



	<p><i>be encouraged.</i></p> <p>f. <i>Mercury, metal halide, and similar intense and bright lights should not be permitted except where their need is specifically approved and their source of light is restricted."</i></p>	
<p>Section 6.3 – Air Quality</p>		
<p>Impact AQ-2 The proposed project could potentially violate air quality standards or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation</p>	<p>MM AQ-1 The applicant shall submit a copy of the MBUAPCD approved Dust Control Plan to the City of Hollister prior to issuance of any construction related.</p> <p>MM AQ-2 Fugitive dust emissions during construction and operational activities shall be controlled by best management practices (BMPs) as mandated by Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District regulation.</p> <p>MM AQ-3 All trucks hauling excavated or graded material on-site shall comply with State Vehicle Code Section 23114 regarding the prevention of such material spilling onto public streets by use of shed boards, truck covers, and other protective measures.</p> <p>MM AQ-4 During construction activities, excessive construction equipment and vehicle exhaust emissions shall be controlled by implementing the following procedures, as specified by the MBUAPCD.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properly and routinely maintain all construction equipment, as recommended by manufacturer manuals, to control exhaust emissions; • Shut down equipment when not in use for extended periods of time to reduce emissions associated with idling engines; • Encourage ride sharing for construction employee commuting to the project site; and • Use electric equipment for construction whenever possible in lieu of fossil fuel fired equipment. 	<p>Less Than Significant Impact.</p>
<p>Impact AQ-5 The proposed project could create</p>	<p>MM AQ-5 Idling time shall be minimized (e.g., 10-minute maximum).</p>	<p>Less Than Significant Impact.</p>



<p>objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people.</p>		
<p>Section 6.4- Biological Resources</p>		
<p>Impact BIO-1 The proposed project would 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.</p>	<p>MM BIO-1 Pre-construction surveys for nesting raptors and birds protected by the MBTA should be implemented between March 15 and September 1 prior to onset of project activities. If active nesting is detected, to the maximum extent practicable, a buffer zone from occupied nests should be maintained during physical ground disturbing activities.</p>	<p>Less Than Significant Impact.</p>
<p>Section 6.5 - Cultural Resources</p>		
<p>Impact CUL-4 The proposed project would potentially disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.</p>	<p>MM CUL-1 In the event that unanticipated archaeological resources should be accidentally discovered during project construction, a qualified archaeologist or paleontologist will be retained for evaluation of the find. If the find is determined to be a historical or unique archaeological resource, appropriate mitigation or avoidance measures will be taken in accordance with CEQA guidelines 15064.5(f). During mitigation of unanticipated archaeological resources, it would not be necessary for work to halt in construction areas not affected by such finds. Any historically significant cultural materials discovered during project construction will be the subject of professional scientific analysis and a report will be prepared by a qualified archaeologist. In the event that such a discovery should contain human remains, the following steps shall be taken as outlined in CEQA guidelines 15064.5 (e)(1): “(1) There shall be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent human remains until: (A) The coroner of the county in which the remains are discovered must be contacted to determine that no investigation of the cause of death is required, and (B) If the coroner determines the remains to be Native</p>	<p>Less Than Significant Impact.</p>



	<p>American:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The coroner shall contact the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours. 2. The Native American Heritage Commission shall identify the person or persons it believes to be the most likely descended from the deceased Native American. 3. The most likely descendent may make recommendations to the landowner or the person responsible for the excavation work, for means of treating or disposing of, with appropriate dignity, the human remains and any associated grave goods as provided in Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 or <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (2) Where the following conditions occur, the landowner or his authorized representative shall rebury the Native American human remains and associated grave goods with appropriate dignity on the property in a location not subject to further subsurface disturbance. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (A) The Native American Heritage Commission is unable to identify a most likely descendent or the most likely descendent failed to make a recommendation within 24 hours after being notified by the commission. (B) The Descendant identified fails to make a recommendation; or (C) The landowner or his authorized representative rejects the recommendation of the descendant, and the mediation by the Native American Heritage Commission fails to provide measures acceptable to the landowner." 	
<p>Section 6.6 - Geology, Soils, and Seismicity</p>		
<p>Impact GEO-1 The proposed project would expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death</p>	<p>MM GEO-1 Prior to issuance of a grading or building permit or approval of plans for grading, drainage, or erosion control on the project site, the applicant shall prepare a geotechnical soils report with engineering recommendations to minimize impacts from seismic-induced ground shaking, liquefaction, erosion, and soil expansion or contraction for all structures, utilities, and paved surfaces. The recommendations from the report shall be incorporated into the improvement plans for grading, drainage, building foundations and plans, paving, and erosion control. Prior to obtaining approvals for building permits and improvement plans, the City of Hollister Engineering and Building Departments will review the plans for compliance with recommendations in the geotechnical report.</p>	<p>Less Than Significant Impact.</p>
<p>Section 6.7 - Greenhouse Gas Emissions</p>		
<p>Impact GHG-1 The proposed project would temporarily generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly,</p>	<p>MM GHG-1 Use Alternative fuel or catalyst-equipped diesel construction equipment;</p> <p>MM GHG-2 Minimize Idling time (e.g., 10-minute maximum)</p>	<p>Less Than Significant Impact.</p>



<p>that may have a significant impact on the environment.</p>	<p>MM GHG-3 Replace Fossil-fueled equipment with electrically driven equivalents when possible;</p> <p>MM GHG-4 Reduce Unnecessary idling usually needed to maintain climate control in the cab of trucks by offering electric power options; and</p> <p>MM GHG-5 Equip Trucks with NOx reduction catalyst systems (See: Section 6.3 for complete discussion). Through the implementation of these mitigation measures, the GHGs emitted from the proposed Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project will be found to be less than significant.</p>	
<p>Section 6.8 - Hazards and Hazardous Materials</p>		
<p>Impact HM-1 The proposed project would create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.</p>	<p>MM HM-1 All employees at the gas station and restaurants shall be provided with a required hazardous materials business plan that educates employees on the handling and shipping of hazardous materials.</p>	<p>Less Than Significant Impact.</p>
<p>Impact HM-2 The proposed project would 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.</p>	<p>MM HM-2 Facilities shall be designed with secondary containment for all USTs.</p> <p>MM HM-3 Underground tank leak detection would be provided for each of the fuel storage tanks. The leak detection system would meet the requirements of API 650. Such a leak detection system would alert gas station staff should any leaks occur, thereby ensuring quick action in the event of a spill. Such a timely response would ensure that any such spill is controlled as close to the onset as possible.</p>	<p>Less Than Significant Impact.</p>
<p>Section 6.9 - Hydrology</p>		
<p>IMPACT HYD-6 The proposed project would substantially degrade water quality.</p>	<p>MM HYD-1 The applicant and/or contractor shall develop and implement an SWPPP and submit an NOI stating its intent to discharge stormwater to the SWRCB prior to beginning construction activities. The SWPPP must specify BMPs that would minimize all construction pollutants from contacting stormwater, with the intent of keeping all products of erosion from moving off site into receiving waters.</p> <p>MM HYD-2 Spill prevention kits shall always be in close proximity when using hazardous materials (e.g., crew</p>	<p>Less Than Significant Impact.</p>



