

Exhibit D

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MARCH 20, 2026

Letter 1

VIA EMAIL: ALAMEDAJ@COUNTYOFMONTEREY.GOV

COUNTY OF MONTEREY
HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
ATTN: JOSEPH ALAMEDA
1441 SCHILLING PL SOUTH 2ND FLOOR
SALINAS, CA 93901

Dear Mr. Alameda:

INITIAL STUDY AND MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR THE CARMEL RIO ROAD LLC PROJECT, SCH# 2026020910

The Department of Conservation's (Department) Division of Land Resource Protection (Division) has reviewed the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Carmel Rio Road LLC Project (Project).

The Division monitors and maps farmland conversion on a statewide basis, provides technical assistance regarding the Williamson Act, and administers various agricultural land conservation programs. Public Resources Code, section 614, subdivision (b) authorizes the Department to provide soil conservation advisory services to local governments, including review of CEQA documents.

Protection of the state's agricultural land resources is part of the Department's mission and central to many of its programs. The CEQA process gives the Department an opportunity to acknowledge the value of the resource, identify areas of Department interest, and offer information on how to assess potential impacts or mitigation opportunities.

The Department respects local decision-making by informing the CEQA process and is not taking a position or providing legal or policy interpretation.

We offer the following comments for consideration with respect to the project's potential impacts on agricultural land and resources within the Department's purview.

PROJECT ATTRIBUTES

The project would involve the demolition of the existing residence and detached garage in the southern portion of the site, and the subdivision of the 12.5-acre site, currently comprised of four parcels, into 60 lots to develop 74 new residential units. The Project site contains Prime Farmland as designated by DOC's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program.

1.1

PROJECT CONSIDERATIONS

The conversion of agricultural land represents a permanent reduction and impact to California's agricultural land resources. The Department generally advises discussion of the following in any environmental review for the loss or conversion of agricultural land:

- Type, amount, and location of farmland conversion resulting directly and indirectly from implementation of the proposed project.
- Impacts on any current and future agricultural operations in the vicinity; e.g., land-use conflicts, increases in land values and taxes, loss of agricultural support infrastructure such as processing facilities, etc.
- Incremental impacts leading to cumulative impacts on agricultural land. This would include impacts from the proposed project, as well as impacts from past, current, and likely future projects.
- Implementation of any City or County Agricultural Mitigation Plans, Programs, or Policies.
- Proposed mitigation measures for impacted agricultural lands within the proposed project area.

1.2

MITIGATING AGRICULTURAL LAND LOSS OR CONVERSION

Consistent with CEQA Guidelines, the Department advises that the environmental review address mitigation for the loss or conversion of agricultural land. An agricultural conservation easement is one potential method for mitigating loss or conversion of agricultural land. (See Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15370 [mitigation includes "compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments, including through permanent protection of such resources in the form of conservation easements."]; see also *King and Gardiner Farms, LLC v. County of Kern* (2020) 45 Cal.App.5th 814.)

Mitigation through agricultural conservation easements can take at least two forms: the outright purchase of easements or the donation of mitigation fees to a local, regional, or statewide organization or agency whose purpose includes the acquisition and stewardship of agricultural easements. The conversion of agricultural land may be viewed as an impact of at least regional significance. Hence, the search for replacement lands may not need to be limited strictly to lands within the project's surrounding area. A helpful source for regional and statewide agricultural mitigation banks is the California Council of Land Trusts. They provide helpful insight into farmland mitigation policies and implementation strategies, including a guidebook with model policies and a model local ordinance. The guidebook can be found at:

1.3

[California Council of Land Trusts](#)

Of course, the use of conservation easements is only one form of mitigation, and the Department urges consideration of any other feasible measures necessary to mitigate project impacts.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Carmel Rio Road LLC Project. Please provide the Department with notices of any future hearing dates as well as any staff reports pertaining to this project. If you have any questions regarding our comments, please contact Farl Grundy, Associate Environmental Planner via email at Farl.Grundy@conservation.ca.gov.

1.4

Sincerely,

Monique Wilber

Monique Wilber

Conservation Program Support Supervisor

March 20, 2026

County of Monterey
Housing & Community Development
Attn: Joseph Alameda
1441 Schilling Pl South 2nd Floor
Salinas, CA 93901
Submitted via email: CEQAcomments@countyofmonterey.gov

Re: Carmel Rio Road LLC; File Number PLN240105-DEP

Dear Mr. Alameda,

Thank you for providing the Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD) with the opportunity to comment on the Notice of Intent (NOI) to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for Carmel Rio Road LLC (File Number PLN240105-DEP). MBARD has reviewed this NOI and has the following comments:

CEQA Guidelines

MBARD recommends the County of Monterey continue to utilize the [MBARD CEQA Air Quality Guidelines](#) as a resource for preparing the MND.

North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB) Attainment Status

The North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB) is currently in attainment with California's standards for ozone. The NCCAB has been in attainment since February 2021 for the State's 8-hour ozone threshold standard of 0.070 ppm. [Additional information](#) and [maps of State and Federal Area Designations](#) are available on California Air Resources Board's (CARB) website.

Rule 402 Nuisances

Fugitive dust should be mitigated during the construction phase of the project. Compliance with MBARD Rule 402 Nuisance and CEQA Guidelines Section 8.2 can be maintained by implementing feasible Mitigation Measures, such as:

- 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 mph).
- Cover all trucks hauling dirt, sand, or loose materials.
- Cover inactive storage piles.
- Maintain at least 2'0" of freeboard in haul trucks.
- Apply chemical soil stabilizers on inactive construction areas (disturbed lands within construction projects that are unused for at least four consecutive days).

2.1

2.2

Rule 424 National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP)

Rule 424 states, “All suspect building materials, in each building, that will be disturbed by planned demolition or renovation activities shall be sampled and analyzed for asbestos using the method specified in Appendix E, Subpart E, 40 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 763, Section 1 (Polarized Light Microscopy) or assumed to be asbestos containing. Suspect materials include, friable asbestos-containing material, Category I nonfriable asbestos-containing material, Category II nonfriable asbestos-containing material or any other material that may contain asbestos, based on past manufacturing practices or use”. Rule 424 includes notifications, project surveys, removal, and disposal of regulated asbestos containing materials (RACM) as well as adherence to the renovation and demolition procedures.

2.3

Rule 424 could also apply if old underground piping or other asbestos containing construction materials are encountered during trenching activities. Proper procedures must be utilized when development or other construction activities encounter any active or abandoned asbestos cement pipe (ACP) or any other asbestos-containing subsurface infrastructure.

For assistance regarding this regulation, please contact Bronwyn Nielson, Supervising Air Quality Compliance Inspector, at (831) 718-8024 bnielson@mbard.org for more information regarding this rule.

Rule 439 Building Removals

Rule 439 applies to all building removals, or “the deconstruction or demolition of any building” by either manual or mechanical means. In addition to the prohibition of visible emissions during building removals, the following work practice standards are required: structures must be sufficiently wet prior to removal and wetting must continue as necessary, demolish structures inward toward building pads, and cease removal activities when peak wind speed exceeds 15 miles per hour.

2.4

For assistance regarding this regulation, please contact Bronwyn Nielson, Supervising Air Quality Compliance Inspector, at (831) 718-8024 bnielson@mbard.org for more information regarding this rule.

Construction Emissions and Permits

MBARD recommends using cleaner than required construction equipment that conforms to CARB’s Tier 3 or Tier 4 emission standards. MBARD also recommends, whenever feasible, construction equipment use alternative fuels such as compressed natural gas (CNG), propane, electricity, or biodiesel to reduce diesel exhaust emissions.

2.5

If a generator, boiler, or other stationary sources of air pollutants are needed to support the construction process or will be installed for use in the operation of the project, a permit may be required. Any stationary piston-type internal combustion engine of greater than or equal to 50 brake horsepower (bhp) requires a permit. Please contact MBARD’s Engineering Division at (831) 647-9411 if there are any questions regarding the permitting process.

Wood Burning Devices

MBARD recommends for residential structures with proposed fireplaces to install alternatives to open hearth fireplaces such as EPA certified wood-burning inserts/stoves unless the fireplace meets or exceeds EPA Phase 2 Qualified emission limits.

MBARD appreciates the opportunity to comment on the NOI to adopt a MND for the County of Monterey. Please let me know if you have any questions. I may be reached at (831) 718-8023 or tbell@mbard.org.

Regards,



Tyrone Bell
Air Quality Planner II

cc: Richard A. Stedman, Air Pollution Control Officer
David Frisbey, Planning and Air Monitoring Manager
Shawn Boyle, Planning and Air Monitoring Supervisor

2.6



March 25, 2026

Letter 3

File No.: 730.15998

Joseph Alameda
Assistant Planner
County of Monterey Housing & Community Development
County of Monterey
1441 Schilling Place South 2nd Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Re: SCH # 2026020910

Dear Mr. Alameda,

The California Highway Patrol (CHP), Monterey Area, received the "Notice of Completion & Environmental Document Transmittal," of an Environmental Impact Report for the Carmel Rio Road LLC, State Clearinghouse (SCH) number 2026020910. I have reviewed the proposed project.

3.1

The CHP's interest in commenting surrounds our concern for public safety. State Route 1 (SR-1) serves as a major vehicular artery connecting several coastal communities and serves as a primary route for both commuters and tourists. Collectively, the project's proposed production of 74 new residential units, would without question result in an increase in volume of vehicular travel, which would have a negative impact on traffic safety on SR-1 and the roadways surrounding the project's vicinity. The Department's concerns with potential impact of this project include the following:

- Increased incidents requiring emergency response during construction.
- Traffic congestion issues near Rio Road and SR-1.
- An additive effect on congestion during peak commute hours, which will result in an increase in crashes and slower first responder response times to emergency incidents.
- Additional enforcement demands.

3.2

If the project moves forward, we are hopeful project operators will diligently establish, monitor, and enforce rules related to vehicle safety as CHP personnel work to ensure compliance with California Vehicle Code provisions.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (831) 770-8000.



Sincerely,

A. E. Elias

A. E. ELIAS, Captain
Commander
Monterey Area



California Department of Transportation

CALTRANS DISTRICT 5
50 HIGUERA STREET | SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401-5415
(805) 549-3101 | FAX (805) 549-3329 TTY 711
www.dot.ca.gov



March 25, 2026

Mon-1-72.778
SCH # 2026020910
PLN240105-DEP

Joseph Alameda, Planner
County of Monterey Housing & Community Development
1441 Schilling PL South 2nd Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Dear Mr. Alameda:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) appreciates the opportunity to review the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Carmel Rio Road (Carmel 1 INV) Project (Project) located at 26500 Val Verde Drive near Carmel. The Project proposes 59 single-family homes and 15 townhomes for a total of 74 residential units. Access to the project is proposed from Rio Road to Val Verde Drive near Carmel. Rio Road connects to State Route 1 (SR 1) approximately a half-mile to the west of Val Verde Drive. Caltrans offers the following comments at this time:

General Comments:

- Caltrans supports local development that is consistent with State planning priorities intended to promote equity, strengthen the economy, protect the environment, and promote public health and safety. We accomplish this by working with local jurisdictions to achieve a shared vision of how the transportation system should and can accommodate interregional and local travel and development.

4.1

Traffic Operations:

- While the TIA report submitted previously does provide analytical results, a summary of results or comments on the intersections on SR 1 should be incorporated in Section 17 (mainly Rio Road and Carmel Valley Road) to enable Caltrans to review the potential impacts and issue further comments, if warranted.
- Please provide an updated Traffic Impact Analysis report as previously requested.

4.2

Transit Planning:

Caltrans appreciates the mitigation strategy of incorporating a transit subsidy for this project. Caltrans encourages the following:

- Please update the *Transportation/Traffic-Transit* section by including Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) Routes 5 and 91 as route services that are in the vicinity of this project.
- Caltrans recommends consultation with MST on improving the transit stops along Carmel Rancho Blvd to improve access, safety, and comfort. While there is no single

4.3

standard bus stop design, improvements such as additional bus shelters (as appropriate) can help support a reduction in VMT by making transit more attractive to existing and future residents in the area.

- Source IX.67 is an outdated CAPCOA source. Please consider using the most recent 2024 handbook from CAPCOA: *Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions, Assessing Climate Vulnerabilities, and Advancing Health and Equity – Designed for Local Governments, Communities, and Project Developers* https://www.caleemod.com/documents/handbook/full_handbook.pdf#page=213
- Please expand on the proposed transit subsidy by including additional details such as the amount per ride or a pass per household, and the length of time the subsidy would be in place.

4.3
cont.

Permits:

- Please be aware that if any work is completed in the State's right-of-way will require an encroachment permit from Caltrans, and must be done to our engineering and environmental standards, and at no cost to the State. The conditions of approval and the requirements for the encroachment permit are issued at the sole discretion of the Permits Office, and nothing in this letter shall be implied as limiting those future conditions and requirements. For more information regarding the encroachment permit process, please visit our Encroachment Permit Website at: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep/applications>.

4.4

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed project. If you have any questions or need further clarification on the items discussed above, please contact me at (805) 835-6555 or email ingrid.mcroberts@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Ingrid McRoberts
Caltrans District 5

Local Development Review Coordinator



Letter 5



State Water Resources Control Board

March 30, 2026

Mr. Joseph Alameda
Monterey County
1441 Schilling Pl. South 2nd Floor
Salinas, CA, 93901

COMMENT LETTER ON THE MONTEREY COUNTY (COUNTY), INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION (ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT) FOR THE CARMEL RIO ROAD, LLC (PROJECT); STATE CLEARINGHOUSE #2026020910

Dear Mr. Joseph Alameda:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Environmental Document for the proposed Project. The State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water (State Water Board, DDW) is responsible for regulating public water systems and issuing water supply permits pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water Act. This Project is within the jurisdiction of the State Water Board, DDW Monterey District.

A public water system, as defined in the California Health and Safety Code (Health & Saf. Code) § 116275 subd. [h], is “a system for the provision of water for human consumption through pipes or other constructed conveyances that has 15 or more service connections or regularly serves an average of 25 individuals daily at least 60 days out of the year.” If a new public water system will be formed by the Project, an application must be submitted, and a permit must be obtained from the DDW Monterey District before water can be provided for human consumption. “Human consumption” means the use of water for drinking, bathing or showering, hand washing, oral hygiene, or cooking, including, but not limited to, preparing food and washing dishes.” Health & Saf. Code § 116275 subd. [e].

Note, Health & Saf. Code § 116527 subd. (b) requires that any person submitting a permit application for a proposed new public water system must first submit a technical report to State Water Board, DDW at least six months before initiating construction of any drinking water-related improvements. The technical report must include an examination of the possibility of connecting to or being annexed by an existing adjacent community water system. Please see the attached What is a Public Water System flyer.

5.1

The State Water Board, DDW, as a responsible agency under the California Environmental Quality Act, has the following comments on the County's Environmental Document:

- Rincon Consultants, Inc (personal communication March 18, 2026) indicated the applicant has been working with the State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Water Rights on "wheeling" the riparian rights to California American Water Company-Monterey (Cal Am -Monterey) and will commit to decommissioning the wells. If plans change and this will not occur, please address the following comments:
 - The Environmental Document proposes three options for providing domestic water:
 - Option A- Domestic water would be provided by Cal Am -Monterey and onsite wells would be abandoned. Under this option, the State Water Board, DDW would not be a responsible agency and no water supply permit or permit amendment would be required.
 - Option B *Project Riparian Rights (Wells) Option 1* The property owner would "wheel" its riparian water rights from three existing on-site wells, the Gamboa Replacement well, Travers well, and the Carmel Presbyterian Church well, to Cal Am -Monterey. Cal Am -Monterey in exchange will provide domestic water through the exiting water main on Val Verde Drive, which would be conveyed to the residences through a system of 8-inch pipelines located within the street right-of-way. If water from the Gambo Replacement well, Travers well, and the Carmel Presbyterian well is provided to the Cal Am -Monterey system, Cal Am-Monterey would need to apply for a water supply permit amendment from the State Water Board, DDW for the addition of new drinking water sources.
 - Option C *Project Riparian Rights (Wells) Option 2* Water would be provided from the Gamboa and Carmel Presbyterian wells and treatment would be installed at the site. This option would create a new public water system. During a previous discussion between the developer and the DDW Monterey District, the developer agreed to not create a new public water system. If the developer plans to create a new water system, they will need to submit a technical report to DDW Monterey District (Health and Saf. Code § 116527 subd. [b]) six months prior to going to construction and obtain approval from the DDW Monterey District for the new water system.
 - Under Section 2.3 Required Approvals, when discussing the State Water Board approvals, please list that a water supply permit amendment may be needed for Option B and a new domestic water supply permit will be needed for Option C.
 - For Options B and C, please discuss the water quality of the existing wells.

5.1
cont.

5.2

5.3

- For Option B consider if the water provided can be treated by Cal Am -Monterey at an existing water treatment facility. 5.4
- For Option C please consider if the wells can currently meet the Waterworks Standards for domestic wells (Ca. Code Regs. tit. 22, chapter 16). If upgrades are needed to meet the standards, discuss what upgrades will be made. 5.5
- For Option C, the water treatment system will include a hydroneumatic tank, water filters, and a water tank (PDF page 15). Please discuss what contaminant will be treated, the operation of the system, and staff needed. 5.6
- For Options B and C, please provide a description of the new and existing system components. Consider water storage and fire flow in addition to the existing wells and treatment. 5.7
- A stormwater basin is proposed near the Carmel Presbyterian Church well in a 100-year special flood hazard area. Cal. Code. Regs. § 64572 and Cal. Code. Regs. § 64560 requires separation of drinking water service lines and domestic supply wells from sources of potential contamination such as stormwater basins. Please discuss how the well will be protected from contamination and indicate if the regulations can be met or if a waiver or alternative to Waterworks Standards (Cal. Code. Regs. § 64551.100) will be needed. If an alternative is needed, the water system will need to submit an application to the DDW Monterey District office. 5.8
- It does not appear that all proposed infrastructure is included on the project maps. Please add the Travers well to the map and expand the Project site location to include the water main extensions from the end of the existing raw water main to the Gamboa, Carmel Presbyterian, and Rancho Canada Subdivision wells and the Rancho Cañada Subdivision well site. Consider the analysis of these areas, as needed in the checklist. 5.9
- In Figure 2-3, the plans indicate the Gamboa replacement well will be placed inside a watertight vault. Please discuss plans for the well based on the different B and C options. (Please note vaulted wells are not allowable as new public water sources – see California Code of Regulations, title 22, section 64560 (c)(3)(D).) 5.10

Once the Environmental Document is adopted, please forward the following items in support of new water system’s permit application or Cal American Water Company- 5.11

Monterey amendment to the State Water Board, DDW Monterey District Office at DWPDIST05@waterboards.ca.gov:

- The Environmental Document, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP), comment letters received, and the lead agency responses as appropriate.
- The Resolution or Board Minutes adopting the Environmental Document and MMRP and approving the Project; and
- The Notice of Determination filed at the County Clerk's Office and the State Clearinghouse.

5.11

Please contact Lori Schmitz of the State Water Board at (916) 449-5285 or Lori.Schmitz@waterboards.ca.gov, for questions regarding this comment letter.

Sincerely,

Lori Schmitz
Environmental Scientist
Division of Financial Assistance
Special Project Review Unit
1001 I Street, 16th floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Cc:

State Clearinghouse

Jonathan Weininger
District Engineer
Monterey District

Nicholas Garibaldi
Water Resource Control Engineer
Monterey District

Responses to Comments on the Draft IS-MND

This section includes comments received during the circulation of the Draft Initial Study Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS-MND) prepared for the Carmel Rio Road (Carmel 1 INV) Project (project).

The Draft IS-MND was circulated for a 30-day public review period that began on February 23, 2026 and ended on March 25, 2026. The County of Monterey received five comment letters on the Draft IS-MND. The commenters and the page number on which each commenter's letter appear are listed below.

Letter Number and Commenter	Page Number
1 Monique Wilber, Conservation Program Support Supervisor, California Department of Conservation (DOC)	2
2 Tyrone Bell, Air Quality Planner II, Monterey Bay Air Resources District	4
3 A.E. Elias, Captain Commander for the Monterey Area, California Highway Patrol (CHP)	6
4 Ingrid McRoberts, District 5, Local Development Review Coordinator, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)	7
5 Lori Schmitz, Environmental Scientist, State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)	8

The comment letters and responses follow. The comment letters have been numbered sequentially and each separate issue raised by the commenter has been assigned a number. The responses to each comment identify first the number of the comment letter, and then the number assigned to each issue (Response 1.1, for example, indicates that the response is for the first issue raised in comment Letter 1).

Letter 1

Commentor: Monique Wilber, Conservation Program Support Supervisor, California Department of Conservation

Date: March 20, 2026

Response 1.1

The commenter states that the DOC's Division of Land Resource Protection has reviewed the IS-MND and describes the project, identifying the presence of Prime Farmland as designated by the DOC's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) on the project site. The commenter describes the role of the DOC in the protection of agricultural resources throughout the State of California. The commenter acknowledges that the comments provided are not legal or policy interpretation.

The comment does not raise any specific significant environmental issues or raise issues on the adequacy of the environmental analysis in the IS-MND, and no further response is warranted.

Response 1.2

The commenter states that the conversion of agricultural land represents a permanent loss and impact to agricultural resources. The commenter provides general guidance on the information to include in environmental review for projects that involve the conversion or loss of agricultural land, including the type, amount and location of farmland conversion; impacts on current and future agricultural operations in the vicinity; cumulative impacts; implementation of any County Agricultural Mitigation Plans, Programs, or Policies; and proposed mitigation for impacted agricultural land.

As detailed in Section VI.2, *Agricultural Resources*, the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) report prepared for the project found that because the site is isolated from other important farmlands and does not function as part of a broader agricultural landscape, the project would not significantly impact agricultural resources. The commenter's guidance on information to include in environmental review for projects that involve the conversion or loss of agricultural land will be shared with County decision-makers for consideration in future projects. The comment does not raise any specific concern or question regarding the adequacy of the environmental analysis in the IS-MND, and no revisions to the IS-MND are necessary.

Response 1.3

The commenter recommends the IS-MND address mitigation for the loss or conversion of agricultural land. The commenter provides potential methods for mitigation, including agricultural conservation easements either through the purchase of conservation easements or the donation of mitigation fees.

As described in Section VI.2, *Agricultural Resources*, the project would result in less than significant impacts to agricultural resources. The site is designated and zoned for Low Density Residential use under the applicable Carmel Valley Master Plan. Because the site's land use designation is residential, County Zoning Ordinance Chapter 21.92, which establishes mitigation requirements for development on agriculturally designated land, does not apply to the project. Therefore, no changes to the IS-MND are necessary in response to this comment.

Response 1.4

The commenter requests the DOC be provided with notices for future hearing dates and staff reports.

The DOC's request for notices and staff reports will be shared with County decision-makers.

Letter 2

COMMENTER: Tyrone Bell, Air Quality Planner II, Monterey Bay Air Resources District

DATE: March 20, 2026

Response 2.1

The commenter recommends the continual use of the Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD) California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Air Quality Guidelines as a reference for the IS-MND. The commenter states that the North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB) has been in attainment for ozone standards since February 2021.

As described in Section VI. 3, *Air Quality*, the air quality analysis conforms to the methodologies recommended in the MBARD CEQA Air Quality Guidelines. Section VI.3, *Air Quality*, has been revised to clarify that the NCCAB is in attainment for all federal standards and other state standards.

Response 2.2

The commenter states that fugitive dust should be mitigated during project construction. The commenter states that compliance with MBARD Rule 402 and CEQA Guidelines Section 8.2 can be maintained by implementing feasible mitigation measures. The commenter summarizes six recommended mitigation measures.

As described in Section VI.3, *Air Quality*, the project would have less than significant air quality impact. Fugitive dust emissions generated during project construction would be temporary, short-term, and below MBARD significance thresholds (refer to Table 6.3-1 in the IS-MND). Therefore, no mitigation is required, and no changes to the IS-MND are necessary in response to this comment.

Response 2.3

The commenter describes the context and requirements of MBARD Rule 424 and recommends that all buildings proposed for demolition test for asbestos in the building materials.

As stated in Section VI.9, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, demolition and construction would be required to comply with MBARD Rule 424, which enforces the National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants regulation with authority delegated by the United States Environmental Protection Act. Therefore, no changes to the IS-MND are necessary in response to this comment.

Response 2.4

The commenter summarizes the requirements of MBARD Rule 439 and provides a contact who can provide additional information on the rule.

As described in Section VI.3, *Air Quality*, the project would have less than significant air quality impacts. The analysis of air quality impacts conforms to the methodologies recommended in MBARD's CEQA Air Quality Guidelines. Project construction would conform to all applicable air quality standards and regulations, including Rule 439. The comment will be shared with County decision-makers for consideration.

Response 2.5

The commenter recommends the use of Tier 3 and 4 construction equipment as well as the use of alternative fuels to reduce diesel exhaust emissions. The commenter provides guidance for equipment

that introduces a stationary source of air pollutants that may require a permit and includes a contact for any questions.

As described in Section VI.3, *Air Quality*, all construction equipment would be equipped with United States Environmental Protection Act Tier 4 engines. Project construction and operation is not anticipated to involve the use of equipment that could introduce a stationary source of air pollutants, such as a generator or boiler. In the event that equipment that could introduce a stationary source of air pollutants could be used, the project developer and contractors would be required to adhere to all necessary permit requirements as part of the regulatory compliance procedures during the grading/building permit plan review. Therefore, no changes to the IS-MND are necessary in response to this comment. The permitting information and contact will be shared with County decision-makers for their consideration.

Response 2.6

The commenter recommends alternatives to open hearth fireplaces within residential structures.

The project does not propose open hearth fireplaces within any of the residential structures. As described in Section VI. 3, *Air Quality*, a conservative estimate of the project's potential operational emissions does not exceed the MBARD thresholds of significance (refer to Table 6.3-2). Therefore, no changes to the IS-MND are necessary in response to this comment. The recommended alternatives to open hearth fireplaces will be shared with County decision makers.

Letter 3

COMMENTER: A.E. Elias, Captain Commander for the Monterey Area, California Highway Patrol

DATE: March 25, 2026

Response 3.1

The commenter acknowledges receipt of the Notice of Completion and the IS-MND. The commenter describes the role of the CHP in the CEQA review process. The commenter states that State Route 1 (SR-1) serves as a major vehicle route for commuters and tourists.

This comment does not raise any specific issue with the environmental analysis and has been included to provide regional and regulatory context. No further response is warranted.

Response 3.2

The commenter states the project would result in an increased vehicular travel, which would impact traffic safety on SR-1 and surrounding roadways. The commenter states CHP concerns with the potential project impacts, including increased incidents requiring emergency response during project construction; traffic congestion near Rio Road and SR-1; increased congestion during peak commute hours which could increase crashes and slow emergency response times; and additional enforcement demands. The commenter urges the enforcement of vehicle safety rules by project operators.

The commenter's concern regarding increased congestion resulting in an increase in crashes and slower first responder response times is acknowledged. The County confirmed with Cypress Fire Protection District that there are emergency access gates on the north end of Val Verde Drive, at the intersection of Val Verde Road and Carmel Valley Road, which would provide a secondary means of ingress and egress to facilitate emergency access during project construction and operation. As described in Section VI.9, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, the project would not impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. The project site is located near Carmel Valley Road and SR-1, which are identified as evacuation routes in the General Plan Safety Element. Although the project would result in an increase in population and associated vehicular travel, as discussed in Section VI.15, *Public Services*, it would not generate population growth beyond that anticipated in the County's General Plan or require new or expanded police protection facilities. Section VI.17, *Transportation and Traffic*, evaluates increased vehicular travel associated with project construction and operation using vehicle miles traveled (VMT), consistent with the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b) and guidance from the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation. As discussed in Section II, *Project Characteristics*, the project incorporates traffic demand management (TDM) strategies consistent with County policies to reduce vehicle trip generation. Pursuant to Senate Bill 743, level of service (LOS) and congestion are no longer used to determine the significance of transportation impacts under CEQA. The IS-MND includes an informational discussion of LOS and congestion to demonstrate consistency with the County's Circulation Element. Therefore, no changes to the IS-MND are necessary in response to this comment.

Vehicle safety rules and enforcement requirements would continue to apply to project construction and operation consistent with existing laws and regulations. The comment will be shared with County decision-makers for their consideration.

Letter 4

COMMENTER: Ingrid McRoberts, District 5, Local Development Review Coordinator, California Department of Transportation

DATE: March 25, 2026

Response 4.1

The comment provides a summary of the project and states the role of Caltrans consistent with State planning priorities.

This comment does not raise any specific issue with the environmental analysis and has been included to provide regional and regulatory context. No further response is warranted.

Response 4.2

The commenter states that the IS-MND should incorporate a summary of the analytical results in the Traffic Impact Analysis ([TIA], Kittelson & Associates, 2025) on the intersections on SR-1, specifically Rio Road and Carmel Valley Road to enable Caltrans to review the potential impacts and issue further comments that may be warranted. The commenter requests an updated copy of the updated TIA report.

Although jurisdictions have typically used vehicle LOS as the primary measure for transportation impacts, changes to CEQA following the implementation of Senate Bill 743 in November 2018 removed LOS as a metric in determining transportation impacts. CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 specifies VMT as the sole appropriate metric to evaluate transportation impacts. As described in Section VI. 17, *Transportation and Traffic*, the transportation and traffic analysis was based on a VMT assessment (Kittelson & Associates, 2026) conducted in accordance with CEQA requirements and the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation. Therefore, the TIA results regarding the intersections on SR-1 are outside the scope of CEQA and the IS-MND. The IS-MND includes a discussion of LOS and congestion based on the results of the TIA for informational purposes only. Therefore, no changes to the IS-MND are necessary in response to this comment.

The commenter's request to be provided with the updated TIA will be shared with County decision-makers. The comment does not raise a substantive issue on the content of the IS-MND, and no further response is warranted.

Response 4.3

The commenter affirms Caltrans support for incorporating a transit subsidy as a mitigation strategy. The commenter provides four recommendations for the IS-MND analysis:

- Update the analysis to include the Monterey-Salinas Transit Routes 5 and 91 as route services in vicinity of the project;
- Consult with Monterey-Salinas Transit when designing transit improvements;
- Update the referenced California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) source in the IS-MND to reflect the most recent 2024 CAPCOA Handbook; and
- Provide additional detail on transit subsidies, such as the cost and how long the subsidy would be in place.

Section VI. 17, *Transportation and Traffic*, identifies Monterey-Salinas Transit Route 24 as being within the project vicinity. The analysis of this topic has been revised to also describe Routes 5 and 91 as transit services in the project vicinity.

The commenters request for consultation with Monterey-Salinas Transit when designing transit improvements will be shared with County decision-makers for their consideration; the comment does not raise any specific significant environmental issues or raise issues on the adequacy of the analysis included in the IS-MND, and no changes to the IS-MND are necessary in response to this comment.

As described in Section IX. *Sources*, the IS-MND references the 2010 CAPCOA Handbook (Source IX.67). The commenter does not raise any specific significant environmental issues or raise issues on the adequacy of the analysis included in the IS-MND as a result of the outdated source; however, analysis in the IS-MND that references the 2010 CAPCOA Handbook has been verified for consistency with the 2024 CAPCOA, and the reference has been updated to the 2024 CAPCOA Handbook.

As described in Section VI.17, *Transportation and Traffic*, the transit subsidy (TDM-1) would include subsidized transit fare for qualifying residents. The additional detail regarding transit subsidies, including cost and duration, requested by the commenter would be developed during the condition compliance phase of the project and is not yet available at the current stage of environmental review. However, in general, transit subsidies in the amount of \$5.96 per month would be issued to each individual residing within an affordable unit, and would be managed by the Homeowners Association. The comment will be shared with County decision-makers for their consideration regarding the implementation of TDM strategies, and does not require any revisions to the IS-MND.

Response 4.4

The commenter states that any work completed in the State right-of-way is required to obtain an encroachment permit from Caltrans. The commenter provides additional disclosures and information regarding encroachment permits.

The project would adhere to all required permit conditions as part of the regulatory compliance procedures during the grading/building permit plan review. The comment will be shared with County decision-makers for consideration. This comment does not raise any specific issue with the environmental analysis and has been included to provide regional and regulatory context. No further response is warranted.

Letter 5

COMMENTER: Lori Schmitz, Environmental Scientist, State Water Resources Control Board

DATE: March 30, 2026

Response 5.1

The commenter states that the project is within the jurisdiction of the SWRCB, Division of Drinking Water (DDW) Monterey District and describes the role of the SWRCB in regulating public water systems and issuing water supply permits. The commenter states the definition of a public water system and the requirements of Health and Safety Code 116527. The commenter states that communication indicated the applicant has been working with SWRCB on wheeling¹ the riparian rights to California American Water Company-Monterey (Cal-Am) and would be responsible for decommissioning the onsite wells. The commenter summarizes the domestic water supply sources for the project and the permit requirements. The commenter states that Option C would create a new public water system, and the developer had previously agreed not to create a new public water system. The commenter summarizes the requirements for approval for a new public water system.

This comment does not raise any specific issue with the environmental analysis and has been included to provide regional and regulatory context. No changes to the IS-MND are necessary in response to this comment.

The commenter's comments and recommendations are included in subsequent comments and are responded to in Responses 5.2 through 5.11 below.

Response 5.2

The commenter states that a water supply permit amendment may be needed (Option B) and a new domestic water supply permit (Option C) would be required, and recommends these permits be added to the IS-MND Required Approvals.

As described in Section II, *Required Approvals*, the project lists a Wheeling Agreement and other permits to authorize connection to Cal-Am as Required Approvals under the Project Riparian Rights Option 1 (Option B, above). The requested Water Supply Permit Amendment would fall within the "other permits to authorize connection to Cal-Am" referenced in the IS-MND. The IS-MND has been revised to specify the Water Supply Permit Amendment (if needed) as a required approval.

In the event a new public water system is created under the Project Riparian Rights Option 2 scenario (Option C), the project would be required to adhere to all applicable SWRCB requirements and permitting, including providing a technical report six months prior to construction for DDW approval and obtaining a new public water system permit. The IS-MND has been revised to identify the Domestic Water Supply Permit the Project Riparian Rights Option 2 scenario (Option C, above).

Response 5.3

The commenter requests that a discussion of the water quality of the existing wells be addressed for Options B and C.

As described in Section VI. 10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, the project would have a less than significant impact on water quality. If onsite wells are utilized for domestic water supply under the Property Riparian Rights water supply scenarios (Options B and C, above), the onsite wells would be subject to all

¹ Wheeling is when a water rights holder uses another water agency's transmission system to transport water.

applicable water quality testing and regulations, which would be provided to the SWRCB as applicable. No changes to the IS-MND are necessary in response to this comment.

Response 5.4

For Option B, the commenter requests consideration of potential water treatment by Cal-Am Monterey at an existing treatment facility.

