

Draft EIR

# Vista Lucia Project

State Clearinghouse Number 2020039056

January 30, 2024



Prepared by  
EMC Planning Group



DRAFT EIR

**VISTA LUCIA PROJECT**  
**(ANNEXATION, PREZONING, SPECIFIC PLAN AND**  
**NEIGHBORHOOD 1 TENTATIVE MAP)**

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER 2020039056

**PREPARED FOR**

**City of Gonzales**

Taven Kinison Brown, Community Development Director

147 Fourth Street

Gonzales, CA 93926

Tel 831.675.5000

TKinisonBrown@ci.gonzales.ca.us

**PREPARED BY**

**EMC Planning Group Inc.**

601 Abrego Street

Monterey, CA 93940

Tel 831.649.1799

Fax 831.649.8399

Ron Sisseem, MRP, Senior Principal

sissem@emcplanning.com

www.emcplanning.com

January 30, 2024

This document was produced on recycled paper.





# Table of Contents

1.0	INTRODUCTION.....	1-1
1.1	Purpose for Preparing the EIR.....	1-1
1.2	Methodology .....	1-1
1.3	EIR Process.....	1-3
1.4	Terminology .....	1-6
2.0	SUMMARY .....	2-1
2.1	CEQA Requirements.....	2-1
2.2	Summary of the Proposed Project.....	2-1
2.3	Summary of Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures.....	2-2
2.4	Summary of Alternatives.....	2-2
2.5	Areas of Known Controversy.....	2-2
2.6	Issues to be Resolved.....	2-3
3.0	ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING .....	3-1
3.1	Project Site Setting.....	3-1
3.2	Regional Setting .....	3-2
3.3	City and County General Plan Land Use and Growth Planning.....	3-9
3.4	Plan Consistency.....	3-18
4.0	PROJECT DESCRIPTION .....	4-1
4.1	Project Objectives.....	4-1
4.2	Project Characteristics.....	4-4
4.3	Intended Uses of the EIR .....	4-38
5.0	AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES.....	5-1
5.1	Environmental Setting.....	5-1
5.2	Regulatory Setting.....	5-2
5.3	Thresholds of Significance .....	5-7
5.4	Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures.....	5-8

6.0	AIR QUALITY .....	6-1
6.1	Environmental Setting.....	6-2
6.2	Regulatory Setting .....	6-2
6.3	Thresholds of Significance.....	6-3
6.4	Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures .....	6-6
7.0	BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES .....	7-1
7.1	Environmental Setting.....	7-2
7.2	Regulatory Setting .....	7-20
7.3	Thresholds or Standards of Significance .....	7-24
7.4	Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures .....	7-25
8.0	CULTURAL AND TRIBAL RESOURCES .....	8-1
8.1	Environmental Setting.....	8-2
8.2	Regulatory Setting .....	8-3
8.3	Thresholds of Significance.....	8-7
8.4	Analysis, Impacts and Mitigation Measures .....	8-8
9.0	ENERGY.....	9-1
9.1	Environmental Setting.....	9-1
9.2	Regulatory Setting .....	9-2
9.3	Thresholds of Significance.....	9-4
9.4	Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures .....	9-5
10.0	GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS.....	10-1
10.1	Environmental Setting.....	10-2
10.2	Regulatory Setting .....	10-2
10.3	Thresholds of Significance.....	10-5
10.4	Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures .....	10-5
11.0	HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS.....	11-1
11.1	Environmental Setting.....	11-2
11.2	Regulatory Setting .....	11-9

11.3	Thresholds of Significance .....	11-13
11.4	Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures.....	11-14
12.0	HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY .....	12-1
12.1	Environmental Setting.....	12-1
12.2	Regulatory Setting.....	12-2
12.3	Thresholds of Significance .....	12-6
12.4	Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures.....	12-7
13.0	NOISE.....	13-1
13.1	Environmental Setting.....	13-2
13.2	Regulatory Setting.....	13-5
13.3	Thresholds of Significance .....	13-6
13.4	Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures.....	13-7
14.0	TRANSPORTATION .....	14-1
14.1	Environmental Setting.....	14-2
14.2	Regulatory Setting.....	14-2
14.3	Thresholds of Significance .....	14-4
14.4	Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures.....	14-5
15.0	PUBLIC SERVICES .....	15-1
15.1	Environmental Setting.....	15-2
15.2	Regulatory Setting.....	15-4
15.3	Thresholds of Significance .....	15-4
15.4	Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures.....	15-4
16.0	WASTEWATER.....	16-1
16.1	Environmental Setting.....	16-1
16.2	Regulatory Setting.....	16-6
16.3	Thresholds of Significance .....	16-7
16.4	Analysis, Impacts and Mitigation Measures.....	16-8

17.0	WATER DEMAND AND SUPPLY .....	17-1
17.1	Environmental Setting.....	17-2
17.2	Regulatory Setting .....	17-4
17.3	Thresholds of Significance.....	17-6
17.4	Analysis, Impacts and Mitigation Measures .....	17-7
18.0	EFFECTS ADEQUATELY ADDRESSED IN THE GENERAL PLAN EIR .....	18-1
18.1	Introduction.....	18-1
18.2	Aesthetics .....	18-1
18.3	Geology and Soils .....	18-3
18.4	Mineral Resources.....	18-5
19.0	GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS .....	19-1
19.1	CEQA Requirements .....	19-1
19.2	Impact Analysis .....	19-1
20.0	CUMULATIVE IMPACTS.....	20-1
20.1	CEQA Requirements .....	20-1
20.2	Cumulative Development Scenario.....	20-2
20.3	Cumulative Impacts.....	20-3
21.0	SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS.....	21-1
21.1	CEQA Requirements .....	21-1
21.2	Impact Analysis .....	21-1
22.0	ALTERNATIVES .....	22-1
22.1	CEQA Requirements .....	22-1
22.2	Project Objectives and Significant Impacts .....	22-1
22.3	Alternatives Considered but Rejected.....	22-5
22.4	Alternatives Considered .....	22-6
22.5	Comparison of Alternatives.....	22-23
22.6	Environmentally Superior Alternative .....	22-23

23.0	SOURCES .....	23-1
23.1	Documents, Persons Contacted and Web Sources .....	23-1
23.2	Report Preparers.....	23-11

## Appendices

Appendix A	Notice of Preparation and Comment Letters
Appendix B	Air Quality Plan Consistency Worksheet; Air Quality Memorandum and Updated Criteria Emissions/GHG Modeling Results; and Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Energy Report
Appendix C	Biological Resources Reports and Regulatory Agency Letters
Appendix D	Environmental Hazards Reports
Appendix E	Noise Reports
Appendix F	Vehicle Miles Traveled Analysis
Appendix G	Water Supply Assessment
Appendix H	Vista Lucia Specific Plan

## Tables

Table 2-1	Summary of Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures.....	2-4
Table 3-1	Gonzales General Plan Policy Consistency Review.....	3-19
Table 3-2	LAFCO Standards Consistency Review .....	3-28
Table 4-1	Projected Residential Development Capacity.....	4-14
Table 4-2	Projected Overall Development Capacity .....	4-15
Table 4-3	Vista Lucia Population Projection.....	4-37
Table 4-4	Vista Lucia Employment Projection .....	4-38
Table 6-1	Thresholds of Significance for Criteria Air Pollutants.....	6-5
Table 6-2	Unmitigated Operational Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions .....	6-9
Table 6-3	Area Source Emissions Reductions.....	6-10
Table 6-4	Specific Plan VMT Related Mobile Source Emissions Reductions.....	6-11
Table 6-5	Total Operational Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions.....	6-11
Table 7-1	Special-Status Plant Species with Potential to Occur in the Project Vicinity.....	7-10
Table 7-2	Special-Status Wildlife Species with Potential to Occur in the Project Vicinity.....	7-13
Table 10-1	Unmitigated Operational Greenhouse Gas Emissions .....	10-6
Table 10-2	Consistency with Applicable Climate Action Plan Greenhouse Gas Reduction Measures.....	10-7
Table 13-1	Existing Plus Project Increases in Traffic Noise .....	13-10
Table 14-1	Residential Vehicle Miles Traveled Analysis Results .....	14-8
Table 15-1	Student Generation.....	15-7

Table 17-1	Existing and Proposed Water Demand.....	17-8
Table 17-2	Proposed Project Water Demands Under Dry-Year Conditions.....	17-9
Table 20-1	Cumulative Impact Analysis Geographic Scope.....	20-3
Table 20-2	Existing and Cumulative Traffic Noise Levels, dB, Ldn.....	20-18
Table 20-3	Distances to Traffic Noise Contours (Cumulative Conditions).....	20-19
Table 22-1	Increased Residential Density Scenario.....	22-17
Table 22-2	Comparison of Alternatives Impacts.....	22-24

## Figures

Figure 3-1	Project Location.....	3-3
Figure 3-2	Aerial Photograph.....	3-5
Figure 3-3	Project Site Photos .....	3-7
Figure 3-4	Planning Boundaries .....	3-11
Figure 3-5	General Plan Land Use Diagram.....	3-13
Figure 3-6	Project Site General Plan Land Use.....	3-15
Figure 4-1	Tentative Map .....	4-7
Figure 4-2	Specific Plan Land Use Plan .....	4-9
Figure 4-3	Santa Lucia and Gabilan Neighborhoods .....	4-11
Figure 4-4	Off-site Wastewater Collection Main Location.....	4-19
Figure 4-5	Vehicular Connection Plan .....	4-23
Figure 4-6	Connectivity and Walkability .....	4-25
Figure 4-7	SOI Circulation Study – Study Intersections.....	4-27
Figure 4-8	SOI Circulation Study - Roadway Segment Geometry.....	4-29
Figure 4-9	Off-Site Circulation Improvements – City Roadways .....	4-33
Figure 4-10	Preliminary Interchange Improvement Concept.....	4-35
Figure 5-1	Important Farmland Map.....	5-3
Figure 7-1	Habitat Map.....	7-5
Figure 7-2	Special Status Species with Potential to Occur in the Project Vicinity.....	7-7
Figure 11-1	Fire Hazard Areas.....	11-7
Figure 12-1	Flood Zones .....	12-3
Figure 13-1	Existing Sensitive Residential Receptors Adjacent to Project Site.....	13-3
Figure 22-1	Reduced Scale Alternative (Possible Project Site Boundary) .....	22-11
Figure 22-2	Increased Residential Density Alternative (Possible Project Site Boundary)....	22-19

## 1.1 Purpose for Preparing the EIR

The City of Gonzales, acting as the lead agency, has determined that the Vista Lucia Project (hereinafter “proposed project”) could result in significant adverse environmental impacts and has required that an environmental impact report (EIR) be prepared to evaluate these potentially significant adverse environmental impacts. The purpose of an EIR is to identify a project’s significant environmental effects, indicate the manner in which those significant effects can be mitigated or avoided, and identify alternatives to the proposed project.

This EIR has been prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended, to inform public decision makers and their constituents of the environmental impacts of the proposed project. In accordance with CEQA guidelines, this report describes both beneficial and adverse environmental impacts generated by the proposed project and suggests measures for mitigating significant adverse environmental impacts.

## 1.2 Methodology

### General

EMC Planning Group has prepared this EIR under contract to the City of Gonzales in accordance with CEQA and its implementing guidelines, using an interdisciplinary approach. The City of Gonzales has the discretionary authority to review and approve the proposed project. This EIR is an informational document that is intended to inform decision makers and their constituents, as well as responsible and trustee agencies, of the environmental impacts of the proposed project and to identify feasible mitigation measures that would avoid or reduce the severity of the impacts. The lead agency is required to consider the information contained in this EIR prior to taking any discretionary action to approve the proposed project.

Information from private and public sources noted herein, as well as information generated through field investigation by EMC Planning Group and other technical experts has been used as inputs to this EIR.

An EIR is an objective public disclosure document that takes no position on the merits of the proposed project. Therefore, the findings of this EIR do not advocate a position "for" or "against"

the proposed project. Instead, the EIR provides information on which decisions about the proposed project can be based. This EIR has been prepared according to professional standards and in conformance with legal requirements.

## Emphasis

This EIR focuses on the significant effects on the environment in accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15143. The significant effects are discussed with emphasis in proportion to their severity and probability of occurrence.

## Forecasting

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15144, preparing this EIR necessarily involved some degree of forecasting. While foreseeing the unforeseeable is not possible, the report preparers and technical experts used best available efforts to find out and disclose all that it reasonably can.

## Speculation

If, after thorough investigation, the report preparers in consultation with the lead agency determined that a particular impact is too speculative for evaluation, the conclusion is noted and the issue is not discussed further (CEQA Guidelines section 15145).

## Degree of Specificity

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15146, the degree of specificity in this EIR corresponds to the degree of specificity involved in the proposed project. An EIR on a well-defined proposed development project will be more detailed than will be an EIR on policy or regulatory document (e.g., land use plan, specific plan, or zoning ordinance) where the resulting physical environmental changes cannot yet be precisely identified. An EIR on policy or regulatory project would focus on secondary effects from implementing the plan or regulations, but the EIR need not be as detailed as an EIR on the specific construction projects that might follow.

As described in Section 4.0, Project Description, the applicant for the proposed project has submitted applications to Gonzales for specific plan, annexation, pre-zoning, and tentative map entitlement approvals. A development agreement between the City and the applicant will also be prepared and considered by the City Council. The applicant has submitted a specific plan, tentative maps for two of several anticipated development phases, and supplemental technical information that are used in this EIR as the basis for evaluating the reasonably foreseeable physical changes that would occur. The level of analysis specificity is limited to the level of detail available in the information submitted by the applicant. Where applicable, environmental effects of the project that are adequately addressed in the *City of Gonzales General Plan Environmental Impacts Report* (City of Gonzales 2010) (“general plan EIR”) are so noted and reviewed in reference to that document.

If the requested entitlements are approved by the City of Gonzales and the annexation request is also approved by the Monterey County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), the applicant could subsequently submit additional applications to the City requesting specific development approvals, including, but potentially not limited to additional tentative map(s) and use permits. If future individual specific projects may have potential to result in new or more severe significant impacts than are evaluated in this EIR, additional CEQA documentation in the form of a negative declaration or EIR may be required.

## Technical Detail

The information contained in this EIR includes summarized technical data, maps, plans, diagrams, and similar relevant information sufficient to permit assessment of significant environmental impacts by reviewing agencies and members of the public, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15147. Placement of highly technical and specialized analysis and data is included as appendices to the main body of the EIR. Appendices to this EIR are included on a CD on the inside, back cover.

## Citation

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15148, the EIR incorporates information from many sources including engineering reports and scientific documents relating to environmental features. If the document was prepared specifically for the proposed project, the document is included in the technical appendices discussed above. Documents that were not prepared specifically for the proposed project, but contain information relevant to the environmental analysis, are cited but not included.

## 1.3 EIR Process

There are several steps required in an EIR process. The major steps are briefly discussed below.

### Notice of Preparation

CEQA Guidelines section 15082 describes the purpose, content and process for preparing, circulating and facilitating early public and public agency input on the scope of an EIR. CEQA Guidelines section 15375 defines a notice of preparation (NOP) as:

...a brief notice sent by the Lead Agency to notify the Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, the Office of Planning and Research, and involved federal agencies that the Lead Agency plans to prepare an EIR for the project. The purpose of the notice is to solicit guidance from those agencies as to the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR.

An NOP was circulated from March 18, 2020 to April 20, 2020 for a supplemental EIR to address the potential impacts of the applicant's original request to the City to approve only an annexation and pre-zoning. Written responses to the original NOP were received from the following:

1. Native American Heritage Commission, March 17, 2020
2. Caltrans District 5, March 27, 2020
3. California Department of Conservation, April 10, 2020
4. Transportation Agency for Monterey County, April 10, 2020
5. Monterey County Resource Management Agency (Planning, Public Works, Environmental Health), April 14, 2020
6. Local Agency Formation Commission of Monterey County, April 16, 2020

The applicant subsequently prepared a specific plan for the project and a tentative map covering a portion of the project site, and submitted applications to the City for these additional approvals. To ensure that the responsible agencies, trustee agencies, the Office of Planning and Research, involved federal and other stakeholders identified by the City had the opportunity to comment on the scope of the EIR for the new proposed entitlements, a revised NOP was prepared and circulated for 30 days from September 14, 2021 to October 13, 2021.

Written responses to the revised NOP were received from the following:

1. Native American Heritage Commission, September 15, 2021
2. LandWatch, October 1, 2021
3. Caltrans District 5, October 5, 2021
4. California Department of Fish and Wildlife, October 10, 2021
5. Transportation Agency for Monterey County, October 12, 2021
6. Local Agency Formation Commission of Monterey County, October 13, 2021

During the revised NOP comment period, the City determined that a scoping meeting should be conducted as part of the revised NOP process. The City submitted an addendum to the revised NOP to the California State Clearinghouse, informing that the scoping meeting would be held on Thursday, October 28, 2021. Since the scoping meeting date fell past the end date of the revised NOP comment period, the City extended the revised NOP comment period to October 29, 2021. The addendum submittal notification was completed consistent with recommendations of the California State Clearinghouse, which posted the addendum. The addendum was also submitted to the Monterey County Clerk and circulated by the City in the local newspaper.

During the extended revised NOP comment period, a comment letter was received from the Gonzales Unified School District dated October 25, 2021.

The revised NOP, comments received from agencies, organizations, and private individuals on the revised NOP and comments received on the original NOP are also included in [Appendix A](#). The comments received on both the original and revised NOP are addressed in the EIR where the comments pertinent to the environmental analysis conducted herein.

## Contents

An EIR is an informational document intended to inform public agency decision makers and the public of the significant environmental effect of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project. The public agency is required to consider the information in a draft EIR along with other information which may be presented to the agency. CEQA Guidelines Article 9 requires an EIR to contain the following information:

- Table of Contents;
- Summary;
- Project Description;
- Environmental Setting;
- Consideration and Discussion of Environmental Impacts;
- Consideration and Discussion of Mitigation Measures Proposed to Minimize Significant Effects;
- Consideration and Discussion of Alternatives to the Proposed Project;
- Organization and Persons Consulted; and
- Discussion of Cumulative Impacts.

The contents of this EIR are outlined in the table of contents.

## Public Review

The draft EIR must be circulated for a 45-day public review period. Comments addressing environmental issues received on the draft EIR will be addressed in the final EIR. CEQA Guidelines section 15204(a) states that in reviewing a draft EIR, persons and public agencies should focus on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts on the environment and ways in which the significant effects of the project might be avoided or mitigated. Comments are most helpful when they suggest additional specific alternatives or mitigation measures that would provide better ways to avoid or mitigate the significant environmental effects. At the same time, reviewers should be aware that the adequacy of an EIR is determined in terms of what is reasonably feasible, in light of factors such as the magnitude of the project at issue, the severity of its likely environmental impacts, and the geographic scope of the project. CEQA does not require a lead agency to conduct every test or perform all research, study, and experimentation recommended or demanded by commenters.

CEQA Guidelines section 15204(c) states that reviewers should explain the basis for their comments, and should submit data or references offering facts, reasonable assumptions based on facts, or expert opinion supported by facts in support of the comments. Pursuant to section 15064, an effect shall not be considered significant in the absence of substantial evidence.

## Final EIR

### Contents

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15132, a final will provide the following:

- List of persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the draft EIR;
- Comments received on the draft EIR;
- Responses to significant environmental points raised in comments; and
- Revisions that may be necessary to the draft EIR based upon the comments and responses.

According to CEQA Guidelines section 15204(a), when responding to comments, lead agencies need only respond to significant environmental issues and do not need to provide all information requested by reviewers, as long as a good faith effort at full disclosure is made in the EIR. The final EIR and the draft EIR will constitute the entire EIR.

### Certification

CEQA Guidelines section 15088 requires the lead agency to provide a written proposed response to a public agency on comments made by that public agency at least 10 days prior to certifying an EIR.

CEQA Guidelines section 15090 requires lead agencies to certify the final EIR prior to approving a project. The lead agency shall certify that the final EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA, the final EIR was presented to the decision-making body of the lead agency and that the decision-making body reviewed and considered the information contained in the final EIR prior to approving the project, and that the final EIR reflects the lead agency's independent judgment and analysis.

## 1.4 Terminology

### Characterization of Impacts

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

#### No Impact

“No impact” means that no change from existing conditions is expected to occur.

#### Adverse Impacts

A “less-than-significant impact” is an adverse impact, but would not cause a substantial adverse change in the physical environment, and no mitigation is required.

A “significant impact” or “potentially significant impact” would, or would potentially, cause a substantial adverse change in the physical environment, and mitigation is required.

A “less-than-significant impact with implementation of mitigation measures” means that the impact would cause no substantial adverse change in the physical environment if identified mitigation measures are implemented.

A “significant and unavoidable impact” would cause a substantial change in the physical environment and cannot be avoided if the project is implemented; mitigation may be recommended, but will not reduce the impact to less-than-significant levels.

### **Beneficial Impact**

A “beneficial impact” would result in a decrease in existing adverse conditions in the physical environment if the project is implemented.

## **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

AB	Assembly Bill
AFY	Acre-Feet per Year
BEES	Building Energy Efficiency Standards
BTU	British Thermal Unit
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO <sub>2</sub> e	Carbon Dioxide Equivalent
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EMFAC	Emissions Factor Model
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FESA	Federal Endangered Species Act
GHG	Greenhouse Gas(es)

GPD	Gallons per Day
ISP	Integrated Sustainability Plan
kWh	Kilowatt-hour
LID	Low Impact Development
LRA	Local Responsibility Area
MGD	Million Gallons per Day
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MT	Metric Tons
MWWTP	Municipal Wastewater Treatment Plant
NO <sub>x</sub>	Nitrogen Oxides
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
OCP	Organochlorine Pesticides
PM <sub>10</sub>	Suspended Particulate Matter 10 micrometers or less
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	Fine Particulate Matter 2.5 micrometers or less
ppm	Parts per Million
PRG	Preliminary Remediation Goals
PRG	Preliminary Remediation Goal
PUD	Planned Unit Development
RSL	Regional Screening Level
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SB	Senate Bill
EIR	Supplemental Environmental Impact Report
SF	Square Feet
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
SOI	Sphere of Influence

SO <sub>x</sub>	Sulfur Oxides
SRA	State Responsibility Area
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TAC	Toxic Air Contaminant
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled
VOC	Volatile Organic Compounds
WSA	Water Supply Assessment

*This side intentionally left blank.*

## 2.1 CEQA Requirements

CEQA Guidelines Section 15123 requires an EIR to contain a brief summary of the proposed project and its consequences. This summary identifies each significant impact of the proposed project and the mitigation measures proposed to lessen or avoid significant impacts, areas of controversy known to the lead agency, and issues to be resolved, including the choice among alternatives and whether or how to mitigate the significant effects.

A brief summary of the project description is also provided.

## 2.2 Summary of the Proposed Project

The applicant is requesting annexation, rezoning, general plan amendment (specific plan adoption) approvals, and approval of the first of what are anticipated to be a series of tentative maps. The types of planned land uses and development capacity projected for the site are summarized in [Table 4-2, Projected Overall Development Capacity](#). Residential uses are the dominant proposed land use. A total of 3,498 dwelling units are proposed on about 452 acres of the total 771-acre site. A total of about 96,000 square feet of neighborhood commercial building is proposed. Parks, promenades, and village greens comprise about 79 acres, with two elementary and one middle school planned on a total of about 42 acres. Detention basins, drainage facilities, buffers, and other open space total about 73 acres, with roads and other miscellaneous uses planned on about 117 acres. Off-site improvements to existing Associated Lane are also proposed as is constructing a new segment of Fanoe Road.

After City approval of the requested entitlements, applications for future individual developments within the specific plan boundary would be submitted and processed. Other than the first in an expected series of tentative maps, no other specific project entitlements are being requested at this time. Future individual projects would be subject to CEQA review, with that review potentially tiering from this EIR.

Detailed project description information is included in Section 4.0, Project Description.

## 2.3 Summary of Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The proposed project would have a range of significant impacts. Each of the significant impacts is identified in [Table 2-1, Summary of Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures](#), located at the end of this Summary section. The table lists each significant impact by topic area, the level of significance of each impact, mitigation measures to avoid or substantially minimize each impact, and the level of significance of each impact after implementation of the mitigation measures.

## 2.4 Summary of Alternatives

This EIR evaluates the environmental impacts of the following three alternatives to the proposed project.

1. No project alternative. This alternative addresses existing conditions and allows decision makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed project with the impacts of not approving the proposed project.
2. Reduced scale alternative. This alternative consists of reducing residential development capacity as a basis for avoiding a significant air quality impact – volatile organic compound emissions that exceed the threshold of significance. This alternative would eliminate 400 residential units as a basis to reduce air emissions from vehicle travel. By eliminating these units, the overall project development footprint/project site size would be reduced by 52 acres. This alternative would also lessen the significance of several other significant impacts, particularly related to development footprint size.
3. Increased residential density. This alternative would increase the average residential density for the Neighborhood Residential Low land use designation from a proposed target of 5.0 units per acre to 7.5 units per acre, and the average density for the Neighborhood Residential Medium land use designation from a proposed target of 7.0 units per acre to 10.5 units per acre. The overall residential development capacity of 3,498 units would be maintained, but the overall project development footprint/project site would be reduced by approximately 277 acres. This alternative would lessen significant impacts of the proposed project that are related to development footprint size, and potentially lessen impacts that are density related.

## 2.5 Areas of Known Controversy

CEQA Guidelines section 15123, Summary, requires a discussion of areas of controversy known to the lead agency including issues raised by agencies and the public.

No known areas of public controversy have been identified to date. Comment letters received in response to the Notice of Preparation (included in Appendix A) identify issues the commenters suggested be evaluated in this EIR.

## 2.6 Issues to be Resolved

CEQA Guidelines Section 15123 requires an EIR to discuss issues to be resolved, including the choice among alternatives and whether or how to mitigate the significant effects. Merced County is not aware of any issues to be resolved; however, the Board of Supervisors will be required to consider each of the alternatives evaluated in this EIR, and make a decision whether to approve the proposed project or one of the alternatives. See Section 16.0, Alternatives, for the complete alternatives analysis.

**Table 2-1 Summary of Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

Impact	Significance Level without Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance Level after Mitigation
<b>Agricultural Resources</b>			
<b>Impact 5-1.</b> Conversion of 767 Acres of Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance to Non-Agricultural Use	Significant	<b>Mitigation Measure 5-1.</b> The applicant shall mitigate the impacts of converting 767 acres of Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance by implementing one or a combination of the mitigation options included in the City's farmland mitigation ordinance (Ordinance No. 2023-136). The applicant shall specify in writing to the City the mitigation option(s) to be implemented. The proposed mitigation option(s) are subject to review and approval by the City Council prior to its decision to approve the project. The mitigation option(s) shall be completely implemented by the applicant prior to City approving any activity resulting in interference with agricultural practices on the property subject to conversion. Mitigation shall not be required for planned uses that are except from mitigation requirements per Section 12.150.040(D) of the ordinance including schools, trails, public parks, and land planned for residential products that would be available to very low- and low-income residents. The City shall not issue any grading permit, building permit, or encroachment permit until mitigation has been completed.	Significant and Unavoidable
<b>Impact 5-2.</b> Urban/Agricultural Land Use Conflicts with Potential to Convert Farmland to Non-Agricultural Use	Significant	<b>Mitigation Measure 5-2.</b> The proposed temporary agricultural buffers shall remain in place until such time as occupancy permits are granted for planned future development on adjacent agricultural lands that abut the temporary buffers. Any future proposed change in the use of temporary buffers shall be subject to review and approval of the Gonzales Community Development Director.	Less than Significant
<b>Air Quality</b>			
<b>Impact 6-2.</b> Fugitive Dust Emissions During Construction Would Exceed Thresholds and Degrade Air Quality	Significant	<b>Mitigation Measure 6-2.</b> To reduce fugitive dust emissions from grading and construction activities on the project site and for off-site circulation improvements, the following language shall be included in all grading and construction plans for on-site and off-site development prior to issuance of a grading permit all such development:	Less than Significant

Impact	Significance Level without Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance Level after Mitigation
		<p>Dust control measures shall be employed to reduce visible dust leaving the area under construction. The following measures or equally effective substitute measures shall be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Use recycled water to add moisture to the areas of disturbed soils twice a day, every day, to prevent visible dust from being blown by the wind;</li> <li>b. Apply chemical soil stabilizers or dust suppressants on disturbed soils that will not be actively graded for a period of four or more consecutive days;</li> <li>c. Apply non-toxic binders and/or hydro seed disturbed soils where grading is completed, but on which more than four days will pass prior to paving, foundation construction, or placement of other permanent cover;</li> <li>d. Cover or otherwise stabilize stockpiles that will not be actively used for a period of four or more consecutive days, or water at least twice daily as necessary to prevent visible dust leaving the site, using raw or recycled water when feasible;</li> <li>e. Maintain at least two feet of freeboard and cover all trucks hauling dirt, sand, or loose materials;</li> <li>f. Install wheel washers at all construction site exit points, and sweep streets if visible soil material is carried onto paved surfaces;</li> <li>g. Stop grading, and earth moving if winds exceed 15 miles per hour;</li> <li>h. Pave roads, driveways, and parking areas at the earliest point feasible within the construction schedule;</li> <li>i. Post a publicly visible sign with the telephone number and person to contact regarding dust complaints. This person shall respond and take corrective action within 48 hours of receiving the complaint. The phone number of the Monterey Bay Air Resources District shall also be visible to ensure compliance with Rule 402 (Nuisance); and</li> <li>j. Limit the area under construction at any one time.</li> </ul>	

Impact	Significance Level without Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance Level after Mitigation
<p><b>Impact 6-3.</b> Criteria Air Pollutants During Operations that Exceed Air District Thresholds and Degrade Air Quality</p>	<p>Significant</p>	<p><b>Mitigation Measures 6-3a through 6-3e:</b></p> <p>6-3a To reduce area source criteria air pollutant emissions, the following reduction measures shall be required for all tentative maps and use permits and incorporated into contractor work specifications for future development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fireplaces shall be prohibited in all residential units; and</li> <li>▪ Architectural coatings that exceed the air district's VOC standards shall be used in all new residential and non-residential development.</li> </ul> <p>The Gonzales Community Development Director shall require that these measures are included prior to approval of each tentative map and use permit, and ensure that the requirements are included all contractor work specifications prior to approval of building permits.</p> <p>6-3b To reduce operational, mobile-source criteria air pollutant emissions, the following reduction measures shall be required for all tentative maps and use permits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide a pedestrian access network that internally links all uses and connects to all existing external streets and pedestrian facilities and with all or planned external streets and pedestrian facilities planned for adjacent properties; and</li> <li>▪ Incorporate bike lane street design and common bike parking facilities in non-residential projects and multi-family residential projects, and incorporate land for bike trails.</li> </ul> <p>The Gonzales Community Development Director shall require that these measures are included prior to approval of each tentative map and use permit.</p> <p>Mitigation measures 6-3a and 6-3b would reduce all criteria emissions, but VOC emissions would remain above the VOC threshold of significance by about 25 percent. Therefore, the proposed project would have a significant unavoidable impact on air quality from VOC emissions.</p> <p>To further reduce criteria emissions, with the co-benefit of reducing GHG emissions, the following emissions reductions measures shall be required</p>	<p>Significant and Unavoidable for VOC Emissions and Less than Significant for All Other Criteria Emissions</p>

Impact	Significance Level without Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance Level after Mitigation
		<p>prior to approval of each tentative map and use permit, and required as contractor work specifications where applicable:</p> <p>6-3c Prior to approval of each tentative map and use permit, the project applicant shall consult with Monterey Salinas Transit to identify locations for incorporating transit facilities into the proposed project. Such facilities shall be constructed to Monterey Salinas Transit standards in each location defined by Monterey Salinas Transit.</p> <p>6-3d Traffic calming measures shall be included as part of each tentative map. Such measures may include, but not be limited to: marked crosswalks, count-down signal timers, curb extensions, speed tables, raised crosswalks, raised intersections, median islands, tight corner radii, roundabouts, on-street parking, planter strips with street trees, and chicanes/chokers.</p> <p>6-3e The following features shall be included as part of each tentative map and use permit and identified in contractor work specifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conductive/inductive electric vehicle charging stations and signage prohibiting parking for non-electric vehicles within all multi-family residential and commercial developments;</li> <li>▪ End-of-trip facilities for bicycle riders including showers, secure bicycle lockers, and changing spaces in all new commercial projects;</li> <li>▪ Subsidized/discounted daily or monthly public transit passes;</li> <li>▪ Programmable thermostat timers in all new residential units;</li> <li>▪ Energy efficient appliances, including dishwashers, refrigerators, ceiling fans, and clothes washers in all new residential units; and</li> <li>▪ High-efficiency electric furnaces and water heaters in residential buildings.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Impact 6-4.</b> Operation of Construction Equipment Could Expose Sensitive Receptors to Toxic Air Contaminants</p>	<p>Significant</p>	<p><b>Mitigation Measures 6-4a and 6-4b:</b></p> <p>6-4a Prior to issuance of a building permit for any development located within 500 feet of existing off-site and future on-site residential and school sensitive receptors, the applicant shall prepare a Construction Staging Management Plan to be reviewed and approved by the Gonzales Community Development Director prior to issuance of a</p>	<p>Less than Significant</p>

Impact	Significance Level without Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance Level after Mitigation
		<p>grading permit such development. The plan shall include the following restrictions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Heavy-duty diesel vehicles shall be required to have 2010 or newer model year engines, in compliance with the California Air Resources Board's Truck and Bus Regulation, and shall not be staged within 500 feet of nearest sensitive receptors; and</li> <li>b. Construction equipment and heavy-duty diesel trucks idling shall be avoided, where feasible, and if idling is necessary, it shall not exceed five minutes.</li> </ul> <p>These measures shall be included in all contractor work specifications and construction documents.</p> <p>6-4b The following language shall be included in all construction documents, subject to review and approval by the City Engineer, prior to issuance of a grading permit for all development: "All construction equipment shall be maintained and properly tuned in accordance with manufacturer's specifications and shall be checked by a certified visible emissions evaluator. All non-road diesel construction equipment shall, at a minimum, meet Tier 3 emission standards listed in the Code of Federal Regulations Title 40, Part 89, Subpart B, §89.112. Further, where feasible, construction equipment shall include the use of alternative fuels such as compressed natural gas, propane, electricity or biodiesel."</p>	
<b>Biological Resources</b>			
<p><b>Impact 7-1.</b> Potential Impact on Candidate, Sensitive, or Special-Status Species (Congdon's Tarplant)</p>	<p>Significant</p>	<p><b>Mitigation Measure 7-1.</b> Prior to approval of any tentative map and prior to approval of grading permits for the off-site wastewater main and off-site circulation improvements, a biologist qualified in botany shall conduct a focused survey for Congdon's tarplant in accordance with current CDFW and CNPS rare plant survey protocols (CDFW 2018 and CNPS 2001). The survey shall occur during the peak blooming period for this species to determine its presence or absence (typically August through September). If possible, a known reference population of the target species in the project vicinity shall first be visited to verify that the species is observable, and the focused survey shall be conducted within two weeks of observing the reference population in full bloom.</p>	<p>Less than Significant</p>

Impact	Significance Level without Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance Level after Mitigation
		<p>The biologist shall then prepare a brief report documenting the results of the survey and, if appropriate, propose measures for avoiding or minimizing possible impacts to Congdon's tarplant before and during construction, as included below. If the focused survey concludes the species is not present within the project site boundary, the off-site wastewater main location, and/or off-site circulation improvement locations, or if it is present but impacts to it can be completely avoided, then no mitigation would be required.</p> <p>If the focused surveys identify Congdon's tarplant within the project site boundary, the off-site wastewater main location, and/or off-site circulation improvement locations, and it would be affected by proposed development, then appropriate mitigation shall be developed by the biologist and implemented by the applicant prior to approval of a tentative map(s) for the project site and prior to approval of grading permits for the off-site wastewater main and off-site circulation improvements. Measures may include, but are not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A qualified biologist shall identify an on-site or off-site mitigation area suitable for restoration of habitat and seed transplantation for this annual herb. The property owner shall be responsible for the placement of a conservation easement over the mitigation area and the provision of funds to ensure the restoration of the mitigation area and its preservation in perpetuity.</li> <li>b. Prior to approval of a tentative map(s) for the project site and grading permits for the off-site wastewater main and off-site circulation improvements, a qualified biologist or native plant specialist shall perform seed collection from all special-status plants located within the impact areas and implement seed installation at the mitigation area at the optimal time. Additionally, topsoil from the special-status species occurrence area(s) shall be salvaged (where practical) for use in the mitigation area.</li> <li>c. A maintenance and monitoring program shall be developed by a qualified biologist and established for a minimum of five years after mitigation area installation to verify that restoration activities have been successful. Maintenance activities may include, but not be limited to, watering during the plant establishment period, supplemental seed</li> </ol>	

Impact	Significance Level without Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance Level after Mitigation
		<p>planting as needed, and removal of non-native plants. Monitoring shall include, at a minimum, quarterly monitoring reports for the first year and annual reports for the remaining four years. The performance standard for successful mitigation shall be a minimum 3:1 replacement ratio (i.e., three plants observed in mitigation area for each plant lost) achieved in at least one of the five years of monitoring.</p> <p>The project applicant shall be responsible for implementation of this mitigation measure with oversight by the City of Gonzales Planning Department. Compliance with this measure shall be documented and submitted to the City of Gonzales, prior to approval of grading permits for developing any portion of the project site, and prior to approval of grading permits for the off-site wastewater main and off-site circulation improvements.</p>	
<p><b>Impact 7-3. Potential Impact on Candidate, Sensitive, or Special-Status Species (Burrowing Owl)</b></p>	<p>Significant</p>	<p><b>Mitigation Measures 7-3a and 7-3b:</b></p> <p>7-3a Prior to issuance of a grading permit for development within the footprint of the project site, the off-site wastewater main location, and off-site circulation improvement locations, a qualified biologist, hired at the applicant's expense, shall conduct a training session for all construction personnel. At a minimum, the training shall include a description of special-status species potentially occurring in the project vicinity, including, but not limited to, burrowing owl and nesting birds and raptors. Their habitats, general measures that are being implemented to conserve species as they relate to the project, and the boundaries within which construction activities would occur shall be explained. Informational handouts with photographs clearly illustrating the species' appearances shall be used in the training session. All new construction personnel shall undergo this mandatory environmental awareness training. The applicant shall submit evidence of completion of this training to the City of Gonzales Planning Department, prior to issuance of a grading permit.</p> <p>7-3b To avoid/minimize impacts to burrowing owls potentially occurring on or adjacent to the project site boundary, the off-site wastewater main location, and/or off-site circulation improvement locations, the project applicant shall retain a biologist qualified in ornithology to conduct surveys for burrowing owl. The approved biologist shall conduct a</p>	<p>Less than Significant</p>

Impact	Significance Level without Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance Level after Mitigation																							
		<p>two-visit (i.e., morning and evening) presence/absence survey at areas of suitable habitat on and adjacent to the project site boundary, the off-site wastewater main location, and/or off-site circulation improvement locations no less than 14 days prior to the start of construction or ground disturbance activities. Surveys shall be conducted according to methods described in the Burrowing Owl Survey Protocol and Mitigation Guidelines (California Burrowing Owl Consortium 1993) and the Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (CDFW 2012). The applicant shall submit evidence of completion of the preconstruction survey to the City of Gonzales Planning Department prior to issuance of a grading permit.</p> <p>Because burrowing owls occupy habitat year-round, seasonal no-disturbance buffers, as outlined in the Burrowing Owl Survey Protocol and Mitigation Guidelines (CBOC 1993) and the Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (CDFW 2012), shall be in place around occupied habitat prior to and during any ground disturbance activities. The following table includes buffer areas based on the time of year and level of disturbance (CDFW 2012), unless a qualified biologist approved by the CDFW verifies through non-invasive measures that either: 1) birds have not begun egg laying and incubation; or 2) that juveniles from the occupied burrows are foraging independently and are capable of independent survival.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Location</th> <th rowspan="2">Time of Year</th> <th colspan="3">Level of Disturbance Buffers (meters)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Low</th> <th>Med</th> <th>High</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Nesting Sites</td> <td>April 1 – Aug 15</td> <td>200 m</td> <td>500 m</td> <td>500 m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nesting Sites</td> <td>Aug 16 – Oct 15</td> <td>200 m</td> <td>200 m</td> <td>500 m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nesting Sites</td> <td>Oct 16 – Mar 31</td> <td>50 m</td> <td>100 m</td> <td>500 m</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>If burrowing owl is found and avoidance is not possible, burrow exclusion may be conducted by qualified biologists only during the non-breeding season, before breeding behavior is exhibited and after the burrow is confirmed empty through non-invasive methods, such</p>	Location	Time of Year	Level of Disturbance Buffers (meters)			Low	Med	High	Nesting Sites	April 1 – Aug 15	200 m	500 m	500 m	Nesting Sites	Aug 16 – Oct 15	200 m	200 m	500 m	Nesting Sites	Oct 16 – Mar 31	50 m	100 m	500 m	
Location	Time of Year	Level of Disturbance Buffers (meters)																								
		Low	Med	High																						
Nesting Sites	April 1 – Aug 15	200 m	500 m	500 m																						
Nesting Sites	Aug 16 – Oct 15	200 m	200 m	500 m																						
Nesting Sites	Oct 16 – Mar 31	50 m	100 m	500 m																						

Impact	Significance Level without Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance Level after Mitigation
		<p>as surveillance. Occupied burrows shall be replaced with artificial burrows at a ratio of one collapsed burrow to one constructed artificial burrow (1:1). Evicted burrowing owls may attempt to colonize or re-colonize an area that would be impacted, thus ongoing surveillance during project activities shall be conducted at a rate sufficient to detect burrowing owls if they return.</p> <p>If surveys locate occupied burrows in or near construction areas, consultation with the CDFW shall occur to interpret survey results and develop a project-specific avoidance and minimization approach.</p> <p>The project applicant shall be responsible for implementation of this mitigation measure with oversight by the City of Gonzales Planning Department. Compliance with this measure shall be documented and submitted to the City of Gonzales.</p>	
<p><b>Impact 7-4.</b> Potential Effect on Candidate, Sensitive, or Special-Status Species (Nesting Raptors and Migratory Birds)</p>	<p>Significant</p>	<p><b>Mitigation Measure 7-4.</b> Prior to issuance of a grading permit, to avoid impacts to nesting birds during the nesting season (January 15 through September 15), construction activities within or adjacent to the project site boundary, the off-site wastewater main location, and/or off-site circulation improvement locations that include any vegetation removal or ground disturbance (such as grading or grubbing) shall be conducted between September 16 and January 14, which is outside of the bird nesting season. If construction activities must commence during the bird nesting season, then a qualified biologist shall conduct a pre-construction survey for nesting birds to ensure that no nests would be disturbed during project construction.</p> <p>If construction activities are scheduled during the nesting season (February 15 to August 30 for small bird species such as passerines; January 15 to September 15 for owls; and February 15 to September 15 for other raptors), nesting bird surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist.</p> <p>a. A survey for active nests of such birds shall occur within 10 days prior to start of construction. Appropriate minimum survey radius surrounding the work area is typically 250 feet for passerines, 500 feet for smaller raptors, and 1,000 feet for larger raptors. Surveys shall be conducted at the appropriate times of day to observe nesting activities. The applicant</p>	<p>Less than Significant</p>

Impact	Significance Level without Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance Level after Mitigation
		<p>shall submit evidence of completion of the preconstruction survey to the City of Gonzales Planning Department, prior to issuance of a grading permit.</p> <p>b. If the qualified biologist documents active nests within the project site boundary, the off-site wastewater main location, and/or off-site circulation improvement locations, or in nearby surrounding areas, an appropriate buffer between each nest and active construction shall be established. The buffer shall be clearly marked and maintained until the young have fledged and are foraging independently. Prior to construction, the qualified biologist shall conduct baseline monitoring of each nest to characterize "normal" bird behavior and establish a buffer distance, which allows the birds to exhibit normal behavior. The qualified biologist shall monitor the nesting birds daily during construction activities and increase the buffer if birds show signs of unusual or distressed behavior (e.g., defensive flights and vocalizations, standing up from a brooding position, and/or flying away from the nest). If buffer establishment is not possible, the qualified biologist shall have the authority to cease all construction work in the area until the young have fledged and the nest is no longer active. Documentation shall be prepared by the biologist and submitted to the City of Gonzales Planning Department weekly until the nests are no longer active.</p>	
<p><b>Impact 7-5.</b> Loss of Federally- and State-Protected Waters of the U.S.</p>	<p>Significant</p>	<p><b>Mitigation Measures 7-5a through 7-5c.</b></p> <p>7-5a Prior to issuance of a grading permit for development within the project site boundary, if the aquatic features delineated in Request for New Verification for Vista Lucia in the City of Gonzales, Monterey, California (USACE File #2006-400217S) (Live Oak Associates, Inc. 2021) are determined to be jurisdictional, the applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to obtain a Clean Water Act Section 404 Nationwide Permit. If impacts to jurisdictional non-wetland irrigation ditches do not qualify for a Nationwide Permit, the applicant shall proceed with the qualified biologist in obtaining an Individual Permit from the USACE. The applicant shall also retain a qualified biologist to coordinate with the RWQCB to obtain a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification.</p>	<p>Less than Significant</p>

Impact	Significance Level without Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance Level after Mitigation
		<p>To compensate for temporary and/or permanent impacts to Waters of the U.S. that would be impacted as a result of the proposed project, mitigation shall be provided as required by the regulatory permits. Mitigation would be provided through one of the following mechanisms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. A Wetland Mitigation and Monitoring Plan shall be developed that outlines mitigation and monitoring obligations for temporary impacts to wetlands and other waters as a result of construction activities. The Wetland Mitigation and Monitoring Plan would include thresholds of success, monitoring and reporting requirements, and site-specific plans to compensate for wetland losses resulting from the project. The Wetland Mitigation and Monitoring Plan shall be submitted to the appropriate regulatory agencies for review and approval during the permit application process.</li> <li>ii. To compensate for permanent impacts, the purchase and/or dedication of land to provide suitable wetland restoration or creation shall ensure a no net loss of wetland values or functions. If restoration is available and feasible, a minimum 1:1 impact to mitigation ratio would apply to projects for which mitigation is provided in advance.</li> </ul> <p>The applicant shall comply with terms and conditions of the permits, including measures to protect and maintain water quality, restore work sites, and mitigation to offset temporary and/or permanent wetland impacts. The applicant shall be responsible for implementation of this mitigation measure prior to issuance of a grading permit, with oversight by the City of Gonzales Planning Department.</p> <p>7-5b Prior to initiation of ground disturbance or construction activities to widen Associated Lane, the applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to determine the extent of ditches and potential wetlands regulated by the USACE, RWQCB, and/or CDFW that could be affected. If the USACE claims jurisdiction, the applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to obtain a Clean Water Act Section 404 Nationwide Permit. If the impacts to potential wetlands do not qualify for a Nationwide</p>	

Impact	Significance Level without Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance Level after Mitigation
		<p>Permit, the applicant shall proceed with the qualified biologist in obtaining an Individual Permit from the USACE. The applicant shall then retain a qualified biologist to coordinate with the RWQCB to obtain a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification and with the CDFW to obtain a Streambed Alteration Agreement.</p> <p>To compensate for temporary and/or permanent impacts to wetlands and other Waters of the U.S, mitigation shall be provided as required by the regulatory permits and described in Mitigation Measure 7-5a.</p> <p>The applicant shall determine the extent of jurisdictional features present and comply with terms and conditions of the permits, if applicable. The applicant shall be responsible for implementation of this mitigation measure prior to issuance of a grading permit, with oversight by the City of Gonzales Planning Department.</p> <p>7-5c Prior to initiation of ground disturbance or construction activities to construct the off-site wastewater main, the applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to determine the extent of potential wetlands regulated by the USACE, RWQCB, and/or CDFW that could be affected. If the USACE claims jurisdiction, the applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to obtain a Clean Water Act Section 404 Nationwide Permit. If the impacts to potential wetlands do not qualify for a Nationwide Permit, the applicant shall proceed with the qualified biologist in obtaining an Individual Permit from the USACE. The applicant shall then retain a qualified biologist to coordinate with the RWQCB to obtain a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification and with the CDFW to obtain a Streambed Alteration Agreement.</p> <p>To compensate for temporary and/or permanent impacts to wetlands and other Waters of the U.S. that would be impacted as a result of the proposed project, mitigation shall be provided as required by the regulatory permits and described in Mitigation Measure 7-5a.</p>	
<b>Impact 7-8.</b> Potential Impact on Riparian Habitat or Other Sensitive Natural Communities	Significant	<b>Mitigation Measures 7-5a through 7-5c</b>	Less than Significant

Impact	Significance Level without Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance Level after Mitigation
<b>Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources</b>			
<p><b>Impact 8-1.</b> Potential Adverse Change to Historic Resources and/or Unique Archaeological Resources During Construction</p>	<p>Significant</p>	<p><b>Mitigation Measures 8-1a through 8-1c:</b></p> <p>8-1a (General plan EIR mitigation measure CUL-1). A project-level analysis of historic and unique archaeological resources shall be conducted for all areas in which off-site improvements within the City's jurisdiction are needed to implement the proposed project. These include, but may not be limited to, the off-site wastewater main location and locations off-site circulation improvements. The analysis shall include recommended measures to mitigate any significant impact that such improvements may have on historic and/or unique archaeological resources.</p> <p>8-1b (General plan EIR mitigation measure CUL-2). The City shall require the following as a standard condition of project approval: "if any archaeological resources are discovered during grading or construction, all work shall be immediately halted and appropriate personnel, including a qualified Native American representative, shall be contacted and consulted. Based on these consultations, appropriate measures shall be taken to protect the discovered resources, and only after such measures have been implemented shall grading or construction continue."</p> <p>8-1c If archaeological resources are discovered during soil-disturbing activities, then work should be stopped within 50 meters (165 feet) of the find until a qualified professional archaeologist can evaluate it. If the find is determined to be significant, then appropriate mitigation measures will be formulated and implemented.</p>	<p>Less than Significant</p>
<p><b>Impact 8-2.</b> Potential Adverse Impact on Native American Human Remains During Construction</p>	<p>Significant</p>	<p><b>Mitigation Measure 8-2.</b> If human remains are found during construction activities, there will be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent human remains until the coroner of Monterey County is contacted to determine that no investigation of the cause of death is required.</p> <p>If the coroner determines the remains to be Native American, the coroner will contact the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours. The Native American Heritage Commission will identify the person or persons it believes to be the most likely descendent (MLD) from the</p>	<p>Less than Significant</p>

Impact	Significance Level without Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance Level after Mitigation
		<p>deceased Native American. The MLD may then make recommendations to the landowner or the person responsible for the excavation work, for means of treating or disposing of, with appropriate dignity, the human remains and associated grave goods as provided in California Public Resources Code Section 5097.98.</p> <p>The landowner or their authorized representative will rebury the Native American human remains and associated grave goods, with appropriate dignity, on the property in a location not subject to further disturbance if: a) the Native American Heritage Commission is unable to identify the MLD or the MLD failed to make a recommendation within 48 hours after being allowed access to the site; b) the descendent identified fails to make a recommendation; or c) the landowner or his authorized representative rejects the recommendation of the descendent, and the mediation by the Native American Heritage Commission fails to provide measures acceptable to the landowner.</p> <p>Note: Mitigation measures 8-1b and 8-1c will also serve to reduce the significance of this impact.</p>	
<p><b>Impact 8-3.</b> Potential Adverse Impact on Tribal Cultural Resources During Construction</p>	<p>Significant</p>	<p><b>Mitigation Measure 8-3.</b> The party responsible (e.g., project applicant or City) for ground disturbing activities within the project site or the off-site improvement areas, shall contract with a qualified Native American monitor from the Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation or qualified archaeologist to observe ground disturbing activities within the site and at off-site improvement locations at an hourly rate and scope deemed acceptable by the Gonzales Community Development Director and at rates charged by similarly qualified archaeologists.</p> <p>The timing and frequency of monitoring shall be based on the timing and duration of ground disturbing activities (i.e., infrastructure trenching, grading, foundation excavation) that could affect undiscovered tribal cultural resources. Monitoring in any area shall be discontinued when it becomes evident to the tribal monitor/archaeologist that no additional monitoring of ground disturbing activities is necessary. If a significant tribal cultural feature or deposit is discovered by the tribal monitor/archaeologist, earth moving activities shall be temporarily halted for the purpose of identifying the deposit. If deemed necessary by the tribal monitor/archaeologist, the feature or deposit shall be sampled or salvaged</p>	<p>Less than Significant</p>

Impact	Significance Level without Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance Level after Mitigation
		according to a mitigation and data recovery plan developed by the Community Development Director in consultation with the tribal monitor/archaeologist.	
<b>Greenhouse Gases</b>			
<b>Impact 10-1.</b> Generation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Significant	<p><b>Mitigation Measure 10-1.</b> To ensure project consistency with Gonzales Climate Action Plan: 2018 Update GHG reduction measure P-1.3 regarding urban forests, applicants for individual tentative maps that include single-family homes shall demonstrate to the City that a minimum of three trees will be planted for every single-family home proposed as part of the tentative map project, with trees planted either within the tentative map boundary and/or elsewhere within the specific plan boundary. The measure shall also be included as a contractor work specification. The requirement shall be verified by the Community Development Director prior to approval of each individual tentative map in which single-family homes are proposed.</p> <p><b>Mitigation Measure 10-2.</b> Applicants for all future individual projects shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Design such projects to be all electric. No permanent natural gas infrastructure shall be permitted as a source of energy supply; and</li> <li>b. Incorporate transportation electrification-supporting site development design and infrastructure (e.g., electric vehicle support infrastructure) consistent with the Tier 2 voluntary electric vehicle standards in the California Green Building Standards Code, Title 24, in effect at the time building permits are requested from the City of Gonzales.</li> </ul> <p>All individual project applications (e.g., tentative maps, use permits, etc.) shall be reviewed by the City of Gonzales Building Official for consistency with these requirements prior to issuance of building permits.</p>	Less than Significant
<b>Impact 10-2.</b> Conflict with the Gonzales Climate Action Plan: 2018 Update	Significant	<b>Mitigation Measures 10-1 and 10-2</b>	Less than Significant

Impact	Significance Level without Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance Level after Mitigation
<b>Hazards and Hazardous Materials</b>			
<b>Impact 11-2.</b> Hazard to the Public or the Environment from Hazardous Materials Conditions within the Project Site	Significant	<b>Mitigation Measure 11-2.</b> The applicant shall be responsible for remediating all project site hazardous materials conditions consistent with direction provided in the Site Mitigation Plan, Vista Lucia (McCloskey Consultants 2022). All hazardous materials conditions within the boundaries of individual tentative maps, including removal of abandoned underground storage tanks, shall be remediated prior to approval of grading permits for development pursuant to the subject tentative map(s). Grading permits shall not be issued until such time as the applicant submits a remediation completion report for the subject tentative map project for review and approval of the Public Works Director and an underground storage tank closure permit is obtained from the Monterey County Environmental Health Department.	Less than Significant
<b>Noise</b>			
<b>Impact 13-1.</b> Construction Activities Would Cause a Substantial Temporary Noise Increase	Significant	<b>Mitigation Measure 13-1.</b> The following best management practices shall be applied during periods of project construction. The management practices shall be included in all construction documents, subject to review and approval by City Engineer, prior to issuance of a demolition or grading permit: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Per the City of Gonzales Municipal Code, construction activities shall not occur outside the hours of 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM;</li> <li>b. All construction equipment shall be properly maintained and muffled as to minimize noise generation at the source;</li> <li>c. Noise-producing equipment shall not be operating, running, or idling while not in immediate use;</li> <li>d. All noise-producing construction equipment shall be located and operated, to the extent possible, at the greatest possible distance from any noise-sensitive land uses;</li> <li>e. Locate construction staging areas, to the extent possible, at the greatest possible distances from any noise-sensitive land uses; and</li> <li>f. Signs shall be posted at the construction site and near adjacent sensitive receptors displaying hours of construction activities and</li> </ol>	Less than Significant

Impact	Significance Level without Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance Level after Mitigation
		<p>providing the contact phone number of a noise disturbance coordinator to be identified by the construction contractor. The coordinator shall be responsible for addressing construction noise issues that may be raised by residents or other affected parties. Concerns that cannot be resolved by the coordinator may then be raised with the Community Development Director, who has final authority to resolve such concerns.</p>	
<p><b>Impact 13.3.</b> Proposed Commercial Uses Could Cause a Permanent Noise Increase at On-Site Sensitive Receptors</p>	<p>Significant</p>	<p><b>Mitigation Measure 13-3.</b> Applicants proposing commercial uses shall prepare an acoustical analysis to define the site-specific potential impacts of stationary commercial noise sources. The potential for these noise sources uses to exceed applicable City noise standards at adjacent noise sensitive uses shall be identified. If significant impacts are identified, mitigation measures shall be identified to reduce impacts to less than significant by ensuring compliance with the City's noise standards. Mitigation could include, but may not be limited to site design to separate commercial uses from adjacent sensitive residential uses, building setbacks, noise equipment enclosures, etc. The acoustical analyses shall be subject to review and approval of the Community Development Director prior to approval of entitlements for future commercial projects.</p>	<p>Less than Significant</p>
<p><b>Impact 13-4.</b> Noise from Planned Schools Could Exceed Standards at On-Site Sensitive Receptors</p>	<p>Significant</p>	<p><b>Mitigation Measure 13-4a through 13-4c:</b></p> <p>13-4a The Gonzales Unified School District should locate trash compactors a minimum of 20 feet from outdoor common use areas and individual patios or balconies for multifamily homes, or backyards of single-family homes. Locate any ground-level HVAC unit at distance of greater than 100 feet from the outdoor common use areas and individual patios or balconies for multi-family homes, or backyards of single-family homes or provide an adequate equipment enclosure to reduce noise levels to below the City's noise level standard.</p> <p>13-4b The Gonzales Unified School District should locate bus loading areas, if planned, at a distance of 90 feet or greater from outdoor activity areas of proposed residential uses (outdoor common use areas and individual patios and balconies for multi-family homes and backyards of single-family homes).</p>	<p>Less than Significant</p>

Impact	Significance Level without Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance Level after Mitigation
		13-4c The Gonzales Unified School District should locate school bells and alarms to ensure that noise levels at outdoor activity areas of proposed residential uses (outdoor common use areas and individual patios and balconies for multi-family homes and backyards of single-family homes) do not exceed the applicable City of Gonzales stationary noise standard. This can be achieved through proper placement and/or by reducing volume levels.	
<b>Transportation</b>			
<b>Impact 14-1.</b> Conflict with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 by Exceeding the Applicable Threshold for VMT	Planned Residential Use – Significant	<b>Mitigation Measures 6b through 6e</b>	Significant and Unavoidable
<b>Aesthetics</b>			
<b>Impact 18-1.</b> Contribution to Degradation of Visual Character	Significant	<b>Mitigation Measure 18-1.</b> (General plan EIR mitigation measure AES-2). Building exteriors with large expanses of glass or other reflective material that could become a significant source of glare shall be prohibited for future development within the specific plan boundary. The Community Development Direction shall ensure that this limitation is enforced through the development review process for individual residential and non-residential projects prior to approving associated building permits.	
<b>Cumulative Impacts</b>			
<b>Impact 20-1.</b> Cumulative Traffic Noise Impacts on Sensitive Residential and School Receptors Along Associated Lane (Proposed Vista Lucia Parkway)	Significant	<b>Mitigation Measure 20-1.</b> The applicant shall locate outdoor activity areas of proposed residential uses (outdoor common use areas and individual patios and balconies for multi-family homes and backyards of single-family homes) outside the cumulative 60 dB Ldn traffic noise contour along Associated Lane (Vista Lucia Parkway). If noise sensitive residential uses are proposed within the 65 dB Ldn noise contour, the applicant shall prepare a traffic noise mitigation plan which demonstrates how traffic noise exposure at these uses will be reduced to 59 dB Ldn or lower. Mitigation could include building orientation, sound walls, or other feasible design or improvements options. The mitigation plan shall be subject to review and approval of the Gonzales Community Development Director for	Less than Significant

Impact	Significance Level without Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance Level after Mitigation
		<p>conformance with these noise exposure performance standards prior to approval of a future specific plan.</p> <p><b>Mitigation Measure 20-2.</b> As part of its future design of the planned elementary school that would front on Associated Lane, the Gonzales Unified School District should locate outdoor activity areas outside the cumulative 60 dB Ldn traffic noise contour along Associated Lane (Vista Lucia Parkway). If outdoor activity areas are proposed within the 65 dB Ldn noise contour, the school district should prepare a traffic noise mitigation plan which demonstrates how traffic noise exposure will be reduced to 59 dB Ldn or lower. Mitigation could include building orientation, sound walls, or other feasible design or improvements options.</p>	

SOURCE: EMC Planning Group 2024

# 3.0 Environmental Setting

## 3.1 Project Site Setting

### Project Location

The Vista Lucia project site is located in unincorporated Monterey County on approximately 768 acres, immediately east of the existing Gonzales city limits. [Figure 3-1, Location Map](#), presents the regional location of the project site. For reference to compass directions used in this EIR, the project boundary along Fanoe Road is assumed to be west, the project site boundary along Associated Lane is assumed to be north, the project boundary along Iverson Road is east, and the proposed Fremont Peak Parkway boundary is to the south.