	<p>trucks and other appropriate locations).</p> <p>MM HYD-3 For equipment that must be fueled on site, containment shall be provided in such a manner that any accidental spill of fuel shall not be able to enter the water or contaminate sediments that may come in contact with water. All fueling done at the job site shall provide containment to the degree that any spill shall be unable to enter the city's storm drainage system or damage river and wetland vegetation.</p> <p>MM HYD-4 A pollutant control plan shall be prepared that specifies logistics and a schedule for construction activities that will minimize the potential for erosion and standard practices that include monitoring and maintenance of control measures.</p>	
<p>Section 6.10 - Land Use and Planning</p>		
<p>Impact LU-1 The proposed project would physically divide an established community.</p>	<p>MM LU-1 A site plan shall be prepared that respects the existing prescriptive easement by providing a 12 feet minimum set back, from the property line and providing an all-weather surface to allow access to and use of the prescriptive easement. City planning staff will verify site plan has incorporated the required easement and allowed the continued access along the property boundary line prior to issuance of building permits.</p> <p>MM LU-2 A dedicated access easement of 12 feet shall be provided along the northern property boundary of the proposed project site and reflect such easement on the parcel map to be prepared for the project. A legal description of the easement shall be recorded with the San Benito County recorder's office.</p>	<p>Less Than Significant Impact.</p>
<p>Impact LU-2 The proposed project would conflict with applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, the General Plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an</p>	<p>MM LU-3 Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project site plan shall meet all the requirements of Chapter 17.08 of the Hollister Municipal Code, which includes standards for mixed-use development and supplemental standards for the West Gateway Mixed-Use Zoning District. Prior to issuance of building permits site plan will be verified for compliance with Chapter 17.08.</p>	<p>Less Than Significant Impact.</p>



environmental effect.		
Section 6.12 - Noise		
<p>Impact NOI-1 The proposed project would not result in the exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies.</p>	<p>MM NOI-1 A silencer shall be installed in the exhaust systems for restaurants.</p> <p>MM NOI-2 Pumps shall be housed in an acoustical enclosure.</p> <p>MM NOI-3 Compressors shall be housed in an acoustical enclosure.</p> <p>MM NOI-4 A noise barrier wall along the northern boundary shall be constructed and placed to minimize noise off site.</p> <p>MM NOI-5 A telephone number shall be established by for use by the public to report any undesirable noise conditions associated with construction and operations. The telephone number shall be posted at the project site in a manner visible to passersby.</p> <p>MM NOI-6 Proper muffler devices shall be installed on all power equipment and vehicles associated with the project.</p> <p>MM NOI-7 All project-related noise complaints shall be documented, investigated, evaluated, and attempted to be resolved as follows: 1) A noise complaint resolution form shall be used to respond to each complaint; 2) Attempt shall be made to contact the person making the noise complaint within 24 hours; 3) An investigation shall be conducted to determine source of noise; and 4) Noise shall be reduced with all feasible measures upon a complaint.</p> <p>MM NOI-8 Wherever feasible, Barriers or shields shall be erected near construction equipment considered major sources of noise (e.g., compressors, pneumatic tools, drills, and generators).</p>	<p>Less Than Significant Impact.</p>
Section 6.16 - Transportation Traffic		
<p>Impact TRAN-1 The proposed project would conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance, or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the</p>	<p>MM TRAN-1 A traffic control plan shall be developed in coordination with the City of Hollister.</p> <p>MM TRAN-2 Start and end times of the construction day shall be offset from identified peak traffic hours to mitigate traffic congestion on local streets and highways. Construction personnel shall typically arrive at the project site around 6:00 AM, before the morning peak hour (7:15 AM to 8:15 AM). Construction employees shall typically</p>	<p>Less Than Significant Impact.</p>



<p>circulation system.</p>	<p>leave between 3:00 PM and 4:00 PM, consistent with the Hollister evening peak hour (3:00 PM and 4:00 PM).</p>	
<p>Impact TRAN-4 The proposed project would not substantially increase hazards due to a design feature.</p>	<p>MM TRAN-3 The project's ingress/egress locations shall comply with the West Gateway Beautification Master Plan, which calls for the signal at Miller Road and San Juan Road to remain and for the signal at Graf Road to be replaced with a roundabout. The Vista De Oro project driveway on Graf Road would not be signalized.</p>	<p>Less Than Significant Impact.</p>
<p>Section 6.17 - Utilities and Service Systems</p>		
<p>Impact UTL-1 The proposed project would exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board.</p>	<p>MM UTL-1 Effluent from commercial activity that does not meet the discharge specifications of the city shall be pretreated, stored in an effluent tank and pumped to the nearby industrial waste water treatment plant.</p>	<p>Less Than Significant Impact.</p>
<p>Impact UTL-6 The proposed project would be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs.</p>	<p>MM UTL-2 An approved solid waste diversion and recycling plan shall be employed and developed in accordance with AB 341 (Solid Waste Diversion), which requires commercial construction efforts to recycle 50% of their industrial wastes. Such a plan shall be implemented in conjunction with Calrecycle.</p>	<p>Less Than Significant Impact.</p>



4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "potentially significant impact," as indicated by the checklist and corresponding discussion in Section 6.0.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics	<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air Quality
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gases	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazards and 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 type="checkbox"/> Population/Housing	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Traffic	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Service Systems	<input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance

Based on the analysis presented in this Initial Study and proposed project-specific mitigation measures, it has been determined that, for all resource areas, the project would not result in any potentially significant impacts on the environment that cannot be mitigated to a less-than-significant impact level. There is no substantial evidence that would necessitate the preparation of an EIR.



5.0 DETERMINATION

On the basis of the Initial Study evaluation:

I find that the proposed project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to the general exemption (CEQA guidelines, 15061 (b) (3)), a statutory exemption, and/or a categorical exemption, and that if a categorical exemption, none of the exceptions to the exemption apply. A NOTICE OF EXEMPTION will be prepared.

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. A TIERED 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, no further environmental document is required. FINDINGS consistent with this determination will be prepared.


Signature Jill Morales, Assistant Planner, City of Hollister
Development Services – Planning Division

9/28/2015
Date



6.0 DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING, POTENTIAL IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The CEQA environmental checklist was used to assist in evaluating the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project. The following potential effects have been identified:

1. **Potentially Significant Impact:** An effect that is substantial based on significance criteria. If there are one or more “potentially significant impact” entries in the CEQA environmental checklist, an EIR is required.
2. **Less-Than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated:** An effect that, with the incorporation of mitigation measures, is reduced from a “potentially significant impact” to a “less-than-significant impact.” The Initial Study includes mitigation measures and briefly explains how these measures reduce the associated effect to a less-than-significant level.
3. **Less-Than-Significant Impact:** No significant impacts will result.
4. **No Impact:** The project will not create an impact in the category.

Included in each discussion is a summary of relevant setting information and identified potential impacts and mitigation measures that apply to the proposed project. Substantiation and clarification for each CEQA environmental checklist response is also provided in the following resource discussions.

CEQA provides the following guidance for evaluation of impacts:

1. A brief explanation is included for all answers except “no impact” answers that are adequately supported by the background 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 does not apply to the project (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A “no impact” answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project would not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All answers must take 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. “Potentially significant impact” is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect is significant. If there are one or more “potentially significant impact” entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.



4. “Less-than-significant with mitigation incorporated” applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from a “potentially significant impact” to a “less-than-significant impact.” The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less-than-significant level.
5. Earlier analysis may be used where, pursuant to the tiered, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or Negative Declaration (Section 15063 (c)(3)(d)).
6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances) into the CEQA environmental checklist references. Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.