As described in Section VI. 19, *Utilities and Service Systems*, Cal-Am confirmed the capability and capacity to treat the additional 16 acre-feet per year of groundwater for iron and manganese at the Begonia Iron Removal Plant. The commenter's request does not raise any specific issue with the environmental analysis. However, the commenter's request will be shared with County decision-makers for their consideration regarding potential options for water treatment. No changes to the IS-MND are necessary in response to this comment.

Response 5.5

For Option C, the commenter requests consideration of whether onsite wells can currently meet the Waterworks Standards for domestic wells (California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Chapter 16). The commenter recommends a discussion of any upgrades needed to meet the Waterworks Standards.

In the event a new public water system is created under the Project Riparian Rights Option 2 scenario (Option C), the project would be required to adhere to all applicable design, construction, operation and permitting requirements for public water systems regulated by SWRCB, DDW. The commenter's request does not raise any specific issue with the environmental analysis. However, the commenter's request will be shared with County decision-makers. No changes to the IS-MND are necessary in response to this comment.

Response 5.6

The commenter describes the water treatment system proposed under Option C and requests a discussion of what containment will be treated, operation of the system, and staff needed.

As described in Section II. 2.2.7, *Infrastructure*, the water treatment system would be a closed, contained system and pressurize system. The water treatment system would include water filters to remove particulates and contaminants to the 25-foot diameter, fully enclosed, and sanitary water tank to store water. The hydroneumatic tank and booster pump station would maintain consistent positive pressure to prevent potential contamination through backflow, leakage, or contaminant from external sources. The water treatment system would be managed by Cal-Am. Regular staffing would not be required for the onsite water treatment system. No changes to the IS-MND are necessary in response to this comment.

Response 5.7

For Options B and C, the commenter requests a description of the new and existing system components, including water storage and fire flow in addition to the existing wells and treatment.

As described in Section VI. 19, *Utilities and Service Systems*, the project would require construction of new water conveyance facilities including 8-inch water pipes located within proposed street rights-of-way to convey water to the residences under all water supply scenarios (refer to Figure 2-3 for proposed streets). All new water supply infrastructure would be confined to previously disturbed areas and would serve only the proposed residences. As described in Section II. 2.2.7, *Infrastructure*, water for emergency fire suppression would be supplied from the existing water main on Val Verde Drive. Water storage would include the 25-foot diameter water tank (refer to Figure 2-3). Under the Project Riparian Rights Option 1 (Option B, above), existing system components would include the onsite wells and existing water main on Val Verde Drive; new system components would include new 8-inch water pipes to convey domestic

water to residences. Under the Project Riparian Rights Option 2 (Option C, above), existing system components would include the onsite wells; new system components would include new 8-inch water mains to convey water from the proposed water treatment system, which would include a hydroneumatic tank for the Carmel Presbyterian Church Well, water filters, an approximately 25-foot wide water tank, and a booster pump station. No changes to the IS-MND are necessary in response to this comment.

Response 5.8

The commenter states that a stormwater basin is proposed near the Carmel Presbyterian Church well in a 100-year flood hazard area. The commenter requests a discussion of how the well will be protected from contamination and a determination of whether the regulations can be met or if a waiver or alternative to Waterworks Standards for domestic wells (California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Chapter 16) is anticipated. The commenter states that if an alternative is needed, a water system application would need to be submitted to DDW Monterey District.

The on-site wells, including the Carmel Presbyterian Church well, were constructed with sanitary seals extending to depths of approximately 50 to 70 feet. The sanitary seals are designed to prevent the downward migration of surface water, thereby protecting groundwater quality and reducing the potential for contamination. The Carmel Presbyterian Church well is located within a floodplain; however, the well head is elevated and can be further elevated is required to meet California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Chapter 16 requirements. Further, all on-site wells will be destroyed with project implementation. As described in Section VI. 10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, the project would not violate water quality standards or substantially degrade water quality. The proposed stormwater basin would be constructed and operated in compliance with applicable federal and state regulations that require protection of groundwater quality. Under the federal Clean Water Act and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program, stormwater controls such as the proposed stormwater basin are required to prevent pollutants from causing or contributing to violations of water quality standards by filtering pollutants at the source. Consistent with these federal requirements, the stormwater basin proposed near the Carmel Presbyterian Church well would remove pollutants from stormwater through a combination of physical, biological, and chemical treatment processes including absorption, filtration, plant uptake, microbial activity, decomposition, sedimentation and volatilization as stored water gradually exfiltrates over a period of days.

At the state level, water quality in the project area is regulated under the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board's Basin Plan (Basin Plan), which establishes water quality objectives for the Carmel Valley Groundwater Basin underlying the site. Implementation of the Basin Plan is carried out through multiple regulatory mechanisms, including the NPDES Construction General Permit, Post-Construction Requirements for stormwater management, and waste discharge requirements applicable to development projects. As described in Section VI. 10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, the proposed stormwater basin design is consistent with the Basin Plan's requirement to treat and infiltrate stormwater and reduce pollutant loading. A Preliminary post-construction Stormwater Control Plan was prepared in accordance with the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board requirements, and implementation of the Stormwater Control Plan and Operations and Maintenance plan would ensure that the potential for water quality degradation associated with project operation would not violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. Maintenance of the stormwater basin would include regular inspection, repair, replacement of treatment components, and removal of debris and plant material to ensure continued effectiveness. As conditioned, on-site drainage improvements would be installed to ensure that post-development runoff from DA-27 does not increase baseline (pre-development) peak surface/overland flow rates, velocities, or depths for the project site or nearby properties that may receive overland flows or displaced flows during 20-year and 100-year storm events. Therefore, as proposed and conditioned, the project would not contaminate groundwater or adversely impact water quality near the Carmel Presbyterian Church well, and no alternative is anticipated. No changes to the IS-MND are necessary in response to this comment.

Response 5.9

The commenter states that the project maps do not include all proposed infrastructure, including the Travers well and water main extensions to the onsite and Rancho Cañada Subdivision well. The commenter requests analysis of these areas be considered.

The Travers well and water main extensions to the onsite wells are located onsite and within the development footprint analyzed in the IS-MND. The Travers well is located in the center of the site, northeast of the Gamboa Replacement well. The proposed water main extensions to the Rancho Cañada Subdivision well referenced in Section II. 2.2.7, *Infrastructure*, were previously described as new connections to existing infrastructure. However, under the proposed wheeling agreement, Cal-Am would provide domestic water for the project by drawing water from existing Cal-Am wells within the same alluvial aquifer as the project site, treating the raw water for domestic use at the Begonia Iron Removal Plant described in Section VI. 19, *Utilities and Service Systems*, and distributing the water to the project via the existing water main along Val Verde Drive. As a result, the project would not require a connection to the Rancho Cañada Subdivision well. Section II. 2.2.7, *Infrastructure*, Section VI. 10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, and Section VI. 19, *Utilities and Service Systems* of the IS-MND have been revised to clarify the required infrastructure under the wheeling agreement. All new development and construction was considered as part of the project site in the IS-MND analysis and no revisions to the IS-MND analysis beyond the revisions for clarification described above are necessary in response to this comment.

As described in Section VI. 19, *Utilities and Service Systems*, the new 8-inch water pipes would connect to the existing water main on Val Verde Drive, which is already connected to Cal-Am. Under the Property's Riparian Rights Option 1 (refer to Section II. 2.2.7, *Infrastructure*), an extension of the existing water main on Val Verde Drive would be located adjacent to the existing water main and within the existing easement (refer to Figure 2-3 for the existing easement within Val Verde Drive). As described in Section VI. 19, *Utilities and Service Systems*, Cal-Am confirmed the capability and capacity to treat the additional 16 acre-feet per year of groundwater for iron and manganese at the Begonia Iron Removal Plant and confirmed the water main on Val Verde Drive is connected to the Begonia Iron Removal Plant, so no additional infrastructure is needed. Water supply via the Property's Riparian Rights Option 2 (refer to Section II. 2.2.7, *Infrastructure*) would require new water supply infrastructure (8-inch water pipes) which would be located within the proposed street rights-of-way (refer to Figure 2-3 for the proposed streets) and would be confined to previously disturbed areas and would serve only the proposed residences. No changes to the IS-MND are necessary in response.

Response 5.10

The commenter states that vaulted wells are not allowable as new public water sources, per California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Section 64560 (c)(3)(D), as is depicted in Figure 2-3, and requests additional discussion on the plan for the Gamboa Replacement well based on Option B and Option C.

The Gamboa Replacement Well would not be used as a new public water source. Under the Project Riparian Rights Option 1 (Option B, above), domestic water for the project would be provided through a wheeling agreement between the property owner and Cal-Am. Under the wheeling agreement, Cal-Am would supply domestic water to the project by pumping from existing Cal-Am wells within the same alluvial aquifer as the project site, treating the water for domestic use, and distributing the domestic water via existing infrastructure. Under Option 1, all onsite wells, including the Gamboa Replacement well, would be abandoned. Section II. 2.2.7, *Infrastructure* of the IS-MND has been revised to clarify that under the Project Riparian Rights Option 1 (Option B, above) the Gamboa Replacement well would not be used as a domestic water supply source, and that onsite wells would be abandoned. As described in Section II. 2.2.7, *Infrastructure*, the Project Riparian Rights Option 2 (Option C, above) would not include the Gamboa Replacement well as a source of domestic water. Therefore, no additional revisions to the IS-MND are necessary to address the plans for the Gamboa Replacement well under Option 2 (Option C, above).

Response 5.11

The commenter requests that project environmental review documents be provided in support of the new water system's permit application or Cal-Am amendment to the State Water Board, DDW Monterey District Office. The commenter provides contact information to provide the above listed documents and contact for questions regarding the comment letter.

The comment does not raise any specific issue with the environmental analysis and has been included to provide regional and regulatory context. The commenter's request for the documents and contact information will be shared with County decision-makers.

COUNTY OF MONTEREY

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Planning – Building – Housing
1441 Schilling Place, South 2nd Floor
Salinas, California 93901-4527
(831) 755-5025

INITIAL STUDY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Project Title: Carmel Rio Road (Carmel 1 INV) LLC Project

File No.: PLN240105

Project Location: Carmel Valley, Monterey County, California

Name of Property Owner: Carmel Rio Road LLC

Name of Applicant: City Ventures, LLC

Assessor's Parcel Number(s): 015-021-004-000, 015-021-015-000, 015-021-020-000,
015-021-021-000, 015-021-049-000

Acreage of Property: 12.5 acres (excluding Val Verde Drive)

General Plan Designation: Residential – Low Density 5-1 Acres/Unit

Zoning District: Low Density Residential/Design Control District – Site Plan
Review District – Residential Allocation Zoning District
(LDR/1-D-S-RAZ)

Lead Agency: County of Monterey Housing & Community Development

Prepared By: Rincon Consultants, Inc.

Date Prepared: February 2026

Contact Person: Fionna Jensen, Principal Planner

Phone Number: 831-796-6407

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

2.1 Project Location

The Carmel Rio Road (Carmel 1 INV) LLC project (project) site encompasses approximately 12.5 acres (not including parcel 015-021-049 for a portion of Val Verde Drive) located at 26500 Val Verde Drive, within unincorporated Monterey County, California (Assessor's Parcel Numbers [APN] 015-021-004-000, 015-021-015-000, 015-021-020-000, 015-021-021-000, 015-021-049-000). The project site is located approximately 0.7 mile southeast of the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea boundary and is outside of the City's formal sphere of influence. The project site is approximately 0.3 mile east of California State Route 1 (SR-1), and approximately 0.2 mile south of Carmel Valley Road.

Figure 2-1 illustrates the location of the proposed project within the region, and Figure 2-2 shows the project within the local context.

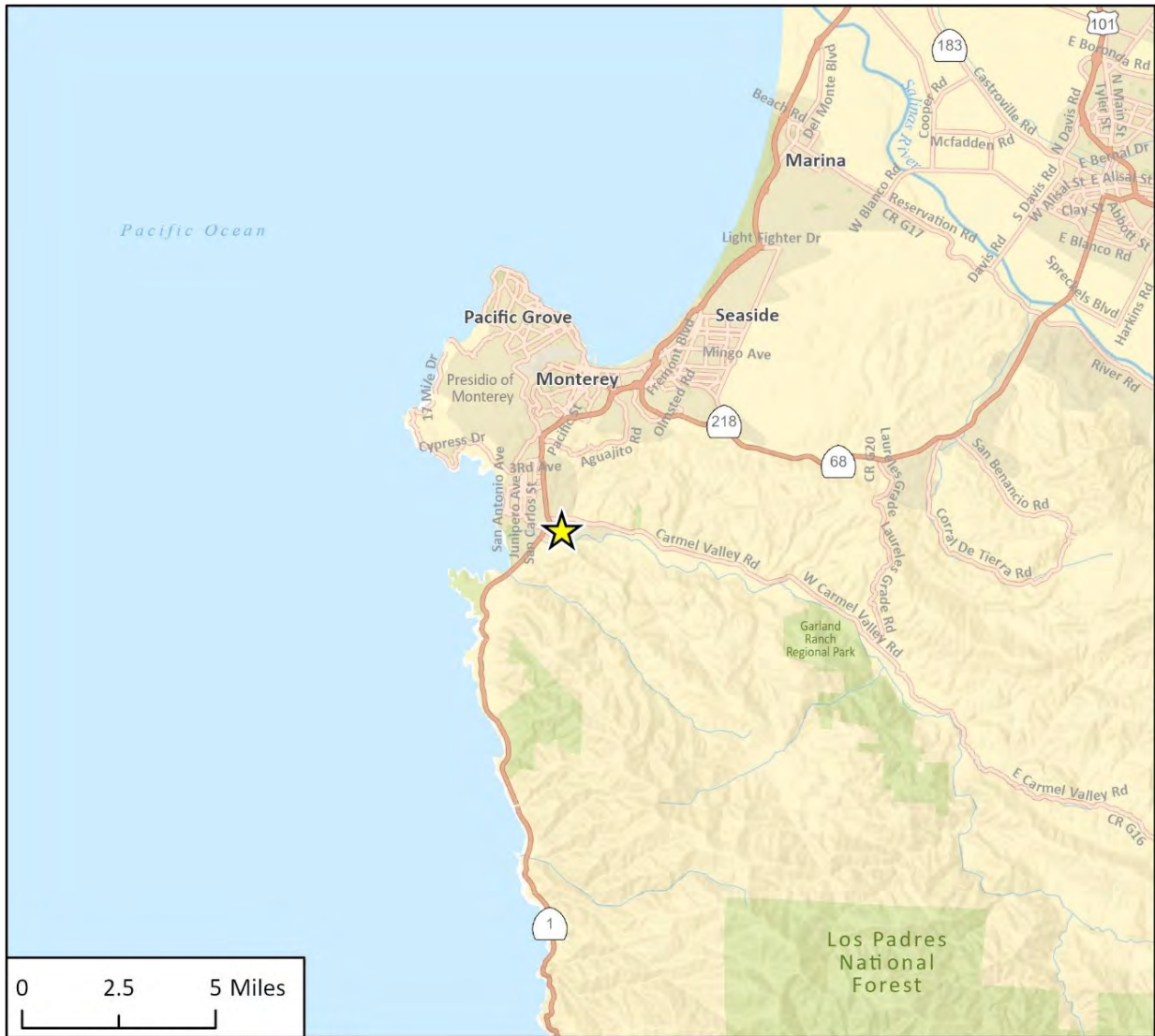
2.2 Existing Site Characteristics

The project site has historically been used for agricultural purposes. Approximately 10 acres of the 12.5-acre project site are currently used for row crop agriculture producing strawberries, melons, artichokes, squash, pumpkins, fennel, fava beans, zucchini, radishes, and flowers. The remaining 2.5 acres, located along the southern portion of the site, are developed with an existing single family residence and a detached garage. Surrounding the residence in the south-central portion of the project site is a mixed woodland habitat planted with species such as Monterey cypress (*Hesperocyparis macrocarpa*), Monterey pine (*Pinus radiata*), myoporum (*Myoporum laetum*), coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), box elder (*Acer negundo*), and holly-leaved cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia*).

The project site's topography is predominantly flat, with an elevation of approximately 34 feet above mean sea level. The Carmel River is located approximately 1,050 feet south of the project site. Two portions of the project site lie within the 100-year flood zone: the southwest corner and the southwestern section of the parcel east of Val Verde drive. These portions of the project site within the 100-year flood zone would be utilized for stormwater quality basins, as shown in Figure 2-3.

Regional access to the project site is provided by SR-1 and Carmel Valley Road. Local access to the site is provided by Rio Road and Carmel Rancho Boulevard to Val Verde Drive, currently a private road.

Figure 2-1 Regional Project Location



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25-17790 EPS

Fig 1 Regional Location

★ Project Location

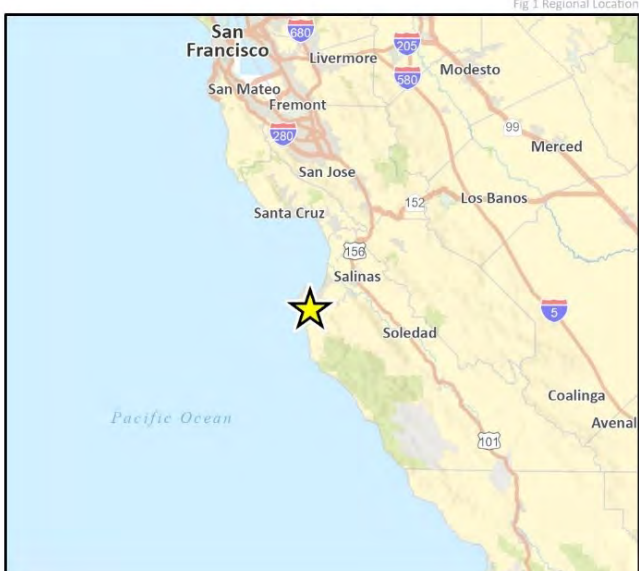
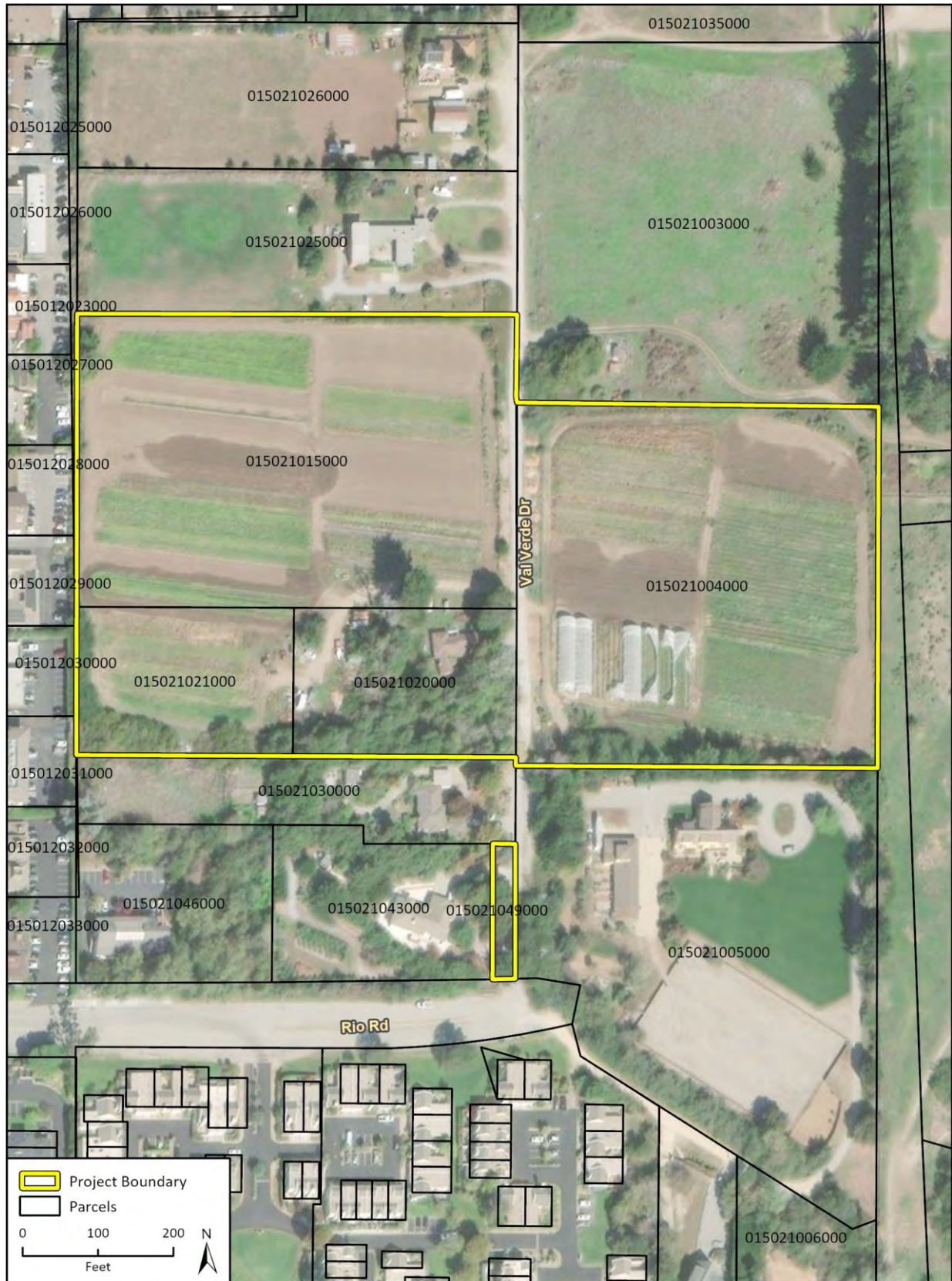


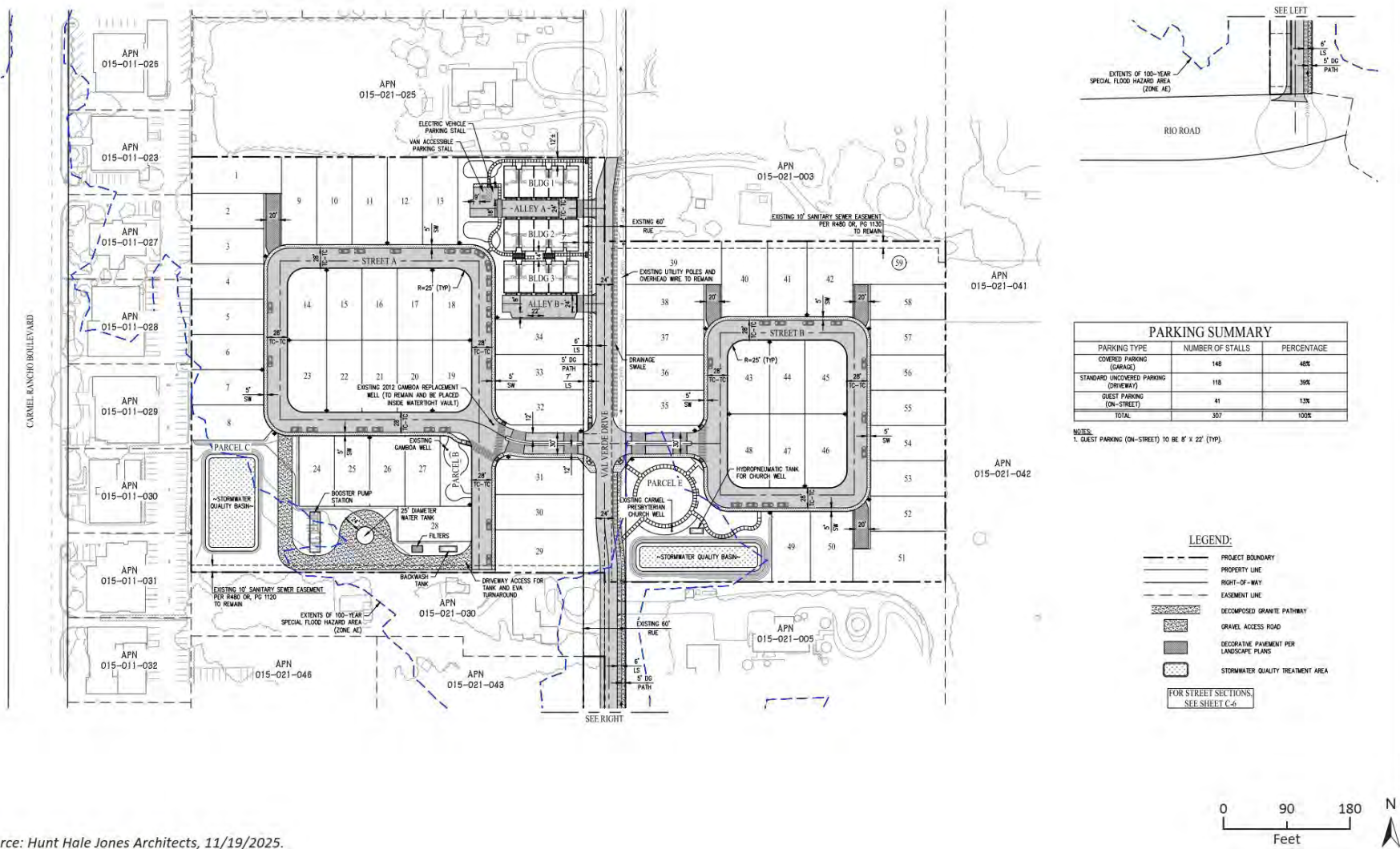
Figure 2-2 Project Site Location



Imagery provided by Esri and its licensors © 2025.

25-17790 EP5
Fig X Project Site

Figure 2-3 Preliminary Site Plan with 100-year Floodplain



Source: Hunt Hale Jones Architects, 11/19/2025.

2.2.1 Surrounding Land Uses

The project site is surrounded by a mix of residential and commercial development, as well as undeveloped parcels. The project site is bordered to the north and south by low density residential designated properties developed with single family residences; to the east by undeveloped high density residential designated land; and to the west by visitor accommodation/professional office designated land developed with existing commercial use buildings and associated parking lots that are accessed from Carmel Rancho Boulevard. Immediately east and southeast of the project site lies the former Rancho Cañada Golf Club, which is planned for redevelopment for residential and recreational uses as the Ranch Cañada Village Subdivision to include approximately 145 residential units and 38-acres of permanent open space. Beyond the planned Ranch Cañada Village Subdivision the project site is surrounded to the south and east by the Palo Corona Regional Park. Four high density residential subdivisions (Riverwood #2, Riverwood #1, Carmel Lago Unit 1, and Arroyo Carmel # 2), consisting of townhomes, duplexes, and condos, are adjacent to (south of) Rio Road and approximately 400 to 1,500 feet south and southwest of the project site. Carmel Middle School is located approximately 500 feet northeast of the project site.

2.2.2 Land Use Regulatory Overview

The project site is governed by the 2010 Monterey County General Plan (the General Plan), specifically through the Carmel Valley Master Plan ([CVMP] Source: IX.2.), which is an area plan under Chapter 9.8 of the County's General Plan. The project site is currently designated in the CVMP as Low Density Residential and is zoned as Low Density Residential within a Design Control District (LDR/1-D-S-RAZ), which allows a density of up to one unit per acre. The applicable requirements and restrictions of each of these regulatory documents are described in Section VI.11, *Land Use*. The project site is bordered by land designated as Visitor-Serving/Professional Office in a Design Control/Site Plan Review District with Residential Allocation Zoning (D-S-RAZ) to the west, Local Commercial(-D-S-RAZ) and Low Density Residential with a minimum lot size of 6-acres-(D-S-RAZ) to the north, Public/Quasi Public-(D-S-RAZ) to the east, and Low Density Residential-(D-S-RAZ) with an allowed density of up to one unit per acre to the south.

2.2.3 Project Characteristics

The project would involve the demolition of the existing residence and detached garage in the southern portion of the site, and the subdivision of the 12.5-acre site, currently comprised of four parcels, into 60 lots to develop 74 new residential units. Fifty-nine of the lots (Lots 1 – 59) would be developed with for-sale single family residences. The remaining 0.82-acre lot (Lot 60) would be developed with three individual townhomes, each with five two-bedroom units (15 deed restricted affordable housing units). All residential units would be equipped with solar panels. The individual lots sizes would range in size from 5,000 to 8,772 square feet and have designated building envelopes. Four different floor plans are proposed for the single family residences, which would be two stories and range between approximately 2,790 and 3,930 square feet in size. Each townhome unit would be approximately 1,026 square feet in size. Two architectural styles are proposed, Spanish colonial and renaissance.

Access would be provided by the existing Val Verde Drive, which would be improved as part of the project. The project would also include the construction of an internal circulation network of two private streets, sidewalks, crosswalks, and medians. To reduce vehicle trip generation consistent with County policies, the project, as proposed and designed, would incorporate seven Traffic Demand Management (TDM) strategies including transit subsidies, travel-behavior outreach, carpool and vanpool loading areas, bicycle facilities, pedestrian improvements, and electric vehicle parking facilities (Source: IX.62). The TDMs are described below, and further discussed in Section VI., *Transportation/Traffic*.

- *TDM- 1: Transit subsidy for the affordable housing units (Transit Strategy)*

To encourage the use of nearby transit, the project would implement subsidized transit fare for residences who occupy the 20 percent deed restricted affordable housing units. The subsidized transit fare would promote the use of transit rather than commuting to destinations by personal vehicle (Source: IX.627).

- *TDM-2: Mandatory Travel Behavior Change Program with Promotions & Marketing (Communications & Information Strategy).*

The project would include the development and implementation of a travel behavior change program to inform residents through passive educational and promotional materials about on-site bike parking and carpool/vanpool areas and proximity to nearby transit stops to promote the use of various transportation options facilitated by the project (Source: IX.627).

- *TDM-3: Passenger Loading Zones for Carpool/Vanpool*

The project would incorporate an easy access location for carpools and vanpools. (Source: IX.627).

- *TDM-4: Provide End of Trip Facilities (Bicycle Infrastructure Strategy)*

The project would incorporate secure bicycle parking to provide the added convenience and security needed to encourage the use of bicycling as a viable form of travel to destinations (Source: IX.627).

- *TDM-5: Pedestrian Network Improvements (Neighborhood Enhancement Strategy)*

The project would include pedestrian network improvements including the construction of a sidewalk along the entirety of Val Verde Drive to Rio Road, thereby providing safe access for pedestrians to nearby retail areas and transit stops (Source: IX.627).

- *TDM-6: EV Parking Spaces/Stations (Miscellaneous Strategy)*

All 307 parking spaces would be compatible with Level 1 or Level 2 electric vehicle chargers.

- *TDM-7: Affordable and Below Market Rate Housing*

The project would include 15 deed restricted affordable housing units, representing 20 percent of the total residences. The affordable housing units would provide opportunities for lower-income households to live closer to job centers and transit, thereby improving

the jobs-housing match, supporting reduced vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Since lower-income households generally have lower rates of auto ownership (Source: IX.627), this represents fewer vehicles per household and therefore fewer vehicle trips.

The project would include both private open space (i.e., rear yard areas for single family residences and flexible green space for the townhomes), and approximately 73,356 square feet of community open space and parks. Approximately 73,356 square feet would be designated as open space, which would consist of stormwater basins (Parcel C and a portion of Parcel E), a community garden (Parcel B), and recreational amenities on the remainder of Parcel E (picnic tables, trash enclosures, bike racks, interior fencing, bocce ball courts, and a playground). A six-foot wooden fence would be constructed on the perimeter of the collective four properties. Oak trees would be planted along the interior access roads.

Table 2-1 summarizes the characteristics of the proposed residences. The conceptual site plan which depicts individual lots is shown in Figure 2-3 and Figure 2-4. The Vesting Tentative Map is shown in Figure 2-5. The preliminary architectural renderings from the street view perspective of the single family residences and townhomes are shown in Figure 2-6 and Figure 2-7.

Table 2-1 Project Summary

Project Size	
Gross area (acres)	12.5 acres
Density	5.92 du/ac
Residential Units	
Two-bedroom (Townhomes)	15 units
Four-bedroom	18 units
Five-bedroom	41 units
<i>Total</i>	<i>74 units</i>
Minimum Lot size	5,000 sf
Maximum Lot size	8,772 sf
Parking – Single Family Residences	
Garage	118 spaces
Private driveway	118 spaces
On-street/Guest	34 spaces
<i>Total</i>	<i>270 spaces</i>
Parking - Townhomes	
Garage	30 spaces
Guest	7 spaces
<i>Total</i>	<i>37 spaces</i>
Open Space	
Private (Single Family Residences)	400-460 sf
Shared	73,356 sf

Notes: du/ac = dwelling units per acre, sf = square feet

Figure 2-4 Conceptual Site Plan



Source: Hunt Hale Jones Architects, 11/19/2025.

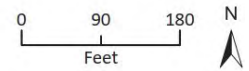


Figure 2-6 Single Family Residence Architectural Rendering



STREETSCAPE

Source: Hunt Hale Jones Architects, 11/19/2025.

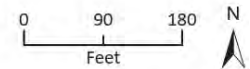
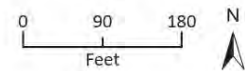


Figure 2-7 Townhome Architectural Rendering



Source: Hunt Hale Jones Architects, 11/19/2025.



2.2.4 Residential Density

As discussed in Section 2.4, *Land Use Regulatory Overview*, the project site is zoned as Low Density Residential, which allows a density of up to one unit per acre. The project would involve developing the net 12.5 acres with 74 total residential units for a total density of 5.92 dwelling units per acre. The applicant submitted a Preliminary Application under Senate Bill 330 (SB 330, Housing Crisis Act of 2019) which was deemed complete on April 15, 2025. An SB 330 application vests applicable objective standards, fees, and regulations as of the date of application submittal. SB 330 prohibits local jurisdictions from imposing new regulations or reducing residential densities after the preliminary application is deemed complete. In addition, the applicant has invoked the Builder's Remedy under Government Code § 65589.5(d)(5), which applies as the County's Housing Element is currently out of substantial compliance with State Housing Element Law. State law (Gov. Code § 65588) requires jurisdictions to update their housing elements on an eight-year cycle; failure to adopt a compliant housing element by statutory deadlines triggers the Builder's Remedy. Under this provision, a qualifying housing development cannot be denied or conditioned to reduce density based on inconsistencies with the General Plan, zoning, or other local policies. Therefore, although the project would develop the site with a residential density of 5.92 units per acre, exceeding the 1 unit per acre limit specified in Section 21.14.060 of the County's Zoning Ordinance, the project cannot be denied or conditioned based on density inconsistency, and cannot be required to rezone to a zoning district with a compatible density.

2.2.5 Access and Parking

Access to the project site would be provided by Val Verde Drive, which would connect to the internal circulation network shown in Figure 2-4. Val Verde Drive, currently a 15-foot wide gravel and dirt road, would be widened to 24-feet to accommodate two 10-foot travel lanes and 2-foot shoulders on either side. A 5-foot decomposed granite pedestrian path on the east side of Val Verde Drive, separated from the roadway by landscaped buffers (6 feet on the west and 7 feet on the east), would provide pedestrian access to the proposed residences and extend to the northern extent of the project boundary, continuing on the west side beyond the internal looped roads. An 18-foot landscaped buffer on the opposite side of Val Verde Drive would separate the roadway from adjacent residences. The internal circulation network would include two looped, two-way roads, one on each side of Val Verde Drive. Each loop would have two access points connecting to Val Verde Drive. Individual residences would be accessed by driveways from the new looped streets. All of the single family residences would include a two-car garage and a driveway capable of accommodating two parked vehicles. Each townhome would also include a two-car garage. In addition, 41 street and guest parking spaces would be provided. In total, 148 parking spaces would be available, all compatible with Level 1 or Level 2 electric vehicle (EV) chargers.