### Existing Site Conditions

#### Project Site

The project site is bound by Fanoe Road to the west, Associated Lane to the north, Iverson Road to the east, and a large agricultural property to the south. The project site is comprised almost entirely of agricultural land that is currently in production. Existing agricultural related improvements include ancillary agricultural support structures, irrigation ditches, ponds and unimproved roadways. A single-family home is located just inside the southern boundary of the project site. [Figure 3-2, Aerial Photograph](#), presents the project site boundary, existing site features, and surrounding land uses. [Figure 3-3, Project Site Photos](#), includes representative images of project site conditions.

The site ranges in elevation from approximately 125 feet in the northwest corner to 250 feet in the southeast corner.

These existing site conditions represent the baseline conditions for assessing environmental impacts of the proposed project. More information about existing improvements is provided in the individual environmental topic sections of this EIR when discussion of the improvements is germane to the analyses of related environmental effects.

#### Off-Site Improvements

As is described in Section 4.0, Project Description, off-site infrastructure improvements are needed to serve the proposed project, while others are needed to serve cumulative development within the SOI, including the proposed project. Several of the improvements will be initiated as separate

projects by the City and undergo separate CEQA review by the City. For those whose impacts are evaluated in this EIR, brief descriptions of existing conditions in their respective locations are provided in the individual environmental topic sections.

Two off-site circulation improvements would be required that are assumed to be part of the project description. These include widening existing roads and constructing a new road segment. The environmental setting in these locations is discussed in individual topics sections of the EIR where potential environmental impacts of constructing the improvements are evaluated.

## Surrounding Land Use and Vicinity Setting

### Surrounding Land Uses

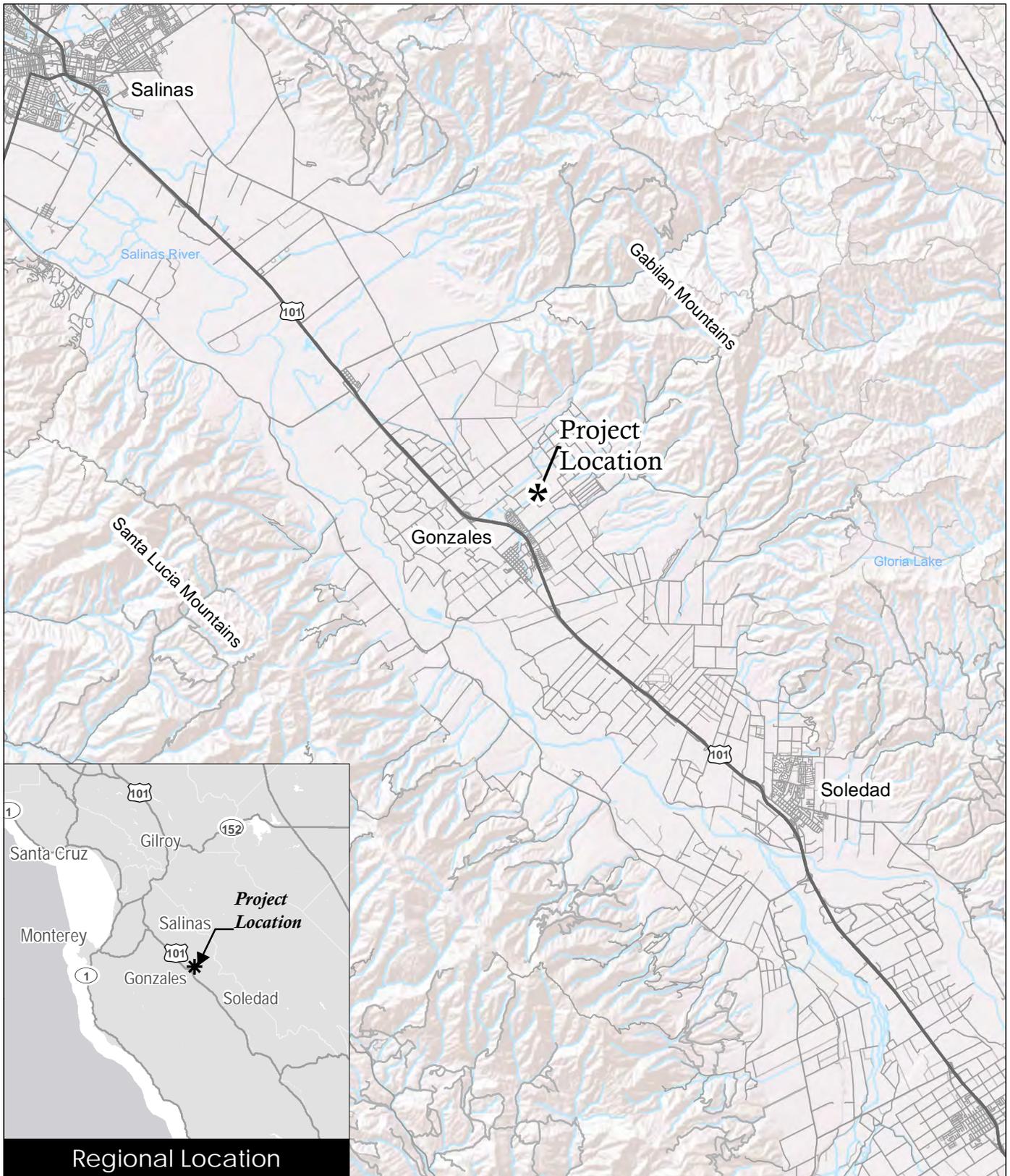
With the exception of the residential subdivision immediately to the west, the project site is bordered by farmland in unincorporated Monterey County. Two single-family subdivisions within the city limits, Canyon Creek and Arroyo Estates, are located to the west. Adjacent land to the north, south, and east is in agricultural use. As designated on the Gonzales general plan land use map, a Permanent Agricultural Edge is located along the northern border of the project site across from Associated Lane. The property to the south is in agricultural use. It is within the City's sphere of influence (SOI) and designated in the general plan as Parks and Open Space, Community Commercial Mixed Use, and Neighborhood. Land to the northwest is also in active agricultural use. Two rural residences are located immediately adjacent to a portion of the western site boundary. Refer to [Figure 3-2, Aerial Photograph](#) for reference to features and uses adjacent to the project site.

### Vicinity Setting

The project site lies at the transition between developed areas within the city limits and the broad expanse of agricultural land to the north, east, and south. To the east, agricultural land transitions to rural hillsides and the Gabilan Range. Downtown Gonzales is located approximately 1.5 miles to the southwest. Agricultural land to the west of the site and U.S. Highway 101 transitions to rural hillsides of the Santa Lucia Mountains.

## 3.2 Regional Setting

Gonzales is located in the central part of the Salinas Valley approximately 30 miles south of Salinas on U.S. Highway 101 and seven miles north of Soledad. Lands surrounding the city are primarily in agriculture use, save for associated rural residences and agricultural support structures and infrastructure. East of Gonzales, land slopes gently toward the foothills of the Gabilan Range. To the south, topography is relatively level and agricultural uses dominate. To the west, topography is also level, with the Salinas River and Santa Lucia Mountains being the dominant natural features. To the north and south of the city limits, large-scale field crop farms are predominant.



Source: Esri 2015



Figure 3-1  
**Location Map**  
 Vista Lucia Project EIR

*This side intentionally left blank.*



 Project Site

Source: Google Earth 2018

Figure 3-2  
Aerial Photograph

*This side intentionally left blank.*



① Looking east from Associated Lane with agricultural pond in foreground



② Looking south along Fanoie Rd. with project site on left and existing adjacent residential neighborhood to the right



③ On-site maintenance building and equipment near center of project site



④ Project Site

Source: Google Earth 2018  
Photographs: EMC Planning Group 2020



④ Looking southeast along Iverson Rd.



⑤ Looking northwest across project site



⑥ Looking northeast across project site with existing on-site rural residence to the right

*This side intentionally left blank.*

There are a limited number of water features in the area. The most prominent is the Salinas River to the west. Johnson Canyon Creek runs to the south of the boundary of the project site in the form of a canal. A complex network of irrigation ditches is located throughout the surrounding agricultural areas. The Gonzales Slough is located to the west of the project site.

### 3.3 City and County General Plan Land Use and Growth Planning

The proposed project involves land use and boundary changes that must be considered by the City, County and LAFCO. Therefore, it is important to understand the current land use and jurisdictional boundary context. This context is summarized below for each jurisdiction.

#### City Boundaries and General Plan City Limits and Sphere of Influence

The project site is one of several locations Gonzales identified as a future development area in the general plan. Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments population projections at that time showed “Gonzales growing to 23,418 people in the year 2035, an increase of about 14,393 over the current 2009 population of 9,025 persons” (City of Gonzales 2018, p. II-18). To accommodate the anticipated growth, the City set aside approximately 1,500 acres of additional land, including the project site, for new growth that would accommodate a total population of about 38,000.

The project site is outside the existing city limit, but inside the SOI, which is a planning boundary outside of a city's legal boundary (such as the city limit line) that designates the city's probable future boundary and service area. In May 2014, LAFCO approved Gonzales' request to include the project site as well as other properties in the SOI. At that time, LAFCO acknowledged the need to annex property within the new SOI boundary to meet projected demand for housing.

The broader Gonzales planning area includes all land within the city limits and the SOI, plus additional land that has a relationship to Gonzales' long-term planning, but is not intended for urban development. The existing city limits, SOI, and planning area are shown in [Figure 3-4, Planning Boundaries](#).

#### General Plan Land Use

[Figure 3-5, General Plan Land Use Diagram](#), shows land use designations for land within the City's planning area, including the project site. [Figure 3-6, Project Site General Plan Land Use](#), shows land use designations for the project site at a higher level of detail as illustrated in the general plan.

The land use designations for the site are as follows:

- Neighborhood Residential;
- Neighborhood Commercial Mixed Use;

- Public/Quasi-Public;
- Parks and Open Space; and
- Agricultural Buffer.

The neighborhood residential designation occurs only within new growth areas including the project site. It allows a full range of housing types at densities ranging from two units per acre to of 24 units per acre provided the average within a neighborhood is between seven and nine units per gross acre. The neighborhood commercial mixed-use designation allows new commercial development appropriately scaled to serve one or two neighborhoods. It enables constructing residential uses above or adjacent to commercial uses Individual commercial uses are intended to be small scale, generally less than 5,000 square feet, with an overall floor-to-area ratio of no more than 1.0.

The parks and open space designation allows active and passive park, recreation, and open space uses. The public/quasi-public designation allows public, non-profit and institutional uses. The agricultural buffer designation denotes locations where permanent and temporary buffers are required to separate urban uses from adjacent agricultural uses.

The general plan land uses are the basis for land uses shown in the applicant’s conceptual land use plan described in Section 4.0, Project Description.

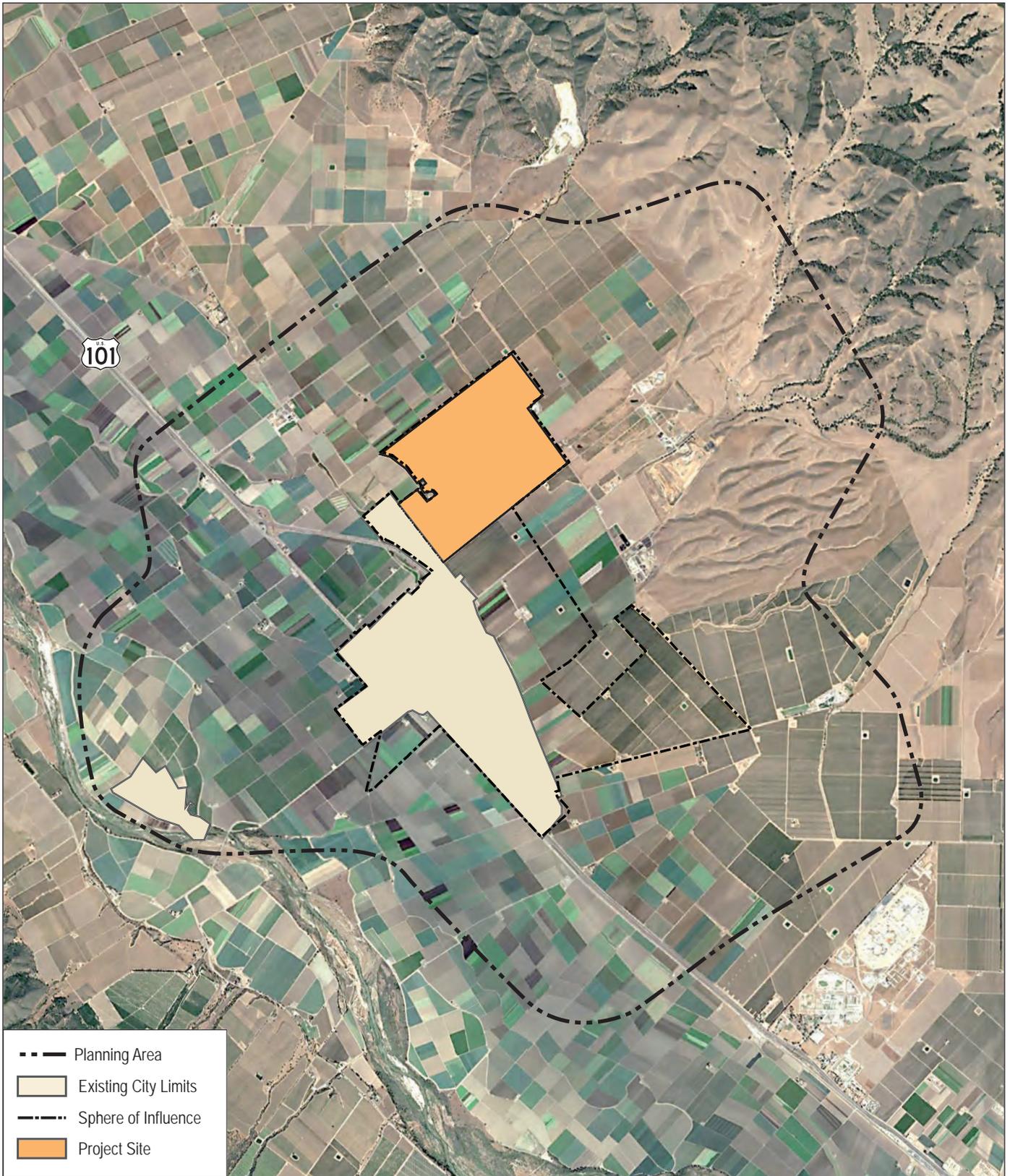
## Monterey County General Plan Land Use

This project site is designated Farmlands 40-Acre Minimum on the Monterey County Central Salinas Valley Land Use Plan.

## City of Gonzales/County of Monterey Memorandum of Agreement

In 2014, the City and the County entered into a memorandum of agreement entitled, “Memorandum of Agreement Between the City of Gonzales and the County of Monterey Regarding Working Cooperatively on Common Planning, Growth and Development Issues in Order to be as Efficient as Possible in the Implementation of Their Respective General Plans” (City of Gonzales and County of Monterey 2014) (MOA). The document was negotiated as a precursor to LAFCO’s consideration of Gonzales’ 2014 request to amend its SOI, in part to expand the SOI to include the project site.

The MOA describes the roles and responsibilities of both parties for managing urban expansion into areas of unincorporated agricultural land adjacent to the city limits. The MOA is particularly focused on agreements regarding converting, conserving and protecting agricultural land as Gonzales grows over time consistent with its general plan. The MOA reiterates Gonzales’ commitments to reducing impacts on agricultural land based on the policies and actions in its general plan, and reiterates related County general plan policies and other commitments for the County to do the same.



Source: City of Gonzales 2018, Google Earth 2018

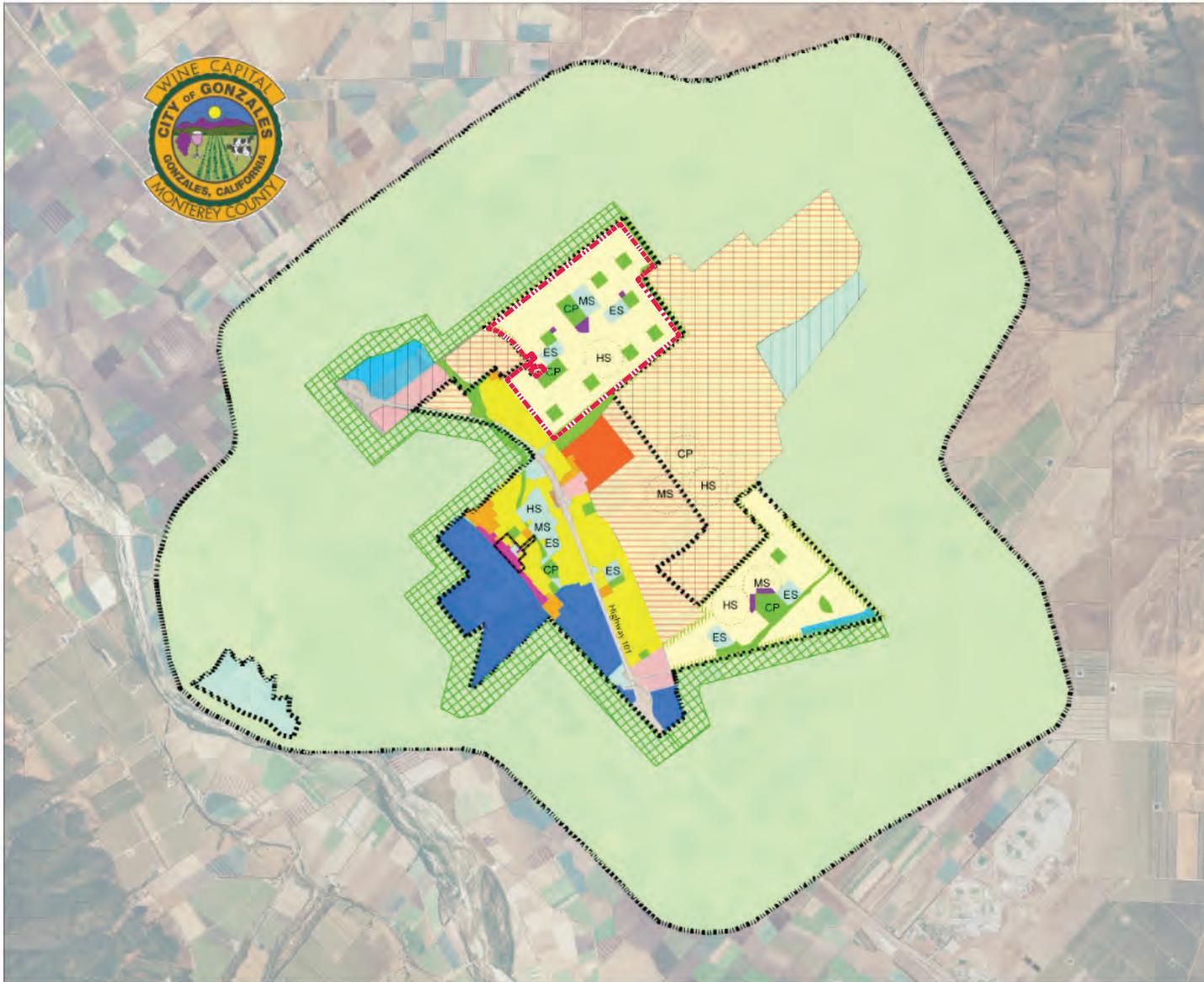
Figure 3-4

# Planning Boundaries

Vista Lucia Project EIR



*This side intentionally left blank.*



# CITY OF GONZALES

2010 GENERAL PLAN  
(Revised February 2016)

## Land Use Diagram

### Legend

- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Neighborhood Residential
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Neighborhood
- Community Commercial Mixed Use
- Highway Commercial
- Industrial/Manufacturing
- Light Industrial
- Public/Quasi Public
- Parks and Open Space
- Agriculture
- Historic District
- Urban Reserve Overlay
- Urban Growth Boundary/Sphere of Influence
- Planning Area Boundary
- Agricultural Buffer
- Permanent Agricultural Edge
- HS High School\*
- MS Middle School\*
- ES Elementary School\*
- CP Community Park\*

Note: \*The precise location, dimensions, and features of community parks and school sites will be determined during the Specific Plan process. Facilities planning studies to be undertaken by the Gonzales Unified School District, in consultation with the City of Gonzales, will determine the need for all, some, or none of the school sites shown on this map.

Project Site

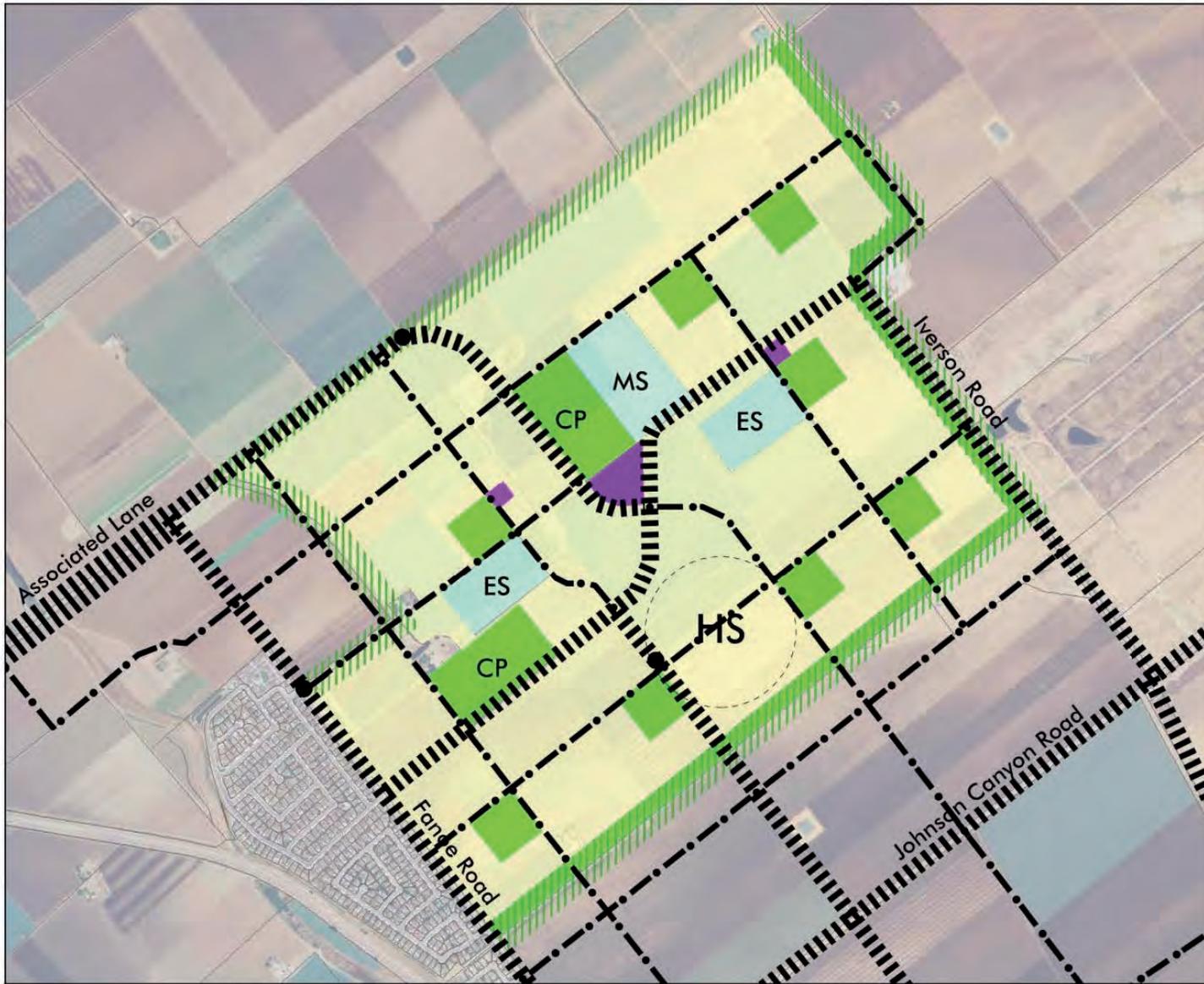


Source: City of Gonzales General Plan 2018



Figure 3-5  
General Plan Land Use Diagram

*This side intentionally left blank.*



**CITY OF GONZALES**

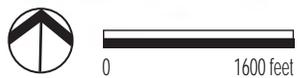
2010 GENERAL PLAN

**Land Use Diagram  
Inset #2**

**Legend**

- Neighborhood Residential
- Neighborhood Commercial Mixed Use
- Public/Quasi Public
- Parks and Open Space
- Agricultural Buffer
- Major Arterial Streets
- Minor Arterial Streets
- Collector Streets
- HS High School
- MS Middle School
- ES Elementary School
- CP Community Park

Note: The precise location, dimensions, and features of all streets, parks, drainage corridors, agricultural buffers, and school sites will be determined during the Specific Plan process. Facilities planning studies to be undertaken by the Gonzales Unified School District, in consultation with the City of Gonzales, will determine the need for all, some, or none of the school sites shown on this inset map. Individual Specific Plan land use and zoning maps will govern final land uses and their arrangement.



Source: City of Gonzales General Plan 2018

Figure 3-6  
Project Site General Plan Land Use

*This side intentionally left blank.*

As part of the MOA, the City agreed to a number of actions that pertain directly or indirectly to the proposed project. These include, but are not limited to:

- limit future development within its urban growth boundary/proposed SOI (the boundary of the SOI proposed in 2014 and subsequently approved by LAFCO);
- establish permanent agricultural edges along defined boundaries between incorporated areas and unincorporated agricultural areas;
- utilize agricultural buffers to address compatibility between urban development and agricultural uses;
- work with the County of Monterey, LAFCO and other cities in the Salinas Valley to develop a “Valley-wide Agricultural Land Mitigation Program” and a “Valley-wide Agricultural Buffer Program”;
- maintain agriculture by conserving and protecting agricultural lands within the planning area and maintain agricultural production until the time the land is converted to urban use;
- continue to implement policies and implementing actions in the Gonzales general plan that directly and indirectly conserve and protect agricultural land; and
- implement an Agricultural Land Conservation Program which requires landowners/developers proposing to develop land within the SOI that is designated Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance to implement one or more agricultural land conservation actions. The possible actions include:
  - purchase/acquire agricultural easements at a 1:1 ratio and dedicate the easement to an agricultural land trust or other qualifying entity;
  - purchase agricultural banked mitigation credits at a 1:1 ratio from a qualifying entity;
  - pay an in-lieu mitigation fee; and/or
  - implement other innovative approaches that result in agricultural land preservation within areas targeted by Gonzales.

Per Section 6.3.7 of the MOA, the first priority use of agricultural mitigation fees is for acquiring permanent conservation easements.

The MOA provides guidance on how the City is to demonstrate that future development within the annexation area will implement actions for agricultural land conservation described in the MOA. Section 4.0, Project Description, includes information on the applicant’s proposed land use plan and features of it that address several of the above-noted actions. Section 6.0, Agricultural Resources, includes analysis of the foreseeable impacts of the proposed project on agricultural land and identifies mitigation requirements that reflect guidance in the MOA. Please refer to these two sections for more information.

## 3.4 Plan Consistency

This section includes evaluations of project consistency with Gonzales general plan policies that serve as mitigation for environmental effects and with applicable LAFCO policies.

Project consistency with other relevant plans such as the 2012-2015 Air Quality Management Plan, the Gonzales Climate Action Plan 2018 Update, the Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin, and the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan is evaluated in environmental topic-specific sections of this EIR.

### Consistency with the City of Gonzales General Plan

Consistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15125(d), this general plan consistency analysis focuses on general plan policies and implementing actions which function to avoid or mitigate environmental effects of development. This focus here is narrower than the larger question of whether the proposed project is consistent with a broader range of general plan policies. Consistency with broader general plan policies is a determination to be made by the City of Gonzales as part of its decision-making process to approve or deny the project.

The potential environmental effects of the project are based primarily on information contained in the specific plan and on information about the associated off-site improvements needed for the project. The specific plan land use plan shows the types and organization of planned land uses. That plan and the projected development capacity it accommodates are described and illustrated in Section 4.0, Project Description.

A range of general plan policies that mitigate environmental effects directly and indirectly reiterate the need for new development to be consistent with regulatory requirements.

General plan policies that mitigate environmental effects of development for which consistency can be determined as part of this EIR are listed in [Table 3-1, Gonzales General Plan Policy Consistency Review](#). A consistency determination and brief discussion of the basis for the consistency determination are also included. No project inconsistencies with applicable general plan policies were identified.

### Consistency with LAFCO Reorganization Proposal Policies

The proposed project will be subject to LAFCO review and approval because it includes changes of organization – annexation and detachments from districts. Please refer to Section 4.2, Project Characteristics, for more information.

As part of its deliberations on the proposal for reorganization (two or more changes of organization), LAFCO will evaluate the consistency of the proposal with its *Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) of Monterey County – Policies and Procedures Relating to Spheres of Influence and Changes of Organization and Reorganization* (Monterey County Local Agency Formation Commission 2020).

**Table 3-1 Gonzales General Plan Policy Consistency Review**

General Plan Policies	Proposed Project	Discussion
<b>LAND USE</b>		
<p><b>Policy LU-1.1 Jobs/Housing Balance.</b> Promote a balance between housing growth and job growth. Encourage the provision of housing at a pace that keeps up with job growth in the City. Conversely, encourage the creation of jobs at a pace that keeps up with housing growth in the City</p>	Consistent	<p>The specific plan land use plan is consistent with the land use vision for the project site as defined in the general plan. The mix of proposed housing and employment is thus consistent with the overall general plan goal of promoting a jobs/housing balance in the city.</p>
<p><b>Policy LU-1.3.</b> Submit Sphere of Influence and annexation requests to LAFCO only for lands within the Urban Growth Boundary depicted on the Land Use Diagram. In addition, submit applications as may be required to facilitate the expansion of the wastewater treatment facility located on Gonzales River Road or other essential public utilities.</p>	Consistent	<p>The project site is located within the Urban Growth Boundary and within the SOI. If the City Council approves the proposed annexation, the City staff will prepare and submit a reorganization application to be considered by LAFCO. See Section 4.0, Project Description.</p>
<p><b>Policy LU-1.4 City-Centered Growth.</b> Support the concept of "City-Centered Growth" in the Salinas Valley. This concept concentrates urban uses in and around South County cities and conserves the remainder of the valley for agriculture.</p>	Consistent	<p>The project site is adjacent to the Gonzales city limits and is within the SOI. The Gonzales General Plan designates the project site for urban uses. The annexation and proposed development would support locating new urban growth in and around existing cities. See Section 4.0, Project Description.</p>
<p><b>Policy LU- 2.1 Specific Plans Required in General Plan Growth Area.</b> New development outside of the City's incorporated area as of 2008 shall be organized through the use of Specific Plans that contain self-contained neighborhoods with the uses prescribed by the applicable land use designations shown in the Land Use Diagram.</p>	Consistent	<p>The proposed specific plan was prepared to meet this general plan policy.</p>
<p><b>Policy LU-6.1 Neighborhoods as "Building Blocks".</b> Employ a neighborhood-based growth strategy whereby new pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods, complete with schools, park and recreation facilities, a wide range of housing types, and neighborhood-serving commercial service form the basic planning unit or "building block" for new residential growth.</p>	Consistent	<p>The proposed specific plan includes all of the diverse land use types referenced in the policy. See Section 4.0, Project Description.</p>
<p><b>Policy LU-6.2 Utilize Land Efficiently.</b> Utilize land efficiently to maintain a compact development pattern, enhance walkability, and</p>	Consistent	<p>The specific plan substantially conforms with the uses identified in general plan Figure II-6, Land Use Diagram Inset #2 (Figure 3.6, Project Site General Plan Land Use, in this EIR. The general plan land use concept implements policy LU-6.2. The proposed project phasing</p>

General Plan Policies	Proposed Project	Discussion
limit farmland conversion in areas outside the identified General Plan growth area.		plan shows development proceeding from the existing city limit line on west to the east over time. The project site is within the identified General Plan growth area. Refer to Section 4.0, Project Description.
<b>Policy LU-9.1 Location and Design of Public Uses.</b> Developers of Specific Plans shall coordinate closely with the Gonzales Unified School District and with the City of Gonzales to ensure that new school sites are fully compatible with the plans and concerns of both agencies. New public uses shall be located and designed to contribute to the life and function of neighborhood and community centers.	Consistent	The applicant and the City have consulted the school district regarding the location and function of proposed school sites.
<b>CIRCULATION</b>		
<b>Policy CIR-1.1 Interconnected and Efficient Streets.</b> Develop and maintain an interconnected and efficient system of arterial, collector, and local streets consistent with the policies and diagrams of the Circulation Element to accommodate the movement of people and vehicles and provide access within Gonzales. Circulation patterns in the new growth area should be inter-connected and provide multiple route choices for residents.	Consistent	Circulation planning in the specific plan is consistent with the 2018 <i>City of Gonzales Sphere of Influence Circulation Study, Transportation Impact Analysis Final Report</i> . The transportation impact analysis describes the required street network, roadway classifications, street pattern design and other improvements and design features needed in the SOI. Roadways are located and designed to maintain a Level of Service C with buildout of the SOI, including the Vista Lucia site. LOS C is the City's acceptable roadway performance standard per general plan implementing action CIR-1.1.1. Improvements made by individual projects consistent with the SOI study would, therefore, be consistent with general plan circulation policies pertaining to the performance and design of the roadway network. The specific plan includes roadway infrastructure plans, roadway classifications, and roadway standards that have been reviewed by the City for consistency with City standards and the SOI transportation impact analysis.  Improvements to the U.S. Highway 101/North Alta Street interchange will be needed to accommodate traffic from the proposed project and additional future development within the SOI. The City has prepared preliminary design plans for Caltrans' consideration and will work with Caltrans to facilitate Caltrans' preliminary study report and related environmental review process. Improvements must be completed commensurate with development of the project site to ensure Caltrans' operational requirements for the interchange are met
<b>Policy CIR-2.2 Connectivity between Neighborhoods.</b> Require a high level of connectivity between neighborhoods to provide numerous route choices that help distribute traffic onto more numerous smaller street facilities and lessen the need for large street facilities.	Consistent	See the discussion for Policy CIR-1.1 above.  Specific plan Figure 3-5, Vehicular Circulation Network and Hierarchy of Street Types, shows how individual neighborhoods would be connected by roadways of varying classifications. The connectivity plan has been reviewed by City staff and found to be consistent with the SOI transportation impact analysis.

General Plan Policies	Proposed Project	Discussion
<p><b>Policy CIR-3.1 Financing Capital Improvements.</b> Allocate the cost of transportation improvements so that those who benefit pay accordingly. In developing areas where assessment district financing is used, tax assessments should be based on the level of benefit provided.</p>	Consistent	<p>The City will require the applicant to provide a fair share of the cost of making circulation improvements through a combination of direct funding and constructing improvements, providing fair share funding for improvements, and paying the City's traffic impact fees.</p>
<p><b>Policy CIR-5.1 Balance Need for Emergency Access with Safe Design.</b> Design new streets to balance the need for emergency access with the need to design safe streets that discourage speeding traffic.</p>	Consistent	<p>Planned roadways are designed consistent with standards acceptable to the City. The specific plan identifies traffic calming features that would be incorporated into roadway designs, including Arterial A. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are shown in the proposed roadway cross-sections/standards included in the specific plan.</p>
<p><b>Policy CIR-7.1 Reduce Dependence on the Single Passenger Vehicle.</b> Require new development to address global warming through the design of transportation/circulation systems that promote sustainable alternatives to single passenger vehicles and reduce the rate of energy consumption and air pollution.</p>	Consistent	<p>The specific plan includes an extensive active transportation network to promote a mode shift from passenger vehicles to pedestrian and bicycle travel modes. Developers will be required to consult with Monterey-Salinas Transit to identify where and when new bus facilities should be constructed and how transit routes can be expanded to provide an option to passenger vehicle travel.</p>
<p><b>Policy CIR-8.1 Increase Opportunities for Biking and Walking.</b> Require new development to address global warming through the design of transportation/circulation systems that facilitate and encourage bicycle and pedestrian travel; promote personal health, recreation, and enjoyment; and reduce the rate of energy consumption and air pollution.</p>	Consistent	<p>See the discussion for Policy CIR-7.1 above.</p>
<p><b>HOUSING (DRAFT 2023-2031 6TH CYCLE HOUSING ELEMENT)</b></p>		
<p><b>Policy HE-1.1 Adequate Sites.</b> Maintain adequate sites for new housing development for all economic sectors to support the Regional Housing Needs Allocation. [Source: 2015-2023 Gonzales Housing Element, Policy HE-1.1, modified]</p>	Consistent	<p>The proposed project has been planned in accordance with the Gonzales 2010 General Plan and is comprised of two neighborhoods. The Santa Lucia Neighborhood includes up to 1,927 single family and multifamily residential units and the Gabilan Neighborhood includes up to 1,571 single family and multi-family residential units. The 6th Cycle Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan 2023-2031 prepared by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments in 2022, requires that the City plan for constructing of 173 dwelling units for very low-income households, 115 dwelling units for low-income households, 321 dwelling units for moderate income households, and 657 dwelling units for above moderate-income households. The first tentative map for development of 1,247 dwelling units has been submitted to the City as described in this EIR. Based on current housing affordability guidelines and current lot configurations, up to 455 or approximately 37 percent of the dwelling units are anticipated to be "for rent" attached units, which would serve the very low- and low-income communities. Up to 296 or approximately 24 percent are anticipated to be "for sale" or "for rent" detached units on small lots, which would serve the moderate and</p>

General Plan Policies	Proposed Project	Discussion
		<p>above-moderate income communities. A total of to 751 or approximately 60 percent of the total dwelling units would be available as affordable housing.</p> <p>Additional tentative maps are anticipated in the future depending on market conditions. Development per these future maps may occur beyond the horizon of the present 6th cycle period. Such development will continue to facilitate the City's ability to meet its regional housing needs obligations.</p>
<p><b>Policy HE-1.3 Encourage a Mix of Housing Types.</b> Encourage the development of a mix of housing types to meet the diverse housing needs of Gonzales residents. [Source: 2015-2023 Gonzales Housing Element, Policy HE-5.1, modified]</p>	<p>Consistent</p>	<p>The specific plan includes five proposed residential land use designations and zoning districts, as well as a sixth category for affordable housing. In aggregate, residential development must have an overall minimum average density consistent with the General Plan (Chapter II: Land Use, Page II-38). To reach this goal, the City requires that at least 15 percent of all new development be zoned high density (15-24 du/acre of attached housing), at least 15 percent be zoned medium-high density (9-15 du/acre of attached and detached housing), and at least 15 percent be zoned medium density (6-9 du/acre). The proposed project meets overall housing diversity/density requirements.</p>
<p><b>Policy HE-2.1 Encourage Affordable Housing with Incentives.</b> Encourage the construction of new housing that varies sufficiently in cost, design, and tenure to meet the needs of existing and future City residents in all income categories, and households with special needs. [Source: 2015-2023 Gonzales Housing Element, Policy HE-2.1, modified]</p>	<p>Consistent</p>	<p>See Response above for policy HE-1.3. Additionally, the applicant is required to prepare an Affordable Housing Plan component that will address households with special needs. The Affordable Housing Plan will be a component of the Development Agreement to be considered and approved by the City Council.</p>
<p><b>Policy HE-3.2 Minimize Environmental Impacts through Land Use and Transportation Planning.</b> Minimize adverse impacts on the environment through land use and transportation policies such as those encouraging housing construction close to planned employment and shopping and requiring sidewalks and bike lanes in new developments. [Source: 2015-2023 Gonzales Housing Element, Policy HE-5.2 &amp; HE-9.3, modified]</p>	<p>Consistent</p>	<p>The project objectives and land use plan/proposed uses illustrate the intent to provide an integrated circulation system that includes pedestrian and bicycle facilities as well as a diversity of land uses that will help to reduce vehicle trips. Mitigation measures are included in this EIR that require future development to incorporate a range of measures to reduce electrical energy demand and transportation fuel demand through improved energy efficiency and reduced vehicle miles traveled.</p>
<p><b>Policy HE-3.3 Promote Energy and Water Conservation.</b> Encourage the use of renewable energy and the use of water-saving devices, drought-tolerant landscaping, and other energy and water conservation measures to address climate change. [Source: 2015-2023 Gonzales Housing Element, Policy HE-9.2, modified]</p>	<p>Consistent</p>	<p>Mitigation measures are included in this EIR that require future development to incorporate a range of measures to reduce electrical energy demand and transportation fuel demand through improved energy efficiency and reduced vehicle miles traveled. Water conservation regulations enforced by the City (e.g., Model Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance) apply to the project and would facilitate water conservation.</p>

General Plan Policies	Proposed Project	Discussion
<b>COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>		
<b>Policy HS-5.1 Hazardous Material Safety in New Construction and Redevelopment.</b> Require all new construction and renovation to be designed and constructed to mitigate the effects of hazardous materials.	Consistent	An environmental site assessment, phase II assessment, existing conditions assessment and a soils mitigation plan have been prepared to address hazardous materials conditions within the site and to identify remediation requirements to minimize risks to public, worker, and environmental health. This EIR includes analysis of hazards conditions and addresses mitigation to reduce hazards where necessary. See Section 11.0, Hazards and Hazardous Materials.
<b>Policy HS-6.2 Siting of New Sources of Toxic Air Contaminants (TACs).</b> New development that would be a source of TACs proposed near existing residences or other sensitive receptors shall either provide adequate buffer distances or provide other measures to reduce the potential exposure to acceptable levels.	Consistent	Based on the proposed land use types, future uses within the project site would not be a source of TACs that could adversely affect sensitive receptors. See Section 4.0, Project Description.
<b>Policy HS-6.3 Siting of New Sensitive Receptors.</b> New residential or other sensitive receptors proposed near existing sources of TACs should have either adequate buffer distances or provide other measures to reduce the potential exposure to acceptable levels.	Consistent	There are no existing stationary TAC sources located near the project site that could affect proposed sensitive receptors within the site. See Section 3.0, Environmental Setting.
<b>Policy HS-8.1 Transportation Noise.</b> Maintain a citywide noise environment that achieves noise goals by minimizing to the degree practicable the impact of transportation-related noise.	Consistent	A noise analysis completed for the project evaluates potential transportation-related noise. The impacts were found to be less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures includes in this EIR. See Section 13.0, Noise.
<b>Policy HS-8.2 Stationary Noise Sources.</b> Maintain a citywide noise environment that achieves noise goals by minimizing to the degree practicable the impact of stationary noise sources.	Consistent	A noise analysis has been completed for the project that evaluates the impacts of stationary noise sources associated with the proposed commercial land use on nearby proposed sensitive receptors. The impacts were found to be less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures includes in this EIR. See Section 13.0, Noise.
<b>CONSERVATION AND OPEN SPACE</b>		
<b>Policy COS-1.1 Protect Regulated Habitats.</b> Protect regulated habitats (e.g., freshwater marsh, riparian woodland, and aquatic habitat) that are located within the Planning Area and prevent the isolation of individual habitat areas by interconnecting them to the degree practicable with open space corridors.	Consistent	Potential impacts of the proposed project on regulated habitats have been evaluated in this EIR and found to be less than significant with implementation of proposed mitigation measures. See Section 7.0, Biological Resources.

General Plan Policies	Proposed Project	Discussion
<p><b>Policy COS-2.1 Protect Special-Status Species.</b> Protect special-status species that are located within the Planning Area and create the conditions necessary for such species to become self-sustaining.</p>	Consistent	Potential impacts of the proposed project on special-status species have been evaluated in this EIR and found to be less than significant with implementation of proposed mitigation measures. See Section 7.0, Biological Resources.
<p><b>Policy COS 4.1 Maintain Agricultural Economy.</b> Maintain agriculture as the core of the local economy by conserving and protecting agricultural lands and operations within the Planning Area, and where agricultural land is planned for eventual urbanization, work to keep such land in production up until the time when the land is converted to urban use.</p>	Consistent	The proposed project includes temporary and permanent agricultural buffers along all four sides of the site. The temporary buffers are along edges of the site where future urban development is planned on adjacent properties. The permanent buffers are along edges where adjacent agricultural land is to be protected over the long term. A mitigation measure is included in this EIR which requires the applicant to permanently conserve agricultural land through dedicating or funding permanent agricultural conservation easements. A phasing plan that is described and illustrated in Section 4.0, Project Description, reflects that development will occur from west to east as market demand dictates; agricultural land within the site would be maintained until such time as it would be converted to urban use consistent with the phasing plan. See Section 5.0, Agricultural Resources.
<p><b>Policy COS-4.2 Permanent Agricultural Edges.</b> Establish permanent agricultural edges in the vicinity of Associated Lane to the northwest, Gloria Road to the southeast, and Gonzales River Road to the west, to preserve adjoining agricultural activities.</p>	Consistent	The proposed project includes a permanent agricultural buffer along Associated Lane, and temporary agricultural buffers.
<p><b>Policy COS-4.3 No Urbanization Outside of Growth Area.</b> Maintain agricultural open space around Gonzales as a means of giving form and definition to the City. To this end, permit urban development only within the areas designated for urban uses on the Land Use Diagram. Land immediately beyond this boundary should remain in agricultural use utilizing agricultural easement funds outlined in Implementing Action COS-4.3.3 (Agricultural Impact Fund), other mitigation measures that may arise as a result of project-level CEQA review, and any other feasible methods to preserve agricultural lands and define the limits of urban expansion for the City.</p>	Consistent	See discussion for Policy COS-4.1.
<p><b>Policy COS-5.1 Water Conservation and Groundwater Recharge.</b> Safeguard the quality and availability of groundwater supplies in Gonzales and the Salinas Valley.</p>	Consistent	Wastewater from the Vista Lucia project would be conveyed to and treated at the City's domestic wastewater treatment plant. Independent of the proposed project, the City has developed and is implementing plans to increase domestic wastewater treatment capacity to accommodate the additional flow volume, to create new capacity to treat industrial wastewater, and to produce recycled water from the industrial wastewater treatment process. The recycled water would be used for agricultural irrigation and/or input process.

General Plan Policies	Proposed Project	Discussion
		water for existing and future industrial uses in the city, thereby replacing an equivalent volume of groundwater consumed by such uses. The water supply assessment for the project concludes that groundwater demand from existing agricultural uses within the project site exceeds projected demand from planned future uses and that sufficient water will be available to serve the project and other existing and planned future development within the city. See Section 17.0, Water Demand and Supply.
<p><b>Policy COS 7.1 Create Open Space and Natural Habitat in Drainage Areas.</b> Protect the community from flooding hazards in a manner that creates open space and natural habitat and does not diminish groundwater recharge in the Planning Area.</p>	Potentially Consistent	The specific plan land use plan indicates that areas planned for permanent agricultural buffers along the northern and eastern site boundaries would also serve a dual use as open space that also would accommodate storm water management features (e.g., storm water detention), consistent with the City's master storm water management plan. All future development must be constructed consistent with the requirements of the City's flood management regulations. See Section 4.0, Project Description, Section 5.0, Agricultural Resources, and Section 12.0, Hydrology and Water Quality.
<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES</b>		
<p><b>Policy FS-1.1 Provision of Public Services.</b> Provide public services and infrastructure in a manner that supports the Land Use Diagram, discourages premature development, minimizes adverse environmental and fiscal impacts, and maintains or improves current service levels.</p>	Consistent	The applicant is required to prepare a plan for services as part of the annexation process. The plan for services must demonstrate how public services and infrastructure will be provided to serve planned development. Circulation, water, and wastewater infrastructure improvements would be constructed consistent with the City's master plans for these systems, which identify improvements needed within the SOI to support new development, including the proposed project. The direct and indirect environmental impacts of constructing infrastructure systems for the project have been evaluated in this EIR to the extent practical. The City's wastewater treatment capacity expansion projects are independent of the proposed project and subject to separate environmental review.
<p><b>Policy FS-2.1 Meet New Demand for Water.</b> Meet the demand for increased water service by new development in a timely, cost-effective manner by construction of new wells, water distribution lines and reservoirs to keep pace with new development. Maintain average groundwater extractions necessary to serve full buildout of the area contained in the Urban Growth Boundary to approximately 5.8 MGD in order to avoid significantly increasing groundwater withdrawals over current (2010) levels. To the degree necessary, the city shall rely upon best management practices, water conservation and recycled wastewater in order to make up a deficit in accommodating the demand for water supply that accompanies buildout of this General Plan.</p>	Consistent	See discussion for policy COS-5.1 and for policy FS-1.1.