6.1 AESTHETICS (VISUAL RESOURCES)

The aesthetics section addresses the potential effects of the proposed Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project on aesthetics (visual resources). This section describes existing regional visual character, visual resources, views of the project area from important vantage points, and the changes in these views that would occur with the implementation of the project.

Visual resources are the natural and cultural features of the landscape that can be seen and that contribute to the public's appreciative enjoyment of the environment. Visual resources, or aesthetic impacts, are generally defined in terms of a project's physical characteristics and potential visibility, and the extent to which the project's presence would change the perceived visual character and quality of the environment in which it would be located.

This section describes the visual resources setting of the project and the appearance of the proposed Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project after construction, and analyzes the potential effects of the project on visual resources in terms of changes to the viewshed from key observation points (KOPs) near the project. KOPs are strategic viewing points where there are significant numbers of public (sensitive) viewers and from which there would be a clear view of the project after construction. This analysis considers the existing visual setting and its visual character and scenic quality, the potential sensitivity of likely project viewers to changes in the viewshed, and the visibility or dominance of the project after construction.

6.1.1 Background

6.1.1.1 Regional Setting

The proposed project site is located in the west end of the City of Hollister, adjacent to San Juan Road historically State Route 156, in the Hollister Valley, at an elevation of 272 feet. Hollister Valley is described as a lowland basin at the southern end of the greater Santa Clara Valley, extending northward to the southern San Francisco Bay. Hollister Valley is surrounded by coastal mountains including the Gavilan Range to the southwest, the Quien Sabe Range to the east, and the Flint Hills along with the more distant Santa Cruz Mountains to the northwest.

The proposed project site is on the western edge of the City of Hollister near the San Benito River basin just outside the San Benito River floodplain. The overall visual and physical character of the region has changed over the past thirty years, from open space with natural vegetation to agricultural vistas to a built-out urban form. The City is characterized by street lights; utility poles; and one-, two-, and three-story buildings, with a mass and scale typical of suburban development and no singular dominate visual feature. Regional landform changes that affect the visual character include residential suburban development surrounding the proposed project site, agricultural lands surrounding the suburban development, and industrial/commercial facilities in the surrounding area of the proposed project site.

LOCAL SETTING

The proposed project site is rectangular, bound by San Juan Road to the south, Miller Road to the east, and Graf Road to the west. The north boundary is bordered by a single-family residential area, with a 6 foot high wooden fence than runs the length of the property boundary. The fence creates a visual barrier to the north from the proposed project site. The topography at the proposed project site, and every direction for several miles, is very flat; which results in no prominent natural features (e.g., hills, mountains, coastal or river view corridors) that can be easily seen. The visual landscape is an eclectic mix of colors, shapes, and forms made up of



commercial development, which produces large amounts of light and glare associated with outdoor lighting. The majority of the surroundings consist of hardscape urban infrastructure, such as blacktop roads, parking areas, cement sidewalks, and non-reflective neutral-colored commercial buildings, with limited reflective glass surfaces. Residential structures with fencing are the typical character view to the north of the proposed project site. The overall foreground is commercial businesses in an urban setting with minimal landscaping or non-native foliage. The landscape as a whole has little visual coherence or compositional harmony.

6.1.1.2 Regulatory Context

FEDERAL REGULATIONS

No federal regulations apply to the proposed project's visual resource issues.

STATE REGULATIONS

California Scenic Highway Program

California's Scenic Highway Program was created by the Legislature in 1963 to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. See the Streets and Highways Code. The state laws governing the program are found in Section 260, et seq; highways that are eligible for designation or designated as scenic highways are found in Section 263. A list and map of California's scenic highways may be obtained from the California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) *California Scenic Highway Mapping System* (2011). There are no designated state scenic highways in the immediate vicinity of the proposed project site.

LOCAL REGULATIONS

Hollister Municipal Code

The Hollister Municipal Code sets out various requirements and standards that affect the visual quality and dominate features of the urban built-out environment within the City of Hollister. The following sections of the Hollister Municipal Code dictate building materials, scale, size, and color of man-made structures to achieve aesthetics that meet public expectations of Hollister:

- Hollister Municipal Code Title 17 Zoning, Chapter 17.20 Signs
- Hollister Municipal Code Title 17 Zoning, Chapter 17.16 Performance Standards, Section 17.16.090 Lighting
- Hollister Municipal Code Title 17 Zoning, Chapter 17.16 Performance Standards, Section 17.16.050 Fencing, Screening, and walls
- Hollister Municipal Code Title 17 Zoning, Chapter 17.16 Performance Standards, Section 17.16.060 Height Measurement and Height Limit Exceptions
- Hollister Municipal Code Title 17 Zoning, Chapter 17.16 Performance Standards, Section 17.16.080 Landscaping Design and Standards



Hollister General Plan 2005–2035

The City of Hollister 2005–2035 General Plan defines policies for land use, circulation, community facilities, and environmental resource management for the city. The following lists the General Plan's goal and policy numbers for urban design issues that may be applicable to the project, and are specifically addressed by the General Plan's *Land Use and Community Design Element* chapter. Refer to *Table 6-24: Consistency with Relevant General Plan / Community Plan Land Use Policies* for details on each goal and policy.

- Goal LU 1 – Maintain and enhance Hollister's small town charm and identity. Organize and design the City with an attractive and positive image.
 - Policy LU1.7: Develop special planning areas and design guidelines for the North Gateway, West Gateway, Downtown, "Old Town" Residential, and Home Office districts.
 - Policy LU1.8: Require that building signs be designed to fit within the scale and character of buildings.
 - Policy LU1.9: Use cohesive design elements in street trees, lighting and street furniture to strengthen character of the special planning areas and residential neighborhoods.
- Goal LU 3 – Develop and maintain landscaping on public and private properties, open space and public gathering spaces.
 - Policy LU 3.2: Promote street tree planting and other community design features to maintain visual quality and small town atmosphere.
 - Policy LU 3.3: Maintain roadway landscaping through both public and private means.
 - Policy LU 3.4: Preserve existing significant trees and tree groupings where possible. Replace trees removed due to site development.
 - Policy LU 3.5: Require the provision of usable open space in multi-family residential developments in the form of ground-floor patios, upper-floor decks and balconies, and common recreational facilities.
 - Policy LU 3.6: Require landscaping on public and private sites, including, entry areas street medians, parks, schools, parking lots, plazas, courtyards and recreational areas.
 - Policy LU 3.7: Promote the beautification of alleys to encourage their use as open space.
- Goal LU 8 – Maintain the stability of existing neighborhoods
 - Policy LU 8.3: Ensure that new development in multifamily neighborhoods supports, rather than detracts from, the existing residential character of the area.
 - Policy LU 8.4: Preserve and enhance the character of existing residential neighborhoods by limiting encroachment of new buildings and activities that are out of scale and character with surrounding uses.
- Goal LU 11 – Encourage well-designed buildings that are compatible with their surroundings
 - Policy LU 11.1: Ensure that buildings are well articulated. Avoid large unarticulated shapes in building design such as blank walls or an unbroken series of garage doors on street frontages.
 - Policy LU 11.2: Ensure that building designs include varied building facades, rooflines, and building heights to create interesting and differentiated building forms and shapes.



6.1.1.3 Required Permits and Approvals

Under the Hollister Municipal Code, a Site and Architectural Review is required to approve the proposed project.