2.2.6 Open Space and Landscaping

The project would incorporate open space throughout the residential development. Shared community open space (approximately 73,356 square feet) would include a garden park and community green space along the southern portion of the project site. Additionally, open space would be provided as a private yard for each single family residence, and a shared open space would be provided west of the townhome units.

Thirty five trees were evaluated as a part of the tree inventory and arborist report for the project (Source: IX.6). According to the arborist report and site plans for the proposed project, all 35 trees would be removed, which includes Coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), black walnuts (*Juglans nigra*), Catalina cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia*), Monterey pine (*Pinus radiata*), Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*), Willow (*Salix lasiolepis*), Ioquat (*Eriobotrya deflexa*), Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), American sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*). Within the Carmel Valley Master Plan area, only Oaks, Madrones, and Coast redwoods with trunk diameters greater than six inches are protected. Of the 35 trees proposed for removal, only one Coast redwood tree (32 inch trench diameter) was determined to be protected under Monterey County Code 21.64.260.C.2. Removal of three or less protected trees would require approval from the County Director of Planning, or appropriate authority for the entirety of the project, consistent with Monterey County Code 21.64.260.

The project would involve planting new trees to landscape the project site. Planted trees would be of varying species including valley oak (*Quercus lobata*), ‘October Glory’ red maple (*Acer rubrum*), and frontier elm (*Ulmus x ‘frontier’*), throughout the project site. The landscaping and irrigation systems would comply with the County’s Landscape Ordinance (Chapter 16.63).

2.2.7 Infrastructure

- a. **Water Supply.** The project has two potential sources of long-term water supply, described below.

Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (preferred source)

On October 21, 2025, the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (MPWMD) filed an application to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to modify the 1995 Cease and Desist Order currently restricting California American Water Company’s (Cal-Am) diversions from the Carmel River. MPWMD demonstrated that conservation efforts and expanded supply sources have established a surplus of water relative to the existing demand (Source: IX.13.). Under MPWMD Ordinance 197, the County holds an allocation of water that cannot be used to establish new meters until the Cease and Desist Order has been lifted. On October 29, 2025, the applicant submitted a request to the County for a portion of this allocation sufficient to serve the project, notwithstanding emergency fire suppression. Under this preferred water supply scenario, domestic water would be provided to the project via Cal-Am and the MPWMD, and on-site wells would be abandoned or restricted to low intensity non-potable use. However, the SWRCB must first approve the modification request, which would rescind the prohibition on new meters.

Project Riparian Rights (wells)

If the MPWMD’s application to modify the Cease and Desist Order is not approved prior to project construction, domestic water supply would be provided to the project via the property’s existing riparian water rights. Emergency fire suppression to be supplied from the existing water main on Val Verde Drive. Under the property’s riparian rights, domestic and irrigation water for the project would source via one of two options, which are described below.

Under Option 1, the property owner would “wheel”¹ its riparian water rights through a wheeling agreement with Cal-Am. from three existing on-site wells: the Gamboa Replacement Well (located on the west side of Val Verde Drive), Travers Well (located on the west side of Val Verde Drive, north of Gamboa Replacement Well), and the Carmel Presbyterian Church Well (located on the east side of Val Verde Drive) to Cal-Am. Under the wheeling agreement, Cal-Am would draw raw water from their existing wells within the same alluvial aquifer as the project site and treat the water for domestic use. The domestic water would be Cal-Am would distributed provide domestic water through an extension of the existing water main on Val Verde Drive, located adjacent to the existing water main and within the existing easement, which would be conveyed to the residences through a system of 8-inch water pipes located within the street right-of-way. Under this scenario, all on-site water wells would be abandoned. Cal-Am would either A) pump an equal amount of raw water from the on-site wells through the proposed raw water main extension at Rancho Cañada Subdivision within a water easement; or B) pump an equal amount of raw water from the adjacent, newly installed Cal-Am well at the Rancho Cañada Subdivision.

Under Option 2, the property owner would not wheel the water. The project water supply would be provided from two on-site wells: Gamboa Well and Carmel Presbyterian Well. Water from these wells would be treated for domestic use at an on-site water treatment system located near the stormwater basin in the southwest portion of the project site, as shown in Figure 2-3. The water treatment system would include a hydropneumatic tank for the Carmel Presbyterian Church Well, water filters, an approximately 25-foot wide water tank, and a booster pump station, all managed by Cal-Am. Treated water would be distributed to residences through proposed 8-inch water mains located within street right-of-way. The infrastructure would be designed to allow conversion to a standard Cal-Am connection should the cease and desist order be lifted, as described in the *Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (preferred source)*

Under Option 1, Cal-Am would provide a domestic water supply directly to the project, eliminating the need for the water treatment system required under Option 2. As a result, the water treatment system would not be constructed, and the area occupied by the water treatment system in Figure 2-3 would be landscaped for use as common open space and/or extension of backyards for Lots 24-26.

- b. Sanitary Sewer.** Sanitary sewer services would be provided by the Carmel Area Wastewater District (CAWD). Wastewater generated by the proposed project would be collected and conveyed through a conventional gravity system of proposed 8-inch sanitary sewer pipes located within the proposed street right-of-ways. The wastewater collected on-site would be conveyed to a new 8-inch CAWD sanitary sewer main that would be located within the on-site proposed right-of-way along Val Verde Drive. The existing 12-inch CAWD sanitary sewer main that runs along the southern project

¹ Wheeling is when a water rights holder uses another water agency’s transmission system to transport water.

boundary before turning south and off-site would be abandoned. Final plans would require CAWD review and approval (Source: IX.1).

- c. Stormwater Management.** Approximately 55 percent of the project site would be covered by new impervious surfaces and approximately 45 percent of the project site would be covered by vegetated landscaping. The project site can be divided into two principal drainage areas: the area west of Val Verde Drive and the area east of Val Verde Drive. To reduce stormwater flows from the project site, two large bioretention basins would be constructed, one for each principal drainage area. Both bioretention basins would have the capacity to accommodate a 95th percentile rainfall event. Specifically, the bioretention basin serving the area west of Val Verde Drive would occupy approximately 8,240 square feet of the southwestern corner of the project site and would have a retention volume capacity of approximately 4,085 cubic feet. The bioretention basin serving the area east of Val Verde Drive would occupy approximately 4,993 square feet of the southern portion of the project site and would have a retention volume capacity of 5,492 cubic feet. The bioretention basins would feature a combination of ponding, permeable planting soils, infiltration materials and sub-drains systems. The basins would be designed to filter pollutants from stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces. The location of the basins is shown in Figure 2-4.
- d. Electricity and Natural Gas.** Electricity to the site would be provided by Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) on Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) infrastructure. Natural gas would be provided by PG&E.

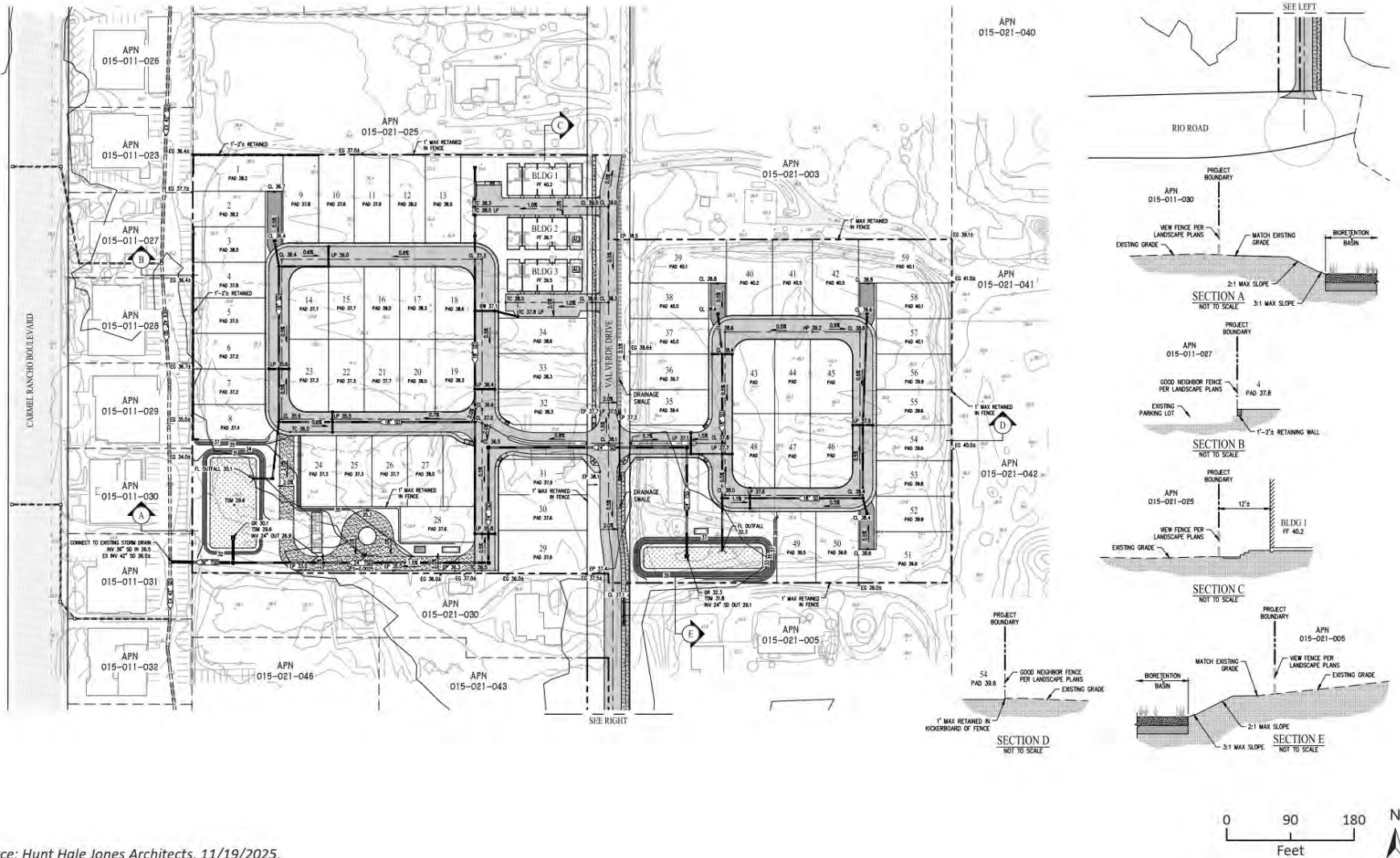
2.2.8 Grading and Construction

Site preparation would involve the demolition of the existing residence and detached garage in the southern portion of the project site and the removal of vegetation over the entire project site. This would include the removal of existing agricultural row crops and planted mixed woodland habitat, including on-site trees which include Monterey cypress, Monterey pine, coast redwood, and box elder.

Grading of the project site would require approximately 18,000 cubic yards of cut and 18,000 cubic yards of fill. The preliminary grading plan is shown in Figure 2-8.

The project is proposed to be prepared, graded, and constructed in a single phase and would be completed within approximately 18 months. Phased construction is not currently anticipated. However, if phasing becomes necessary, it would be completed in two phases (“west side” and “east side”) and would be addressed through conditions of approval and coordination with the County prior to implementation.

Figure 2-8 Preliminary Grading Plan



Source: Hunt Hale Jones Architects, 11/19/2025.

2.3 Required Approvals

This IS-MND is an informational document for both agency decision-makers and the public. The County is the lead agency responsible for adoption of the IS-MND and approving land use permits related to the project. Below is a list of approvals required by Monterey County, including but not limited to project entitlements:

- Combined Development Permit (“entitlements”) submitted pursuant to Senate Bill 330 consisting of the following:
 - 1) A Vesting Tentative Map to subdivide four parcels containing a net 12.5 acres into 60 residential lots;
 - 2) An Administrative Permit to allow the construction of 59 single family dwellings ranging between approximately 2,790 and 3,930 and 15 1,026 square foot townhomes;
 - 3) Design Approval to allow use of four conceptual single family residential floor plans and one townhouse floor plan, offered in two architectural styles: Spanish colonial and renaissance;
 - 4) Use Permit to allow development within the Carmel Valley Floodplain.
 - 5) Use Permit to allow development on slopes in excess of 25% of approximately 5,000 square feet.
- Construction, Encroachment, and Grading Permits, which includes allocation of County water credits per Allocation request submitted on October 29, 2025.

The following government agencies would or may have some level of approval for one or more components of the proposed project (post-entitlements), as required by State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15124(d):

- Monterey Peninsula Water Management District – Permit would be determined based on the project’s water supply source, and may include the following:
 - Water Distribution Permit to amend the current water system to serve the subdivision (MPWMD Rule 20-A), applicable under the *Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (preferred project water supply source)*; or
 - A Wheeling Agreement, [a Water Supply Permit Amendment from the State Water Resources Control Board \(if needed\)](#), and other permits to authorize connection to Cal-Am, applicable under the *Project Riparian Rights (wells) Option 1*.
 - Water System Distribution Permit [and a Domestic Water Supply Permit](#) from the State Water Resources Control Board, applicable under *Project Riparian Rights (wells) Option 2*.
- Carmel Area Wastewater District – Approval of final wastewater infrastructure plans.
- Monterey Bay Air Resources District - Authority to Construct /Permit to Operate

III. PROJECT CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER APPLICABLE LOCAL AND STATE PLANS AND MANDATED LAWS

Use the list below to indicate plans applicable to the project and verify their consistency or non-consistency with project implementation.

General Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Air Quality Management Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Specific Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Airport Land Use Plans	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water Quality Control Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Local Coastal Program-LUP	<input type="checkbox"/>

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED AND DETERMINATION

A. FACTORS

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, as discussed within the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and Forest Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Energy |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazards/Hazardous Materials |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hydrology/Water Quality | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Use/Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Population/Housing | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Services |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Traffic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Service Systems | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wildfires | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |

Some proposed applications that are not exempt from CEQA review may have little or no potential for adverse environmental impact related to most of the topics in the Environmental Checklist; and/or potential impacts may involve only a few limited subject areas. These types of projects are generally minor in scope, located in a non-sensitive environment, and are easily identifiable and without public controversy. For the environmental issue areas where there is no potential for significant environmental impact (and not checked above), the following finding can be made using the project description, environmental setting, or other information as supporting evidence.

Check here if this finding is not applicable

FINDING: For the above referenced topics that are not checked off, there is no potential for significant environmental impact to occur from either construction, operation or maintenance of the proposed project and no further discussion in the Environmental Checklist is necessary.

EVIDENCE:

B. DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a “potentially significant impact” or “potentially significant unless mitigated” impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.



Signature

February 13, 2026

Date

V. *EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS*

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

- 8) The explanation of each issue should identify:
 - a) The significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
 - b) The mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

VI. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

1. AESTHETICS

Would the project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista? (Source: IX.6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway? (Source: IX.6, 16)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c)	In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality? (Source: IX.6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d)	Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area? (Source: IX.4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

The Visual/Scenic Resources policies of the General Plan and Carmel Valley Master Plan are intended to protect the scenic resources of the Carmel Valley area, particularly those in visually “sensitive” or “highly sensitive” areas or areas generally visible from designated Scenic Highways, as well as views of Carmel Valley and distant hills. CVMP Policy CV-3.3 identifies public viewing areas as Garland Ranch Regional Park, Carmel Valley Road, and Laureles Grade Road. Title 21 (Zoning Ordinance) section 21.06.195 defines “common public viewing area” as a public area such as a public street, road, designated vista point, or public park from which the general public ordinarily views the surrounding viewshed. The California Department of Transportation, which manages the State’s Scenic Highway Program, recognizes State Route (SR) 1 (0.25 miles west of the project site) as an officially designated Statewide Scenic Highway and Laureles Grade Road (8.3 miles east of the project site) as an officially designated County Scenic Highway. Palo Corona Regional Park (10,000 acres) is located 0.5 miles east and 0.25 miles south of the project site.

Aesthetics Impact 1(a, c) – Less Than Significant Impact

A scenic vista is generally defined as an expansive view of highly valued landscape as observable from a publicly accessible vantage point. The closest scenic vistas to the project site are SR-1, located 0.25 miles west of the project site, and Palo Corona Regional Park, located south (0.25 miles) and east (0.5 miles) of the project site. SR-1 is designated by the California Department of Transportation as a state scenic highway (Source: IX.16). Given the distance and intervening vegetation, the project site is not visible from SR-1. Therefore, the proposed two-story structures and site improvements would not be visible from SR-1.

The project site is not visible from the northern extent of Palo Corona Regional Park due to intervening vegetation; however, construction of the proposed development would be visible along a 0.2-mile stretch of an internal hiking trail due to minimal changes in elevation and the height of the structures. From this vantage point, two-story commercial developments along Carmel Rancho Boulevard and low-density residential development are distantly visible and heavily screened by intervening vegetation. From this vantage point, the introduction of two-story residential development and associated site improvements would not substantially degrade the semi-rural, vegetated viewshed, as the development would be complementary and consistent in height, bulk, and mass with surrounding development. Additionally, the project site is visible from the park's first ridge/mountain, known as Inspiration Point (0.8 miles south). From Inspiration Point, which is recognized by the Monterey County Regional Park District as a vista for the express purpose of hiking, viewing, and sightseeing, the project site is entirely visible and thus the proposed development would also be distantly visible from Inspiration Point. Due to the elevation change of approximately 600 feet, only limited portions of the proposed southern facades and the roofs would be visible. Further, at 0.8 miles south of the project site, the proposed development's scale would appear much smaller due to distance and elevation change. The project's roof-mounted solar panels are presumed to face south. Due to distance and intervening vegetation or development, the proposed development would heavily screen from Carmel Valley Road. The proposed development would be visible from the intersection of SR-1 and Carmel Valley Road, but all views of the development would be distant and subordinate the surround commercial and developed character of this intersection. Compliance with General Plan Policy LU-1.13 would ensure that all exterior lighting is downlight and all roof-mounted solar panels have a non-reflective coating or other appropriate design to reduce glare. Additionally, the proposed project's open space and landscaping, as well as the size of the residential parcels and massing of the residential units, ensure that the project would be visually compatible with the surrounding development, including the commercial shopping center to the west and the residential subdivision south of Rio Road. Carmel Valley Master Plan Policy CV-1.1 requires that development follow a rural architectural theme to preserve the rural character of Carmel Valley. Consistent with this policy, the project would incorporate two architectural styles (Spanish colonial and Renaissance), with colors and materials consisting of earth tone colors and materials that are complementary to the area. At the proposed density and by incorporating these design details, the proposed project would be compatible with the rural character of Carmel Valley and would not introduce structures that would significantly degrade the public viewshed.

Due to distance, the proposed development would not be visible from Laureles Grade Road, or Garland Ranch Regional Park, and would not block views of the Carmel Valley River or distant hills. No other scenic resources identified within the General Plan or Carmel Valley Master Plan are within proximity to the project site that the proposed residential development would interfere with the viewshed. Given the distance and intervening topography and vegetation between the project site and the area's scenic resources, and the scale and design of the proposed development, the project would have a less than significant impact on scenic vistas.

The project site is in a non-urbanized area (as defined in CEQA Guidelines §15387). The project site is surrounded by a mix of residential and commercial development, as well as undeveloped parcels. The existing visual character of the project site is characteristic of a single family residence and detached garage on a 12.5 acre parcel, which includes 10 acres developed with row crops and 35 trees. Construction of the project would alter the visual character of the site by adding 74 residential units to the site, removing the 35 existing trees, and landscaping the site

with new trees and vegetation. However, the project would be visually consistent with the height and style of existing residential developments in the vicinity of the project site, including the mix of low to high density residential developments to the south of the site across Rio Road. The two architectural styles proposed for the residential units, Spanish colonial and Renaissance, would increase the aesthetic appeal of the project. In addition, the project would include landscaping throughout the residential development, along roadways, and throughout the private and shared open spaces and community gardens, providing vegetative screening and adding to the aesthetic quality of the project. As described above, the project would not significantly impact the viewshed from a scenic vista and would not impact any scenic resource identified by the General Plan. Public views of the project site would be from Val Verde Drive (Source: IX.6). Given that the project would be consistent with the aesthetic qualities of surrounding development, the project would not substantially degrade the visual character of the site or the quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. Impacts would be less than significant.

Aesthetics Impact 1(b) – No Impact

SR-1 is designated by the California Department of Transportation as a state scenic highway (Source: IX.16). Given the distance and intervening vegetation, the project site is not visible from SR-1. Therefore, the proposed two-story structures and site improvements would not be visible from SR-1. No rock outcroppings exist on the project site. Although trees are proposed for removal, these trees are not visible from the nearest State Scenic Highway (SR-1). Finally, the existing structure slated for removal is neither historic nor visible from SR-1. Therefore, the proposed project would not impact or damage scenic resources within a State Scenic Highway.

Aesthetics Impact 1(d) – Less Than Significant Impact

The project site is bordered to the north and south by low density residential properties, to the east by undeveloped high density residential designated land, and to the west by commercial development. There are moderate levels of existing lighting typical of the surrounding residential and commercial land uses. Primary sources of light and glare within the vicinity of the project site include interior and exterior lighting associated with the existing residential and commercial buildings, vehicle headlights, and streetlights. Existing light on the project site is limited to the on-site residence. Following completion of construction, the project would include new lighting for the proposed development, including exterior building lighting, interior lighting visible through windows, car headlights, and driveway lights. Further, the roof-mounted solar may create glare during the daytime. Although the project would introduce new sources of lighting and/or glare, the proposed lighting would be similar to surrounding land uses that already contribute to ambient light levels at night in the project area. As conditioned, all new exterior lighting and roof mounted solar would be installed in compliance with Chapter 21.63 of the County's Zoning Ordinance and Policy LU-1.13 of the General Plan, which requires lighting and other sources of glare (e.g., solar) to be glare-free and focused on intended areas (Source: IX.4). Sources of glare associated with the project site include vehicles parked in driveways or in the designated street parking spaces. The residences are not anticipated to be constructed with reflective building materials or finishes that would contribute additional glare. Accordingly, the project would introduce new sources of light and glare beyond existing conditions; however, these sources would be consistent with existing uses and would not substantially affect daytime or nighttime views. Therefore, impacts associated with light and glare would be less than significant.

2. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES

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

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use? (Source: IX.11, 90)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract? (Source: IX.23, 90)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))? (Source:IX.2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? (Source: IX.2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? (Source: IX.11)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

A Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) report was prepared by David J. Powers and Associates, Inc. on January 14, 2026 (Source: IX.90). The California LESA model is a quantitative methodology used to evaluate potential agricultural resource impacts based on the quality of agricultural soils and the surrounding land uses. These factors are scored and combined to generate a total LESA score. The purpose of the report was to provide a quantitative assessment to evaluate the project’s potential impacts to agricultural resources. The report presents an explanation of the LESA model, results of the modeling, and conclusions based on the assessment.

Agriculture and Forest Resources Impact 2(a) – Less Than Significant Impact

Within the 12.5-acre project site, approximately 11.2 acres are designated as Prime Farmland under the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) (Source: IX.11). The remaining 1.3 acres consist primarily of land designated under the FMMP as Urban along the southern portion of the site and a small portion (less than 0.1 acres) of Grazing Land along the northeastern boundary (Source: IX.11). Figure 6.2-1 shows the FMMP land designations within the project site. As discussed in subsection 2.2, *Existing Site Characteristics*, approximately 10 acres of the 12.5-acre project site are currently used for row crop agriculture producing strawberries, melons, artichokes, squash, pumpkins, fennel, fava beans, zucchini, radishes, and flowers. The project would convert the entire 11.2 acres designated as Prime Farmland from the current agriculture use to non-agricultural use as a residential development.

Chapter 21.92 (Regulations to Mitigate For Development On Farmland) of the County's Zoning Ordinance establishes regulations to mitigate the loss of farmland, as designated by the FMMP, as a result of development or the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses or the redesignation of land from an agricultural designation, pursuant to the General Plan (e.g., Farmland, Permanent Grazing, and Rural Grazing) to any designation other than an agricultural designation (e.g., Commercial, Industrial, Residential, or Public/Quasi-Public). However, Chapter 21.92 only applies to land designated or zoned for agriculture. The project site is designated in the CVMP as Low Density Residential and is zoned as Low Density Residential within a Design Control District, both of which are designated for residential uses (Source: IX.2). As such, Chapter 21.92 does not apply to the proposed project and thus does not trigger mitigation requirements described in section Title 21 section 21.92.030.

Because the project site contains 11.2 acres of land designated as Prime Farmland, a LESA report was prepared to quantitatively evaluate the project's potential impacts on agricultural resources. Using the California LESA model, the assessment evaluates both soil quality and surrounding land uses to determine the significance of agricultural land conversion. LESA scores range from zero to 100, with scores between zero and 39 indicating no significant impact to agricultural resources, scores of 80 or higher indicating a significant impact, and scores between 40 and 79 considered potentially significant depending on individual sub-scores. According to the LESA report, the project's overall LESA score is 68.5 (Source: IX.68). While scores within the 60–79 range can indicate a significant impact, significance is not triggered when either the Land Evaluation or Site Assessment sub-score is below 20 points. The project's Land Evaluation sub-score is 49.75, reflecting the agricultural capability of underlying soils, while the Site Assessment sub-score is 18.75 due to the limited extent of surrounding agricultural lands (Source: IX.11, 90).

Figure 6.2-1 Prime Farmland within the Project Site



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Farmland data provided by California Department of Conservation, 2020.

25-17790 EPS
Fig X Prime Farmland in Project Site

In summary, although the FMMP identifies the project site as Prime Farmland, the site is designated and zoned for Low Density Residential use under the CVMP and is located within a Design Control District. Because the site's land use designation is residential, County Zoning Ordinance Chapter 21.92, which establishes mitigation requirements for development on agriculturally designated land, does not apply to the project. In addition, the LESA report concludes that the site is isolated from other important farmlands and does not function as part of a broader agricultural landscape, meaning the conversion of Prime Farmland to non-agricultural use for the project would not significantly affect agricultural resources. The Monterey County Agriculture Commissioner's Office reviewed the proposed project and the LESA and concurred with its less than significant impact determination. Therefore, based on the site's residential land use designations and the LESA sub-scores indicating limited agricultural context, the project would not result in a significant impact converting Prime Farmland to non-agricultural use. Impacts would be less than significant.

Agriculture and Forest Resources Impact 2(b) - No Impact

As identified in the CVMP, the project site is currently zoned for Low Density Residential development within a Design Control District. The project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, as the site is not zoned for agriculture. According to the County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, there are no Williamson Act contracts in effect for the project site (Source: IX.23). As a result, the project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural uses or Williamson Act contracts. No impact would occur.

Agriculture and Forest Resources Impact 2(c & d) - No Impact

The project site has historically been used for agricultural purposes and is characterized by several mature trees and scattered vegetation. The project site is developed with a single family residence, detached garage, and row crops. The project site is zoned as Low Density Residential. The project site is not zoned forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220[g]); timberland (as defined by Government Code Section 51104[g]); or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104[g]). As such, the project would not conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production. Additionally, pursuant to the Tree Inventory, Assessment, and Protection Report prepared for the project (Source: IX.14), there are no forest or timberland resources on or in the vicinity of the project site. One native tree is proposed for removal; however, this single tree does not qualify as a forest resource because it does not constitute 10 percent native tree coverage on the site. Therefore, the project would not result in the loss of forest land or the conversion of forest land to non-forest use. No impact would occur.

Agriculture and Forest Resources Impact 2(e) - No Impact

The project would not involve other changes to the existing environment, that due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use or forest land to non-forest use. While the project would directly convert Prime Farmland to non-agricultural residential use, the project does not include additional changes such as new access roads, utility extensions, off site grading, or other improvements that would indirectly result in farmland or forest land conversion. Therefore, the project would not result in other changes that could result in conversion of farmland or forest land and there would be no impact.

3. AIR QUALITY

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

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan? (Source: IX.68)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) 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? (Source: IX.68)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? (Source: IX.68, 69, 70, 71, 72)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people? (Source: IX.73)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation

The CEQA Guidelines state that the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the significance determinations for project analysis.

Thresholds of Significance

Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD) has issued criteria for determining the level of significance for project specific impacts within its jurisdiction in accordance with the above thresholds. Based on criteria applied in or adapted from the MBARD Guidelines, the project’s impacts on criteria air pollution would be significant if the project would:

- Be inconsistent with the adopted Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP).
- During construction:
 - Cause a violation of the particulate matter of 10 microns or less (PM₁₀) Ambient Air Quality Standards (AAQS) nearby or upwind of sensitive receptors, based on whether the project would:
 - Emit greater than 82 pounds per day (lbs/day) of PM₁₀ if located nearby or upwind of sensitive receptors (note: projects which require minimal earthmoving on 8.1 or more acres per day or grading and excavation on 2.2 or more acres per day are likely to exceed this threshold); or
 - Use equipment that is not “typical construction equipment” as specified in Section 5.3 of the MBARD CEQA Guidelines.

- During operations:
 - Generate direct (area source or stationary) plus indirect (operational or mobile) emissions of either Reactive Organic Gases (ROG) or Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x) that exceed 137 lbs/day;
 - Generate on-site emissions of PM₁₀ exceeding 82 lbs/day;
 - Generate direct emissions of Carbon Monoxide (CO) exceeding 550 lbs/day;
 - Generate direct emissions of Sulfur Oxides (SO_x) exceeding 150 lbs/day.
 - Cause or substantially contribute to a violation of a CO standard.

Air Quality Management Plan Consistency

Residential projects that increase population will also generate population-related emissions (e.g., motor vehicles, residential heating and cooling emissions). A project would conflict with or obstruct implementation of the 2015 AQMP for the Monterey Bay Region if it is inconsistent with the plan's growth assumptions, in terms of population, employment, or regional growth in vehicle miles traveled. These population forecasts were developed, in part, using data obtained from local jurisdictions on projected land uses and population projections identified in community plans. Projects that result in an increase in population that is inconsistent with local community plans would be considered inconsistent with the AQMP. MBARD utilizes residential units to determine consistency rather than population because residential units are closely related to population and jurisdictions have the ability to track the housing stock in their area. To determine a project's consistency, a project's proposed residential units are compared to the existing and approved residential units within the jurisdiction. If the jurisdiction's residential units, including the project, are less than the forecast in the AQMP, then the project is consistent. If the jurisdiction residential units, including the project, exceed the forecast in the AQMP, then the project is not consistent.

Methodology

The analysis of air quality impacts conforms to the methodologies recommended in MBARD's CEQA Air Quality Guidelines. The handbook includes thresholds for emissions associated with both construction and operation of proposed projects.

Construction Emissions

The California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod, version 2022.1.1.37) was used to estimate construction emissions from off-road equipment and fugitive dust generated during the construction phase. CalEEMod quantifies emissions associated with the use of off-road equipment, on-road worker commute, and construction delivery and haul trucks. Fugitive dust emissions are quantified for grading and site preparation activities/earthwork, truck loading, demolition, and vehicle trips on paved and unpaved surfaces. The program calculates fugitive dust associated with on-site earthwork, including on-site grading and site preparation phases, based on the construction equipment to be used (e.g., crawler tractors, graders, dozers, scrapers), hours of use, and the estimated area of disturbance calculated for each piece of equipment.

Operational Emissions

Operational emissions associated with on-site development were estimated using CalEEMod default vehicle trip data provided for residential units. Operational emissions would be comprised of mobile source emissions, emissions associated with energy consumption, and area source emissions. Mobile source emissions are generated by the increase in vehicle trips to and from the project site associated with operation of the project. Emissions attributed to energy use include electricity (although strictly related to greenhouse gas [GHG] emissions) and natural gas consumption for space and water heating and cooling, etc. Area source emissions are generated, for example, by landscape maintenance equipment, consumer products, and architectural coatings. Emissions from the existing conditions on the site and the emissions from the full build-out of the project were calculated in order to find the net change in operational emissions at the project location.

Air Quality Impact 3(a) – Less Than Significant Impact

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) coordinates and oversees both state and federal air quality control programs in California. CARB has established 14 air basins statewide, and the project site is in the North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB), which is under the jurisdiction of MBARD. ~~The NCCAB is currently designated as nonattainment for the state particulate matter that is PM₁₀ standards and nonattainment transitional for the state one-hour and eight-hour ozone standards.~~ The NCCAB is designated as in attainment for all federal standards and other state standards. MBARD is responsible for enforcing the state and federal air quality standards and regulating stationary sources through the 2015 AQMP for the Monterey Bay Region, adopted on March 15, 2017 (Source: IX.68).

As discussed above under Section VI.3, Air Quality, *Air Quality Management Plan Consistency*, a project would conflict with or obstruct implementation of the AQMP for the Monterey Bay Region if it is inconsistent with the growth assumptions included in the 2012-2015 AQMP (Source: IX.68). The project involves the construction of 74 residential units which would result in an increase in the County's population. Based on an average household size of 2.84 persons per dwelling unit in unincorporated Monterey County, derived from Department of Finance estimates, the project would house approximately 211 residents (Source: IX.17). The population growth projections used in the 2012-2015 AQMP forecast show that the population of Monterey County will reach 495,086 residents by 2035, an increase of 31,202 from 2025 projections (Source: IX.68). The project's buildout would not exceed the AQMP population growth forecast for the County. The project's population growth represents approximately 0.70 percent of the total population growth expected in Monterey County between 2025 and 2035. The MBARD AQMP anticipated the level of population growth associated with the project in Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG)'s long-term population forecasts. Therefore, it would not exceed official regional population projections. The project would be consistent with AQMP growth assumptions and accommodated within and consistent with the AQMP. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

The owner/applicant provided the equipment that would be used for project construction. The equipment anticipated for project construction would be “typical” as specified in Section 5.3 of the MBARD CEQA Guidelines, and is considered standard equipment within the CalEEMod

Model. As such, the construction equipment that would be used for the project would not conflict with the 2015 AQMP.

In summary, the project would not result in population growth that would exceed the 2015 AQMP forecast, nor would the project result in emissions exceeding MBARD criteria pollutant thresholds or utilize construction equipment that is not accounted for within the CalEEMod Model. Therefore, the project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan (the 2015 AQMP). Impacts would be less than significant.

Air Quality Impact 3(b)– Less Than Significant Impact

As discussed under Section VI.3, *Air Quality*, Impact (a), the NCCAB is currently designated as nonattainment for the state PM₁₀ standard and nonattainment-transitional for the state one-hour and eight-hour ozone standards (Source: IX.68).