General Plan Policies	Proposed Project	Discussion
<b>COMMUNITY CHARACTER</b>		
<b>Policy CC-9.1 Archaeological and Paleontological Protection.</b> Support continued research on Native American settlement around Gonzales and protect any unique artifacts or sites discovered.	Consistent	Potential project impacts on archaeological, paleontological, and tribal resources have been evaluated in this EIR. Potentially significant impacts would be reduced to less than significant with implementation of proposed mitigation measures. See Section 8.0, Cultural and Tribal Resources.
<b>SUSTAINABILITY ELEMENT</b>		
<b>Policy SUS-1.1 Climate Protection Strategies.</b> The City shall continue to pursue strategies designed to reduce greenhouse gas production and increase the production and use of renewable energy.	Consistent	Future development within the site will be required to incorporate features that ensure it is consistent with the City's Climate Action Plan. Mitigation measures have been included in this EIR to reduce criteria air emissions. These mitigation measures will have the co-benefit of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. All new residential development must be consistent with the state's building energy efficiency standards that require residential development to have net zero energy demand. This will require such development to incorporate renewable energy features, most likely to be solar photovoltaic technologies. See Section 10.0, Greenhouse Gas Emissions.
<b>Policy SUS-1.5 Increase Use of Renewable Energy.</b> Increase the local use and production of renewable energy.	Consistent	See discussion for policy SUS-1.1.
<b>HEALTH AND WELLNESS</b>		
<b>Policy HW-1.2 Equitable Access.</b> Require neighborhood retail, services, and public facilities to be located within walking distance of residential areas to create safe and convenient circulation system.	Consistent	The proposed land use plan shows that all residential uses would be located within one-half mile of planned neighborhood commercial uses. See Section 4.0, Project Description.
<b>Policy HW-3.1 Open and Public Spaces.</b> Through private and public partnerships facilitate the creation, maintenance, and upgrade of public facilities and open spaces, and the development of activities to attract more public use.	Consistent	The proposed land use plan includes public parks as public use amenities. See Section 4.0, Project Description.

SOURCE: EMC Planning Group 2023, City of Gonzales 2010

Standards that are applicable to the proposed project are set forth in Part D and Part E of this document. To assist LAFCO in its consistency determination, the applicable standards are listed in [Table 3-2, LAFCO Standards Consistency Review](#), along with a discussion of project consistency with each standard.

**Table 3-2 LAFCO Standards Consistency Review**

LAFCO Standards/Guidance	Consistency Determination	Discussion
<b>Part D. Standards for the Evaluation of Proposals for a Reorganization</b>		
Section II includes standard 9. It addresses an action to be taken by LAFCO which was not germane to assessing project consistency with LAFCO standards. Therefore, this standard is not included in the following list.		
<p><b>II. DETERMINATION OF BOUNDARIES</b></p> <p>1. Definite and certain maps and legal descriptions must be filed as part of an application for boundary change proposal. All maps and written geographic descriptions must comply with State Board of Equalization requirements. (Section 56668 f.) Detailed requirements of the State Board of Equalization are found in the "Change of Jurisdictional Boundary - Requirements for Statements, Boundary Descriptions, Maps and Schedule of Processing Fees" which is included in the LAFCO application packet.</p>	Consistent	The applicant has prepared an annexation exhibit and legal description that will be included in the LAFCO reorganization application. The exhibit will need to be updated to include detachment from special districts, prior to submittal of the reorganization application to LAFCO.
<p>2. To the greatest possible extent, boundaries should follow existing political boundaries and natural or man-made features such as rivers, lakes, railroad tracks, and freeways. Where boundaries do not meet this standard, the proponent shall justify the reasons for non-conformance. (Sections 56668 a and f.)</p>	Consistent	The annexation and district detachment boundaries follow existing public roads and parcel lines, with the boundaries being consistent with assumptions in the Gonzales General Plan for this proposed project.
<p>3. Boundaries should not be drawn so as to create an island, corridor, or strip either within the proposed territory or immediately adjacent to it. Where such an island, corridor, or strip is created, the proponent shall justify the reasons for non-conformance with this standard. (Section 56668 f.)</p>	Consistent	The specific plan land use plan shows that the proposed project site boundary is consistent with this standard. The annexation area boundary exhibit to be included in the reorganization application will reflect this fact.
<p>4. Whenever practicable, boundary lines of areas proposed to be annexed to cities and/or districts shall be located so that all streets and rights-of-way will be placed within the same jurisdiction as the properties which abut thereon and/or for the benefit of which such streets and rights-of-way are intended. (Section 56668 d.)</p>	Consistent	The applicant's reorganization exhibit and legal description will be included in the application.
<p>5. The creation of boundaries that divide assessment parcels should be avoided whenever possible. Where such division occurs, the proponents shall justify to LAFCO the necessity for such division. (Section 56668 d.)</p>	Consistent	The applicant's reorganization exhibit and legal description will be included in the reorganization application to LAFCO from the City.

LAFCO Standards/Guidance	Consistency Determination	Discussion
<p>6. Boundaries should avoid dividing an existing identifiable community, commercial district, or any other area having social or economic homogeneity. Where such division occurs, the proponents shall justify the reasons for non-conformance to this standard. (Section 56668 c.)</p>	<p>Consistent</p>	<p>The project site does not include a community, commercial district or other area. It is planned for uses that are consistent with adjacent uses within the city and would be an extension of those uses. The reorganization would not divide a community, commercial district or other area having social or economic homogeneity.</p>
<p>7. The following guidelines related to road right-of-way apply to all proposals submitted to LAFCO. (Section 56668 f.)</p> <p>a. The following should not be allowed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) City limits which include a portion of the road right-of-way.</li> <li>(2) Road islands of County maintained roads.</li> <li>(3) Islands of road caused by annexation on both sides.</li> <li>(4) Strip annexation roads.</li> </ol> <p>b.* In the following cases where the road is the boundary and is a major County arterial, the street or road should be retained by the County. These roads would not have direct access from the property:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Roads which carry through traffic.</li> <li>(2) Planned development by developer or city which provides limited access and protects the capacity of the road.</li> </ol> <p>*Note: Each case should be considered on its own merit.</p> <p>c. The following should be annexed to the city. These roads would have direct access to the annexing property and would serve the residents of the property:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Minor or local roads.</li> <li>(2) When the street will be used for the city sewer lines, water lines, or storm drains.</li> <li>(3) Piece-meal development by developer causing difficult coordination between two or more agencies.</li> <li>(4) Where the annexation will complicate drainage or traffic control.</li> </ol>	<p>Consistent</p>	<p>The proposed annexation boundaries do not include features that are not to be allowed. The annexation boundaries do not include islands of County roads. The annexation boundary does include adjacent roads such that no conflict with utility provision, piecemealing, or drainage/traffic control would occur.</p>
<p>8. Where feasible, city and related district boundary changes should occur concurrently to avoid an irregular pattern of boundaries. (Section 56668 b.)</p>	<p>Consistent</p>	<p>The proposed annexation boundary is logical and would be coterminous with changes to district boundaries as will be reflected in the reorganization application.</p>

LAFCO Standards/Guidance	Consistency Determination	Discussion
10. Boundaries should reasonably include all territory which would reasonably benefit from agency services. (Section 56668 b.)	Consistent	The project site is within the adopted SOI boundary into which City services are logically proposed to extend. The annexation boundary includes all areas that would benefit from urban service which are under the applicant's control or necessary to form a logical boundary.
<b>III. DUPLICATION OF AUTHORITY TO PERFORM SIMILAR FUNCTIONS</b> 1. Proposals, where feasible, should minimize the number of local agencies and promote the use of multi-purpose agencies. (Sections 56668 b and c.)	Consistent	The City of Gonzales (as a multi-purpose agency) would provide services to the annexation area. No new service agencies are required.
2. The effect of the approval of a proposal which would result in two or more districts or a city and a district possessing any common territory, the authority to perform the same or similar functions shall be considered by LAFCO. The views of the governing body of the city or special district possessing authority to perform the same or similar function in the subject territory should be made known to LAFCO. Proponents must justify the need for boundary change proposals which result in duplication of authority to perform similar functions. (Section 56668 b and c.)	Consistent	The proposal will not result in two or more districts or service agencies with overlapping jurisdiction and authority to perform the same or similar functions.
<b>IV. CONFORMANCE WITH CITY OR COUNTY GENERAL PLAN OR SPECIFIC PLAN</b> 1. Each proposal should be consistent with the appropriate city or county general and specific plans. Where the proposal does not abide by these plans, the proponent shall specify the reasons for plan non-conformance. (Section 56668 g.)	Consistent	The proposed project is substantially consistent with the land use and boundary assumptions included in the Gonzales General Plan. The proposal is also consistent with the proposed specific plan.
2. Pursuant to Section 56375, for proposals involving city annexations, the LAFCO Executive Officer shall not file a Certificate of Filing, which acknowledges that an application is complete, until the city has completed a rezoning process for the subject property in a manner consistent with the city's general or specific plan. (Section 56668 g.)	Consistent	The proposed project includes a rezoning request, with zoning districts to be consistent with land uses shown in the applicant's proposed specific plan land use plan. The City of Gonzales will consider the annexation and rezoning request together, before submitting a reorganization application to LAFCO.

LAFCO Standards/Guidance	Consistency Determination	Discussion
<p><b>V. CONFORMANCE WITH SPHERES OF INFLUENCE</b></p> <p>Section V includes standards 2, 3, 5, and 6. Each specifies actions to be taken by LAFCO that either are not germane to assessing project consistency with LAFCO standards or address reorganization actions that are not included in the proposed project. These standards are not included in the following list.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposals shall be consistent with the Spheres of Influence for the local agencies affected by those determinations. (Sections 56375.5 and 56668 h.)</li> <li>When a proposal is inconsistent with the adopted Sphere of Influence, the applicant shall justify reasons for amending the Sphere of Influence. An annexation application for land outside an adopted Sphere of Influence may be considered concurrently with a request for amendment to the Sphere of Influence. (Section 56668 h.)</li> </ol>	Consistent	The project site is within the City of Gonzales SOI.
<p><b>VI. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LAFCOs are subject to the terms of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the regulations of the California Resources Agency, which establishes the guidelines for its implementation. All environmental factors introduced by the proposal shall be considered as outlined in the Act and the State Guidelines.</li> <li>The potential environmental impacts of proposals involving changes of organization or reorganization shall be reviewed by LAFCO environmental staff and the appropriate environmental determination shall be considered by LAFCO in accordance with state law and the State's "Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act.</li> </ol>	Consistent	This EIR has been prepared by the City of Gonzales acting as the lead agency. A final EIR will be prepared and considered for certification by the City of Gonzales City Council. LAFCO will consider the EIR as its CEQA documentation in conjunction with the reorganization proposal.
<p><b>VII. ECONOMICS SERVICE DELIVERY AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS<sup>1</sup></b></p> <p>Section VII also includes standards 8, 9, and 10. Each specifies actions to be taken by LAFCO that are either not germane to assessing project consistency with LAFCO standards or address reorganization actions that are not included in the proposed project. These standards are not included in the following list.</p>	Consistent	The applicant has completed a fiscal analysis that will be included in the LAFCO reorganization application for LAFCO consideration.

LAFCO Standards/Guidance	Consistency Determination	Discussion
<p>1. LAFCO shall discourage proposals that would have adverse financial impacts on the provision of governmental services or would create a relatively low revenue base in relationship to the cost of affected services. Applications shall describe related service and financial impacts (including revenues and expenditures) on the County, cities, and/or special districts and provide feasible measures which would mitigate such adverse impacts. (Section 56668 a, b and c.)</p>		
<p>2. Applications must address current and ultimate needs for governmental services and facilities as established by the appropriate land use plans and rezoning. Proposals shall not be approved unless a demonstrated need for additional service exists or will soon exist. In reviewing boundary change proposals, LAFCO shall consider alternative government structure options which may be more appropriate in light of the demonstrated need for service. The formation of, or annexation to, a single governmental agency, rather than several limited purpose agencies, shall be encouraged when possible. (Section 56668 a and b.)</p> <p>3. Applications must indicate that the affected agencies have the capability to provide service. Territory shall be annexed to a city or special district only if such agency has or soon will have the capability to provide service. (Section 56668 b.)</p> <p>4. Whenever a local agency submits a resolution of application for a change of organization or reorganization, the local agency shall submit with the resolution of application a plan for providing services within the affected territory. The plan for providing services shall include all of the following information. (Section 56653.):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. An enumeration and description of the services to be extended to the affected territory.</li> <li>b. The level and range of those services.</li> <li>c. An indication of when those services can feasibly be extended to the affected territory.</li> <li>d. An indication of any improvement or upgrading of structures, roads, sewer or water facilities, or other conditions the local</li> </ul>	<p>Consistent</p>	<p>The project would result in annexation to a single governmental agency, the City of Gonzales, which will provide government services, utilities and public services. The proposed reorganization would result in a consolidation of services now provided by Monterey County (e.g. governmental services, police protection services, resource conservation, etc.) and the Gonzales Rural Fire District.</p> <p>The City will require the applicant to prepare and include a plan for providing services in the reorganization application package. The plan for providing services will be required to demonstrate that the City of Gonzales has or will have the capacity to provide services commensurate with need generated by the proposed project.</p>

LAFCO Standards/Guidance	Consistency Determination	Discussion
<p>agency would impose or require within the affected territory if the change of organization or reorganization is completed.</p> <p>e. Any conditions which would be imposed or required within the affected territory such as, but not limited to, improvement or upgrading of structures, roads, and sewer or water facilities.</p> <p>f. Information with respect to how those services will be financed.</p> <p>A plan for providing services may consist of:</p> <p>a. A master plan for providing services throughout all or a portion of a city or distinct Sphere of Influence for use in evaluating all proposals affecting the area covered in the master plan.</p> <p>b. A proposal-specific supplement which updates and/or provides a higher level of detail than is contained within the master plan for services. Such supplement may include by reference or in summary form those pertinent sections of the master plan for services which remain valid. The supplement need discuss in detail only that information which is not current or discussed in sufficient detail in the master plan for services.</p>		
<p>6. LAFCO discourages proposals which will facilitate development that is not in the public interest due to topography, isolation from existing developments, premature intrusion of urban-type developments into a predominantly agricultural area, or other pertinent economic or social reason. (Section 56668 a.)</p>	<p>Consistent</p>	<p>The project site is within the City's adopted SOI, which was approved by LAFCO. This suggests that development of the project site with urban uses would be logical.</p> <p>The 768-acre project site would not likely build out for 20 years or more. The applicant has prepared a phasing plan to demonstrate that development would logically proceed in an incremental fashion from west (adjacent to the existing city limits) to the east on land that is classified as Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance.</p> <p>Regarding conversion of agricultural land, future development would be subject to stipulations contained in the 2014 Memorandum of Agreement Between the City of Gonzales and the County of Monterey Regarding Working Cooperatively on Common Planning, Growth and Development Issues in Order to be as Efficient as Possible in the Implementation of Their Respective General Plans, a primary purpose of which is to create long-term protection of agricultural areas adjacent to the project site. The agricultural buffers shown on the specific plan land use plan are included pursuant to stipulations in the Memorandum of Agreement and the City's draft agricultural mitigation program.</p>

LAFCO Standards/Guidance	Consistency Determination	Discussion
7. LAFCO shall consider the testimony from all potentially affected agencies or individuals in reviewing boundary change proposals. Proposals submitted by resolution of application shall include information indicating that landowners in the affected area support the proposal. (Section 56668 i.)	Consistent	The reorganization application will include information indicating landowners in support of the proposal.
<b>VIII. PHASING</b> 1. LAFCO, in furtherance of its objectives of preserving prime agricultural land, containing urban sprawl, and in providing a reasonable assurance of a city/district's ability to provide services shall consider the appropriateness of phasing annexation proposals which include territory that is not within a city/district's urban service area and has an expected build-out over a period longer than five to seven years. (Sections 56668 a, b, and e.)	Consistent	As described in this EIR, the project would be phased over time with development occurring adjacent to the existing city limits first, and continued development occurring commensurate with development demand. Development would not be permitted without the developer(s) demonstrating and the City verifying prior to each phase that adequate public services and utilities are in place or will be in place prior to approval of grading or building permits for each phase.
2. Change of organization and reorganization proposals which are totally within a city or district's adopted urban service area shall not be considered appropriate for phasing. Urban service areas are, by definition, territory expected to be developed/serviced in the next five years. (Sections 56668 a, b and c.)	Consistent	The project site is not within the city limits or within its urban service area.
3. Proposals which contain territory which is not within a city or district's adopted urban service area and have an expected build-out extending beyond a five- to seven-year period may be considered appropriate for phasing. For the purpose of this policy, "phasing" shall be defined as a planned incremental approval of a project and "building- out" shall be interpreted as 70 to 80 percent developed. When an exception from this policy is desired, the proponent shall justify to LAFCO the reasons why phasing is not appropriate. Included within the justification for exception, the proponent shall demonstrate the jurisdiction's ability to provide necessary public services. (Sections 56668 a, b and e.)	Consistent	As described in this EIR, the project would be phased over time with development occurring adjacent to the existing city limits first, and continued development occurring commensurate with development demand. Development would occur over a period that is longer than five to seven years. Development would not be permitted without the developer(s) demonstrating and the City verifying prior to each phase that adequate public services and utilities are in place or will be in place prior to approval of grading or building permits for each phase.
4. The Executive Officer shall not issue a certificate of filing pursuant to Section 56658 until the local agencies included in the property tax revenue exchange negotiation, within the 60-day negotiation period, present resolutions adopted by each such county and city whereby each county and city agrees to accept the exchange of	To be Determined	The City of Gonzales and the County of Monterey have collaborated to address property tax revenue exchanges on numerous occasions in the past. It is assumed that the exchange agreement will be negotiated within the negotiation period and related resolutions will be adopted.

LAFCO Standards/Guidance	Consistency Determination	Discussion
property tax revenues. (California Revenue and Taxation Code section 99 b 6.)		
<p><b>IX. OPEN SPACE AND AGRICULTURAL LAND</b></p> <p>1. It is the policy of LAFCO to encourage and to seek to provide for planned, well-ordered, efficient urban development pattern while at the same time remaining cognizant of the need to give appropriate consideration to the preservation of open space and agricultural land within such patterns. (Section 56300.) Proposals for a change of organization or reorganization will be judged according to LAFCO's adopted Policy on Preservation of Open-Space and Agricultural Lands (Section E of this Policy Document).</p>	Consistent	See discussion under Part E. Preservation of Open-Space and Agricultural Lands below.
<p><b>X. GROUNDWATER STANDARDS</b></p> <p>Section X includes standards 1, 3, 4, and 5. Each specifies actions to be taken by LAFCO that are not germane to assessing project consistency with LAFCO standards. These standards are not included in the following list.</p> <p>2. In considering a proposal which may significantly impact the groundwater basin, as documented by the Lead Agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), LAFCO shall review the following information. This information can be submitted to LAFCO in an environmental document or as a part of the LAFCO application.</p> <p>a. The projected water demand of the proposed project based on guidelines provided by the appropriate water resources agency.</p> <p>b. The existing water use and historical water use over the past five years.</p> <p>c. A description of the existing water system including system capacity serving the site.</p> <p>d. A description of proposed water system improvements</p> <p>e. A description of water conservation or reclamation improvements that are to be incorporated into the project.</p> <p>f. An analysis of the impact that proposed water usage will have on the groundwater basin with respect to water quantity and quality, including cumulative impacts.</p>	Consistent	<p>a, b, c, e, f, k, l. The water supply assessment prepared for the proposed is described in Section 17.0, Water Demand and Supply. It concludes that net demand for groundwater generated by existing agricultural uses within the projects site would exceed projected demand from new planned urban uses. Therefore, the proposed project would have a benefit on groundwater conditions by increasing groundwater in storage. The water supply assessment also includes additional information about the City's water supply system.</p> <p>d. Water system improvements will be described in the plan for services to be included in the reorganization application.</p> <p>g, i. The City is the applicable water agency, as the City would provide water service. The City has been consulted about the project and has reviewed the water supply assessment. The City Council would adopt the water supply assessment as part of its project decision making process.</p> <p>h, j. Future development will be required to comply with all City and state water conservation measures. As previously stated, the project would have a positive impact on groundwater sustainability and would more than off-set its water demand.</p>

LAFCO Standards/Guidance	Consistency Determination	Discussion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>g. Evidence of consultation with the appropriate water agency. The agency shall be consulted at the earliest stage of the process, so that applicable recommendations can be included in the environmental document.</li> <li>h. A description of water conservation measures currently in use and planned for use on the site such as drought tolerant landscaping, water-saving irrigation systems, installation of low-flow plumbing fixtures, retrofitting of plumbing fixtures with low-flow devices, and compliance with local ordinances.</li> <li>i. A description of how the proposed project complies with adopted water allocation plans.</li> <li>j. A description of those proposals where the agency has achieved water savings or where new water sources have been developed that will off-set increases in water use on the project site that would be caused by the proposal.</li> <li>k. A description of how the proposal would contribute to any cumulative adverse impact on the groundwater basin.</li> <li>l. A description of those boundary change proposals that, when considered individually and after taking into account all mitigation measures to be implemented with the project, still cause a significant adverse impact on the groundwater basin.</li> </ul>		
<p>6. LAFCO will encourage boundary change proposals involving projects that use reclaimed wastewater, minimize nitrate contamination, and provide beneficial use of storm waters.</p>	Consistent	<p>The project would remove approximately 768 acres of agricultural land from production. Existing agricultural activities may involve application of nitrogen-based fertilizers which could contribute to existing surface and groundwater contamination. Storm water will be managed consistent with the City's storm water development regulations, with benefits that include pretreatment of storm water and percolation of storm water back to groundwater.</p>
<p>7. LAFCO will encourage proposals which have incorporated water conservation measures. Water conservation measures include drought tolerant landscaping, water-saving irrigation systems, installation of low-flow plumbing fixtures, retrofitting of plumbing fixtures with low-flow devices, and compliance with local ordinances</p>	Consistent	<p>Future urban development must comply with City and state water conservation standards and regulations. Details about any additional proposed water conservation measures would be provided as part of the future project-specific entitlement process.</p>

LAFCO Standards/Guidance	Consistency Determination	Discussion
8. LAFCO will encourage those proposals which comply with adopted water allocation plans as established by applicable cities or water management agencies.	Not Applicable	Water use in the City is not currently subject to a water allocation plan. The discussion under X.2 above shows that the project would have a net benefit on water supply.
9. LAFCO will encourage those proposals where the affected jurisdiction has achieved water savings or new water sources elsewhere that will off-set increases in water use in the project site that would be caused by the proposal.	Consistent	The project would not result in a net increase in water use. See discussion under X.2 above.
10. LAFCO will discourage those proposals which contribute to the cumulative adverse impact on the groundwater basin unless it can be found that the proposal promotes the planned and orderly development of the area.	Consistent	See discussion under X.2 above.
11. LAFCO will discourage those boundary change proposals which, when considered individually and after taking into account all mitigation measures to be implemented with the project, still cause a significant adverse impact on the groundwater basin.	Consistent	See discussion under X.2 above.
<b>XI. INCORPORATION GUIDELINES</b>	Not Applicable	The project does not include a proposal for incorporation.
<b>XII. REGIONAL TRAFFIC IMPACTS</b> 1. For annexations and Sphere of Influence applications, Monterey County LAFCO shall consider as part of its decision whether the proposal mitigates its regional traffic impacts by, for example, monetary contribution to a regional transportation improvement fund as established by the Transportation Agency of [sic] Monterey County or otherwise.	Consistent	The City will require that all development within the project site pay the applicable Transportation Agency for Monterey County Regional Fee to mitigate impacts on the regional circulation network.
<b>XIII. EFFICIENT URBAN DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS</b> 1. For annexations and Sphere of Influence applications, Monterey County LAFCO shall consider as part of its decision whether the city in which the annexation or Sphere of Influence amendment is proposed has included certain goals, policies, and objectives into its General Plan that encourage mixed uses, mixed densities, and development patterns that will result in increased efficiency of land use, and that encourages and provides planned, well-ordered, efficient urban development patterns.	Consistent	This EIR includes analysis of project consistency with City of Gonzales General Plan policies that mitigate environmental effects, including policies that address development patterns. The City of Gonzales General Plan includes a multitude of additional land use and urban services policies designed to promote mixed land uses and efficient development patterns. LAFCO's approval of the City's 2014 SOI amendment suggests that the policies in the general plan are consistent with this LAFCO standard.
<b>XIV. DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES</b>	Not Applicable	The annexation area does not include a disadvantaged community.

LAFCO Standards/Guidance	Consistency Determination	Discussion
XV. CONTRACT/AGREEMENT SERVICE EXTENSION	Not Applicable	The proposal does not include a request for service extensions outside an agency's jurisdictional boundary.
<b>Part E. Preservation of Open-Space and Agricultural Lands</b>		
<p>1. A proposal must discuss how it balances the state interest in the preservation of open space and prime agricultural lands against the need for orderly development. (Government Code section 56001.) Proposals that fail to discuss this balance, in the opinion of the executive officer, will be deemed incomplete. Proposals may be denied if they fail to demonstrate to the satisfaction of LAFCO that the need for orderly development is balanced against the preservation of open space and prime agricultural lands.</p>	Consistent	<p>The project site is within the City of Gonzales' SOI and designated for urban development in the City of Gonzales General Plan. In including the project site as a future growth area in the general plan, and its subsequent request for and LAFCO approval of a SOI amendment to include the project site in the SOI, both the City, and subsequently LAFCO determined that the project site is appropriate for new urban development. The general plan includes discussion and policy regarding growth management and the need to protect agricultural land and provide opportunities for new housing and employment generating uses.</p> <p>The need to balance preservation of agricultural land against orderly development is further enumerated in the Memorandum of Agreement Between the City of Gonzales and the County of Monterey Regarding Working Cooperatively on Common Planning, Growth and Development Issues in Order to be as Efficient as Possible in the Implementation of Their Respective General Plans from 2014. Stipulations for conserving agricultural land identified in the agreement would partially be implemented through creation of agricultural buffers as shown in the specific plan land use plan and through other agricultural mitigation requirements identified in the EIR that would apply to future development.</p>
<p>2. A Proposal must discuss its effect on maintaining the physical and economic integrity of agricultural lands. (Government Code section 56668 (a).) Proposals that fail to discuss their effect, in the opinion of the executive officer, will be deemed incomplete. Proposals may be denied if they fail to demonstrate to the satisfaction of LAFCO that the physical and economic integrity of agricultural lands is maintained.</p> <p>3. A Proposal must discuss whether it could reasonably be expected to induce, facilitate, or lead to the conversion of existing open-space land to uses other than open-space uses. (Government Code section 56377.) Proposals that fail to discuss potential conversion, in the opinion of the executive officer, will be deemed incomplete. Proposals may be denied if they fail to demonstrate to</p>	Consistent	See the discussion under E.1 above.

LAFCO Standards/Guidance	Consistency Determination	Discussion
<p>the satisfaction of LAFCO that: a) they guide development or use of land for other than open-space uses away from existing prime agricultural lands in open-space use and toward areas containing nonprime agricultural lands (Government Code section 56377 (a)); and b) development of existing vacant or nonprime agricultural lands for urban uses within the existing jurisdiction of a local agency or within the Sphere of Influence of a local agency will occur prior to the development of existing open-space lands for non-open-space uses which are outside of the existing jurisdiction of the local agency or outside of the existing Sphere of Influence of the local agency (Government Code section 56377 (b))</p>		
<p>4. A Proposal must, if applicable, provide for pre-zoning (Government Code section 56375 (a)), and must demonstrate that it is consistent with the General Plans and Specific Plans of the existing local agency and any immediately adjacent local agency (Government Code sections 56375 (a) and 56668 (g)). Proposals may be denied if they are not consistent with such plans, or, if not rezoned, if the Proposal does not demonstrate to the satisfaction of LAFCO that the existing development entitlements are consistent with the local agency's plans.</p> <p>To further these policies, it is the position of LAFCO that agricultural buffers provide an important means to preserve open space and agricultural lands and preserve the integrity of planned, well-ordered, efficient urban development patterns. Such buffers may be permanent, temporary, or rolling, and may take many forms; easements, dedications, appropriate zoning streets, or parks, for example. How agricultural buffers are used to further the state policy of preserving open-space and agricultural lands within patterns of planned, well-ordered, efficient urban development is left to the discretion of each local agency; however, Proposals will be judged on how state-wide policies under the Act, and LAFCO adopted policies, with respect to the preservation of open-space and agricultural lands are furthered. Agreements between neighboring local agencies with regard to the preservation of open-space and agricultural lands are encouraged, and such agreements may be incorporated by LAFCO into a Proposal as a</p>	<p>Consistent</p>	<p>The proposed project includes rezoning to districts that are consistent with the land use designations shown in the proposed specific plan. The specific plan land use designations are consistent with the land use vision for the project site as included in the general plan.</p> <p>See the discussions under E.1 and VII.6 above regarding agricultural buffers and the City/County agreement regarding preservation of agricultural land and agricultural impact mitigation included in the SEIR.</p>

LAFCO Standards/Guidance	Consistency Determination	Discussion
condition of approval, or may be required as a condition precedent to approval.		
<b>Part F. Housing and Jobs</b>		
<p>1. It is the policy of LAFCO that, consistent with section 56300 (a) of the Act, Proposals must demonstrate through both quantitative and qualitative methods the relationship between the Proposal and the surplus or deficiency of local and county-wide housing supply and demand, and employment availability and creation. Additionally, the Proposal must demonstrate how its pattern of land use and transportation complements local and regional objectives and goals for the improvement of air quality and reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and local vehicle miles traveled (VMT). These factors and their impacts, if any, shall be considered by the Commission in acting upon the Proposal.</p>	Consistent	<p>There is an extreme shortage of housing in Monterey County per the 2020 Monterey County Affordable Housing Needs Report. In addition, approximately 20 percent of the housing units in Gonzales are overcrowded. To address the housing shortage, the City has a regional housing needs allocation of nearly 1,500 dwelling units for very low to above moderate-income levels for the 6<sup>th</sup> cycle period of 2023-2031. Less than five residential units have been constructed since 2009.</p> <p>The proposed specific plan land uses are consistent with those assumed in the general plan and 2014 City/County MOA as a basis to provide needed housing over time. The general plan residential density requirement applies to the project and is intended to increase the number of units that are affordable “by design”. The first tentative map, as described in this EIR, includes 1,247 dwelling units. Based on current housing affordability guidelines and current lot configurations, up to 455 or approximately 37 percent of the dwelling units are anticipated to be “for rent” attached units, which would serve the very low and low income communities, and up to 296 or approximately 24 percent are anticipated to be “for sale” or “for rent” detached units on small lots, which would serve the moderate and above-moderate income communities, for a total of up to 751 or approximately 60 percent of the total dwelling units being available for affordable housing. The remainder would provide additional much needed housing stock to help mee the City’s regional housing needs obligations. Additional tentative maps are anticipated in the future per these future maps may occur beyond the horizon of the 6th cycle period. Such development will continue to facilitate the City’s ability to meet its regional housing needs obligations.</p> <p>As a rural, agriculture-based community, most residents travel out of town to the north to access employment opportunities. However, the City has and is continuing to actively grow its employment base in an effort to improve its job/housing balance. The local employment base is expected to grow with continued expansion of the Gonzales industrial business park, with new light industrial and highway commercial uses</p>

LAFCO Standards/Guidance	Consistency Determination	Discussion
		<p>planned within the SOI and with the recently approved agricultural cooler project on Gloria Road.</p> <p>It is widely acknowledged that the opportunities for rural communities to meet state VMT reduction goals (and by extension, substantially reduce air and GHG emissions from transportation sources over which local agencies and developers have control) is challenging. The proposed land use plan includes a mix of land uses and alternative transportation mode infrastructure that will help to reduce VMT. The extensive network of planned roundabouts will also help to reduce GHGs with the co-benefit of reducing air emissions, vehicle noise and vehicle accidents. This EIR includes mitigation measures that require future development to incorporate design features identified in the specific plan that are designed to reduce VMT and to reduce GHG emissions from non-transportation sources.</p>

SOURCE: LAFCO 2021, EMC Planning Group 2023

*This side intentionally left blank.*

# 4.0 Project Description

The applicant has submitted an application to the City requesting annexation, pre-zoning, and general plan amendment approvals for the project site. Approval of the first tentative map for developing a portion of the site is also being requested. Future tentative map approvals would be sought to build out the remainder of the project site.

This section of the EIR describes the project objectives; requested approvals; specific plan, including land use and development capacity and conceptual phasing; projected population and employment; and intended uses of the EIR.

## 4.1 Project Objectives

The underlying purpose of the project is to support the City's projected growth needs consistent with General Plan goals and policies. The objectives are based on the applicant's vision for developing the site as embodied in the specific plan. The objectives are as follows:

1. Maintain consistency with General Plan land use policies and priorities.
2. Maintain consistency with the Neighborhood Design Guidelines and Standards for land planning, circulation planning, and site design.
3. Create a plan with a balance of land uses, that optimizes residential opportunities, and provides educational, recreational, shopping and job opportunities, all brought together to create a strong sense of place and community.
4. Include an array of residential densities and housing types for people of different income levels, age groups, and lifestyles.
5. Provide housing for the existing workforce in Gonzales and vicinity.
6. Balance the distribution of housing sites affordable to lower and moderate-income families so that it is not concentrated in a single location.
7. Create two community-centric neighborhood villages by orienting residential land uses around central neighborhood villages features, including local retail centers, community parks, and public schools.

8. Establish two mixed-use neighborhood village centers and neighborhood village greens to provide activity hubs and gathering destinations to enhance the community experience and support the residents, visitors, and employees.
9. Provide employment opportunities to assist in meeting the City of Gonzales employment goals.
10. Plan for the inclusion of two elementary school sites and a middle school site that are located, integrated into the overall activity core of the community, and readily accessible via non-vehicular pathways, trails and promenades.
11. Locate lower density uses on the outer perimeter areas of each neighborhood village, with densities increasing as one moves toward the neighborhood village centers, thereby providing services accessible to the highest density of residents.
12. Plan residential land uses for orderly, compact growth, achieving a minimum net density of seven dwelling units per acre, as provided in the General Plan.
13. Establish neighborhoods that are inviting for residents and buffered from noise, arterial traffic, and other factors associated with agricultural practices in accord with good planning design.
14. Circulation Design
  - a. Design multimodal streets that effectively circulate vehicular traffic and provide for future transit connections while providing a safe, attractive, and connective circulation system throughout the community.
  - b. Design for consistency with General Plan land use and circulation policies related to street connectivity to form a pattern that provides direct travel routes, facilitates walking and biking, and provides more than one way of reaching a destination.
  - c. Design an arterial framework that accomplishes General Plan objectives for efficient access and through traffic, without interfering with the small town feel of neighborhood village centers.
  - d. Set up a framework that allows efficient grid-like or concentric local residential blocks to conform to optimum lengths and patterns.
  - e. Minimize using cul-de-sacs to provide multiple routes in and out of residential neighborhoods.
  - f. Design narrow residential streets to reduce traffic speeds and create safer, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods.
  - g. Design a connective greenway system that, to the extent feasible, maintains separation between autos, pedestrians, and bicycles, including a system of promenades.
  - h. Create a park-to-park, park-to-school, and school-to-neighborhood village center connective pedestrian system that establishes safe routes to the school, parks, and other community gathering places.

- i. Employ roundabouts and other traffic calming features to promote efficient movement, safety and a relaxed residential neighborhood environment.
- j. Design local residential and commercial neighborhood streets such that buildings front on community amenities and park features.
- k. Create a network of multi-use trails within parks and open spaces that complements the other pedestrian-bicycling networks to encourage walking and bicycling.

#### 15. Community Facilities and Services

- a. Plan for community facilities as key elements of the Vista Lucia Project.
- b. Plan for two elementary schools and a middle school that are integrated into the overall land plan and serve as residential neighborhood gathering places.
- c. Provide park and open space amenities, including residential neighborhood parks, community parks, two neighborhood village greens, and interconnecting pedestrian-friendly and bicycle-friendly routes.
- d. Provide for potential civic uses within neighborhood village centers to serve the local residents.
- e. Plan for supporting utility services and infrastructure that would be phased in accordance with development.
- f. Provide community facilities and services (water service, sewer service, parks and open spaces, retail services, etc.) that accommodate the needs of the community and do not place an unfair burden on the City of Gonzales or Monterey County.

#### 16. Natural and Environmental Features

- a. Minimize water use through water conservation techniques including management of stormwater runoff through Low Impact Development (LID), use of detention basins and other devices to recharge groundwater aquifers, and use of drought-tolerant landscaping and efficient irrigation practices.
- b. Maintain consistency with the Water Supply Assessment (WSA).
- c. Adopt green building practices for site and building design that focus on resource and energy efficiency.
- d. Design landscape plans and guidelines to encourage native and adaptive plants that harmonize with the region's environment.

#### 17. Agricultural land conservation and protection

- a. Phase development of neighborhood villages, so as to allow continued agricultural use of undeveloped properties until such time as site preparation requires termination of use. Minimize the impact on existing agricultural operations, including agricultural land adjacent to Vista Lucia.

- b. Provide a minimum 200-foot buffer or transitional zone within Vista Lucia adjacent to all permanent and operational agricultural areas. Provide a minimum 200-foot buffer zone as a transition area adjacent to agricultural properties which have been identified for future growth.
- c. Mitigate impacts to permanent agricultural areas by recording a Right-to-Farm Notice on all Vista Lucia neighboring residential properties.

#### 18. Economic Vitality

- a. Promote a long-term financially viable project that provides housing, recreation, educational opportunities, and job creation.
- b. Provide housing choices for a range of income levels to help meet local housing demand.
- c. Establish financing mechanisms to develop and maintain the necessary infrastructure (e.g., water, sewer, storm drain, parks, open space, and roadways) to create a fiscally neutral project for the City.
- d. Phase development with adequate financing for infrastructure, public services, facilities, and amenities.

## 4.2 Project Characteristics

Several approvals are required to enable development. Characteristics of the proposed project are described below for each of the approvals being requested by the applicant.

### Specific Plan (General Plan Amendment)

Policy LU-2.1 in the General Plan requires that specific plans be prepared for new development proposed outside of the City’s incorporated area. Implementation Action LU-2.1.1 requires the City to adopt specific plans for all areas within the Urban Growth Boundary prior to approval of development entitlements. The City of Gonzales Specific Plan Procedures, adopted in September 2008, identify the process for adopting specific plans and described required content.

The project site is within the Urban Growth Area. Therefore, the applicant has prepared the *Vista Lucia Draft Specific Plan* (Kimley Horn 2023) to meet City requirements. It is included as Appendix H of this EIR. The specific plan includes the following chapters: Introduction; Development Plan; Circulation and Mobility; Development Standards and Regulations; Infrastructure and Public Services; and Administration, Implementation, and Financing. The specific plan represents the “roadmap” for physical development within the specific plan boundary. The specific plan boundary is co-terminus with the proposed annexation area boundary. Content of the specific plan is referenced throughout this EIR.

The specific plan includes land use classifications and development standards that differ from those contained in Title 12, Zoning Regulations, of the City of Gonzales Municipal Code. As a result, the City would adopt the specific plan by ordinance.

Information regarding land use, zoning, site planning, infrastructure planning and other specific plan components are described in the Land Use Plan, Zoning, and Development Capacity section below and summarized, where necessary, in the Regulatory Setting section of each environmental topic evaluated in this EIR.

The City Council would adopt the specific plan as a General Plan amendment. The General Plan land use plan would be amended to illustrate that the specific plan provides the land use direction for developing the project site. For the City Council to adopt the specific plan, it must make findings that the specific plan is substantially consistent with the General Plan.

## **Pre-zoning/Rezoning**

The applicant is requesting that the City pre-zone the project site. Proposed zoning is described in the Land Use Plan, Development Capacity and Zoning section below. The proposed zoning would become effective upon LAFCO's subsequent approval of the annexation, subject to any conditions imposed by LAFCO. The City would also act to approve rezoning for the project site. The City Zoning Code would be amended to identify that the specific plan provides development regulations that apply to the project site. The City would also amend the City zoning map to show that the specific plan is the regulating development for developing the project site.

## **Annexation**

The 768-acre project site is within unincorporated Monterey County. The site must be annexed to City prior to development.

LAFCO has discretionary approval over reorganizations of city and county boundaries, including annexations and attachments/detachments from special districts. The applicant is requesting the City to approve the annexation, then to forward a resolution of application for reorganization to LAFCO. The project site is also within the boundaries of the Monterey County Resource Conservation District and the Gonzales Rural Fire Protection District. As part of the boundary reorganization process, the project site would also be detached from the boundaries of these two districts.

The resolution of application would include requests to LAFCO to approve the annexation and approve the noted district detachments. The annexation and detachments would become effective upon LAFCO's approval of the reorganization, subject to any conditions imposed by LAFCO.

## Tentative Map

The applicant is requesting approval of the first of what is anticipated to be several tentative subdivision maps. The first tentative map represents the applicant's formal plan for developing a portion of the project site. [Figure 4-1, Tentative Map](#), shows the overall residential lotting, circulation plan, parcels for park sites to be dedicated to the City, temporary agricultural buffer easement locations and other information for the first tentative map. As shown in [Figure 4-2, Specific Plan Land Use Plan](#), the entire specific plan area has been preliminarily divided into a total of 30 development blocks for preliminary development planning purposes. The first tentative map identifies development plans for blocks 1 to 7.

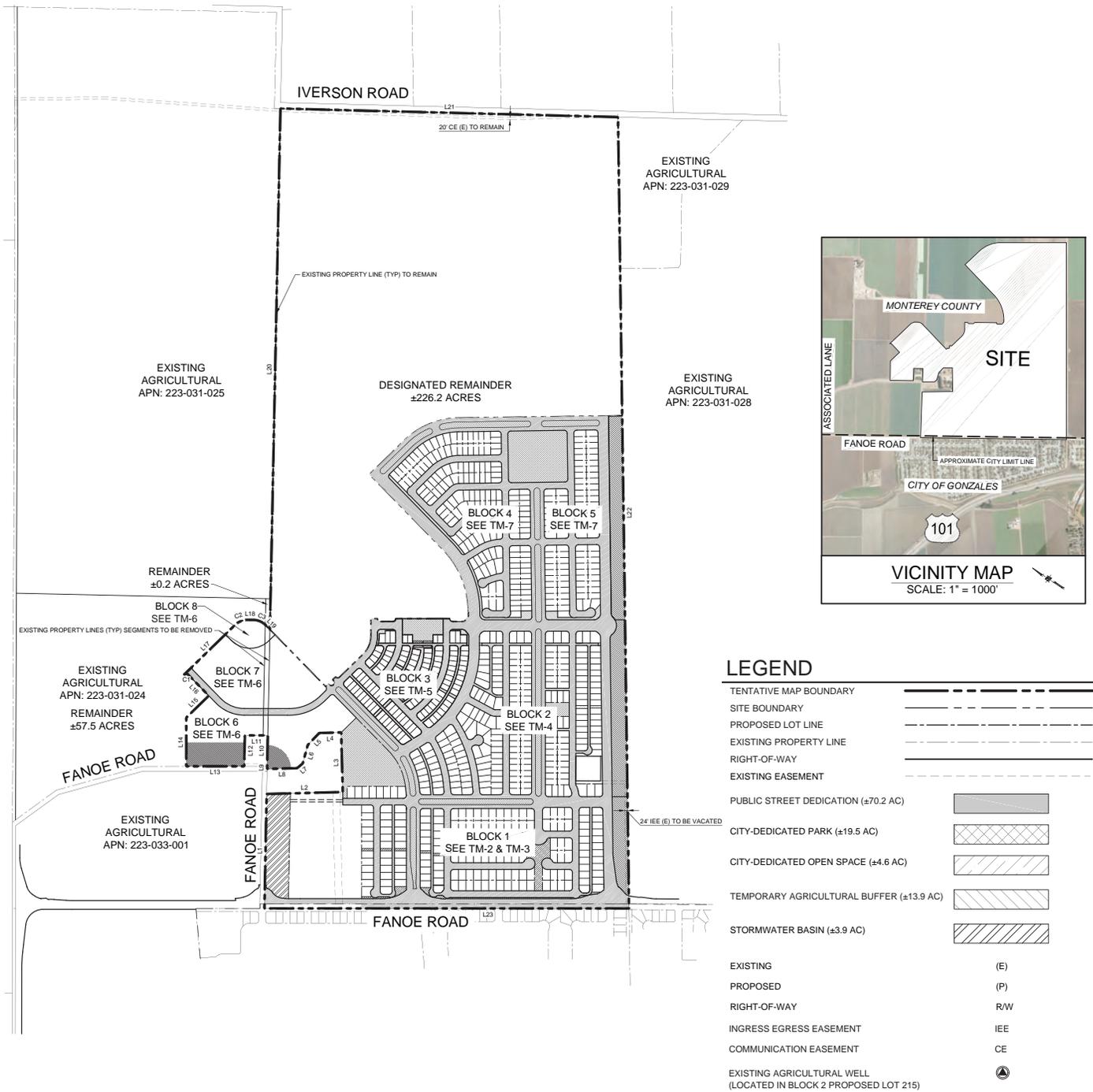
Figure 4-1 shows that development would be initiated adjacent to existing residential uses along Fanoe Road that are within the city limits, then proceed to the east. This is consistent with the logical extension of existing City services and utilities. The tentative map covers about 266 acres, of which about 166 acres would be used for homes, parks, schools, temporary agricultural easements, etc., with an additional 70 acres dedicated to public roadways. The tentative map includes 1,247 dwelling units. Single-family homes would be constructed within blocks 1-5, with higher density multiple-family dwelling units focused in blocks 6-8. Individual final maps covering portions of the tentative map area would be submitted for approval over time once the tentative map is approved.

The full tentative map plan set is available for review at the City of Gonzales Community Development Department.

## Specific Plan Land Use Plan, Development Capacity and Zoning Land Use Plan

Specific plan Chapter 2, Development Plan, includes a land use plan which shows the arrangement and types of proposed land uses, defines zoning districts that implement the proposed land uses, and identifies the development capacity for the various land use types. The land use plan and development capacity information are a primary basis for assessing the environmental impacts of future development that would occur under guidance provided in the specific plan. [Figure 4-2, Specific Plan Land Use Plan](#), presents the planned locations of residential, commercial, public facility (school), and park and open space uses, along with the anticipated internal road network. As noted above, the plan shows that the project site has been divided into 30 blocks for preliminary planning purposes.

For planning purposes, the specific plan has been divided into two neighborhoods, the Santa Lucia and Gabilan neighborhoods. The boundary line between them largely follows the planned Vista Lucia Parkway, as shown in [Figure 4-3, Santa Lucia and Gabilan Neighborhoods](#). Development planning for each neighborhood is summarized below.



Source: HMM Engineers 2023

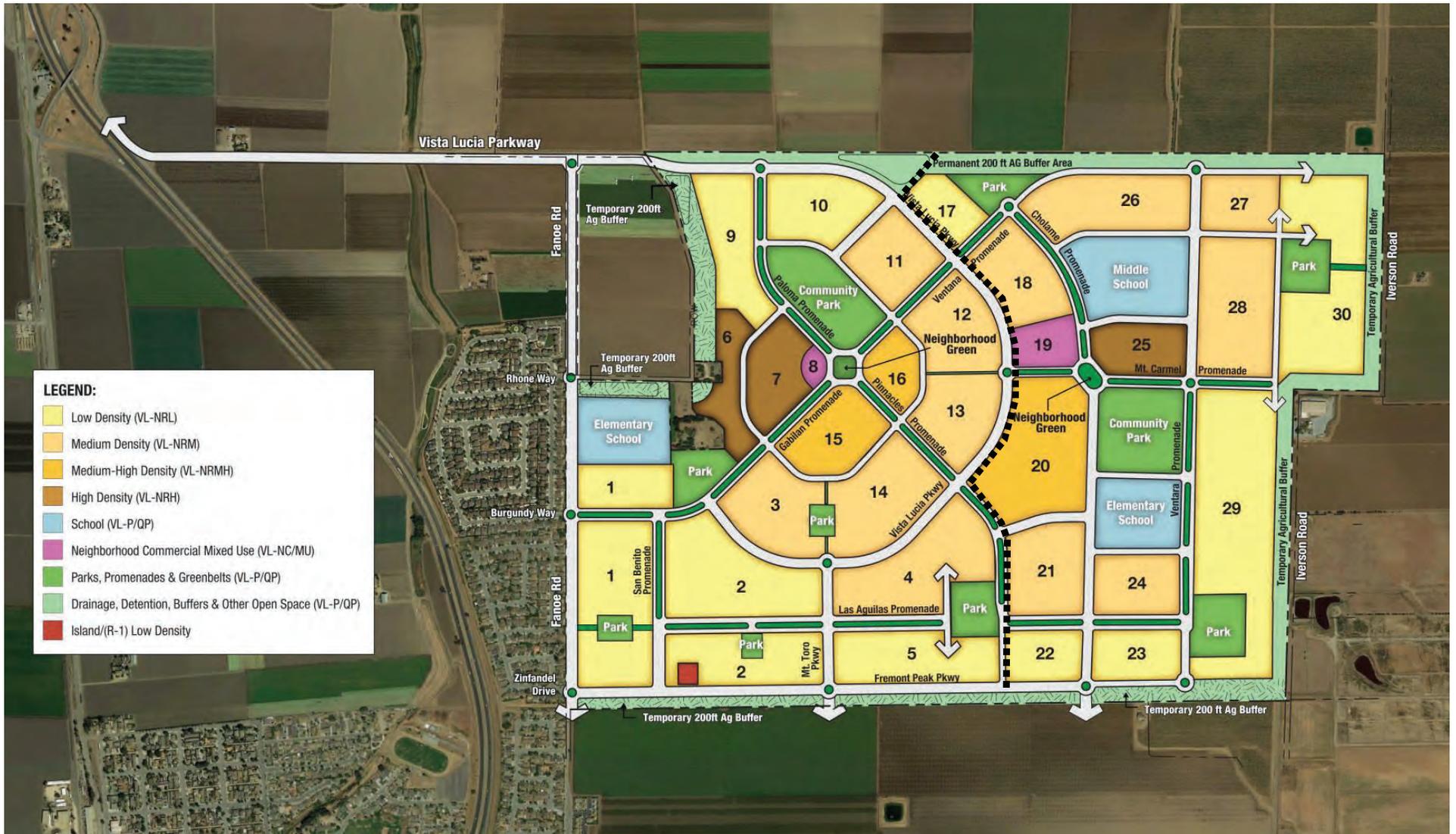
Figure 4-1

# Tentative Map

Vista Lucia Project EIR



*This side intentionally left blank.*



----- Village One/Village Two Boundary Line

Source: Kimley-Horn 2023



Figure 4-2  
Specific Plan Land Use Plan

Vista Lucia Project EIR

*This side intentionally left blank.*



Source: Kimley-Horn 2023

Figure 4-3  
Santa Lucia and Gabilan Neighborhoods

Vista Lucia Project EIR

*This side intentionally left blank.*

### *Santa Lucia Neighborhood One*

The Santa Lucia neighborhood is the approximately 399-acre western half of the site. It includes 249 acres of residential uses of varying densities; two acres of neighborhood commercial/mixed use, a 12-acre elementary school site, and 40 acres of parks, promenades, greenways, and neighborhood green. Storm water detention, storm water drainage facilities, buffers and other open space uses are planned on 30 acres. Roads and other miscellaneous uses make up the 65-acre balance of the neighborhood. Bike trails and pedestrian paths would link uses within the neighborhood.

### *Gabilan Neighborhood*

This neighborhood is approximately 372 acres. It includes up to 203 acres of residential uses at varying densities; an approximately six-acre neighborhood commercial/mixed-use center; a 12-acre elementary school site; an 18-acre middle school site; 79 acres of parks, promenades greenways and village green; and 73 acres of drainage/detention areas and other open space features. Roads and other miscellaneous uses make up the 35-acre balance of the Gabilan neighborhood.

### *Agricultural Buffers*

Temporary 200-foot-wide agricultural buffers are planned along a portion of the western boundary, and along the eastern and southern boundaries of the project site. These are considered to be temporary because future urban development could occur adjacent to these boundaries. A permanent 200-foot buffer is shown along the northern site boundary along Associated Lane. It is permanent because no future urban development is permitted north of the site. The agricultural buffers are designed to implement general plan policy and the City's 2014 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the County of Monterey (Section 2.1.f and 2.1.h). The MOA requires the use of agricultural buffers along the Urban Growth Boundary/Sphere of Influence Boundary to promote: 1) compatibility between urban uses within Gonzales and existing agricultural uses within its sphere of influence (SOI) that will eventually be developed with urban uses, and 2) compatibility between urban uses in the city and permanent agricultural uses within the county.

Refer to Section 5.0, Agricultural Resources, for more information.

### **Projected Development Capacity**

Residential development is the predominant proposed development type. [Table 4-1, Projected Residential Development Capacity](#), provides detail on residential development capacity. Proposed zoning for each of the proposed residential use types is also shown. [Table 4-2, Projected Overall Development Capacity](#), shows all land uses identified in the proposed land use plan, along with their projected gross acreage and where applicable, resulting development capacity. The residential use development capacity in Table 4-2 is taken from Table 4-1.

**Table 4-1 Projected Residential Development Capacity**

Proposed Use and Zoning	Gross Acres <sup>1</sup>		Gross Density Range (du/ac) <sup>4</sup>	Dwelling Units <sup>2</sup>		Total Units <sup>2,7</sup>	% of Total Units <sup>3</sup>
	Santa Lucia	Gabilan		Santa Lucia	Gabilan		
Neighborhood Residential Low (VL)	112	86	3-7 (5 du/ac target)	560	430	990	28%
Neighborhood Residential Medium (NRM)	96	81	6-9 (7 du/ac target)	672	567	1,239	35%
Neighborhood Residential Medium-High (NRMH)	20	25	9-15 (12 du/ac target)	240	300	540	16%
Neighborhood Residential High (NRH)	21	11	15-24 (20 du/ac target)	429	211	640	18%
Neighborhood Commercial/ Mixed Use <sup>5</sup> (NC/MU) <sup>5</sup>	2	6	7-15 (11.0 du/ac target)	26	63	89	3%
Subtotals by Neighborhood	249 <sup>6</sup>	203 <sup>6</sup>		1,927	1,571		
<b>Total</b>	<b>452</b>		<b>7.7 average du/ac</b>			<b>3,498</b>	<b>100%</b>

SOURCE: Pembroke Development 2023

NOTES:

1. Gross acres include all land parcels (including interior local streets and rights-of-way) designated for a particular residential category. According to City standards, the density of dwelling units per gross residential acre "is calculated exclusive of schools, parks, drainages, commercial areas, and major rights-of-way."
2. Projected dwelling unit counts within each residential land use category or parcel are based on estimated densities and may vary, as long as the City General Plan overall minimum density is met for the overall project, the overall unit count is not exceeded, and the City General Plan and 2008 City Neighborhood Design Guidelines and Standards "Required Mix of Residential Uses" (Table II-4, City GP, and Item B2 in the Neighborhood Design Guidelines) are met.
3. Unit counts must conform to General Plan requirements for minimum percentage of units by density category.
4. Allowable gross density ranges for parcels within each category are taken from City's 2008 "Neighborhood Design Guidelines and Standards" for the New Growth Area. The density range for VL-NRL has been increased to 3-7 du/ac in order to allow flexibility between Medium and Low-Density housing design.
5. Mixed Use residential units shall be above ground floor commercial. The residential component of this mixed-use area allows for up to 15 du/ac density within mixed use sites. (Note: Acreages of this land use are not included in total acreage, to avoid double counting the retail commercial component in Table 2-1 above)
6. Total acreage does not include Mixed-Use residential component, to avoid double-counting Mixed-Use acreages for commercial component.
7. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and units resulting from California Senate Bill SB9 are permitted, but are not included in the residential unit counts.