6.1.2 Methodology

A qualitative assessment of the existing and future visual environment within the project area was conducted to determine whether there would be significant impacts resulting from project construction. Visual elements of the project were evaluated in relation to the existing visual character in the vicinity of the project. Potential KOPs were reviewed within the project area and viewer sensitivities were identified.

6.1.2.1 Viewer Sensitivity

Visual perception is the basic act of seeing or recognizing an object. Physical conditions that affect perception and ability to discern details are: (1) observer distance; and (2) speed. As observer distance increases, the ability to see the details of an object decreases. As observer speed increases, the sharpness of lateral vision decreases and the observer tends to focus along the line of travel. Vehicle passengers are able to focus on the passing landscape for longer periods than the driver. Viewer groups are differentiated by the physical factors that modify perception.

6.1.2.2 Viewer Response

Changes to the visual environment are subjectively evaluated by the affected viewers. To understand and predict viewer response to the changes resulting from project construction, it is necessary to make assumptions about the viewers who may see the project and the aspects of the visual environment to which they are likely to respond. See *Table 6-1: Viewshed Ratings*.

Table 6-1: Viewshed Ratings

Rating	Description
Outstanding Visual Quality	A rating reserved for landscapes with exceptionally high visual quality. These landscapes will be significant regionally and/or nationally. They usually contain exceptional natural or cultural features that contribute to this rating. They will be what we think of as "picture postcard" landscapes. People will be attracted to these landscapes to be able to view them.
High Visual Quality	Landscapes that have high quality scenic value. This may be due to cultural or natural features contained in the landscape or to the arrangement of spaces contained in the landscape that causes the landscape to be visually interesting or a particularly pleasing place for people. These are often landscapes that have high potential for recreational activities or in which the visual experience is important.
Moderately High Visual Quality	Landscapes that have above-average scenic value but are not high scenic value. The scenic value of these landscapes may be due to manmade or natural features contained within the landscape, to the arrangement of spaces in the landscape, or the two dimensional attributes of the landscape.
Moderate Visual Quality	Landscapes that have average scenic value. They usually lack significant manmade or natural features. Their scenic value is primarily a result of the arrangement of spaces contained in the landscape and the two-dimensional visual attributes of the landscape.
Moderately Low Visual Quality	Landscapes that have below-average scenic value but not low scenic value. They may contain visually discordant manmade alterations, but the landscape is not dominated by these features. They often lack spaces that people would perceive as inviting and



	provide little interest in terms of two-dimensional visual attributes of the landscape.
Low Visual Quality	Landscapes with low scenic value. These landscapes are often dominated by visually discordant manmade alterations or they are landscapes that do not include spaces that people will find inviting and lack interest in terms of two-dimensional visual attributes.

6.1.3 Environmental Setting

6.1.3.1 Regional Overview

The City of Hollister is located in a historic floodplain adjacent to the San Benito River at an elevation of 272 feet. It was built near the southern end of a broad alluvial plain formed by the San Benito River, in the Hollister Valley. Hollister Valley is described as a lowland basin at the southern end of the greater Santa Clara Valley that extends northward to the southern San Francisco Bay. The major natural visual characteristics of the area include a flat topography and surrounding mountains, scattered irrigation canals, creeks, river, levees, and riparian vegetation located along the various waterways. Distant views of the surrounding coastal mountain ranges, including Gavilan Range to the southwest, Quien Sabe Range to the east, and Flint Hills along the more distant Santa Cruz Mountains in the northwest, are available throughout the region.

The proposed project site is located in the west end of the city, adjacent to San Juan Road, within the southern end of the greater Santa Clara Valley region of California. Because this portion of the city is so highly developed, few, if any, natural features exist within the area. Open space near the project area exists along the San Benito River.

The project site is very flat, with urban development that limits sight distance in the area. Due to the residential, commercial, and industrial developed nature of the area, minimal topographic relief, and lack of natural vegetative features, the existing land uses are the strongest determining factor for visual character. The dominant visual features of the area are single-family residential structures (low, medium, and high densities), neighborhood commercial, and light industrial and institutional buildings, all of which provide low relative visibility of the project area. The vantage points with the clearest views of the project site are from San Juan Road to the south, which runs immediately adjacent to the project site. There are no other elevated or clear views of the project site within 2 miles.

The general viewshed is highly disrupted by existing man-made residential, commercial, and industrial infrastructure. The minimal topographic relief also does not provide the viewers with a vivid viewshed. Viewer sensitivity remains low to moderately low for commercial and industrial viewers, and moderate to residential viewers. As such, these viewers, who are already in an impacted viewshed, will receive minimal, if any, impact from the proposed project.

6.1.3.2 Potential Project Visibility

Identification of the project's viewshed was based on reviews of project engineering drawings and visual simulations of the project's appearance from a bird's-eye view, studying topographic maps and air photos, and extensive field observations. (See Figure 6.1-1: Building Type A North-South Exterior Elevations; Figure 6.1-2: Building Type A East-West Exterior Elevations; Figure 6.1-3: Vista De Oro Rendering #1 and Figure 6.1-4: Vista De Oro Rendering #2) The viewshed map indicates two categories of view areas: (1) those in which the proposed project area would likely be generally visible; and (2) those in which views toward the proposed project area and its ancillary facilities would likely be blocked for the most part, but may be visible from specific locations. The boundaries of the viewshed were set to the south sides of the project area along



San Juan Road, where views were not otherwise blocked by urban development, buildings, trees, walls/fencing, or other obstructions. This distance was selected because elements of a view that are beyond the San Juan Road distance are considered part of the background—the landscape zone in which little color or texture is apparent, colors blur into values of blue or gray, and individual visual impacts become least apparent (USDA Forest Service 1973, pp. 56-57).

The proposed project facilities would be most visible in views immediately adjacent to the project and from a short portion of San Juan Road to the south, Miller Road to the east, and Graf Road to the west. In most cases, views of the project features beyond the immediate vicinity would be completely blocked by intervening structures, required walls/fencing, and natural features of the area.

6.1.3.3 Sensitive Viewing Areas

Views of the project area are limited due to flat terrain, walls/fences, and surrounding urban development. Unobstructed views of the proposed project area are limited to locations immediately adjacent to the proposed project area. The area surrounding the proposed project area is dominated by various residential dwellings and commercial, industrial, and institutional facilities. The nearest sensitive viewers with potential to experience a visual impact from the proposed project area are residents in neighborhoods situated on the north side and west side of the project, and drivers/passengers on San Juan Road, Miller Road, or Graf Road.



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KOP 1 – MILLER ROAD / CONVENIENCE STORE LOOKING NORTHWEST:

KOP 1: Miller Road / Convenience Store – View of the Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project site from the corner of the convenience store located at Miller Road and San Juan Road.

All views from KOP 1 are dominated by the vacant lot of the proposed project site in the foreground. The middleground view is dominated by the 6-foot tall wood residential property fence with the background view of residential dwelling rooftops of gray and brown colors and tops of palm trees. Sensitive viewers are likely to have the most substantial view (defined as duration of view and predominance of the proposed Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project) at the backside of the convenience store located at the intersection of Miller Road and San Juan Road. The existing trails throughout the project site, accessed by motorists and pedestrians, will be removed by the development. Viewers along Miller Road would have unobstructed views of the project for limited lengths of time (likely 15 seconds or less) while stopped at the convenience store or traveling into the adjacent residential development on Miller Road. The visual character of this view can be considered urban and manmade, resulting in the visual quality ranking to be moderately low to low. Miller Road and San Juan Road receive consistent commuter, recreation, and residential traffic; therefore, commuters traveling along this road are consistent throughout the day, but their exposure is only for 0.2 mile, causing them to have low visual sensitivity. From this perspective, the proposed two-story residential buildings to be developed on the site will reduce the site distance and obscure the existing views of single-family dwelling rooftops and residential fencing, thus not diminishing the existing quality or dominance of the view. Due to the nature of the existing fore- and middleground of this viewshed, the proposed Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project is consistent with the visual nature of existing facilities in the area (bulk, shape, color, texture, etc.) and would not represent a significant impact to any potential viewer; as such, no mitigation measures will be required for KOP 1 viewers.