Construction emissions are generally referred to as temporary impacts of a project. However, construction emissions have potential to represent a significant impact with respect to air quality. Fugitive particulate matter dust emissions are among the pollutants of greatest concern with respect to construction activities. Emissions from construction activities can lead to adverse health effects and nuisance concerns, such as reduced visibility and soiling of exposed surfaces. Grading operations are the primary sources of fugitive particulate matter dust emissions. However, these emissions can vary greatly, depending on the level of activity, the specific operations taking place, the number and types of equipment operated, vehicle speeds, local soil conditions, weather conditions, and the amount of earth disturbance (e.g., site grading, excavation, cut and fill).

Emissions of ozone precursors NO_x and ROG are primarily generated by the operation of off-road construction equipment and mobile sources (i.e., delivery vehicles, construction worker vehicles). Generation of these emissions vary as a function of the types and number of heavy-duty, off-road equipment used and the intensity and frequency of their operation, as well as vehicle trips per day associated with delivery of construction materials, the importing and exporting of soil, vendor trips, and worker commute trips.

The project would involve demolition, site-preparation, grading, excavation, and paving, to develop 74 new residential units. The ozone precursors NO_x and ROG would be emitted by the operation of construction equipment, while PM₁₀ would be emitted by activities that disturb the soil, such as grading and excavation.

Off-road equipment exhaust emissions, including from United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)-defined non-road engines, were calculated based on emissions factors for individual pieces of construction equipment within CalEEMod and applicant-provided assumptions for the amount of construction equipment that would be operating during the construction phase and each subphase. The CalEEMod results provide the total peak emissions that would occur if all construction equipment required for the project would be operating on the same day for a total of eight hours. This is a conservative estimate; actual peak emissions would generally be lower, since it is unlikely that all construction equipment would operate simultaneously. Emissions would also be generated by construction employees traveling to and from the site, as well as trucks hauling materials to and from the site. According to MBARD,

construction related emissions could result in adverse health risks to nearby sensitive receptors if emission thresholds are exceeded (Source: IX.68).

Project construction would result in the temporary generation of vehicle and equipment exhaust and fugitive dust for the duration of construction activities. To provide a maximum case evaluation of daily construction emissions, this analysis assumed that all units on the project site would be developed concurrently. Construction emissions related to the project are presented in Table 6.3-1.

Table 6.3-1 Estimated Daily Construction Emissions

Estimated emissions (lbs/day)	ROG	NO _x	CO	SO _x	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}
2026 Maximum Daily Emissions	1	4	41	<1	5	2
2027 Maximum Daily Emissions	1	4	34	<1	<1	<1
MBARD Threshold	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	82	N/A
Threshold Exceeded?	N/A	/	/	/	No	/

See CalEEMod Calculations, Source: IX.74

As shown in Table 6.3-1, temporary emissions during construction would not exceed MBARD’s significance thresholds. Further, per the draft Construction Management Plan, less than 2.2 acres of grading and excavation and less than 8.1 acres of earthmoving would occur per day during construction. As such, short-term air quality emissions during project construction would be less than significant.

Operational emissions would result from ongoing activities associated with occupancy of the proposed 74 residential units, including motor vehicle trips generated by residents, visitors, and service providers, as well as energy consumption for building operations such as electricity and natural gas use for space heating, water heating, cooking, and other household uses. These activities would generate criteria air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions on a daily basis for the life of the project. Because there is one existing residence on the site, the existing emissions from this residence were subtracted from the project’s total operational emissions to calculate the project’s net change in operational emissions. Table 6.8-2 summarizes the operational emissions from the project.

Table 6.3-2 Estimated Annual Operational Emissions

	Estimated Emissions (lbs/day)					
	ROG	NO _x	CO	SO _x	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}
Mobile	3	2	17	<1	4	1
Area	6	1	7	<1	<1	<1
Energy	<1	1	<1	<1	<1	<1
Total Project	9	4	24	<1	4	1
Less: Existing Emissions	-<1	-<1	-<1	-<1	-<1	-<1
Net Emissions	9	4	24	<1	4	1
<i>MBARD Threshold</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>550</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>82</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Threshold Exceeded?	No	No	No	No	No	N/A

See CalEEMod calculations, Source: IX.74

As shown in Table 6.3-2, project operational emission would not exceed the applicable MBARD thresholds for any of the criteria pollutants. Therefore, project operation would not 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.

Air Quality Impact 3(c)– Less Than Significant Impact

Construction Dust

As described in Section VI.3, *Air Quality*, Impact (b), project construction emissions would not exceed MBARD daily thresholds (Source: IX.68). The nearest existing sensitive receptors are existing residences located adjacent, south, east, and west of the project site and the residential development directly south of Rio Road.

MBARD recommends evaluating potential impacts to sensitive receptors within 1,000 feet of a project site; however, as discussed in Section VI.3, *Air Quality*, Impact (b), the highest daily PM₁₀ emissions associated with project construction would not exceed the MBARD's threshold of 82 lbs/day. This estimate for PM₁₀ emissions does not include compliance with MBARD Rule 400 (Visible Emissions), Rule 425 (Use of Cutback Asphalt), and Rule 426 (Architectural Coatings), which would further reduce emissions of dust particulates by minimizing overspray and volatilization of coating materials that could otherwise become aerosolized and contribute to localized particulate concentrations, as well as ROGs by limiting the volatile organic compound (VOC) content of architectural coatings used on-site during construction activity (Source: IX.69). Therefore, the project would not have a significant impact on any sensitive receptors through an exposure to substantial pollutant concentrations relating to construction dust. Impacts would be less than significant.

Short-Term Construction Toxic Air Contaminants

Project construction would result in temporary project-generated emissions of diesel particulate matter (DPM) (exhaust emissions) from off-road, heavy-duty diesel equipment for site preparation, demolition, grading, building construction, and other construction activities. DPM was identified as a toxic air contaminant (TAC) by CARB in 1998 (Source: IX.69, 70).

Generation of DPM from construction projects typically occurs in a single area for a short period. Project construction would involve the use of heavy construction equipment over approximately 18 months. The dose to which the receptors are exposed is the primary factor used to determine health risk. Dose is a function of the concentration of a substance or substances in the environment and the extent of exposure that person has to the substance. Dose is positively correlated with time, meaning that a longer exposure period would result in a higher exposure level for the Maximally Exposed Individual. The risks estimated for a Maximally Exposed Individual are higher if a fixed exposure occurs over a longer period of time. According to the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, health risk assessments, which determine the exposure of sensitive receptors to toxic emissions, should be based on a 70-year exposure period; however, such assessments should be limited to the period/duration of activities associated with the project. Thus, the duration of proposed construction activities (i.e., 18 months) is approximately five percent of the total exposure period used for 30-year health risk

calculations. Current models and methodologies for conducting health-risk assessments are associated with longer-term exposure periods of 9, 30, and 70 years, which do not correlate well with the temporary and highly variable nature of construction activities, resulting in difficulties in producing accurate estimates of health risk (Source: IX.71).

Based on the project design, construction equipment would be equipped with USEPA Tier 4 engines, which greatly reduce DPM emissions compared to older engines. With the use of Tier 4 engines, DPM generated by project construction is not anticipated to create conditions where the probability is greater than ten in one million of contracting cancer for the Maximally Exposed Individual or to generate ground-level concentrations of non-carcinogenic TACs that exceed a Hazard Index greater than one for the Maximally Exposed Individual. Therefore, project construction would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial TAC concentrations, and impacts would be less than significant.

Operational Toxic Air Contaminants

DPM would be emitted from diesel-fueled off-road equipment, including equipment used during landscaping, and by project-generated traffic (on-road diesel vehicles) within the vicinity of the site. The particulate matter component of diesel exhaust has been classified as a TAC by CARB based on its potential to cause cancer and other adverse health effects. Urban roads with traffic volumes exceeding 100,000 vehicles per day or rural roads with volumes greater than 50,000 vehicles per day are potentially hazardous sources of TACs within 500 feet of a sensitive receptor (Source: IX.72). Roadways near the project site do not have traffic volumes that exceed these thresholds (see Section VI.17, *Transportation/Traffic*). Therefore, the project site is not located near any major sources of TACs, and the project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. Impacts would be less than significant.

Carbon Monoxide Hotspots

Areas with high vehicle density, such as congested intersections and parking garages, have the potential to create high concentrations of CO, known as CO “hot spots,” which can expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. Specifically, hot spots can be created at intersections where traffic levels are sufficiently high such that the local CO concentration exceeds the federal AAQS of 35.0 parts per million (ppm) or the state AAQS of 20.0 ppm.

According to the MBARD CEQA Air Quality Guidelines, a local CO hotspot analysis should be conducted if:

1. Intersections or road segments that operate at Level of Service (LOS) D or better would operate at LOS E or F with the project’s traffic,
2. Intersections or road segments that operate at LOS E or F where the volume-to-capacity (V/C) ratio would increase 0.05 or more with the project’s traffic,
3. Intersections that operate at LOS E or F where delay would increase by 10 seconds or more with the project’s traffic,
4. Unsignalized intersections which operate at LOS E or F where the reserve capacity would decrease by 50 or more with the project’s traffic,

5. The project would generate substantial heavy duty traffic or generate substantial traffic along urban street canyons or near a major stationary source of CO.

As further described in Section VI.17, *Transportation/Traffic*, the project would involve the development of 74 residences and would not generate substantial heavy duty truck traffic or generate substantial traffic along urban street canyons or near major stationary sources of CO. Although the project would add vehicle trips to these segments, it would not further degrade existing LOS, nor increase the V/C ratio or delay substantially enough to warrant a CO hotspot analysis (see Section VI.17, *Transportation/Traffic*). As such, CO hotspot impacts would be less than significant.

Air Quality Impact 3(d) – Less Than Significant Impact

Project construction would generate temporary odors from vehicle exhaust and equipment exhaust. However, construction-related odors would disperse and dissipate and would not cause substantial odors at the closest sensitive receptors, such as nearby residences to the north or south of the project site (Source: IX.73). Contractors would be required to comply with the provisions of California Code of Regulations (CCR) Sections 2449 and 2485, which prohibit diesel-fueled commercial motor vehicles and off-road diesel vehicles from idling for more than five minutes to minimize unnecessary fuel consumption, which would limit exhaust fumes. In addition, construction-related odors would be temporary and would cease upon completion of construction. During operation, the proposed residences would not be expected to produce other emissions, such as lead, or result in nuisance odors. Therefore, the project would not result in other emissions, such as those leading to odors, that could adversely affect a substantial number of people. Impacts would be less than significant.

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES			Less Than Significant		
Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service? (Source: IX.14, 58, 59)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service? (Source: IX.58, 59, 60, 61)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means? (Source: IX.59, 60, 61)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites? (Source: IX.58, 59, 60)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance? (Source: IX.2, 14)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan? (Source: IX.2, 4, 58)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

Rana Creek Habitat Restoration (RANA) completed a Biological Assessment of the project site in May 2024. The assessment included a review of literature and regional resource agency databases including the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CBDDB), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Critical Habitat Mapper, USFWS wetland data, Natural Resource Conservation Service Soil Survey, California Native Plant Society’s Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants, and USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation; and a field reconnaissance survey conducted by RANA biologists on May 9, 2024 (Source: IX.58; County of Monterey Library No. LIB240302). Monk & Associates (M&A) prepared a Due Diligence Biological Site Assessment Report for the project site in May 2024 (revised December 2025). This assessment included a review of literature and regional resource agency databases including the CDFW CNDDDB, California Native Plant Society’s Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants, and a field reconnaissance

survey conducted by M&A biologists on May 29, 2024 (Source: IX.59; County of Monterey Library No. LIB250157). M&A prepared two additional memos for the project, the Memo Discussing Findings on the Willow Stand, and the Memo on the USGS Hydrography Dataset. The memos included an additional field survey conducted by an M&A biologist on December 17, 2025 and a review of the United States Geological Survey (USGS) National Hydrography Dataset (Source: IX.60, 61). Richard Gessner prepared a Tree Inventory, Assessment, and Protection Report for the project site in April 2025. The assessment included a tree survey by an arborist on February 5, 2025 (Source: IX.14; County of Monterey Library No. LIB250132). The purpose of these reports was to determine the presence of biological resources at the project site. The reports present an explanation of the research, investigation procedures, results of surveys and research findings, and recommendations for the project, and were used to develop the analysis for this section.

The 12.5-acre project site is mostly flat at an elevation of 33 feet above mean sea level. The project site is located approximately 1,050 feet north of the Carmel River and approximately 725 feet north of the Carmel River riparian corridor. There are no regulatory waters, aquatic resources, or wetlands on-site. The entire project site is highly disturbed from the current agricultural use and is developed with row crops, a single family residence, and detached garage. The majority of the site supports agrestal cropland² and ruderal herbaceous vegetation. A planted mixed woodland surrounds the residence in the south-central portion of the project site with species such as Monterey cypress (*Hesperocyparis macrocarpa*), Monterey pine (*Pinus radiata*), myoporum (*Myoporum laetum*), coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), box elder (*Acer negundo*), and holly-leafed cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia*). The understory is dominated by nonnative invasive plants, including thistles, Arundo, cape ivy, hemlock, black mustard, and nasturtium. The project site is surrounded by a mix of residential and commercial development, as well as undeveloped parcels. The project site is bordered to the north and south by low density residential designated properties developed with single family residences; to the east by undeveloped high density residential designated land; and to the west by visitor accommodation/professional office designated land developed with existing commercial use buildings and associated parking lots. Immediately east and southeast of the project site lies the former Rancho Cañada Golf Club, which is planned for redevelopment for residential and recreational uses as the Ranch Cañada Village Subdivision to include approximately 145 residential units and 38-acres of permanent open space. Beyond the planned Ranch Cañada Village Subdivision, the project site is surrounded to the south and east by Palo Corona Regional Park.

Biological Resources Impact 4(a) – Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Special Status Plants

Based on the review of resource agency databases, 25 special status plants are known to occur or have the potential to occur within a 1.6 mile radius of the project site (Source: IX.58). During the 2024 field surveys conducted by RANA and M&A, the potential for special status plants to occur on the project site was evaluated. No special status plant species were observed during the field surveys. Based on the absence of suitable habitat and previous site disturbance, the field surveys determined that special-status plant species do not have the potential to occur on the project site

² Agrestal cropland is a weed dominated community of rural, agricultural areas that form in areas disturbed by agricultural cultivation (Source: IX.59).

(Source: IX.58, 59). Plant communities observed during the field surveys included agrestal croplands, ruderal herbaceous vegetation, and a small, disturbed mixed woodland around the single-family residence along the southern boundary of the project site, as shown in Figure 6-4.1. The mixed woodland was determined to have been intentionally planted, not part of a native stand, and impacted by non-native species and human disturbance (Source: IX.58). Given the confirmed lack of presence or suitable habitat for special status plants, the project would not result in impacts to special status plants either directly or indirectly through habitat modifications, and potential impacts to special status plants would be less than significant.

Special Status Wildlife

Based on the review of resource agency databases, 23 special status animals are known to occur or have the potential to occur within a 1.6 mile radius of the project site (Source: IX.58). According to the 2024 field surveys, three special status animal species were identified as having the potential to occur within the project site based on the presence of suitable habitat or foraging. The potential for the remaining species identified in the database reviews was eliminated based on known occurrences, lack of aquatic habitat, and the highly disturbed nature of the project site due to agricultural activities that have eliminated the habitat conditions these species require (Source: IX.59, 60, 61). These species are not discussed further in this section.

The planted mixed woodland provides suitable habitat for Monterey dusky-footed woodrat (*Neotoma macrotis Luciana*), California red-legged frog ([CRLF] *Rana draytonii*), overwintering monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), and potential nesting and foraging habitat for non-game migratory birds and native birds protected by California Fish and Game Code Section 3503 and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Trees within this vegetation community are proposed for removal, which would have a direct effect on these species through habitat loss or nest destruction. The project would indirectly affect these species during project operation as a result of increased human presence and habitat modifications (Source: IX.58, 59). See below for a discussion of potential impacts associated with the three special status animal species that have the potential to occur within the project site.

Monterey dusky-footed woodrat

The Monterey dusky-footed woodrat, a subspecies of the common woodrat, is a California species of special concern. This species requires dense cover, such as oak woodlands or willow riparian areas. Woodrats nests are typically multi-chamber structures composed of dead woods, leaves and grass and are often found next to trees. Multiple nests with signs of recent activity were observed within the planted mixed woodland area during the 2024 field surveys (Source: IX.58, 59). If present, individuals could be directly impacted by tree removal and ground-disturbing activities through injury, mortality, habitat loss, or nest destruction, and indirectly impacted during project operation due to increased human presence and habitat loss. These impacts would be potentially significant. **Mitigation Measures BIO-1** and **BIO-2** would be implemented to avoid significant impacts to Monterey dusky-footed woodrat during construction, reducing the impact to a less than significant level.

Figure 6.4-1 Plant Communities within the Project Site



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25-17790 BIO
Fig X Vegetation Communities

California red-legged frog

The CRLF is federally Threatened and a California species of special concern. This species uses both aquatic and upland habitats for migration and dispersal and may travel distances up to three miles during the course of a wet season. The project site is not within critical habitat for the species, although designated critical habitat for the CRLF is present to the south, east, and northeast of the project site. The closest critical habitat unit to the project site, MNT2, is located adjacent to the Carmel River 0.1 mile south of the project site. No CRLF were observed within the project site during the 2024 field surveys, but there are two CNDDDB occurrences of the species within three miles of the project site. The nearest record (Occurrence #1107) in 2003 was adjacent to the Carmel River, approximately 600 feet southeast of the project site (Source: IX.58).

Although the Carmel River provides suitable dispersal/migration habitat for the species, there is no direct connection from the Carmel River to the project site, and the species would need to travel 0.25-mile through uplands or along ephemeral drainages and culverts to occur on the site. Once on-site, there is no suitable aquatic breeding habitat for the species (Source: IX.59). There are closer occurrences within water features on the former golf course east of the site that may provide suitable habitat (approximately 314 feet east of the property). Typical upland habitat consists of downed woody vegetation, leaf litter, and small mammal burrows, densely vegetated areas, and even man-made structures (i.e., culverts, livestock troughs, spring-boxes, abandoned sheds) up to 328 feet from breeding habitat (Source: IX.77). CRLF may migrate to upland habitats or between breeding ponds, especially when aquatic habitat dries seasonally; however, most of these movements are small scale (within 85 feet). Occasionally, individuals have been documented making far ranging movements of up to 1.7 miles (Source: IX.77). However, a review of aerial imagery indicates that these golf course ponds have remained dry year-round for many years (Source: IX.58). Therefore, there is a moderate potential for this species to occur during upland movement. If present, individuals could be significantly impacted during construction and grading activities. **Mitigation Measures BIO-1, BIO-3, and BIO-4** would be implemented to avoid significant impacts to CRLF during construction, reducing the impact to a less than significant level.

Overwintering monarch butterfly

The planted Monterey cypress trees along the southern boundary of the property could provide temporary, marginal habitat for overwintering monarch butterflies; however, the trees are isolated and subject to wind and human disturbance. As such, they do not meet the requirement for overwintering habitat. No monarch butterflies were observed during the 2024 field surveys, and none were observed by RANA during past site surveys conducted in 2012 and 2022 (Source: IX.59). The nearest CNDDDB record (Occurrence #85) of overwintering monarch butterfly was 2.8 miles southwest of the project site. This record documents a species population first observed in December 1984 and last observed in 1985. Fewer than 100 individuals were observed in 1985, and none were observed in 1990 (Source: IX.59). Based on the lack of known occurrences and marginal suitable habitat, the potential for monarch butterfly to occur on the project site is very low. Additionally, the project would not impact any overwintering or foraging habitat, as the site is actively farmed. Impacts to monarch butterfly would be less than significant.

Nesting birds

Non-game migratory birds and native birds protected by California Fish and Game Code Section 3503 and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, including white-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*), Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*), Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*), Bewick's wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*), and other migratory birds may nest or forage within the planted mixed woodland area along the southern boundary of the project site. No nests were observed during the field surveys; however, protected bird species listed above were observed to be present and foraging during the 2024 field surveys (Source: IX.58, 59). These trees are proposed for removal, which would impact nesting birds if active nests are present on-site, through nest abandonment or destruction. Indirect impacts to nesting birds may occur if active nests are present in undeveloped and landscaped areas adjacent to active construction or staging through disturbance and nest abandonment. These impacts would be potentially significant. Compliance with the County's standard Raptor/Migratory Bird Nesting Condition of Approval (PD050), together with implementation of **Mitigation Measure BIO-1**, would avoid significant impacts to nesting birds during construction, reducing the impact to a less than significant level.

Condition of Approval PD050 requires that a nesting bird survey be completed by a County-approved qualified biologist no more than seven days prior to initiation of any construction activities, including construction staging and vegetation removal, that would be conducted during the typical nesting bird season (February 1 - August 31). The nesting bird surveys shall include an examination of all buildings on-site and all trees and shrubs on-site and within 300 feet of the project site (i.e., within a zone of influence of nesting birds), in addition to the ground area. A nesting bird preconstruction survey report documenting survey methods, dates, and results shall be prepared and submitted to the County for review and verification prior to initiation of on-site construction activities, including staging and mobilization, regardless of whether active nests or roosts are observed.

If no active nests or roosts are observed, no further mitigation is necessary. If active bird nests are identified on-site or within the zone of influence, a no-disturbance buffer zone shall be established by the Project Biologist based on the species and nest location, and the area shall be fully avoided. Full avoidance shall be documented by regular site visits by a County-approved qualified biologist. These site visits shall be documented in monitoring reports submitted to the County for verification that the project complies with full avoidance of nests or roosts. The monitoring and report documentation shall continue for the duration of the project or until the nests or roosts are no longer active.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure BIO-1. Worker Environmental Awareness Program

Monterey dusky-footed woodrat, CRLF, and other special status species may be present on site. To ensure impacts are less than significant, the owner/applicant shall retain a County-approved qualified biologist (Project Biologist) to conduct a Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training prior to subdivision improvements and prior to the construction of residential development. The Project Biologist shall provide the training to all personnel associated with

project construction to ensure they can recognize special-status species and sensitive biological resources that may occur on-site. The program shall include identification of the special status species and their habitats, a description of the regulatory status and general ecological characteristics of sensitive resources, and review of the limits of construction and mitigation measures required to reduce impacts to biological resources within the work area. A fact sheet conveying this information shall also be prepared for distribution to all contractors, their employers, and other personnel involved with construction of the project. All employees shall sign a form documenting that they have attended the WEAP training and understand the information presented to them. The form shall be submitted to the County to document compliance prior to the initiation of ground disturbing activities, and updated and resubmitted as new personnel are added to the construction site.

Compliance Actions:

Prior to approval of the Final Map, this mitigation measure's language and requirements shall be added as a note on the Final Map.

Prior to issuance of grading permits for subdivision improvements (all phases, if phased) from HCD-Building Services, the owner/applicant shall submit evidence to HCD-Planning of a contract with a qualified biologist to implement the requirements of this mitigation measure.

Prior to initiation of grading activities associated within subdivision improvements (all phases, if phased), including staging and mobilization, the owner/applicant/Project Biologist shall submit documentation signed by all personnel associated with project construction that they have attended the WEAP training and understand the information presented to them to HCD-Planning.

Prior to issuance of grading permits/construction permits for residential development (all phases, if phased) from HCD-Building Services, the owner/applicant shall submit evidence to HCD-Planning of a contract with a qualified biologist to implement the requirements of this mitigation measure.

Prior to the initiation of construction activities associated with the residential development (all phases, if phased) , the owner/applicant/Project Biologist shall submit documentation signed by all personnel associated with project construction that they have attended the WEAP training and understand the information presented to them to HCD-Planning.

On an ongoing basis, updated documentation shall be submitted as new personnel are added to the construction site.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2. Monterey Dusky-Footed Woodrats Survey

To the greatest extent feasible, initial vegetation removal shall occur when woodrats are least likely to be reproducing (October - November). If infeasible and construction/grading permits are to be issued between October and November, the owner/applicant shall retain a County-approved qualified biologist (Project Biologist) to implement this mitigation measure and conduct a pre-construction survey for Monterey dusky-footed woodrat nests within 50 feet of the project work limits no more than 30 days prior to construction. Identified nest(s) shall be flagged and avoided, where possible. If the nest(s) cannot be avoided and must be removed to allow

construction activities, the nest(s) shall be dismantled by hand prior to grading or vegetation removal activities. A report of the preconstruction survey results and any proposed avoidance buffers or nest removals shall be submitted to the County for review and verification prior to the initiation of any dismantling activities and/or construction activities that could affect woodrat nests.

Dismantling of nest(s) shall be monitored by the Project Biologist. The Project Biologist shall have the authority to halt construction or dismantling activities within the work area if woodrat nests or individuals are at risk, until appropriate avoidance or corrective measures are implemented at the biologist's discretion. If young are encountered during nest dismantling, the dismantling activity shall cease, and the material shall be carefully replaced back on the nest. Once the biologist determines that the young are capable of being independent, nest dismantling shall be allowed to continue. All dismantling activities shall be completed prior to on-site construction activities, including staging and mobilization. A report documenting the dismantling shall be submitted to the County within seven days of activities requiring nest removal. This mitigation measure is not applicable to the construction of residential structures, as all vegetation and ground clearing associated with subdivision improvements will remove any potential dusky-footed woodrat habitat.

Compliance Actions:

Prior to issuance of grading permits for subdivision improvements (all phases, if phased) from HCD-Building Services, the owner/applicant shall submit evidence to HCD-Planning of a contract with a qualified biologist to implement the requirements of this mitigation measure.

If the initiation of project grading or vegetation removal associated with subdivision improvements (all phases, if phased) occurs during October - November, the owner/applicant/Project Biologist shall submit to HCD-Planning a copy of the preconstruction survey results report that includes any proposed avoidance buffers or nest removals. If nest(s) are identified during the preconstruction surveys that cannot be feasibly avoided, the Project Biologist shall monitor the dismantling of nest(s). Following removal, the owner/applicant/Project Biologist shall submit to HCD-Planning a copy of the report documenting dismantling within seven days of activities requiring nest removal.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3. CRLF Avoidance

The following measures shall be implemented during project construction.

- To the greatest extent possible, work activities shall be completed between May 1 and October 31 to avoid the breeding season of the CRLF, when activities would be most disruptive to the species. If work activities occur outside this period, the avoidance, survey, and monitoring measures described below shall be implemented.
- A County-approved qualified biologist with experience in identification of all life stages of CRLF and its habitat shall conduct a pre-construction survey no more than 14 days before the onset of work activities. A report of the preconstruction survey results shall be submitted to the County for review and verification prior to on-site construction activities, including staging and mobilization.

- A County-approved qualified biologist shall conduct a daily clearance survey prior to the start of work and be present during all initial ground disturbing project activities, including vegetation removal. A report of monitoring results shall be submitted to the County for review and verification within 14 days of completion of all initial ground disturbance and vegetation removal.
- If any life stage of CRLF is detected at any time throughout the duration of the project, project activities shall cease and the County shall be notified immediately. Work shall not continue on-site until the County-approved qualified biologist has verified the individual has left the project site on its own. If the individual does not leave the site, and/or may be impacted by the project, the County shall contact the USFWS and if the USFWS determines that adverse effects to the CRLF or habitat cannot be avoided, the project shall not commence until further guidance from USFWS is provided.
- Workers shall inspect all holes and trenches for CRLF or entrapped wildlife prior to backfill. Open trenches greater than three feet deep shall be covered at the end of the day or ramped to prevent entrapment.
- No work shall occur during a rain event exceeding 0.25 inch in a 24-hour period. If work resumes within 24 hours of a rain event, a County-approved qualified biologist shall inspect the site again prior to resuming work.
- Water shall not be impounded in a manner that may attract CRLF.
- Workers shall not handle any wildlife.
- Pets shall be prohibited at the construction site.
- All food-related garbage shall be placed in tightly sealed containers at the end of each workday to avoid attracting predators. Containers shall be emptied and garbage removed from the construction site at the end of each workweek. If sealed containers are not available, garbage shall be removed from the construction site upon completion of daily activities. All garbage removed from the construction site shall be disposed of at an appropriate off-site refuse location

Compliance Actions:

Prior to approval of the Final Map, a note shall be added to the Final Map summarizing the requirements of this mitigation measure, subject to approval by HCD-Planning.

Prior to issuance of grading permits for subdivision improvements (all phases, if phased) from HCD-Building Services, the owner/applicant shall include a note on the grading/construction plans encompassing the language contained in Mitigation Measure BIO-3, including all compliance actions.

Prior to initiation of grading activities associated within subdivision improvements (all phases, if phased), including staging and mobilization, the owner/applicant shall submit evidence to HCD-Planning of a contract with a qualified biologist to implement the requirements of this mitigation measure.

Prior to initiation of grading activities associated within subdivision improvements (all phases, if phased) between November 1 and April 31, the owner/applicant/Project Biologist shall provide a copy of the preconstruction survey results report to HCD-Planning.

Within 14 days of completion of all initial ground disturbance and vegetation removal associated with subdivision improvements, the owner/applicant shall provide a copy of the daily monitoring results report to HCD-Planning.

Prior to issuance of grading permits/construction permits for residential development from HCD-Building Services, the owner/applicant shall include a note on the grading/construction plans encompassing the language contained in Mitigation Measure BIO-3, including all compliance actions.

Prior to issuance of grading permits/construction permits for residential development from HCD-Building Services, the owner/applicant shall submit evidence to HCD-Planning of a contract with a qualified biologist to implement the requirements of this mitigation measure.

Prior to initiation of grading or construction activities for residential development (all phases, if phased) between November 1 and April 31, the owner/applicant/Project Biologist shall provide a copy of the preconstruction survey results report to HCD-Planning.

Within 14 days of completion of all initial ground disturbance associated with residential development, the owner/applicant shall provide a copy of the daily monitoring results report to HCD-Planning.

Prior to final inspection of all grading and construction permits from HCD-Building Services, the Project Biologist shall submit a final report to HCD-Planning demonstrating compliance with this mitigation measure for all phases.

Mitigation Measure BIO-4. Exclusionary Protective Fencing

Prior to issuance of grading permits/construction permits for subdivision improvements from HCD-Building Services, a qualified biologist (Project Biologist) shall be retained to supervise the installation of temporary exclusionary protection fencing with one-way funnels along the eastern and southern property lines the project site for the duration of all grading and construction. Fencing shall be installed prior to any site grubbing or grading activities associated with subdivision improvements and construction to prevent small mammals, amphibians, or reptiles from migrating onto the site. Installation during the dry season is intended to minimize the potential for amphibians that disperse during wet weather conditions to enter and potentially establish on the project site. The Project Biologist shall oversee the installation of the fencing. The Project Biologist or Contractor shall verify that the fencing is properly installed and maintained throughout all ground disturbance and construction, until such time that privacy fencing along the southern and eastern perimeter is installed. Exclusionary fencing may be modified to install privacy fencing (section by section). Any damage or gaps in the fencing shall be repaired immediately upon discovery. A report documenting protection fencing location and methods shall be submitted to HCD-Planning for review and verification prior to on-site construction activities, including staging and mobilization.

Compliance Actions:

Prior to approval of the Final Map, a note shall be added to the Final Map stating “Exclusionary fencing along the eastern and southern property lines shall be properly installed and maintained throughout all ground disturbance and construction, until such time that privacy fencing along the southern and eastern perimeter is installed. Exclusionary fencing may be modified to install privacy fencing (section by section). Any damage or gaps in the fencing shall be repaired immediately upon discovery. The Project Biologist/Contractor shall keep a log of activities” or the equivalent language.

Prior to issuance of grading permits for subdivision improvements (all phases, if phased) from HCD-Building Services, the owner/applicant shall submit evidence to HCD-Planning of a contract with a qualified biologist to implement the requirements of this mitigation measure.

Prior to the issuance of grading permits for subdivision improvements (all phases, if phased) from Building Services, the owner/applicant/Project Biologist shall provide a copy of the report documenting the protection fencing location and methods to HCD-Planning.

Weekly, during active grading during subdivision improvements, the Project Biologist/Contractor shall ensure the protective fencing remains properly installed. Any damage or gaps in the fencing shall be repaired immediately upon discovery. The Project Biologist/Contractor shall keep a log of activities.

Prior to issuance of grading permits/construction permits for residential development (all phases, if phased) from HCD-Building Services, the owner/applicant shall submit evidence to HCD-Planning that the exclusionary fencing is still installed.

On an ongoing basis, the Project Biologist/Contractor shall verify that the fencing is properly installed and maintained throughout all ground disturbance and construction, until such time that privacy fencing along the southern and eastern perimeter is installed. Exclusionary fencing may be modified to install privacy fencing (section by section). Any damage or gaps in the fencing shall be repaired immediately upon discovery. The Project Biologist/Contractor shall keep a log of activities.

Prior to final inspections for all grading and construction permits, the Project Biologist shall submit a final report to HCD-Planning demonstrating ongoing or final compliance with this mitigation measure, as applicable.

Biological Resources Impact 4(b) – No Impact

The review of resource agency databases did not identify the presence of any sensitive natural communities within a 1.6-mile radius of the project site (Source: IX.58). A row of arroyo willows (*Salix lasiolepis*) is present along the southern project site boundary of Val Verde Road. These trees do not form an arroyo willow thicket shrubland alliance as defined by CDFW’s Manual of California Vegetation. The arroyo willows do not dominate the shrub/tree layer nor do they grow in a structurally dense form with continuous canopy cover. The understory is dominated by nonnative invasive species, including thistles, arundo, cape ivy, hemlock, and black mustard, rather than moisture-tolerant herbs typical of riparian alliances. Further, based on

the absence of hydrology and hydric soil indicators observed during the December 2025 field survey, the arroyo willow trees do not represent a forested wetland and likely germinated from irrigation water used for crop production during on-site agricultural activities (Source: IX.60, 61). No other evidence of sensitive natural communities or riparian habitat was observed during the 2024 field surveys (Source: IX.58, 59). As such, no adverse effect on sensitive natural communities or riparian habitat would occur as a result of the project. There would be no impact.

Biological Resources Impact 4(c) – No Impact

Based on the review of resource agency databases, including the USGS National Hydrography Dataset and December 2025 field survey conducted by M&A, no wetlands or other potentially jurisdictional features occur within or adjacent to the project site (Source: IX.59, 60). During the field survey, no evidence of hydric soils or wetland hydrology, such as standing water, saturated soils, or soil surface cracks were observed (Source: IX.60, 61). Therefore, no impacts to jurisdictional wetlands or waters would occur as a result of the project.

Biological Resources Impact 4(d) – Less Than Significant Impact

The project site does not provide an effective wildlife movement corridor because it does not connect distinct or isolated natural areas and is surrounded by a mix of existing residential and commercial development to the north, south, and west. Further, an existing perimeter fence limits any effective wildlife movement. Undeveloped land to the east and southeast of the site is planned for redevelopment as the Rancho Cañada Village Subdivision, which would include approximately 145 residential units and 38-acres of permanent open space. This planned development would further limit future wildlife movement in the vicinity of the project site. Beyond the planned Rancho Cañada Village Subdivision, undeveloped lands within Palo Corona Regional Park to the south and east provide broader wildlife linkages connecting Point Lobos, surrounding preserves, and Los Padres National Forest. The project site does not function as a wildlife corridor to these undeveloped lands because existing residential and commercial development to the north, south, and west of the site impedes wildlife movement.