As described in Section 3.0, Environmental Setting, an approximately one-acre parcel located within and adjacent to the southeastern boundary of the specific plan area contains a single residence. That parcel and the residence located on it are shown on the land use plan. The parcel is designated Low Density Residential. It would be pre-zoned consistent with that designation. However, the project applicant does not control this parcel and, therefore, it is not considered part of the applicant's development plan for the remainder of the project site. It is assumed that this parcel would develop in the future independent of the remainder of the project site. Further, for purposes of this EIR, it is assumed that the parcel will remain in its existing use. Consequently, no additional development capacity has been assigned to the parcel and its inclusion in the specific plan would result in no new

development and no new environmental effects. Additional CEQA documentation would be required in the future as part of any application to develop the parcel consistent with the assigned land use and zoning.

**Table 4-2 Projected Overall Development Capacity**

Proposed Land Use and Zoning	Neighborhood Gross Acreages <sup>1</sup>			Maximum Capacity
	Santa Lucia	Gabilan	Total Acreage	
<b>Residential Uses</b>				
Residential	249 <sup>2</sup>	205 <sup>2</sup>	452	3,498 dwelling units <sup>3</sup>
<b>Commercial Use (NC/MU)</b>				
Neighborhood Commercial/Mixed Use	2	6	8	96,000 SF
<b>Parks and Schools (P/QP)</b>				
Neighborhood Parks (5)	12	16	28	-
Community Parks (2)	14	15	29	-
Promenades <sup>4</sup>	13	7	20	-
Village Green	1	1	2	-
Elementary Schools (2)	12	12	24	-
Middle School (1)		18	18	-
<b>Other Land Uses<sup>5</sup></b>				
Detention, Drainage, Buffers, and Other Open Space	30	43	73	-
Major Roads & Other Misc.	66	51	117	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>771</b>	<b>3,498 Dwelling Units + 96,000 SF Commercial</b>

SOURCE: Pembroke Development 2023

NOTES:

1. Approximate gross acreage includes all land (including interior local streets and rights-of-way) designated for a particular land use category.
2. Acreage does not include mixed use residential component to avoid double-counting mixed-use acreages for commercial component.
3. Excludes accessory dwelling units.
4. Promenades are landscaped linear parks for pedestrian, cycling, and other park uses, that will extend across the villages and link parks, public places, and other community elements, forming a green corridor system. The promenades may feature amenities such as a wide multi-use paths, flower gardens, entry arbors, kiosks, shade trees, landscape sculptures, sitting areas, fitness areas, and other landscape and recreational features.
5. Uses are allowed in other zoning districts.

## Tentative Map and Project Relationship to City Housing Goals

The proposed project has been planned in accordance with the Gonzales 2010 General Plan and is comprised of two neighborhoods. The Santa Lucia Neighborhood includes up to 1,927 single family and multifamily residential units and the Gabilan Neighborhood includes up to 1,571 single family and multi-family residential units. The 6th Cycle Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan 2023-

2031 prepared by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments in 2022, requires that the City plan for constructing 173 dwelling units for very low-income households, 115 dwelling units for low-income households, 321 dwelling units for moderate income households, and 657 dwelling units for above moderate- income households. The first tentative map for development of 1,247 dwelling units has been submitted to the City as described above. Based on current housing affordability guidelines and current lot configurations, up to 455 or approximately 37 percent of the dwelling units are anticipated to be “for rent” attached units, which would serve the very low- and low-income communities. Up to 296 or approximately 24 percent are anticipated to be “for sale” or “for rent” detached units on small lots, which would serve the moderate and above-moderate income communities. A total of up to 751 units or approximately 60 percent of the total dwelling units would be available as affordable housing.

Additional tentative maps are anticipated in the future depending on market conditions. Development per these future maps would occur beyond the horizon of the present 6th cycle period. Such development will continue to facilitate the City’s ability to meet its regional housing needs obligations.

## Zoning

The proposed zoning districts shown for each use type in Tables 4-1 and 4-2 are consistent with the uses and development intensities proposed for each use type. The allowable gross residential and neighborhood commercial/mixed use district density ranges are taken from the City’s 2008 Neighborhood Design Guidelines and Standards. The proposed zone districts and associated development standards (described in Chapter 4 of the specific plan) are unique to the specific plan and would apply only within the specific plan boundary.

## Infrastructure Planning and Construction

A range of on-site infrastructure improvements are required as part of the project. In addition, several off-site infrastructure improvements are needed either to serve the project and/or to serve cumulative development, including the proposed project. The environmental effects of off-site improvements needed to solely or largely serve the project are described in this EIR at the level of detail available about the improvements. Off-site improvements required to serve cumulative development, including the proposed project, are generally described here. However, the environmental effects of constructing these improvements would be addressed as part of separate CEQA processes conducted by the responsible lead agency prior to their construction.

## Water Supply Infrastructure

### *On-Site Improvements*

The applicant will be responsible for installing the in-tract (on-site) water system to serve the development. The improvements would be operated and maintained by the City as part of its public water system. The *City of Gonzales Existing City Plus Sphere of Influence Water Master Plan* (“water master

plan”) (Kimley Horn 2019a, Figure 10) identifies future water infrastructure needs, including for development of the project site. The water master plan shows that a new well is needed within the project site. Figure 5-2, Conceptual Potable Water System, in the specific plan shows that on-site water mains would be located throughout the site within planned roadway rights-of-way.

The applicant also plans to construct domestic water storage within the site. Enhanced storage is identified in the water master plan as necessary to serve new development within the SOI, including the project site. The tank site, assumed to be approximately one acre, is conceptually planned within the temporary agricultural buffer at the southwest corner of the project site. Two 500,000-gallon tanks are proposed in this location. Each would be about 30 feet tall and 60 feet in diameter. More information about planned water infrastructure can be found in specific plan Chapter 5, Infrastructure and Public Services and in Section 17.0, Water Demand and Supply, in this EIR.

### *Off-Site Improvements*

The water master plan identified that off-site improvements needed to accommodate cumulative development within the SOI, including the project, consist of a new 2.7-million-gallon storage tank (concept location shown near the intersection of Gloria Road and Iverson Road), an 18-inch transmission main in the Iverson Road/Johnson Canyon Road intersection, and an 18-inch main in Johnson Canyon Road. As described above, the applicant is proposing to construct a water supply storage within the project site that is needed to serve the project, rather than rely on storage that would otherwise have been provided via the off-site 2.7-million-gallon storage tank.

Specific plan Figure 5-2, Conceptual Potable Water System, shows portions of the off-site transmission mains described in the water master plan. These mains would be constructed by the City as part of its water master plan implementation process. Environmental effects of constructing the mains would be addressed in a separate CEQA process to be conducted by the City prior to initiating construction. Effects could include short-term generation of criteria air emissions, GHG emissions, and construction noise, and ground disturbance with the potential to impact biological resources and cultural resources.

Refer to Section 17.0, Water Demand and Supply, for more information.

### **Wastewater Treatment**

To identify future wastewater treatment and collection infrastructure needs for development within the SOI, including for buildout of the project site, the City prepared the *City of Gonzales Existing City Plus Sphere of Influence Wastewater Master Plan* (Kimley-Horn 2019b) (“wastewater master plan”). The wastewater master plan identifies alternatives for treating wastewater from future development. The wastewater collection infrastructure improvements for each treatment alternative are also identified. Of the alternatives, the City decided to require that wastewater from the project be conveyed to and treated at the City’s existing municipal wastewater treatment plant.

The capacity of the existing plant must be expanded to meet the treatment demand from the proposed project. The City has plans in place to do so in a phased manner. The first phase is to construct an industrial wastewater treatment plant with a capacity of 1.0 million gallons per day. Once that plant is completed, industrial wastewater that is now treated at the municipal plant would be treated at the industrial plant, thereby freeing up some capacity in the municipal plant. The City would then make improvements to the existing municipal plant to further increase its capacity. Each of the two phases would be initiated and completed by the City. Each is independent of the Vista Lucia project. The City has certified an EIR for the industrial wastewater plan project. Separate CEQA documentation will be required for the future municipal plant expansion. Refer to Section 16.0, Wastewater, for more information about wastewater treatment capacity expansion plans and associated wastewater conveyance requirements and improvements, and recycled water production planning.

## **Wastewater Collection Planning**

### ***On-Site Wastewater Collection***

Within the project site, wastewater would be collected via a series of gravity mains that would convey wastewater to the low elevations of the site. One or more lift stations would pump wastewater to a single point of connection at the southwest corner of the site. From there, wastewater would be conveyed via off-site collection infrastructure to the existing wastewater treatment plant. The sizes of the on-site collection mains, lift stations, and associated improvements would be determined based on future additional analysis. Specific plan Figure 5-4, Conceptual Wastewater Collection System, shows that on-site mains would be located within the rights-of-way of planned roadways. More information about on- and off-site wastewater infrastructure can be found in Chapter 5, Infrastructure and Public Services, in the specific plan, and in Section 16.0, Wastewater, in this EIR.

### ***Off-Site Wastewater Collection***

From a point of connection at the southwest corner of the site, the City has anticipated that wastewater would be conveyed to the City's existing collection system via a new 500-foot long, eight-inch gravity sewer main. The new main would be constructed by the City within a vacant linear area located between Zinfandel Drive and Chardonnay Drive. It would extend from the on-site point of connection to an existing lift station that pumps wastewater across U.S. Highway 101 and on to the existing wastewater treatment plant. [Figure 4-4, Off-site Wastewater Collection Main Location](#), presents the location of this main. Because this improvement is solely required to serve the project, environmental effects of constructing it are evaluated in this EIR.

Other points of connection from the site to the existing City system may be needed over time as the project site builds out. Their precise locations and sizes would be determined over time as development occurs and could be contingent on broader off-site wastewater collection system improvements made by the City over time. CEQA documentation would be prepared prior to constructing other points of connections once the specific project description(s) are known.



— Interim Wastewater Collection Main

Source: Kimley Horn 2019

Figure 4-4

# Off-site Wastewater Collection Main Location



*This side intentionally left blank.*

Improvements to the City's existing off-site collection system would also be required to accommodate cumulative development within the SOI, including the proposed project, and accommodate infill development within the city limits. These improvements are the City's responsibility. The City would conduct independent CEQA review for these improvements prior to their construction once specific improvement descriptions are available.

## Storm Water Infrastructure

The *City of Gonzales Conceptual Drainage Master Plan* (House Moran Consulting 2019) states that storm water storage basins are needed within the project site to accommodate a 100-year design storm event. The primary purpose of the basins is to ensure that under post-project conditions, the rate of storm water discharge from the site is no greater than under pre-project conditions. Specific plan Figure 5-6, Conceptual Drainage System, shows that storm drain mains will be located within planned roadway rights-of-way. Storm water will be directed to four on-site storm water storage basins within the site. Storm water which flows from off-site properties onto the site under existing conditions would be routed around the periphery of the site within proposed storm water channels planned within the project site that connect to existing storm water channels operated by the City. Information about planned storm water infrastructure can be found in Chapter 5, Infrastructure and Public Services, in the specific plan, and in Section 12.0, Hydrology and Water Quality, of this EIR.

## Circulation Infrastructure and Planning

### *On-Site Improvements*

The specific plan land use plan shows an internal street network that is designed to achieve the objectives described in Section 4.1. More detailed information about on-site road classifications, traffic calming features/locations, bicycle and pedestrian facility plans and improvements, and transit planning is included in Chapter 3, Circulation and Mobility, of the specific plan. The applicant's goal has been to design roadway circulation as a modified loop-and-grid system. The network design is intended to provide efficient connectivity and to create strong pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and safety using traffic calming features such as roundabouts, bulb-outs, and other design features. Figure 4-5, *Vehicular Connection Plan*, shows the planned backbone roadway system that facilitates through traffic and connects internal neighborhoods to each other and adjacent arterials.

As described in the specific plan, the residential neighborhoods are organized around pedestrian-friendly greenway linkages to parks, schools, and community centers to encourage walking, biking and active community interaction. Figure 4-6, *Connectivity and Walkability*, illustrates the locations of promenades greenbelts, Class I paths (separated paths along planned arterial roads and within promenade streets for exclusive bicycle and pedestrian use), and multi-use trails (bicycle and pedestrian paths placed in other locations including adjacent to agricultural buffers), that together with on-street sidewalks and on-street Class 2 bicycle facilities, illustrate how neighborhoods, parks, and schools would be linked via an extensive non-vehicular connectivity network. The system is

designed so that all residential neighborhoods are within a quarter-mile distance to a local neighborhood park, school, community park, local shopping center, and/or neighborhood green.

The specific plan includes detail about proposed roadway classifications and illustrates roadway cross-sections. Planned arterial streets include Vista Lucia Parkway (existing Associated Lane), Fanoe Road, Gabilan Promenade (extension of existing Burgundy Road), Mt. Toro Parkway (labeled Arterial A in the General Plan), and Fremont Peak Parkway (labeled Arterial B in the General Plan). Arterial roads would vary from two to four lanes. Promenade streets would have their own unique character and cross-sections. Promenade streets would function as connectors and provide vehicular and central pedestrian-bicycle linkages to various parks, school sites, and other community features. Each promenade street would include 10-foot-wide multi-use paths within its center greenway for pedestrians and bicycles. Refer back to [Figure 4-2, Specific Plan Land Use Plan](#), for the locations of planned arterial and promenade streets.

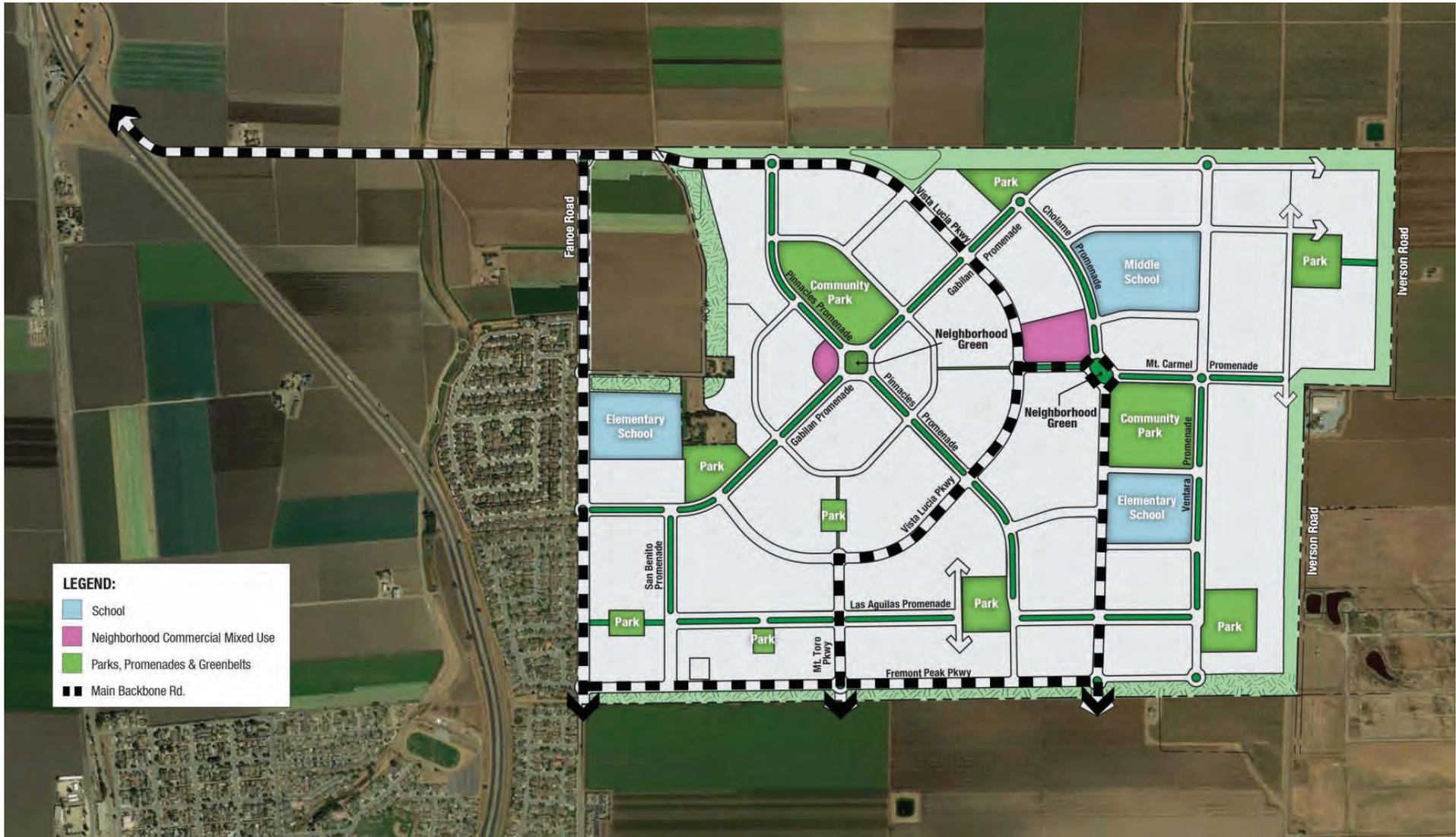
Two-lane local neighborhood streets, consisting mostly of grid and concentric paralleling streets would provide circulation within residential neighborhoods and between neighborhoods. They also would function to connect with the main roads which provide access from residential areas to public services, shopping centers, and recreation areas.

More information about planned roadway classifications, roadway standards and cross-sections, and non-vehicular connectivity can be found in Chapter 3 of the specific plan, *Circulation and Mobility*, and Section 14.0, *Circulation*, in this EIR.

The *City of Gonzales Sphere of Influence Circulation Study* (Kimley-Horn 2019c) (“circulation study”) includes an analysis of circulation network improvements needed to accommodate future growth within the SOI, including within the project site. Improvement requirements include new traffic signals and/or new roundabouts, roadway widening in specific locations, and new roadways. These improvement needs are shown in [Figure 4-7, SOI Circulation Study – Study Intersections](#), and in [Figure 4-8, SOI Circulation Study - Roadway Segment Geometry](#). The planned on-site roads and roundabouts implement a number of the overall improvements identified in the circulation study.

### ***Off-Site Improvements to City Circulation Network***

The City has determined that several off-site circulation improvements are needed to enable full buildout of the project site. These improvements are identified in the circulation study and are summarized on the following pages



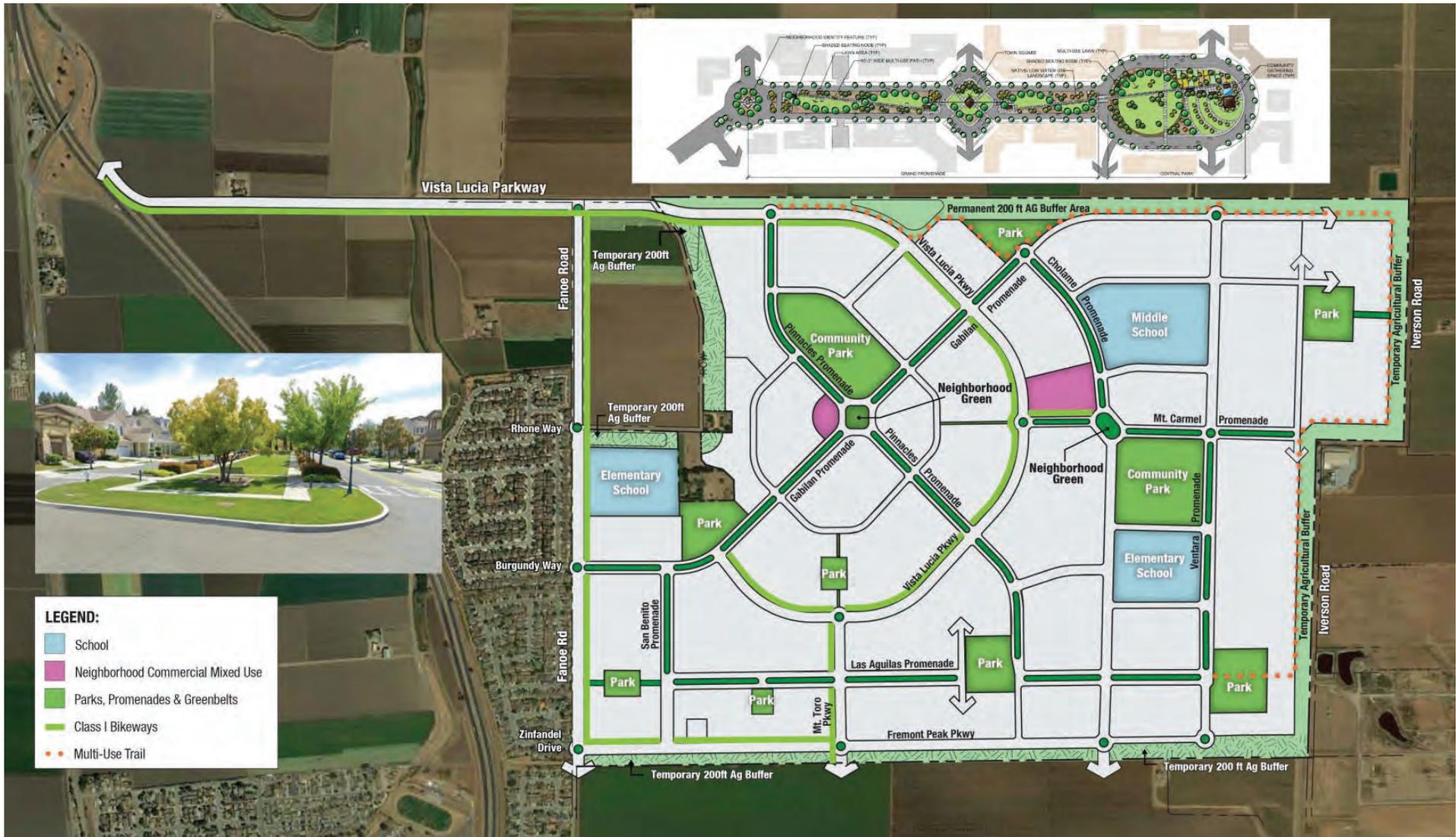
Source: Kimley-Horn 2023

Figure 4-5  
 Vehicular Connection Plan

Vista Lucia Project EIR



*This side intentionally left blank.*



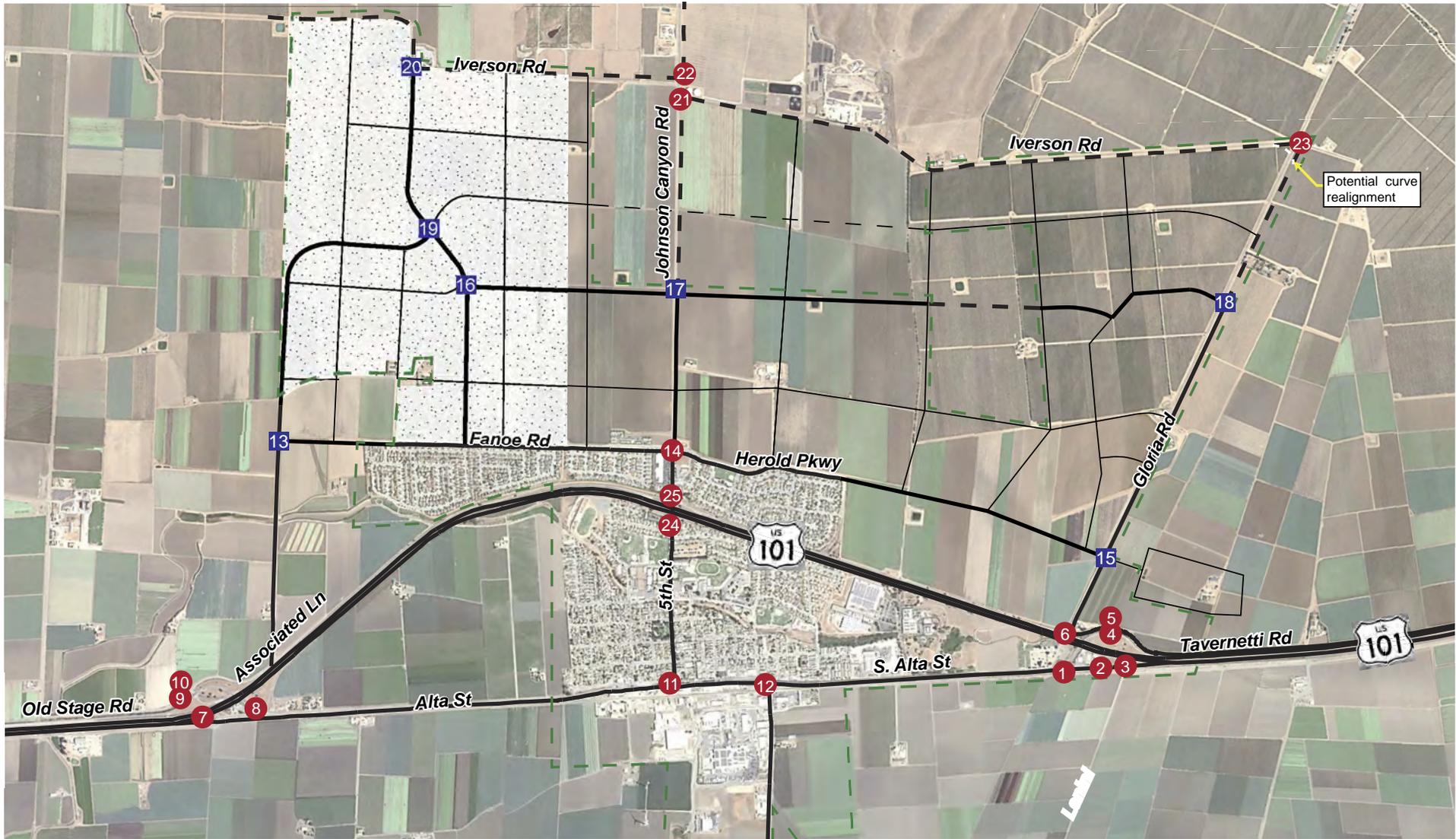
Source: Kimley-Horn 2023

Figure 4-6  
Connectivity and Walkability

Vista Lucia Project EIR



*This side intentionally left blank.*



**X** Existing Study Intersections

**X** Cumulative Study Intersection

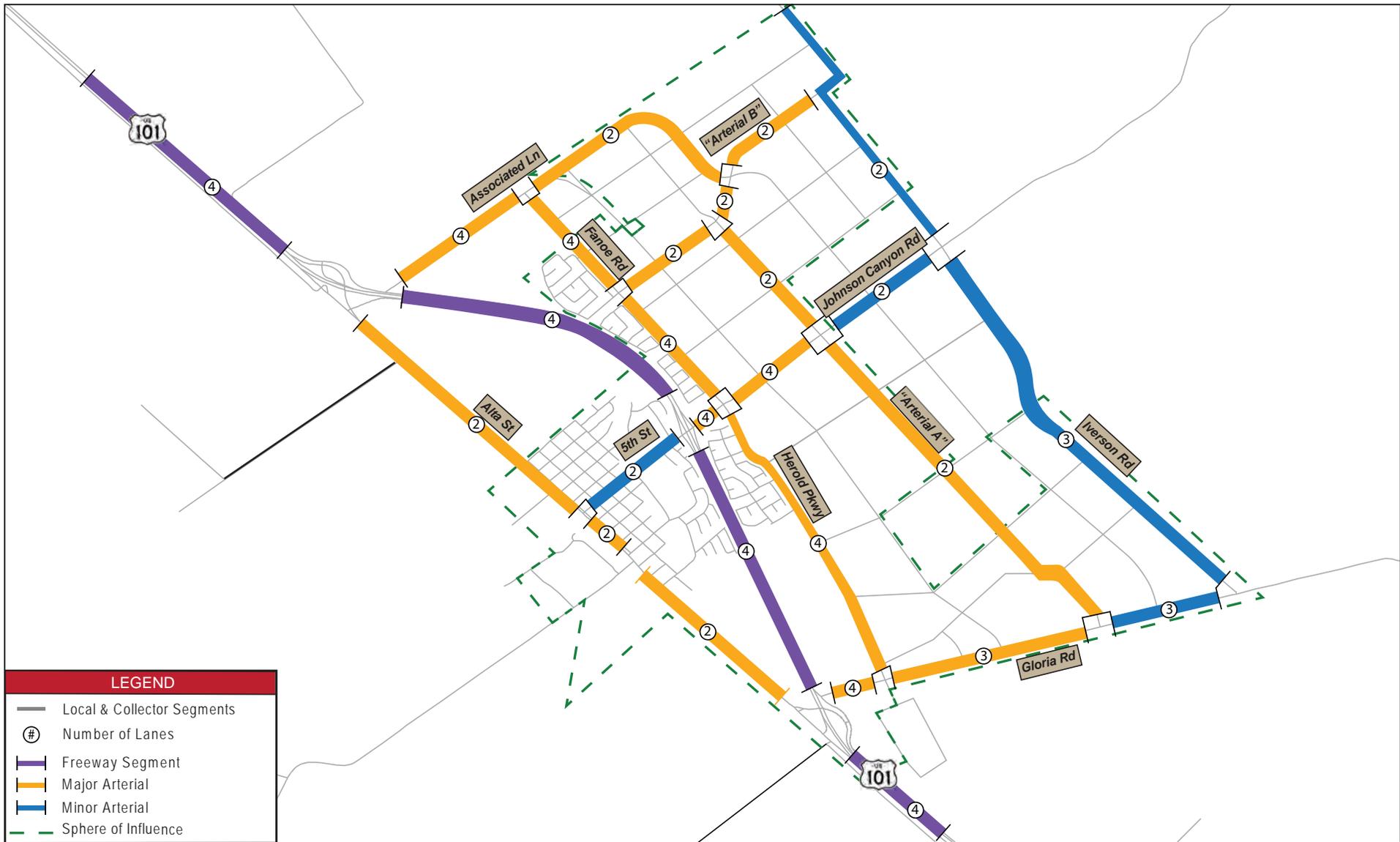
Project Site

Source: Kimley Horn 2019, Google Earth 2018



Figure 4-7  
SOI Circulation Study – Study Intersections

*This side intentionally left blank.*



Source: Kimley Horn 2019

Figure 4-8

# SOI Circulation Study - Roadway Segment Geometry



*This side intentionally left blank.*

**Fanoe Road.** There are two components to off-site Fanoe Road improvements: 1) widening an existing approximately 32-foot wide, two-lane section of Fanoe Road located south of the site between the Fanoe Vista Apartments and the project site; and 2) constructing a new extension of Fanoe Road from the northern project boundary to Associated Lane. The segment to the south of the project would be classified as an arterial roadway and widened to four lanes within an 86-foot right of way. The new segment to the north would also be constructed as a four-lane arterial, also within an 86-foot right of way. The improvement locations are illustrated in [Figure 4-9, Off-Site Circulation Improvements – City Roadways](#). The new Fanoe Road extension and widening Fanoe Road south of the project site would be funded by the applicant through payment of development impact fees and constructed by the City. Interim improvements for both sections would be constructed to accommodate the first 600 homes planned within the project site. Timing for constructing the roads to full arterial standards would be contingent on additional analysis of traffic patterns that would be required by the City prior to occupancy of the first 600 homes.

**Associated Lane.** The existing, approximately 15- to 25-foot paved section of Associated Lane located between the project site and U.S. Highway 101 would be also be constructed to four-lane arterial standards within an 86-foot right of way along most of its length. A roundabout would be constructed at the Fanoe Road/Associated Lane intersection and a new bridge over the Gonzales Slough would be required. The locations of these improvements are also illustrated in [Figure 4-9](#). Widening Associated Lane and constructing the roundabout and new bridge would be funded by the applicant through payment of development impact fees and constructed by the City. Interim improvements for both sections of Associated Lane would be constructed to accommodate the first 400 homes planned within the project site.

With the exception of the new bridge over the Gonzales Slough, the planned off-site improvements would occur on land that is predominantly in agricultural use or vacant. The bridge improvement may have potential to impact features under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Regional Water Quality Control Board, and/or California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Potential impacts of these improvements are largely limited to the construction activities associated with each and are addressed in relevant sections of this EIR.

#### ***Off-Site Improvements Under Caltrans Jurisdiction***

The capacity of the existing U.S. Highway 101/North Alta Street interchange is insufficient to accommodate new traffic from buildout of the project site as well as additional cumulative development within the SOI and city limits. A number of improvements would be required to expand interchange capacity. The circulation study includes a preliminary improvement concept that is based on Caltrans design standards. The concept is preliminary because Caltrans has authority to design and approve improvements to the interchange. Primary improvements include reconfiguring existing on- and off-ramps and constructing three, multi-lane roundabouts. [Figure 4-10, Preliminary Interchange Improvements](#), shows the conceptual interchange layout.

Caltrans would complete a project study report process for the interchange project. A project study report is a substantial document that includes preliminary engineering; detailed alternatives analysis; cost, schedule and scope information; and costs for environmental mitigation and permit compliance. A project study report must include an inventory of known environmental resources, identify potential environmental issues and constraints, describe potential hazardous materials or waste in the project area, define CEQA and potential National Environmental Policy Act documentation requirements, and include potential mitigation measures and their estimated costs. The City will execute a cooperative agreement with Caltrans District 5 to begin the project study report process.

Even though Caltrans will conduct its own independent environmental review process, reasonably foreseeable short-term impacts of constructing the interchange could include, but are not limited to: air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, greenhouse gases, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, and noise. The improvements would occur on land that is undeveloped. However, some components of the improvements may affect existing drainage features that may be under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Regional Water Quality Control Board, and/or California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

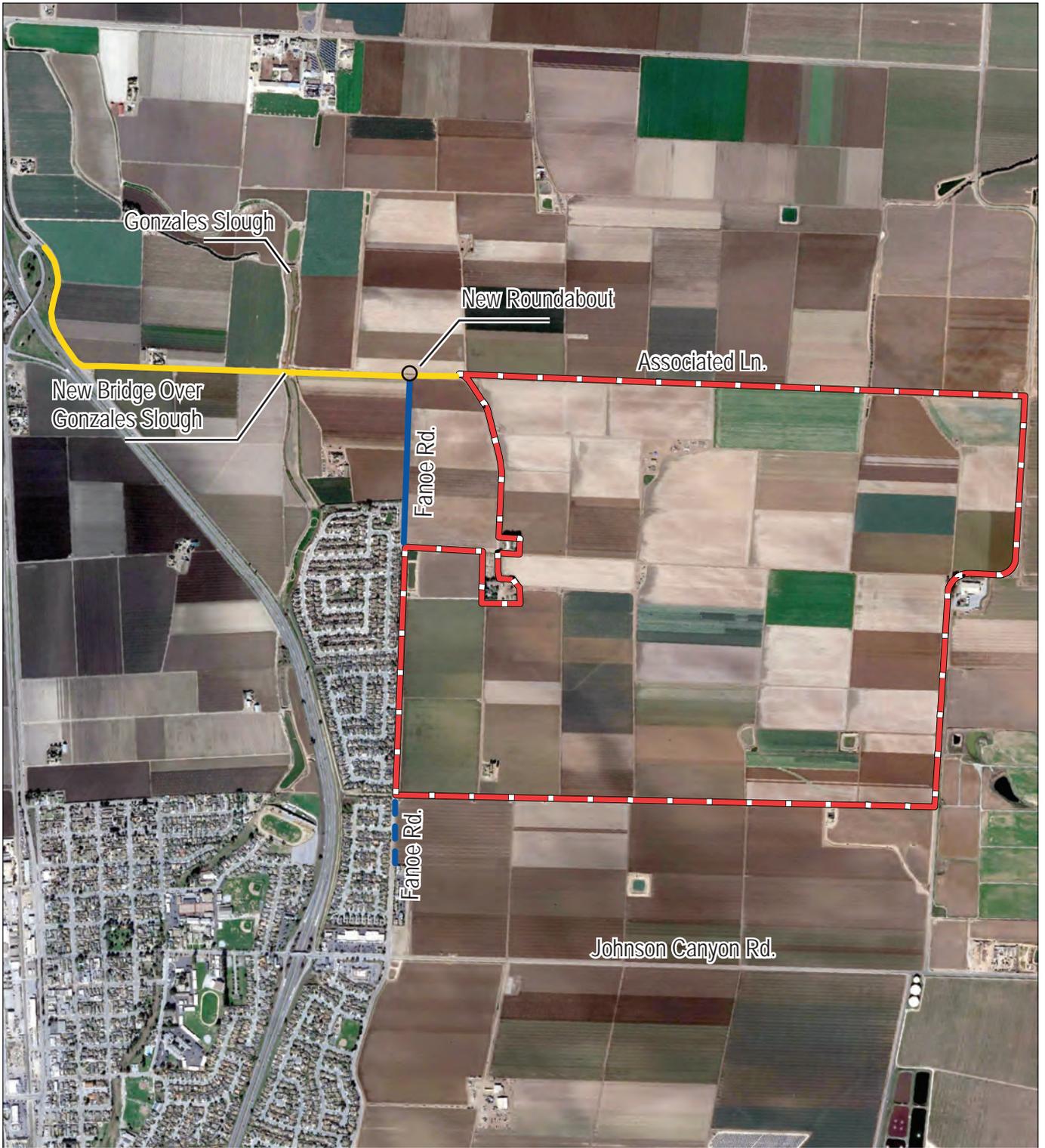
Refer to Section 14.0, Transportation, for more information.

## Development Phasing

The specific plan does not include detailed plans for development phasing, but does include a high-level phasing concept. Generally, development would be initiated in the southwest corner of the project site adjacent to existing urban development within the city, as illustrated by the first tentative map approval being requested by the applicant, and proceed eastward and northward over time. The sequence and size of future blocks of development would be dictated by market, economic, and other considerations.

Individual future projects would be served by infrastructure that is extended sequentially from the initial phase of development commensurate with the need created by such projects. Residential development would not be permitted without prior evidence from the applicant that cost of extending infrastructure can be funded by City impact fees and/or by the applicant, as would be stipulated in the project development agreement. As part of the City's annexation application to LAFCO that would be submitted subsequent to the City's approval of the project, a fiscal analysis will be prepared that identifies how infrastructure costs will be addressed commensurate with the need to support residential development. Parks and other ancillary features would also be constructed commensurate with need to support new residential development.

Schools would be constructed commensurate with need as determined by the Gonzales Unified School District. School needs are discussed in Section 15.0, Public Services, of this EIR.



Source: Monterey County GIS 2021, City of Gonzales 2021, Google Earth 2021



0 1750 feet

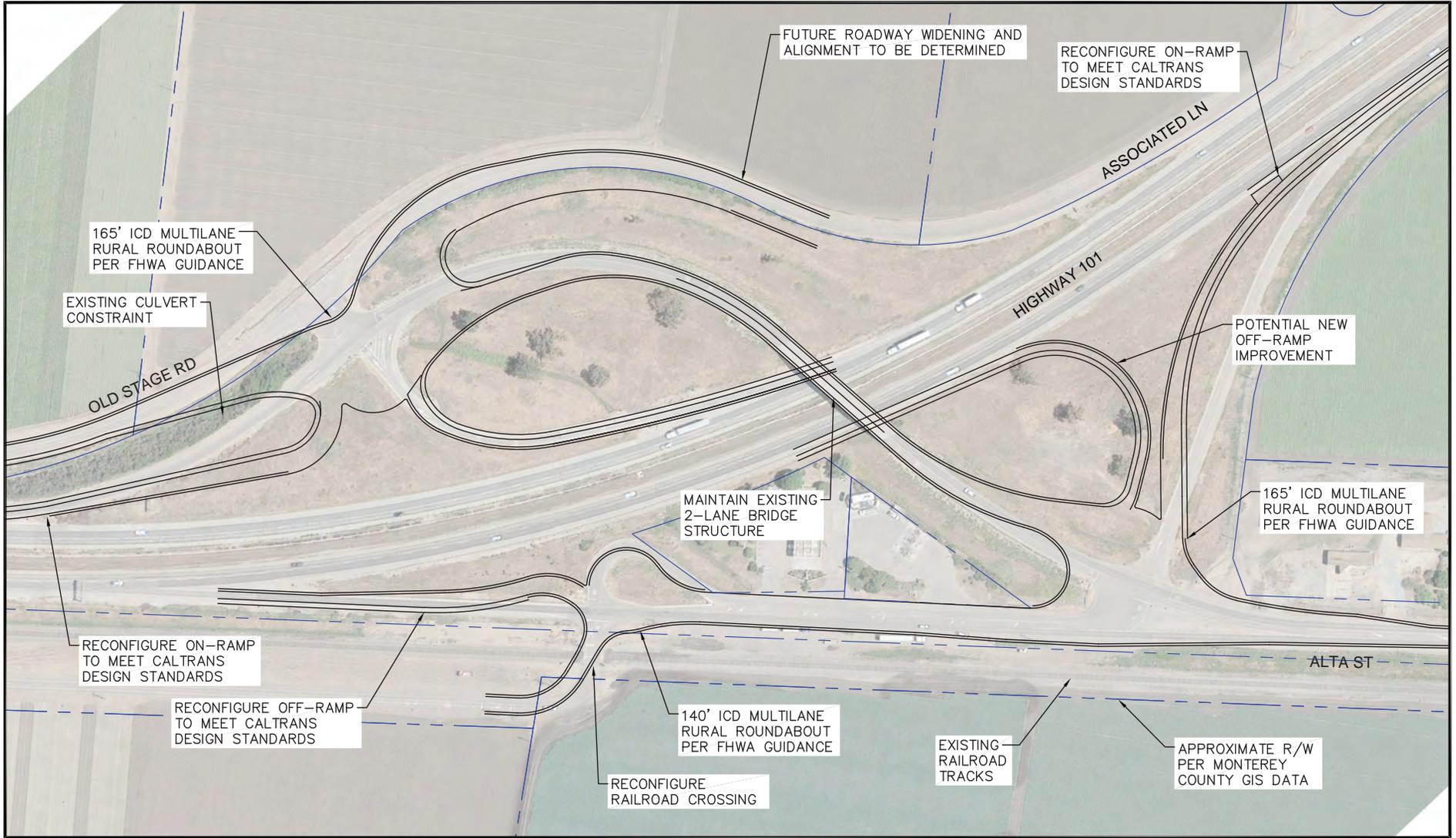
- Project Site
- New Fanoe Road Extension - 86' Arterial
- Roundabout at Fanoe Road and Associated Lane
- Associated Lane Widening - 86' Arterial
- Fanoe Road Widening - 86' Arterial

Figure 4-9

## Off-Site Circulation Improvements - City Roadways



*This side intentionally left blank.*



Source: Kimley-Horn 2021

Figure 4-10  
 Preliminary Interchange Improvements



*This side intentionally left blank.*

It is anticipated that development could be initiated in 2025, with buildout occurring over 20 years or more. It is also anticipated that development of all residential product types/densities would occur concurrently throughout the buildout period. Full buildout may not occur until after 2045.

## Population and Employment Capacity

### Population Capacity

Using a rate of 4.40 persons per household for Gonzales (utilized in the *City of Gonzales 2015-2023 Housing Element*) and the projected 3,498 residential units, future development could add up to 15,391 people to the City’s population. [Table 4-3, Vista Lucia Population Projection](#), summarizes projected new population. It is possible that some future individual homeowners could construct accessory dwelling units that could result in increased population. However, it would be speculative to assume whether such units would be constructed and if so, how many might be constructed. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 14145, Speculation, if a particular impact is too speculative for evaluation, this conclusion should be noted and discussion of the impact may be terminated. Consequently, no quantified projection of additional population growth that might occur with constructing accessory dwelling units has been made.

**Table 4-3 Vista Lucia Population Projection**

Number of Residential Units	Persons per Household	Total New Population
3,498	4.40 <sup>1</sup>	15,391

SOURCE: Pembroke Development 2023; City of Gonzales 2015

NOTE:

1. Persons per household figure taken from *City of Gonzales 2015-2023 Housing Element*

Anticipated future growth within the SOI, including the proposed project, represents the dominant source of future population growth for the city. As noted, the rate of new residential development within the site will be based on market conditions. It would be speculative to rely on any conceptual projection residential unit development rate per year over the duration of a project build out period that could be 20 years or more. Consequently, it would also be speculative to project the precise magnitude and timing of population-related environmental effects of the proposed project over any increment of time (e.g., water demand, wastewater generation, student generation/demand for school capacity, etc.). Nevertheless, the purpose of this EIR is to disclose the reasonably anticipated environmental effects of the project at the level of information available.

### Employment Generation

Employment generation from the commercial component of the project is projected at approximately 175 jobs, as summarized in [Table 4-4, Vista Lucia Employment Projection](#).

**Table 4-4 Vista Lucia Employment Projection**

Land Use	Square Feet <sup>1</sup>	Employment Density (SF per Employee) <sup>2</sup>	New Employees
Neighborhood Commercial/ Mixed Use	96,000	550	175

SOURCE: Pembroke Development 2023; City of Gonzales 2010

NOTES:

1. From Table 4-2.
2. Commercial use employment density from Gonzales 2010 General Plan, Table II-3.

## 4.3 Intended Uses of the EIR

The annexation, pre-zone request, specific plan, and tentative map requests require approval from the City Council. The City Council must certify the EIR before approving the requested entitlements. Monterey County LAFCO must then approve the annexation request. LAFCO would also utilize the EIR as the CEQA documentation for its subsequent action to consider the annexation/reorganization. The EIR would also be considered by responsible agencies as part of their decision-making processes for future project-specific permits and approvals over which they have discretion.

Actions and approvals required to implement the proposed project, including actions for which the EIR would be used, are listed below.

### City of Gonzales Actions

#### Actions for Current Requested Entitlements

- Certify EIR;
- Adopt CEQA Findings;
- Approve Pre-zoning;
- Approve Annexation;
- Approve Specific Plan;
- Amend General Plan land use map to identify the Vista Lucia Specific Plan;
- Amend the Zoning Map and Zoning Code to identify the Vista Lucia Specific Plan;
- Approve first Tentative Subdivision Map;
- Approve Development Agreement; and
- Adopt Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

## Actions Associated with Future Individual Project Specific Entitlements

- Additional CEQA Documentation (if required);
- Approve Tentative Map(s); and
- Approve Conditional Use Permit(s).

## Monterey County LAFCO Actions

- Adopt CEQA Documentation;
- Approve Reorganization Application including:
  - Annexation;
  - Detachments from the Monterey County Resource Conservation District and the Gonzales Rural Fire Protection District; and
- Approve Property Tax Transfer Agreement (approved by both the City Council and the County Board of Supervisors).

## Potential Responsible Agency Actions

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife - special-status species permitting;
- California Department of Transportation - approve various engineering and related studies and issue permits for improvements within U.S. Highway 101 right-of-way including the U.S. Highway 101/North Alta Road interchange;
- County of Monterey Department of Public Works – issue encroachment permit(s) for portions of Associated Lane constructed within County jurisdiction;
- County of Monterey Environmental Health Bureau – permit for removal of underground storage tanks;
- County of Monterey Local Agency Formation Commission – approve annexation;
- Regional Water Quality Control Board - approve National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit;
- United States Army Corp of Engineers - approve permit for impacts to Waters of the US; and
- United States Federal Emergency Management Agency – approve modification to the Flood Insurance Rate Map(s) for development within a flood hazard zone if necessary.

*This side intentionally left blank.*

## 5.0 Agricultural Resources

This section of the EIR assesses potential project impacts on agricultural resources by directly converting agricultural land to non-agricultural use and by potentially indirectly causing agricultural land to be converted to non-agricultural use. Agricultural land within the specific plan boundary and within the footprint of the planned off-site infrastructure improvements has been classified and identified, and the status of adjacent agricultural land and its potential to be converted has been evaluated. Mitigation of significant impacts is discussed in the context of applicable City and responsible agency programs and agreements.

Unless otherwise noted, the following sources were utilized:

- *Gonzales 2010 General Plan* (Revised June 2018);
- *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report* (“general plan EIR”) (December 2010);
- *Memorandum of Agreement between the City of Gonzales and the County of Monterey Regarding Working Cooperatively on Common Planning, Growth and Development Issues in Order to be as Effective as Possible in the Implementation of their Respective General Plans* (City of Gonzales and County of Monterey 2014) (“City/County MOA”);
- Monterey County Important Farmland Map (California Department of Conservation 2018);
- *Vista Lucia Draft Specific Plan* (Kimley-Horn 2023); and
- *City of Gonzales Municipal Code*, Chapter 12.150, Agricultural Resource Mitigation.

### Responses to the Notice of Preparation

The California Department of Conservation, Monterey County, and LAFCO submitted NOP responses that address agricultural resources. The responses generally focused on identifying impacts from conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use, establishing buffers between proposed urban uses and existing adjacent farmland, mitigation for loss of farmland and the City/County MOA regarding agricultural land conservation. Please refer to [Appendix A](#) for the NOPs prepared for the project and the responses to the NOPs.

## 5.1 Environmental Setting

This environmental setting section incorporates information provided in the general plan EIR where applicable and information available from the County and state agencies.

## Important Farmland

The general plan EIR identifies that approximately 11,000 of the 19,200 acres in the general plan planning area, of which the project site is a part, are classified as Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide importance.

Land in Gonzales was inventoried as part of the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program and mapped on the Monterey County Important Farmlands Map. The land mapped is classified into the following categories: Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance, Grazing Land, Urban and Built-Up Land, and Other Land. Public Resources Code (CEQA) Section 21060.1 defines agricultural land as "prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, or unique farmland, as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture land inventory and monitoring criteria, as modified for California." Therefore, the conversion of prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, or unique farmland may be considered a significant adverse impact.

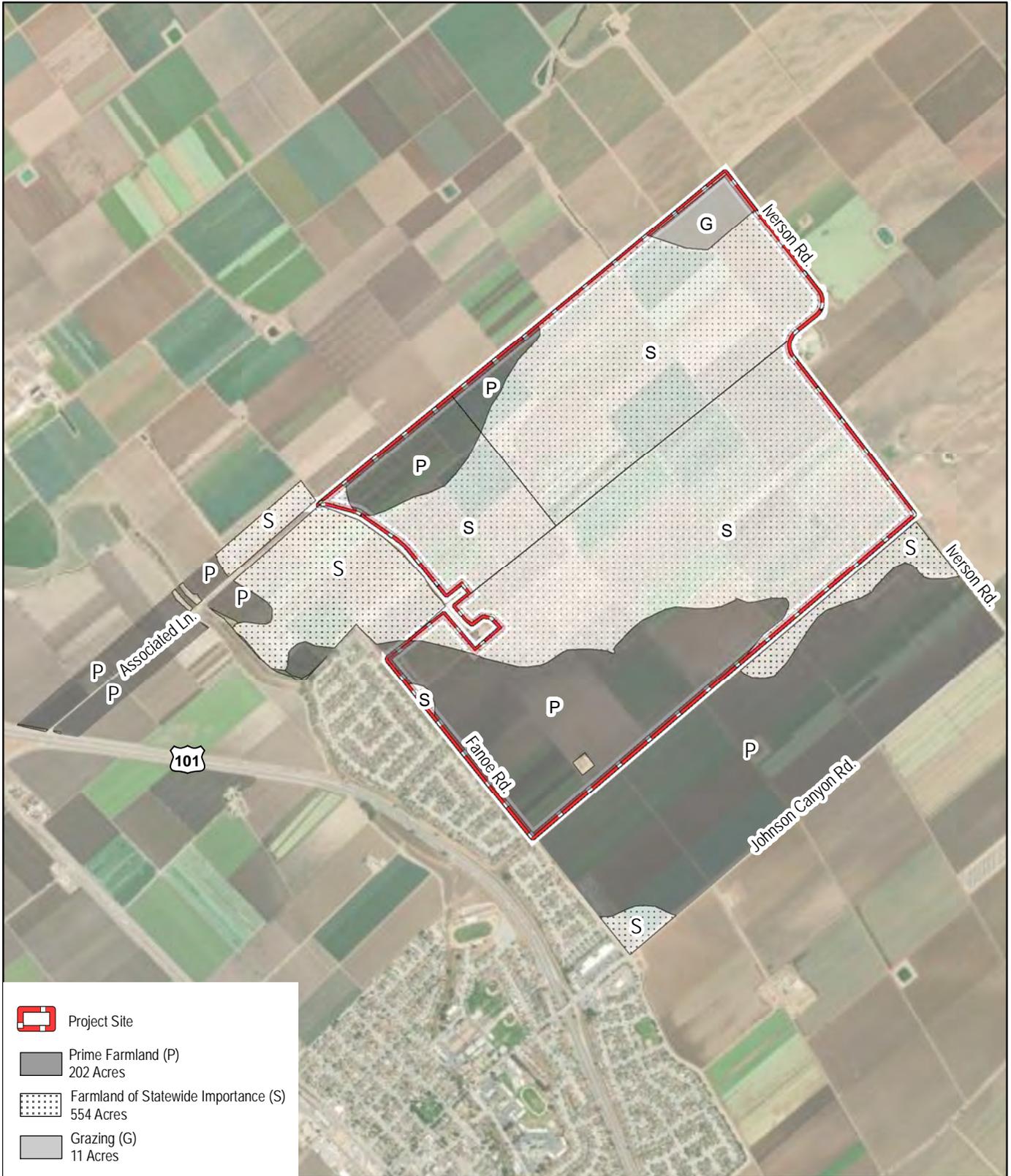
The farmland classifications for the project site as mapped by the California Department of Conservation are shown on [Figure 5-1, Important Farmland Map](#). The 768-acre project site contains 202 acres of Prime Farmland, 544 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance, for a total of 656 acres of "Farmlands", the loss of which would constitute a significant impact. The remaining balance of the site is comprised of about 11 acres of Grazing Land. Additional Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance is located along the margins of the segments of existing Fanoe Road and Associated Lane where both roads would be widened, and within the footprint of the new segment of Fanoe Lane that would be constructed between the project site and Associated Lane.

The project site is in active agricultural use as are lands adjacent to the site on the north, east, and south. A portion of the western boundary of the site is also adjacent to land in agricultural use. Please refer back to [Figure 3-2, Aerial Photograph](#), which shows the project site boundary in relationship to existing, adjacent agricultural uses. The off-site wastewater main would be located in a previously developed area that is not classified as Farmland.

As shown on the Williamson Act contracts map available through the Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, no part of the project site is under Williamson Act zoning.

## 5.2 Regulatory Setting

This section includes summaries of standards, regulations and plans that are pertinent to assessing the agricultural impacts of the proposed project.