KOP 2 – Vista De Oro Project Site LOOKING South View:



KOP 2: Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project Site South View – Representative southern view from Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project site.

KOP 2 represents the view from the proposed project site and the backyards over the fence from the adjoining residential properties looking south. The foreground and near middleground contain the proposed project site and the overgrown nonnative vegetation. The far middleground view is of the convenience store and gas station located across from San Juan Road and the utility power lines and poles adjacent to and paralleling San Juan Road. Background views consist of the surrounding foothills. The visual character can be considered undeveloped and manmade, offering viewers a moderately low to low visual quality ranking.

Sensitive viewers of this KOP include the residents adjacent to the north project boundary line. Residential viewers typically have the highest sensitivity since their duration of exposure is long and their activity type is leisurely, among other sensitivity factors. Viewer exposure at this location is considered moderate to high due to its stationary position, residential activity type, and long duration of view, combined with a very low number of private viewers. However, the proposed commercial and residential structures would not represent a significant impact as all proposed structures would be consistent with the visual nature of existing facilities in the area (bulk, shape, color, texture, etc.). The proposed Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project structures are consistent with the existing viewshed, and would not further degrade the aesthetic value of the KOP 2 viewshed.

KOP 3 – GRAF ROAD AND SAN JUAN ROAD LOOKING NORTHEAST:



KOP 3: Graf Road and San Juan Road View – View of Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project site near the corner of Graf Road and San Juan Road looking north east.

KOP 3 represents a view of the proposed project site in the foreground from the corner of Graf Road and San Juan Road. The fore- and middleground views consist of the vacant project site overgrown with nonnative vegetation and the fencing of the single-family residences adjacent to the north project boundary. Background views offer residences on the west side of Graf Road a view of the surrounding Quien Sabe or Diablo Range. The visual character can be described as relatively urban and manmade, resulting in a visual quality ranking of moderately low to low. The proposed structures of the Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project will become the dominant visual feature from this view when completed.

Sensitive viewers of this KOP include the residents to the west of the proposed project site adjacent to Graf Road. Residential viewers typically have the highest sensitivity since their duration of exposure is long and their activity type is leisurely, among other sensitivity factors. Viewer exposure at this location is considered moderate to high due to its stationary position, residential activity type, and long duration of view, combined with a very low number of private viewers. In addition, Graf Road and San Juan Road receive consistent commuter, recreation, and residential traffic; therefore, commuters traveling along this road are consistent throughout the day, but their exposure is only for 0.2 mile, causing them to have low visual sensitivity. From this perspective, the proposed two-story residential buildings to be developed on the site will reduce the site distance and obscure the existing views of single-family dwellings rooftops and residential fencing, thus not diminishing the existing quality or dominance of the view. Due to the nature of the existing fore- and middleground of this viewshed, the proposed Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project is consistent with the visual nature of existing facilities in the area (bulk, shape,

color, texture, etc.) and would not represent a significant impact to any potential viewer; as such, no mitigation measures will be required for KOP 3 viewers.

KOP 4 – SAN JUAN ROAD / CONVENIENCE STORE LOOKING NORTH VIEW:



KOP 4: San Juan Road / Convenience Store Looking North View – View of Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project near the corner of Graf Road and San Juan Road looking north.

KOP 4 represents a view looking north toward the proposed project site from the south side of San Juan Road at the convenience store and gas station located approximately midway along the project site. The fore- and middleground views consist of vehicular traffic along San Juan Road, utility power lines and poles, and the vacant project site. The middleground and background views consist of the single-family residential dwelling rooftops, wooden fencing, sparse landscaping (trees), and San Lorenzo Drive. The visual character can be described as developed and manmade, resulting in the visual quality ranking to be moderately low to low. Viewer exposure is relatively brief, therefore the visual sensitivity is considered low.

Upon completion of the proposed project, the view will be dominated by a drive-through restaurant building with a footprint of 3,200 square feet in the foreground, with a two-story residential structure in the middleground, which will obstruct the current view of the single-family residential dwelling rooftops and fencing. The proposed structures will be consistent with the character and existing aesthetics qualities of the area, and would not impact the aesthetic value of KOP 4.



6.1.4 Standards of Significance

An impact to aesthetics would be considered significant if the project would

- Prove to be inconsistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan and the West Gateway;
- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- Substantially damage a major landform or scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway;
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings; or
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day- or nighttime views in the area.

6.1.5 Impact Analysis

Table 6-2: Aesthetics (Visual Resources) Initial Study Responses

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-Than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day- or nighttime views in the area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



6.1.5.1 Scenic Vista

Impact AES-1 The proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

The proposed Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project would not interfere with any scenic vistas or damage any scenic resources. The existing visual character in the vicinity of the proposed project area is not considered scenic, and, therefore, there would be no impact to scenic vistas.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

No Impact

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary

Level of Significance After Mitigation

No Impact

6.1.5.2 Scenic Resources within a State Scenic Highway

Impact AES-2 The proposed project would not substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic building within a state scenic highway.

The proposed Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project would not damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway. The proposed project site is not located near a designated state scenic highway according to Caltrans California Scenic Highway Mapping System (2011). The proposed project area has no trees, rock outcroppings, historic structures, or other scenic resources. Due to the fact that the existing visual character of the vicinity of the proposed project area is not considered scenic, there will thus be no impact to scenic vistas or scenic resources.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

No Impact

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary

Level of Significance After Mitigation

No Impact

6.1.5.3 Visual Character

Impact AES-3 The proposed project would substantially degrade the existing visual character and quality of the site and its surroundings.

The proposed project site is currently vacant and the existing visual character will not be changed by the proposed Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project with the proposed structures regarding mass and scale. The commercial and residential structures will be designed to meet



the requirements of Hollister Municipal Code mass and scale and façade standards (17.08.050 (D)). Figures 6.1-3 and 6.1-4 Vista De Oro Rendering #1 and #2 provides an example of exterior elevations to meet the Spanish and Mediterranean style called for by the West Gateway. The elevations of the buildings will be designed to evoke the history of Hollister and be consistent with the more recently developed or approved structures in the West Gateway area. The building elevations will be highly visible on San Juan Road as proposed, which will make a dominate feature of the West Gateway area. Following the requirements in the municipal code, West Gateway, and the Hollister General Plan will insure no impacts from the proposed project.

With the mitigation measures applied, the proposed Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project improvements will have similar scale, density, and building materials as existing development surrounding the proposed project site within the West Gateway. The proposed project with mitigation measures would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. The proposed apartments and commercial buildings will be designed with similar architectural elements and color schemes in accordance with the mitigation measures AES-1. The General Plan states that new development in this area should have a unified theme that reflects the history of Hollister while being visually distinct from downtown Hollister. There is a large Hispanic population in the residential neighborhoods located near the West Gateway. This heritage is reflected in the Spanish Mediterranean style of architecture that has been established by some of the more recent development in the West Gateway, including new façade improvements at the commercial center east of the project site along Miller Road.

