANING
SOI	sphere of influence
SR	State Route
SRA	state responsibility area
SSCWD	Sunnyslope County Water District
SSMP	sewer system management plan
SSO	sanitary sewer overflow
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
SWRP	stormwater resource plan
TCR	tribal cultural resource
TISG	*Vehicle Miles Traveled-Focused Transportation Impact Study Guide*
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
UPRR	Union Pacific Railroad
USA	urban service area (*see* Hollister USA)
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USDOT	United States Department of Transportation
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFP	Unit Strategic Fire Plan
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
UWMP	urban water management plan
Valley Water	Santa Clara Valley Water District
VMT	vehicle miles traveled
VTA	Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
WCR	well completion report
WDR	waste discharge requirement
WRA	Water Resources Association (of San Benito County)
WSA	water supply assessment
WSCP	water shortage contingency plan
WTP	water treatment plan
WUI	wildland-urban interface
WWMP	(Hollister Urban Area) Water and Wastewater Master Plan
ZE	zero-emissions
ZNE	zero net energy

COMMON ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

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CALIFORNIA

City of HOLLISTER
CALIFORNIA

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