Source: Monterey County GIS 2018, Google Earth 2018, California Department of Conservation 2016



Figure 5-1  
Important Farmland Map

Vista Lucia Project EIR

*This side intentionally left blank.*

## City of Gonzales General Plan and General Plan EIR

The general plan EIR identified that agricultural resource impacts from development planned in the general plan, including development of the project site, would be significant with regards to conversion of prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance to non-agricultural use and conflicts with existing agricultural Williamson Act contracts. The conflict with existing agricultural Williamson Act contract is not germane to the project site, as no part of the site is under a Williamson Act contract. The impact of converting farmland to non-residential use was found to be significant and unavoidable even with implementation of general plan policies. No mitigation measures were presented in the EIR. The related general plan policies that partially mitigate this impact are found in section 4.2.3.1 of the general plan EIR. These policies address topics that include phasing growth to manage the pace of converting farmland, maintaining compact growth to reduce the acreage of converted farmland, minimizing conflicts between urban growth and adjacent agricultural uses through the use of buffers (described in the general plan as typically 200 feet in width), requiring no-access utility prohibition strips be included in specific plans along boundaries with agricultural land, right-to-farm agreements, establishing permanent agricultural edges to the city, establishing an agricultural impact fund to help purchase agricultural land conservation easements in areas adjacent to the city, and promoting Williamson Act contracts for areas outside the general plan growth area.

## City of Gonzales/County of Monterey Memorandum of Agreement

In 2014, the City of Gonzales and the County of Monterey entered into a City/County MOA. The document was negotiated as a precursor to LAFCO's consideration of a City of Gonzales request to amend its SOI. The SOI amendment request was made to implement the general plan by expanding the SOI to include the growth areas identified in the general plan, including the project site.

A fundamental purpose of the MOA was to create mutual understanding between the City and the County about how agricultural land is to be managed to reduce impacts from agricultural land conversion as the city grows over time consistent with the general plan, and to identify County obligations with respect to agricultural land use at the margins of the City's planning area.

The City/County MOA reiterates the City's commitments to reducing impacts on agricultural land based on the policy and actions in the general plan that address this issue, and reiterates the County's general plan policy and other commitments to do the same in areas within and adjacent to the City's planning area. The City and County also both agreed to work together and with LAFCO and other cities in the Salinas Valley to develop a "Valley-wide Agricultural Land Mitigation Program" and a "Valley-wide Agricultural Buffer Program". As of the date of this draft EIR, the valley-wide programs noted have not been developed.

Other specific agricultural resource planning actions were agreed on pending LAFCO's approval of the City's SOI expansion request. These focused on the City agreeing to amend its general plan land uses to protect agricultural land while maintaining land supply for job-generating uses.

As part of the MOA, the City agreed to a number of actions that pertain directly or indirectly to the proposed project. These include, but are not limited to:

- limit future development within its urban growth boundary/proposed SOI (the boundary of the SOI proposed in 2014 and subsequently approved by LAFCO);
- establish permanent agricultural edges along defined boundaries between incorporated areas and unincorporated agricultural areas;
- utilize agricultural buffers to address compatibility between urban development and agricultural uses;
- work with the County of Monterey, LAFCO and other cities in the Salinas Valley to develop a "Valley-wide Agricultural Land Mitigation Program" and a "Valley-wide Agricultural Buffer Program";
- maintain agriculture by conserving and protecting agricultural lands within the planning area and maintain agricultural production until the time the land is converted to urban use;
- continue to implement policies and implementing actions in the Gonzales general plan that directly and indirectly conserve and protect agricultural land; and
- implement an Agricultural Land Conservation Program which requires landowners/developers proposing to develop land within the SOI that is designated Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance to implement one or more agricultural land conservation actions. The possible actions include:

- purchase/acquire agricultural easements at a 1:1 ratio and dedicate the easement to an agricultural land trust or other qualifying entity;

This action is considered by both parties to be the priority use of agricultural mitigation fees.

- purchase agricultural banked mitigation credits at a 1:1 ratio from a qualifying entity;
- pay an in-lieu mitigation fee; and/or
- implement other innovative approaches that result in agricultural land preservation within areas targeted by Gonzales.

## City of Gonzales Agricultural Mitigation Program

To address its responsibilities for conserving and protecting agricultural land as enumerated in the general plan and the City/County MOA, the City adopted an agricultural mitigation ordinance in April 2023 (Ordinance No. 2023-136). The ordinance contains the fundamental requirements for conserving and protecting agricultural land that the City will apply to new development within the SOI, including the proposed project. Section 12.150.040 of the ordinance specifies several options for mitigating impacts on agricultural land due to its conversion to non-agricultural use.

“Agricultural Land” is defined as, “Land that is either currently in agricultural use or substantially undeveloped and capable of agricultural use.” The mitigation options available to a project applicant are as follows:

1. Offer on-site Agricultural Mitigation Easements. Agricultural Mitigation Easements may be offered on the development project site consistent with the requirements of section 12.150.060 below.
2. Purchase and/or otherwise provide Agricultural Mitigation Easement offsite. Agricultural Mitigation Easements may be offered at a location other than the development project site consistent with the requirements of section 12.150.060 below.
3. Purchase agricultural banked mitigation credits. A development project can purchase agricultural mitigation credits from a qualified entity or the City, if available. Purchased credits must ensure that the amount of land preserved via the credit (in acres) is equivalent to the amount of land converted by the development project.
4. Pay a fee in-lieu of preserving agricultural land. This amount shall be verified through an appropriate independent City appraisal funded by the development project. In-lieu fees for agricultural mitigation will be updated with other City Impact Fees and schedules and kept current on a regular basis by the City. In lieu fees will be collected and deposited into the Agricultural Impact Mitigation Fund. Fees in-lieu will be collected by the City and used for city sponsored programs in support of agriculture.
5. Implement another approach as approved by the City. A development project may propose another approach to be approved by the City Council, or combination of the above options, that:
  - a. Results in the preservation of the same acreage of agricultural land that is converted which is proximate to the City of Gonzales, or
  - b. Includes agricultural mitigation easements in the Permanent Agricultural Edge.

Section 12.150.040(D) of the ordinance identifies exceptions for requiring agricultural mitigation. Actions that result in agricultural land conversion that are not subject to mitigation include: 1) land areas reserved to house persons of very low income and low income; 2) agricultural land that would be converted for public uses including: schools, public parks or public recreational facilities, permanent natural open space, trails and developed open spaces that are open to the public (fenced detention or retention basins are not exempt), and 3) City projects and city-initiated zoning and/or general plan amendments.

## 5.3 Thresholds of Significance

CEQA Guidelines Appendix G is a sample initial study checklist that includes a number of factual inquiries related to the subject of agricultural resources, as it does on a whole series of additional

environmental topics. Lead agencies are under no obligation to use these inquiries in fashioning thresholds of significance on the subject of agricultural resource impacts, or on any subject addressed in the checklist. Rather, with few exceptions, CEQA grants agencies discretion to develop their own thresholds of significance. Even so, it is a common practice for lead agencies to take the language from the inquiries presented in Appendix G and to use that language in fashioning thresholds. The City of Gonzales has done so here. Therefore, for purposes of this EIR, a significant impact may occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

- 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; or
- 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.

These are the two issues evaluated in the impact analysis below.

### Issues or Potential Impacts not Discussed Further

The Appendix G questions on the subject of agricultural resources include questions that are not relevant to the proposed project. These are as follows:

- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.

As noted in Section 5.1 above, the project site does not contain land under Williamson Act contact. Further, the site would be rezoned for uses that are consistent with the proposed land uses. Consequently, a conflict with existing County agricultural zoning for the site would not occur upon approval of the annexation and rezoning actions. Therefore, it is not necessary to discuss this topic further.

## 5.4 Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

This section includes information and data regarding potential impacts from direct and indirect conversion of agricultural to non-agricultural use, and is also used to identify mitigation measures for related significant impacts.

### Convert Farmland to Non-Agricultural Use

<b>IMPACT 5-1</b>	<b>Conversion of 767 Acres of Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance to Non-Agricultural Use</b>	<b>Significant and Unavoidable</b>
-----------------------	---	------------------------------------

Future development of the project site would convert 756 acres of agricultural land, comprised of 202 acres of Prime Farmland and 554 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance, to non-

agricultural use. Approximately 11 acres of additional farmland with the same classifications would be converted as a result of widening existing Associated Lane and constructing a new off-site extension of Fanoe Road, as described in Section 4.0. The roadway improvement conversion acreage was calculated by multiplying the planned width of the new/widened road segments by the number of linear feet of the subject segments.

This impact is significant and unavoidable, as once Farmland is committed to urban use, it is considered to be irreversibly lost for agricultural use. The proposed project would contribute to the significant unavoidable impact from farmland conversion that is already identified in the general plan EIR. There are no mitigation measures available to avoid or reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level. However, consistent with the City/County MOA and the City's agricultural mitigation ordinance, mitigation is available to lessen the significance of the impact.

The City's Agricultural Resource Mitigation Ordinance provides guidance for requiring the applicant to mitigate the significant impact from loss of farmland for uses that are not exempt from mitigation requirements. Several of the planned uses are exempt, including schools, trails, public parks, and land planned for residential uses with residential products that would be considered available to very low- and low-income residents.

To ensure that the applicant reduces the significant impact to the extent feasible consistent with the farmland mitigation ordinance, the following mitigation measure shall be implemented.

### ***Mitigation Measure***

5-1 The applicant shall mitigate the impacts of converting Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance by implementing one or a combination of the mitigation options included in the City's farmland mitigation ordinance (Ordinance No. 2023-136). The applicant shall specify in writing to the City the mitigation option(s) to be implemented. The proposed mitigation option(s) are subject to review and approval by the City Council prior to its decision to approve the project. The mitigation option(s) shall be completely implemented by the applicant prior to City approving any activity resulting in interference with agricultural practices on the property subject to conversion. Mitigation shall not be required for planned uses that are except from mitigation requirements per Section 12.150.040(D) of the ordinance including schools, trails, public parks, and land planned for residential products that would be available to very low- and low-income residents. The City shall not issue any grading permit, building permit, or encroachment permit until mitigation has been completed.

Implementation of this mitigation measure would lessen the significant unavoidable impact of farmland loss. However, because converting farmland to urban use is considered irreversible, the mitigation only partially lessens the impact; the impact would remain significant and unavoidable.

## Other Changes with Potential to Convert Farmland

IMPACT 5-2	Urban/Agricultural Land Use Conflicts with Potential to Convert Farmland to Non-Agricultural Use	Less than Significant with Mitigation
---------------	--	---------------------------------------

The proposed project would introduce urban uses to a site that is adjacent to agricultural land in active production. Developing urban uses adjacent to active agricultural operations can lead to land use conflicts. These include inconveniences or discomforts associated with dust, smoke, noise, and odor from agricultural operations; restrictions on agricultural operations (such as pesticide application) along interfaces with urban uses; conflicts with farm equipment and vehicles using roadways; trespassing and vandalism on active farmlands; etc. These conflicts can lead to constraints on agricultural operations and along with rising land values associated with urban development, create pressure for agricultural land owners to consider converting their land to non-agricultural use.

Agricultural buffers are designed to substantially reduce potential for land use conflicts at the urban/agricultural use interface by separating planned urban uses from active agricultural operations and the nuisances they have potential to create. As described in Section 5.2, Regulatory Setting, the general plan EIR identifies general plan implementing action COS-4.1.4 as one approach for reducing impacts of potential indirect impacts of new urban development from converting farmland outside the area planned for growth. That action calls for using buffers or transitional uses between permanent agricultural areas and residential development areas. The City has determined that temporary agricultural buffers are appropriate along edges of proposed urban development that abut land also planned for future urban development in the general plan, while permanent buffers are required adjacent to farmland located outside the City’s growth area that are not expected to develop with urban uses in the future. Agricultural buffers that are 200-foot wide or more are generally recommended by the Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner’s office, and the City has elected to follow that guidance for both temporary and permanent buffers to be incorporated into the proposed project.

Per the City/County MOA, the City agreed that utilizing agricultural buffers to address compatibility between urban development and agricultural uses is appropriate and would be pursued.

Figure 4-2, [Specific Plan Land Use Plan](#), shows that both permanent and temporary agricultural buffers are included in the specific plan land use plan. Buffers would be provided along all sides of the project site that are adjacent to farmland. Agricultural land to the north in the county is to be preserved in agricultural use in perpetuity. Thus, the buffer along northern property boundary would be permanent. The eastern project site boundary is also adjacent to land to be preserved in agricultural use in perpetuity. Thus, the buffer along Iverson Road at the eastern boundary of the project site is also planned as permanent. A portion of the agricultural land adjacent to the site on the south is within the SOI and a portion is designated urban reserve in the general plan. The buffer

along this site boundary would, therefore, be temporary and would remain in place until such time as the adjacent lands are developed. The buffer adjacent to the agricultural land to the northwest is also shown as temporary, as it is adjacent to land designated urban reserve that could develop in the future. All buffers would be a minimum of 200 feet wide. The permanent buffer on the east includes land within the project site as well as the adjacent Iverson Road. The temporary buffer along the southern boundary includes land within the site and the proposed Fremont Peak Parkway.

Impacts associated with urban interface conflicts were identified in the general plan EIR and found to be less than significant with implementation of general plan policies and implementing actions. In addition to general plan implementing action COS-4.1.4 referenced above, implementation action COS-4.3.5 is also key. It requires right-to-farm disclosure notices for new residential uses adjacent to active agricultural operations; this action would also serve to reduce pressure on agricultural uses in the event that nuisances were still to occur even with agricultural buffers in place.

To ensure that the applicant mitigates the potential for urban development to indirectly result in conversion of agricultural land, the following mitigation measure requires that the applicant maintain temporary agricultural easements adjacent land designated for urban development for as long as practically possible.

#### ***Mitigation Measure***

5-2           The proposed temporary agricultural buffers shall remain in place until such time as occupancy permits are granted for planned future development on adjacent agricultural lands that abut the temporary buffers. Any future proposed change in the use of temporary buffers shall be subject to review and approval of the Gonzales Community Development Director.

Implementation of this mitigation measure would ensure that the function of the temporary agricultural buffers is consistent with the intent of the City to preserve agricultural land from conversion for as long as is feasibly possible. This, along with required permanent agricultural buffers and requiring right-to-farm disclosure notices, reduces the potential for urban/agricultural land use conflicts that could otherwise create potential for indirect conversion of adjacent agricultural land such that this impact would be reduced to less than significant.

*This side intentionally left blank.*

# 6.0 Air Quality

This section of the EIR includes information needed to evaluate potential impacts of the project related to criteria air emissions and toxic air contaminants (TACs). Projected air emissions are quantified and compared to thresholds of significance to determine impact significance. The information is originally sourced from the *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report* prepared for the proposed project in September 2020 by EMC Planning Group and included as [Appendix B](#). However, since that report was completed, the Emissions Factor Model (EMFAC) used in the report to quantify mobile source emissions from the project has been updated. The California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) model used to quantify area and energy source criteria air emissions for the 2020 report has also been updated.

[Appendix B](#) also includes a memo entitled, “Air Quality and GHG Modeling and Regulatory Setting Updates” (“AQ/GHG memo”) that describes how these updated models were used to update the original 2020 modeling results. The updated results are attached to the AQ/GHG memo. The updated EMFAC model was also run with updated vehicle miles traveled (VMT) data generated by an updated VMT analysis prepared for the project as described in Section 14.0, Transportation. The updated results from EMFAC and CalEEMod modeling have been used in this section of the EIR to assess project impacts. Elements of the 2020 report other than emission modeling results remain largely applicable. Additional sources of information are introduced where applicable.

The prior *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report* describes the proposed project as an annexation and pre-zoning project. Subsequent to that report having been completed, the applicant submitted the proposed specific plan and a tentative map. The land use plan and development capacity identified in the specific plan is essentially unchanged relative to the conceptual land use plan and development capacity associated with the annexation as referenced in the *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report*. Other than the updated information provided in the AQ/GHG memo, the 2020 report remains valid.

Information in this section is also referenced from the *Vista Lucia Draft Specific Plan* included as [Appendix H](#) to this EIR.

## Responses to the Notice of Preparation

The Gonzales Unified School District commented that air quality effects on students should be evaluated. Please refer to [Appendix A](#) for the NOPs prepared for the project and the responses to the NOPs.

## 6.1 Environmental Setting

The environmental setting section of the *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report* in Appendix B incorporates information that is pertinent to assessing potential project impacts, and information specific to the proposed project and/or the project site. The information addresses topics that include the regional climate and topography, human health effects of criteria air pollutants and TACs, construction emissions, and presence of sensitive receptors.

### Sensitive Receptors

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

Existing sensitive receptors located adjacent to or in the vicinity of the project site include a residential subdivision located adjacent to the site west of Fanoe Road, two single-family residences located between Fanoe Road and the site, and a single-family home located along Iverson Road to the northeast of the site. A single-family residence is located just within the southern boundary of the site. Refer to [Figure 3-2, Aerial Photograph](#), for the location of sensitive residential receptors. New sensitive receptors (residents) would be introduced as the site is developed with residential and school uses.

## 6.2 Regulatory Setting

The *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report* includes summaries of applicable standards, regulations, and plans regarding air quality. Refer to that report and the AQ/GHG memo, also in Appendix B, for reference to the full suite of information that is germane to the air quality impact analysis.

### Air Basin Attainment Status

Gonzales is located within the North Central Coast Air Basin (air basin), which is under the jurisdiction of the Monterey Bay Air Resources District (air district). The air district is charged with regulatory authority over stationary sources of air emissions, monitoring air quality within the air basin, providing guidelines for analysis of air quality impacts pursuant to CEQA, and preparing an air quality management plan to maintain or improve air quality in the air basin.

The air basin is currently designated as a non-attainment area for State ozone and respirable particulate matter standards. With respect to national standards, the air basin has achieved attainment. The air district periodically prepares and updates plans in order to attain state and national air quality standards, to comply with quality planning requirements, and to achieve the goal of clean and healthy air.

## 2012-2015 Air Quality Management Plan

The *2012-2015 Air Quality Management Plan* (air quality plan) was adopted by the air district in March 2017. This remains the currently adopted plan. The air quality plan focuses on achieving the 8-hour component of the California ozone standard (the air basin has already attained the 1-hour standard), by continuing successful programs carried forward from the prior air quality management plan.

## City of Gonzales General Plan and General Plan EIR

The general plan EIR identified that for development planned in the general plan, including development of the project site as proposed in the specific plan, air quality impacts regarding consistency with the air quality management plan and generation of criteria air pollutants would be less than significant with implementation of policies and implementation actions found in section 4.5.3.1 of the general plan EIR. Impacts associated with increases in carbon monoxide concentrations would be less than significant with implementation of policies and implementation actions found in section 4.5.3.2 of the general plan EIR. Impacts related to the exposure of sensitive receptors due to increased diesel exhaust and other toxic air contaminants would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level by implementing mitigation measure AQ-1 in the general plan EIR, which requires new development to be evaluated for its proximity to TACs.

## 6.3 Thresholds of Significance

CEQA Guidelines Appendix G is a sample initial study checklist that includes a number of factual inquiries related to the subject of air quality, as it does on a whole series of additional environmental topics. Lead agencies are under no obligation to use these inquiries in fashioning thresholds of significance on the subject of air quality impacts, or on any subject addressed in the checklist. Rather, with few exceptions, CEQA grants agencies discretion to develop their own thresholds of significance. Even so, it is a common practice for lead agencies to take the language from the inquiries presented in Appendix G and to use that language in fashioning thresholds. The City has done so here.

For the purposes of this EIR, a significant impact related to air quality would occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

- Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan;
- 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; and
- Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.

## Issues Not Discussed Further in this Section

The Appendix G questions on the subject of air quality include a question for which no further discussion is needed. The question is as follows:

- Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people.

The proposed project is predominantly residential, with a minor amount of commercial development. Neither of these uses, nor other planned uses are considered sources of odors with potential to adversely affect a substantial number of people. Therefore, no further discussion of this issue is required.

## Air District Significance Threshold Criteria

### Air Quality Plan Consistency

A consistency determination is a process by which the Lead Agency demonstrates that the population associated with proposed housing projects in their area is accommodated by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (“AMBAG”) regional growth forecasts (Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments 2022). AMBAG’s regional growth forecasts for population and dwelling units are embedded in the emission inventory projections used in the air quality plan. Projects consistent with AMBAG’s regional growth forecasts have been accommodated in the air quality plan, and are therefore consistent with the air quality plan. Projects that are not consistent with AMBAG’s regional growth forecasts may require mitigation to ensure uniformity with the air quality plan.

### Construction Emissions Threshold

Construction activities are temporary impacts that, depending on the size and type of project, commonly occur in limited time periods. Construction emissions have the potential to significantly impact local air quality. The following are the impact thresholds for inhalable particulates, ozone, and other pollutants:

- Construction activities that directly generate 82 pounds per day or more of PM<sub>10</sub> would have a significant impact on local air quality when they are located nearby and upwind of sensitive receptors. Excavation and earthmoving activities generate about 38 pounds of PM<sub>10</sub> per day per acre, and minimal grading generates about 10 pounds per day per acre. Absent modeling, an impact is assumed when daily major earthwork exceeds 2.2 acres or minimal grading exceeds 8.1 acres. However, air district-approved PM<sub>10</sub> dispersion modeling can be used to refute (or validate) this determination. If modeling demonstrates that direct emissions under individual or cumulative conditions would not cause the exceedance of the state PM<sub>10</sub> standard [50 micrograms per cubic meter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ )] at existing receptors as averaged over 24 hours, the impact would not be considered significant. If ambient air quality in the project area already exceeds the

state standard, a project would contribute substantially to this violation if it would emit 82 pounds per day or more. If there are existing PM<sub>10</sub> emissions in the project area, dispersion modeling should be undertaken to determine if the project and existing emissions would cause a violation of the state PM<sub>10</sub> standard;

- Construction projects using typical construction equipment, such as dump trucks, scrapers, bulldozers, compactors and front-end loaders that temporarily emit ozone precursors, are accommodated in the emission inventories of State- and federally-required air plans and would not have a significant impact on the attainment and maintenance of the ozone standard; and
- Construction projects that may cause or substantially contribute to the violation of other state or national air quality standards, or that could emit TACs, could result in temporary significant impacts.

### Operational Emissions Thresholds

The majority of adverse impacts on air quality come from the long-term operations of a project. [Table 6-1, Thresholds of Significance for Criteria Air Pollutants](#), provides thresholds of significance for criteria air pollutants during operation of a project.

**Table 6-1 Thresholds of Significance for Criteria Air Pollutants**

Pollutants Source	Threshold(s) of Significance <sup>1</sup>
Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)	137 lb/day (direct + indirect) <sup>2</sup>
Nitrogen Oxides (NO <sub>x</sub> ), as Nitrogen Dioxide (NO <sub>2</sub> )	137 lb/day (direct + indirect) <sup>2</sup>
Respirable Particulate Matter (PM <sub>10</sub> )	82 lb/day (on-site) <sup>3</sup>
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	550 lb/day (direct)
Sulfur Oxides (SO <sub>x</sub> ), as Sulfur Dioxide (SO <sub>2</sub> )	150 lb/day (direct)

SOURCE: Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District 2008

NOTES:

1. Projects that emit other criteria pollutant emissions would have a significant impact if emissions would cause or substantially contribute to the violation of state or national ambient air quality standards. Criteria pollutant emissions could also have a significant impact if they would alter air movement, moisture, temperature, climate, or create objectionable odors in substantial concentrations. When estimating project emissions, local or project-specific conditions should be considered.
2. Because of the complexities of predicting ground level ozone concentrations in relation to the state and national ambient air quality standards, the air district has developed mass emissions thresholds for VOC and NO<sub>x</sub> that can be used to make significance determinations. The air district ties these thresholds to the local attainment status of ozone. Exceedance of VOC and/or NO<sub>x</sub> thresholds indicates that a project would be inconsistent with ozone standards, resulting in a significant contribution to ground level ozone impacts.
3. The air district's 82 pounds per day operational phase threshold of significance applies only to onsite emissions and project-related exceedances along unpaved roads. These impacts are generally less than significant. On large development projects, almost all travel is on paved roads (0% unpaved), and entrained road dust from vehicular travel can exceed the significance threshold. Please contact the air district to discuss estimating emissions from vehicular travel on paved roads. Air district-approved dispersion modeling can be used to refute (or validate) a determination of significance if modeling shows that emissions would not cause or substantially contribute to an exceedance of California and national ambient air quality standards.

## 6.4 Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

The *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report* and the AQ/GHG memo in [Appendix B](#) include data regarding criteria air pollutants and TACs that are relevant to the proposed project based on the thresholds of significance described above.

### Conflict with Air Quality Plan

<b>IMPACT 6-1</b>	<b>Proposed Project Does Not Conflict with the Air Quality Plan</b>	<b>No Impact</b>
-----------------------	---	------------------

The air district’s *Consistency Determination Procedure for Residential Development Projects* (Monterey Bay Air Resources District, no date) was used to assess whether the proposed project is consistent with AMBAG’s housing unit forecasts. The consistency determination procedure uses housing units rather than population because housing units can be easily tracked, while there are no such tracking measures for population.

AMBAG’s current *2022 Regional Growth Forecast* (Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments 2022) housing unit projections are made in five-year increments to the year 2045. The proposed project is projected to be built out over a period of 20 years or more, with the first residential units projected to be completed in 2025. The annual rate of home construction and the buildout period will be contingent on market conditions. The number of new housing units to be constructed in each five-year increment was estimated for purposes of preparing the consistency analysis. Based. Under the assumptions made, through 2045. The results of the consistency determination are included in [Appendix B](#).

### Conclusion

Since the project is within the AMBAG projections for housing units, the proposed project is consistent with the air quality plan and would have no impact from conflict with the air quality plan.

### Construction Emissions

<b>IMPACT 6-2</b>	<b>Fugitive Dust Emissions During Construction Would Exceed the Air District Thresholds and Degrade Air Quality</b>	<b>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</b>
-----------------------	---	--

The proposed project would require soil disturbance across the entire project site and on an additional approximately 11 acres for widening two existing off-site roadway segments and constructing a new off-site roadway segment. Grading and excavation activities with that disturb more than 2.2 acres per day and construction activities with minimal earthmoving that disturb more than 8.1 acres per day are assumed to be above the 82 pounds of particulate matter per day threshold of significance. Even though grading and construction would occur incrementally over time as the site develops, grading and construction activities are likely to result in soil disturbance that exceeds the air district particulate matter thresholds of 2.2 acres per day and 8.1 acres per day.

## Conclusion

Fugitive dust from grading and construction could result in significant PM<sub>10</sub> emissions because the amount of grading per day could exceed the air district criteria for generating fugitive dust. Therefore, this impact is potentially significant.

Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

### *Mitigation Measure*

6-2 To reduce fugitive dust emissions from grading and construction activities on the project site and for off-site circulation improvements, the following language shall be included in all grading and construction plans for on-site and off-site development prior to issuance of a grading permit all such development:

Dust control measures shall be employed to reduce visible dust leaving the area under construction. The following measures or equally effective substitute measures shall be used:

- a. Use recycled water to add moisture to the areas of disturbed soils twice a day, every day, to prevent visible dust from being blown by the wind;
- b. Apply chemical soil stabilizers or dust suppressants on disturbed soils that will not be actively graded for a period of four or more consecutive days;
- c. Apply non-toxic binders and/or hydro seed disturbed soils where grading is completed, but on which more than four days will pass prior to paving, foundation construction, or placement of other permanent cover;
- d. Cover or otherwise stabilize stockpiles that will not be actively used for a period of four or more consecutive days, or water at least twice daily as necessary to prevent visible dust leaving the site, using raw or recycled water when feasible;
- e. Maintain at least two feet of freeboard and cover all trucks hauling dirt, sand, or loose materials;
- f. Install wheel washers at all construction site exit points, and sweep streets if visible soil material is carried onto paved surfaces;
- g. Stop grading, and earth moving if winds exceed 15 miles per hour;
- h. Pave roads, driveways, and parking areas at the earliest point feasible within the construction schedule;

- i. Post a publicly visible sign with the telephone number and person to contact regarding dust complaints. This person shall respond and take corrective action within 48 hours of receiving the complaint. The phone number of the Monterey Bay Air Resources District shall also be visible to ensure compliance with Rule 402 (Nuisance); and
- j. Limit the area under construction at any one time.

The various fugitive dust reduction approaches included in this mitigation measure range from 34 to 90 percent effective (Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District 2008, Table 8-2). For example, watering would reduce dust from wind erosion by about half, and use of stabilizers or binders would reduce wind erosion by up to 80 percent. Two feet of freeboard and truck covers would reduce dust from trucking operations by about 90 percent. These measures, although not additive, would reduce overall dust emissions significantly, ensuring that the threshold for fugitive dust emissions would not be exceeded during construction activities.

## Criteria Air Emissions from Operations

<b>IMPACT 6-3</b>	<b>Criteria Air Pollutants During Operations that Exceed Air District Thresholds and Degrade Air Quality</b>	<b>Significant and Unavoidable for VOCs/Less than Significant with Mitigation for Other Pollutants</b>
-----------------------	--	--

Operation of the proposed project would result in new criteria air pollutant emissions from mobile sources (e.g., transportation vehicles) and energy sources (e.g., lighting electricity). Operational, mobile-source criteria air pollutant emissions were estimated using the 2021 Emissions Factor Model (EMFAC). The California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) version 2022.1.1.18 was used to estimate criteria air pollutant emissions from area and energy sources, as described in the AQ/GHG memo in [Appendix B](#). The model printouts are attached to the AQ/GHG memo. The results are presented in [Table 6-2, Unmitigated Operational Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions](#). Please refer to [Appendix B](#) for discussion of the assumptions and methodology used to generate the information in Table 6-2.

The proposed project is forecast to produce VOC, NO<sub>x</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, and CO emissions in excess of their thresholds of significance. The thresholds are set by the air district to reduce the cumulative levels of each pollutant generated by existing and projected development within the air basin to ensure air quality within the air basin does not reach non-attainment levels. Measures are required to reduce these emissions volumes to the extent feasible.

## Emissions Reduction Approach

### *Area Source Emissions Reductions*

As seen in Table 6-2, area sources are the dominant contributor to operational criteria air pollutant emissions. The CalEEMod results attached to the AQ/GHG memo in [Appendix B](#) show that about

94 percent of the area source emissions would come from hearths (fireplaces) within planned residential units. Consumer products, represent approximately 5 percent, and landscaping equipment and architectural coatings represent less than 1 percent each of the total area source emissions.

**Table 6-2 Unmitigated Operational Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions**

Emissions <sup>1,2</sup>	VOC	NO <sub>x</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	CO	SO <sub>2</sub>
Mobile	52.45	64.36	12.07	385.66	1.50
Area	2,403.60	74.73	419.12	3,285.30	6.15
Energy	0.69	12.42	0.95	9.70	0.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,456.74</b>	<b>151.51</b>	<b>432.14</b>	<b>3,680.66</b>	<b>7.73</b>
Air District Thresholds	137	137	82	550	150
Exceeds Thresholds?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

SOURCE: EMC Planning Group 2023

NOTES:

1. Expressed in pounds per day.
2. Results have been rounded, and may, therefore, vary slightly.

Since area sources dominate the operational emissions inventory, particularly emissions from fireplaces, measures which target these emissions would be most effective for reducing or avoiding significant impacts. CalEEMod includes the following measures (“mitigations” in CalEEMod) for area source emissions that can be triggered to calculate how area source emissions would decline with implementation of the measures:

- Prohibit use of hearths (fireplaces);
- Use low VOC cleaning supplies;
- Use low VOC architectural coatings; and
- Use electric landscaping equipment.

Use of low VOC cleaning supplies and electric landscaping equipment is up to the decisions of individual homeowners and cannot be enforced by the applicant or the City. Therefore, these reductions options are not considered implementable for the project. The specific plan states that fireplaces will be prohibited in all detached and attached residential units and Appendix A of the specific plan includes a requirement that architectural coatings which meet or exceed the air district’s VOC standards shall be used in all new development. Therefore, these measures are assumed to be binding on all future development, particularly residential uses. A mitigated CalEEMod run was conducted assuming fireplaces would be prohibited and low VOC architectural coatings would be used as stated. [Table 6-3, Area Source Emissions Reductions](#), summarizes the results, which show that area source emissions are dramatically reduced. The (area source) mitigated CalEEMod results are attached to the AQ/GHG memo in [Appendix B](#).

**Table 6-3 Area Source Emissions Reductions**

VOC	NO <sub>x</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	CO	SO <sub>2</sub>
132.17	1.03	0.04	112.36	0.01

SOURCE: EMC Planning Group 2023

NOTES:

1. Expressed in pounds per day.
2. Results have been rounded, and may, therefore, vary slightly.

### *Mobile Source Emissions Reduction Measures*

Mobile sources are the second largest contributor to operational criteria air pollutant emissions. Measures which reduce the number of miles traveled (VMT) by future residents and/or by users and operations of non-residential uses would also be effective at reducing criteria air pollutants, as well as greenhouse gases (GHG). The specific plan includes important features that would reduce VMT. Additional VMT reduction measures are considered. Both are described below.

**VMT Related Reduction Measures Included in the Specific Plan.** The specific plan includes design features that will serve to reduce VMT. Each of these is summarized below. The VMT reductions that would result from these measures are taken from the *Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions, Assessing Climate Vulnerabilities, and Advancing Health and Equity* (California Air Pollution Control Officers Association 2021), which includes detailed discussion of a range of GHG reduction options, including mobile source options focused on reducing VMT that can be considered for land use projects.

- **Pedestrian Network:** Providing a pedestrian access network to link areas of the project site encourages people to walk instead of drive. This mode shift results in people driving less, and a VMT reduction. The specific plan illustrates that on-street and off-street pedestrian facilities and trails are included throughout the project site as described in Section 4.0, Project Description. This measure can result in a 0-6.4 percent reduction in GHG emissions, which is being assumed to be analogous to a similar reduction in VMT. To be conservative, for the purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that this measure would reduce project VMT by 2.0 percent.
- **Construct Bike Facility:** This measure is about constructing bicycle lane facilities (only Class I, II, or IV) that connect to a larger existing bikeway network. Providing bicycle infrastructure helps to improve biking conditions within an area. This encourages a mode shift from vehicles to bicycles, displacing VMT and thus reducing GHG emissions. The specific plan illustrates that Class I bicycle facilities will be constructed within the site and along major site frontages to connect to the remainder of the city via Associated Lane. This measure can result in a GHG reduction of up to 0.8 percent. For the purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that this measure would reduce project VMT by 0.8 percent.

EMFAC was rerun with a total reduction in project VMT of 2.8 percent based on the measures above that are included in the specific plan. [Table 6-4, Specific Plan VMT Related Mobile Source Emissions Reductions](#), summarizes the results, which are attached to the AQ/GHG memo in [Appendix B](#).

**Table 6-4 Specific Plan VMT Related Mobile Source Emissions Reductions**

VOC	NO <sub>x</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	CO	SO <sub>2</sub>
50.98	62.56	11.74	374.86	1.45

SOURCE: EMC Planning Group 2023

NOTES:

1. Expressed in pounds per day.
2. Results have been rounded, and may, therefore, vary slightly.

### *Total Criteria Air Pollutant Reductions*

With the area source and mobile-source reductions identified above, total operational criteria air pollutant volumes would decline to the values shown in [Table 6-5, Total Operational Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions](#). The VOC volume would still remain above its threshold of significance.

**Table 6-5 Total Operational Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions**

Emissions <sup>1,2</sup>	VOC	NO <sub>x</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	CO	SO <sub>2</sub>
Mobile	50.98	62.56	11.74	374.86	1.45
Area	132.17	1.03	0.04	112.36	0.01
Energy	0.69	12.42	0.95	9.7	0.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>183.84</b>	<b>76.01</b>	<b>12.73</b>	<b>496.92</b>	<b>1.54</b>
Air District Thresholds	137	137	82	550	150
Exceeds Thresholds?	Yes	No	No	No	No

SOURCE: EMC Planning Group 2023

NOTES:

1. Expressed in pounds per day.
2. Results have been rounded, and may, therefore, vary slightly.

### *Additional Reduction Measures*

The following additional measures were found to be feasible for the project to further reduce criteria air pollutant emissions. The applicant has included language in the specific plan to address all of the measures. However, potential emissions reductions associated with these measures have not been quantified because the extent to which each would generate emissions reductions is uncertain. Therefore, the mitigated emissions volumes shown in [Table 6-5](#) are conservative. The additional measures include:

- **Incorporate Transit Facilities.** The project applicant shall consult with Monterey Salinas Transit, the regional transit provider, to identify one or more locations for incorporating transit facilities into the proposed project. Locating transit stops within and adjacent to the project site will facilitate the use of transit by people traveling to or from the project site. Transit promotes a mode shift away from individual vehicles, and reduced VMT. The specific plan addresses transit facility consultation needs and identifies responsibilities for constructing such facilities once the number and locations are defined in consultation with MST, if in fact MST agrees to extend transit service to the site at some point in the future.
- **Provide Traffic Calming Measures:** Providing traffic calming measures encourages people to walk or bike instead of using a vehicle by slowing traffic speeds and making conditions safer for walking and biking. Traffic calming feature examples include marked crosswalks, count-down signal timers, curb extensions, speed tables, raised crosswalks, raised intersections, median islands, tight corner radii, roundabouts or mini-circles, on-street parking, planter strips with street trees, and chicanes/chokers. The specific plan describes a range of representative traffic calming measures that would be employed. Measures including roundabouts and narrower than standard vehicle travel lane widths are illustrated in the specific plan. However, the specific plan does not include standards for the percentage of roadways that will include traffic calming measures.
- **Commercial and Multi-Family Residential Electric Vehicle Parking/Charging.** All commercial buildings and multi-family residential building shall provide priority parking spaces closest to buildings for electric vehicle parking. Conductive/inductive electric vehicle charging stations shall also be provided in these locations. The specific plan notes that electric vehicle charging stations will be included within all multi-family residential areas and commercial parking areas, and that priority parking will be provided for electric vehicles, but does not specify standards to define the extent to which these features will be employed.
- **Single-Family Residential Electric Vehicle Charging.** Install a minimum of two electric vehicle charging outlets at each single-family residential use garage, one interior and one exterior. This measure is identified in the development standards for detached residential uses in the specific plan.
- **Provide End of Trip Facilities.** Commercial buildings shall provide "end-of-trip" facilities for bicycle riders including showers, secure bicycle lockers, and changing spaces. End-of-trip facilities help incentivize using bicycles as a viable form of travel to destinations, especially to work. End-of-trip facilities provide the added convenience and security needed to encourage bicycle commuting. The specific plan identifies that such facilities will be provided in commercial buildings.
- **Install Programmable Thermostats in Residential Buildings.** Programmable thermostat timers allow users to easily control when the HVAC system will heat or cool a certain space,

thereby saving energy. Because most commercial buildings already have timed HVAC systems, this measure focuses on requiring residential programmable thermostats in all residential units. Appendix A of the specific plan states that programmable thermostats will be installed in new residential units.

- **Install Energy Efficient Appliances in Residential Buildings.** Using energy-efficient appliances reduces a building's electricity energy consumption and the associated air and GHG emissions from electricity production. The measure covers dishwashers, refrigerators, ceiling fans, and clothes washers. Appendix A of the specific plan includes this measure.
- **Install High-Efficiency Electric Furnaces and Water Heaters in Residential Buildings.** Like the measure above, efficient furnaces and water heaters will reduce electricity energy consumption and the associated air and GHG emissions from electricity production. Appendix A of the specific plan includes this measure.

## Conclusion

Projected VOC, NO<sub>x</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, and CO emissions would be in excess of their respective thresholds of significance in the absence of emissions reduction measures. Implementation of the following mitigation measures would ensure that emissions reduction measures identified in the specific plan are implemented as part of each individual future tentative map and use permit or other development entitlements.

### *Mitigation Measures*

6-3a To reduce area source criteria air pollutant emissions, the following reduction measures shall be required for all tentative maps and use permits and incorporated into contractor work specifications for future development:

- Fireplaces shall be prohibited in all residential units; and
- Architectural coatings that exceed the air district's VOC standards shall be used in all new residential and non-residential development.

The Gonzales Community Development Director shall require that these measures are included prior to approval of each tentative map and use permit, and ensure that the requirements are included all contractor work specifications prior to approval of building permits.

6-3b To reduce operational, mobile-source criteria air pollutant emissions, the following reduction measures shall be required for all tentative maps and use permits:

- Provide a pedestrian access network that internally links all uses and connects to all existing external streets and pedestrian facilities and with all or planned external streets and pedestrian facilities planned for adjacent properties; and

- Incorporate bike lane street design and common bike parking facilities in non-residential projects and multi-family residential projects, and incorporate land for bike trails.

The Gonzales Community Development Director shall require that these measures are included prior to approval of each tentative map and use permit.

Mitigation measures 6-3a and 6-3b would reduce all criteria emissions, but VOC emissions would remain above the VOC threshold of significance by about 25 percent. Therefore, the proposed project would have a significant unavoidable impact on air quality from VOC emissions.

To further reduce criteria emissions, with the co-benefit of reducing GHG emissions, the following emissions reductions measures shall be required prior to approval of each tentative map and use permit, and required as contractor work specifications where applicable:

- 6-3c Prior to approval of each tentative map and use permit, the project applicant shall consult with Monterey Salinas Transit to identify locations for incorporating transit facilities into the proposed project. Such facilities shall be constructed to Monterey Salinas Transit standards in each location defined by Monterey Salinas Transit.
- 6-3d Traffic calming measures shall be included as part of each tentative map. Such measures may include, but not be limited to: marked crosswalks, count-down signal timers, curb extensions, speed tables, raised crosswalks, raised intersections, median islands, tight corner radii, roundabouts, on-street parking, planter strips with street trees, and chicanes/chokers.
- 6-3e The following features shall be included as part of each tentative map and use permit and identified in contractor work specifications:
  - Conductive/inductive electric vehicle charging stations and signage prohibiting parking for non-electric vehicles within all multi-family residential and commercial developments;
  - End-of-trip facilities for bicycle riders including showers, secure bicycle lockers, and changing spaces in all new commercial projects;
  - Subsidized/discounted daily or monthly public transit passes;
  - Programmable thermostat timers in all new residential units;

- Energy efficient appliances, including dishwashers, refrigerators, ceiling fans, and clothes washers in all new residential units; and
- High-efficiency electric furnaces and water heaters in residential buildings.

Implementing mitigation measures 6-3c, 6-3d and 6-3e would further reduce criteria air pollutant emissions volumes and reduce GHG emissions. Because the reductions from these measures are not quantified, it is conservatively assumed that these mitigation measures would not reduce the significant VOC emissions impact to less than significant; the VOC impact would remain significant and unavoidable.

## Construction Toxic Air Contaminants

<b>IMPACT</b> 6-4	Operation of Construction Equipment Could Expose Sensitive Receptors to Toxic Air Contaminants	<b>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</b>
----------------------	--	--

The air district’s CEQA Guidelines do not provide screening thresholds for TACs generated by construction equipment. A threshold can be inferred from the *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective* (California Air Resources Board 2005), which recommends avoiding siting new sensitive land uses, such as residences, schools, daycare centers, playgrounds, or medical facilities, within 500 feet of a freeway, urban roads with 100,000 vehicles per day, or rural roads with 50,000 vehicles per day. This threshold is used to determine potentially significant impacts to human health from prolonged exposures to concentrations of mobile-source TACs. Conservatively, it can be inferred that construction activity located within 500 feet of sensitive receptors may, dependent on site- and project-specific conditions, contribute to exposures to concentrations of TACs that have the potential to adversely affect human health, albeit on a temporary basis.

As discussed in Section 6.1, Environmental Setting, sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the project site and off-site roadway improvements include a residential subdivision located on the west side of Fanoe Road, two single-family residences located in the vicinity of the proposed Elementary School on Fanoe Road, and a single-family residence located along Iverson Road to the northeast of the site. A single-family residence under separate ownership from the remainder of the site, is within the southern boundary of the site. The distance between these existing receptors and the project site is within the 500-foot screening distance recommended by the California Air Resources Board.

In addition, the project would introduce new sensitive receptors (residents) as the site is developed. New construction adjacent to new residential and/or school development within the site could also have potential to expose these receptors to health risks from construction TACs.

## Conclusion

Because existing and future sensitive receptors would be located within 500 feet of the project site where construction activities would occur, exposure of these receptors to TACs from heavy equipment diesel exhaust during construction is a potentially significant impact.

Implementation of the following mitigation measures would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

### *Mitigation Measures*

- 6-4a Prior to issuance of a building permit for any development located within 500 feet of existing off-site and future on-site residential and school sensitive receptors, the applicant shall prepare a Construction Staging Management Plan to be reviewed and approved by the Gonzales Community Development Director prior to issuance of a grading permit for such development. The plan shall include the following restrictions:
- a. Heavy-duty diesel vehicles shall be required to have 2010 or newer model year engines, in compliance with the California Air Resources Board's Truck and Bus Regulation, and shall not be staged within 500 feet of nearest sensitive receptors; and
  - b. Construction equipment and heavy-duty diesel trucks idling shall be avoided, where feasible, and if idling is necessary, it shall not exceed five minutes.

These measures shall be included in all contractor work specifications and construction documents.

- 6-4b The following language shall be included in all construction documents, subject to review and approval by the City Engineer, prior to issuance of a grading permit for all development: "All construction equipment shall be maintained and properly tuned in accordance with manufacturer's specifications and shall be checked by a certified visible emissions evaluator. All non-road diesel construction equipment shall, at a minimum, meet Tier 3 emission standards listed in the Code of Federal Regulations Title 40, Part 89, Subpart B, §89.112. Further, where feasible, construction equipment shall include the use of alternative fuels such as compressed natural gas, propane, electricity or biodiesel."

Implementation of these mitigation measures would reduce exposure of sensitive receptors to TACs by requiring cleaner engines and/or filters, by limiting idle times, and by locating non-compliant equipment sufficiently distant that concentrations of TACs would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

# 7.0 Biological Resources

This section of the EIR addresses existing biological resources on the project site and in locations where off-site improvements are planned to support future on-site development; the federal, state, and regional/local regulatory framework pertaining to biological resources; and anticipated impacts to sensitive biological resources as a result of the proposed project. This evaluation was conducted by an EMC Planning Group biologist and is based on reconnaissance field surveys of the project site and select off-site improvement locations, review of aerial photographs where other off-site improvements are proposed; review of scientific literature, aerial photographs, and technical background information provided by the applicant; and policies applicable to projects in the region.

Information in this section is derived from a variety of sources including:

- *Biological Constraints Analysis, Assessor's Parcel Numbers 223-031-024, 223-031-025, and 223-031-027, Gonzales, California* (Live Oak Associates, Inc. 2003);
- *Vista Lucia Annexation – Peer Review of Biological Resource Documents* (EMC Planning Group 2020);
- *Investigation of Waters of the United States, Cielo Grande Ranch, Monterey County, California* (Live Oak Associates, Inc. 2006);
- *Regulatory Status of the Tiger Salamander Population at Cielo Grande Ranch (Assessor's Parcel Numbers 014-030-029 through 014-020-032, 014-030-034 through 014-030-039; and 014-030-056) in Gonzales, Monterey County, California* (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS] 2007);
- Letter to Ms. Franlinda Khuon, *File Number 400217S* (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers [USACE] 2007);
- Letter to Ms. Franlinda Khuon plus jurisdictional features stamped map, *File Number 2006-400217S* (USACE 2014);
- *Request for New Verification for Vista Lucia in the City of Gonzales, Monterey, California (USACE File #2006-400217S)* (Live Oak Associates, Inc. 2021);
- *Fanoe Pond Tiger Salamander Genotyping* (Johnson and Shaffer 2006);
- *Historical and Current Genetic Composition of Mole (Ambystoma) Salamanders at Vista Lucia, City of Gonzales, Monterey California* (Live Oak Associates, Inc. 2019);
- *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report* (City of Gonzales 2010); and
- *Gonzales 2010 General Plan* (Updated 2018, City of Gonzales).

Live Oak Associates' biological resources reports were prepared for the applicant. In 2020, EMC Planning Group independently peer reviewed the Live Oak Associates reports, under contract to the City of Gonzales, to assess their content and consistency with professional standards. The Live Oak Associates' reports and the peer review report, are included in [Appendix C](#). The *Request for New Verification for Vista Lucia in the City of Gonzales, Monterey, California (USACE File #2006-400217S)* (Live Oak Associates, Inc. 2021) is also included in Appendix C, however this document was not included in the peer review.

Several of the information sources listed above describe the proposed project as an annexation and pre-zoning project only. Subsequent to these reports being completed, the applicant submitted the proposed specific plan and a tentative map for one of several future development phases. The project boundary, land use plan and development capacity identified in the specific plan is essentially unchanged relative to the conceptual land use plan and development capacity associated with the annexation. Therefore, the technical analyses in these reports remain valid for assessing the impacts of the annexation, specific plan and tentative map approvals being sought by the applicant. Analysis of off-site circulation improvement impacts is also included in this section to assess potential impacts of those improvements that have now been identified in association with the specific plan and tentative map.

## Responses to the Notice of Preparation

A comment on the Notice of Preparation from California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) was received on October 13, 2021. CDFW recommends addressing the following special-status species in the EIR: State-listed fully protected white-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*), State-listed species of special concern burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) and American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), and California Native Plant Society (CNPS)-listed 1B.1 Congdon's tarplant (*Centromadia parryi* ssp. *congdonii*). Survey results and potential impacts to these species are addressed below. The Notices of Preparation prepared for the project and responses to those notices are included in [Appendix A](#).

## 7.1 Environmental Setting

EMC Planning Group biologist Patrick Furtado conducted a reconnaissance-level biological survey of the specific plan area on June 4, 2020. A second reconnaissance-level biological survey of the proposed off-site circulation improvements at the U.S. Highway 101/North Alta Street interchange and Associated Lane widening improvement was conducted on October 12, 2021. All species observed were recorded in field notes, along with information on plant communities and wildlife habitats. Qualitative observations of plant cover, structure, and species composition were used to determine plant communities and wildlife habitats. Plant species were identified in the field or collected for subsequent identification. Searches for reptiles and amphibians were performed by overturning and then replacing rocks and debris, as well as assessment of potentially suitable habitat areas found on the site. Birds were identified by visual and/or auditory recognition; mammals were identified by diagnostic signs (including scat and tracks).

In locations where off-site improvements are planned to support future on-site development, a review of current and historic aerial photographs and the natural resource databases was conducted to determine the general biological conditions present.

## Existing Conditions at the Project Site

The project site is located east of U.S. Highway 101, between Fanoe Road and Iverson Road, on the Gonzales U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangle map. It consists primarily of active agricultural fields along with constructed irrigation canals and detention basins, dirt access roads, and some maintenance areas and buildings. [Figure 7-1, Habitat Map](#), shows the location of habitats and biological features at the project site and within the vicinity. Features mapped in the National Wetland Inventory are also included. The site is bordered to the west by residential development, and by farmland in all other directions.

The Salinas Valley has a Mediterranean climate with warm to hot dry summers and cool winters. Average annual rainfall is approximately 17 inches, almost 85 percent of which falls between the months of October and March. Elevation on the site ranges from about 150 to 270 feet, and water infiltrates the soils unless directed into irrigation canals that drain into a slough located west of the site. Aquatic features on the site have been heavily modified for agricultural uses and natural drainage features are absent (Live Oak Associates, Inc. 2003).

Wildlife habitat quality within the project site is considered low due to the level of development and disturbance from agricultural activities. The borders of the agricultural fields contain scattered ruderal (weedy) plants, such as non-native cheeseweed (*Malva parviflora*), prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*), and black mustard (*Brassica nigra*). Plant cover required by many animal species is intensively managed through the regular application of herbicides. The detention basins are also regularly cleared of vegetation but at times support common wetland plants such as tule/bulrush (*Schoenoplectus* sp.), and the irrigation canals contain patches of non-native vegetation including sweet fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*), radish (*Raphanus sativus*), Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), barley (*Hordeum murinum*), bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*), and annual beard grass (*Polypogon monspeliensis*).

Common mammal species that could possibly occur include raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*), and California ground squirrel (*Spermophilus beecheyi*); common reptiles may include western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*) and common garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*). Species of small rodents including mice (*Mus musculus*, *Reithrodontomys megalotis*, and *Peromyscus maniculatus*). California vole (*Microtus californicus*) may also occur. No mammal, reptile, or amphibian species were observed during the June 2020 site visit, however active Botta's pocket gopher (*Thomomys bottae*) mounds were observed on the banks of Pond 5. Biologists from Live Oak Associates also found numerous California ground squirrel burrows present along the banks of the ponds in 2003 (Live Oak Associates, Inc. 2003). These ground squirrel burrows were not present in June 2020, likely due to bait stations placed throughout the project site.

## Wetlands and Waterways

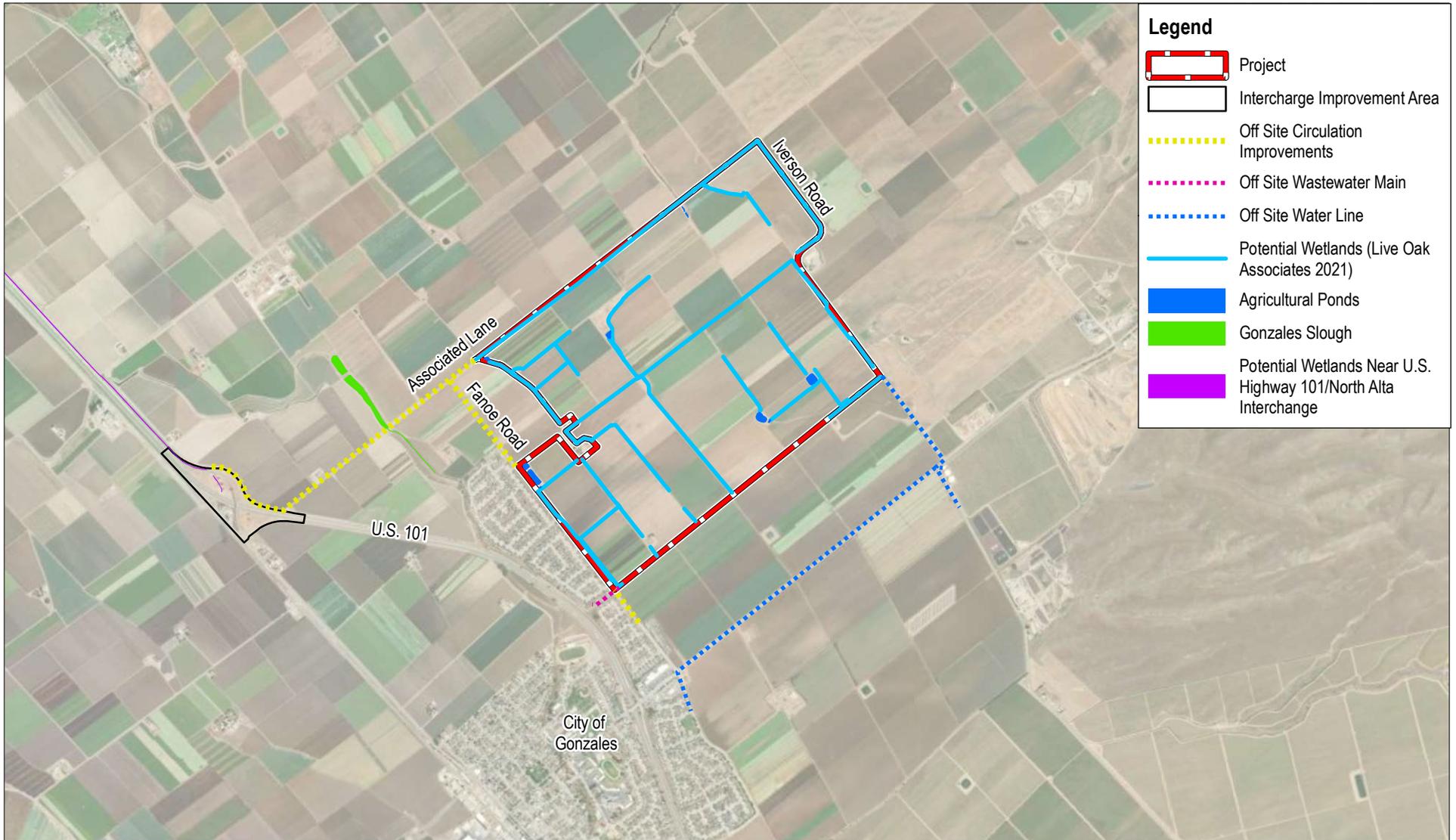
Aquatic habitats found within the project site include irrigation drainage canals and perennial ponds (agricultural retention basins) utilized as part of on-going agricultural activities at the site. The canals eventually drain to a slough west of the site, where water appears to percolate into the soil. Some drainage canals and ponds are connected to a larger offsite pond to the east, which appears to be a part of the Johnson Creek watershed. Connectivity to a larger body of water or resource, such as the Salinas River, does not occur (Live Oak Associates, Inc. 2003). There are six perennial ponds located throughout the site. These ponds accumulate run-off from the adjacent agricultural fields and are regularly maintained.