The site plan complies with the requirement to orient structures and building entrances along street frontages of the site with parking in the rear or in limited circumstances to the side of the property in *Section 17.08.080 A.1 Mixed Use Standards of the Zoning Ordinance*. The site plan has also been designed to maintain low profiles at residential edges to provide a transition between single-family neighborhoods.

In addition, the proposed project shall implement a Landscape Plan in order to enhance the overall visual character of the site. The Landscape Plan recommends 25.34% of project area to be designated for landscaping and open space. There will be fourteen (14) Japanese Sawleaf Zelkova Trees along San Juan Road, five (5) Chinese Evergreen Elms, and two (2) Raywood Ash trees along Graf Road. Elm trees and flowering plum trees will be placed along the north boundary of the project site. Eleven (11) London Plane trees will be planted throughout the parking lots providing shade for the parking areas. Chitalpa trees, flowering pears, California Fan Palms, and Raywood Ash will be planted in close proximity to the community/recreation center, and flowering plum trees and groundcover will be placed near the monument sign on Miller Road. Landscaping will also include shrubs, perennials, vines, sod lawn, and groundcover. The groundcover will consist of Achillea millefolium, Cotoneaster, Sedum acre-Goldmoss Sedum, Myoporum parvifolium, Trachelospermum Jaminoides, Rosamarinus, Rubus Calychinoides, and Vinca Minor. Landscaping will provide color, texture, and interest in creating an aesthetically pleasing environment to meet the environmental performance expectations of Hollister. Therefore, the proposed project will result in having a less-than-significant impact with the implementation of mitigation measures AES-1 and AES-2.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Potentially Significant Impact.



Mitigation Measures

MM AES-1 Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project structures shall meet all the requirements of Chapter 17.08 of the Hollister Municipal Code, which includes standards for mixed-use development and supplemental standards for the West Gateway Mixed-Use Zoning District. Prior to issuance of building permits all structures will be verified for compliance with Chapter 17.08 mass and scale and façade standards.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation.

6.1.5.4 Light or Glare

Impact AES-4 **The proposed project would not create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.**

The proposed Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project would include parking lot and security lighting. The nearest sensitive receptor is located approximately 100 feet from the proposed project area and is associated with residential properties to the north and across Miller Road and Graf Road. The residential land uses adjacent to the proposed project site are an existing source of light and glare, and, as such, this project would not result in a significant increase in light or glare in the area. All lighting for the proposed Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project would be designed so that it does not adversely impact adjacent areas. Exterior lighting will be designed with shields and light will be directed only onto the commercial facilities, residential dwellings, parking areas, and pedestrian pathways. Only lighting that is absolutely necessary for safety and operation purposes will remain on at night. Mitigation Measure 4.7-4-1 from the General Plan EIR is incorporated into this study as AES-5 and will be adhered to by the proposed project. Therefore, the impact is considered less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Potentially Significant Impact.

Mitigation Measures

MM AES-2 A lighting plan shall be provided as required for all new development per Mitigation Measure 4.7-4-1 of the Hollister General Plan EIR: *"In order to minimize light trespass and greater overall light levels in the city, new development and projects making significant parking lot improvements or proposing new lighting shall be required to prepare a lighting plan for review by city planning staff. Require design guidelines to include the following provisions for lighting plans:*

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



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

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation.



6.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

This section describes the proposed project as it could affect agricultural and forestry conditions and describes Applicable federal, state, and local farmland conservation policies.

6.2.1 Background

6.2.1.1 Regulatory Context

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION'S FARMLAND MAPPING AND MONITORING PROGRAM LANDS

The Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) was designed by the Soil Conservation Service in 1982 as a non-regulatory system that categorizes important farmland through the State of California. The goal of the program is to provide maps and data to various stakeholders to assist them in making land-planning decisions with regard to the best utilization of California's farmlands. The important farmland categories are "Prime Farmland," "Farmland of Statewide Importance," "Unique Farmland," and "Farmland of Local Importance."

WILLIAMSON ACT FARMLANDS

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly referred to as the Williamson Act, enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open-space use. In return, landowners receive property tax assessments that are much lower than normal because they are based upon farming and open-space uses as opposed to full market value.

6.2.2 Methodology

Information related to agricultural resources and zoning was obtained from California Department of Conservation maps and General Plan and Hollister zoning district maps. Site inspection of the proposed project area confirmed the existing conditions of the area and the surrounding land uses.

6.2.3 Environmental Setting

6.2.3.1 Regional Overview

The proposed project site is located along San Juan Road within the city limits of the City of Hollister. The proposed project site is 8 acres of existing vacant land within an urban setting surrounded by single-family, low-density residential and commercial retail land uses. The proposed mixed-use development of residential and commercial land uses are planned for in regional and community plans. The proposed project area is centrally located within the city and mixed-use special planning area and does not abut agricultural property or designated Williamson Act-contracted land.

6.2.3.2 Study Area Setting

The proposed project has never supported agricultural production or forestry resources. The land within the city has been subdivided to small residential and commercial parcels, which are not conducive to agricultural production. All property surrounding the proposed project area has been developed for residential, commercial retail, public services, and industrial land uses, and no agricultural production occurs within the area. The proposed project area is zoned for non-



agricultural uses, which precludes the proposed project site from qualifying for Williamson Act contracts.

6.2.4 Standards of Significance

An impact to agriculture would be considered significant if the project would

- Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Farmland of Local Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the FMMP of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use;
- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract; and/or
- Involve other changes in the existing environment that, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use.

6.2.5 Impact Analysis

Table 6-3: Agriculture and Forestry Resources Initial Study Responses

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-Than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
<p>AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES: In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the <i>California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997)</i> prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:</p>				
<p>a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local or Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the FMMP of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>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])?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-Than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Result in the loss of forestland or conversion of forestland to non-forest use?	<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 forestland to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

6.2.5.1 Convert Important Farmland to Non-Agricultural Use

Impact AG-1 The proposed project would temporarily convert Prime, Unique, or Important agricultural farmland to a non-agricultural use.

There would not be any changes in the existing environment that could result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local or Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use. The proposed Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project would not convert farmland as none exists in the project area. Therefore, there would be no impact.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

No Impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

No Impact.

6.2.5.2 Conflict with Existing Zoning or Williamson Act Contract

Impact AG-2 The proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract.

The proposed Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project is zoned as West Gateway and is not subject to a Williamson Act contract. Therefore, there would be no impact.



Level of Significance Before Mitigation

No Impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

No Impact.

6.2.5.3 Pressures to Convert Farmland to Non-Agricultural Use

Impact AG-3 **The proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220[g]), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104[g]).**

The proposed Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project would not involve other changes in the existing environment that, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of forestland, timberland, or timberland zoned "Timberland Production." The spatial relationship of the proposed project area relative to any such land is such that the two land uses would not conflict. The nearest forest area is over 100 miles from the proposed project area, and the nearest timberland would be no closer as there are no timberland-zoned properties within San Benito County as of 2001 (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection [CDFFP] 2002 confirmed by CDFFP 2010). The proposed Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project would therefore not involve other changes in the existing environment that could result in conversion of timberland or forestland. Therefore, there would be no impact.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

No Impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

No Impact.



6.2.5.4 Result in the Loss of Forest Land

Impact AG-4 The proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220[g]), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104[g]).