Wildlife could potentially move from the Carmel River riparian corridor, located approximately 725 feet south of the site, north to the project site. However, such movement would be constrained by existing residential development. The project site does not contain aquatic habitat, nor is it hydraulically connected to aquatic habitat, that would interfere with the movement of native resident or migratory fish species (Source: IX.60). Based on the existing residential and commercial development surrounding the project site to the north, south and west, and the lack of connectivity of the site to natural landscape, the project is not expected to significantly impede wildlife movement through established corridors. Impacts to wildlife movement through established corridors would be less than significant.

Biological Resources Impact 4(e) – Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

The project is subject to the goals and policies of the General Plan and the CVMP, which include requirements for tree protection and biological resource conservation. **Mitigation Measures BIO-1** through **BIO-4**, and Condition of Approval PD050, as described under Section VI.4, *Biological Resources*, Impact (a), would avoid and reduce impacts to special status species to a

less than significant level. Therefore, the project would be consistent with relevant policies, including General Plan Policy OS-5.4, which requires avoidance, minimization, and mitigation of impacts to biological resources and Policy OS-5.25, which requires protection of nesting migratory birds during the breeding season (Source: IX.2, 4).

CVMP Policy CV-3.11 discourages the removal of healthy native oak, madrone, and redwood trees within the CVMP Area. This policy is codified in Monterey County Code Section 21.64.260(C). No native oaks or madrone trees occur within the project site. However, one Coast redwood tree has been documented within the planted mixed woodland in the southern portion of the site and was determined to be protected under Monterey County Code 21.64.260.C.2 (Source: IX.14). The tree is proposed to be removed during site preparation. Removal of three or less protected trees would require approval from the County Director of Planning, or appropriate authority for the entirety of the project, consistent with Monterey County Code 21.64.260. Monterey County Code 21.64.260 requires that native tree removal be replanted on-site on a 1:1 ratio. Upon approval from the County Director of Planning, or appropriate authority, the project would not conflict with local policies or ordinances related to tree preservation or removal (Source: IX.2).

Therefore, with implementation of **Mitigation Measures BIO-1** through **BIO-4**, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Biological Resources Impact 4(f) – No Impact

The project site is not under the jurisdiction of any Habitat Conservation Plans, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan (Source: IX.2, 4, 58). Therefore, no impact would occur.

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES			Less Than Significant	
Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5? (Source: IX.28, 29, 87)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5? (Source: IX.28, 29, 89)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries? (Source: IX.29)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

Historic Resource Associates completed a Cultural Resources Study of the project site in November 2025 (Source: IX.28; County of Monterey Library No. LIB250130). The assessment included a records search through the Northwest Information Center (NWIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) in Rohnert Park, California; a review of the State of California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) Built Environment Resources Directory (BERD), which lists properties on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), California Historical Landmarks (CHL), California Points of Historical Interest (CPHI), and the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), as well as certified Local Government surveys; and a pedestrian survey. Archaeological Resource Management prepared a Cultural Resource Evaluation for the project site in February 2025 (Source: IX.29; County of Monterey Library No. LIB250131). This evaluation consisted of a CHRIS records search at NWIC, a pedestrian survey, and a review of historic aerial maps. The purpose of these reports was to determine the presence of archaeological or historical resources at the project site. The reports present an explanation of the research, investigative procedures, results of surveys and research findings, and recommendations for the project.

Cultural Resources Impact 5(a) – No Impact

The project would involve demolition of the two existing structures on the project site, a California Ranch-style single-family residence built in 1958, and a detached garage built in 1962. Both structures were evaluated in 2010 and 2016 as part of a Phase I Historical Review of the project site conducted by Historian Kent Seavey which determined that, based on the lack of architectural distinction, historical significance, and integrity, the two structures are not eligible for listing in the CRHR and the NRHP (Source: IX.28). During preparation of the Cultural Resources Study in November 2025, Historic Resource Associates conducted a peer review of the 2010 and 2016 historical reports where the structures were evaluated and concurred with their conclusions. Therefore, the structures are not considered a historic resource as defined by CEQA. See below discussion.

The Hatton family owned a large tract of land that was used for farming and ranching at the mouth of Carmel Valley, in and around this project site. While the Hatton family played a significant role in the history of Carmel Valley, the project site itself has no physical evidence of improvements associated with either William Hatton or any of his children. In 1958, a single-family residence was constructed on the southernmost project parcel. According to the Cultural Resources Study, while the builder remains unidentified, Historian Kent Seavy described the residence as a one-story, wood-framed building as having been designed in the “California Ranch” style of architecture (Source: IX.28). Per Historian Kent Seavey, the wood house lacks sufficient architectural distinction or historic significance to be considered eligible for listing in the CRHR or qualifying for listing on the Monterey County Historic Resource inventory because the original rural setting has changed. Many houses of the same type and style are present in the County, and neither an event of significance, nor any important individual has been identified with the property. A garage was then constructed in 1962, approximately 50 feet northwest of the residence. The garage is front-gabled with paired sliding barn doors, and rests on a mud-sill foundation. The exterior features narrow vertical flush wood siding, and its low-pitched roof slightly overhangs the eave line. Two windows are along the southern side. Like the residence, Historian Kent Seavy determined that the garage lacks architectural distinction (Source: IX.28).

The remainder of the project site has been used for cultivation of various agricultural products, as it has been for at least the last 75 years. The subject property, including both the residence and the garage, were evaluated in 2010 and 2016 during a Phase I Historical Review of the project site. The 2010 and 2016 reports found that the subject property, including the residence and garage, was not a significant cultural (historical) resource, and is ineligible for the NRHP and the CRHR. Both structures are unrelated to the historic agricultural use of the project site and are architecturally unrelated to each other. Further, as described above, the structures are not associated with William Hatton. Although the “Hatton Dairy Barn” (APN: 015-201-012-000, 6540 Carmel Valley Road, Carmel) is listed on the Monterey County (Local) Registry of Historic Resources, the project is not in close proximity to this resource and thus would have no impact on local historical resources (Sources: IX.87, 61). The current use of the project site for row crops does not represent the historic use as grazing land for dairy (Source: IX.28).

Therefore, as the project site does not represent the historical use of the project site and neither the existing residence nor garage are historically significant, the demolition of the structures and change of use from row-crops to residential development would not result in a impact on historical resources.

Cultural Resources Impact 5(b) – Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

County of Monterey Geographic Information System records indicate the project site and surrounding area have a high archaeological sensitivity (Source: IX.89). However, this designation is based on the countywide probability of encountering a cultural or archaeological resource rather than site-specific conditions. The Archaeological and Historic Assessment prepared by Historic Resource Associates (County of Monterey Library No. LIB250130) and the Cultural Resource Evaluation conducted by Archaeological Resource Management (County of Monterey Library No. LIB250131) found that the project site does not contain significant cultural sites, features, or artifacts based on the lack of surface evidence of potentially significant archaeological resources (Source: IX.28, 29). Therefore, although the County of Monterey Geographic Information System identifies the area as high archaeological sensitivity based on

regional probability, the site-specific investigations indicate a low likelihood of encountering cultural or archaeological resources within the project site. Both a records search and a field reconnaissance survey were performed during the preparation of the reports, and no potentially significant historic period archaeological materials were found in the project site (Source: IX.28, 29). While no historic or archaeological resources have been identified within the project site, the site is located within an area of regional archaeological sensitivity and five recorded cultural resources, including prehistoric sites and a historic trail, have been identified within 0.25-mile of the site (Source: IX.89, 29). Although the potential to encounter historic or archaeological resources is low based on site-specific study, construction of the project would require ground disturbance such as grading and excavation in an area of regional sensitivity. Construction activities within the project site would have the potential to encounter unrecorded buried or subsurface pre-historic resources as well as human remains during ground disturbing activities, as discussed under Section VI.5, *Cultural Resources*, Impact 5 (c), below. The possibility of damage to or destruction of unrecorded archaeological resources, if present, would have a potentially significant impact. **Mitigation Measure CR-1** would be implemented to avoid significant impacts to unrecorded buried archaeological resources during construction, reducing the impact to a less than significant level. Should any identified resources be determined eligible for the CRHR, those resources would be avoided or appropriate measures, such as data recovery, would be identified on a case by case basis.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure CR-1. On-Call Archaeological Monitoring and Cultural Resource Training

To reduce potential impacts on cultural resources that may be discovered during development on-site, a qualified archaeologist (i.e., an archaeologist registered with the Register of Professional Archaeologists [RPA] or a Registered Archaeologist [RA] under the supervision of an RPA) shall be retained through a binding contract with the owner/applicant, as an on-call monitor for the duration of all project-related ground-disturbing activities (Archaeological Monitor). If at any time, potentially significant archaeological resources or intact features are discovered, the County's standard Condition of Approval PD003(A) shall be adhered to. The On-Call Archaeological Monitor shall review and evaluate any inadvertent discoveries to determine if they are historical resource(s) and/or unique archaeological resources or tribal cultural resources under CEQA, and work in coordination with the Tribal Monitor (**Mitigation Measure TR-1**). If the Archaeological Monitor determines that any cultural resources exposed during construction constitute a historical resource and/or unique archaeological resource or tribal cultural resource under CEQA, he/she shall notify the project proponent and other appropriate parties of the evaluation. The Professional Archaeologist shall recommend mitigation measures to mitigate to a less-than-significant impact in accordance with California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 15064.5, including but not limited to a Cultural Resources Protection and Management Plan ("Plan"), and conduct additional testing to determine the resources' boundaries, if needed. The Cultural Resources Protection and Management Plan shall be prepared in consultation with the County and the tribal cultural monitor for the treatment of any cultural resources with appropriate dignity, and the final disposition of any artifacts, and submit the Plan to HCD-Planning for review and approval. The Plan shall also include a Data Recovery Plan that follows the California Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Archeological Documentation. Should additional testing identify significant resources, or resources are

inadvertently discovered, the goals of the Plan are to avoid disturbance of resources to the extent feasible and document any unique archaeological resources that would be directly impacted by construction activities:

- Measures to avoid disturbance of resources include re-siting or re-designing approved project components if feasible, or capping/covering the resource in a non-destructive manner. If neither avoidance measures are feasible, on-site relocation, following consultation with HCD-Planning and the Tribal Monitor, shall be considered and implemented if feasible.
- Avoidance shall be pursued prior to considering excavation and recovery.
- If avoidance is determined infeasible, the qualified archaeologist shall formulate measures for their treatment and recovery that document the unique resource prior to removal.

The Archaeological Monitoring contract shall require that the Archaeological Monitor keep a log of inadvertent discoveries and submit a final report summarizing compliance actions with HCD-Planning. The contract shall also require that the on-call monitor conduct a cultural resource awareness and response training for construction personnel prior to the commencement of any grading or excavation activity. The cultural resource awareness and response training shall be conducted with the Tribal Monitor (**Mitigation Measure TR-1**) and describe protocols to be used in the event of an unanticipated discovery, and the importance of cultural resources to the Native American community, identify specific construction activities that the tribal monitor shall be present for, any construction activities where the tribal monitor will not be present for, how sampling of the excavated soil will occur, if required, and any other logistical information such as when and how work on the site will be halted.

Compliance Actions:

Prior to approval of the Final Map, a note on the Final Map shall be added requiring an on-call archaeological monitor and pre-construction cultural awareness training. Language subject to approval by HCD-Planning.

Prior to issuance of grading permits for subdivision improvements (all phases, if phased) from HCD-Building Services and prior to issuance of grading permits/construction permits for residential development from HCD-Building Services, the owner/applicant shall include a note on the construction plans encompassing the language contained in Mitigation Measure CR-1, including all compliance actions. The owner/applicant shall submit said plans to HCD-Planning for review and approval.

Prior to issuance of grading permits for subdivision improvements (all phases, if phased) from HCD-Building Services and prior to issuance of grading permits/construction permits for residential development from HCD-Building Services, the owner/applicant shall submit to HCD-Planning a copy of the contract between the owner/applicant and a qualified Archaeological Monitor. The contract shall satisfy the requirements of this mitigation measure. The contract shall authorize the on-call monitor and a designated crew member to stop work in the event resources are found. In addition, the contract shall authorize the monitor to prepare a report suitable for compliance documentation to be prepared within four weeks of completion of the

data recovery field work. The contract shall be submitted to HCD-Planning for review and approval.

Prior to the commencement of any grading or excavation activity, the owner/applicant shall submit evidence that the project archaeologist has conducted a cultural resource awareness and response training for construction personnel. Evidence shall include training materials and a sign-in sheet.

During construction, the application/owner/contractor/archaeologist shall adhere to the requirements of this mitigation measure.

Prior to final inspection, the Project Archaeological shall submit a final report to HCD-Planning demonstrating compliance with this mitigation measure, a copy of the monitoring log, instances of halting work, in-field revisions, and additional measures, if warranted.

Cultural Resources Impact 5(c) – Less Than Significant Impact

There is no evidence of known burial sites or cemeteries within the project site. However, the discovery of human remains is always a possibility during ground disturbing activities. In the event of an unanticipated discovery of human remains, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and Monterey County standard Condition of Approval PD003(A) require that no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made the necessary findings as to origin and disposition pursuant to California PRC Section 5097.98. If the remains are determined to be of Native American descent, the coroner has 24 hours to notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). The NAHC would identify and notify the most likely descendant. The most likely descendant must complete the inspection of the site within 48 hours of being granted access and provide recommendations as to the treatment of the remains to the landowner (Source: IX.29). With adherence to existing regulations, impacts to human remains would be less than significant.

6. ENERGY	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation? (Source: IX.64)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency? (Source: IX.4, 64)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

Energy Impact 6(a) – Less Than Significant Impact

Project construction would require site preparation and grading, including hauling material off-site; pavement and asphalt installation; residence construction; water, wastewater, and power utility installation; and landscaping. During project construction, energy would be consumed in the form of petroleum-based fuels used to power off-road construction vehicles and equipment on the project site, construction workers' travel to and from the project site, and vehicles used to deliver materials to the site. However, energy use during construction would be temporary in nature, and the construction equipment used would be typical of similar-sized construction projects in the area. In addition, construction contractors would be required to comply with the provisions of CCR Title 13 Sections 2449 and 2485, which prohibit diesel-fueled commercial motor vehicles and off-road diesel vehicles from idling for more than five minutes and would minimize unnecessary fuel consumption. Construction equipment would be subject to the USEPA Construction Equipment Fuel Efficiency Standard, which would also minimize inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary fuel consumption. Furthermore, pursuant to applicable regulatory requirements such as 2022 California Green Building Standards Code ([CalGreen], CCR Title 24, Part 11), the project would comply with construction waste management practices to divert a minimum of 65 percent of construction debris. Contractors would use energy efficiently during construction and avoid wasting fuel, both to reduce environmental impacts and save costs. Therefore, the project would not involve the inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary use of energy during construction, and construction impacts related to energy consumption would be less than significant.

Project operation would contribute to regional energy demand by consuming electricity, natural gas, gasoline, and diesel fuels. Electricity would be used for residential cooling systems, lighting, appliances, and water and wastewater conveyance, among other purposes. While the proposed residences would be all-electric, gasoline and diesel consumption would be associated with vehicle trips generated by residents. The project would be required to comply with all standards set in the latest iteration of the California Building Standards Code (CCR Title 24), which would minimize the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during operation. California's CalGreen standards require installation of energy-efficient light fixtures and building materials into the design of new construction projects. Further, the 2022 Building Energy Efficiency Standards (CCR Title 24, Part 6) require newly constructed buildings to meet

energy performance standards set by the California Energy Commission (Source: IX.64). Pursuant to the Building Energy Efficiency Standards, the residences constructed under the project would include photovoltaic systems and would be equipped with energy efficient appliances, water fixtures, and ventilation systems that meet required performance standards to reduce overall energy consumption (Source: IX.64). These standards are specifically crafted for new buildings to result in energy efficient performance so that the buildings do not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy (Source: IX.64). Therefore, project operation would not result in potentially significant environmental effects due to the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy, and impacts would be less than significant.

Energy Impact 6(b) – Less Than Significant Impact

The County has not adopted a specific renewable energy or energy efficiency plan. However, the County’s General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element contains the following applicable policies related to energy (Source: IX.4):

- **Energy Resources Goal OS-9.** Promote efficient energy use.
- **Policy OS-9.1.** The use of solar, wind and other renewable resources for agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, and public building applications shall be encouraged.
- **Policy OS-9.2.** Development shall be directed toward cities, Community Areas, and Rural Centers where energy expended for transportation and provision of services can be minimized.
- **Policy OS-9.3.** Areas of urban concentration shall provide convenient access for employment, commercial, and other activities.
- **Policy OS-9.4.** Lots shall be oriented to maximize the energy gains from solar and/or wind resources in order to minimize energy losses where possible.
- **Policy OS-9.6.** Development shall incorporate features that reduce energy used for transportation, including pedestrian and bicycle pathways, access to transit, and roadway design as appropriate.

As described under Section VI.6, *Energy*, Impact (a), the project would meet the requirements of the 2022 Building Energy Efficiency Standards and the 2022 California Energy Code, which conserve energy in residential projects by requiring efficient mechanical and lighting systems, and the integration of renewable energy and smart energy-management measures to reduce overall energy consumption (Source: IX.64). The project would include the installation of solar panels on all residential units and does not contain steep slopes that could limit the ability of rooftop solar panels to maximize energy production, thereby complying with the County’s General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element Energy Resources Goal OS-9 and Policies OS-9.1 and OS-9.4, described above. The project is located in an area surrounded by commercial and residential development and would include the construction of sidewalks along Val Verde Drive to improve pedestrian access and encourage walking to nearby services. Further, the project site is less than 0.25-miles from Barnyard shopping center, and within one mile of Carmel Middle School and Carmel High School, allowing for convenient access and reducing the energy used for transportation. As such, the project would comply with the County’s General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element Policies OS-9.2, OS-9.3, and OS-9.6, described

above. Therefore, the project would not conflict with or obstruct any state or local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency, including the above applicable General Plan policies. Impacts would be less than significant.

7. GEOLOGY AND SOILS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) 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? (Source: IX.36) Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking? (Source: IX.35, 36)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction? (Source: IX.35, 36)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides? (Source: IX.33, 36)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil? (Source: IX.5, 35)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse? (Source: IX.33, 35, 36)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Chapter 18A of the 2007 California Building Code, creating substantial risks to life or property? (Source: IX.36)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater? (Source: IX.1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature? (Source: IX.35)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

A Geotechnical Investigation for the project was prepared by Quantum Geotechnical, Inc. in November 2024 (Source: IX.35; County of Monterey Library No. LIB240314). A Geologic Hazards and Geotechnical Investigation was prepared by Quantum Geotechnical, Inc. in April 2025 (Source: IX.36; County of Monterey Library No. LIB250156). The purpose of these investigations was to determine the nature of the surface and subsurface soil conditions at the project site through field investigations and laboratory testing. The reports present an explanation of investigative procedures, results of the testing program, conclusions regarding soil conditions, and recommendations for earthwork and foundation design to adapt the proposed development to the existing soil conditions.

Geology and Soils Impact 7(a.i) – No Impact

The project site is not located within the boundaries of an Earthquake Fault Zone for fault rupture hazard as defined by the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act and no faults are known to pass through the site. The nearest active fault is Monterey Bay-Tularcitos, approximately 1.4 miles northeast of the project site (Source: IX.36). Therefore, no impact related to fault rupture would occur. There would be no impact.

Geology and Soils Impact 7(a.ii, a.iii, c) – Less Than Significant Impact

The San Andreas Fault system, which is the most active fault system in California, runs approximately 17 miles to the east of the project site. Two other active faults, the Palo Colorado-San Gregorio Fault zone and the Monterey Bay-Tularcitos-Fault zone, also occur in the County (Source: IX.30). From 2007 to 2014, Monterey County experienced 47 earthquakes (Source: IX.31). Earthquakes are classified by magnitude; magnitudes up to 5.9 may be felt but cause only minor damage (Source: IX.32). No earthquakes in Monterey County between 2007 and 2014 had a magnitude of greater than 4.4 or caused any damages, fatalities, or injuries (Source: IX.31). Research by the United States Geological Survey reported that the San Andreas Fault has a 21 percent probability of a magnitude 6.7 or greater earthquake by 2032, at which could cause structural damage.

Due to its location in a seismically active region, the project could be subject to ground shaking during an earthquake along the San Andreas Fault or other active fault in the region. The faults in the area are capable of generating earthquakes that could produce strong to violent ground shaking at the project site. The active fault nearest to the project site is the Monterey Bay-Tularcitos, approximately 1.4 miles northwest of the project site (Source: IX.36). The effects of earthquake-related ground shaking could include damage to structures, as well as damage to streets and utilities. However, the project would be required to comply with applicable building codes, including the Monterey County Code Chapter 16.08, Grading, which prohibits the issuance of grading permits for projects that would be hazardous by reason of flood, geological hazard, seismic hazard, or unstable soil. The Monterey County Building Code, Chapter 18.02, adopts the California Building Code (CBC), which assigns Seismic Design Categories for new construction projects, with earthquake safety regulations commensurate to the earthquake risks associated with a project's use and location. CBC requirements would ensure that the proposed structures would be able to: (1) resist minor earthquakes without damage; (2) resist moderate earthquakes without structural damage, but with some non-structural damage; and (3) resist major earthquakes without collapse, but with some structural as well as nonstructural damage. Further, all recommendations of the Geotechnical and Geological Reports are required to be implemented into the final construction plans pursuant to Monterey County Code section 16.080.110. By adhering to these existing regulations and requirements, the direct or indirect impacts from the project as they relate to strong seismic ground shaking would be less than significant.

According to the Geotechnical Investigation, the project site is also in a state-designated moderate- to high-potential liquefaction hazard zone (Source: IX.35). The factors known to influence liquefaction potential include grain size, relative density, groundwater conditions, effective confining pressures, and intensity and duration of ground shaking. Loose, saturated, near-surface, cohesionless soils exhibit the highest liquefaction potential, while dense,

cohesionless soils and cohesive soils exhibit low to negligible liquefaction potential. The Geotechnical Investigation determined that liquefiable layers are present at the project site, although they are located relatively deep. In the event an earthquake caused liquefaction at the site, the ground would settle by six to nine inches, resulting in an estimated 4.5 inches of differences in site elevation over 100 feet. Therefore, the project site has moderate liquefaction potential. However, all recommendations of the Geotechnical Report shall be implemented into the final construction plans pursuant to Monterey County Code section 16.080.110. Accordingly, the differential settlement of 4.5 inches in 100 feet would be incorporated into the design of gravity utilities and foundations for residences (Source: IX.36). With the differential settlement incorporated into project designs, the direct or indirect impacts from the project as they relate to liquefaction would be less than significant.

Lateral spreading and earthquake-induced landslides involve lateral ground movements caused by seismic shaking. These lateral ground movements are often associated with a weakening or failure of an embankment or soil mass overlying a layer of liquefied sands or weak soils or unsupported face such as a creek bank, open cut, or in the direction of a regional slope or gradient (Source: IX.35). Due to the relatively flat site topography, absence of open channels or creeks in proximity to the site, and the depth of potentially liquefiable layers, the potential for lateral spread and seismic related ground failure would be low and the impact would be less than significant.

Geology and Soils Impact 7(a.iv) – No Impact

The project site is not located within a State of California landslide hazard zone (Source: IX.33). The topography of the project site and surrounding area is predominantly level with small elevation changes throughout (Source: IX.36). No steep slopes are located on or near the site that would result in an increased landslide risk to the project site. Therefore, the project site is not susceptible to landslides, and no impact would occur.

Geology and Soils Impact 7(b) – Less Than Significant Impact

Development of the project would involve grading and excavation for the construction of the proposed residences, utility services, and roadways. The project site has historically been used for agriculture, with approximately 10 acres currently under row crop cultivation and the remaining 2.5 acres developed with a single family residence and detached garage. While the project site is generally level and has already been disturbed (which limits the potential for substantial erosion under normal conditions), grading and excavation activities would expose soils, creating a short-term potential for erosion and loss of topsoil. Excavation activities would involve approximately 18,000 cubic yards of cut and fill to be balanced on site. After construction, long-term erosion risk would be minimal because soils would be stabilized by buildings, pavement, landscaping, and vegetation.

However, all land clearing, grading, and construction activities would be required to comply with the County Ordinance Code, specifically Chapter 16.12, which requires an erosion control plan prior to permit issuance for building, grading, or land clearing. Erosion control plans must comply with Chapter 16.12.070, Runoff Control, and Chapter 16.12.090, which prohibits land

clearing or grading between October 15 and April 15. Chapter 16.12.070 requires the following (Source: IX.5):

- On highly permeable soils, excess runoff must be retained on site through the use of infiltration basins, percolation pits or trenches, or other suitable means.
- On projects where on-site percolation is not feasible, all runoff must be detained or dispersed over non-erodible vegetated surfaces.
- Concentrated runoff which cannot be effectively detained or dispersed without causing erosion shall be carried in non-erodible channels or conduits to the nearest drainage course designated for such purpose or to on-site percolation devices.
- Runoff from disturbed areas shall be detained or filtered by berms vegetated filter strips, catch basins, or other means as necessary to prevent the escape of sediment from the disturbed area.
- No earth or organic material shall be deposited or placed where it may be directly carried into a body of water.

The project would be subject to the State Construction General Permit issued by the SWRCB under the federal National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). This permit applies to construction sites that disturb one acre or more, or smaller sites that are part of a larger development plan and requires implementation of Best Management Practices such as covering or stabilizing soil stockpiles, installing silt fences, fiber rolls, and sediment basins, and managing stormwater runoff to prevent sediment discharge.

According to the Preliminary Stormwater Control Plan for the project, approximately 55 percent of the project site would be covered by new impervious surfaces and approximately 45 percent of the project site would be covered by pervious landscaping (Source: IX.85). The project would include construction of new stormwater drainage facilities, including two bioretention basins designed to manage runoff from the impervious surfaces and accommodate a 95th percentile rainfall event for the site's two principal drainage areas (refer to Section II.2.2.7, *Infrastructure*), in accordance with Post-Construction Stormwater Management Requirements. The basins would be designed to filter pollutants from stormwater runoff before discharge, ensuring that runoff does not exceed the capacity of existing or planned drainage systems. Further, these basins would ensure the project would not result in substantial soil loss or erosion by capturing stormwater runoff, slowing its velocity, and releasing it gradually.

All recommendations provided by the Geotechnical Report would be required to be implemented into the final construction plans pursuant to Monterey County Code Chapter 16.08. The project would comply with other County Ordinances and the State Construction General Permit. Pursuant to guidance with these existing regulations and guidance documents, the project would not result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil. Impacts would be less than significant.

Geology and Soils Impact 7(d) – Less Than Significant Impact

Expansive soils are generally clays, which increase in volume when saturated and shrink when dried. The swelling that occurs in expansive soils exerts pressure that can damage the foundation of a building. When expansive soil is present, foundations must be designed to prevent uplift of

the supported structure or to resist forces exerted on the foundation due to soil volume changes (Source: IX.34). The subsurface profile consists primarily of poorly graded sands, well-graded sands, silty sands, and occasional sandy silt, all of which are non-expansive soil types under the Unified Soil Classification System (Source: IX.36). No clay-rich horizons or high plasticity indices were reported, and the laboratory results confirm low plasticity and low fines content. The Geotechnical Report determined that the project site is suitable for the project. As described above, the final construction plans would be required to comply with the 2022 CBC, including its expansive-soil provisions in Section 1803.5.3, which ensure that foundations are designed to resist any uplift or lateral pressures that could result from soil movement, while also requiring implementation of all applicable recommendations from the Geotechnical Report pursuant to Monterey County Code Chapter 16.08. Therefore, by integrating these CBC requirements with the Geotechnical Report's post-tensioned slab design criteria, and the lack of expansive soils present at the project site, the potential for expansive soil-related issues would be less than significant.

Geology and Soils Impact 7(e) – No Impact

The project would not include the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. Because the project would be served by a public sewer system and would not propose any on-site wastewater disposal, soils on the project site do not need to support septic tanks or alternative wastewater systems (Source: IX.1). As a result, the project would not directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects related to soils incapable of supporting such systems. No impact related to septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems would occur.

Geology and Soils Impact 7(f) – Less Than Significant Impact

Paleontological resources include the fossilized remains, traces, or imprints of organisms preserved in or on the earth's crust. The potential for impacts to significant paleontological resources is based on the potential for ground disturbance to directly impact paleontologically sensitive geologic units. The project would involve ground disturbance (such as grading and excavation) throughout the project site footprint. Paleontological sensitivity is defined based on the underlying geologic formation. The project site is underlain by Holocene alluvial deposits (sand, silt, and minor clay), which are generally considered to have low paleontological sensitivity near the surface (Source: IX.35). Additionally, the agricultural practices have included disking the land and disturbing the top 2 to 3 feet of soil over the course of many years. Therefore, direct impacts to geologic units with high paleontological sensitivity would be negligible, and the likelihood of impacting significant fossils beneath the project site would be low. Further, California PRC Section 5097.5 prohibits unauthorized disturbance of paleontological sites and requires notification and proper handling of discoveries. Based on the low paleontological sensitivity of the project site and required compliance with California PRC Section 5097.5, potential impacts to paleontological resources would be less than significant.

8. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment? (Source: IX.4, 68, 74, 75)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? (Source: IX.4, 65, 64, 68, 74).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation

The majority of individual projects do not generate sufficient GHG emissions to create a project-specific impact through a direct influence on climate change; therefore, the issue of climate change typically involves an analysis of whether a project’s contribution towards an impact is cumulatively considerable. According to the CEQA Guidelines Section 15355, “cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, other current projects, and probable future projects.

The County does not currently have an adopted GHG reduction plan with numerical reduction targets for individual uses and developments. The County is in the process of developing a Community Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CCAAP) to reduce GHG emissions within the unincorporated County area. In October 2024, a Final Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Report was prepared for the County’s CCAAP (Source: IX.85). The CCAAP has not yet been approved, however it is intended to align with the requirements of the General Plan, as well as State mandates, and will serve to reduce GHG emissions for target years 2030 and 2045. The long-term target year of 2045 was chosen to align with the statewide carbon neutrality goal expressed in Executive Order B-55-18.

Since MBARD has not adopted thresholds, the County uses consistency with applicable plans for the reduction of GHG emissions as the threshold for project significance.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Impact 8(a, b) – Less Than Significant Impact

Construction Emissions

Project construction would occur over approximately 18 months and would generate an estimated 1,487 metric ton (MT) CO₂e, as shown in Table 6.8-1. This total includes CO₂ and CH₄ emissions, which are combined using standard global warming potential conversions. When amortized over a 30-year project lifespan, construction-related emissions would equal approximately 50 MT CO₂e per year (Source: IX.74). Construction emissions are provided for informational purposes only.

Table 6.8-1 Estimated Annual Construction Emissions

Emission Source	Annual Emissions (CO₂e)
2026 Construction	662 MT CO ₂ e
2027 Construction	825 MT CO ₂ e
Total Construction	1,487 MT CO ₂ e
Amortized Over 50-Years	50 MT CO ₂ e

See CalEEMod Calculations, Source: IX.74

Operational Emissions

Project operational GHG emissions were calculated for area source emissions, energy emissions, mobile source emissions, waste, and water. Project operational emissions would total 991 MT CO₂e per year, with a net total (including amortized construction emissions, and reductions for the existing home use) of 1,026 MT CO₂e per year. The CalEEMod project operational emissions are summarized below in Table 6.8-2 (Source: IX.74). Operational emissions are provided for informational purposes only.

Table 6.8-2 Estimated Annual Operational Emissions

Emission Source	CO₂e (MT)¹
Construction	50
Operational	
Area	111
Energy	200
Solid Waste	22
Water	10
Mobile	649
Refrigerants	<1
Operational Total	992
Existing Site Emissions	(14)
Project Total (with amortized GHG)	1,028

¹ Numbers may not add directly due to rounding.

² Section VI.14, Population and Housing shows a population of 211. This results in a conservative efficiency number and was used for the determination of service population emissions.

See CalEEMod Calculations, Source: IX.74

All 307 parking spaces provided by the project would be compatible with Level 1 or Level 2 EV chargers. All residences would be equipped with solar panels. The use of EV's was included in the emissions quantifications using the CalEEMod model emission factors. Although all residences would be equipped with solar panels, the total amount of electrical consumption from the on-site solar panels was not available at the time of the analysis. Therefore, the GHG emissions analysis conservatively assumes no electrical offsets from solar.

The County has not adopted a specific renewable energy or energy efficiency plan (Source: IX.4). However, the following plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases are applicable to the project:

MBARD AQMP

Compliance with the AQMP is demonstrated under Section VI.3, *Air Quality*, Impact (a) through Impact (c). As described therein, the project would not result in population growth that would exceed the 2015 AQMP forecast, nor would the project result in emissions exceeding MBARD criteria pollutant thresholds or utilize construction equipment that is not accounted for within the CalEEmod Model. Therefore, the project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan (the 2015 AQMP).

AMBAG Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy

AMBAG adopted the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) as part of the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) in June 2022. The MTP serves as the long-range plan for the region, identifying transportation needs, investment priorities, and policy frameworks for local governments to foster sustainable development, including meeting the SB 375 GHG emissions reduction target of five percent below 2005 per capita GHG emissions by 2035. As part of meeting these reductions, AMBAG has an overall goal to assure that the region is EV ready. The project would include EV compatibility for all 307 parking spaces provided by the project. Emissions inventories are determined based on the AMBAG population growth forecasting to determine whether a project meets the SB 375 goals in the MTP/SCS. As described in Section VI.3, *Air Quality*, the project would not exceed the AMBAG population growth projections. Further, the MTP/SCS promotes residential development within existing urbanized areas to reduce reliance on motor vehicles. The project would include the construction of a pedestrian path along Val Verde Drive and sidewalks within the internal circulation network to encourage alternative modes of travel to nearby commercial services (Source: IX.65). Therefore, the project would be consistent with AMBAG's MTP/SCS.

County General Plan

The County does not currently have an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs. However, the County's General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element contains the following applicable policies related to reducing GHG emissions through renewable energy sources (Source: IX.4).

- **Policy OS-9.1.** The use of solar, wind and other renewable resources for agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, and public building applications shall be encouraged.
- **Policy OS-9.4.** Lots shall be oriented to maximize the energy gains from solar and/or wind resources in order to minimize energy losses where possible.
- **Policy OS-9.6.** Development shall incorporate features that reduce energy used for transportation, including pedestrian and bicycle pathways, access to transit, and roadway design as appropriate.