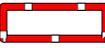
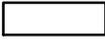
Due to the high level of maintenance, the drainage canals and ponds support only sparse vegetation such as curly dock (*Rumex crispus*), annual beard grass (*Polygomon monspeliensis*), and annual blue grass (*Poa annua*). Shrub and tree species were absent from all wetlands and waterways.

## Special-Status Species at and Within the Vicinity of the Project Site

Special-status species are those listed as Endangered, Threatened, or Rare, or as Candidates for listing by the USFWS or CDFW under the state and/or federal Endangered Species Acts. The special-status designation also includes CDFW Species of Special Concern and Fully Protected species, California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Rare Plant Rank 1B and 2B species, and other locally rare species that meet the criteria for listing as described in Section 15380 of CEQA Guidelines. Special-status species are generally rare, restricted in distribution, declining throughout their range, or have a critical, vulnerable stage in their life cycle that warrants monitoring.

A search of the 2023 CDFW *California Natural Diversity Database* (CNDDDB) was conducted for the Gonzales, Natividad, Mount Harlan, Paicines, Mount Johnson, Soledad, Palo Escrito Peak, Rana Creek, and Chualar USGS quadrangles in order to evaluate potentially occurring special-status plant and wildlife species in the project vicinity. Results are shown on [Figure 7-2, Special Status Species with Potential to Occur in the Project Vicinity](#). Records of occurrence for special-status plants were reviewed for those USGS quadrangles in the CNPS *Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants* (CNPS 2023). A USFWS *Information Planning and Conservation System* threatened and endangered species list was also generated for the project site (USFWS 2023a). Detailed information for special-status species potentially occurring in the project vicinity is presented in the project biological reports and regulatory agency letters found in Appendix C.



- Legend**
-  Project
  -  Interchange Improvement Area
  -  Off Site Circulation Improvements
  -  Off Site Wastewater Main
  -  Off Site Water Line
  -  Potential Wetlands (Live Oak Associates 2021)
  -  Agricultural Ponds
  -  Gonzales Slough
  -  Potential Wetlands Near U.S. Highway 101/North Alta Interchange

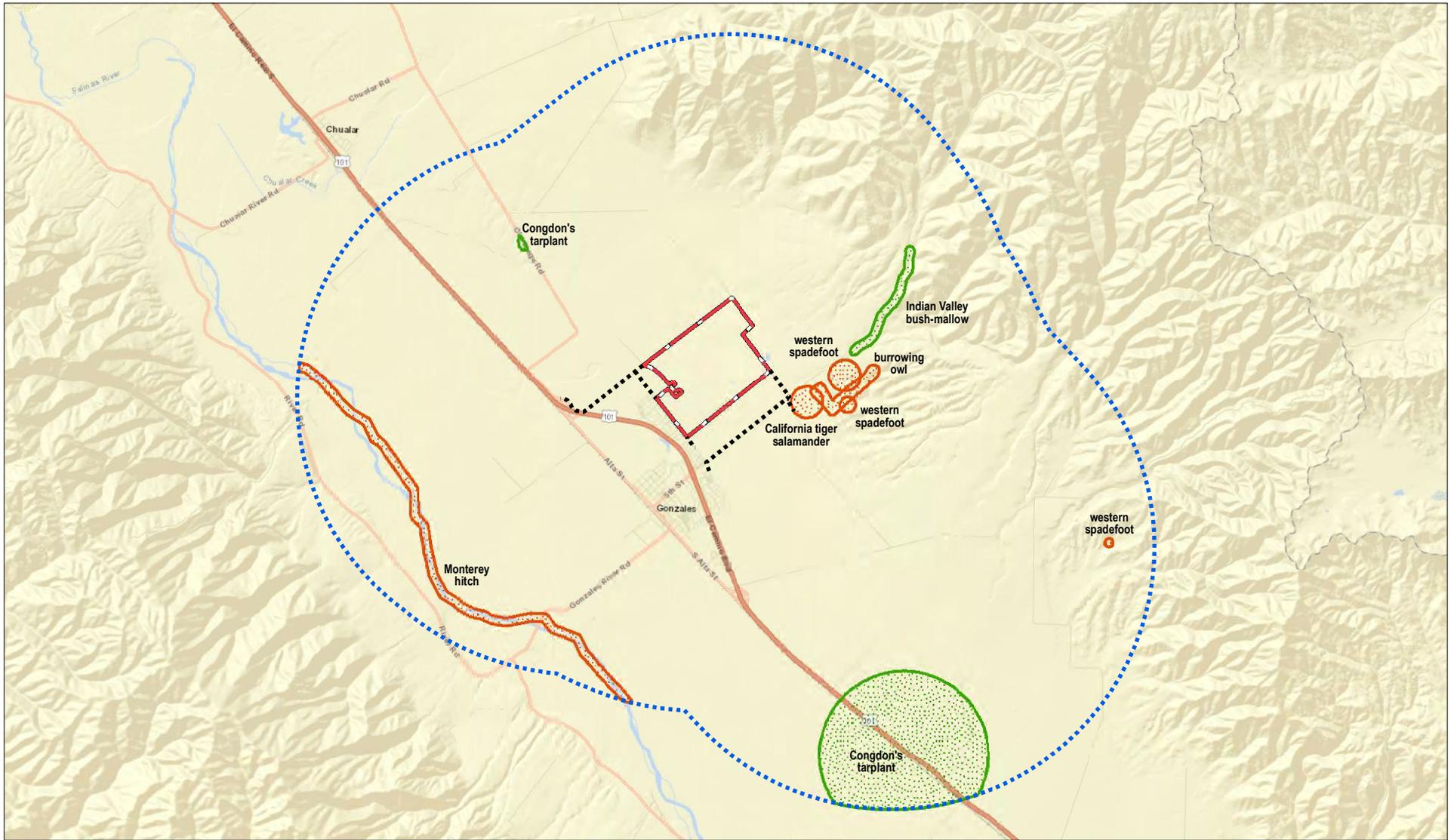


Source: ESRI 2023, Monterey County GIS 2020, Live Oak Associates 2021, HMM 2023



Figure 7-1  
**Habitat Map**  
 Vista Lucia Project EIR

*This side intentionally left blank.*



Source: ESRI 2023, CDFW CNDDDB 2023



Figure 7-2

# Special-Status Species with Potential to Occur in the Project Vicinity

Vista Lucia Annexation EIR



*This side intentionally left blank.*

## Special-Status Plants

Special-status plant species potentially occurring in the project vicinity were evaluated for potential to occur on the project site. Database search results (including species listing status and suitable habitat description) and the potential for special-status plants to occur on the project site are presented in [Table 7-1, Special-Status Plant Species with Potential to Occur in the Project Vicinity](#). No special-status plants were incidentally observed on the site during field surveys, and no suitable habitat exists on the site for most special-status plants due to historic, long-term intensive agriculture. However, one disturbance-tolerant species, Congdon's tarplant (*Centromadia parryi* ssp. *congdonii*) has potential to occur on the site and is discussed in the Analysis, Impacts and Mitigation Measures section, below.

## Special Status Wildlife

Special-status wildlife species potentially occurring in the project vicinity were evaluated for their potential to occur on the project site. Database search results and the potential for special-status wildlife to occur on the project site and vicinity are presented in [Table 7-2, Special-Status Wildlife Species with Potential to Occur in the Project Vicinity](#), and are discussed in in the Analysis, Impacts and Mitigation Measures section, below. Special-status wildlife species with potential to occur on the project site include burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), and nesting birds and raptors.

## Existing Conditions in Potential Off-Site Improvement Locations

Infrastructure improvements that would be located outside the project boundary will be needed to implement the proposed project. These include a new wastewater collection main that would connect the project site to an existing City of Gonzales pump station, and roadway and intersection improvements. These improvements are described and their locations illustrated in Section 4.0, Project Description.

The existing biological setting at and near these potential off-site improvement locations is summarized below.

### Off-Site Wastewater Collection Main

Please refer back to Section 4.2, Project Characteristics, for a discussion of the off-site wastewater collection main required to convey wastewater from the project site to the City of Gonzales's existing collection system. The 500-foot collection main would be installed through a vacant corridor located between Zinfandel Drive and Chardonnay Drive. The corridor contains ruderal vegetation. Based on a review of the *National Wetlands Inventory*, the main parallels a drainage canal associated with Johnson Creek and may impact pond or wetland habitats between Fanoe Road and Burgundy Road (USFWS 2023b).

**Table 7-1 Special-Status Plant Species with Potential to Occur in the Project Vicinity**

Species	Status (Federal/State/CNPS)	Suitable Habitat Description	Potential to Occur on Project Site
Alkali milk-vetch ( <i>Astragalus tener</i> var. <i>tener</i> )	--/--/1B.2	Alkaline sites in playas, valley and foothill grassland (on adobe clay), and vernal pools; elevation 1-60m. Blooming Period: March - June.	Not expected. No suitable habitat found at the project site.
Carmel Valley bush-mallow ( <i>Malacothamnus palmeri</i> var. <i>involutus</i> )	--/--/1B.2	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub; elevation 30-1100m. Blooming Period: May - October.	Not expected. No suitable habitat found at the project site.
Carmel Valley malacothrix ( <i>Malacothrix saxatilis</i> var. <i>arachnoidea</i> )	--/--/1B.2	Rocky sites in chaparral; elevation 25-335m. Blooming Period: March - December.	Not expected. No suitable habitat found at the project site.
Congdon's tarplant ( <i>Centromadia parryi</i> spp. <i>congdonii</i> )	--/--/1B.1	Valley and foothill grassland (alkaline); elevation 1-230m. Known to occur on various substrates, and in disturbed and ruderal (weedy) areas. Blooming Period: June - November.	Moderate Potential. Suitable habitat present at the project site and species has been observed in proximity to the project site.
Fragrant fritillary ( <i>Fritillaria liliacea</i> )	--/--/1B.2	Coastal scrub, valley and foothill grassland, and coastal prairie. Often on serpentine; various soils reported though usually clay in grassland; elevation 3-410m. Blooming Period: February - April.	Not expected. No suitable habitat found at the project site.
Gabilan Mountains manzanita ( <i>Arctostaphylos gabilanensis</i> )	--/--/1B.2	Granitic substrates in chaparral and cismontane woodland; elevation 300-700m. Blooming Period: March.	Not expected. No suitable habitat found at the project site.
Hooked popcornflower ( <i>Plagiobothrys uncinatus</i> )	--/--/1B.2	Chaparral (sandy), cismontane woodland, and valley and foothill grassland; prefers sandstone outcrops and canyon sides, often in burned or disturbed areas; elevation 300-730m. Blooming Period: April - May.	Not expected. No suitable habitat found at the project site.

Species	Status (Federal/State/ CNPS)	Suitable Habitat Description	Potential to Occur on Project Site
Indian Valley bush-mallow ( <i>Malacothamnus aboriginum</i> )	--/--/1B.2	Chaparral and cismontane woodland; rocky, often burned areas. Prefers granitic outcrops and sandy bare soil; elevation 150-1700m. Blooming Period: April - October.	Not expected. No suitable habitat found at the project site.
Jolon clarkia ( <i>Clarkia jolonensis</i> )	--/--/1B.2	Cismontane woodland, chaparral, coastal scrub; elevation 20-660m. Blooming Period: April - June.	Not expected. No suitable habitat found at the project site.
Marsh sandwort ( <i>Arenaria paludicola</i> )	FE/SE/1B.1	Sandy openings in freshwater or brackish marshes and swamps; elevation 3-170m. Blooming Period: May - August	Not expected. No suitable habitat found at the project site.
Monterey spineflower ( <i>Chorizanthe pungens</i> var. <i>pungens</i> )	FT/--/1B.2	Sandy openings in maritime chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal dunes, coastal scrub, and valley and foothill grassland; elevation 3-450m. Blooming Period: April - June.	Not expected. No suitable habitat found at the project site.
Pajaro manzanita ( <i>Arctostaphylos pajaroensis</i> )	--/--/1B.1	Sandy soils in chaparral habitat; evergreen; elevation 30-760m. Blooming Period: December - March.	Not expected. No suitable habitat found at the project site.
Pinnacles buckwheat ( <i>Eriogonum nortonii</i> )	--/--/1B.3	Sandy sites in chaparral, and valley and foothill grassland, often on recent burns; elevation 300-975m. Blooming Period: May - June.	Not expected. No suitable habitat found at the project site, and species occurs at elevations higher than the project site.
Robust spineflower ( <i>Chorizanthe robusta</i> var. <i>robusta</i> )	FE/--/1B.1	Sandy or gravelly openings in cismontane woodland, coastal dunes, and coastal scrub; prefers sandy terraces and bluffs or loose sand; elevation 3-300m. Blooming Period: April - July.	Not expected. No suitable habitat found at the project site.
Santa Lucia dwarf rush ( <i>Juncus luciensis</i> )	--/--/1B.2	Chaparral, Great Basin scrub, lower montane coniferous forest, meadows and seeps, and vernal pools; elevation 300-2040m. Blooming Period: April - July.	Not expected. No suitable habitat found at the project site.
Shining navarretia ( <i>Navarretia nigelliformis</i> ssp. <i>radians</i> )	--/--/1B.2	Cismontane woodland, valley and foothill grassland, and vernal pools; elevation 200-1000m. Blooming Period: May - July.	Not expected. No suitable habitat found at the project site.

Species	Status (Federal/State/ CNPS)	Suitable Habitat Description	Potential to Occur on Project Site
Toro manzanita ( <i>Arctostaphylos montereyensis</i> )	--/--/1B.2	Sandy sites in maritime chaparral, cismontane woodland, and coastal scrub; elevation 30-730m. Blooming Period: February - March.	Not expected. No suitable habitat found at the project site.
Umbrella larkspur ( <i>Delphinium umbraculorum</i> )	--/--/1B.3	Cismontane woodland, mesic sites; elevation 400-1600m. Blooming Period: April - June.	Not expected. No suitable habitat found at the project site.

SOURCE: CDFW 2023, CNPS 2023, USFWS iPaC 2023

NOTE: Status Codes:

Federal (USFWS)

FE: Listed as Endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

FT: Listed as Threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

FC: A Candidate for listing as Threatened or Endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

FSC: Species of Special Concern.

FD: Delisted under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

State (CDFW)

SE: Listed as Endangered under the California Endangered Species Act.

ST: Listed as Threatened under the California Endangered Species Act.

SR: Listed as Rare under the California Endangered Species Act.

SC: A Candidate for listing as Threatened or Endangered under the California Endangered Species Act.

SSC: Species of Special Concern.

SFP: Fully Protected species under the California Fish and Game Code.

SD: Delisted under the California Endangered Species Act.

CNPS Rare Plant Ranks and Threat Code Extensions

1B: Plants that are considered Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California and elsewhere.

2B: Plants that are considered Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California, but more common elsewhere.

.1: Seriously endangered in California (over 80% of occurrences threatened/high degree and immediacy of threat).

.2: Fairly endangered in California (20-80% occurrences threatened).

.3: Not very endangered in California (<20% of occurrences threatened or no current threats known).

**Table 7-2 Special-Status Wildlife Species with Potential to Occur in the Project Vicinity**

Species	Status (Federal/State)	Suitable Habitat Description	Potential to Occur on Project Site
American badger ( <i>Taxidea taxus</i> )	--/SSC	Most abundant in drier, open stages of most shrub, forest, and herbaceous habitats. Needs sufficient food and open, uncultivated ground with friable soils to dig burrows. Preys on burrowing rodents.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.
Bank swallow ( <i>Riparia riparia</i> )	--/ST	Highly colonial species that nests in alluvial soils along rivers, streams, lakes, and ocean coasts. Nesting colonies only occur in vertical banks or bluffs of friable soils at least one meter tall, suitable for burrowing with some predator deterrence values. Breeding colony present in Salinas River.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.
Bay checkerspot butterfly ( <i>Euphydryas editha bayensis</i> )	FT/--	Restricted to native grasslands on outcrops of serpentine soil in the vicinity of San Francisco Bay. <i>Plantago erecta</i> is the primary host plant; <i>Castilleja densiflora</i> and <i>C. exserta</i> are secondary host plants.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.
Big-eared kangaroo rat ( <i>Dipodomys venustus elephantinus</i> )	--/SSC	Chaparral-covered slopes of the southern part of the Gabilan Range, in the vicinity of the Pinnacles. Forages under shrubs and in the open. Burrows for cover and for nesting.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.
Burrowing owl ( <i>Athene cucularia</i> )	--/SSC	Open, dry, annual or perennial grasslands, desert, or scrubland, with available small mammal burrows.	Low Potential. Species known to occur within one mile of the project site.
California condor ( <i>Gymnogyps californianus</i> )	FE/SE	Requires vast expanses of open savannah, grasslands, and foothill chaparral in mountain ranges of moderate altitude. Deep canyons containing clefts in the rocky walls provide nesting sites. Forages up to 100 miles from roost/nest.	Unlikely. Species more typically found in open habitats east of the project site.
California horned lark ( <i>Eremophila alpestris actia</i> )	--/WL	Coastal regions, chiefly from Sonoma County to San Diego County, also within the main part of the San Joaquin Valley and east to the foothills. Prefers short-grass prairie, mountain meadows, open coastal plains, fallow grain fields, alkali flats.	Low Potential. Species may forage in agricultural fields or along margins.

Species	Status (Federal/State)	Suitable Habitat Description	Potential to Occur on Project Site
California red-legged frog ( <i>Rana draytonii</i> )	FT/SSC	Rivers, creeks, and stock ponds with pools and overhanging vegetation. Requires dense, shrubby or emergent riparian vegetation, and prefers short riffles and pools with slow-moving, well-oxygenated water. Needs upland habitat to aestivate (remain dormant during dry months) in small mammal burrows, cracks in the soil, or moist leaf litter.	Unlikely. Pond and upland habitat found at the project site not suitable for this species.
California tiger salamander ( <i>Ambystoma californiense</i> )	FT/ST	Grasslands and oak woodlands near seasonal pools and stock ponds in central and coastal California. Needs upland habitat to aestivate (remain dormant during dry months) in small mammal burrows, cracks in the soil, or moist leaf litter. Requires seasonal water sources that persist into late March for breeding habitat.	Absent. Genetic testing indicates that salamanders found on the property are almost completely non-native.
Coast horned lizard ( <i>Phrynosoma blainvillii</i> )	--/SSC	Arid grassland and scrubland habitats; prefers lowlands along sandy washes with scattered low bushes. Requires open areas for sunning, bushes for cover, patches of loose soil for burrowing, and abundant supply of ants and other insects for feeding.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.
Coast Range newt ( <i>Taricha torosa</i> )	--/SSC	Coastal drainages; lives in terrestrial habitats and can migrate over 1 km to breed in ponds, reservoirs, and slow-moving streams.	Unlikely. Pond and upland habitat found at the project site not suitable for this species.
Cooper's hawk ( <i>Accipiter cooperii</i> )	--/WL	Oak or riparian woodlands.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.
Crotch bumble bee ( <i>Bombus crotchii</i> )	--/SC	Coastal California east to the Sierra-Cascade Crest and south into Mexico. Food plant genera include <i>Antirrhinum</i> , <i>Phacelia</i> , <i>Clarkia</i> , <i>Dendromecon</i> , <i>Eschscholzia</i> , and <i>Eriogonum</i> .	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.
Foothill yellow-legged frog ( <i>Rana boylei</i> )	--/SC	Partly shaded, shallow streams and riffles with rocky substrate in a variety of habitats. Requires at least some cobble-sized substrate for egg-laying and 15 weeks of available water to attain metamorphosis.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.

Species	Status (Federal/State)	Suitable Habitat Description	Potential to Occur on Project Site
Golden eagle ( <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> )	--/SFP	Rolling foothill mountain areas, sage-juniper flats, and desert. Cliff-walled canyons provide nesting habitat in most parts of range. Also uses large trees in open areas.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.
Least Bell's vireo ( <i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i> )	FE/SE	Summer resident of southern and central California in riparian habitats below 2,000 feet in elevation. Often nests in large shrubs, along margins of bushes or on twigs projecting into pathways.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.
Monarch butterfly ( <i>Danaus plexippus</i> )	FC/--	Winter roost sites. Wind protected tree groves (Eucalyptus, Monterey pine, cypress) with nectar and water sources nearby.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.
Monterey dusky-footed woodrat ( <i>Neotoma macrotis luciana</i> )	--/SSC	Forest habitats of moderate canopy and moderate to dense understory. Also chaparral habitats. Nests constructed of grass, leaves, sticks, feathers, etc. Population may be limited by availability of nest materials.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.
Monterey hitch ( <i>Lavinia exilicauda harengus</i> )	--/SSC	Inhabits slow warm water, including lakes and quiet stretches of rivers. Sometimes found in cool and clear low-gradient streams, hiding among aquatic vegetation in sandy runs or pools.	Unlikely. Pond and upland habitat found at the project site not suitable for this species.
Northern California legless lizard ( <i>Anniella pulchra</i> )	--/SSC	Sandy or loose loamy soils under sparse vegetation, in moist soils. <i>Anniella pulchra</i> is traditionally split into two subspecies: <i>A. pulchra pulchra</i> (silvery legless lizard) and <i>A. pulchra nigra</i> (black legless lizard), but these subspecies are typically no longer recognized.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.
Pallid bat ( <i>Antrozous pallidus</i> )	--/SSC	Deserts, grasslands, scrublands, woodlands, and forests. Most common in open, dry habitats with rocky areas for roosting. Roosts must protect bats from high temperatures.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.
Salinas pocket mouse ( <i>Perognathus inornatus psammophilus</i> )	--/SSC	Annual grassland and desert shrub communities in the Salinas Valley. Prefers fine-textured, sandy, friable soils. Burrows for cover and nesting.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.

Species	Status (Federal/State)	Suitable Habitat Description	Potential to Occur on Project Site
San Joaquin coachwhip ( <i>Masticophis flagellum ruddocki</i> )	--/SSC	Open, dry habitats with little or no tree cover. Found in valley grassland and saltbush scrub in the San Joaquin Valley. Requires mammal burrows for refuge and oviposition (egg-laying).	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.
San Joaquin kit fox ( <i>Vulpes macrotis mutica</i> )	FE/ST	Annual grasslands or grassy open stages with scattered shrubby vegetation. Needs loose-textured sandy soils for burrowing, and suitable prey base.	Unlikely. Project site is isolated from known occupied habitat and is more than 10 miles from the nearest recorded observation.
Southwestern willow flycatcher ( <i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i> )	FE/SE	Riparian woodlands in Southern California. Requires dense riparian habitats (cottonwood/willow and tamarisk vegetation) for nesting. Riparian woodland not suitable for nesting may be used for migration and foraging.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.
Swainson's hawk ( <i>Buteo swainsoni</i> )	--/ST	Breeds in grasslands with scattered trees, juniper-sage flats, riparian areas, savannahs, and agricultural or ranch lands with groves or lines of trees. Requires adjacent suitable foraging areas, such as grasslands or agricultural fields supporting rodent populations.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.
Townsend's big-eared bat ( <i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i> )	--/SSC	Inhabits a wide variety of habitats. Most common in mesic sites. Roosts in the open, hanging from walls and ceilings. Roosting sites limiting. Extremely sensitive to human disturbance.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.
Tricolored blackbird ( <i>Agelaius tricolor</i> )	--/ST	Areas adjacent to open water with protected nesting substrate, which typically consists of dense, emergent freshwater marsh vegetation.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.
Vernal pool fairy shrimp ( <i>Branchinecta lynchi</i> )	FT/--	Endemic to the grasslands of the Central Valley, Central Coast Mtns., and South Coast Mtns. in astatic rain-filled pools. Inhabits small, clear-water sandstone depression pools and grass swale, earth slump, or basalt-flow depression pools.	Unlikely. Pond and upland habitat found at the project site not suitable for this species.

Species	Status (Federal/State)	Suitable Habitat Description	Potential to Occur on Project Site
Western mastiff bat ( <i>Eumops perotis californicus</i> )	--/SSC	Many open, semi-arid habitats, including conifer and deciduous woodlands, coastal scrub, grasslands, chaparral, etc. Roosts in crevices in cliff faces, high buildings, trees, and tunnels.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.
Western pond turtle ( <i>Emys marmorata</i> )	--/SSC	Ponds, marshes, rivers, streams, and irrigation ditches with aquatic vegetation. Needs basking sites (such as rocks or partially submerged logs) and suitable upland habitat for egg-laying (sandy banks or grassy open fields).	Unlikely. Pond and upland habitat found at the project site not suitable for this species.
Western spadefoot ( <i>Spea hammondi</i> )	--/SSC	Occurs primarily in grassland habitats, but can be found in valley foothill hardwood woodlands. Breeds in winter and spring (January - May) in quiet streams and temporary pools.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.
Western yellow-billed cuckoo ( <i>Coccyzus americanus occidentalis</i> )	FT/SE	Riparian forest nester, along the broad, lower flood-bottoms of larger river systems. Nests in riparian jungles of willow, often mixed with cottonwoods, with lower story of blackberry, nettles, or wild grape.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.
White-tailed kite ( <i>Elanus leucurus</i> )	--/SFP	Rolling foothills and valley margins with scattered oaks, and river bottomlands or marshes next to deciduous woodlands. Open grasslands, meadows, or marshes for foraging close to isolated, dense-topped trees for nesting and perching.	Unlikely. Species may fly over site; however active agricultural land is not considered suitable habitat.
Yellow rail ( <i>Coturnicops noveboracensis</i> )	--/SSC	Summer resident in eastern Sierra Nevadas; prefers freshwater marshlands.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.
Yellow-breasted chat ( <i>Icteria virens</i> )	--/SSC	Summer resident; inhabits riparian thickets of willow and other brushy tangles near watercourses. Nests in low, dense riparian habitat, consisting of willow, blackberry, and wild grape. Forages and nests within 10 ft of ground.	Unlikely. Suitable habitat not found at the project site.

SOURCE: CDFW 2023, USFWS iPac 2023

NOTE: Status Codes:

Federal (USFWS)

FE: Listed as Endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

FT: Listed as Threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act.  
FC: A Candidate for listing as Threatened or Endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act.  
FSC: Species of Special Concern.  
FD: Delisted under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

State (CDFW)

SE: Listed as Endangered under the California Endangered Species Act.  
ST: Listed as Threatened under the California Endangered Species Act.  
SR: Listed as Rare under the California Endangered Species Act.  
SC: A Candidate for listing as Threatened or Endangered under the California Endangered Species Act.  
SSC: Species of Special Concern.  
SFP: Fully Protected species under the California Fish and Game Code.  
SD: Delisted under the California Endangered Species Act.

---

## Off-Site Circulation Network Improvements Locations

### *Improvements to Existing/New City Roadways*

Please refer back to Section 4.2, Project Characteristics, for an overview of the types and locations of circulation improvements that would be required to serve new development within the site.

Improvements would be required in both urban and/or active agricultural areas, including widening and extending Fanoe Road to Associated Lane, and widening Associated Lane between the project site and U.S. Highway 101. The locations of proposed improvements along Fanoe Road and Associated Lane were surveyed on October 12, 2021. Existing roadway widening and construction of the new segment of Fanoe Road would occur primarily within agricultural or ruderal land dominated by agricultural or non-native species. The Associated Lane improvements would include constructing a new bridge over the Gonzales Slough. At the time of the survey, soils at the slough crossing location were moist with pockets of standing water remaining. Vegetation dominating the crossing location included cattail (*Typha latifolia*), tall flatsedge (*Cyperus eragrostis*), loosestrife (*Lythrum hyssopifolia*), *Chenopodium* sp., rabbitsfoot grass (*Polypogon monspeliensis*), dock (*Rumex crispus*), and arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*).

A drainage channel along Associated Lane, northeast of Gonzales Slough, held some flowing water at the time of the survey. Vegetation present included tall flatsedge, *Chenopodium* sp., and peppergrass (*Lepidium* sp.).

### *Preliminary Improvements at U.S. Highway 101/North Alta Street Interchange*

A preliminary design to improve the interchange has been prepared as part of the circulation study prepared for the project. The proposed improvements at the U.S. Highway 101/North Alta Street interchange include reconfiguring existing on- and off-ramps and constructing three, multi-lane roundabouts. The general location of the interchange improvements was surveyed on October 12, 2021. A majority of the area has been regularly mowed and is dominated by non-native grasses, including great brome (*Bromus diandrus*), barley (*Hordeum murinum*) and other weedy species. Mature trees present include Monterey pine (*Pinus radiata*) and *Eucalyptus*. Gopher and ground squirrel burrows were present throughout.

A drainage channel bisects the interchange area, originating from the west side of U.S. Highway 101. The southern half of the channel did not support wetland vegetation. Closer to Associated Lane, soils within the channel were moist and plants present included dock, tall flatsedge, white sweetclover (*Melilotus albus*), and hemlock (*Conium maculatum*). The drainage north of the U.S. Highway 101 northbound onramp contained arroyo willow and California tule (*Schoenoplectus acutus*).

Biological impacts of implementing the interchange improvement project will be assessed by Caltrans as part of a separate environmental review process with Caltrans acting as the lead agency. Consequently, no further discussion of the interchange project is included here.

## Wildlife Movement

Wildlife movement includes migration (i.e., usually movement one way per season), inter-population movement (i.e., long-term dispersal and genetic flow), and small travel pathways (i.e., daily movement within an animal's territory). While small travel pathways usually facilitate movement for daily home range activities, such as foraging or escape from predators, they also provide connection between outlying populations and the main populations, permitting an increase in gene flow among populations. These habitat linkages can extend for miles and occur on a large scale throughout the greater region. Habitat linkages facilitate movement between populations located in discrete locales and populations located within larger habitat areas.

The project site and off-site improvement areas are generally located within an area developed for agricultural and residential uses that have been highly disturbed with limited presence of natural corridors. Drainage channels and the Gonzales Slough marginally more potential to attract wildlife species than adjacent agricultural lands, however, movement is likely restricted to that of common wildlife species and the project site and off-site improvement areas do not function as a regional wildlife movement corridor or habitat linkage (refer to Appendix C).

## 7.2 Regulatory Setting

This section includes summaries of standards, regulations, and plans that are pertinent to assessing the biological resources impacts of the proposed project.

### Federal Plans and Regulations

#### Endangered Species Act

The federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 (known hereafter as the “Act”) protects species that the USFWS has listed as “Endangered” or “Threatened.” Permits may be required from USFWS if activities associated with a proposed project would result in the “take” of a federally listed species or its habitat. Under the Act, the definition of “take” is to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” USFWS has also interpreted the definition of “harm” to include significant habitat modification that could result in “take.” “Take” of a listed species is prohibited unless (1) a Section 10(a) permit has been issued by the USFWS or (2) an Incidental Take Statement has been obtained through formal consultation between a federal agency and the USFWS pursuant to Section 7 of the Act.

#### Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 prohibits killing, possessing, or trading in migratory birds, and protects the nesting activities of native birds including common species, except in accordance with certain regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior. Over 1,000 native nesting bird species are currently protected under the federal law. This Act encompasses whole birds, parts of birds, bird nests, and eggs.

The USFWS published a proposed rule to clarify prohibitions governing the "take" of birds under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act on February 3, 2020. This proposed rule clarifies that the scope of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act applies only to intentional injuring or killing of birds. Conduct that results in the unintentional (incidental) injury or death of migratory birds is not prohibited under the Act. On January 7, 2021, the final regulation defining the scope of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act was published in the Federal Register. The rule goes into effect on February 8, 2021.

On October 4, 2021, the USFWS published a final rule revoking the January 7, 2021, regulation that limited the scope of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. With this final and formal revocation of the January 7 rule, the USFWS returns to implementing the Migratory Bird Treaty Act as prohibiting incidental take and applying enforcement discretion, consistent with judicial precedent and long-standing agency practice prior to 2017. This final rule went into effect on December 3, 2021.

## Clean Water Act

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1972 regulates the discharge of dredge and fill material into "Waters of the U.S.". "Waters of the U.S." are waters such as oceans, rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, and wetlands subject to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Regulatory Program jurisdiction under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Certain artificial drainage channels and wetlands have also been considered jurisdictional "Waters of the U.S."

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are in receipt of the U.S. Supreme Court's May 25, 2023, decision in the case of *Sackett v. Environmental Protection Agency*. In light of this decision, the agencies are interpreting the phrase "waters of the United States" consistent with the Supreme Court's decision in *Sackett*. The agencies are developing a rule to amend the final "Revised Definition of 'Waters of the United States'" rule, published in the Federal Register on January 18, 2023, consistent with the U.S. Supreme Court's May 25, 2023 decision in the case of *Sackett v. Environmental Protection Agency*.

The USACE determines the extent of its jurisdiction as defined by ordinary high-water marks on channel banks, wetland boundaries, and/or connectivity to a navigable water. Wetlands are habitats with soils that are intermittently or permanently saturated or inundated. The resulting anaerobic conditions naturally select for plant species known as hydrophytes that show a high degree of fidelity to such soils. Wetlands are identified by the presence of hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils (soils intermittently or permanently saturated by water), and wetland hydrology according to methodologies outlined in the 1987 *Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual* and the 2008 *Interim Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Arid West Region (Version 2.0)*.

Activities that involve the discharge of fill into jurisdictional wetlands or waters are subject to the permit requirements of the USACE. Discharge permits are typically issued on the condition that the project proponent agrees to provide compensatory mitigation which results in no net loss of area,

function, or value, either through wetland creation, restoration, or the purchase of credits through an approved mitigation bank. In addition to individual discharge permits, the USACE also issues nationwide permits applicable for certain activities.

Pursuant to the USACE Manuals, key criteria for determining the presence of wetlands are:

- The presence of inundated or saturated soil conditions resulting from permanent or periodic inundation by ground water or surface water; and
- A prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions (hydrophytic vegetation).

Explicit in the definition is the consideration of three environmental parameters: hydrology, soil, and vegetation. Positive wetland indicators of all three parameters are normally present in wetlands. The assessment of all three parameters in normal circumstances enhances the technical accuracy, consistency, and credibility of a wetland determination and is required per the USACE Manuals.

## **State Plans and Regulations**

### **California Endangered Species Act**

Pursuant to the California Endangered Species Act and Section 2081 of the California Fish and Game Code, an Incidental Take Permit from the CDFW is required for projects that could result in the “take” of a state-listed Threatened or Endangered species. “Take” is defined under these laws as an activity that would directly or indirectly kill an individual of a species. If a project would result in the “take” of a state-listed species, then a CDFW Incidental Take Permit, including the preparation of a conservation plan, would be required.

### **Nesting Birds and Birds of Prey**

Sections 3505, 3503.5, and 3800 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibit the take, possession, or destruction of birds, including their nests or eggs. Birds of prey (the orders Falconiformes and Strigiformes) are specifically protected under provisions of the California Fish and Game Code, Section 3503.5. This section of the Code establishes that it is unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds of prey or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird except as otherwise provided by this Code. Disturbance that causes nest abandonment and/or loss of reproductive effort, such as construction during the bird nesting season, is considered “take” by the CDFW.

### **Streambed Alterations**

The CDFW has jurisdiction over the bed and bank of natural drainages according to provisions of Sections 1601 through 1603 of the California Fish and Game Code. Diversions, obstructions, or changes to the natural flow or bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake in California that support wildlife resources and/or riparian vegetation are subject to CDFW regulations. Activities

that would disturb these drainages are regulated by the CDFW; authorization is required in the form of a Streambed Alteration Agreement. Such an agreement typically stipulates measures that will protect the habitat values of the drainage in question.

### California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

Under the California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) may necessitate Waste Discharge Requirements for the fill or alteration of “Waters of the State,” which according to California Water Code Section 13050 includes “any surface water or groundwater, including saline waters, within the boundaries of the state.” The RWQCB may, therefore, necessitate Waste Discharge Requirements even if the affected waters are not under USACE jurisdiction. Also, under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, any activity requiring a USACE Section 404 permit must also obtain a state Water Quality Certification (or waiver thereof) to ensure that the proposed activity will meet state water quality standards. The applicable state RWQCB is responsible for administering the water quality certification program and enforcing National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits.

## Regional/Local Plans and Regulations

### Gonzales General Plan and General Plan EIR

The general plan EIR identifies significant biological resource impacts that would result from build out of the general plan, including the project site. The impacts include loss of sensitive natural communities (including freshwater marsh, aquatic, and Pacific willow riparian woodland) and federally protected wetlands. Significant impacts related to sensitive natural communities and federally protected wetlands are mitigated to less than significant by policies included in the general plan and/or by mitigation measures included in the general plan EIR.

### Gonzales City Code

The *Gonzales City Code* Chapter 9.16, Street Trees and Tree Protection defines the following as protected trees:

- A. Trees having a minimum trunk diameter of six inches (6") measured fifty-four inches (54") above the ground. When measuring a multi-trunk tree, the diameters of the largest three (3) trunks shall be added together.
- B. Street trees or other required trees such as those required as a condition of approval, use permit, or other zoning requirement, regardless of size.
- C. Trees of the following species that have reached a minimum of four inches (4") diameter trunk size:
  1. Coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*).
  2. Pacific willow (*Salix lasiandra* ssp. *lasiandra*).

D. A tree or trees of any size planted as a replacement for a protected tree.

If trees protected by the City may be damaged or removed by a project, an arborist evaluation of on-site trees and project plans prior to construction; implementation of specific protections for preserved trees during construction; and replacement plantings consistent with the City of Gonzales code guidelines for any damaged or removed trees is required.

## 7.3 Thresholds or Standards of Significance

CEQA Guidelines Appendix G is a sample initial study checklist that includes a number of factual inquiries related to the subject of biological resources, as it does on a whole series of additional environmental topics. Lead agencies are under no obligation to use these inquiries in fashioning thresholds of significance on the subject of biological resource impacts, or on any subject addressed in the checklist. Rather, with few exceptions, CEQA grants agencies discretion to develop their own thresholds of significance. Even so, it is a common practice for lead agencies to take the language from the inquiries presented in Appendix G and to use that language in fashioning thresholds. The City has done so here. Therefore, for purposes of this EIR, a significant impact would occur if implementation of 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 CDFW or USFWS;
- Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS;
- 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;
- Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites;
- Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance; or
- Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional or state habitat conservation plan.

## Issues not Discussed Further

### Special Status Wildlife Species – Western Spadefoot

Western spadefoot (*Spea hammondi*) is a California species of special concern. The closest documented occurrence is from 2010 approximately 0.5 miles northeast of the project site, within the Johnson Canyon Landfill property (Occurrence # 119, CDFW 2020). This species could occur in ponds within the project boundary, particularly Pond 5 (the easternmost pond, closest to Iverson Road), which is not cleaned annually and is closest to the recorded observations northeast of the project site. However, this species was not observed in any pond during extensive dip-netting conducted in 2016 and 2018 (Live Oak Associates, Inc. 2019) as part of the analysis for California tiger salamander and is not expected to occur within the agricultural ponds. The pond closest to Iverson Road exhibited the highest habitat quality during surveys. However, the potential for this species to occur at this pond is considered unlikely, as a chlorination system which maintains the pond free of aquatic plants and algae would also likely prohibit its use by western spadefoot.

### Habitat Conservation Plans

No adopted habitat conservation plans exist in the project vicinity. No further discussion of this issue is necessary.

## 7.4 Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

This evaluation is based a review of existing scientific literature, aerial photographs, technical background information; relevant documents addressing biological resources at the project site; surveys conducted by Live Oak Associates, Inc. and EMC Planning Group; and policies applicable to projects located in the City of Gonzales. See the beginning of this EIR section for a list of relevant documents used in this analysis.

### Special-Status Species

<b>IMPACT 7-1</b>	<b>Potential Impact on Candidate, Sensitive, or Special-Status Species (Congdon’s Tarplant)</b>	<b>Less than Significant with Mitigation</b>
-----------------------	---	--

Although suitable habitat for most special-status plants is limited in this part of the Salinas Valley due to long-term intensive agriculture, CNPS Rare Plant Rank 1B Congdon’s tarplant (*Centromadia parryi* ssp. *congdonii*) has potential to occur on the site and within the off-site improvement areas. Congdon’s tarplant is a low-growing annual herb that typically blooms May to October, with peak blooming from late summer to early fall. It is found on a range of substrates and is tolerant of disturbed and ruderal (weedy) areas, often occurring in patches of non-native grassland. The closest documented occurrence was recorded in 1998 about two miles northwest of the project site (CDFW 2020). This special-status plant has potential to occur in sparsely vegetated and disturbed areas within the project site boundary, the off-site wastewater main location, and/or off-site circulation

improvement locations, including along roads, irrigation canals, edges of detention basins and field margins. This species would not have been in peak bloom at the time of the June 2020 survey, however an approximately 15-acre area covered in ruderal vegetation such as wild radish (*Raphanus sativus*), cheeseweed (*Malva parviflora*), and barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) in the northeastern corner of the project site in particular has the potential to support this species.

## Conclusion

This species may occur within the project site boundary, the off-site wastewater main location, and/or off-site circulation improvement locations and project implementation could cause direct loss of individual plants if they are present in the impact areas.

The following mitigation measure would ensure that this potential, significant impact would be reduced to less than significant.

### *Mitigation Measure*

7-1 Prior to approval of any tentative map and prior to approval of grading permits for the off-site wastewater main and off-site circulation improvements, a biologist qualified in botany shall conduct a focused survey for Congdon's tarplant in accordance with current CDFW and CNPS rare plant survey protocols (CDFW 2018 and CNPS 2001). The survey shall occur during the peak blooming period for this species to determine its presence or absence (typically August through September). If possible, a known reference population of the target species in the project vicinity shall first be visited to verify that the species is observable, and the focused survey shall be conducted within two weeks of observing the reference population in full bloom.

The biologist shall then prepare a brief report documenting the results of the survey and, if appropriate, propose measures for avoiding or minimizing possible impacts to Congdon's tarplant before and during construction, as included below. If the focused survey concludes the species is not present within the project site boundary, the off-site wastewater main location, and/or off-site circulation improvement locations, or if it is present but impacts to it can be completely avoided, then no mitigation would be required.

If the focused surveys identify Congdon's tarplant within the project site boundary, the off-site wastewater main location, and/or off-site circulation improvement locations, and it would be affected by proposed development, then appropriate mitigation shall be developed by the biologist and implemented by the applicant prior to approval of a tentative map(s) for the project site and prior to approval of grading permits for the off-site wastewater main and off-site circulation improvements. Measures may include, but are not limited to:

- a. A qualified biologist shall identify an on-site or off-site mitigation area suitable for restoration of habitat and seed transplantation for this annual herb. The property owner shall be responsible for the placement of a conservation easement over the mitigation area and the provision of funds to ensure the restoration of the mitigation area and its preservation in perpetuity.
- b. Prior to approval of a tentative map(s) for the project site and grading permits for the off-site wastewater main and off-site circulation improvements, a qualified biologist or native plant specialist shall perform seed collection from all special-status plants located within the impact areas and implement seed installation at the mitigation area at the optimal time. Additionally, topsoil from the special-status species occurrence area(s) shall be salvaged (where practical) for use in the mitigation area.
- c. A maintenance and monitoring program shall be developed by a qualified biologist and established for a minimum of five years after mitigation area installation to verify that restoration activities have been successful. Maintenance activities may include, but not be limited to, watering during the plant establishment period, supplemental seed planting as needed, and removal of non-native plants. Monitoring shall include, at a minimum, quarterly monitoring reports for the first year and annual reports for the remaining four years. The performance standard for successful mitigation shall be a minimum 3:1 replacement ratio (i.e., three plants observed in mitigation area for each plant lost) achieved in at least one of the five years of monitoring.

The project applicant shall be responsible for implementation of this mitigation measure with oversight by the City of Gonzales Planning Department. Compliance with this measure shall be documented and submitted to the City of Gonzales, prior to approval of grading permits for developing any portion of the project site, and prior to approval of grading permits for the off-site wastewater main and off-site circulation improvements.

Implementation of this mitigation measure would reduce potential, significant impacts to Congdon’s tarplant to less than significant by ensuring that surveys are conducted to determine its presence, and if present, measures are implemented to conserve and propagate the species in an alternative location. Therefore, this potential impact is less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

<b>IMPACT 7-2</b>	<b>Potential Impact on Candidate, Sensitive, or Special-Status Species (California Tiger Salamander)</b>	<b>Less than Significant</b>
-----------------------	--	------------------------------

The federally and state-listed threatened California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*) is a large terrestrial salamander. It occurs in central California from the Sacramento Valley to the south-central San Joaquin Valley, and in the surrounding foothills of both the Coast Ranges and the Sierra Nevada

Mountains. California tiger salamanders are also recorded from the San Francisco Bay region, Sonoma County, the Monterey Bay region, and the valleys and foothills of San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties. California tiger salamanders breed in temporary wetland pools, such as vernal pools, and other seasonal wetland bodies where ponded water is present for a minimum of three to four months, extending into the early spring. Such ponds and temporary wetlands provide necessary breeding and larval-stage habitat for the species. Adults spend most of the year in aestivation, underground in the burrows of small mammals, such as the California ground squirrel and/or Botta's pocket gopher, or within other suitable subterranean retreats.

A non-native species similar to the California tiger salamander, the barred tiger salamander (*Ambystoma mavortium* or *Ambystoma tigrinum*) was likely introduced to California in the early- to mid-1900's to be used as bait for the sport fishing industry. The barred tiger salamander can hybridize with the native California tiger salamander and numerous populations of these "hybrids" can be found in the Salinas Valley (Riley et. al. 2003). The only reliable method of determining the level of hybridization in salamanders suspected to be hybrids is to capture individuals and conduct genetic testing to determine the percentage of native alleles present.

The nearest recorded observation of California tiger salamander is immediately west of the intersection of Iverson Road and Johnson Canyon Road, on the Johnson Canyon Landfill property (CNDDDB Occurrence #385). Two adults and over 100 larvae were observed in two sedimentation ponds in 1995. It is unknown if the salamanders observed were native, non-native or hybrid salamanders. Recorded observations of California tiger salamander in the vicinity of the project site are reviewed further in the 2019 report on California tiger salamander genetic composition and distribution (Live Oak Associates, Inc. 2019).

## Conclusion

Potential impacts to the state and federally listed threatened California tiger salamander have been thoroughly investigated since release of the 2003 biological report. In 2006, Dr. Bradley Shaffer collected samples of larval salamanders from four ponds on the project site and from seven additional aquatic sites in the vicinity of the project site. Dr. Schaffer then conducted a genetic analysis of the samples to determine the level of hybridization present. Results of the genetic testing indicate that salamanders found on the property are almost completely non-native, and the USFWS concluded that "...none of the individual tiger salamanders which compromise the salamander population at the subject property are the listed entity under the Act (i.e., California tiger salamanders). Therefore, tiger salamanders utilizing the ponds on the subject property are not afforded the protections of the Act." (USFWS 2007).

The California tiger salamander was listed under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) in 2010. The project applicant and their biological consultant, Live Oak Associates, Inc., initiated consultation with CDFW and completed additional site assessment and genetic studies in 2019 (Appendix C).

It is acknowledged by both CDFW and USFWS that hybrids pose a serious threat to the native California tiger salamander. Based on the genetic sampling and lack of evidence of the presence of native California tiger salamander, Live Oak Associates, Inc. concluded that native California tiger salamander is not present on the site and the project would not impact any state or federally listed threatened or endangered species. No mitigation is required.

<b>IMPACT 7-3</b>	<b>Potential Impact on Candidate, Sensitive, or Special-Status Species (Burrowing Owl)</b>	<b>Less than Significant with Mitigation</b>
-----------------------	--	--

Burrowing owl is a California Species of Special Concern with low potential to occur within the project site boundary, the off-site wastewater main location, and/or off-site circulation improvement locations. Burrowing owls live and breed in burrows in the ground. Optimal habitat conditions include large, open, dry, and nearly level grasslands or prairies with short to moderate vegetation height and cover, areas of bare ground, and populations of burrowing mammals. This species occurs in open, dry grasslands, deserts, and shrub-lands with low-growing vegetation; it usually occupies natural burrows excavated by other fossorial species such as California ground squirrel. In open habitats, they prefer flat, open areas where the vegetation is relatively short, affording a vantage point from which to evade potential predators.

The closest documented occurrence is from 1998, approximately 0.5 miles northeast of the project site within the Johnson Canyon Landfill property (Occurrence #344, CDFW 2020). Two to three adult owls were observed foraging along a dirt access road. Non-native grassland habitat present was used as habitat for burrowing, foraging, and overwintering. Although not observed during surveys conducted in 2003 and 2020 at the project site, this species is known to occur in the region and is highly mobile. Potential nesting, foraging and overwintering habitat occur on the site, particularly in areas where ground squirrel burrows occur at a higher density. Numerous ground squirrel burrows were identified in 2003, however none were observed at the project site or off-site improvement locations in June 2020, likely due to the intensive placement and maintenance of poison bait traps.

### Conclusion

If burrowing owl is present within or adjacent to the project site boundary, the off-site wastewater main location and/or off-site circulation improvement locations, soil disturbing activities could result in the loss or disturbance of individual animals. These impacts to burrowing owl are considered significant adverse environmental impacts. The following mitigation measure would ensure that this potentially significant impact is reduced to less than significant.

## *Mitigation Measures*

- 7-3a Prior to issuance of a grading permit for development within the footprint of the project site, the off-site wastewater main location, and off-site circulation improvement locations, a qualified biologist, hired at the applicant's expense, shall conduct a training session for all construction personnel. At a minimum, the training shall include a description of special-status species potentially occurring in the project vicinity, including, but not limited to, burrowing owl and nesting birds and raptors. Their habitats, general measures that are being implemented to conserve species as they relate to the project, and the boundaries within which construction activities would occur shall be explained. Informational handouts with photographs clearly illustrating the species' appearances shall be used in the training session. All new construction personnel shall undergo this mandatory environmental awareness training. The applicant shall submit evidence of completion of this training to the City of Gonzales Planning Department, prior to issuance of a grading permit.
- 7-3b To avoid/minimize impacts to burrowing owls potentially occurring on or adjacent to the project site boundary, the off-site wastewater main location, and/or off-site circulation improvement locations, the project applicant shall retain a biologist qualified in ornithology to conduct surveys for burrowing owl. The approved biologist shall conduct a two-visit (i.e., morning and evening) presence/absence survey at areas of suitable habitat on and adjacent to the project site boundary, the off-site wastewater main location, and/or off-site circulation improvement locations no less than 14 days prior to the start of construction or ground disturbance activities. Surveys shall be conducted according to methods described in the *Burrowing Owl Survey Protocol and Mitigation Guidelines* (California Burrowing Owl Consortium 1993) and the *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFW 2012). The applicant shall submit evidence of completion of the preconstruction survey to the City of Gonzales Planning Department prior to issuance of a grading permit.

Because burrowing owls occupy habitat year-round, seasonal no-disturbance buffers, as outlined in the *Burrowing Owl Survey Protocol and Mitigation Guidelines* (CBOC 1993) and the *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFW 2012), shall be in place around occupied habitat prior to and during any ground disturbance activities. The following table includes buffer areas based on the time of year and level of disturbance (CDFW 2012), unless a qualified biologist approved by the CDFW verifies through non-invasive measures that either: 1) birds have not begun egg laying and incubation; or 2) that juveniles from the occupied burrows are foraging independently and are capable of independent survival.

Location	Time of Year	Level of Disturbance Buffers (meters)		
		Low	Med	High
Nesting Sites	April 1 – Aug 15	200 m	500 m	500 m
Nesting Sites	Aug 16 – Oct 15	200 m	200 m	500 m
Nesting Sites	Oct 16 – Mar 31	50 m	100 m	500 m

If burrowing owl is found and avoidance is not possible, burrow exclusion may be conducted by qualified biologists only during the non-breeding season, before breeding behavior is exhibited and after the burrow is confirmed empty through non-invasive methods, such as surveillance. Occupied burrows shall be replaced with artificial burrows at a ratio of one collapsed burrow to one constructed artificial burrow (1:1). Evicted burrowing owls may attempt to colonize or re-colonize an area that would be impacted, thus ongoing surveillance during project activities shall be conducted at a rate sufficient to detect burrowing owls if they return.

If surveys locate occupied burrows in or near construction areas, consultation with the CDFW shall occur to interpret survey results and develop a project-specific avoidance and minimization approach.

The project applicant shall be responsible for implementation of this mitigation measure with oversight by the City of Gonzales Planning Department. Compliance with this measure shall be documented and submitted to the City of Gonzales.

Implementation of this mitigation measure would reduce potential impacts to burrowing owl to less than significant by conducting a preconstruction survey for the species prior to construction in and adjacent to the project site boundary, off-site wastewater main locations, and/or off-site circulation improvement locations. Another measure presented earlier also requires preconstruction training to inform workers at the construction site that burrowing owl may be found and steps to follow if an individual is observed. If burrowing owl is found, measures to protect or relocate individuals shall be implemented. Therefore, this impact is less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

<b>IMPACT 7-4</b>	<b>Potential Effect on Candidate, Sensitive, or Special-Status Species (Nesting Raptors and Migratory Birds)</b>	<b>Less than Significant with Mitigation</b>
-----------------------	--	--

Various bird species may nest throughout the project site, the off-site sewer main location, and/or off-site circulation improvement locations, including in buildings, on open ground, or in any type of vegetation. Several avian species were observed at the project site and off-site improvement areas during the reconnaissance field survey, including barn swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), red-winged blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), and killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*). No nesting activity was observed during the

surveys. However, many bird species are migratory and fall under the jurisdiction of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, protections for birds of prey, and/or are considered Fully Protected Species.