The proposed Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project is zoned as West Gateway and possesses no forestlands. Furthermore, the nearest forest resources are located in the Stanislaus Forest, which is over 100 miles from the proposed project area. Therefore, there would be no impact.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

No Impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

No Impact.

6.2.5.5 Conversion of Farmland or Forestland

Impact AG-5 The proposed project would not result in the loss of forestland or conversion of forestland to non-forest use.

There is no existing forest- or farmland in the nearby vicinity of the proposed project site that could be converted. Therefore, there would be no impact.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

No Impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

No Impact.



6.3 AIR QUALITY

This section describes the Impacts of the proposed Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project on local and regional air quality. The two primary sources of odor and air contaminants from the proposed project consist of construction-related emissions and operational emissions, such as particulate matter (PM), also known as fugitive dust, from surface disturbance activities (such as grading preparation), and other short-term emissions from fuel combustion in equipment, including semi-trucks, graders, trenchers, pavers, backhoes, and front-end loaders. Dust and fumes from increased traffic associated with construction can also reduce air quality. The presence of contaminants does not equate to an environmental or health risk unless minimum threshold values are exceeded. Air contaminants released from construction and operational activities that can create health problems may include PM (dust), and gases in diesel exhaust such as nitrous oxide, nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), formaldehyde, benzene, sulfur dioxide (SO₂), hydrogen sulfide, carbon dioxide (CO₂), and carbon monoxide (CO).

The following section analyzes the potential impacts on air quality resulting from the proposed project. The air quality analysis was prepared using methodologies and assumptions recommended within the rules and Regulation of the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District (MBUAPCD). Regional and Local Air Quality Conditions are presented, along with Pertinent Air Quality Standards and Regulations.

6.3.1 Background

6.3.1.1 Regulatory Context

FEDERAL REGULATIONS

At the federal level, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has been charged with implementing national air quality programs. The USEPA air quality mandates are drawn primarily from the federal Clean Air Act (CAA), which was signed into law in 1970. Congress substantially amended the CAA in 1977 and again in 1990. The CAA required the USEPA to establish National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and also set deadlines for their attainment. Two types of NAAQS have been established: primary standards, which protect public health, and secondary standards, which protect public welfare from non-health-related adverse effects, such as visibility restrictions.

STATE REGULATIONS

California Clean Air Act

The California Clean Air Act (CCAA), 1988, requires that all air districts in the state endeavor to achieve and maintain California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) for ozone (O₃), CO, SO₂, and NO₂ by the earliest practical date.

Plans for attaining CAAQS were to be submitted to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) by June 30, 1991. The CCAA specifies that districts focus particular attention on reducing the emissions from transportation and area wide emission sources, and the act provides districts with authority to regulate indirect sources. Each district plan is required to either (1) achieve a 5% annual reduction, averaged over consecutive 3-year periods, in district-wide emissions of each nonattainment pollutant or its precursors, or (2) to provide for implementation of all feasible measures to reduce emissions. Any planning effort for air quality attainment would thus need to consider both state and federal planning requirements.



California Air Resources Board

CARB is the agency responsible for coordination and oversight of state and local air pollution control programs in California and for implementing the CCAA. Any additional development within the region would impede the reduction goals of the CCAA.

Other CARB duties include monitoring air quality (in conjunction with air monitoring networks maintained by air pollution control districts and air quality management districts), establishing CAAQS (which in many cases are more stringent than the NAAQS), and setting emissions standards for new motor vehicles. The emission standards established for motor vehicles differ depending on various factors including model year, type of vehicle, fuel, and engine used.

Monterey Bay Union Air Pollution Control District

MBUAPCD is the agency primarily responsible for ensuring that NAAQS and CAAQS are not exceeded and that air quality conditions are maintained in the North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB), within which the City of Hollister is located. Responsibilities of the MBUAPCD include, but are not limited to, preparing plans for the attainment of ambient air quality standards, adopting and enforcing rules and regulations concerning sources of air pollution, issuing permits for stationary sources of air pollution, inspecting stationary sources of air pollution and responding to citizen complaints, monitoring ambient air quality and meteorological conditions, and implementing programs and regulations required by the CAA and the CCAA. In an attempt to achieve NAAQS and CAAQS and maintain air quality, the MBUAPCD has completed several air quality plans. The 1991 *Air Quality Management Plan for the Monterey Bay Area (AQMP)* was the first plan prepared in response to the CCAA that established specific planning requirements to meet the ozone standard. The CCAA requires that the AQMP be updated every 3 years. The 2008 *Air Quality Management Plan* is the fifth update to the 1991 AQMP with the first four completed in 1994, 1997, 2000, and 2004, respectively.

The AQMP addresses only attainment of the state ozone standard. Attainment of the state PM₁₀ standard is addressed in MBUAPCD's *Senate Bill 656 Implementation Plan*, which was adopted in December 2005. Maintenance of the national 8-hour standard for ozone is addressed in MBUAPCD's *Federal Maintenance Plan for the Monterey Bay Region*, which was adopted in March 2007.

The CCAA also requires MBUAPCD to prepare and submit a report to CARB summarizing progress in meeting the schedules for developing, adopting, or implementing the air pollution control measures contained in MBUAPCD's plans.

LOCAL REGULATIONS

Local governments' responsibility for air quality increased significantly with the passage of the CCAA and the CAA amendments. Both of these pieces of legislation placed new emphasis on reducing motor vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled at the local level. Although MBUAPCD is required to address state air quality standards by way of transportation control measures (TCMs) and indirect source programs in its air quality attainment plans, local jurisdictions are responsible for most implementation. Local government responsibilities for air quality are found in four areas: (1) land use planning; (2) reviewing and mitigating the environmental impacts of development projects; (3) developing and maintaining the transportation infrastructure in the community, including transit systems; (4) implementing local air quality programs such as commute-based trip reduction and ridesharing.



6.3.2 Methodology

Emissions from the proposed Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project construction and operations were estimated using appropriate methodology provided by the MBUAPCD, CARB, and USEPA. To determine whether the calculated emissions and the impacts to air quality are significant environmental effects, CEQA guidelines have been addressed.

Operational emissions sources include vapors from gas dispensing, restaurant exhaust emissions, drive-through car idling, diesel emissions from heavy equipment, and vehicle emissions associated with the vehicle trips generated by the project during construction and operations after build-out. Emissions from these sources are summed and compared to thresholds of significance. Mitigation measures are recommended where necessary.

6.3.2.1 Construction Impact Assessment Methods

Construction of the proposed Vista De Oro Mixed-Use Project is anticipated to begin in Summer or Fall 2016 and is expected to last a period of 9 to 11 months (

Table 6-4: General Construction Assumptions).

Table 6-4: General Construction Assumptions

Specifications	Assumptions
Site Area (acres)	8.0
Construction Start Date	Summer or Fall 2016
Construction Duration	11 months
Hours per Day	8
Days per Week	5

The construction phases consist of final grading and site staking; excavation and site work; trenching; building of structural facilities; installing electrical, paving, and striping; and finally architectural coating (*Table 6-5: Phase-Specific Construction Assumptions*).