As described under Section VI.6, *Energy*, the project would meet the requirements of the 2022 Building Energy Efficiency Standards and the 2022 California Energy Code, which require efficient mechanical and lighting systems, and the integration of renewable energy and smart energy management measures to reduce overall energy consumption and thereby reduce GHG

emissions (Source: IX.64). The project would include the installation of solar panels on all residential units and does not contain steep slopes that could limit the ability of rooftop solar panels to maximize energy production, thereby complying with the County's General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element Policies OS-9.1 and OS-9.4, described above. The project is located in an area surrounded by commercial and residential development and would include the construction of sidewalks along Val Verde Drive to improve pedestrian access and encourage walking to nearby services (Source: IX.4). As such, the project would comply with the County's General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element Policy OS-9.6.

CARB's 2022 Scoping Plan Update

MBARD has not established significance thresholds for GHG emissions to ensure compliance with CARB's 2022 Scoping Plan Update goals of carbon neutrality by 2045, nor has MBARD adopted specific goals or policies designed to reduce GHG emissions. However, the project would exceed the 2025 CalGreen mandatory and voluntary Tier standards for the inclusion of EV charging infrastructure requirements, as all 307 parking spaces would be EV charging compatible. Further, consistency with the 2025 CalGreen mandatory EV charging station implementation and minimum solar requirements would be required for the project. As California moves towards a Net Zero Carbon goal by 2045, the project's implementation of above mandated EV charging infrastructure, along with the implementation of mandatory EV charging station and solar requirements, the project will be well suited to accommodate additional EV vehicles that residents are anticipated to own moving toward 2045. The additional reductions anticipated from the additional charging capabilities as well as the increased efficiencies will provide a suitable offset to the natural gas emissions that are anticipated on-site in the initial operational years. Additionally, as California moves towards the 2045 goal, California is moving towards reducing the reliance on natural gas appliances throughout the state therefore, as appliances are replaced it is anticipated that less and less natural gas will be used on-site. Therefore, the project would be consistent with the 2022 Scoping Plan Update and impacts would be less than significant.

MBARD has not established significance thresholds for GHG emissions to support CARB's 2022 Scoping Plan Update target of achieving carbon neutrality by 2045, nor has MBARD adopted specific GHG-reduction policies. However, the project would exceed the 2025 CalGreen mandatory and voluntary Tier EV-charging requirements, as all 307 parking spaces would be EV-charging ready. The project would also be required to meet the 2025 CalGreen mandatory EV-charging station installation and minimum solar photovoltaic requirements.

As California transitions toward statewide carbon neutrality by 2045, the project's EV-charging infrastructure and compliance with mandatory EV-charging and solar requirements would enable the site to accommodate increasing EV ownership among residents. The resulting reductions in transportation related emissions, combined with improved building energy efficiencies, would offset natural gas emissions expected during the early years of project operation. Over time, as California phases down the use of natural gas appliances, on-site natural gas demand would be expected to continue to decline. Therefore, the project would be consistent with the applicable plan, policies, and regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHG. Impacts would be less than significant.

9. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS			Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials? (Source: IX.50)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment? (Source: IX.45, 50)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school? (Source: IX.50)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment? (Source: IX.44, 49)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area? (Source: IX.46)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? (Source: IX.5, 15, 20)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires? (Source: IX.5, 19)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

Hazardous materials, as defined by the CCR, are substances with certain physical properties that may pose a substantial present or future hazard to human health or the environment when improperly handled, disposed, or otherwise managed. Hazardous materials and waste can result in public health hazards if improperly handled, released into the soil, or groundwater, or through airborne releases in vapors, fumes, or dust.

A Phase II Environmental Site Assessment was conducted by Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. (Stantec) in April 2024 (Source: IX.50; County of Monterey Library No. LIB240315). The purpose of this investigation was to evaluate the site through a subsurface soil investigation and laboratory testing. The report presents an explanation of investigative procedures, analysis results from laboratory testing, conclusions regarding the analytical findings, and recommendations for the project development.

The Hazardous Waste and Substances Site (Cortese) List is a planning tool used by the state, local agencies, and developers to comply with CEQA requirements related to the disclosure of information about the location of hazardous materials release sites. California Government Code Section 65962.5 requires the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) to develop at least annually an updated Cortese List. Various state and local government agencies are required to track and document hazardous material release information for the Cortese List. There are no hazardous materials release sites in the vicinity of the Project site (Source: IX.37). Similarly, according to the California Department of Toxic Substances Control's (DTSC) EnviroStor database, there are no contaminated sites within the vicinity of the project site (Source: IX.44).

Hazards and Hazardous Materials Impact 9(a, b) – Less Than Significant Impact

Construction

Project construction would include the temporary transport, storage, use, or disposal of potentially hazardous materials including fuels, lubricating fluids, cleaners, solvents, or soils assumed to be contaminated from pesticides due to widespread agricultural practices in Monterey County. If spilled, these substances could pose a risk to the environment and to human health. However, the transport, storage, use, or disposal of hazardous materials is subject to various federal, state, and local regulations designed to reduce risks associated with hazardous materials, including potential risks associated with upset or accident conditions. Hazardous materials would be required to be transported under U.S. Department of Transportation regulations (U.S. Department of Transportation Hazardous Materials Transport Act, 49 Code of Federal Regulations), which stipulate the types of containers, labeling, and other restrictions to be used in the movement of such material on interstate highways. In addition, the use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials are regulated through the Resources Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). DTSC is responsible for implementing the RCRA program, as well as California's own hazardous waste laws. DTSC regulates hazardous waste, cleans up existing contamination, and looks for ways to control and reduce the hazardous waste produced in California. It does this primarily under the authority of RCRA and in accordance with the California Hazardous Waste Control Law (California H&SC Division 20, Chapter 6.5) and the Hazardous Waste Control Regulations (Title 22, CCR, Divisions 4 and 4.5). DTSC also oversees permitting, inspection, compliance, and corrective action programs to ensure that hazardous waste managers follow federal and state requirements and other laws that affect hazardous waste specific to handling, storage, transportation, disposal, treatment, reduction, cleanup, and emergency planning. Compliance with existing regulations would reduce the risk of potential release of hazardous materials from spills and transport during construction.

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment report was prepared by Stantec in December 2023 and identified historical agricultural use on the project site that may have used herbicides containing organochlorine pesticides (OCPs) and/or heavy metals. Based on this finding, Stantec conducted a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment in April 2024 to evaluate the subsurface condition at the project site based on the site's historical agricultural use. The Phase II Environmental Site Assessment involved collecting soil samples from 30 shallow soil borings across the site. Soil samples were analyzed for OCPs, arsenic, and lead. Analytical results did not indicate the presence of OCPs lead above applicable regulatory thresholds. Although two of the 30 samples reported arsenic at concentrations of 5.4 and 7.4 mg/kg, which exceeds regulatory thresholds, the

Phase II Environmental Site Assessment did not recommend any remediation because arsenic natural occurs throughout the State of California at concentrations of up to 11 mg/kg. The State of California uses the background levels the cleanup standard for arsenic; therefore, arsenic was not detected above anticipated cleanup levels (Source: IX.50). Based on these results, the sites' historical agricultural use would not pose a concern for human health and/or the environment, and no further assessment or remedial action would be warranted. Because these contaminants are not present above typical background or regulatory thresholds, ground disturbance would not result in the release of hazardous materials into the environment, and impacts are less than significant with respect to OCP, arsenic, and lead (Source: IX.50).

Buildings constructed prior to 1977 in California may contain lead-based paint and asbestos-containing materials. The existing buildings on the project site (single family residence and detached garage) were constructed around 1960 and therefore may contain lead and asbestos. The project would require the demolition of the existing single-family residence and detached garage on southern portion of the site, which could result in upset and release of hazardous materials into the environment. During demolition activities, all building materials containing lead-based paint shall be removed in accordance with California Occupational Safety and Health Administration lead-related regulations contained in Title 8 of the CCR, Section 1532.1, including employee training, employee air monitoring, and dust control. Any debris or soil containing lead-based paint or coatings shall be disposed of at landfills that meet acceptance criteria for the type of lead being disposed. In addition, demolition and construction would be required to comply with MBARD Rule 424, which enforces the National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants regulation with authority delegated by the USEPA. Rule 424 requires surveys for asbestos to be conducted prior to demolition activities that would disturb materials that might contain asbestos. MBARD also collects fees for demolition activities subject to Rule 424 (Source: IX.45). Compliance MBARD and USEPA regulations would ensure that asbestos containing materials are identified and disposed of in such a manner as to ensure that demolition 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. As such, this construction impact would be less than significant.

Operation

Residential buildings typically do not use or store large quantities of hazardous materials other than those typically used for household cleaning, maintenance, and landscaping. For example, households may contain one or several gallons of paint for touching up interior architectural features, such as baseboards along walls, which would generate a nominal amount of waste that would not warrant a potentially significant hazardous materials or waste impact. Therefore, project operation would not involve the use, storage, transportation, or disposal of substantial quantities of hazardous materials and would not result in the release of such materials into the environment. Impacts from project operation would be less than significant.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials Impact 9(c) – Less Than Significant Impact

Children are particularly susceptible to long-term effects from exposure to hazardous materials. Locations where children spend extended periods of time, such as schools, are considered sensitive to hazardous air emissions and accidental release associated with the handling of

extremely hazardous materials, substances, or wastes. Carmel Middle School is located approximately 500 feet northeast of the project site.

As discussed under Section VI.9, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, Impact 9 (a, b), project operation would not involve the use or storage of hazardous materials other than minor household chemicals in household quantities. Though potentially hazardous materials such as fuels, lubricants, solvents, and oils could be used during project construction, the transport, use and storage of hazardous materials would be conducted in accordance with applicable State and federal laws, such as the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act, RCRA, the California Hazardous Material Management Act, and CCR, Title 22. Licensed hazardous materials transporters leaving the project site would take the shortest direct route, which would include driving west to access SR-1 via Rio Road. This route would not be in proximity to Carmel Middle School. Therefore, it is unlikely that transporters would be required to drive past the school while carrying hazardous materials. Impacts related to hazardous materials near schools would be less than significant.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials Impact 9(d) – No Impact

The following databases compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 were checked for known hazardous materials contamination within the project site:

- EnviroStor Database, California Department of Toxic Substances Control (Source: IX.44)
- GeoTracker Database, California State Water Resources Control Board (Source: IX.49)

According to the database search, there are no known hazardous material sites within the project site. Four cleanup sites were identified within 0.5 mile of the project site. The nearest cleanup sites are the Crossroads Shopping Center Safeway (case SLO605371998) and the Arco Service Station #2161 (case T0605300295), both on Rio Road approximately 1,000 feet southwest of the project site. These two cases were completed and closed in 2005 and 1999, respectively (Source: IX.49). Located just under 0.5 mile from the project site are the Tosco Facility (case T0605300253) and the Chevron Station (case T060530BMP0249). These two cases were completed and closed in 2014 and 2012, respectively (Source: IX.49). No hazardous materials sites are known to exist in the project site, and the nearest hazardous materials cleanup cases have been resolved. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials Impact 9(e) – No Impact

The closest public airport to the project site is the Monterey Regional Airport located approximately four miles northeast. Therefore, the project site is not located in the airport's Airport Influence Area and is not subject to the 2019 Monterey Regional Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. There are no private airstrips in the vicinity of the project site (Source: IX.46). Given the distance from the project site, aircraft at Monterey Regional Airport would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working at the project site. There would be no impact.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials Impact 9(f) – Less Than Significant Impact

As described in Section VI.20, *Wildfire*, the project site is located within a Moderate Fire Hazard Severity zone and is not located within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) or state responsibility area. A VHFHSZ is located approximately 0.35 mile east of the project site (Source: IX.19).

The project would involve the construction of 74 residential units and would result in an estimated additional 211 residents on the site, thereby increasing the human presence near the VHFHSZ³. However, as discussed in Section VI.14, *Population and Housing*, the population growth is within the AMBAG projected growth increase for unincorporated Monterey County (Source: IX.15). Further, as discussed in Section VI.15, *Public Services*, the project site is in an area already served by Cypress Fire Protection District and would not have a significant impact on fire response times nor create substantially greater need for additional fire protection services above the current capacity (Source: IX.20). The project site is located in close proximity to Carmel Valley Road and SR-1. Both of these corridors are identified as Evacuation Routes per the General Plan Safety Element, Table S-1. Although the population would increase, which could increase traffic volumes, thereby potentially impacting response during an emergency event along the evacuation routes, the project would involve improvements to Val Verde Drive and construction of an internal circulation network ultimately allowing for safer movement through the site in the event of an emergency. Cypress Fire Protection District would conduct a review of the project during the permit process to verify compliance with all codes and standards including driveway width, turning radius, and emergency access (Source: IX.5). Therefore, the project would not impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan and impacts would be less than significant.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials Impact 9(g) – Less Than Significant Impact

As described in Section VI.20, *Wildfire*, the project site is located within a Moderate Fire Hazard Severity zone and a VHFHSZ is located approximately 0.35 mile east of the project site (Source: IX.19). The project would be developed in accordance with State and County fire standards and regulations including Monterey County Code Section 18.14.080, which requires all new structures and exterior premises to include fire safety features, such as fire-residence ratings and fire protection systems (Source: IV. 5). The project would not expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

³ 74 housing units multiplied by the average number of persons per household in the County (2.84) equals approximately 211 residents

10. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
a)	Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality? (Source: IX.5, 78, 83, 84)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin? (Source: IX.53, 78, 84)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c)	Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
i)	result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site? (Source: IX.78, 84)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii)	substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site? (Source: IX.78, 84)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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? (Source: IX.84)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv)	impede or redirect flood flows? (Source: IX.78)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d)	In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation? (Source: IX.78, 84)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e)	Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan? (Source: IX.5, 53, 78, 81, 84)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

A Hydrogeologic Report for the project was prepared by Todd Groundwater in January 2026 (Source: IX.78). The purpose of this report was to evaluate groundwater levels, aquifer characteristics, groundwater-surface water interactions, and potential changes to groundwater demand and recharge associated with the project. These findings provide the basis for evaluating whether the project would degrade surface or groundwater quality, substantially decrease groundwater supplies, alter drainage patterns, or conflict with applicable stormwater management regulations. A Preliminary post-construction Stormwater Control Plan was prepared by the owner/applicant in accordance with the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board requirements (Source: IX.84). In addition, an Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Plan was prepared by the owner/applicant, which outlines long-term operational maintenance and funding of the project stormwater treatment facilities (Source: IX.83).

The project site is located approximately 1,050 feet north of the Carmel River, within the lower Carmel River Valley. The project site is underlain by the Carmel Valley Groundwater Basin (CVGB) where the Carmel Valley Alluvial Aquifer (CVAA) is the primary water-bearing unit. The CVAA is highly permeable, shallow (typically 10–25 feet below ground surface), and hydraulically connected to river flows. Two portions of the site lie within the 100-year flood zone of the Carmel River: the southwest corner and the southwestern section of the parcel east of Val Verde drive, as shown in Figure 2-3.

Hydrology and Water Quality Impact 10(a) – Less Than Significant Impact

Project Construction

Project construction would include short-term soil disturbing activities that could lead to increased erosion and sedimentation, which would decrease water quality and be a potential violation of water quality standards. The project would disturb more than one acre of land, and therefore would be subject to the General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities, Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000002 (Construction Stormwater General Permit) adopted by the SWRCB. The Construction Stormwater General Permit requires development of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) with best management practices to control the discharges of pollutants, including sediment, into local surface water drainages. Prior to the issuance of a permit for grading activity, the owner/applicant must submit an Erosion Control Plan developed in compliance with County Code 16.12 (Erosion Control) to the appropriate County Director for review and approval. Further, the project would be subject to County Code 16.12.070, which requires the use of erosion and sediment controls to protect water quality while the site is under construction (Source: IX.5). This would prevent project construction from adversely impacting water quality or violating water quality standards. Compliance with existing regulations would ensure that the potential for water quality degradation from project construction is minimized, would not violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality. As such, project construction impacts to surface water and groundwater quality would be less than significant.

Project Operation

Project operation would result in a net increase of approximately 299,139 square feet of impervious surfaces (Source: IX.84). Under post-project conditions, approximately 55 percent of the site would be covered by impervious surfaces and 45 percent would be landscaped (Source: IX.78). Although the additional impervious surfaces would cover soils and reduce soil erosion, impervious surfaces prevent the infiltration of water and other fluids into soils and could potentially result in the addition of contaminants or runoff entering the local stormwater drainage system and ultimately degrade surface water and groundwater quality. Stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces would be directed toward the two on-site bioretention basins designed to treat and infiltrate stormwater runoff consistent with County requirements. One of the bioretention basins would be located west of Val Verde Drive, with a capacity of approximately 4,085 cubic feet. The second bioretention basin would be located east of Val Verde Drive, with a capacity of approximately 5,492 cubic feet (Source: IX.78). These facilities would reduce pollutant loading through the inclusion of ponding, permeable planting soils, infiltration

materials and sub-drains systems designed to filter pollutants from stormwater runoff from adjacent roof areas and other impervious surfaces (Source: IX.83). Further, the Stormwater Control Plan and the O&M plan would ensure pollutants discharges are minimized during long-term project operation (Source: IX.83, 84). In summary, compliance with existing regulations, on-site management of runoff provided by the bioretention basins, and implementation of the Stormwater Control Plan and O&M plan would ensure that the potential for water quality degradation from project operation is minimized and would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality. As such, project operation impacts to surface water and groundwater quality would be less than significant.

Hydrology and Water Quality Impact 10(b) – Less Than Significant Impact

The project site is currently utilized for agricultural purposes and contains 2,948 square feet of impervious surfaces including the roofs from the existing single-family residence and detached garage (Source: IX.84). Once project construction is complete, the project site would increase the impervious surfaces on the site by 299,139 square feet (approximately 55 percent of the project site), which would reduce the infiltration of precipitation into the groundwater compared to existing conditions. However, the remaining 45 percent of the project site would be comprised of pervious surfaces, landscaped vegetation, and would include two bioretention areas that would provide groundwater recharge on-site. The soil underlying the bioretention basins (Pico fine sandy loam) would facilitate infiltration and are estimated to provide 4–7 acre feet per year (AFY) of groundwater recharge, supplemented by infiltration from landscaped areas and disconnected impervious surfaces (Source: IX.78). The infiltration provided by the bioretention basins, pervious surfaces, and landscaped areas would result in approximately 9.84 to 12.22 AFY of groundwater recharge under project development, which is sufficient to offset the reduction in natural infiltration caused by the additional impervious surfaces (Source: IX.78). Therefore, the project would not substantially reduce groundwater recharge.

The CVGB has an estimated storage capacity of 37,500 acre feet and historical pumping ranging from 5,900–9,100 AFY (Source: IX.53, 78). As described in Section II.2.2.7, *Infrastructure*, the project would be served by one of two potential long-term water supply sources: (1) an MPWMD allocation delivered through a new Cal-Am connection, or (2) continued use of the property's riparian rights through on-site wells or a wheeling agreement with Cal-AM. The project's potential impact on groundwater supplies can be determined by whether the project would increase or decrease the current (baseline) water demand based on the net consumptive water use of the project compared to the current water demand. Net consumptive water use represents water permanently removed from the groundwater system. Therefore, any increase above the current water demand would reduce groundwater supplies, resulting in a potential impact on groundwater supplies. Under both potential water supply scenarios, the project's estimated long-term water demand would be lower than the current agricultural water use on the site, representing a net decrease in consumptive water use. MPWMD typically uses the most recent 10 years of data to determine the baseline consumptive use for a development project (Rule 40-A.5.a). Based on reported water use, consumptive use of groundwater on the property during 2015-2024 averaged 27 AFY⁴ (Source: IX.78). The project would require approximately

⁴ Based on 10-year average data from MPWMD (Source: IX.78)

16 AFY⁵, which is substantially lower than historical water demand on the property (Source: IX.53). This reduction in water demand represents approximately a 36 percent decrease relative to current (baseline) conditions and represents less than one percent of the CVGB's historical pumping range (Source: IX.53). Therefore, the project would result in a net decrease in consumptive groundwater use, thereby reducing groundwater depletions, and result in an improvement in comparison to current (baseline) conditions (Source: IX.78).

Given the lower water supply demand under the project compared to the site's current use, CVGB's substantial capacity, and sufficient production from on-site wells, the project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies. This impact would be less than significant.

Hydrology and Water Quality Impact 10(c.i, c.ii) – Less Than Significant Impact

The project would not involve altering the course of any stream or river, and no defined channels or drainages cross the site. Two portions of the site lie within the 100-year flood zone of the Carmel River, which is located 1,050 feet to the south: the southwest corner and the southwestern section of the parcel east of Val Verde Drive. These portions of the project site within the 100-year flood zone would be utilized for bioretention basins, as shown in Figure 2-3. Hydraulic modeling performed during preparation of the Hydrogeologic Report indicated that the project would have a negligible effect on Carmel River flood levels (Source: IX.78). Further, existing roadside ditches along Val Verde Drive currently provide adequate stormwater conveyance, and there have been no documented local flooding events in the project vicinity (Source: IX.78).

Construction activities would include grading, excavation, and other ground-disturbing activities, which could temporarily alter surface drainage patterns on-site and increase the potential for erosion and siltation. However, the project would be required to comply with the SWPP, which would require implementation of best management practices and erosion control measures, thereby reducing the potential for construction activities to result in soil erosion and siltation of waters.

According to the Preliminary Stormwater Control Plan for the project, full project development would result in approximately 55 percent of the project site being covered by new impervious surfaces such as the roadways, driveways, sidewalks, residences, and landscaped areas; representing a net increase of 299,139 square feet compared to existing conditions. The remaining 45 percent of the project site would be covered by pervious landscaping (Source: IX.84). Although the new impervious surfaces would increase by preventing infiltration of rainwater, stormwater runoff would be adequately managed on-site by the two bioretention basins designed to treat and infiltrate stormwater runoff consistent with County requirements to prevent flooding. Further, the new impervious surfaces proposed under the project would cover soils, reducing on-site soil erosion and siltation of waters. In addition, the project would be required to comply with the SWPP, County stormwater requirements, Stormwater Control Plan and O&M plan. Therefore, flooding and siltation impacts resulting from the project's effects on drainage patterns would be less than significant.

⁵ Interior annual average water demand (13.35AFY) added to exterior annual average water demand (2.36 AFY), rounded up for conservative estimate (Source: IX.53)

Hydrology and Water Quality Impact 10(c.iii) – Less Than Significant Impact

As described in Section VI.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, Impact 10(c.i, c.ii), the project would introduce 299,139 square feet of new impervious surfaces (Source: IX.84), replacing the existing agricultural crop lands and thereby altering the existing drainage pattern of the site. The new impervious surfaces introduced by the project would reduce infiltration and increase surface stormwater runoff compared to current conditions. The project would include construction of new stormwater drainage facilities, including two bioretention basins designed to manage surface stormwater runoff from the additional impervious surfaces and accommodate a 95th percentile rainfall event for the site (refer to Section II.2.2.7, *Infrastructure*). The bioretention basins would be designed to filter pollutants from stormwater runoff before discharge, ensuring that runoff does not exceed the capacity of existing or planned drainage systems. Therefore, the project would not create a significant new source of stormwater runoff which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or contribute substantial amounts of polluted runoff. Therefore, the project's impact on stormwater drainage systems would be less than significant.

Hydrology and Water Quality Impact 10(c.iv) – Less Than Significant Impact

The project site is located within a 100-year floodplain as mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), as shown in Figure 2 3. However, the project is designed to raise finished grades in the southwest corner of the site that lies within the 100-year floodplain above the mapped base flood elevation through placement of engineered fill (Source: IX.78). Therefore, no residences would be placed within a 100-year flood hazard area. The project would increase impervious surface area on the project site compared to existing conditions; however, the project includes on-site stormwater management facilities, such as bioretention areas, where stormwater would collect and be treated before discharge. This treatment process involves infiltration of stormwater through soils and sub-drains, which slows the velocity of the stormwater runoff and releases treated stormwater into the existing storm drain system gradually. Therefore, impacts related to impeding or redirecting flood flows would be less than significant.

Hydrology and Water Quality Impact 10(d) – Less Than Significant Impact

The project site is located in the lower Carmel River Valley, where regional flooding is primarily caused by overbank flows from the Carmel River during major storm events. As shown in Figure 2 3, a small portion of the site's southwest corner lies within the FEMA-mapped 100-year floodplain. The remainder of the site is outside any mapped flood, tsunami, or seiche hazard zones, and no nearby enclosed water bodies are present that could generate a seiche (Source: IX.78). Because the site is near the Carmel River and partially overlaps the 100-year floodplain, a 100-year flood event is the most likely scenario in which floodwaters could reach the project area and potentially mobilize pollutants. As shown in Figure 2-3, a limited portion of three residential parcels (Lots 6-8) lie within the 100-year floodplain; all other residential parcels would be located outside of the floodplain. No residential units or building foundations are anticipated to be developed within the 100-year floodplain. Although not anticipated, should development within the floodplain occur, it would be subject to the requirement of Chapter 16.16 of the County Code and require that finished floors be elevated one foot above the base flood elevation to minimize related risk and hazards to an acceptable level. The portions of Lots 6-8 within the floodplain would serve as rear yards and would be graded to direct flood flows away

from the residences and south toward the bioretention basin adjacent to Lot 8, as shown in the Preliminary Grading Plan (Figure 2-8). According to the Hydrogeologic Report, project grading activities would not significantly alter flood elevations or redirect overbank flows in a manner that would elevate flood hazards off-site (Source: IX.78). Further, the project's bioretention basins (Parcels C and B) would be located within the flood hazard area and would exceed the required capacity required to accommodate a 95th percentile storm event (Source: IX.78, 84). If a flood did occur, the bioretention basins would prevent on-site floodwater ponding that could mobilize pollutants, ensuring that stormwater is conveyed away from residences and would not rise to levels capable of inundating pollutant sources. Therefore, impacts related to the release of pollutants from inundation from flood hazards, tsunamis, or seiches would be less than significant.

Hydrology and Water Quality Impact 10(e) – Less Than Significant Impact

Water quality in the project area is regulated under the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board's Basin Plan (Basin Plan), which establishes water quality objectives for the Carmel River and underlying groundwater basins, including the CVGB (Source: IX.82). Implementation of the Basin Plan is carried out through multiple regulatory mechanisms, including the NPDES Construction General Permit, Post-Construction Requirements for stormwater management, and waste discharge requirements applicable to development projects. The project's stormwater design, which includes two bioretention basins and compliance with the County's Low Impact Development (LID) standards, is consistent with the Basin Plan's requirement to treat and infiltrate stormwater and reduce pollutant loading. The basins are capable of infiltrating stormwater and preventing uncontrolled discharges that could violate water quality objectives for sediment, nutrients, or other pollutants (Source: IX.78). As described under Section VI.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, Impact (a), the project would not violate water quality standards.

The project also would not conflict with any Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) plan, because the CVAA, which is the primary water-bearing unit of the CVGB, is not managed under SGMA. Instead, groundwater in the CVAA is legally considered underflow of the Carmel River and is regulated through surface water rights administered by the SWRCB. The CVAA is managed through MPWMD's regulatory authority rather than SGMA, and project-related pumping under both water supply scenarios would not conflict with any sustainable groundwater management plan (Source: IX.81). As described under Section VI.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, Impact (b), the project would demand approximately 16 AFY of water, which is substantially lower than historical use. This reduction in water demand represents approximately a 36 percent decrease relative to existing conditions and represents less than one percent of the CVGB's historical pumping range (Source: IX.53, 78). The project's reduced groundwater use would support, rather than conflict with, long-term resource management goals for the CVAA and the Carmel River. Therefore, the project does not include any action that would interfere with regional water quality regulations, watershed management programs, or the County's stormwater ordinances, or prevent the County, MPWMD, or the Regional Water Quality Control Board from implementing their adopted water resource programs (Source: IX.5, 84). This impact would be less than significant.

11. LAND USE AND PLANNING	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community? (Source: IX.91)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) 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? (Source: IX.2, 4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

Land Use and Planning Impact 11(a) - No Impact

The project site has historically been used for agricultural purposes and is characterized by several mature trees, scattered vegetation, and row crops. The project site is currently developed with a single family residence and detached garage on the southern portion of the project site. Surrounding land uses near the project site are generally characterized by residential and commercial uses to the north, south and west; and to the east by undeveloped high density designated land.

The physical division of an established community typically refers to the construction of a physical feature (such as an airport, roadway, or railroad track) or the removal of a means of access (such as a local road or bridge) that would impair mobility. The project involves the demolition of the existing on-site structures and construction of 74 residential units. Vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian access to the project site would be provided via Val Verde Drive. An internal circulation system would provide circulation throughout the site. The project would not alter the existing public street layout or access to existing adjacent land uses. The project would improve circulation on the project site and would not introduce any physical barriers, such as high-capacity roadways or other major infrastructure, that could divide an established community. Further, the project would not involve the removal of any means of access that could impair mobility within the existing local community or between the community and adjacent areas (Source: IX.91). Therefore, the project would result in no impact related to the physical division of an established community.

Land Use and Planning Impact 11(b) - Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

The project would be subject to the goals, policies, and regulations of the County’s General Plan, CVMP, and Zoning Ordinance. The proposed subdivision and residential use is consistent with the Low Density Residential land use designation and zoning district; therefore, it would not conflict with the allowed land uses described in section 21.14.030. As described in Section II subsection 2.2.4, *Residential Density*, the project proposes a residential density that exceeds the limits established by Section 21.14.060 of the County’s Zoning Ordinance and CVMP Policy CV-1.10. The project applicant submitted a Preliminary Application under SB 330, which was deemed complete and vested on June 12, 2024, and invoked the Builder’s Remedy (California

Government Code 65589.5(D)(5). Under SB 330, an application cannot be denied or conditioned to reduce density based on inconsistencies with the General Plan, zoning regulations, or other local policies. Subject to approval of the SB 330 application and issuance of associated building permits, the residential development would no longer be considered nonconforming under the County's General Plan or Zoning Ordinance. Approval of the nonconforming density would not result in physical environmental impacts beyond those already analyzed in this document.

The project would not conflict with policies in the CVMP adopted for the express purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental effects. CVMP Policy 1.10 states that Val Verde Drive is designated for residential development (Source: IX.2). Thus, the project is consistent with the intended land use of the project site. CVMP Policy CV-6.3 requires the preservation of croplands and orchards for agricultural use and allows only limited clustered development under strict location, density, and visual quality standards. This policy is not intended to mitigate or avoid impacts to agricultural resources; rather, it is intended to maintain the rural character of Carmel Valley by supporting agricultural uses while also allowing low-density residential development. The project site is designated for residential use under the CVMP, and although 10 acres are currently used for agriculture, the project would not result in a substantial reduction in the agricultural uses in Carmel Valley as a whole. Therefore, the project would not conflict with CVMP Policy CV-6.3. The residential development would be set back more than 100 feet from Carmel Valley Road; therefore, the project would not conflict with CVMP Policy CV-3.1. As discussed in Section VI.2, *Agriculture and Forest Resources*, one coast redwood tree on the site would be removed. The coast redwood tree would be replaced with a 15-gallon tree of the same species; therefore, the project would not conflict with CVMP Policy CV-3.11.

Although the project would involve converting Prime Farmland to a non-agricultural use (see Section VI.2, *Agriculture and Forest Resources*), the project's residential use aligns with its existing zoning and land use designation under the County's General Plan (Source: IX.4). The residential designation was applied prior to adoption of the current General Plan. Since the site is not zoned or designated for agriculture, the project does not conflict with Agriculture Element Policy AG-1.1. Similarly, while the project would subdivide land identified as Prime Farmland, the site is designated by the County as Low Density Residential rather than Farmland. Therefore, the project does not conflict with Agriculture Element Policy AG-1.3, which restricts subdivision of agricultural land except under specific circumstances such as inclusion in a Community Plan, an Infrastructure and Financing Study for a Rural Center, or for farmworker or employee/family housing.

The County's General Plan Open Space Element includes policies for protecting biological, cultural and tribal cultural resources. With implementation of **Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-4** in Section VI.4, *Biological Resources*, **Mitigation Measure CR-1** in Section VI.5, *Cultural Resources*, and **Mitigation Measure TR-1** in Section VI.18, *Tribal Cultural Resources*, the project would not conflict with these policies. Consistency with Transportation Element policies is addressed in Section VI.17, *Transportation/Traffic*, and consistency with Public Services Element policies is addressed in Section VI.15, *Public Services*.

As described in Section VI.1, *Aesthetics*, compliance with General Plan Policy LU-1.13 would ensure that impacts related to the creation of a new source of substantial light or glare would be less than significant.

As such, the project would not conflict with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect, and impacts would be less than significant.

12. MINERAL RESOURCES				
Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) 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? (Source: IX.12)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) 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? (Source: IX.12)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

Mineral Resources Impact 12(a, b) – No Impact

The project site is not currently used for mineral extraction. The project would involve the construction of 74 residential units and would not involve mineral resource extraction, nor require the use of mineral resources during construction or operation. Further, the 2021 California Geological Survey Mineral Resource Zone Map for Construction Aggregate in the Monterey Bay Production-Consumption Region does not identify any known mineral resources on the site (Source: IX.12). Therefore, the project would have no impact on mineral resources.

13. NOISE	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project result in:				
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies? (Source: IX.27)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels? (Source: IX.27)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels? (Source: IX.46)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

A Noise and Vibration Assessment for the project was prepared by Illingworth & Rodkin in April 2024 (Source: IX.27; County of Monterey Library No. LIB250133). The purpose of this assessment was to evaluate the project’s potential to result in significant noise impacts. The report presents an overview of the fundamentals of environmental noise and groundborne vibration, summarized applicable regulatory criteria, and discusses ambient noise conditions in the project vicinity. The report also discusses noise levels at the project site with regards to the land use compatibility based on the County’s General Plan and identifies potential impacts and mitigation measures.

Noise

Noise is unwanted sound that disturbs human activity. Environmental noise levels typically fluctuate over time, and different types of noise descriptors are used to account for this variability. Noise level measurements include intensity, frequency, and duration, as well as time of occurrence. Noise level (or volume) is generally measured in decibels (dB) using the A-weighted sound pressure level (dBA). Because of the way the human ear works, a sound must be about 10 dBA greater than the reference sound to be judged as twice as loud. In general, a 3 dBA change in community noise levels is noticeable, while 1-2 dBA changes generally are not perceived. Quiet suburban areas typically have noise levels in the range of 40-50 dBA, while arterial streets are in the 50-60+ dBA range. Normal conversational levels are in the 60-65 dBA range, and ambient noise levels greater than 65 dBA can interrupt conversations.