Protected nesting birds, including raptor species, have potential to nest on the ground or in vegetation or trees on or adjacent to the project site boundary, the off-site wastewater main location, and/or off-site circulation improvement locations, during the nesting bird season (January 15 through September 15).

## Conclusion

If nesting birds protected by state and federal regulations are present during soil-disturbing or construction activities including vegetation removal and site preparation within the project site boundary, the off-site wastewater main location, and/or off-site circulation improvement locations, the proposed project may directly result in loss of active nests, or indirectly result in nest abandonment and thereby cause loss of fertile eggs or nestlings. These impacts to nesting birds are considered significant adverse environmental impacts. The following mitigation measure would ensure that this potentially significant impact is reduced to less than significant.

### *Mitigation Measure*

7-4 Prior to issuance of a grading permit, to avoid impacts to nesting birds during the nesting season (January 15 through September 15), construction activities within or adjacent to the project site boundary, the off-site wastewater main location, and/or off-site circulation improvement locations that include any vegetation removal or ground disturbance (such as grading or grubbing) shall be conducted between September 16 and January 14, which is outside of the bird nesting season. If construction activities must commence during the bird nesting season, then a qualified biologist shall conduct a pre-construction survey for nesting birds to ensure that no nests would be disturbed during project construction.

If construction activities are scheduled during the nesting season (February 15 to August 30 for small bird species such as passerines; January 15 to September 15 for owls; and February 15 to September 15 for other raptors), nesting bird surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist.

- a. A survey for active nests of such birds shall occur within 10 days prior to start of construction. Appropriate minimum survey radius surrounding the work area is typically 250 feet for passerines, 500 feet for smaller raptors, and 1,000 feet for larger raptors. Surveys shall be conducted at the appropriate times of day to observe nesting activities. The applicant shall submit evidence of completion of the preconstruction survey to the City of Gonzales Planning Department, prior to issuance of a grading permit.

- b. If the qualified biologist documents active nests within the project site boundary, the off-site wastewater main location, and/or off-site circulation improvement locations, or in nearby surrounding areas, an appropriate buffer between each nest and active construction shall be established. The buffer shall be clearly marked and maintained until the young have fledged and are foraging independently. Prior to construction, the qualified biologist shall conduct baseline monitoring of each nest to characterize “normal” bird behavior and establish a buffer distance, which allows the birds to exhibit normal behavior. The qualified biologist shall monitor the nesting birds daily during construction activities and increase the buffer if birds show signs of unusual or distressed behavior (e.g., defensive flights and vocalizations, standing up from a brooding position, and/or flying away from the nest). If buffer establishment is not possible, the qualified biologist shall have the authority to cease all construction work in the area until the young have fledged and the nest is no longer active. Documentation shall be prepared by the biologist and submitted to the City of Gonzales Planning Department weekly until the nests are no longer active.

The project applicant shall be responsible for implementation of this mitigation measure with oversight by the City of Gonzales Planning Department.

Implementation of this mitigation measure would reduce potential impacts to nesting birds and raptors to less than significant by requiring a preconstruction survey prior to construction in and adjacent to the project site boundary, off-site wastewater main location, and/or off-site circulation improvement locations. A previously presented measure also requires preconstruction training to inform workers at the construction site that nesting birds may be found and steps to follow if any nesting activity is observed. If nesting activity is observed, measures to protect the nest(s) shall be implemented. Therefore, this impact is less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

## Protected Wetlands

<b>IMPACT 7-5</b>	Loss of Federally- and State-Protected Waters of the U.S.	<b>Less than Significant with Mitigation</b>
-----------------------	---	--

Wetlands are identified by the presence of hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils (soils intermittently or permanently saturated by water), and wetland hydrology. Waterways or drainage channels are defined by their ordinary high-water marks on channel banks and their connection to other waterways or aquatic features.

## Project Site

According to the Investigation of Waters of the United States, Cielo Grande Ranch, Monterey County, California (Live Oak Associates, Inc. 2006) and Request for New Verification for Vista Lucia in the City of Gonzales, Monterey, California (USACE File #2006-400217S) (Live Oak

Associates, Inc. 2021), the majority of the on-site features are artificial irrigation features that flow into irrigation ponds or percolate into the ground prior to flowing off the project site. Irrigation ditches used for agricultural production are frequently altered depending needs at the time, and wetland conditions subsequently change as well.

The 2006 Live Oak Associates investigation identified potentially jurisdictional features on the project site and the applicant requested a jurisdictional determination from the USACE. Formal determination letters and maps were prepared by the USACE in 2007 and 2014. The 2014 USACE letter and stamped map are included in Appendix C.

Two features appear to be fed water from upstream USGS blue-line waterways and were identified as jurisdictional. Both are parts of a permanent irrigation ditch that begins at a culvert under Iverson Road along the site's northern boundary that extends through the center of the project site along Associated Lane, then offsite under a culvert at Fanoe Road. They are shown on [Figure 7-1, Habitat Map](#), and described as follows:

1. Non-wetland irrigation ditch: 1,886 linear feet, 3,599 square feet, 0.08 acres; and
2. Non-wetland irrigation ditch: 4,968 linear feet, 22,356 square feet, 0.51 acres.

All other irrigation ditches, detention basins, and the reservoir on the project site were not considered jurisdictional by the USACE. Features deemed jurisdictional by the USACE are also typically considered jurisdictional by the RWQCB and possibly the CDFW. However, due to the lack of riparian and wetland vegetation, it is unlikely that the features are considered jurisdictional by the CDFW.

Based on the wetland delineation conducted in 2006 and verified by the USACE in 2007 and 2014, the project site supports non-wetland irrigation ditches of approximately 1,886 and 4,968 linear feet. The USACE letter states that site conditions can change over time and that a jurisdictional delineation expires within five years from the date of the letter. A wetland delineation was conducted in 2021 to update the prior 2014 delineation. As per current USACE protocol, all aquatic resources occurring on the site were mapped. Although confirmation by USACE is pending, none of the features on the site, including the ditch previously verified as a water of the U.S., meet the definition of waters of the U.S. as set forth in the Navigable Waters Protection Rule (Live Oak Associates 2021). The 2021 update has been submitted to the USACE for a jurisdictional determination. However, the results of the determination were not yet available at the time this EIR was released for public review.

### **Off-Site Circulation Improvements**

As discussed in Environmental Setting, above, the proposed improvements to Associated Lane include a new bridge over Gonzales Slough, which contained wetland plants and showed signs of inundation. Permitting for impacts to Gonzales Slough will be the responsibility of the applicant.

## Off-Site Wastewater Main

As discussed in Environmental Setting, above, construction of the off-site wastewater main could impact Johnson Creek and associated Waters of the U.S. if determined to be jurisdictional.

## Conclusion

Modification of aquatic features may occur as a result of ground disturbance during construction of the proposed project, the widening of Associated Lane, and construction of the off-site wastewater main. Impacts to jurisdictional features are considered significant adverse environmental impacts.

The following mitigation measures would ensure that these potentially significant impacts are reduced to less than significant.

## *Mitigation Measures*

7-5a Prior to issuance of a grading permit for development within the project site boundary, if the aquatic features delineated in *Request for New Verification for Vista Lucia in the City of Gonzales, Monterey, California (USACE File #2006-400217S)* (Live Oak Associates, Inc. 2021) are determined to be jurisdictional, the applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to obtain a Clean Water Act Section 404 Nationwide Permit. If impacts to jurisdictional non-wetland irrigation ditches do not qualify for a Nationwide Permit, the applicant shall proceed with the qualified biologist in obtaining an Individual Permit from the USACE. The applicant shall also retain a qualified biologist to coordinate with the RWQCB to obtain a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification.

To compensate for temporary and/or permanent impacts to Waters of the U.S. that would be impacted as a result of the proposed project, mitigation shall be provided as required by the regulatory permits. Mitigation would be provided through one of the following mechanisms:

- i. A Wetland Mitigation and Monitoring Plan shall be developed that outlines mitigation and monitoring obligations for temporary impacts to wetlands and other waters as a result of construction activities. The Wetland Mitigation and Monitoring Plan would include thresholds of success, monitoring and reporting requirements, and site-specific plans to compensate for wetland losses resulting from the project. The Wetland Mitigation and Monitoring Plan shall be submitted to the appropriate regulatory agencies for review and approval during the permit application process.
- ii. To compensate for permanent impacts, the purchase and/or dedication of land to provide suitable wetland restoration or creation shall ensure a no net loss of wetland values or functions. If restoration is available and feasible, a minimum 1:1 impact to mitigation ratio would apply to projects for which mitigation is provided in advance.

The applicant shall comply with terms and conditions of the permits, including measures to protect and maintain water quality, restore work sites, and mitigation to offset temporary and/or permanent wetland impacts. The applicant shall be responsible for implementation of this mitigation measure prior to issuance of a grading permit, with oversight by the City of Gonzales Planning Department.

- 7-5b Prior to initiation of ground disturbance or construction activities to widen Associated Lane, the applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to determine the extent of ditches and potential wetlands regulated by the USACE, RWQCB, and/or CDFW that could be affected. If the USACE claims jurisdiction, the applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to obtain a Clean Water Act Section 404 Nationwide Permit. If the impacts to potential wetlands do not qualify for a Nationwide Permit, the applicant shall proceed with the qualified biologist in obtaining an Individual Permit from the USACE. The applicant shall then retain a qualified biologist to coordinate with the RWQCB to obtain a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification and with the CDFW to obtain a Streambed Alteration Agreement.

To compensate for temporary and/or permanent impacts to wetlands and other Waters of the U.S, mitigation shall be provided as required by the regulatory permits and described in Mitigation Measure 7-5a.

The applicant shall determine the extent of jurisdictional features present and comply with terms and conditions of the permits, if applicable. The applicant shall be responsible for implementation of this mitigation measure prior to issuance of a grading permit, with oversight by the City of Gonzales Planning Department.

- 7-5c Prior to initiation of ground disturbance or construction activities to construct the off-site wastewater main, the applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to determine the extent of potential wetlands regulated by the USACE, RWQCB, and/or CDFW that could be affected. If the USACE claims jurisdiction, the applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to obtain a Clean Water Act Section 404 Nationwide Permit. If the impacts to potential wetlands do not qualify for a Nationwide Permit, the applicant shall proceed with the qualified biologist in obtaining an Individual Permit from the USACE. The applicant shall then retain a qualified biologist to coordinate with the RWQCB to obtain a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification and with the CDFW to obtain a Streambed Alteration Agreement.

To compensate for temporary and/or permanent impacts to wetlands and other Waters of the U.S. that would be impacted as a result of the proposed project, mitigation shall be provided as required by the regulatory permits and described in Mitigation Measure 7-5a.

The applicant shall determine the extent of jurisdictional features present and comply with terms and conditions of the permits, if applicable. The applicant shall be responsible for implementation of this mitigation measure prior to issuance of a grading permit, with oversight by the City of Gonzales Planning Department.

Implementation of these mitigation measures would ensure that impacts to potentially jurisdictional wetlands and waterways within the project site boundary and off-site improvement locations are mitigated by requiring a wetland assessment/jurisdictional determination and associated permitting. With implementation of these mitigation measures, construction of the proposed project and off-site improvements would not have a substantial adverse effect on federally or state-protected wetlands through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means. Therefore, this impact is less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

### Protected Trees

<b>IMPACT</b> 7-6	<b>Damage or Removal of Regulated Trees</b>	<b>Less than Significant</b>
----------------------	---	------------------------------

The *Gonzales City Code* Chapter 9.16 (Street Trees and Tree Protection) includes a definition of protected trees (see details in the Regulatory Section above), and outlines the requirements if protected trees may be damaged or removed by a project (City of Gonzales 2020). Several mature eucalyptus trees (*Eucalyptus globulus*) and one Peruvian pepper tree (*Schinus molle*) are located on the eastern edge of the project site along Iverson Road may be considered protected and may be damaged or removed by the project. Additional trees are located within the off-site wastewater main location, and off-site circulation improvement locations.

### Conclusion

An arborist evaluation of all on-site trees and project plans prior to construction, and implementation of specific protections for preserved trees during construction and replacement plantings for any damaged or removed trees is required per *Gonzales City Code* regulations. Compliance with these requirements would ensure that impacts to protected trees are avoided, minimized, or mitigated. Therefore, no mitigation measures are necessary.

### Wildlife Movement

<b>IMPACT</b> 7-7	<b>Interfere with Movement of Wildlife Species or with Established Wildlife Corridors</b>	<b>Less than Significant</b>
----------------------	---	------------------------------

Wildlife movement includes migration (i.e., usually movement one way per season), inter-population movement (i.e., long-term dispersal and genetic flow), and small travel pathways (i.e., daily movement within an animal's territory). The project site and off-site improvement areas

are generally located within developed areas or areas in agricultural use with limited access to natural corridors. Movement is likely restricted to that of common wildlife species and these areas do not function as regional wildlife movement corridors or habitat linkages (refer to [Appendix C](#)).

## Conclusion

It is possible that future development of the project site could impede to a limited degree the local movement of common wildlife due to an incremental loss of marginal habitat for common species, if such species were present. However, the project site and locations of off-site improvements are highly disturbed and provide little to no natural habitat value. Therefore, movement of common wildlife species through the area would be limited. In addition, a substantial amount of similar habitat is located adjacent to the site, in the vicinity and in the region. For these reasons, impacts on wildlife movement would be less than significant.

## Sensitive Natural Communities

<b>IMPACT 7-8</b>	<b>Potential Impact on Riparian Habitat or Other Sensitive Natural Communities</b>	<b>Less than Significant with Mitigation</b>
-----------------------	--	--

Sensitive natural communities are those that are listed in the CNDDDB due to the rarity of the community in the state or throughout its entire range (globally). Ranking of plant communities occurs according to their degree of imperilment, as measured by rarity, trends, and threats. Sensitive natural communities that may occur in the Central California region include, but are not limited to, the following: wetland and marsh, riparian forest, sycamore alluvial woodland, maritime chaparral, manzanita chaparral, dune scrub, and vernal pools.

Though the constructed irrigation canals and detention basins on the site and within the off-site improvement areas at times may contain some wetland plants, they are regularly maintained, which prevents wetland habitats from developing.

## Conclusion

Sensitive natural communities potentially present on the site are limited to highly impacted isolated wetlands along irrigation canals. Prior mitigation measures require the applicant to retain a biologist to determine the extent of potentially regulated drainage ditches and potential wetlands prior to initiation of ground disturbance or construction activities within the off-site wastewater main location, and/or off-site circulation improvement locations. As described in mitigation measures 7-5a, 7-5b and 7-5c, if sensitive natural communities such as wetlands, marshes, or riparian forests are present, disturbance to these communities would require permits from one or more responsible agencies. To compensate for temporary and/or permanent impacts, mitigation shall be provided as required by the regulatory permits. No additional mitigation measures are necessary.

## Cultural and Tribal Resources

This section of the EIR assesses potential project impacts on historical resources, archaeological resources, Native American human remains and tribal resources. The potential for such resources to exist within the project site and within areas proposed for off-site infrastructure improvements is examined in technical studies conducted for this purpose, with results reported herein.

Information in this section is derived from a variety of sources including:

- *Historic Evaluation of the Structures within the Proposed Vista Lucia Annexation Areas for the City of Gonzales* (“historic evaluation”) (Archaeological Resource Management 2020);
- *A Cultural Resources Survey of the 771-Acre Fanoe Road Property, Assessor’s Parcel Numbers 223-031-024, 223-031-025, and 223-031-027, Gonzales, Monterey County, California* (“cultural resources survey”) (Sierra Valley Cultural Planning 2004);
- California Historical Resources Information System, Northwest Information Center, Sonoma State University. Accessed March 19, 2020;
- *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report* (City of Gonzales 2010);
- *Gonzales 2010 General Plan* (Revised June 2018); and
- *Vista Lucia Draft Specific Plan* (Kimley-Horn 2023).

The *Cultural Resources Survey of the 771-Acre Fanoe Road Property* and the *Historic Evaluation of the Structures within the Proposed Vista Lucia Annexation Areas for the City of Gonzales* address potential cultural resources impacts associated with development of the project site. These two reports describe the proposed project as an annexation and pre-zoning project only. Subsequent to these reports being completed, the applicant submitted the proposed specific plan and the first of several future tentative maps, and the need for off-site circulation improvements has been defined with specificity. The project boundary and land use plan identified in the specific plan is essentially unchanged relative to the conceptual land use plan associated with the original annexation. Therefore, the analyses in these reports remain valid for assessing the impacts of the annexation, specific plan and tentative map approvals being sought by the applicant. The reports do not address the planned off-site wastewater main or the off-site circulation improvements that are described in Section 4.2, Project Characteristics; associated impacts are evaluated separately in this section.

## Responses to the Notice of Preparation

The Native American Heritage Commission responded to the NOP and recommended consultation with California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the proposed project. Consultation was conducted and the results are presented herein. Additionally, letters to all tribes identified by the Native American Heritage Commission were contacted by an EMC Planning Group archaeologist in March 2020 regarding the project. The Notices of Preparation prepared for the project and responses to those notices are included in [Appendix A](#).

## 8.1 Environmental Setting

This environmental setting section incorporates information that is pertinent to assessing potential project impacts and information specific to the proposed project and/or the project site. Much of the information is derived from the general plan EIR and the specific reports referenced above. In locations where off-site improvements are planned, current and historic aerial photographs were reviewed to determine general cultural resources conditions.

### Cultural, Historic, and Paleontological Resources

According to the general plan EIR, most of the general plan planning area has low archaeological sensitivity with a small area at its eastern edge having medium archaeological sensitivity. The project site is not located within the identified medium archaeological sensitivity area. However, with a water course near the city and level terrain throughout, the general plan EIR reports the possibility that indigenous people did live in the area.

The project site and areas planned for off-site circulation infrastructure improvements have historically been in agricultural use and highly disturbed by associated activities. There is no surface evidence of archaeological resources being present. The corridor through which the off-site wastewater collection main would be constructed is vacant. Generally, the locations of planned improvements to the City's roadway network are used for cultivated agriculture/farm roads and/or are vacant.

There is one residence along the southern boundary and maintenance buildings toward the north portion of the project site. As described in the historic evaluation, there were no structures of historic age located within the project site and all agricultural utility structures were recent (1990s to present). The proposed project would not impact the existing residence, as the parcel on which it is located is not proposed for development as described in Section 4.0, Project Description.

### Tribal Cultural Resources

On April 13, 2020, the City of Gonzales submitted a formal notification letter, pursuant to Assembly Bill 52, to the Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation, Amah Mutsun Tribal Band of Mission San Juan

Bautista, and the Salinan Tribe, regarding the proposed project. A response was received from the Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation requesting consultation. Consultation was subsequently conducted. The tribal representative stated that the project site may contain tribal cultural resources, though no tribal cultural resources are known to exist within the site, and requested that a tribal monitor be present at the site during ground disturbing activities (Matthew Sundt, personal communication, July 17, 2020).

## **Northwest Information Center Search Results**

The updated California Historical Resources Information System search concluded that there is one historic resource adjacent to the project area (P-27-002581), the Fanoe Road Farmstead, Assessor's parcel number 223-031-026, that was evaluated in 2000. There is one other resource within a quarter-mile radius of the project site (P-27-002322), a section of the El Camino Real (U.S. Highway 101), and one previous study and report from 2000 (S-030213).

## **National Register of Historic Places Search Results**

A search of the National Register of Historic Places database did not result in any listed properties within the project site or area.

## **Sacred Lands Search Results**

The results from the Native American Heritage Commission concluded that the search for known Sacred Lands was negative. The Commission provided a list of local tribes to contact for potential additional information. These tribes were contacted as described above.

# **8.2 Regulatory Setting**

## **Federal**

### **National Historic Preservation Act**

The Act was passed into law in 1966 to establish systems and standards for coordinating historic preservation efforts between the federal government and state, local, and tribal governments. Title I, Historic Preservation Programs, Section 101, states the Secretary may expand and maintain a National Register of Historic Places composed of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Additional information about this Act can be found under Title 54 U.S.C. Chapter 3021-National Register of Historic Places, 54 U.S.C. 302101 (National Park Service 2018).

### **Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act**

This Act, passed into law on November 16, 1990, describes the rights of Native American lineal descendants, Indian tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations with respect to the treatment, repatriation, and disposition of Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects,

and objects of cultural patrimony, referred to collectively in the statute as cultural items, with which they can show a relationship of lineal descent or cultural affiliation. Additional information about this Act can be found under Public Law 101-601; 54 U.S.C. (National Park Service 2018).

## State Laws, Regulations, and Statutes

### California Environmental Quality Act Archaeological Resources

California Code 21083.2 describes that the lead agency shall determine whether a project may have a significant effect on archaeological resources. If a project may have a significant effect on unique archaeological resources, the environmental document must address the issue of those resources. If it can be demonstrated that a project will cause damage to a unique archaeological resource, the lead agency may require reasonable efforts to be made to permit any or all of these resources to be preserved in place or left in an undisturbed state (California Office of Historic Preservation 2019).

### Tribal Cultural Resource

For purposes of CEQA, Public Resources Code Sections 21073 and 21074 define “California Native American tribe” and “tribal cultural resources.” A California Native American tribe is defined as a Native American tribe located in California that is on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission.

(a) Tribal cultural resources are defined as:

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

(b) A cultural landscape that meets the criteria of subdivision (a) is a tribal cultural resource to the extent that the landscape is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape.

(c) A historical resource described in Section 21084.1, a unique archaeological resource as defined in subdivision (g) of Section 21083.2, or a “nonunique archaeological resource” as defined in subdivision (h) of Section 21083.2 may also be a tribal cultural resource if it conforms with the criteria of subdivision (a).

Public Resources Code § 21080.3.1 provides guidance for tribal consultation. Prior to the public release of a CEQA document, the lead agency must consult with any California Native American tribe if: (1) the California Native American tribe has submitted a written request to be informed by the lead agency through formal notification of proposed projects in the geographic area that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the tribe; and (2) the tribe provides a written response requesting consultation within 30 days of receipt of the formal notification.

The Native American Heritage Commission will help the lead agency identify California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area. Within 14 days of determining that an application for a project is complete or a decision by a public agency to undertake a project, the lead agency shall provide formal notification to traditionally and culturally affiliated California Native American tribes that have requested notice. The written notice will include a brief description of the proposed project, project location, lead agency contact information, and a 30-day notice for the California Native American tribe to request consultation. The tribal consultation process must begin within 30 days of receiving the written consultation request from the California Native American tribe.

### **State Historical Resources Commission**

Under California Code 5020.5, the State Historical Resources Commission shall develop criteria and methods for determining the significance of archaeological sites, for selecting the most important archaeological sites, and for determining whether the most significant archaeological sites should be preserved intact or excavated and interpreted. The commission shall also develop guidelines for the reasonable and feasible collection, storage, and display of archaeological specimens. The commission oversees the California Register (California Office of Historic Preservation 2019).

### **State Historic Preservation Office**

In consultation with the State Historical Resource Commission, under California Code 5020.6, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) acts as the executive secretary of the commission and shall be the chief administrative officer of the Office of Historic Preservation (California Office of Historic Preservation 2019).

### **California Register of Historical Resources**

The California Register is an authoritative guide in California to be used by state and local agencies, private groups, and citizens to identify the state's historical resources and to indicate what properties are to be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible, from substantial adverse change (California Office of Historic Preservation 2019).

### **Native American Heritage Commission**

Under California Code 5097.9, the commission shall identify and catalog places of special religious or social significance to Native Americans, and known graves and cemeteries of Native Americans

on private lands. The commission shall notify landowners on whose property such graves and cemeteries are determined to exist, and shall identify the Native American group most likely descended from those Native Americans who may be interred on the property. The commission shall make recommendations relative to Native American sacred places that are located on private lands, are inaccessible to Native Americans, and have cultural significance to Native Americans for acquisition by the state or other public agencies for the purpose of facilitating or assuring access thereto by Native Americans (California Office of Historic Preservation 2019).

## **Human Remains**

Per California Health and Safety Code 7050.5, every person who knowingly mutilates or disinters, wantonly disturbs, or willfully removes any human remains in or from any location other than a dedicated cemetery without authority of law is guilty of a misdemeanor. In the event of discovery or recognition of any human remains in any location other than a dedicated cemetery, there shall be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent remains until the coroner of the county in which the human remains are discovered has determined, in accordance with Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 27460) of part 3 of Division 2 of Title 3 of the Government Code, that the remains are not subject to the provisions of Section 27491 of the Government Code or any other related provisions of law concerning investigation of the circumstance, manner and cause of any death, and the recommendations concerning the treatment and disposition of the human remains have been made to the person responsible for the excavation, or to his/her authorized representative, in the manner provided in Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code. The coroner shall make his/her determination within two working days from the time the person responsible for the excavation, or his/her authorized representative, notifies the coroner of the discovery or recognition of the human remains. If the coroner determines that the remains are not subject to his/her authority and if the coroner recognizes the human remains to be those of a Native American, or has reason to believe that they are those of a Native American, he/she shall contact, by telephone within 24 hours, the Native American Heritage Commission (California Office of Historic Preservation 2019).

## **Assembly Bill 52**

On September 25, 2014, Governor Brown signed Assembly Bill (AB) 52, which creates a new category of environmental resources “tribal cultural resources” that must be considered under CEQA. The legislation imposes new requirements for consultation regarding projects that may affect a tribal cultural resource, includes a broad definition of what may be considered to be a tribal cultural resource, and includes a list of recommended mitigation measures. AB 52 adds tribal cultural resources to the categories of cultural resources in CEQA, which had formerly been limited to historic, unique archaeological, and paleontological resources. AB 52 requires lead agencies to provide notice to tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of a proposed project if they have requested notice of projects proposed within that area.

To participate in AB 52, a tribe requests, in writing, that they wish the lead agency to notify them through a formal notification of proposed projects within the tribe's geographic area where they are traditionally and culturally affiliated. The lead agency has 14 days after determining that an application for a project is complete, or a decision by a public agency to undertake a project, to provide formal notification to the designated contact or tribal representative of traditionally and culturally affiliated California Native American tribes that have requested notice.

## Local

### City of Gonzales General Plan and General Plan EIR

The general plan EIR identified that new development has potential to result in significant impacts on historic, prehistoric, and paleontological resources. These significant impacts are mitigated to less than significant by policies and implementing actions included in the general plan, and by mitigation measures CUL-1 and CUL-2 in the general plan EIR. Implementing action CC-7.1.10, Project-level Cultural Analysis Required, requires development applications to contain a project-level analysis of cultural resources for all areas planned for urbanization. The mitigation measures reinforce the noted action by requiring site-specific cultural resources analyses for all areas planned for urbanization so that project-specific impacts and mitigations for cultural resources can be identified and implemented.

## 8.3 Thresholds of Significance

CEQA Guidelines Appendix G is a sample initial study checklist that includes a number of factual inquiries related to the subject of cultural resources, tribal cultural resources, and paleontological resources, as it does on a whole series of additional environmental topics. Lead agencies are under no obligation to use these inquiries in fashioning thresholds of significance on the subject of cultural and tribal cultural resources impacts, or on any subject addressed in the checklist. Rather, with few exceptions, CEQA grants agencies discretion to develop their own thresholds of significance. Even so, it is a common practice for lead agencies to take the language from the inquiries presented in Appendix G and to use that language in fashioning thresholds. The City has done so here. Therefore, for purposes of this EIR, a significant impact would occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

### Historic and Unique Archaeological Resources

- Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource;
- Cause a substantial adverse change in significance of a (unique) archaeological resource; or
- Disturb any (Native American) human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries.

## Tribal Cultural Resources

- 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:
  1. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k); or
  2. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

## 8.4 Analysis, Impacts and Mitigation Measures

### Historic Resources and Unique Archaeological Resources

<b>IMPACT 8-1</b>	<b>Potential Adverse Change to Historic Resources and/or Unique Archaeological Resources During Construction</b>	<b>Less than Significant with Mitigation</b>
-----------------------	--	--

The cultural resources survey determined that there were no observable archaeological resources within the boundaries of the site. A cultural resources survey has not yet been conducted to assess potential cultural resources impacts from constructing the off-site wastewater collection main or circulation improvements that would be part of the City’s circulation network.

The content of general plan EIR mitigation measure CUL-1 is included below as a project-specific mitigation measure and would apply to the off-site improvements associated with the project. The content of general plan EIR mitigation measure CUL-2 is also included below as a project-specific mitigation measure, which would be applicable to both on-site and off-site construction activities. An additional mitigation measure is included to reflect current CEQA practice for mitigating potential historic or unique archaeological resource impacts. This mitigation measure is included to more precisely describe actions to be taken in the event that unknown buried archaeological resources are uncovered during construction activities.

### Conclusion

While it is possible that unknown historic and unique archaeological resources could be uncovered during on- and off-site ground disturbance activities, implementation of the following mitigation measures would reduce potential impacts on these resources from future on- and off-site development to less than significant.

### ***Mitigation Measures***

- 8-1a (General plan EIR mitigation measure CUL-1). A project-level analysis of historic and unique archaeological resources shall be conducted for all areas in which off-site improvements within the City’s jurisdiction are needed to implement the proposed project. These include, but may not be limited to, the off-site wastewater main location and locations off-site circulation improvements. The analysis shall include recommended measures to mitigate any significant impact that such improvements may have on historic and/or unique archaeological resources.
- 8-1b (General plan EIR mitigation measure CUL-2). The City shall require the following as a standard condition of project approval: “if any archaeological resources are discovered during grading or construction, all work shall be immediately halted and appropriate personnel, including a qualified Native American representative, shall be contacted and consulted. Based on these consultations, appropriate measures shall be taken to protect the discovered resources, and only after such measures have been implemented shall grading or construction continue.”
- 8-1c If archaeological resources are discovered during soil-disturbing activities, then work should be stopped within 50 meters (165 feet) of the find until a qualified professional archaeologist can evaluate it. If the find is determined to be significant, then appropriate mitigation measures will be formulated and implemented.

Implementation of these mitigation measures would ensure that should unknown historic and unique archaeological resources be uncovered during ground disturbing activities; measures would be taken to avoid damaging such resources with appropriate resource recovery actions taken to protect and/or preserve the resources. Therefore, the impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

### **Native American Human Remains**

<b>IMPACT 8-2</b>	<b>Potential Adverse Impact on Native American Human Remains During Construction</b>	<b>Less than Significant with Mitigation</b>
-----------------------	--	--

The general plan EIR determined that although no recorded Native American burials are known within the growth areas identified in the general plan, including the project site and off-site improvement locations, it remains possible that unrecorded prehistoric or historic burials could be uncovered and damaged or destroyed during site preparation or excavation activities for development within the site or associated with off-site improvements. This potentially significant impact would be reduced to less than significant with implementation of general plan policies and mitigation measures CUL-1 and CUL-2 in the general plan EIR. General plan EIR mitigation

measures CUL-1 and CUL-2 are referenced in the project-specific mitigation measures referenced for impact 8-1 above. An additional mitigation measure is included below to reflect current CEQA practice for mitigating potential impacts on Native American human remains.

## Conclusion

While it is possible that unknown Native American human remains could be uncovered during site preparation and/or other site disturbance activities, including at off-site improvement locations, implementation of the mitigation measures above, and implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce impacts on human remains to less than significant.

### *Mitigation Measure*

Implement mitigation measures 8-1a and 8-1b above and the following mitigation measure:

8-2 If human remains are found during construction activities, there will be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent human remains until the coroner of Monterey County is contacted to determine that no investigation of the cause of death is required.

If the coroner determines the remains to be Native American, the coroner will contact the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours. The Native American Heritage Commission will identify the person or persons it believes to be the most likely descendent (MLD) from the deceased Native American. The MLD may then make recommendations to the landowner or the person responsible for the excavation work, for means of treating or disposing of, with appropriate dignity, the human remains and associated grave goods as provided in California Public Resources Code Section 5097.98.

The landowner or their authorized representative will rebury the Native American human remains and associated grave goods, with appropriate dignity, on the property in a location not subject to further disturbance if: a) the Native American Heritage Commission is unable to identify the MLD or the MLD failed to make a recommendation within 48 hours after being allowed access to the site; b) the descendent identified fails to make a recommendation; or c) the landowner or his authorized representative rejects the recommendation of the descendent, and the mediation by the Native American Heritage Commission fails to provide measures acceptable to the landowner.

Implementation of this mitigation measure would ensure that should unknown buried Native American human remains be uncovered during ground disturbing activities; measures would be taken to avoid damaging such resources with appropriate resource recovery actions taken to protect and/or preserve the resources. Therefore, the impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

## Tribal Cultural Resources

IMPACT 8-3	Potential Adverse Impact on Tribal Cultural Resources During Construction	Less than Significant with Mitigation
---------------	--	--

Though tribal cultural resources are not known to exist within the project site or in off-site improvement locations, however, through the tribal consultation process conducted by the City pursuant to AB 52, it was determined that unknown tribal cultural resources could be present. If present, such resources could be damaged during site preparation and construction activities. This would be a potentially significant impact.

### Conclusion

While it is possible that unknown tribal cultural resources could be uncovered during site preparation and/or other site disturbance activities, including at off-site improvement locations, implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce potential impacts on such resources, if present, to less than significant.

### *Mitigation Measure*

8-3 The party responsible (e.g., project applicant or City) for ground disturbing activities within the project site or the off-site improvement areas, shall contract with a qualified Native American monitor from the Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation or qualified archaeologist to observe ground disturbing activities within the site and at off-site improvement locations at an hourly rate and scope deemed acceptable by the Gonzales Community Development Director and at rates charged by similarly qualified archaeologists.

The timing and frequency of monitoring shall be based on the timing and duration of ground disturbing activities (i.e., infrastructure trenching, grading, foundation excavation) that could affect undiscovered tribal cultural resources. Monitoring in any area shall be discontinued when it becomes evident to the tribal monitor/archaeologist that no additional monitoring of ground disturbing activities is necessary. If a significant tribal cultural feature or deposit is discovered by the tribal monitor/archaeologist, earth moving activities shall be temporarily halted for the purpose of identifying the deposit. If deemed necessary by the tribal monitor/archaeologist, the feature or deposit shall be sampled or salvaged according to a mitigation and data recovery plan developed by the Community Development Director in consultation with the tribal monitor/archaeologist.

Implementation of this mitigation measure would ensure that, should unknown tribal cultural resources be uncovered during ground disturbing activities, measures would be taken to avoid damaging resources, with appropriate resource recovery actions taken to protect and/or preserve the resources. Therefore, this potential impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

*This side intentionally left blank.*

# 9.0 Energy

This section of the EIR assesses the energy demand characteristics of the proposed project, particularly for electricity and transportation fuels, to provide context for the magnitude of demand and whether such demand could be considered wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary.

The information within this section is sourced from the *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report* prepared for the proposed project in September 2020 by EMC Planning Group and included as [Appendix B](#). However, since the 2020 report was completed, the Emissions Factor Model (EMFAC) used in the report to quantify fuel demand from the project has been updated. The California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) model used to quantify electricity and natural gas demand for 2020 report has also been updated. [Appendix B](#) also includes a memo entitled, “Air Quality and GHG Modeling and Regulatory Setting Updates” (“AQ/GHG memo”) that describes the updated modeling process used to reflect the model updates. The updated EMFAC and CalEEMod results are attached to the memo. The updated results are referenced in this section of the EIR. Other energy analysis related elements of the 2020 report remain pertinent. Additional sources of information are introduced where applicable.

The *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report* describes the proposed project as an annexation and pre-zoning project only. Subsequent to the report being completed, the applicant submitted the proposed specific plan and the first of several anticipated future tentative maps. The land use plan and development capacity identified in the specific plan is essentially unchanged relative to the conceptual land use plan and development capacity associated with the annexation as referenced in the *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report* and used as an input for the updated EMFAC and CalEEMod modeling runs. Other than the updated model results attached to the AQ/GHG memo, the energy information in the 2020 report remains valid.

## Responses to the Notice of Preparation

There were no responses to the NOP regarding energy.

## 9.1 Environmental Setting

The energy environmental setting section of the *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report* incorporates environmental setting information provided in the general plan EIR where applicable, as well as new energy setting information. Included below is the environmental setting information that is most germane to the energy environmental impact analysis.

## Energy Provider and Baseline Energy Demand

In 2017, Gonzales joined with 18 other jurisdictions in the three-county Monterey Bay Region (Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito counties) to form Monterey Bay Community Power, a community choice aggregation agency. Monterey Bay Community Power has recently changed names to Central Coast Community Energy. Central Coast Community Energy has been providing 100 percent carbon-free and renewable energy to its customers since March 2018, while retaining Pacific Gas & Electric for delivering power and maintaining electric infrastructure.

The project site is currently in active agricultural production. Agricultural machinery and electricity use for pumping irrigation water are the two primary sources of direct energy consumption associated with agricultural production.

## 9.2 Regulatory Setting

The *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report* includes summaries of standards, regulations, and plans that have been adopted or revised by local, regional, state, or federal agencies that bear on the evaluation of energy impacts. Much of this information is the same as reported in Section 3.2, Regulatory Setting of the *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report*, that pertains to GHGs. Please refer to that section for more information. Several of the pertinent regulations and plans are summarized below.

### State

The California Legislature has enacted a series of regulations and statutes over time addressing the need to reduce energy demand across the State. Representative examples that are relevant to the proposed project are summarized below.

#### California Building Codes

##### *California Energy Code*

The California Energy Code (California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 6), which is incorporated into the California Building Standards Code, was first established in 1978 in response to a legislative mandate to reduce California's energy consumption. The California Energy Code is updated every three years by the California Energy Commission as the Building Energy Efficiency Standards (BEES) to allow consideration and possible incorporation of new energy efficiency technologies and construction methods. Although the BEES were not originally intended to reduce GHG emissions, increased energy efficiency results in decreased GHG emissions because energy efficient buildings require less electricity. The California Building Standards Code is enforceable at the project level.

Energy standards have supported California's long-term strategy to meet energy demand, and conserve resources. The Energy Code governs window and door materials, lighting, electrical panels, insulation, faucets and additional building features. The requirements vary between home and

business buildings, as well as among climate zones in which they are implemented. The current 2022 Energy Code updates the prior 2019 code by requiring actions/features that continue to support California’s gradual transition away from use of fossil fuels, and improve environmental quality.

### ***California Green Building Standards Code***

The purpose of the California Green Building Standards Code (California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 11) (“CALGreen”) is to improve public health and safety and to promote the general welfare by enhancing the design and construction of buildings through the use of building concepts having a reduced negative impact or positive environmental impact and encouraging sustainable construction practices in the following categories: 1) planning and design; 2) energy efficiency; 3) water efficiency and conservation; 4) material conservation and resource efficiency; and 5) environmental quality. The code requires all new buildings in the state to be more energy efficient and environmentally responsible.

These achieve major reductions in interior and exterior building energy consumption. CALGreen institutes mandatory minimum environmental performance standards for all ground-up new construction of commercial, residential, and state-owned buildings, as well as schools and hospitals. The current 2022 regulations encourage efficient electric heat pumps, establishes electric-ready requirements for new homes, expands solar photovoltaic and battery storage standards, strengthens ventilation standards, and promote electrification of the vehicle fleet by expanding standards for electric vehicle infrastructure (e.g., electric vehicle charging stations) for residential and non-residential development. These electric vehicle changes promote electrification of the vehicle fleet by expanding standards for electric vehicle infrastructure (e.g., electric vehicle charging stations) for residential and non-residential development. Changes in the water efficiency, materials conservations, and environmental quality standards were limited.

### **Renewable Energy Generation Targets**

In 2015, the Legislature enacted Senate Bill 350 that increased Renewable Portfolio Standard to require 50 percent of electricity generated to be from renewables by 2030. On September 10, 2018, former Governor Brown signed into law SB 100. SB 100 raises California’s Renewable Portfolio Standard requirement to 50 percent renewable resources target by December 31, 2026, and 60 percent target by December 31, 2030. In 2022, the Legislature enacted Senate Bill 1020. SB 1020 adds interim targets to the policy framework originally established in SB 100 to require renewable energy and zero-carbon resources to supply 90 percent of all retail electricity sales by 2035 and 95 percent of all retail electricity sales by 2040. The purpose was to ensure that the state makes steady and accountable progress towards the full decarbonization of California’s electricity grid.

### **Senate Bill 743**

Senate Bill 743 (SB 743), which became effective September 2013, initiated reforms to the CEQA Guidelines to establish new criteria for determining the significance of transportation impacts that

“promote the reduction of GHG emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses.” Specifically, SB 743 directed the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research to update the CEQA Guidelines to replace automobile delay—as described solely by LOS or similar measures of vehicular capacity or traffic congestion—with VMT as the recommended metric for determining the significance of transportation impacts. The Office of Planning and Research has updated the CEQA Guidelines for this purpose. Beginning July 1, 2020, the provisions of SB 743 apply statewide.

## Regional/Local

### Gonzales Climate Action Plan

The *Gonzales Climate Action Plan: 2018 Update* (CAP) was adopted in 2018. The CAP identifies measures that are intended to reduce energy demand. These include Residential Electrification Program (New Residential), Urban Forest, Monterey Bay Community Power 100 Percent Carbon-Free Power (New Commercial and Industrial), Gonzalez Renewables Program (New Commercial and Industrial), and Gonzales/Monterey Bay Community Power Electric Vehicle Program.

### City of Gonzales General Plan and General Plan EIR

The general plan includes policies and implementing actions that address topics including, but not limited to: energy conservation, energy efficiency in housing, energy conservation through land use and planning, greenhouse gas reduction planning, reducing transportation related greenhouse gases, renewable energy use and production, and green building. The general plan EIR concluded that development activity associated with the general plan would result in less-than-significant impacts due to wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary consumption of energy and the need for new and improved energy transmission facilities with implementation of a multitude of general plan policies and implementing actions.

## 9.3 Thresholds of Significance

CEQA Guidelines Appendix G is a sample initial study checklist that includes a number of factual inquiries related to the subject of energy resources, as it does on a whole series of additional environmental topics. Lead agencies are under no obligation to use these inquiries in fashioning thresholds of significance on the subject of energy resource impacts, or on any subject addressed in the checklist. Rather, with few exceptions, CEQA grants agencies discretion to develop their own thresholds of significance. Even so, it is a common practice for lead agencies to take the language from the inquiries included in Appendix G and to use that language in fashioning thresholds. The City has done so here. Therefore, for purposes of this EIR, a significant impact would occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

- Result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation; or

- Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

## Issues or Potential Impacts not Discussed Further

### Conflict with State or Local Plan for Renewable Energy or Energy Efficiency

A multitude of state regulations and legislative acts are aimed at improving vehicle fuel efficiency, energy efficiency, and enhancing energy conservation. While most of the energy-related legislation is enforced at the state-level, the California Building Standards Code is enforceable at the local level by Gonzales through the development review process. That enforcement is the primary mechanism through which the project will be required to implement state mandated energy efficiency/conservation measures that are within the control of the applicant and the city.

The CAP is a relevant local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency as it includes measures that would result in energy demand reduction. As discussed under Impact 10-1 in Section 10.0, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, future development within project site would be required to include measures to ensure its consistency with the CAP. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. No further discussion is required. Additional mitigation is included to require consistency with performance standards designed to further reduce energy demand in the form of natural gas.

## 9.4 Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

The evaluation of energy impacts is based on project compliance with the City’s CAP, features of the project that serve to reduce energy demand, and applicable energy efficiency regulations.

### Energy Use

<b>IMPACT 9-1</b>	<b>Wasteful, Inefficient, or Unnecessary Energy Consumption</b>	<b>Less than Significant</b>
-----------------------	---	------------------------------

#### Project Energy Consumption

The three primary sources of long-term energy consumption from future development of the project site will be vehicle fuel, natural gas, and electricity. Each of these energy sources is described below. Energy demand will increase incrementally over the projected 20-year buildout time horizon.

#### *Transportation Fuel*

The daily vehicles miles traveled at project buildout is projected at 317,972 miles (Ollie Zhou, Hexagon Transportation Consultants, email message, December 12, 2023). This includes travel for all types of vehicles in the vehicle fleet including passenger cars and trucks and light and heavy-duty trucks. This is the unmitigated VMT value. Mitigations included in Section 6.0, Air Quality, would reduce daily VMT as described in that section.

The 2021 EMFAC model was used to forecast transportation fuel demand (gas and diesel) from future development based on the unmitigated daily vehicle miles traveled value. Fuel demand at project buildout is forecast at 2,846,465 gallons per year. The EMFAC results used to generate this data are attached to the AQ/GHG memo in [Appendix B](#). Transportation fuel would also be consumed as part of the construction process for all on- and off-site improvements. The volume would be minimal relative to annual operational demand, so it has not been quantified.

### ***Electricity***

According to the California Energy Commission Energy Consumption Data Management System, in 2021, total electricity consumption in Monterey County was 2,530,978,869 kilowatt-hours. Section 5.11.1 of the CalEEMod results attached to the AQ/GHG memo in [Appendix B](#) show that the unmitigated electricity demand at buildout of the project site would be approximately 33,987,000 kilowatt-hours/year. This represents about 1.3 percent of the total 2021 Monterey County electricity demand. Electricity demand would be notably reduced with the implementation of mitigation measures included in the air quality and GHG sections of this EIR.

Electricity may also be consumed as part of the construction process for all on- and off-site improvements. The demand would be minimal relative to annual operational demand, so it has not been quantified.

### ***Natural Gas***

According to the California Energy Commission Energy Consumption Data Management System, in 2021, total natural gas consumption in Monterey County was 114,954,974 therms. A therm is a unit of measurement for natural gas use. One therm equals 100,000 British Thermal Units. A British Thermal Unit is the amount of heat required to raise the temperature of one pound of water by one degree. Section 5.11.1 of the CalEEMod results attached to the AQ/GHG memo in [Appendix B](#) show that the unmitigated natural gas demand at buildout of the project site would be about 149,280,000 British Thermal Units per year or 1,492 therms/year. This is less than .01 percent of Monterey County's total 2021 natural gas demand.

Natural gas demand would be notably reduced with the implementation of mitigation measures included in the air quality and GHG sections of this EIR.

## **Conclusion**

A multitude of state regulations and legislative acts are aimed at improving vehicle fuel efficiency, energy efficiency, and enhancing energy conservation. For example, the Pavley I standards focus on transportation fuel efficiency. The gradual increased use of electric cars powered with cleaner electricity will reduce consumption of fossil fuel. According to the State of California, vehicle miles traveled are expected to decline with the continuing implementation of SB 743, resulting in less vehicle travel and less fuel consumption. In the renewable energy use sector, a series of senate bills has progressively ramped up the percentage of the state's electricity that must be generated by

renewable sources. In the building energy use sector, representative legislation and standards for reducing natural gas and electricity consumption include, but are not limited to CALGreen and the California Building Standards Code.

The land uses proposed represent common land use development types whose energy demand would not be excessive. Further, Gonzales enforces the California Building Standards Code through the development review process. That enforcement is the primary mechanism through which the project will be required to implement state mandated energy efficiency/conservation measures that are within the control of the applicant and the City.

Implementation of project specific measures will also result in reduced energy demand. These include mitigation measures in Section 6.0, Air Quality that would result in reduced vehicle miles traveled and reduced electricity demand, and reduced natural gas demand, and mitigation in Section 10.0, Greenhouse Gases, that require compliance with the City's climate action plan measures that reduce energy demand and with other performance standards designed to further reduce GHG emissions, including prohibiting natural gas use.

Given the considerations summarized above, the proposed project would have a less-than-significant energy impact.

*This side intentionally left blank.*

# 10.0 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

This section of the EIR identifies the projected GHG emissions sources and volumes resulting from operations of future proposed urban uses within the project site. The purpose is to disclose the magnitude of projected emissions. The significance of GHG impacts is not based on comparing projected emissions volumes to a quantified threshold of significance, but rather by evaluating project consistency with the City's adopted climate action plan, the content of which is fully described herein.

The information within this section was originally sourced from the *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report* prepared for the proposed project in September 2020 by EMC Planning Group and included in [Appendix B](#), and from the *Gonzales Climate Action Plan: 2018 Update (Zero City LLC 2018a) (CAP)*. Since the 2020 report was completed, the Emissions Factor Model (EMFAC) used in that report to quantify mobile source GHG emissions from the project has been updated. The California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) model used to quantify area and energy source GHG emissions for the 2020 report has also been updated. [Appendix B](#) also includes a memo entitled, "Air Quality and GHG Modeling and Regulatory Setting Updates" ("AQ/GHG memo") that describes how these updated models were used to update the original 2020 modeling results. The updated results are attached to the AQ/GHG memo. The updated EMFAC model was also run with updated vehicle miles traveled (VMT) data generated by an updated VMT analysis prepared for the project as described in Section 14.0, Transportation. The updated results from EMFAC and CalEEMod modeling are reported in this section of the EIR. Elements of the 2020 report other than emission modeling results remain largely applicable. Additional sources of information are introduced where applicable.

The *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report* describes the proposed project as an annexation and pre-zoning project only. Subsequent to the report being completed, the applicant submitted the proposed specific plan and a tentative map covering a portion of the project site. The land use plan and development capacity identified in the specific plan is essentially unchanged relative to the conceptual land use plan and development capacity associated with the annexation. Therefore, the characteristics of projected development associated with the annexation project are similar to that of development planned under the current annexation, specific plan and tentative map project. Other than the updated model results described in AQ/GHG memo, the GHG information in the 2020 report remains valid.

## Responses to the Notice of Preparation

There were no responses to the NOP regarding GHG emissions.

## 10.1 Environmental Setting

The GHG environmental setting section of the *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report* addresses topics that include the physical, environmental and human health effects of climate change; GHG types and their global warming potentials; and GHG inventories for California and Gonzales. Please refer to Appendix B for more information.

## 10.2 Regulatory Setting

The *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report* in Appendix B includes summaries of standards, regulations, and plans that had been adopted or revised by local, regional, state, or federal agencies at the time the report was prepared in 2020. The AQ/GHG memo also included in Appendix B includes summarizes of important legislation that has been passed since that time. Please refer to Appendix B for reference. While the regulatory information is informative, the City's CAP is the pertinent guidance for assessing GHG impacts as described in the following section.

### Gonzales Climate Action Plan

#### Climate Action Plan Background and Content

The City adopted the CAP in 2013 and updated it in 2018. The City certified the *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (February 2013): (SCH# 2009121017) Addendum (Zero City LLC 2018b)* that was prepared to evaluate the impacts of implementing the CAP as a new component of the general plan.

The CAP includes GHG reduction targets and associated GHG reduction measures in the sectors of energy use and energy generation (via local microgrid using renewable energy), transportation, land use, water, and solid waste. The reduction targets are a 15 percent reduction in 2005 baseline emissions by 2020, a 49 percent reduction in 2005 baseline emissions by 2030, and an 83 percent reduction in 2005 baseline emissions by 2050.

The CAP identifies GHG emissions projections based on buildout of the general plan, including land uses identified for the project site. Community-wide GHG emissions were estimated to increase from 25,138 metric tons (MT) of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) in 2005 to 30,129 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e by 2020. By 2030, these emissions are expected to reach 48,612 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e, and 88,375 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e by 2050 (Zero City 2018a, Table CAP-3).

## Qualified Climate Action Plan and CEQA Streamlining

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15064(h)(3) and 15130(d), if a project is consistent with the requirements of an adopted plan, such as a climate action plan that is prepared consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5(b), the lead agency may determine that the GHG impacts are less than significant with no further analysis required. Plans that are prepared consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5(b) are considered to be “qualified” for streamlining the review of GHG impacts of projects subject to the plan. If it is determined that a proposed project is not consistent with an adopted climate action plan or other plan for reducing GHGs, further analysis would be required to determine whether the impact is significant.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5(b), Tiering and Streamlining the Analysis of Greenhouse Gas Emissions, outlines six elements that should be included in a plan to reduce GHG emissions. These include:

1. Quantify GHG emissions, both existing and projected over a specified time period, resulting from activities within a defined geographic area;
2. Establish a level, based on substantial evidence, below which the contribution to GHG emissions from activities covered by the plan would not be cumulatively considerable;
3. Identify and analyze the GHG emissions resulting from specific actions or categories of actions anticipated within the geographic area;
4. Specify measures or a group of measures, including performance standards that substantial evidence demonstrates, if implemented on a project-by-project basis, would collectively achieve the specified emissions level;
5. Monitor the plan’s progress; and
6. Adopt the GHG reduction strategy in a public process following environmental review.

The CAP meets the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5(b) by: quantifying GHG emissions from all sectors for years 2005, 2020, 2030, and 2050; defining emissions reduction targets for the future years; analyzing baseline and future emissions from all sectors; defining specific measures to achieve the overall reduction targets; requiring periodic monitoring of plan progress; complying with CEQA; and being adopted in a public process.

The GHG emissions reduction target percentages shown in CAP Table CAP-6, GHG Reduction Targets, correlate to the statewide GHG emissions reduction targets embodied in Assembly Bill 32 for the year 2020 (reduce 2020 emissions volume to the statewide 1990 emissions volume by 2020), Senate Bill 32 for the year 2030 (achieve a 40 reduction in 1990 statewide 1990 emissions volume by 2030), and Executive Order No. S-3-05 for the year 2050 (achieve an 80 percent reduction in 1990 statewide emissions volume by 2050). Summaries of the noted legislation can be found in Appendix B. Table CAP-6 identifies the sum of GHG emissions volumes reductions for each of the target

years that would accrue with implementing GHG reduction measures in the CAP and from actions being implemented at the state level. Resulting emissions volumes in the city in each of the three target years would meet the state percentage reduction targets for those years.

Since the CAP was adopted in 2018, a number of new pieces of state legislation have been signed into law that are designed to reduce GHG emissions statewide. Several are identified in the AQ/GHG memo in Appendix B. Among these is Assembly Bill 1279, enacted in September, 2022. It sets a new statewide GHG emissions statewide reduction goal of net zero GHG emissions and an 85 percent reduction in human-induced (“anthropogenic”) GHG emissions by 2045. It sets a deeper statewide emissions reduction goal for post-2030 conditions than does the Executive Order S-3-05 reduction target of 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.

Assembly Bill 1279 recognizes that net zero emissions likely cannot be achieved without expanding/managing natural and working lands that serve to sequester CO<sub>2</sub> and without deploying technologies/implementing programs to remove CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere. These are large-scale initiatives that are generally outside the control of local agencies. Therefore, the City’s ability to achieve net zero emissions by 2045 is considered infeasible. The City has not had the opportunity to update the CAP to consider the new Assembly Bill 1279 goals, nor have the vast majority of local agencies in California that have adopted otherwise current, qualified CAPs. The City’s current CAP does make substantial progress towards meeting the new 2045 anthropogenic emissions reduction goal due to its 2050 emissions reduction target setting and inclusion of GHG reduction measures that would achieve that target. Consequently, the CAP is considered to remain valid as a qualified GHG reduction plan pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5(b).