**Table 6-5: Phase-Specific Construction Assumptions**

CalEEMod Phase Name	Dates	Description	Equipment Used	Worker Trips
Rough Grading and Site Staking	5/1/2015 – 05/29/2015	Site Preparation	Default CalEEMod Equipment	Default
Excavation and Site Work	6/1/2015 – 7/17/2015	Grading	Default CalEEMod Equipment	Default
Structural Facilities	7/20/2015 – 11/13/2015	Building Construction	Default CalEEMod Equipment	75/day
Paving	11/16/2015 – 12/4/2015	Paving	Default CalEEMod Equipment	Default
Architecture Coating	12/7/2015 – 12/31/2015	Architecture Coating	Default CalEEMod Equipment	Default

Construction of the proposed project would result in the temporary generation of emissions of reactive organic gases (ROGs), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), and respirable particulate matter (PM₁₀). Emissions would originate from construction equipment exhaust, employee vehicle exhaust, dust from clearing the land, exposed soil eroded by wind, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from asphalt paving. Construction-related emissions would vary substantially depending on the level of activity, length of the construction period, specific construction operations, types of equipment, number of personnel, wind and precipitation conditions, and soil moisture content.

Construction-related emissions were estimated and analyzed using the California Emissions Estimate Model (CalEEMod) 2013 version 2, which is a computer program used to estimate emissions from construction, vehicle trips, and fuel use resulting from land use development projects. To estimate construction emissions, CalEEMod 2013 analyzes the type of construction equipment used and the duration of the construction period. A detailed inventory of construction equipment that would be used for the proposed project was not provided; therefore, this analysis is based on anticipated construction equipment that would be used during construction activities calculated by CalEEMod 2013.

6.3.2.2 Area Source and Vehicular Emissions from Project Operation

The primary operational emissions associated with the project are PM₁₀ and ozone precursors emitted as vehicle exhaust. The effects of PM₁₀ and ozone precursors were evaluated using the CalEEMod 2013 model.

6.3.3 Environmental Setting

Air quality in a region is determined by its topography, meteorology, and existing air pollutant sources. These factors are discussed below, together with the current regulatory structure that



applies to the NCCAB pursuant to the regulatory authority of the MBUAPCD. The MBUAPCD is responsible for establishing and enforcing local air quality rules and regulations that address the requirements of federal and state air quality laws. Currently, the NCCAB is designated as nonattainment for the state 1-hour and 8-hour ozone standard and the state PM₁₀ (particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter) standards (CARB, 2009).

6.3.3.1 Climate and Meteorology

Ambient air quality is commonly characterized by climatological conditions, the meteorological influences on air quality, and the quantity and type of pollutants released. The air basin is subject to a combination of topographical and climatic factors that increase the potential for high levels of regional and local air pollutants.

6.3.3.2 Regional Climate

The climate of the NCCAB is dominated by a semi-permanent high-pressure cell over the Pacific Ocean. In the summer, the dominant high-pressure cell results in persistent west and northwest winds across the majority of coastal California. As air descends in the Pacific high-pressure cell, a stable temperature inversion is formed. As temperatures increase, the warmer air aloft expands, forcing the coastal layer of air to move onshore, producing a moderate sea breeze over the coastal plains and valleys. Temperature inversions inhibit vertical air movement and often result in increased transport of air pollutants to inland receptor areas.

In the winter, when the high-pressure cell is weakest and farthest south, the inversion associated with the Pacific high-pressure cell is typically absent in the NCCAB. Air frequently flows in a southeasterly direction out of the Salinas and San Benito valleys in the NCCAB. The predominant offshore flow during this time of year tends to aid in pollutant dispersal, producing relatively healthful to moderate air quality throughout the majority of the region. Conditions during this time are often characterized by afternoon and evening land breezes and occasional rain storms. However, local inversions caused by the cooling of air close to the ground can form in some areas during the evening and early morning hours.

Winter daytime temperatures in the NCCAB average in the mid-50s °F during the day, with nighttime temperatures averaging in the low 40s °F, summer daytime temperatures averaging in the 60s °F during the day, and nighttime temperatures averaging in the 50s °F. Precipitation varies within the region, but in general, annual rainfall is lowest in the coastal plain and inland valley, higher in the foothills, and highest in the mountains.

6.3.3.3 Meteorological Influences on Air Quality

Regional flow patterns have an effect on air quality patterns by directing pollutants downwind of sources. For instance, winds originating in the San Francisco Bay Area often transport pollutants into the NCCAB, where surface winds move the pollutants to the eastern part of the NCCAB. The transport of pollutants can often cause exceedances of air quality standards in the NCCAB. Localized meteorological conditions, such as light winds and shallow vertical mixing, and topographical features, such as surrounding mountain ranges, create areas of high pollutant concentrations by hindering dispersal. Temperature inversions especially hamper dispersion by trapping air pollutants in a limited atmospheric volume near the ground.

During summer's longer daylight hours, plentiful sunshine provides the energy needed to fuel photochemical reactions between NO₂ and volatile organic compounds, which results in ozone formation. Ozone is a colorless toxic gas that irritates the lungs and damages materials and vegetation. To reach high levels of ozone requires adequate sunshine, early morning stagnation



in source areas, high surface temperatures, strong and low morning inversions, greatly restricted vertical mixing during the day, and daytime subsidence that strengthens the inversion layer. Because of its long formation time in the atmosphere, ozone patterns are most affected by transport patterns.

In the winter, temperature inversions occur close to ground level during the night and early morning hours. At these times, the greatest pollution problems are from CO and NO₂. Higher CO concentrations occur on winter days with strong surface inversions and light winds. CO transport is extremely limited. Highest concentrations are associated with areas of highest traffic density. Higher NO₂ levels usually occur during the autumn or winter on days with summer-like weather conditions. These conditions include low inversions, limited daytime mixing, and stagnant windflow conditions. Although days are clear, sunlight is limited in duration and intensity and the photochemical reactions necessary to form ozone are incomplete.

Atmospheric particulates (total suspended particulates or TSP) are made up of fine solids or liquids such as soot, dust, aerosols, fumes, and mists. A large portion of the TSP in the atmosphere is finer than PM₁₀. These small particulates cause the greatest health risk of all suspended particulates since they can more easily penetrate the defenses of the human respiratory system. Peak concentrations of PM₁₀ occur downwind of precursor emission sources. As with ozone, a substantial fraction of PM₁₀ forms in the atmosphere as a result of chemical reactions. Manmade sources of PM₁₀ include agriculture, mining, grading, and other activities that involve earthwork.

According to the General Plan EIR, the NCCAB encounters its most significant air quality problems in late spring and fall when a combination of weak onshore winds and a stable temperature create an inversion that restricts the vertical and horizontal dispersion of pollutants. This relatively stationary air mass is sustained by a high-pressure cell along the Pacific Ocean, which can enable pollutants to build up over several days.

6.3.3.4 Criteria Air Quality Pollutants

OZONE

Ground level ozone, commonly referred to as smog, is greatest on warm, windless, sunny days. Ozone is not emitted directly into the air, but formed through a complex series of chemical reactions between ROGs and NO_x. These reactions occur over time in the presence of sunlight. Ground level ozone formation can occur in a matter of hours under ideal conditions. The time required for ozone formation allows the reacting compounds to spread over a large area, producing a regional pollution concern. Once formed, ozone can remain in the atmosphere for one or two days.

Ozone is also a public health concern because it is a respiratory irritant that increases susceptibility to respiratory infections and diseases, and because it can harm lung tissue at high concentrations. In addition, ozone can cause substantial damage to leaf tissues of crops and natural vegetation and can damage many natural and manmade materials by acting as a chemical oxidizing agent.

The principal sources of the ozone precursors (ROG and NO_x) are the combustion of fuels and the evaporation of solvents, paints, and fuels.