Noise levels typically attenuate (or drop off) at a rate of 6 dBA per doubling of distance from point sources such as construction equipment. Noise from lightly traveled roads typically attenuates at a rate of about 4.5 dBA per doubling of distance. Noise from heavily traveled roads typically attenuates at about 3 dBA per doubling of distance, while noise from a point source typically attenuates at about 6 dBA per doubling of distance. A significant noise impact would occur if the noise level increase due to project-generated traffic is 3dBA day-night average sound level (Ldn) or greater where future noise levels would exceed 60 dBA Ldn or is 5 dBA Ldn or

greater where future noise levels would remain at or below 60 dBA Ldn (Source: IX.13). Noise levels may also be reduced by the introduction of intervening structures. For example, a single row of buildings between the receptor and the noise source reduces the noise level by about 5 dBA, while a solid wall or berm that breaks the line-of-sight reduces noise levels by 5 to 10 dBA. The construction style for dwelling units in California generally provides a reduction of exterior-to-interior noise levels of about 25 dBA with closed windows (Source: IX 57). Some land uses are more sensitive to ambient noise levels than other uses due to the amount of noise exposure and the types of activities involved. For example, residences, motels, hotels, schools, libraries, churches, nursing homes, auditoriums, museums, cultural facilities, parks, and outdoor recreation areas are more sensitive to noise than commercial and industrial land uses.

The CBC requires, in addition to other requirements, that interior noise levels attributable to exterior environmental noise sources be limited to a level not exceeding 45 dBA in any habitable room.

The Monterey County Code Chapter 10.60 (Noise Control Ordinance), regulates noise within the County. The Noise Control Ordinance prohibits the generation of mechanical noise in excess of 85 dBA, measured at 50 feet from the noise source. This ordinance is only applicable to noise generated within 2,500 feet of any occupied dwelling unit and is used to regulate construction-related noise.

Section 10.60.040 of the County Code applies to nighttime noise, in which it is prohibited to make, assist in making, allow, continue, create, or cause to be made any loud and unreasonable sound any day of the week from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. the following morning within the unincorporated area of the County of Monterey. The ordinance adopted by the County that added this section to the County Code indicates that the ordinance is intended to “strengthen protection of the environment from loud and unreasonable nighttime sound” and “protect the public health, safety and welfare by increasing protections from loud and unreasonable sounds during the nighttime hours.” During this time period, a loud and unreasonable sound includes any sound that exceeds the exterior noise level standards set forth below in Table 6.13-1.

Table 6.13-1 Nighttime Noise Standards

Noise Standard	dBA
Nighttime hourly equivalent sound level, (Leq dBA)	45
Maximum level, dBA	65

The County General Plan Safety Element combines the State-mandated safety and noise elements and contains guidelines relating to noise. The Safety Element identifies sources of noise and provides policies addressing existing and foreseeable noise problems, and establishes acceptable community noise equivalent levels for various land use types. Safety Element Policy S-7.1 states, “New noise-sensitive land uses may only be allowed in areas where existing and projected noise levels are ‘acceptable’ according to ‘Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Table’ (Table S-2)”. For low-density and multi-family housing projects, normally acceptable Community Noise Equivalent Levels (CNELs) range from 50 to 65 dBA, and conditionally acceptable CNELs range from 55 to 70 dBA. According to Figure 10c of the General Plan and the prepared Noise and Vibration Assessment, the project site is within a normally acceptable existing and proposed CNEL. Policy S-7.10 provides standard noise

protection measures for construction, and Policy S-7.8 requires projects that propose the use of heavy construction equipment that has the potential to create vibrations that could cause structural damage to adjacent structures within 100 feet to be required to submit a pre-construction vibration study.

Vibration

Ground vibration consists of rapidly fluctuating motions or waves with an average motion of zero. Several different methods are typically used to quantify vibration amplitude. One method is the Peak Particle Velocity (PPV). The PPV is defined as the maximum instantaneous positive or negative peak of the vibration wave. In this report, a PPV descriptor with units of mm/sec or in/sec is used to evaluate construction generated vibration for building damage and human complaints. Table 6.13-2 displays the reactions of people and the effects on buildings that continuous or frequent intermittent vibration levels produce. The guidelines in Table 6.13-2 represent syntheses of vibration criteria for human response and potential damage to buildings resulting from construction vibration.

Construction activities can cause vibration that varies in intensity depending on several factors. The use of pile driving and vibratory compaction equipment typically generates the highest construction related groundborne vibration levels. Because of the impulsive nature of such activities, the use of the PPV descriptor has been routinely used to measure and assess groundborne vibration and almost exclusively to assess the potential of vibration to cause damage and the degree of annoyance for humans.

The two primary concerns with construction-induced vibration, the potential to damage a structure and the potential to interfere with the enjoyment of life, are evaluated against different vibration limits. Human perception to vibration varies with the individual and is a function of physical setting and the type of vibration. Persons exposed to elevated ambient vibration levels, such as people in an urban environment, may tolerate a higher vibration level.

Table 6.13-2 Reaction of People and Damage to Buildings from Continuous or Frequent Intermittent Vibration Levels

Velocity Level, PPV (in/sec)	Human Reaction	Effect on Buildings
0.01	Barely perceptible	No effect
0.04	Distinctly perceptible	Vibration unlikely to cause damage of any type to any structure
0.08	Distinctly perceptible to strongly perceptible	Recommended upper level of the vibration to which ruins and ancient monuments should be subjected
0.1	Strongly perceptible	Threshold at which there is a risk of damage to fragile buildings with no risk of damage to most buildings
0.25	Strongly perceptible to severe	Threshold at which there is a risk of damage to historic and some old buildings
0.3	Strongly perceptible to severe	Threshold at which there is a risk of damage to older residential structures
0.5	Severe – Vibrations considered unpleasant	Threshold at which there is a risk of damage to new residential and modern commercial/industrial structures

Note: PPV = peak particle velocity; in./sec. = inches per second

Source: IX.56

Structural damage can be classified as cosmetic only, such as paint flaking or minimal extension of cracks in building surfaces; minor, including limited surface cracking; or major, that may threaten the structural integrity of the building. Safe vibration limits that can be applied to assess the potential for damaging a structure vary by researcher. The damage criteria presented in Table 6.13-1 include several categories for ancient, fragile, and historic structures, the types of structures most at risk to damage. Most buildings are included within the categories ranging from “historic and some old buildings” to “modern industrial/commercial buildings.” Construction-induced vibration that can be detrimental to the building is very rare and has only been observed in instances where the structure is at a high state of disrepair and the construction activity occurs immediately adjacent to the structure.

Sensitive Receptors

Noise exposure standards for various types of land uses reflect the varying noise sensitivities associated with each of these uses. Noise sensitive receptors generally include schools, parks, residential areas, hospitals, churches, courts, libraries, and care facilities. Noise-sensitive receptors nearest to the project site include residences adjacent to the north and south of the project site and Carmel Middle School approximately 500 feet northeast of the project site.

Noise Impact 13(a) – Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Construction Noise

Project construction has the potential to create excessive noise levels above ambient noise conditions and County of Monterey standards on a temporary basis. Project construction is anticipated last approximately two years. Project construction phases would include demolition, site preparation, and building exterior and interior construction. Table 6.13-2 shows the maximum expected construction noise levels based on the combined use of construction equipment anticipated to be used concurrently during each phase of project construction.

While County of Monterey does not establish noise level thresholds for construction activities, this analysis uses the noise limits established by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to identify the potential for impacts due to temporary construction noise. The FTA identifies construction noise limits in the Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual. During daytime hours, an exterior threshold of 80 dBA one-hour equivalent noise level (Leq) shall be enforced at residential land uses, 85 dBA Leq at commercial land uses, and 90 dBA Leq at industrial land uses.

Standard methods for acoustical analysis of construction sites are based on the distance from the “acoustical center” or construction activity center on the site to the nearest receiving property lines of existing noise-sensitive receptors, as was the case for this analysis. The proposed construction equipment are modeled at the approximate center of the area in which most construction activity is likely to occur. The worst-case hourly average noise level, calculated by combining all equipment per phase, was propagated from the geometrical center of the project site to the property lines of the receptors. These noise level estimates are shown in Table 6.13-3. Noise levels shown in Table 6.13-3 do not assume reductions due to intervening buildings or existing barriers.

Table 6.13-3 Estimated Noise Levels by Construction Phase at Sensitive Receivers

Phase	Hourly Average Noise Levels, dBA Leq				
	Source (50 feet)	North Residential (260 ft) ^b	Northeast Playfields (680 ft) ^b	South Residential (330 ft) ^b	West Commercial (480 ft) ^b
Demolition	85	71	62	69	65
Site Preparation	80	66	57	64	60
Grading/Excavation	82	68	59	66	62
Trenching/Foundation	82	68	59	66	62
Building - Exterior	83	69	60	67	63
Building – Interior/Architectural Coating	74	60	51	58	54
Paving	83	69	60	67	63

^a These noise levels represent all equipment per phase operating simultaneously

^b The distances shown in the table were conservatively measured from the center of the construction area to the receiving property lines

Shown in Table 6.13-3, at the nearest land uses, construction noise levels would typically range from 51 to 71 dBA Leq. Additionally, the construction contractor is required to limit construction to the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday for any on-site or off-site work within 500 feet of any sensitive use.

The equipment expected to be used in each construction phase is summarized in Table 6.13-4, along with the quantity of each type of equipment to be used. The table also summarizes the maximum instantaneous noise levels (Lmax) expected from each type of construction equipment and the Leq calculated at 50 feet from the two loudest pieces of equipment identified in each phase.

Table 6.13-4 Noise Levels for Construction Equipment

Phase	Construction Equipment (Quantity)	Maximum Instantaneous Noise Level (Lmax)	Average Noise Level (Leq)
Demolition	Concrete/Industrial Saw (1)a	90	85
	Rubber-Tired Dozer (1)	82	
	Tractor/Loader/Backhoe (1)a	84	
Site Preparation	Tractor/Loader/Backhoe (1)a	84	80
Grading/Excavation	Rubber-Tired Dozer (1)a	82	82
	Tractor/Loader/Backhoe (1)a	84	
Trenching/Foundation	Tractor/Loader/Backhoe (1)a	84	82
	Excavator (1)a	81	
Building - Exterior	Crane (1)	81	82
	Forklift (1)	75	
	Generator Set (1)a	81	
	Tractor/Loader/Backhoe (1)a	84	
	Welder (2)	74	
Building – Interior/Architectural Coating	Air Compressor (1)a	78	74

Phase	Construction Equipment (Quantity)	Maximum Instantaneous Noise Level (Lmax)	Average Noise Level (Leq)
Paving	Cement and Mortar Mixer (1) ^a	80	82
	Paver (1)	77	
	Paving Equipment (1)	77	
	Roller (1)	80	
	Tractor/Loader/Backhoe (1) ^a	84	

^a Denotes the loudest pieces of construction equipment per phase

As shown in Table 6.13-4, the construction noise levels for the two loudest pieces of equipment per phase would range from 74 to 85 dBA Leq at 50 feet. Construction noise levels would exceed the 80 dBA Leq threshold at the nearest residential land uses when activities occur within approximately 90 feet of the property line. The 85 dBA Leq threshold would not be exceeded at commercial land uses to the west of the site (Source: IX.27). Because construction noise levels would exceed the 80 dBA Leq threshold within 90 feet of residential uses, impacts would be potentially significant. **Mitigation Measure N-1** is required to ensure that noise levels would be reduced to below FTA’s 80 dBA Leq threshold for residential land uses.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure N-1. Temporary Construction Noise

Project construction will occur near residential land uses. Construction shall only occur Monday-Saturday, 7am to 7pm. The project construction contractor shall use the best available noise suppression devices and techniques including, but not limited to the following noise reduction measures:

- Equip all internal combustion engine-driven equipment with intake and exhaust mufflers that are in good condition and appropriate for the equipment.
- Locate stationary noise-generating equipment such as pumps, air compressors, or portable power generators, and staging or lay-down areas over 100 feet from adjoining sensitive land uses. If this cannot be feasibly accomplished, temporary noise barriers shall be constructed to screen stationary noise-generating equipment when located near adjoining sensitive land uses.
- Prohibit unnecessary idling of internal combustion engines.
- Utilize “quiet” air compressors and other stationary noise sources where technology exists.
- Control noise from construction workers’ radios to a point where they are not audible at existing residences bordering the project site.
- Notify all adjacent businesses, residences, and other noise-sensitive land uses of the construction schedule in writing.

- Designate a “disturbance coordinator” who shall be responsible for responding to any complaints about construction noise. The disturbance coordinator shall determine the cause of the noise complaint (e.g., bad muffler, etc.) and shall require that reasonable measures be implemented to correct the problem. Conspicuously post a telephone number for the disturbance coordinator at the construction site and include it in the notice sent to neighbors regarding the construction schedule. The disturbance coordination shall keep a log of complaints and modifications implemented, and shall provide this log to HCD-Planning upon request.

Compliance Actions:

Prior to approval of the Final Map, this mitigation measure’s language shall be added as a note on the Final Map.

Prior to issuance of grading permits for subdivision improvements (all phases, if phased) from HCD-Building Services and prior to issuance of grading permits/construction permits for residential development from HCD-Building Services, the requirements of this mitigation measure shall be included as a note on the construction plans. The construction plans shall delineate a 100-foot setback from adjoining sensitive land uses. Additionally, HCD-Planning shall be provided with contact information for the “disturbance coordinator” and written acknowledgement of this mitigation measure’s requirements.

During construction, the construction manager and disturbance coordinator shall ensure compliance with Mitigation Measure N-1.

Prior to final inspection for all permits, the owner/applicant shall submit a report from the disturbance coordinator and construction manager outlining the complaints received, how complaints were addressed, and compliance with all other noise reduction measures.

Operational Noise

Noise generated during project operation would be typical of residential uses and would not significantly affect ambient noise levels. Primary on-site sources would include vehicle circulation noise (e.g., engine startups, alarms, parking) associated with the on-site roads; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning equipment at proposed residences; outdoor recreational noise at common and private open space areas; and use of landscaping equipment.

On-Site Stationary Operational Noise

One major source of on-site operational noise source from the project would be one two-ton heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) unit at each proposed residence, which may operate 24 hours a day, depending on weather conditions. Specific mechanical specifications for the proposed HVAC system are not available at this stage of project design. Therefore, this analysis assumes the use of a typical 2-ton Carrier 24ANB7-3PD air conditioner that has a sound pressure level of 63 dBA at three feet. To provide a conservative analysis, it was assumed the HVAC unit would be located on the rear of the building nearest to the nearest noise-sensitive receptor and would thus be approximately 15 feet from the single-family residence to the south on Val Verde Drive. Accounting for a 5 dBA reduction from the proposed fence at the property line, at this distance, noise generated by the project’s HVAC equipment would attenuate to

approximately 44.6 dBA Leq. Furthermore, this is a conservative analysis as it does not take into account any shielding from any mechanical equipment enclosures. Other nearby residential uses would be located further away and HVAC noise levels would be lower at these locations. As such, noise generated by the project's HVAC equipment would not exceed the County's maximum noise limit of 65 dBA measured at 50 feet from any equipment or nighttime exterior noise limit of 45 dBA Leq. Therefore, operational mechanical equipment would not generate a substantial 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 applicable standards of other agencies, and impacts would be less than significant.

Future Residents

In addition to mechanical equipment, the project would generate noise from people gathering at the project site. The main noise source associated with future residents would be speech from conversations. Typically, a conversation between two people using a normal voice (not raised) at a distance of three feet is 60 dBA (Source: IX.26). No amplified sound is proposed at any gathering location, and speech from conversations would quickly dissipate and would not interfere with surrounding outdoor activities and noise-sensitive uses. Furthermore, per Assembly Bill 1307 (2023), the effect of noise generated by residential project occupants and their guests is not a significant effect on the environment. This impact would be less than significant.

Off-Site Operational Traffic Noise

Traffic noise from project-generated vehicle trips was evaluated based on trip generation estimates from the Traffic Impact Assessment prepared by Kittelson & Associates, Inc (Source: IX.26); which is included in Appendix F. According to the Traffic Impact Assessment, existing daily traffic along Rio Road east of Carmel Rancho Boulevard is approximately 1,160 trips, with 45 morning and 116 evening peak hour trips. The project would add approximately 685 daily trips, including 48 morning and 66 evening peak hour trips, all entering and existing via Rio Road. Ambient noise measurements made at the project site indicate that existing noise levels in the immediate project site vicinity are approximately 52 dBA Ldn. To assess the increase in ambient noise levels at the nearby sensitive receptors, per CCR requirements, the traffic noise increase was determined using the following equation: Traffic Noise Increase = $10 \cdot \text{LOG}(\text{Future Traffic Volumes}/\text{Existing Traffic Volumes})$. This increase in traffic would result in a 2 dBA day-night average sound level (Ldn) at sensitive receptors along Rio Road; below the 3 dBA and 5 dBA Ldn thresholds and therefore not substantial. The project would not result in significant traffic increases along roadways with higher traffic volumes (i.e., Carmel Rancho Boulevard, SR-1, and Carmel Valley Road) (Source: IX.26).

The greatest potential for project-generated traffic noise impacts would occur at existing receptors along Val Verde Drive given the relatively low ambient noise environment. As noted above, the project is expected to generate up to 116 peak hour trips. During the peak traffic hours, vehicle traffic along Val Verde Drive would generate an hourly average noise level of 50 dBA Leq and a daily average noise level of 50 dBA Ldn as measured at 50 feet from the centerline of the roadway. When project-generated traffic noise is added to the existing ambient noise conditions measured at the site (52 dBA Ldn), the resulting noise level due to local and distant traffic would be 54 dBA Ldn. Therefore, noise generated by project traffic would increase

ambient noise levels by 2 dBA Ldn at sensitive receptors along Val Verde Drive. However, the project’s traffic noise increase would not exceed the 5 dBA Ldn noise impact threshold. Therefore, project-generated traffic would have a less than significant impact on the noise environment in the project area (Source: IX.27).

Because the proposed residences would not generate sources of noise that are new to the existing surrounding area, and traffic noise would not exceed the noise impact threshold, permanent operational noise impacts as a result of the project would be less than significant.

Noise Impact 13(b) – Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Construction of the project would intermittently generate vibration on and adjacent to the project site. Vibration-generating equipment may include bulldozers and loaded trucks to move materials and debris, and vibratory rollers for paving. The distance to the nearest sensitive receptors to the project site includes residences located adjacent to the south and north of the project site within 20 feet.

The California Department of Transportation recommends a vibration limit of 0.5 in/sec PPV to avoid damage to new residential and modern commercial/industrial structures and a vibration limit of 0.3 in/sec PPV to avoid damage to older residential structures. Table 6.13-5 identifies typical vibration levels associated with the construction equipment that could be used during project construction at a distance of 25 feet.

Table 6.13-5 Vibration Levels for Construction Equipment and Minimum Setbacks

Construction Equipment	PPV at 25 feet	Minimum Setback to Meet the Thresholds	
		0.3 in/sec PPV, feet	0.5 in/sec PPV, feet
Vibratory roller	0.210	19	12
Large bulldozer	0.089	9	6
Loaded trucks	0.076	8	5
Jackhammer	0.035	4	3
Small bulldozer	0.003	<1	<1

Source: IX.51.

As shown in Table 6.13-5 the residences immediately south of the project site are within the identified screening distances. Consequently, project construction could generate vibration levels exceeding the 0.3 in/sec PPV threshold when heavy equipment or impact tools are operated within 20 feet of the nearest building. Specifically, vibratory rollers used within 20 feet and dozers or excavators operated within 5 feet of these buildings could exceed the 0.3 in/sec PPV threshold. Vibration levels at all other buildings to the west and north would remain below this threshold. Because vibration levels could exceed 0.3 in/sec PPV at the southern residences, this impact would be potentially significant and would require mitigation to reduce vibration below the threshold. **Mitigation Measure N-2** would reduce this impact to a less than significant level.

The use of concrete/industrial saws, tractors/loaders/backhoes, cranes, forklifts, generators, welding equipment, air compressors, mixers, or pavers/paving equipment would not be expected to generate vibration levels exceeding the 0.3 in/sec PPV threshold (Source: IX.27).

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure N-2: Temporary Ground-borne Vibration

Construction of the project may result in vibration levels that could exceed 0.3 in/sec PPV near the proposed southern residences. To reduce these vibration levels, the project construction contractor shall incorporate the following vibration reduction measures:

- Avoid using vibratory rollers within 20 feet and rubber-tired dozers or excavators within 5 feet of the adjacent residences to the south.
- A static roller shall be used in lieu of a vibratory roller when work would occur within 20 feet of the adjacent residences to the south.
- Substitute smaller equipment (e.g., Tractor/Loader/Backhoe) to complete the tasks designated for rubber-tired dozers or excavators.
- Select demolition methods that do not involve large impact tools within 20 feet of the adjacent residences to the south. Portable jackhammers, saws, or grinders shall be used to minimize impacts to the ground.
- Avoid dropping heavy equipment and use alternative methods for breaking up existing pavement, such as a pavement grinder, instead of dropping heavy objects, within 20 feet of the adjacent residences to the south.
- Designate a Disturbance Coordinator responsible for registering and investigating claims of excessive vibration. The contact information for the responsible party shall be posted on the construction site

Compliance Actions:

Prior to approval of the Final Map, this mitigation measure's language shall be added as a note on the Final Map.

Prior to issuance of grading permits for subdivision improvements (all phases, if phased) from HCD-Building Services and prior to issuance of grading permits/construction permits for residential development from HCD-Building Services, the requirements of this mitigation measure shall be included as a note on the construction plans. Additionally, HCD-Planning shall be provided with contact information for the "disturbance coordinator" and written acknowledgement of this mitigation measure's requirements.

During construction, the construction manager and disturbance coordinator shall ensure compliance with Mitigation Measure N-2.

Prior to final inspection for all permits, the owner/applicant shall submit a report from the disturbance coordinator and construction manager outlining the complaints received, how complaints were addressed, and compliance with all other vibration reduction measures.

Noise Impact 13(c) – No Impact

The closest public airport to the project site is the Monterey Regional Airport located approximately four miles northeast. Therefore, the project site is not located in the airport's

Airport Influence Area and is not subject to the 2019 Monterey Regional Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. There are no private airstrips in the vicinity of the project site. Given the distance from the project site, aircraft at Monterey Regional Airport would have a negligible effect on the noise environment at the project site (Source: IX.27, 46). The project would not expose people residing or working at the project site to excessive noise levels associated with airports. There would be no impact.

14. POPULATION AND HOUSING	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Induce 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)? (Source: IX.15)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? (Source: IX.17)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

Population and Housing Impact 14(a) – Less Than Significant Impact

The project would introduce 74 new residential units in the County, thereby resulting in population growth. However, the project would not result in substantial unplanned growth. As of January 2025, unincorporated Monterey County has a population of 105,096 people with an average of 2.84 persons per household (Source: IX.17). Assuming each proposed unit would house an average of 2.84 residents, and all residents would relocate to the County, the project would result in approximately 211 additional persons in the County.⁶ The AMBAG projects an approximately 14% growth increase between the planning years of 2015 and 2045. Specifically, unincorporated Monterey County (which includes Carmel Valley) is anticipated to experience a 6% growth increase (a population increase of 6,317) between the planning years of 2015 and 2045 (Source: IX.15). The population upon completion of the project would account for approximately 3.3% of the projected growth for the unincorporated area of the County. The County’s General Plan allows for the development of approximately 10,015 additional dwelling units within the unincorporated area through 2030, potentially facilitating a population increase of approximately 25,292 residents (Source: IX.12). This project represents approximately 0.83 percent of the growth projected by the County’s General Plan, and an approximately 0.2 percent increase from the current population of unincorporated Monterey County, which is within the County’s General Plan allowed population increase. Further, as discussed in Section VI.11, *Land Use and Planning*, pursuant to CVMP Policy CV-1.10, Val Verde Drive is identified as an area intended for residential development. Thus, the project is consistent with the intended land use of the project site. Therefore, the project would not induce substantial unplanned population growth in the County, and impacts would be less than significant.

Population and Housing Impact 14(b) – Less Than Significant Impact

The project would involve the demolition of one existing single family residence on the project site, which is currently occupied. Demolition of one unit would not displace substantial numbers of people, and the project would result in a net gain of 73 units on the project site. Therefore, the project would not displace substantial numbers of people or housing, and impacts would be less than significant.

⁶ 74 housing units multiplied by the average number of persons per household in the County (2.84) equals approximately 211 residents

15. PUBLIC SERVICES		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project result in:					
Substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:					
a)	Fire protection? (Source: IX.19, 88)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Police protection? (Source: IX.22)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c)	Schools? (Source: IX.20, 24, 25)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d)	Parks? (Source: IX.9)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e)	Other public facilities? (Source: IX.4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

Public Services Impact 15(a) - Less Than Significant Impact

The Cypress Fire Protection District (Cypress FPD) would provide fire protection services to the project. The closest Cypress FPD station to the project site is Station 25, located at 3775 Rio Road in Carmel, approximately 0.18 miles west of the site within an approximately three-minute driving time (Source: IX.19).

The project would result in addition of approximately 211 additional persons within unincorporated Monterey County, which would increase the demand for fire protection services. The project would not introduce development to areas outside of the Cypress FPD’s normal service area that would necessitate new fire protection services. The project would be required to comply with County’s requirements for fire access and on-site fire prevention development standards, including smoke detectors and sprinkler systems, pursuant to Chapter 18.09, Fire Code, of the County’s Municipal Code. David Jones of Cypress FPD reviewed the project on November 18, 2024, and did not raise any concerns or indicators of inconsistencies with applicable requirements (Source: IX.88). Prior to issuance of grading/building permit, the Cypress FPD would conduct an additional review of the construction plans to verify compliance with all codes and standards, including driveway width, turning radius, hydrant spacing, and emergency access. Further, as described under Section VI.14, *Population and Housing*, the project would not generate population growth beyond that anticipated in the County’s General Plan. Therefore, the project would not create an unanticipated burden on fire protection services or affect response times such that new or expanded fire facilities would be needed. Impacts would be less than significant.

Public Services Impact 15(b) - Less Than Significant Impact

The Monterey County Sheriff Department would provide police protection services to the project site. The closest Monterey County Sheriff's Office is located at 1200 Aguajito Road in Monterey, approximately 3.6 miles north of the project site, within an approximately 12-minute driving time (Source: IX.13). The project would result in the addition of approximately 211 persons within unincorporated Monterey County, which would increase the total population requiring police protection services. However, the project would not introduce development to areas outside of the Monterey County Sheriff Office's normal service area that would necessitate new police protection services. Further, as described under Section VI.14, *Population and Housing*, the project would not generate population growth beyond that anticipated in the County's General Plan. Therefore, the project would not create the need for new or expanded police protection facilities, and impacts would be less than significant.

Public Services Impact 15(c) - Less Than Significant Impact

The project site is within the Carmel Unified School District (CUSD) service area. The project would involve the construction of 74 residential units, which would result in an additional 211 persons within unincorporated Monterey County. The student generation rate for CUSD is 0.23 students per household (Source: IX.20); accordingly, the project would result in an increase of 18 students in CUSD schools. According to the CUSD Facilities Master Plan, the projected student enrollment for the 2025/2026 school year is 2,264 students, and the current enrollment is 2,159 (Source: IX.24). Therefore, the anticipated additional 18 students would be within the projected enrollment for CUSD schools, and would not necessitate additional school facilities (Source: IX.25). Pursuant to Senate Bill 50 (Section 65995(h)), payment of mandatory fees to the affected school district would reduce potential school impacts to less than significant level under CEQA. In addition, the County requires the payment of impact fees pursuant to Section 19.12.015 of the County Municipal Code and Policy PS-7.8 within the County's Public Service Element. Payment of mandatory fees to the affected school district would be required, which would reduce potential school impacts to less than significant level. Therefore, with the projected enrollment capacities of CUSD schools and payment of mandatory fees, the project would have a less-than-significant impact on public schools.

Public Services Impact 15(d) - Less Than Significant Impact

Refer to Section VI.16, *Recreation*, for analysis of impacts related to parks and recreation resources.

Public Services Impact 15(e) - Less Than Significant Impact

As discussed in Section VI.14, *Population and Housing*, the project result in approximately 211 new residents to unincorporated Monterey County, which is consistent with the growth anticipated in the County's General Plan and would not necessitate new the need for additional public facilities, such as libraries, healthcare facilities or altered government facilities (Source: IX.4). Impacts would be less than significant.

16. RECREATION			Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact				
a) 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? (Source: IX.9, 10)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment? (Source: IX.5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

Recreation Impact 16(a, b) – Less Than Significant Impact

The Monterey County Parks Department is responsible for the maintenance of parks and recreation facilities in the County. The County’s park system consists of nine regional parks spanning 12,155 acres and 10,000 acres of lakes (Source: IX.9). The closest parks to the project site are the Palo Corona Regional Park, which borders the project site to the south and east, Jacks Peak Park, located less than a mile northeast of the project site, Mission Trail Park, located less than a mile northwest of the project site and Carmel River Beach, located 1.4 miles west of the project site (Source: IX.10). The project would introduce new residences in unincorporated Monterey County, which would result in approximately 211 new residents. These new residents would increase demand for parks and recreational facilities.

Pursuant to section 19.12.010 of the County’s Subdivision Ordinance and Policy PS-11.10 of the Public Services Element, the project applicant would be required to dedicate land and/or pay an in-lieu fee for park and recreational purposes. Based on the parkland dedication table in section 19.12.010 of the County’s Subdivision Ordinance, the project would be required to provide 1.1 acres of parkland (Source: IX.5). As proposed, the project would provide approximately 1.68 acres of parkland and open space, including shared community areas, private yards, a garden park, and community green space along the southern portion of the project site. The proposed 1.68 acres of parkland and open space would exceed the 1.1-acre requirement under the County’s parkland dedication standards, reducing the demand on nearby existing parks. Therefore, demand facilitated by the project would be incremental and would not substantially contribute to the use of existing parks, such that new or expanded recreational facilities would be required. Impacts would be less than significant.

17. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities? (Source: IX.4, 62, 63, 65, 66, 67)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)? (Source: IX.62, 67)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)? (Source: IX.62)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in inadequate emergency access? (Source: IX.62)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

Kittelson & Associates (K&A) completed a VMT assessment for the project on January 19, 2026 (Source: IX.62). The assessment was conducted in accordance with CEQA requirements and the Governor’s Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI; formerly the Office Planning and Research) guidelines utilizing the VMT Calculator and VMT maps provided by the County. At this time, the County has not adopted their own VMT thresholds. Therefore, VMT guidelines from the LCI’s Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA, updated December 2018, were used as guidance for evaluating potential transportation and traffic impacts from the project (Source: IX.62).

K&A also prepared a Transportation Impact Assessment for the project on December 11, 2025. The assessment was prepared to determine the expected transportation-related effects of the project, and included calculations of project-related trip estimates to assess the project’s traffic effect on local roads (Source: IX.63).

The General Plan (Circulation Element) has adopted following Level of Service standards (LOS):

Monterey County Level of Service Standards

- **For Signalized Intersections:** A potentially significant impact would occur if an intersection operating at LOS A, B, or C, degrades to D, E, F. For intersections already operating at unacceptable levels D and E, a potentially significant impact would occur if a project added 0.01 during peak hour or more to the critical movement’s volume-to-capacity ratio. If the intersection is already operating at LOS F, any increase (one vehicle) in the critical movement’s volume-to-capacity ratio is considered potentially significant.
- **For Unsignalized Intersections:** A potentially significant impact would occur if any traffic movement has a LOS F or any traffic signal warrant is met.

- For Roadway Segments: A potentially significant impact would occur if a roadway segment degrades to a lower level of service of D, E, or F. If a segment is already operating at LOS F, any increase during peak hour (one vehicle) is considered a potentially significant impact.

Carmel Valley Master Plan (Supplemental) LOS Standards

- For Signalized Intersections: LOS of C is the acceptable condition
- For Unsignalized Intersections: LOS of F or meeting any traffic signal warrant are defined as unacceptable conditions.
- With the exception of some road segments along Carmel Valley Road, LOS C has been established as the minimum acceptable level of service for roadways within Carmel Valley. Per CVMP Policy CV-2.17, LOS D has been established as the minimum acceptable level of service for several segments along Carmel Valley Road.

The General Plan and these reports present an explanation of the research, investigation procedures, results of research findings, and recommendations for the project, and were used to develop the analysis for this section.

Transportation/Traffic Impact 17(a) – Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated

Transit

Monterey-Salinas Transit operates fixed-route service in the project vicinity, including Route 24 with existing stops along Carmel Rancho Boulevard within 0.5 mile of the site. The project would not alter transit routing or frequency and would add a continuous pedestrian path along Val Verde Drive that connects to Rio Road and nearby commercial areas, improving pedestrian access to the nearest transit stops. These features support the County’s General Plan Circulation Element Goal C-6, which promotes viable transportation alternatives, and are consistent with General Plan Policy C-2.7, which encourages new development in areas with convenient access to alternative transportation. At the regional level, the project would not conflict with the AMBAG 2045 MTP/SCS because it enhances pedestrian access to nearby transit and does not preclude any multimodal improvements identified in the plan (Source: IX.65). Therefore, the project would not conflict with any programs, plans, ordinances or policies addressing transit facilities.

Roadways

The project would not conflict with Section 21.64.250 of the County’s Zoning Ordinance, which requires residential developments of 25 or more units to incorporate feasible trip-reduction measures that reduce dependence on automobiles (Source: IX.5). As described in Section II. 2.2.5, *Access and Parking*, Val Verde Drive would be widened to accommodate two 10-foot travel lanes, two-foot shoulders, and a five-foot decomposed granite pedestrian path. These improvements are consistent with roadway strategies in Section 21.64.250 of the County’s Zoning Ordinance, which encourage maintaining safe and efficient local access and supporting multimodal connectivity within neighborhood-scale roadway networks. These improvements

would provide adequate access, internal circulation, and encourage alternative modes of travel to reduce vehicle trips. As discussed in Section VI.17, *Transportation/Traffic*, Impact (b), the TDM strategies introduced in Section II, *Project Characteristics*, include transit subsidies, travel-behavior outreach, carpool and vanpool loading areas, bicycle facilities, pedestrian improvements, and electric vehicle parking. The TDM strategies would be consistent with County policies developed to reduce vehicle trip generation (Source: IX.62). With 74 residential units, the project would generate approximately 685 daily trips, with 48 occurring during the AM peak hour and 66 occurring during the PM peak hour.

Pursuant to Senate Bill 743, LOS is no longer used to determine environmental impacts under CEQA. The following discussion is provided for informational purposes only and to demonstrate consistency with the County's Circulation Element.

With implementation of the project, more than 0.01 in V/C ratio would be added to the intersection of Carmel Valley Road and Carmel Rancho Boulevard, which already operates at an unacceptable level of service under existing and would continue to operate at an unacceptable level of service under existing plus project condition. This change in V/C ratio would conflict with 2010 General Plan LOS standards for signalized intersection. Therefore, **Mitigation Measure T-1** would require that the project convert the existing northbound left-through to a northbound through-right at Carmel Valley Road/Carmel Rancho Boulevard to improve the level of service to an acceptable level and result in a less than significant impact. Additionally, the project will be conditioned to pay into the Carmel Valley Traffic Impact Program which would support additional improvements within the Carmel Valley Master Plan. Adherence to **Mitigation Measure T-1** and standard conditions of approval requiring payment of fair share traffic fees would ensure impacts are less than significant relative to roadway congestion and conflicts with local transportation polices or programs.

The intersection of Carpenter Street and State Route 1 operates at an unacceptable LOS under existing and would continue to operate at an unacceptable LOS under existing plus project conditions. However, the project would not add more than 0.01 in volume to capacity ratio to the intersection and thus would have a less than significant impact at this intersection. Additionally, as described above, the project would be subject to applicable Regional Development Impact Fees imposed under Section 12.90.070 of the County's Zoning Ordinance. These fees would be used to fund regional transportation improvement projects, further reducing the project's overall impact on roadways. With the access improvements to the project site to support multimodal connectivity, implementation of TDMs, and Regional Development Impact Fees to fund regional transportation improvement projects, the project would not conflict with any programs, plans, ordinances or policies specific to roadway facilities.

The Transportation Impact Assessment analyzed 10 roadway segments to determine LOS conditions. Under existing and existing plus project conditions, three of the 10 roadway segments operate at an acceptable level of service. The other seven roadway segments operate at an unacceptable level of service. The project would not have a significant impact on these roadway segments because it would not worsen the LOS by one letter grade. Accordingly, the project would not cause an intersection's LOS to degrade below acceptable LOS or have a significant impact on an intersection already operated below acceptable levels (D-F) (Source: IX.63). Accordingly, the project would not conflict with the General Plan as it pertains to roadway congestion.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure T-1: Traffic Improvements

The owner/applicant shall install and construct the following measure at the Carmel Valley Road/Carmel Rancho intersection to ensure compliance with the County's level of service standards per the Transportation Impact Assessment prepared by K&A, dated December 11, 2025 (Source: IX.63):

- Convert the existing northbound left-through to a northbound through-right at Carmel Valley Road/Carmel Rancho Boulevard to improve the LOS targets to meet the target thresholds.⁷

Compliance Actions

Prior to Final Map approval, the owner/applicant shall enter into a Subdivision Improvement Agreement with the County of Monterey, and provide to HCD-Planning, Engineering Services, and the County Survey for review and approval a Subdivision Improvements Plan illustrating the required traffic improvements.

Prior to issuance of the first construction or grading permit from HCD-Building Services, the required intersection improvement shall be constructed and finalized to the satisfaction of HCD-Engineering Services.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

As described in Section II. 2.2.5, *Access and Parking*, the project would include the construction of two-foot shoulders and a decomposed granite pedestrian path along Val Verde Drive to provide bicycle and pedestrian access to the project site. Currently, there are no existing bicycle facilities or sidewalks that provide direct pedestrian access to the site. Additionally, the project's internal circulation network, shown in Figure 2-4, would include sidewalks and crosswalks to provide safe pedestrian and bicycle circulation within the neighborhood. These improvements are consistent with the County's General Plan Circulation Element Goal C-9, which promotes safe and convenient bicycle transportation (Source: IX.4).

Regionally, the AMBAG 2045 MTP/SCS emphasizes the expansion of low-stress walking and bicycling networks, consistent with Goal 1, Access and Mobility, and Goal 4, Healthy Communities. Similarly, the Monterey County Active Transportation Plan identifies goals to increase active transportation trips, improve safety, eliminate network gaps, and provide bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The project's decomposed granite pedestrian path and internal sidewalk system would connect the residences to nearby commercial services and existing transit options where no pedestrian or bicycle facilities currently exist, thereby aligning with the MTP/SCS and Monterey County Active Transportation Plan goals (Source: IX.65, 66, 67). As such, the project would not conflict with any program, plan, ordinance, or policy regarding bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and impacts would be less than significant.

⁷ This modification would involve a striping change only.

Transportation/Traffic Impact 17(b) – Less Than Significant Impact

A VMT analysis was conducted in accordance with CEQA Section 15064.3 and the LCI’s guidelines using the County’s VMT Calculator and VMT maps. The Countywide average VMT per capita for residential projects is 11.4. To meet the screening threshold for a less than significant impact, a project must be equal to or less than 85 percent of the County average, or 9.7 VMT per capita. Based on the project location, the VMT per capita for the site is estimated at 11.3, which is slightly below the county average but above the 85 percent threshold. To reduce VMT, the project, as proposed, would implement the TDM strategies introduced in Section II. 2.2.3, *Project Characteristics*. The TDM strategies are summarized with the reductions to VMT in Table 6.17-3, below. Although the County has not adopted a formal VMT policy, HCD-Planning and Engineering Services has reviewed the below proposed TDM measures and concurs with their applicability and related VMT reduction percentage, which are consistent with VMT reduction targets used by neighboring jurisdictions following the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association Handbook. To ensure these TDMs are implemented into the Final Map and/or final construction plans, a condition of approval would be applied.

Table 6.17-3 Traffic Design Measures

TDM Measure	Measure Summary	VMT Reduction
TDM -1: Transit subsidy for the affordable housing units (Transit Strategy)	To encourage the use of nearby transit, the project would implement subsidized transit fare for residences who occupy the 20 percent deed restricted affordable housing units. The subsidized transit fare would promote the use of transit rather than commuting to destinations by personal vehicle.	4%
TDM-2: Mandatory Travel Behavior Change Program with Promotions & Marketing (Communications & Information Strategy).	The project would include the development and implementation of a travel behavior change program that would inform residents through passive educational and promotional materials on the facilities available at the project site, such as bike parking and carpool/vanpool areas, and nearby transit stops to promote the use of various transportation options facilitated by the project.	4%
TDM-3: Passenger Loading Zones for Carpool/Vanpool	The project would incorporate an easy access location for carpools and vanpools.	1%
TDM-4: Provide End of Trip Facilities (Bicycle Infrastructure Strategy)	The project would incorporate secure bicycle parking to provide the added convenience (repair facility) and security needed to encourage the use of bicycling as a viable form of travel to destinations.	1%
TDM-5: Pedestrian Network Improvements (Neighborhood Enhancement Strategy)	The project includes complete internal and external pedestrian network improvements including the construction of a sidewalk along the entirety of Val Verde Drive to Rio Road, thereby providing safe access for pedestrians to nearby retail areas and transit stops within 0.5 miles of the project	2%
TDM-6: EV Parking Spaces/Stations (Miscellaneous Strategy)	All 148 parking spaces would be compatible with Level 1 or Level 2 electric vehicle chargers.	1%
TDM-7: Affordable and Below Market Rate Housing	The project would include 15 deed restricted affordable housing units, representing 20 percent of the total residences. The affordable housing units would provide opportunities for lower-income households to live closer to job centers and transit, thereby improving the jobs-housing balance, which reduces VMT. In addition, lower-income households generally have lower rates of auto ownership, which represents fewer vehicles per household and therefore fewer vehicle trips.	1%

Source IX.62, 67

Altogether, implementation of the above TDM strategies would result in a 14 percent reduction in VMT and a project VMT per capita of 9.7, which is equal to the 85 percent County average. As such, with implementation of the proposed TDM measures, the project would meet the County's screening threshold for a less than significant VMT impact (Source: IX.62). Therefore, the project would not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b). Impacts would be less than significant.

Transportation/Traffic Impact 17(c) – Less Than Significant Impact

Circulation improvements at the project site would include modifications to the existing Val Verde Drive and two new looped roads with access to Val Verde Drive to facilitate internal project site access to the residences. The proposed circulation improvements would allow vehicles a clear view of oncoming traffic and are not located near a sharp curve or intersection that would obstruct the vision of exiting drivers. The project would not significantly change site access or road operations surrounding the project site. Further, all circulation features within the project site would be subject to review and approval by the County's Public Works Engineering Services department to ensure the design of the circulation features would maintain safe traffic operations and would not introduce hazards related to roadway geometry. Accordingly, the project would not substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or inadequate site distance), and the impact would be less than significant.

Transportation/Traffic Impact 17(d) – Less Than Significant Impact

The design of the project is required to comply with the County's standards for emergency vehicle access, including provisions within section 19.10.045, Access, of the County's Zoning Ordinance. In compliance with the Monterey County Fire Code, all roads would include two 10-foot-wide travel lanes with unobstructed access for fire apparatus and a minimum vertical clearance of 15 feet. The project's civil plans, prepared by a licensed engineer, would document the design of driveways and internal circulation for trucks and emergency vehicles and would be subject to applicable County requirements. Cypress FPD reviewed the proposed project on November 18, 2024, and did not raise any concerns or indicators of inconsistencies with applicable requirements. Therefore, the project would not result in inadequate emergency access. Impacts would be less than significant.

18. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, 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 of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k); or (Source: IX.28, 29)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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 Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe. (Source: IX.28, 29)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

Tribal Cultural Resources Impact 18(a.i, a.ii) – Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

The project is subject to compliance with Assembly Bill (AB) 52, which requires consideration of impacts to tribal cultural resources as part of the CEQA process, and that within 14 days of determining to undertake a project, the lead agency notify California Native American tribal representatives who are traditionally or culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the project and who have requested notification. Assembly Bill (AB) 52 allows California Native American tribal representatives 30 days after receiving notification of the project to request consultation. If a response pursuant to AB 52 is not received within 30 days, it is assumed that consultation is declined.

On January 9, 2026, the County sent AB 52 consultation letters containing a project description, AB 52 noticing requirements, invitation to consult, and contact information for the appropriate County representative to the following three tribal organizations: Oholone/Coastonan- Esselen Nation, The Esselen Tribe of Monterey County, and KaKoon Ta Ruk Band of Ohlone-Costanoan. The AB 52 notification period ended on February 9, 2026. The Esselen Tribe of Monterey County requested consultation.

During the consultation on February 3, 2026, representatives of the tribe requested the on-site presence of a Native American monitor to observe all ground-disturbing activities associated with the subdivision improvements and development of the site. In addition, the tribal representative requested that the Esselen Tribe of Monterey County be included in any resource recovery program or reburial. Although the Esselen Tribe of Monterey County requested monitoring for all ground disturbance, including utilities, trenches, landscaping, foundations, etc., the County of Monterey, as lead agency, finds that the monitoring as required by **Mitigation Measure TR-1** (described below) is sufficient to mitigate any potential impacts to cultural resources. Monitoring of soils previously disturbed and monitored as a part of this project does not lessen the potential for impacts.

As described in Section VI.5, *Cultural Resources*, there is always potential to uncover buried archaeological resources, which could be Tribal, during ground disturbing activities such as the excavation and grading that would be required for project construction. Should project construction activities encounter and damage or destroy a Tribal cultural resource or resources, impacts would be potentially significant. Implementation of a standard County Condition of Approval for the protection of cultural resources, PD003(A), would be applied to address the potential inadvertent discovery of cultural resources. Further, **Mitigation Measure CR-1** (described in Section VI.5, *Cultural Resources*) would require that a qualified Archaeological Monitor be retained on an “on-call” basis during ground-disturbing activities and conduct a pre-construction cultural resources awareness training. **Mitigation Measure TR-1** (described below) would require that a tribal monitor observe all initial ground disturbance (e.g., grading and excavation associated with subdivision improvements [grubbing, leveling, ground clearing, etc.]), all ground disturbance associated with main utility trenching (water & sewer mains), detention ponds, and roadways. If construction of the residential development requires ground disturbance at depths deeper than what has already been monitored and excavated with initial grading, the Tribal Monitor shall monitor that additional excavation. If tribal cultural artifacts or human remains are discovered, these resources shall be treated with appropriate dignity and respect. With implementation of the County’s condition of approval for cultural resources (PD003A) and **Mitigation Measures CR-1 and TR-1**, the potential impact to Tribal cultural resources would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure TR-1. On-Site Tribal Monitor

A Tribal Monitor approved by the appropriate tribe, traditionally and culturally affiliated with the vicinity of the subject parcel, that has consulted with the County and designated one lead contact person in accordance with AB 52 requirements, or other appropriately NAHC-recognized representative, shall be on-site for all initial ground disturbance (e.g., grading and excavation associated with subdivision improvements [grubbing, leveling, ground clearing, etc.], as phased, if phased), all ground disturbance associated with main utility trenching (water & sewer mains), detention ponds, and roadways. If construction of the residential development requires ground disturbance at depths deeper than what has already been monitored and excavated with initial grading, the Tribal Monitor shall monitor that additional excavation. The Tribal Monitor shall monitor the work area and identify any materials or findings with Tribal cultural significance, should they be uncovered during ground disturbing activities, to ensure potential impacts remain

less-than-significant. This Tribal Monitor shall have the authority to temporarily halt work in order to examine any potentially significant cultural materials or features. If resources are discovered, the owner/applicant/contractor shall refer to and comply with Condition PD003(A) as applicable. The Tribal Monitor shall also be present for and assist in conducting the pre-construction cultural resources awareness training of Mitigation Measure CR-1. This mitigation is not intended to alleviate responsibility of the owner or its agents from contacting the County Coroner and complying with State law if human remains are discovered.

Compliance Actions:

Prior to approval of the Final Map, a note shall be added to the Final Map requiring that evidence be submitted to HCD-Planning demonstrating whether construction of the residential development will require excavation deeper than disturbed during subdivision improvements. If deeper excavation is required, the requirements of this mitigation measure apply.

Prior to issuance of grading permits for subdivision improvements (all phases, if phased) from HCD-Building Services, the owner/applicant shall include a note on the construction plans encompassing the language contained in Mitigation Measure TR-1, including all compliance actions. The owner/applicant shall submit said plans to HCD-Planning for review and approval.

Prior to issuance of grading permits for subdivision improvements (all phases, if phased) from HCD-Building Services, the owner/applicant shall submit evidence to the satisfaction of the HCD-Planning that a monitor approved by the appropriate tribe traditionally and culturally affiliated with the vicinity of the subject parcel, and that has consulted with the County and designated one lead contact person in accordance with AB 52 requirements, or other appropriately NAHC-recognized representative, has been retained to monitor the appropriate construction activities. This Tribal Monitor shall be retained for the duration of ground disturbing activities described in this mitigation measure.

Any artifacts found that are not associated with the finding of human remains shall be cataloged by both the Tribal Monitor and the qualified Archaeological Monitor. Once cataloged, the qualified Archaeological Monitor will take temporary possession of the artifacts for testing and reporting purposes. Upon completion of these testing and reporting activities, all artifacts, at the discretion of the property owner, shall be returned within one (1) year to a representative of the appropriate local tribe as recognized by the Native American Heritage Commission, or the Monterey County Historical Society. A final technical report containing the results of all analyses shall be completed within one year following completion of the field work. This report shall be submitted to HCD-Planning and the Northwest Information Center at Sonoma State University. Artifacts associated with the finding of human remains shall be reburied in accordance with State law and penalty for violation pursuant to PRC section 5097.994.

Prior to final grading inspection, the Tribal Monitor or other appropriately NAHC recognized representative shall submit a letter to HCD-Planning confirming participation in the monitoring and provide a summary of archaeological and/or cultural finds or no finds, as applicable.

On and on-going basis, should construction of the residential development require ground disturbance at depths deeper than what has already been monitored and excavated with initial grading, the Tribal Monitor shall monitor that additional excavation.

19. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) 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? (Source: IX.1, 40, 41, 42, 85)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years? (Source: IX.13, 53, 54, 86)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) 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?(Source: IX.40, 41, 53)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals? (Source: IX.38, 39)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste? (Source: IX.38, 39)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

Utilities and Service Systems Impact 19(a) – Less Than Significant Impact

As described in Section II. 2.2.7, *Infrastructure*, there are two potential sources of long-term water supply for the project, MPWMD (preferred source) and the project’s riparian water rights (wells). As further discussed under Section VI.19, *Utilities and Service Systems*, Impact 19 (b), the project would not require water supply that would result in new or expanded water supply facilities. Under either water supply scenarios, the project would require construction of new water conveyance facilities including 8-inch water pipes located within proposed street rights-of-way to convey water to the residences. Under the MPWMD (preferred source) scenario, the new water pipes would connect to the existing water main on Val Verde Drive (which are already connected to Cal-Am), and on-site wells would be abandoned. If the MPWMD application to modify the cease and desist order is not approved prior to approval of the Final Map (refer to Section II. 2.2.7, *Infrastructure*), water would be supplied under the property’s riparian rights through one of two options. Option 1 would involve a wheeling agreement between the property owner and Cal-Am. Under the wheeling agreement, Cal-Am would provide domestic water for the project via wheeling water from existing on-site wells to Cal-Am via an extension of the existing water main on Val Verde Drive, located adjacent to the existing water main and within the existing easement, which would be conveyed to the residences through a system of 8-inch

~~water pipes located within the street right-of-way. located adjacent to the existing water main and within the existing easement.~~ Scott Ottmar of Cal-AM confirmed via email on February 6, 2026 that Cal-Am “has capability and capacity to treat the additional 16 acre-feet per year of groundwater for iron and manganese at its Begonia Iron Removal Plant” (Source: IX.92). Per a call with David Stoldt of the MPWMD on February 9, 2026, the water main on Val Verde Drive is connected to the Begonia Iron Removal Plant, so no additional infrastructure is needed, and the additional 16-acre feet treated at the Begonia Iron Removal Plant would result in negligible additional discharge as the Plant currently treats approximately 3,000 AF of water per year and has historically treated 8,000 AF of water (Source: IX.93). Option 2 would involve treating water from the on-site wells at an on-site water treatment facility that would be located near stormwater basin within the southwest portion of the project site, as shown in Figure 2-3. The on-site water treatment facility would include a hydropneumatics tank, water filters, a 25-foot wide water tank, and a booster pump station. New water supply infrastructure required under the project riparian water rights would be designed to allow conversion to a standard Cal-Am connection should the cease and desist order be lifted. All new water supply infrastructure would be located within the proposed street rights-of-way and confined to previously disturbed areas, and would serve only the proposed residences. Therefore, impacts associated with new water supply infrastructure would be less than significant.

The project site is within CAWD’s wastewater service area, which maintains approximately 81 miles of sewer lines, seven lift stations, and associated force mains (Source: IX.40, 41). The project would require the construction of new wastewater conveyance infrastructure, including a conventional gravity system of proposed 8-inch sanitary sewer pipes within the proposed street rights-of-way and a new 8-inch CAWD sanitary sewer main that would be located within the on-site proposed right-of-way along Val Verde Drive. The existing wastewater line running along the southern boundary of the project site would be abandoned. New wastewater infrastructure plans would require review and approval by CAWD (Source: IX.1). Wastewater from the project would be conveyed to the CAWD Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). As further described under Section VI.19, *Utilities and Service Systems*, Impact (c) below, the project would not exceed the capacity of the CAWD WWTP. Because new wastewater treatment infrastructure would be located within proposed street rights-of-way, and the project would not exceed the capacity of the CAWD WWTP, impacts associated with new wastewater infrastructure would be less than significant.

According to the Preliminary Stormwater Control Plan for the project, approximately 55 percent of the project site would be covered by new impervious surfaces and approximately 45 percent of the project site would be covered by pervious landscaping (Source: IX.85). The project would include construction of new stormwater drainage facilities, including two bioretention basins designed to manage runoff from the impervious surfaces and accommodate a 95th percentile rainfall event for the site’s two principal drainage areas (refer to Section II.2.2.7, *Infrastructure*). The basins would be designed to filter pollutants from stormwater runoff before discharge, ensuring that runoff does not exceed the capacity of existing or planned drainage systems. New stormwater drainage facilities would be located entirely within the project site boundaries and would serve only the proposed new residences. Therefore, impacts associated with new stormwater drainage infrastructure would be less than significant.

The project site is served by 3CE, the primary electricity provider for the area that supplies energy via PG&E transmission lines. 3CE would provide the project with electricity and PG&E

would provide the project with natural gas. Local telephone, internet service, and cable television would be provided by multiple companies that provide services to the area surrounding the site, including Comcast and AT&T (Source: IX.42). Connections to these existing service providers would be installed during construction of the project, with no facility upgrades required. Therefore, the 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.

Utilities and Service Systems Impact 19(b) – Less Than Significant Impact

As described in Section II.2.2.7, *Infrastructure*, the project has two potential long-term water supply sources: the MPWMD (preferred source) and the property's riparian rights (on-site wells). Based on MPWMD data from 1993 to 2023, the project site's current agricultural use requires 25 acre feet per year (AFY).⁸ The project would require 16 AFY,⁹ which is substantially lower than the site's current demand (Source: IX.53).

Under the MPWMD scenario, water would be supplied by Cal-Am through MPWMD's allocation sourced from the Carmel River, and on-site wells would be abandoned or limited to low-intensity, non-potable use. This scenario requires SWRCB approval of MPWMD's modification request to rescind the prohibition on new meters under the Cease and Desist Order issued on October 20, 2009 (Order WR 2009-0060). Since issuance of the Cease and Desist Order in October 2009, which restricted Cal-Am's diversions from the Carmel River to preserve river habitat, the develop and use of alternative water supplies such as Pure Water Monterey project, and tiered rate structures have reduced Cal-Am's use of Carmel River water by over 4,300 AFY (Source: IX.13).

From 2022-2025, Cal-Am diversions from the Carmel River averaged 3,240 AFY, which is approximately 139 AFY less than Cal-Am's legal water right to the river of 3,376 AFY. This successful reduction in reliance on the Carmel River demonstrated that through the incorporation of alternative water supplies and conservation to its water supply portfolio, Cal-Am effectively supports its water demands while maintaining use of the Carmel River at rates below its legal right to the river.

The project would require approximately 16 AFY, which is approximately 9 AFY less than agricultural uses of the site between 1993 and 2023. As noted above, Cal-Am currently (based on 2022-2025 data) uses approximately 139 AFY less than its legal right to Carmel River water (Source: IX.13). Therefore, under the MPWMD preferred scenario, sufficient water supply would be available to serve the project.

Cal-Am's 2021 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) includes water supply availability projections for normal water year conditions as well as single dry year and multiple dry year conditions. As presented therein (see Table 7-5 on page 7-7 of the UWMP), during single dry year conditions, Cal-Am anticipates a surplus water supply available for all years projected, through 2045. During multiple dry year conditions (see Table 7-6 on pages 7-8 through 7-10 of the UWMP), Cal-Am anticipates potential water supply shortages under certain circumstances;

⁸ Based on 10-year average data from MPWMD (Source: IX.53)

⁹ Interior annual average water demand (13.35AFY) added to exterior annual average water demand (2.36 AFY), rounded up for conservative estimate (Source: IX.53)

to address these potential shortages, Cal-Am implements appropriate actions from its Water Shortage Contingency Plan, which is included in the 2021 UWMP and identifies specific actions in response to shortages of various severity (Source: IX.86). As demonstrated in the projections provided in the 2021 UWMP, with implementation of Water Shortage Contingency Plan Actions, Cal-Am anticipates no water supply shortages under multiple dry year conditions.

The single dry and multiple dry year projections in Cal-Am's 2021 UWMP assume that Cal-Am's water supply portfolio includes its legal allocation of 3,376 AFY of Carmel River water under all years and climatic conditions (Source: IX.86). As described above, Cal-Am is currently operating below its legal right to the river, with approximately 139 AFY to spare. Additionally, the project would reduce historic water uses on the site by approximately 9 AFY, required approximately 16 AFY of this 25 AFY historically consumed to support agricultural use of the site. Therefore, sufficient water supplies would be available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years, and impacts would be less than significant.

As discussed in Section II. 2.2.7, Infrastructure, if MPWMD's application is not approved before approval of the Final Map, water would be provided under the property's riparian rights by Cal-Am through a wheeling agreement under Option 1 or via on-site wells (Traver and Gamboa Well) under Option 2. As discussed in Section VI.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, the project lies within the CVGB, which has an estimated storage capacity of 36,000–60,000 AF and historical pumping ranging from 5,900–9,100 AFY (Source: IX.54). The project's anticipated use of 16 AFY represents less than one percent of the basin's historical pumping range. Based on MPWMD Historical Water Production Data, the project's main water supply source (Travers Well) currently produces 21.68 AFY, which exceeds the project's estimated water demand of 16 AFY and suggests that the on-site wells are adequate to serve the project and have sufficient supply availability (Source: IX.53). Given the lower water supply demand under the project compared to the site's current use, CVGB's substantial capacity, and sufficient production from on-site wells, the 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.

Utilities and Service Systems Impact 19(c) – Less Than Significant Impact

Wastewater from the project site would be conveyed to the CAWD WWTP, which has an average flow capacity of 1.1 million gallons per day (mgd) and a peak design flow of 3 mgd (Source: IX.41). Wastewater generated by new residential development can be estimated using its anticipated water demand. The project would require approximately 14,284 gallons of water per day¹⁰ (Source: IX.53); conservatively assuming that 100 percent of water consumed by the project would become wastewater, the project would generate approximately 14,284 gallons of wastewater per day, which would represent 0.75 percent of the remaining flow capacity of the CAWD WWTP. Therefore, the project would not exceed the capacity of existing wastewater treatment facilities, and impacts would be less than significant.

¹⁰ 16 AFY converted to gallons per day (Source: IX.53)

Utilities and Service Systems Impact 19(d, e) – Less Than Significant Impact

The California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery estimates that single-family developments generate approximately 10 pounds of solid waste per dwelling unit per day (Source: IX.38). The project would involve construction of 74 residential units, which when multiplied by the 10 pound generation rate, would result in approximately 740 pounds (0.37 tons) of solid waste per day. Solid waste generated from the project would be disposed of at the Monterey Peninsula Landfill, located north of the City of Marina (Source: IX.39). This landfill has a maximum daily throughput of 1,500 tons per day and has a remaining capacity of 48,560,000 cubic yards (Source: IX.39). According to Monterey Regional Waste Management District Production data, the Monterey Peninsula Landfill currently receives approximately 548 tons per day; therefore, the landfill has a remaining capacity of approximately 950 tons per day (Source: IX.55). The 0.37 tons of solid waste generated daily by the project would represent less than one percent of the remaining daily capacity of the Monterey Peninsula Landfill. Therefore, the project would not result in the generation of solid waste in excess of the capacity of local solid waste infrastructure.

Pursuant to Section 18.11.010 of the Monterey County Code of Ordinances, the County has adopted the most recent version of the California Green Buildings Standards Code, which contains construction waste recycling requirements. Further, AB 939 requires the County to divert 50 percent of solid waste from landfills. Local infrastructure would have the capacity to accommodate solid waste generated by the project. Development facilitated by the project would also be required to demonstrate compliance with all applicable solid waste regulations. Therefore, the project would not generate waste in excess of applicable standards or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure and would comply with applicable solid waste regulations. Impacts would be less than significant.

20. WILDFIRE			Less Than Significant	
If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? (Source: IX.20, 517)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire? (Source: IX.19, 22, 5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment? (Source: IX.5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes? (Source: IX.19, 22, 5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

Wildfire Impact 20(a) – Less Than Significant Impact

The project site is located within a Moderate Fire Hazard Severity zone and is not located within a VHFHSZ or state responsibility area; however, a VHFHSZ is located approximately 0.35 miles east of the project site (Source: IX.19).

The project would involve the construction of 74 residential units and would result in an additional 211 residents, thereby increasing the human presence near the VHFHSZ. However, as discussed in Section VI.14, *Population and Housing*, the population growth is within the AMBAG projected growth increase for unincorporated Monterey County (Source: IX.15). Further, as discussed in Section VI.15, *Public Services*, the project site is in an area already served by Cypress FPD and would not have a significant impact on fire response times nor create substantially greater need for additional fire protection services above the current capacity (Source: IX.20). The project would not involve the addition of structures that would impair emergency response or evacuation. Although the population would increase, the project would involve improvements to Val Verde Drive and construction of an internal circulation network, ultimately allowing for safer movement through the site in the event of an emergency. Cypress FPD has reviewed the proposed project and raised no concerns. Cypress FPD would conduct an additional review of the project during the building permit process to verify compliance with all codes and standards, including driveway width, turning radius, and emergency access (Source: IX.5). Therefore, the project would not impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, and impacts would be less than significant.

Wildfire Impact 20(b & d) – Less Than Significant Impact

The project site is located within a Moderate Fire Hazard Severity zone and is not located within a VHFHSZ or state responsibility area; however, a VHFHSZ is located approximately 0.35 miles east of the project site (Source: IX.19).

The project site is located on and surrounded by primarily flat topography, with minor elevation changes throughout (Source: IX.22). The project would not result in changes related to slope, winds, or other factors that would exacerbate wildfire risk. Given the flat topography of the project site and surrounding area, the project would not pose a significant risk of downslope or downstream flooding or landslides because of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. Two portions of the project site lie within the 100-year flood zone: the southwest corner and the southwestern section of the parcel east of Val Verde Drive (refer to Figure 2-3). These portions of the project site within the 100-year flood zone would be utilized for stormwater quality basins, further reducing the risk of flooding caused by runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. In addition, all land clearing, grading and construction activities would be required to comply with the Monterey County Code Chapter 16.12, which requires an erosion control plan prior to permit issuance for building, grading, or land clearing (Source: IX.5). The erosion control plan would prohibit grading during the rainy season, and include measures to prevent exacerbation of slope instability. Therefore, the project would not exacerbate the existing wildfire risks, and would not expose people or structures to significant post-fire hazards. This impact would be less than significant.

Wildfire Impact 20(c) – Less Than Significant Impact

The project site is located within a Moderate Fire Hazard Severity zone and is not located within a VHFHSZ or state responsibility area; however, a VHFHSZ is located approximately 0.35 miles east of the project site (Source: IX.19).

The project would involve the construction of 74 residential units, an on-site water treatment system consisting of water tanks, filters and a booster pump station (refer to the *Project Description*), bioretention basins for stormwater, and the expansion of sewer, electricity, and natural gas utilities to serve the residences. New and expanded structures and utility infrastructure, such as those listed above, would not exacerbate fire risk. All new structures and utility infrastructure would be required to include fire safety requirements, such as fire-residence rating and fire protection systems in accordance with Section 18.14.080 of the Monterey County Municipal Code (Source: IX.5). A Fuel Management Plan for the project was prepared for the project, which was reviewed by David Jones of Cypress FPD on November 18, 2024, and did not raise any concerns or indicators of inconsistencies with applicable requirements (Source: IX.62). The project Fuel Management Plan (sheet L-10 of the applicant-provided project plans) identifies all open space within the buildout project site to be within the “Green Zone”, which requires all vegetation to be cut to a maximum height of 4 inches, trim nearby trees, and removal fallen, dead material. On an on-going basis, the project site shall be managed in accordance with State of California fuel management requirements as well as the prepared Fuel Management Plan. Therefore, the project would not require installation or maintenance of infrastructure or utilities that would exacerbate fire risk and impacts would be less than significant.

VII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Does the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.) (Source: IX.37)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

Mandatory Findings of Significance (a) – Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

As discussed in Section VI.4, *Biological Resources*, development of the project could impact habitat for special-status species, disrupt nesting birds, and alter natural habitat. However, implementation of **Mitigation Measures BIO-1** through **BIO-4** would reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level, and the project would not cause a fish or wildlife population to fall below self-sustaining levels, eliminate a plant or animal community, or restrict the range of any plant or animal species. As discussed in Section VI.5, *Cultural Resources*, no historic resources are known to occur within the project site; however, the site and surrounding area have high archaeological sensitivity. Implementation of **Mitigation Measures CR-1** and **TR-1** would require immediate halting of construction in the event of an unanticipated discovery of cultural or tribal cultural resources. Therefore, the project would not eliminate an important example of major periods of California history or prehistory. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Mandatory Findings of Significance (b) – Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated

As described in the discussion of environmental checklist Sections VI.1 through VI.20, with respect to all environmental issues, the project would not result in significant and unmitigable impacts to the environment. All anticipated impacts associated with project construction and operation would be either no impact, less than significant, or less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Cumulatively considerable impacts could occur if the construction of other projects occurs at the same time as the project and in the same vicinity, such that the effects of similar impacts of multiple projects combine to expose adjacent sensitive receptors to greater levels of impact than would occur under the proposed project. For example, if the construction of other projects in the area occurs at the same time as construction of the project, potential impacts associated with noise and traffic to residents in the project area may be more substantial. There is one residential development project near the project site east of Val Verde Drive:

- Ranch Cañada Village Subdivision; located adjacent to the southeast boundary of the project site; approved by HCD-Planning permit PLN04006, and construction has not commenced.

All projects would be required to adhere to the County's standard conditions of approval and construction hours limitations, which would result in less than significant cumulative noise impacts. The project would not create substantial unplanned population growth and would not contribute to cumulative impacts related to population growth, such as population and housing, public services, and recreation. Impacts related to cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, land use and planning, mineral resources, and tribal cultural resources are generally limited to the project site and would not contribute to cumulative impacts associated with existing and future developments. In addition, air quality and GHG impacts are cumulative by nature, and as discussed in Section VI.3, *Air Quality*, and Section VI.8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, the project would not generate substantial air pollutant emissions or GHG emissions; therefore, it would not contribute to the existing significant cumulative air quality impacts related to the NCCAB's nonattainment status for ozone and PM₁₀ or the existing significant cumulative climate change impact. Furthermore, the project's impacts to resources such as aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, hydrology and water quality, and utilities and service systems would be minimal and would not have the potential to constitute a cumulatively considerable contribution to cumulative impacts that may occur due to existing and future development in the region. Implementation of **Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-4, N-1 through N-2, and T-1** would result in less than significant impacts on biological resources, noise, and traffic/transportation, and would ensure that these potential impacts would not constitute a cumulatively considerable contribution to cumulative impacts that may occur due to existing and future development in the region. Therefore, the project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to a significant impact. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Mandatory Findings of Significance (c) – Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

In general, impacts to human beings are associated with such issues as air quality, hazards and hazardous materials, noise, and wildfire. As discussed in Section VI.3, *Air Quality*, the project would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase in criteria pollutant emissions or expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. As discussed in Section VI.9, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, the project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment and is not located on a site listed as a hazardous materials site. While construction activities could result in temporary noise or ground-borne vibration, implementation of the mitigation measures described in Section VI.13, *Noise*, would reduce impacts to a less than significant level. With implementation of **Mitigation Measures N-1 and N-2**, the project would not generate significant construction-related noise or ground-borne vibration impacts.

Finally, as discussed in Section VI.20, *Wildfire*, the project would not result in significant wildfire-related due to site conditions, including slope and prevailing winds. Therefore, impacts to human beings would be less than significant.

VIII. CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FEES

Assessment of Fee:

The State Legislature, through the enactment of Senate Bill (SB) 1535, revoked the authority of lead agencies to determine that a project subject to CEQA review had a “de minimis” (minimal) effect on fish and wildlife resources under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Projects that were determined to have a “de minimis” effect were exempt from payment of the filing fees.

SB 1535 has eliminated the provision for a determination of “de minimis” effect by the lead agency; consequently, all land development projects that are subject to environmental review are now subject to the filing fees, unless the California Department of Fish and Wildlife determines that the project will have no effect on fish and wildlife resources.

To be considered for determination of “no effect” on fish and wildlife resources, development applicants must submit a form requesting such determination to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. A No Effect Determination form may be obtained by contacting the Department by telephone at (916) 653-4875 or through the Department’s website at www.wildlife.ca.gov.

Conclusion: The project will be required to pay the fee.

Evidence: Based on the record as a whole as embodied in the HCD-Planning files pertaining to PLN240105 and the attached Initial Study/ Mitigated Negative Declaration.

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