As noted above, neither the City nor most local agencies with adopted qualified CAPs can reasonably have been expected to have yet updated their CAPs to reflect the recent Assembly Bill 1279 direction. The Monterey Bay Air Resourced District has not historically provided GHG reduction plan guidance to local agencies, nor has it done so in response to Assembly Bill 1279. The most current such guidance was adopted by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) in 2022 as the *Justification Report: CEQA Thresholds for Evaluating the Significance of Climate Impacts from Land Use Projects and Plans* (Bay Area Air Quality Management District 2022). BAAQMD has identified a series of GHG reduction performance standards for new land use projects (particularly residential, commercial and/or office projects), that if met through the project design or otherwise required as mitigation, would reduce GHG impacts to less than significant. The guidance is based in part on actions that local agencies/developers can take to ensure that new land use projects contribute their fair share towards meeting the state 2045 emissions reduction goals. The performance measures include: 1) new development is to be designed with no natural gas infrastructure (new development is to be all electric); 2) new development is to demonstrate less-than-significant energy impacts; 3) new development is to incorporate transportation electrification

improvements (electric vehicle support infrastructure) consistent with Tier 2 voluntary standards contained in the latest California Green Building Standards Code; and 4) new development must have a less-than-significant vehicle miles traveled impact.

### 10.3 Thresholds of Significance

CEQA Guidelines Appendix G is a sample initial study checklist that includes a number of factual inquiries related to the subject of GHGs, as it does on a whole series of additional environmental topics. Lead agencies are under no obligation to use these inquiries in fashioning thresholds of significance on the subject GHG impacts, or on any subject addressed in the checklist. Rather, with few exceptions, CEQA grants agencies discretion to develop their own thresholds of significance. Even so, it is a common practice for lead agencies to take the language from the inquiries included in Appendix G and to use that language in fashioning thresholds. The City has done so here. Therefore, for purposes of this SEIR, a significant impact would occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

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

### 10.4 Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

The AQ/GHG memo in [Appendix B](#) includes GHG emissions projections for project operations that update those found in the *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report*, which is also found in Appendix B. The updated emissions projections are provided below for informational purposes. Construction activities associated with developing the site and constructing off-site wastewater and circulation infrastructure improvements would also generate GHGs. These emissions have not been quantified, as it is project operations that are pertinent to assessing the significance of GHG impacts.

#### Generation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions

IMPACT 10-1	Generation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Less than Significant with Mitigation
----------------	--	--

#### Projected GHG Emissions

Operations of future development as described in the specific plan would result in new mobile, area, energy, waste, and water GHG emissions as summarized in [Table 10-1, Unmitigated Operational](#)

**Greenhouse Gas Emissions.** The data in the table is taken from the EMFAC and CalEEMod results attached to the AQ/GHG memo on [Appendix B](#). The EMFAC results report GHG emissions in units of tons/day and tons/year, with the latter converted to metric tons per year.

**Table 10-1 Unmitigated Operational Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Emission Sources	GHG Emissions (MT CO <sub>2</sub> e)
Mobile	24,960
Area	3,202
Energy	8,966
Waste	1,561
Water	530
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,219</b>

SOURCE: EMC Planning Group 2023

The unmitigated projected GHG emissions volume of 39,219 is within the total projected GHG emissions inventory for the city as identified in the CAP for the years 2030 (48,612 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e) and 2050 (88,375 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e).

***GHG Emissions Reductions – Project Design Features and Air Quality Mitigation Measures***

The volume of emissions shown in Table 10-1 would be reduced with implementation of the project as designed and mitigation measures described in Section 6.0, Air Quality. Project design features that would reduce GHG emissions include an extensive pedestrian network and an extensive bicycle network and supporting infrastructure.

The specific plan also references a number of other standards and features that would serve to reduce GHG emissions. These include coordinating with Monterey-Salinas Transit to incorporate transit facilities into future individual development projects (e.g. tentative maps), including traffic calming measures on roads within the site; supporting electrification of the vehicle fleet by incorporating electric vehicle charging stations and reserving parking spaces for electric vehicles in multi-family and commercial development, including charging outlets in single-family homes; supporting bicycle commuting by including “end-of-trip” bicycle facilities in new commercial development; installing programmable thermostats in residential buildings; and installing energy efficient appliances in new residential buildings. The GHG reductions that would accrue to these measures have not been quantified here, as the significance of GHG impacts is based on consistency with the CAP rather than a numerical threshold of significance and on showing additional progress towards meeting the Assembly Bill 1279 emissions reduction target.

## Project Consistency with Climate Action Plan

As described in Section 10.2 above, the CAP is a qualified plan that can be used to streamline the analysis of GHG impacts. If a project is consistent with the CAP, it would have a less-than-significant impact from generating GHGs. Planned development would be consistent if it incorporates GHG reduction measures included in the CAP that are applicable to the type of development proposed and/or is required to incorporate such measures.

### *Climate Action Plan Reduction Measures*

Table CAP-8, GHG Reduction Measures, on page VI-2 of the CAP identifies the full set of GHG emission reduction measures that apply throughout the city and presents the expected GHG emissions reductions from each. Table CAP-8 is included in the *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report*. As is common for many CAPs, the local agency is responsible for implementing many of the reduction measures, with a limited number of the measures within the implementation responsibility of individual development projects. This is the case with the City’s CAP. Two of the 10 measures in Table CAP-8 are within the implementation responsibility of individual developers. The applicable measures are listed in [Table 10-2, Consistency with Applicable Climate Action Plan Greenhouse Gas Reduction Measures](#). Definitions of the measures are included in the CAP.

For the project to be determined consistent with the CAP and its impacts determined to be less than significant, it must include and/or be required to include the applicable GHG reduction measures shown in Table 10-2.

**Table 10-2 Consistency with Applicable Climate Action Plan Greenhouse Gas Reduction Measures**

CAP Measure	GHG Reduction Measures	Project Consistency
<b>Residential Measures</b>		
P-1.3	Residential Electrification Program (New Residential)	<b>Consistent.</b> Appendix A of the specific plan includes requirement that all homes be equipped with high efficiency electric space and water heaters. Implementation is required per mitigation measure 6-3e in Section 6.0, Air Quality.
P-1.4	Urban Forest	<b>Consistent.</b> While the specific plan does not include reference to planting three trees for every single-family home planned within the site as identified in this measure, this requirement is included in mitigation measure 10-1 as described below.

SOURCE: Zero City 2018a

To ensure project consistency with CAP measure P-1.4, the following mitigation measure shall be implemented.

***Mitigation Measure***

- 10-1 To ensure project consistency with *Gonzales Climate Action Plan: 2018 Update* GHG reduction measure P-1.3 regarding urban forests, applicants for individual tentative maps that include single-family homes shall demonstrate to the City that a minimum of three trees will be planted for every single-family home proposed as part of the tentative map project, with trees planted either within the tentative map boundary and/or elsewhere within the specific plan boundary. The measure shall also be included as a contractor work specification. The requirement shall be verified by the Community Development Director prior to approval of each individual tentative map in which single-family homes are proposed.

With implementation of mitigation measure 10-1 and with 6-3e in Section 6.0, Air Quality, that requires consistency with CAP measure P-1.3, the proposed project would be consistent with the CAP and its GHG impacts would be less-than-significant.

**Additional GHG Reduction Mitigation**

As described in the Regulatory Setting section above, Assembly Bill 1279, enacted in September 2022, established GHG reduction goals for the year 2045 that heretofore did not exist. Like local agencies throughout California that have adopted qualified, valid CAPs, the City has not yet had the opportunity to consider updates to its qualified CAP that reflect the new statewide reduction goals. Nevertheless, the City recognizes its responsibility to contribute its fair share towards meeting the 2045 reduction goals in a timely, feasible manner. Consequently, the City is referring to the BAAQMD’s GHG reduction plan guidance described in the *Justification Report: CEQA Thresholds for Evaluating the Significance of Climate Impacts from Land Use Projects and Plans* (refer to the Regulatory Setting section above) as a basis for requiring the proposed project meet two of the GHG reduction performance standards identified in that guidance. Conformance with the two standards would be required with implementation of the following mitigation measure.

***Mitigation Measure***

- 10-2 Applicants for all future individual projects shall:
- a. Design such projects to be all electric. No permanent natural gas infrastructure shall be permitted as a source of energy supply; and

- b. Incorporate transportation electrification-supporting site development design and infrastructure (e.g., electric vehicle support infrastructure) consistent with the Tier 2 voluntary electric vehicle standards in the California Green Building Standards Code, Title 24, in effect at the time building permits are requested from the City of Gonzales.

All individual project applications (e.g., tentative maps, use permits, etc.) shall be reviewed by the City of Gonzales Building Official for consistency with these requirements prior to issuance of building permits.

As described in Section 8.0, Energy, the energy impacts of implementing the specific plan were determined to be less than significant. As described in Section 13.0, Transportation, the proposed project would have a significant and unavoidable vehicle miles traveled impact, despite project design features and air quality mitigation measures that lessen the impact. In summary, though the City is not referencing BAAQMD’s GHG reduction plan as the basis for evaluating GHG impact significance, the proposed project, as mitigated, would demonstrate substantial progress towards reducing GHG emissions consistent with the state’s Assembly Bill 1279 GHG reduction goals.

### Conflict with a GHG Reduction Plan

<b>IMPACT 10-2</b>	<b>Conflict with the Gonzales Climate Action Plan: 2018 Update</b>	<b>Less than Significant with Mitigation</b>
------------------------	--	--

Consistency with the CAP is detailed in the impact analysis above. The CAP is a qualified climate action plan pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5(b) that functions as the applicable plan for reducing GHGs. As described for impact 10-1 above, the proposed project would be consistent with the CAP with implementation of mitigation measures 6-3e and 10-1 in this EIR. The proposed project would not conflict with the CAP provided these mitigation measures are implemented as required. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant with mitigation.

Further, with implementation of mitigation measure 10-2, the project would be substantially consistent with GHG reduction performance standards designed to ensure that land use projects meet their fair share contribution for reducing GHG emissions per the state’s newly enacted Assembly Bill 1279 GHG reduction goals for 2045.

*This side intentionally left blank.*

# 11.0

## Hazards and Hazardous Materials

This section of the EIR includes analysis of hazardous environmental conditions within the specific plan boundary and at off-site improvement locations. Potential impacts associated with risks to public health and safety and the environment are evaluated based on the potential presence/absence of hazardous environmental conditions.

The information within this section is based on the following sources:

- *Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessment Fano Ranch Gonzales, California* (Lowney Associates 2004) (“environmental site assessment”);
- *Phase II Environmental Site Assessment, Vista Lucia Development* (McCloskey Consultants, Inc. 2019) (“phase II assessment”);
- *Environmental Site Review and Current Conditions Assessment* (McCloskey Consultants, Inc. 2021) (“current conditions assessment”);
- *Site Mitigation Plan, Vista Lucia* (McCloskey Consultants 2022 (“mitigation plan”); and
- *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report* (“general plan EIR”) (December 2010).

The environmental site assessment, phase II assessment, current conditions assessment, and the mitigation plan are the fundamental sources of information for the hazards analysis. They are included in [Appendix D](#). The 2004 environmental site assessment was a comprehensive evaluation of environmental hazard conditions across the entire project site. The 2019 phase II assessment was completed to assess hazardous materials conditions in three areas within what was then designed to be the Village I portion of the proposed project that are planned for public schools. The 2021 current conditions assessment investigates and updates the then current status of hazardous environmental conditions identified in the 2004 environmental site assessment. The 2022 mitigation plan summarizes the results of the three prior analyses and provides site management and worker protocols for handling impacted soil to minimize the threat to human health and the environment. It functions as the mitigation approach for the identified hazardous materials conditions.

Additional sources of information are introduced where applicable.

### Responses to the Notice of Preparation

One comment was received from the Monterey County Resource Management Agency in response to the NOP associated with wildfire hazards. A comment was also received from the Monterey

County Environmental Health Bureau regarding historical pesticide and fertilizer usage as well as possible fuel storage. The Notices of Preparation prepared for the project and responses to those notices are included in [Appendix A](#).

## 11.1 Environmental Setting

This environmental setting section incorporates information from both the environmental site assessment and the current conditions assessment, as well as the general plan EIR and other sources.

### Site Specific Hazardous Materials Conditions

The term "environmental conditions" means the presence or likely presence of hazardous substances or petroleum products on a property under conditions that indicate a significant release or significant threat of a release into the ground, groundwater, or surface water. The environmental site assessment, current conditions assessment, and mitigation plan include results of investigations of numerous features within the site and of numerous soil and other materials samples taken to determine presence and concentrations of hazardous materials relative to regulatory thresholds. These features include retention basins, drainage ditches, water wells, debris areas, the "duck pond", a soil treatment area, burn areas, structures, residences, above ground storage tanks, buried diesel tanks, and storage areas.

The environmental site assessment indicated that several hazardous materials conditions existed in 2004 with potential to result in significant hazards to the public and environment. As noted above, the phase II assessment and current conditions assessment include analysis to update the status of the prior defined hazardous conditions. The broader hazardous materials conditions identified in the 2004 environmental assessment are summarized below. Conditions for which hazards were not found to pose public health and safety risks (materials conditions or concentrations that did not exceed regulatory safety thresholds) are not summarized below, but can be reviewed in [Appendix D](#). The environmental site assessment, phase II assessment, current conditions assessment, and mitigation plan include several figures which illustrate information summarized below.

### Agricultural Chemical Residues in Site Soils

The project site has been in agricultural use for approximately 100 years and agricultural chemicals and pesticides were applied to crops over time. Pesticides and herbicides were commonly applied to row crops and orchards and the presence of residual concentrations of organochlorine pesticides (OCPs) and arsenic were, therefore, potential environmental concerns.

The 2004 sampling indicated elevated concentrations of OCPs (toxaphene) in the agricultural crop areas generally in the western area of the project site. To evaluate the current concentrations over the entire site, shallow soil samples were collected at 14 locations and analyzed for OCPs as shown in Figure 2 of the current conditions assessment. Many of the sampling locations were targeted at

the locations of elevated concentrations identified in the 2004 sampling. The laboratory results for the current samples indicate that none of the OCP materials (e.g., DDT, dieldrin, DDE, toxaphene) exceed the single compound U.S. EPA Regional Screening Levels (RSLs) for residential uses or California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) Office of Human and Ecological Risk, Human Health Risk Assessment Note 3 screening levels. Each of these regulatory standards is summarized in Section 11.2, Regulatory Setting. The prior elevated concentrations have degraded to less than the regulatory standard for residential uses. Arsenic levels were found in all samples, but none exceeded the maximum natural-occurring background concentration of this material.

The phase II assessment reconfirmed these results for soils at the three proposed school sites.

### **Contamination from Debris Piles**

The environmental site assessment included summaries of conditions in three debris areas observed on the project site. No compounds exceeding the applicable regulatory guidelines were identified in Debris Area 3. The results of the evaluation for Debris Areas 1 and 2 are summarized below.

#### ***Debris Area 1 – Lead and Dieldrin***

Debris Area 1 is in the northeast corner of the project site where debris was disposed and partly buried over time. The areas observed included miscellaneous metal and concrete debris, electrical appliances, general construction debris, and other miscellaneous debris. Elevated lead concentrations, dieldrin and dioxin levels that exceed the residential Preliminary Remediation Goals (PRG) were detected (Lowney Associates 2004, p. 50).

#### ***Debris Area 2 – Cadmium and Dioxin***

Debris Area 2 was identified as being along the southern property boundary. Within Debris Area 2, two separate debris pits were identified. The areas included predominantly general household garbage and construction debris. Cadmium concentrations (a fuel-related metal) and dioxin concentrations were detected in the soil at levels that exceeded the residential PRG limits (Lowney Associates 2004, p. 50).

The current conditions assessment did not include updated testing of materials in Debris Areas 1 and 2. It concludes that these hazardous conditions areas should be mitigated by excavation and off-haul prior to residential development.

### **Lead Based Paint**

As part of the environmental site assessment, the soils near the then extant two residences located just west of and outside the western site boundary, the single residence along but outside the southern site boundary, and the former dairy farm barn within the project site were analyzed for detection of toxic concentrations of contaminants. By 2012, the dairy farm residences had been demolished. There were 16 total samples taken; five exceeded limits for lead concentration. Two of the soil samples exceeded state hazardous waste criteria for lead. The highest concentrations of lead

were detected in samples near the southernmost residence. The environmental site assessment identified on page 30 that the lead sampling locations are shown on Figure 9 of the document, but neither Figure 9 nor other figures in the document appear to identify the lead sampling locations. Therefore, it was uncertain at what precise locations lead levels exceeded PRG or hazardous waste levels. Lead levels associated with the three residences located outside the site are not inherently a consideration for the proposed project, as those sites would not be physically affected by future development within the project site.

To provide precision about current lead concentrations associated with the on-site former dairy farm barn buildings, additional testing was conducted as part of the 2019 current conditions assessment process. Nineteen soil samples were collected. Lead exceeded the DTSC Note 3 Screening Level for residential uses at one of the sampling locations. Statistical analysis was performed on the lead data set for all 19 locations to determine that the effective lead concentration in the one location can be considered statistically below the DTSC lead screening level for residential uses. Based on the statistical analysis and the locations of the sporadic elevated concentration in the area between former residences, the current conditions assessment concludes that no mitigation is warranted.

### **Contamination from Burn Area**

A waste burning area was identified and sampled in the former dairy farm area in the 2004 environmental site assessment. Elevated concentrations of lead and dioxin were found in several of the samples. As part of the current conditions assessment, the burn area was further investigated. Shallow trenches were excavated to determine if burned debris was still present in the subsurface. A five-inch layer of burned material covered by a foot of soil was found. The debris consisted of concrete fragments, plastic piping, glass fragments, and glass bottles.

Two samples of the burned material were collected. Additional samples were taken from beyond the burned layer to evaluate the lateral extent of affected soils. Lead concentrations were detected in all of the soil samples and compared to the DTSC Note 3 Screening Level guidance. One sample exceeded the threshold and consequently, this is considered an environmental hazard condition. None of the samples were analyzed for soluble lead. Soluble lead levels are not likely to exceed the hazardous waste threshold once the soil is excavated, stockpiled, and resampled. The remaining concentrations detected appeared consistent with naturally-occurring background concentrations.

Dioxins were detected in all of the soil samples. All of the dioxin concentrations detected exceed the U.S. EPA RSL for residential uses. The elevated concentrations extended to the north beyond the visible burned material indicating that affected soils extend beyond the burned material and were not fully delineated. This remains an environmental hazard condition requiring remediation.

These potential environmental concerns can be addressed by excavating the soils, stockpiling them for landfill characterization sampling, and disposing soils at the appropriate offsite disposal facility. The mitigation plan addresses these actions as discussed later in this section.

## Potential Contamination from On-site Aboveground and Underground Storage Tanks

Eleven aboveground and two underground storage tanks were present on the former dairy farm. Seven soil borings were completed to evaluate the soil quality in the vicinity of the tanks. A geophysical survey was conducted to identify the precise locations of the underground tanks.

Analytical results of several of the exploratory borings detected elevated diesel and motor oil concentrations and hydrocarbon levels exceeding the Monterey County Environmental Health Department guidelines for the protection of groundwater. However, the environmental site assessment concluded that given the relatively deep groundwater level (80 feet at the time), and the sampling results, it is very unlikely that groundwater was being affected by the hydrocarbon releases.

The current conditions assessment concludes that the underground tanks have not been in use since 2004 and that an undocumented release of fuels is not expected, but that the tanks should be removed consistent with regulatory requirements.

## Site Listing on Hazardous Material Site Databases

The 2010 general plan EIR indicates that the project site was the only contaminated site listed on any hazardous material site database within the City's planning area at that time. The DTSC EnviroStor database, which was the source referenced the general plan EIR, was reviewed for purposes of this EIR to determine the current status of the project site; the site is no longer listed in the database (California Department of Toxic Substances Control 2020).

The State Water Resources Control Board GeoTracker indicates several closed leaking underground storage tank clean-up sites within and around Gonzales; none are located within the project site. The nearest closed clean-up site is located just outside of the northwestern border of the site (State Water Resources Control Board 2020).

The project site is not listed on the California Environmental Protection Agency's list of solid waste sites identified as containing waste constituents above hazardous waste levels outside the waste management unit (California Environmental Protection Agency 2020a).

Lastly, the project site is not located on the list of hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action pursuant to Section 25187.5 of the Health and Safety Code, identified by DTSC (California Environmental Protection Agency 2020b).

## Schools within One-Quarter Mile

The project site is located less than one-quarter mile northeast of the Gonzales High School football, track and soccer field. Three sites for future schools are reserved within the project site boundary. The locations are shown on Figure 4-2, Vista Lucia Land Use Plan. As noted previously, the phase II assessment investigated environmental hazard conditions at the proposed school sites.

## Wildland Fire Hazards

Land in Monterey County is classified as within either a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) or a State Responsibility Area (SRA). LRAs include land in cities, cultivated agriculture lands, nonflammable areas in unincorporated areas, and lands that do not meet the criteria for state responsibility areas. Fire protection within LRAs is typically provided by city fire departments, fire protection districts, and counties, or by CalFire under contract to local governments. LRAs may include flammable vegetation and wildland urban interface areas where the financial and jurisdictional responsibility for improvement and wildfire protection is that of a local government agency.

SRAs are lands where CalFire has legal and financial responsibility for wildfire protection and administers fire hazard classifications and building standard regulations. SRAs include forested lands and land that is generally considered wildland. SRAs do not include incorporated cities or federal lands. CalFire is responsible for carrying out the mandate for wildland fire protection within SRAs.

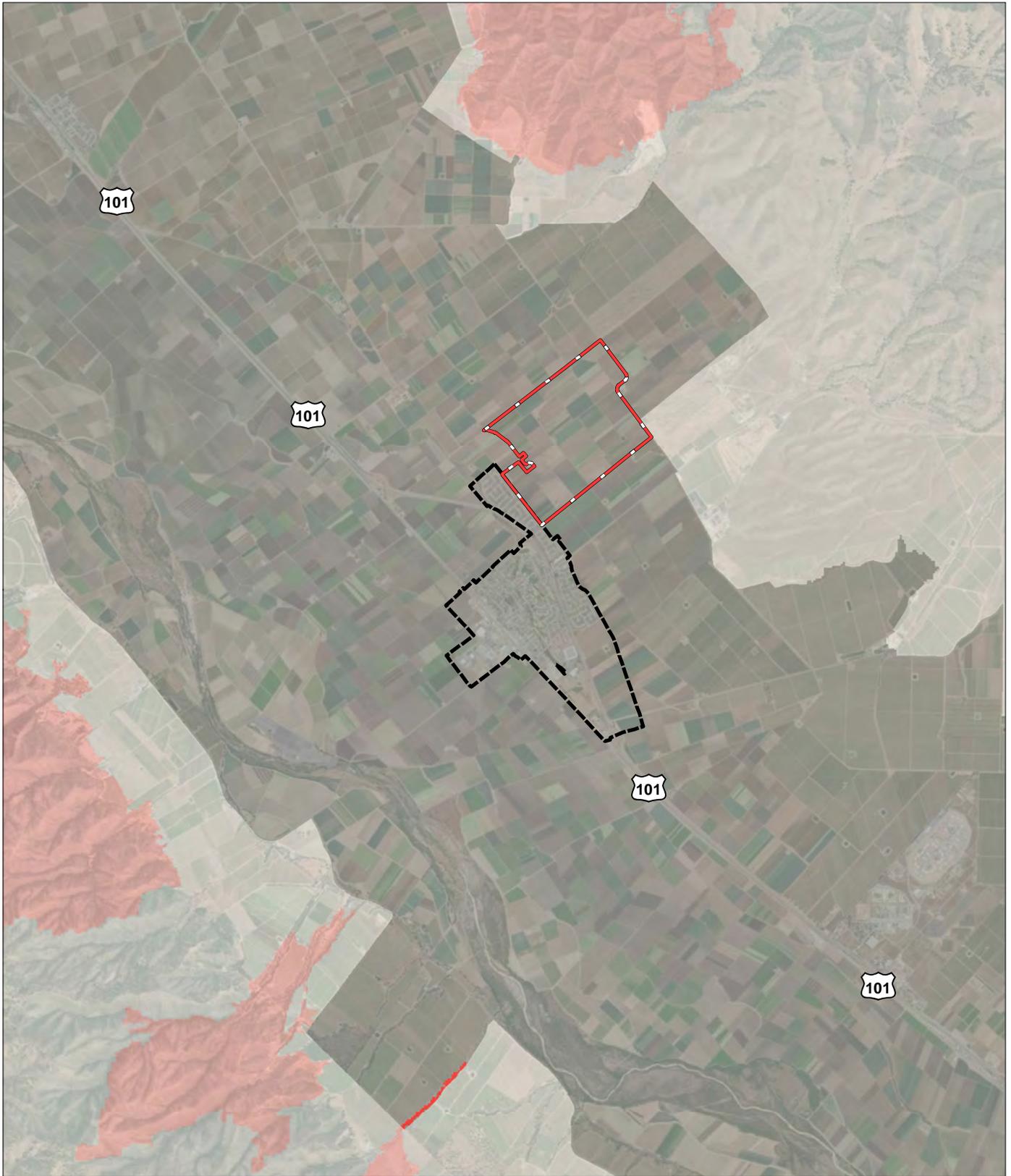
The project site is located within an LRA, outside a very high fire hazard zone (CalFire 2008). The land northeast, east and southeast of the project site (across Iverson Road) is within an SRA. Within the SRA, the nearest high fire hazard area is over two miles to the northeast. Lands adjacent to the site on the north, east and south are predominantly in cultivated agricultural use and have low wildfire hazard potential. Refer to [Figure 11-1, Fire Hazard Areas](#), for an illustration of the referenced fire hazard areas and fire protection jurisdictions.

## Asbestos

The environmental site assessment indicates that the age of the former dairy farm structures that existed on the project site at the time of the assessment suggested the potential for asbestos-containing materials to be present. However, as reported in the current conditions assessment, the structures have since been demolished and removed. Therefore, asbestos is no longer an environmental condition of concern at the site.

## Off-site Improvement Location Hazardous Materials Conditions

Detailed analysis of hazardous materials conditions in off-site improvement locations has not been conducted. However, no unique hazardous materials conditions are expected in these locations. Vacant land in planned roadway widening and new roadway locations has historically been in agricultural use. Potential for contaminated soils conditions in these locations would be similar to those within the site for which no significant risk has been identified (as described above). The planned location of the off-site wastewater main has been previously disturbed by grading activities associated with the adjacent residential subdivisions and construction of the existing, adjacent storm water conveyance channel; no new hazards would be expected with future ground disturbance associated with the planned wastewater main.



City Limit



Project Site



Non-VHFHSZ (SRA)



Non-VHFHSZ (LRA)



VHFHSZ (SRA)



VHFHSZ (LRA)

Source: CalFire FHSZ Map 2008,  
Google Earth 2023,  
Monterey County GIS 2023

Figure 11-1

# Fire Hazard Areas

Vista Lucia Project EIR



*This side intentionally left blank.*

## 11.2 Regulatory Setting

### Federal

#### U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was established in 1970 to consolidate a variety of federal research, monitoring, standard-setting, and enforcement activities in one agency to ensure environmental protection. EPA's mission is to protect human health and safeguard the natural environment (i.e., air, water, land) upon which life depends. EPA works to develop and enforce regulations that implement environmental laws enacted by Congress. The agency is responsible for researching and setting national standards for a variety of environmental programs and delegates the responsibility for using permits and monitoring and enforcing compliance to states and tribes. Where national standards are not met, EPA can issue sanctions and take other steps to help states and tribes reach desired levels of environmental quality.

The current conditions assessment prepared for the project site utilizes the U.S. EPA's regional screening levels (RSLs) as standards for determining the risk of toxic materials found in the test samples taken as part of that assessment. The RSLs are used for site screening and as initial cleanup goals. In site screening, the RSLs aid in identifying areas, contaminants, and conditions that need further attention at a particular site. Where the concentration of a contaminant falls below the stipulated RSL, no further action or study is considered necessary. When the chemical concentrations are found to be above the RSLs, further evaluation of the potential risks are considered warranted.

#### Resource Conservation and Recovery Act

Under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976, individual states may implement their own hazardous waste programs in lieu of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act as long as the state program is at least as stringent as federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act requirements. The EPA must approve state programs intended to implement federal regulations. In California, the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) and DTSC, a department within Cal/EPA, regulate the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste. The EPA approved California's Hazardous Waste Control Law, in 1992. DTSC has hazardous material regulatory responsibility, but can delegate enforcement responsibilities to local jurisdictions that enter into agreements with DTSC for the generation, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials under the authority of the Hazardous Waste Control Law.

The hazardous waste regulations establish criteria for identifying, packaging, and labeling hazardous wastes; prescribe the management of hazardous wastes; establish permit requirements for hazardous waste treatment, storage, disposal, and transportation; and identify hazardous wastes that cannot be disposed of in ordinary landfills. Hazardous waste generators must retain hazardous waste manifests for a minimum of three years. These manifests provide a description of the waste, its intended

destination, and regulatory information about the waste. A copy of each manifest must be filed with the State. The generator must match copies of hazardous waste manifests with receipts from treatment, storage, and disposal facilities.

## State

### California Environmental Protection Agency

Cal/EPA was created in 1991. It unified California's environmental authority in a single cabinet-level agency and brought California Air Resources Board, State Water Resources Control Board, Regional Water Quality Control Boards, CalRecycle, Department of Toxic Substance Control, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, and the Department of Pesticide Regulation under one agency. These agencies were placed within the Cal/EPA "umbrella" for the protection of human health and the environment to ensure the coordinated deployment of State resources. Their mission is to restore, protect, and enhance the environment and ensure public health, environmental quality, and economic vitality.

### Department of Toxic Control

DTSC is the primary agency in California for regulating hazardous waste, cleaning up existing contamination, and finding ways to reduce the amount of hazardous waste produced in California. Other laws that affect hazardous waste are specific to handling, storage, transportation, disposal, treatment, reduction, cleanup, and emergency planning. DTSC and the Department of Health Services (now the Department of Public Health) maintain a list (commonly known as the Cortese List) of hazardous waste facilities and sites, contaminated drinking water wells, sites listed by the State Water Resources Control Board as having underground storage tank leaks or a discharge of hazardous wastes or materials into the water or groundwater, and sites with a known migration of hazardous waste/material.

The current conditions assessment prepared for the project site makes referenced to the DTSC Office of Human and Ecological Risk Human Health Risk Assessment Note 3. Like the U.S. EPA's RSL screening criteria described above, the state-level criteria are used to assess whether concentrations of hazardous substances may pose a risk that then would trigger the need for more detailed analysis. DTSC developed its modified screening levels based on the U.S. EPAs RSLs. For projects in California, the DTSC criteria are to be used instead of the RSLs, except in cases where Note 3 does not provide criteria.

### California Office of Emergency Services

To protect public health and safety as well as the environment, the California Office of Emergency Services is responsible for establishing and managing statewide standards for business and area plans related to the handling and release, or threatened release, of hazardous materials. The California Office of Emergency Services requires basic information regarding hazardous materials handled, used, stored, or disposed of (including location, type, quantity, and health risks) to be available to

firefighters, public safety officers, and regulatory agencies. Typically, this information should be included in business plans to prevent or mitigate impacts on the environment or the health and safety of individuals from the release, or threatened release, of these materials into the workplace and environment.

Businesses that use, handle, or store a hazardous material or an extremely hazardous material in quantities defined in the regulations must prepare a hazardous materials business plan.

### **California Code of Regulations, Title 22 Division 4.5**

Soils having concentrations of contaminants higher than certain acceptable levels must be handled and disposed of as hazardous waste when excavated. The California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 4.5 contains over 30 chapters, each of which contains regulations that taken together, constitute a comprehensive framework for managing the transfer, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste. Chapter 11, Identification and Listing of Hazardous Waste, Article 3, Characteristics of Toxicity, identifies types of materials that are classified as hazardous wastes and describes the concentrations at which each material is considered to be toxic. These criteria are generally used to screen soil and groundwater data or set cleanup goals.

### **Unified Hazardous Waste and Hazardous Materials Management Regulatory Program**

The Unified Hazardous Waste and Hazardous Materials Management Regulatory Program has six elements: 1) hazardous waste generators and hazardous waste on-site treatment; 2) underground storage tanks; 3) aboveground storage tanks; 4) hazardous materials release response plans and inventories; 5) risk management and prevention programs; and 6) Uniform Fire Code hazardous materials management plans and inventories. The plan is implemented at the local level. The local agency that is responsible for the implementation of the Unified Program is the Certified Unified Program Agency. The Monterey County Department of Environmental Health Department is designated as the local Certified Unified Program Agency.

### **State Water Resources Control Board Underground Storage Tank Program**

The State Water Resources Control Board established regulations governing prevention of leaks from underground storage tanks. There are published standards and requirements for installation, tank construction, tank testing, leak detection, spill containment and overflow protection. California underground storage tank laws and regulations give local agencies (counties, cities, or other local agencies) authority throughout the State to issue permits for tank operation and to enforce tank testing requirements within their jurisdiction. In Monterey County, the Monterey County Department of Environmental Health Department issues permits for the operation of underground storage tanks and oversees installations and operation, and monitoring of tank integrity. The department also oversees underground storage tank removal. An underground storage tank closure permit is required for any underground storage tank in which the storage of hazardous materials has ceased and where the owner or operator has no intent to use the tanks. Tanks are to be closed and removed in a manner approved by the Environmental Health Bureau.

## Hazardous Materials Transportation Regulations

The State has also adopted U.S. Department of Transportation regulations for the intrastate movement of hazardous materials. State regulations are contained in 26 CCR. In addition, the State regulates the transportation of hazardous waste originating in the state and passing through the state as found in 22 CCR, Division 4.5, Chapter 11. Both regulatory programs apply in California. The two State agencies with primary responsibility for enforcing federal and State regulations and responding to hazardous materials transportation emergencies are the California Highway Patrol and the California Department of Transportation.

## California Aboveground Petroleum Storage Act

The California Aboveground Petroleum Storage Act (Health & Safety Code § 25270 et seq.) requires the owner or operator of a tank facility, with an aggregate storage capacity of greater than or equal to 1,320 gallons of petroleum, to prepare and implement a Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan in accordance with U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, Title 40, part 112 (40CFR112). The Certified Unified Program Agency (Monterey County Department of Environmental Health) is required to conduct inspections at tank facilities with an aggregate storage capacity greater than or equal to 10,000 gallons of petroleum at least every three years. The purpose of the inspection is to determine whether the owner or operator is in compliance with the Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan requirements of the California Aboveground Petroleum Storage Act.

## City of Gonzales General Plan and General Plan EIR

The general plan EIR identifies significant hazards and hazardous materials impacts related to transport or handling of hazardous materials; emitting hazardous emissions from industrial uses near schools; new development planned for sites that may contain hazardous materials, congesting one or more City-designated emergency evacuation routes, and enabling development in areas of very high fire potential. The general plan EIR concludes that significant hazards and hazardous materials impacts would be mitigated to less than significant by policies and implementing actions included in sections 4.17.3.1 and 4.17.3.5 of the general plan EIR and/or by mitigation measures HAZ-1, HAZ-2, and HAZ-3. These mitigation measures address site specific review of potential land use conflicts between industrial uses and schools, remediation planning for Fanoie Ranch, and site-specific investigation of potential soil contamination, respectively. The Fanoie Ranch area includes the project site. Hazardous material conditions within the Fanoie Ranch were known at the time that the general plan EIR was prepared, as the document includes a mitigation measure that specifically addresses hazardous materials conditions within the ranch.

## 11.3 Thresholds of Significance

CEQA Guidelines Appendix G is a sample initial study checklist that includes a number of factual inquiries related to the subject of hazards and hazardous materials, as it does on a whole series of additional environmental topics. Lead agencies are under no obligation to use these inquiries in fashioning thresholds of significance on the subject of hazards and hazardous materials, or on any subject addressed in the checklist. Rather, with few exceptions, CEQA grants agencies discretion to develop their own thresholds of significance. Even so, it is a common practice for lead agencies to take the language from the inquiries set forth in Appendix G and to use that language in fashioning thresholds. The City has done so here. Therefore, for purposes of this EIR, a significant impact would occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use or disposal of hazardous materials;
- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment;
- Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school; or
- Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

### Issues not Discussed Further in This Section

The Appendix G questions on the subject of hazards and hazardous materials include questions for which no further discussion is needed. These are as follows:

- 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?

As described in Section 11.1, Environmental Setting, the site is not on a list of hazardous materials sites. Therefore, it is not necessary to discuss this topic further.

- For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such 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?

The project site is not within an airport land use plan and that there are no airports within two miles of the planning area. Therefore, the proposed project would have no airport related safety or noise exposure impacts. No further discussion of this issue is necessary.

- If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:
  - a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?
  - b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?
  - c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?
  - d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, Item XX, Wildfire, identifies that projects located in or near SRAs or land classified as very high fire hazard severity zones should be analyzed further regarding potential impacts associated with wildland fire risks. As discussed in Section 11.1, Environmental Setting, and illustrated in Figure 11-1, the project site is located within an LRA and adjacent to an SRA. The site is not within or near land classified as within a very high fire hazard severity zone. Therefore, no further discussion of this issue is necessary.

## 11.4 Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

This section includes information and data regarding hazards and hazardous materials issues that are relevant to the proposed project based on the thresholds of significance described above. The information and data are used as a basis for determining impact significance and for identifying mitigation measures where necessary.

### Risks from Transport, Use or Disposal of Hazardous Materials

<b>IMPACT 11-1</b>	<b>Risks Involving the Routine Transport, Use, or Disposal of Hazardous Materials</b>	<b>Less than Significant</b>
------------------------	---	------------------------------

The specific plan land use plan includes residential, retail and other ancillary land uses that are not commonly associated with use of hazardous materials with potential to pose a substantial risk to public health and safety.

The federal and state regulations with which future development with potential to use, store or handle hazardous materials must comply are designed to minimize risks to public health and safety and to the environment from the accidental release of hazardous materials. Future on- and off-site development activities associated with the proposed project must be conducted consistent with

applicable regulatory requirements identified in the Regulatory Setting section above. This will assure that the impacts of the project are less than significant. No mitigation measures are required.

## Risks from Release of Hazardous Materials

<b>IMPACT 11-2</b>	<b>Hazard to the Public or the Environment from Hazardous Material Conditions within the Project Site</b>	<b>Less than Significant with Mitigation</b>
------------------------	---	--

Hazardous environmental conditions known to exist within the project site as reported in the four site-specific environmental hazards conditions analyses are summarized in Section 11.1, Environmental Setting. Conditions where hazardous materials exceeded applicable safety thresholds included: agricultural chemical contamination of soil within portions of the site, presence of lead in soils in specific locations, agricultural chemicals and toxic chemicals present in former debris disposal areas, hydrocarbon contamination and toxic chemicals in areas previously used as refuse burn sites, and hydrocarbon contamination associated with aboveground storage tanks.

As also described in Section 11.1, the 2021 current conditions assessment was prepared specifically to investigate the current status of hazardous environmental conditions identified in 2004. The purpose was to ascertain which, if any of the prior hazardous conditions remain and could pose public health and/or environmental risk. The following conclusions are taken from the current conditions assessment:

- Hazardous environmental conditions identified in 2004 regarding residual concentrations of OCPs in site soils associated with past and current agricultural practices no longer exist. Recent samples of these soils show that OCP concentrations had degraded to less than the regulatory standards for residential uses. Testing of these samples also showed that arsenic levels in the soils do not exceed maximum naturally occurring levels.
- Elevated concentrations of lead found in association with the former dairy farm residences in 2004 no longer pose a potential hazard. Analysis of new samples of soils in this area show all levels are below regulatory screening concentration levels.
- A waste burn area north of the former dairy farm residences was identified in 2004 as containing concentrations of lead and dioxin that exceeded regulatory standards.
- Dioxin levels in all of the new samples exceed U.S. EPA RSL criteria for residential uses. The elevated concentrations extended to the north beyond the visible burned material indicating that affected soils extend beyond the burned material and were not fully delineated. Dioxin levels continue to pose a significant environmental hazard that could result in significant public health and environmental impacts if released to the environment during site grading/excavation, handling and/or disposal activities.

- The current conditions assessment did not further evaluate hazardous materials conditions identified in the 2004 environmental site assessment at Debris Area 1 (elevated lead, dioxin, and dieldrin concentrations) or Debris Area 2 (elevated cadmium and dioxin concentrations). These hazardous materials could continue to pose a significant public health and environmental hazard if released to the environment during site grading/excavation, handling and/or disposal activities.

## Conclusion

Three hazardous materials conditions remain within the project site that have potential to cause significant environmental impacts on public health and safety and the environment: 1) concentrations of dioxin at the waste burn area north of the former dairy farm residences; 2) concentrations of lead, dioxin and dieldrin at Debris Area 1; and 3) concentrations of cadmium and dioxin at Debris Area 2. These three conditions must be remediated to lessen potentially significant impacts to public health and safety from release of these materials during development activities and transport of contaminated materials to appropriate landfill facilities, and impacts to worker safety during the soil excavation/remediation process. In addition, pursuant to Monterey County Environmental Health Department regulations, the existing abandoned underground storage tanks must be removed.

## Mitigation Plan

The 2022 soil mitigation plan was prepared to identify how the noted hazardous materials conditions are to be remediated to reduce potential public and worker health risks, and to minimize environmental contamination. Chapter 3 of the mitigation plan, Remediation Site Management, provides guidance for implementing remediation activities. It addresses the following topics:

- Site Specific Health and Safety Worker Requirements;
- Pre-Field Activities – permitting (for soil excavation, off-haul, and grading), utility clearance, protecting work zones and specifying support zone/staging area requirements;
- Site Control - reducing potential spread of contamination from the site (e.g., protective fencing to create restricted areas, ingress/egress restrictions, and stockpiling guidance);
- Soil Excavation – excavating contaminated soil and debris (construction equipment, stockpiling procedures and transporting procedures for transfer to an off-site disposal facility);
- Dust Control;
- Decontamination – equipment, worker protection and decontamination;
- Field Documentation;
- Soil Sampling Confirmation; and
- Remediation Completion Report.

The soil mitigation plan also references the need to remove the existing abandoned underground storage tanks consistent with local regulations. As noted previously, the Monterey County Environmental County Health Department is responsible for permitting removal of such tanks per its uniformly applied regulations.

Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce the impact to less than significant by requiring the applicant to remediate hazardous materials conditions prior to issuance of grading permits for projects whose boundaries include documented hazardous materials conditions.

***Mitigation Measure***

11-2 The applicant shall be responsible for remediating all project site hazardous materials conditions consistent with direction provided in the *Site Mitigation Plan, Vista Lucia* (McCloskey Consultants 2022). All hazardous materials conditions within the boundaries of individual tentative maps, including removal of abandoned underground storage tanks, shall be remediated prior to approval of grading permits for development pursuant to the subject tentative map(s). Grading permits shall not be issued until such time as the applicant submits a remediation completion report for the subject tentative map project for review and approval of the Public Works Director and an underground storage tank closure permit is obtained from the Monterey County Environmental Health Department.

Implementation of this mitigation measure would require that hazardous environmental conditions be remediated to regulatory screening levels to allow the subject contaminated sites to be acceptable for future development.

**Hazardous Materials Risks to Future Schools**

<b>IMPACT 11-3</b>	<b>Risks from Handling or Emitting Hazardous Emissions Within One-Quarter Mile of an Existing or Proposed Schools</b>	<b>Less than Significant</b>
------------------------	---	------------------------------

The project site is less than one-quarter mile to the northeast of the Gonzales High School athletic field. Three school sites are planned within the project boundary. Please refer back to Figure 4-2, Vista Lucia Land Use Plan, for the proposed school site locations.

The planned residential and ancillary commercial uses types are not commonly associated with requiring transport, use, or storage of acutely hazardous materials or other materials with potential to pose substantial hazards to the public or environment.

The phase II assessment described previously investigated hazardous materials conditions at the three planned school sites. Supplemental soil testing was conducted to determine whether hazardous materials conditions identified in the 2004 environmental assessment, primarily related to soil

contamination from historic agricultural activities, are present at the school sites. The investigation concluded that no elevated levels of pesticides were detected and that arsenic and naturally-occurring asbestos were present, but not at levels that exceed regulatory standards.

The agricultural uses bordering the project site could be sources of hazardous emissions that could adversely affect planned schools in the absence of site planning measures to avoid this conflict. As shown on Figure 4-2, each planned school site is buffered from adjacent agricultural uses. The elementary school site along Fanoe Road would be buffered from the adjacent agricultural land to the north by a minimum of 200 feet. The adjacent agricultural land is also within the City’s SOI, and could be developed with urban uses in the future. Once this occurs, the potential land use conflict would be eliminated.

The second elementary school site and the middle school site would be located a minimum of about 500 feet from adjacent agricultural uses. The school site locations and associated buffers have been included in the land use plan to ensure that school sites and sensitive residential uses are protected from applications of agricultural chemicals, other hazardous environmental conditions associated with on-going agricultural activities, and nuisances such as noise and dust from such activities. Please refer to Section 5.0, Agricultural Resources, for more information on agricultural buffers and their function for reducing conflicts with proposed urban uses.

## Conclusion

The proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact from hazardous materials affecting existing or planned school sites

## Emergency Response and Evacuation Plans

<b>IMPACT 11-4</b>	<b>Potential to Impair or Interfere with an Adopted Emergency Response Plan or Emergency Evacuation Plan</b>	<b>No Impact</b>
------------------------	--	------------------

Emergency evacuation routes are present throughout the county; the routes germane to the city are: U.S. Highway 101, Gonzales River Road, Gloria Road, Johnson Canyon Road, and Old Stage Road. These routes are considered “Pre-designated Emergency Evacuation Routes” and may be used, when necessary (City of Gonzales 2010, p. 4-350 - 4-351), including but not limited to wildfire that could occur in the open space areas to the east. The project site is located near, but not adjacent to several of the emergency access routes. The proposed project would not physically interfere with use of any emergency evacuation routes. However, the proposed project would add traffic to local emergency access routes that could compromise their function if not improved to avoid degrading their performance/capacity. The applicant is required to contribute funding for or make direct improvements to access routes to which it contributes traffic when that traffic has potential to degrade operations of the roads to unacceptable levels. This will assure that future development of the project site would not impair or interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. No mitigation measures are required.

# 12.0 Hydrology and Water Quality

This section of the EIR assesses hydrology and water quality conditions within the project site and areas of planned off-site improvements, and identifies potential impacts of the project associated with flood hazards and water quality degradation.

Information in this section is derived from a variety of sources including:

- *Conceptual Drainage Master Plan Proposed Developments Within Sphere of Influence City of Gonzales* (House Moran Consulting 2019);
- *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report* (“general plan EIR”) (December 2010); and
- *Vista Lucia Draft Specific Plan* (Kimley-Horn 2023).

## Responses to the Notice of Preparation

LAFCO commented on the need to evaluate the project’s compatibility with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act by addressing the plans prepared by the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency. The Notices of Preparation prepared for the project and responses to those notices are included in [Appendix A](#).

## 12.1 Environmental Setting

This environmental setting section incorporates information provided in the general plan EIR where applicable, and information specific to the proposed project and/or the project site taken from the sources listed above.

### Existing Hydrology within the Project Site

The project site is comprised largely of agricultural land that is currently in agricultural production. Existing improvements include ancillary agricultural support structures, irrigation ditches, agricultural ponds/retention basins that are used to manage agricultural tail water, and unimproved farm roads. Johnson Creek runs south of and along the southern boundary of the site. Refer back to Figure 3-2, Aerial Photograph, which shows locations of these features. The site is relatively flat, ranging in elevation from approximately 250 feet in the southeast corner to approximately 125 feet in the northwest corner.

According to Monterey County’s Geographic Information System, the project site includes approximately 269 acres within Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Special Flood Hazard Area Flood Zone A (100-year floodplain) along the northern and southern boundaries and the remainder of the project site is within Flood Zone X. [Figure 12-1, Flood Zones](#), illustrates the location of the flood zone areas within the project site.

## 12.2 Regulatory Setting

This section includes summaries of standards, regulations and plans that have been adopted or revised by local, regional, state, and/or federal agencies that serve as uniformly applied development standards or are otherwise pertinent to assessing environmental impacts.

### Federal

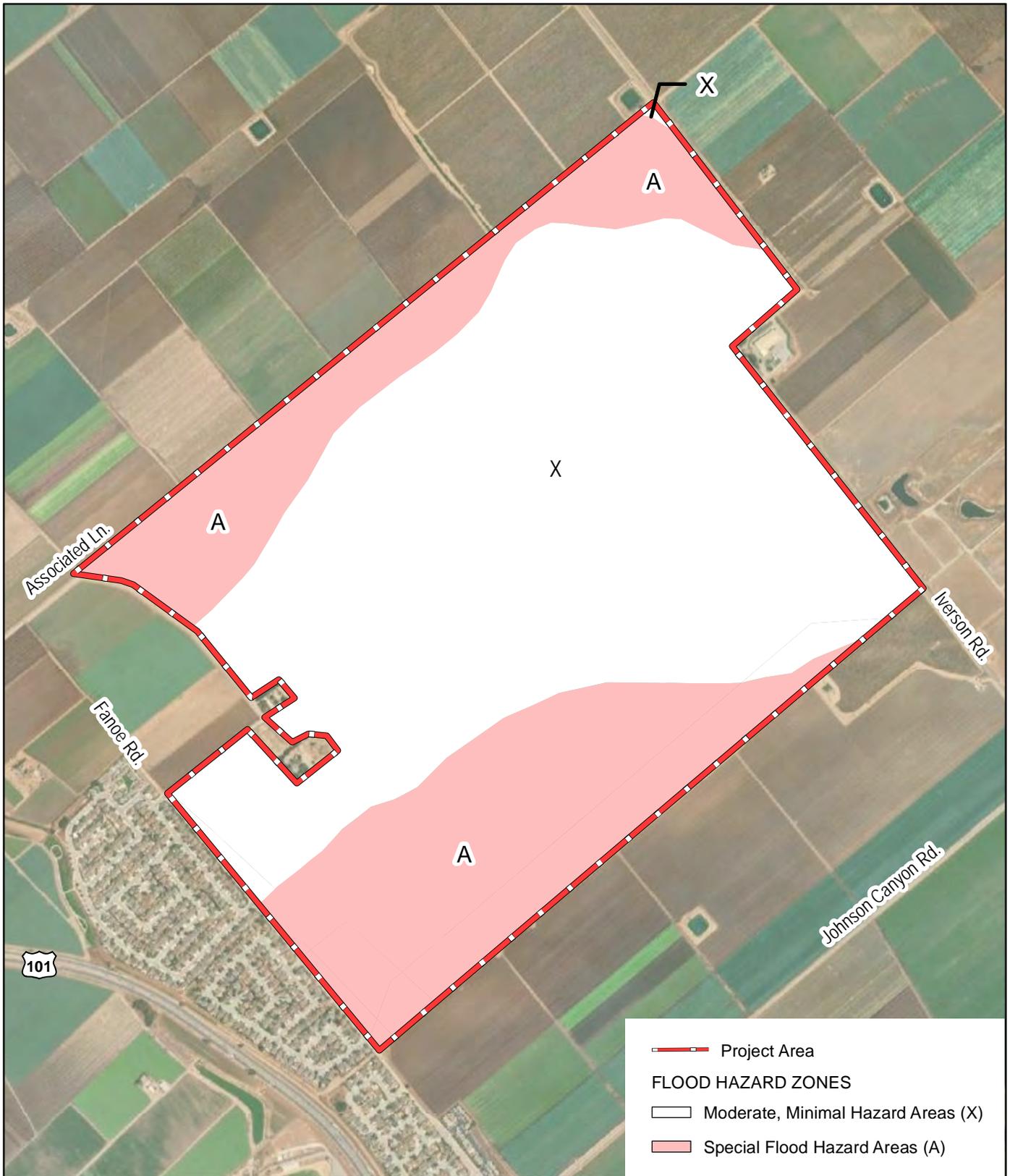
#### Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Program

FEMA administers the National Flood Insurance Program to address flood hazards. The program provides federal flood insurance and federally financed loans for property owners in flood prone areas. For this purpose, FEMA produces Flood Insurance Rate Maps that define areas subject to inundation by flooding. Protective controls that must be implemented by project applicants to reduce flood hazards and damage to projects they propose are generally incorporated onto the flood hazard management program and general plan policies of local jurisdictions. These tools assist cities in mitigating flooding hazards through land use planning and building permit requirements that must be implemented by applicants for projects located in specific flood hazard areas. The City’s flood hazard management program is described below. Local agency compliance with FEMA flood hazard controls is required for local agencies to participate in FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Program. Such conformance enables residents and businesses in a community to obtain federal flood hazard insurance.

### State

#### Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act of 1969 established the State Water Quality Control Board and the nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards. The SWRCB and the nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCB) are responsible for assuring implementation and compliance with the provisions of the Clean Water Act and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. The regional boards set water quality standards, issue waste discharge requirements, determine compliance with those requirements, and take enforcement action. The RWQCBs also administer the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program for storm water and construction site runoff as described below.



Source: Monterey County GIS 2016, Google Earth 2018

Figure 12-1

# Flood Zones

Vista Lucia Project EIR



*This side intentionally left blank.*

## Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board Post-Construction Storm Water Management Requirements

In 2014, the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board adopted the Central Coast Post-Construction Stormwater Requirements. The primary objective of the requirements is to ensure that land development projects reduce pollutant discharges to the maximum extent practicable and to prevent storm water discharges from causing or contributing to a violation of receiving water quality standards. The post-construction requirements emphasize protecting and restoring key watershed processes to create and sustain linkages between hydrology, channel geomorphology, and biological health necessary for healthy watersheds. Regulated projects, which include all new development or redevelopment projects that create and/or replace more than 2,500 square feet of impervious surface, must implement measures to reduce pollutant discharges and prevent storm water discharges from causing or contributing to a violation of receiving water quality standards.

All regulated projects must submit a storm water control plan and practice best management practices such as source control such as low impact development (LID), site design, and storm water treatment. The goal is to reduce runoff by minimizing disturbed areas and impervious coverage and then infiltrating, storing, detaining, evapotranspiring and/or bio-retaining storm water runoff close to its source. Practices used to adhere to these LID principals include measures such as rain barrels and cisterns, green roofs, permeable pavement, preserving undeveloped open space, and biotreatment through rain gardens, bio-retention units, bio-swales, and planter/tree boxes.

Regulated projects that create and/or replace more than 22,500 square feet of impervious surface are required to treat a rainfall intensity of at least 0.2 in per hour, prevent off-site discharge from events up to the 95th percentile rainfall event, and mitigate post-development peak flows to at least pre-project peak flows for the 2- through 10-year storm events (hydromodification requirements).

## Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board - Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin

The *Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin June 2019 Edition* (Basin Plan) is the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board's (regional board) master water quality control planning document. It designates beneficial uses and water quality objectives for waters of the State, including surface waters and groundwater. The regional board implements the Basin Plan by issuing and enforcing waste discharge requirements to individuals, communities, or businesses whose waste discharges can affect water quality. These requirements can be either State Waste Discharge Requirements for discharges to land, or federally delegated NPDES permits for discharges to surface water. When such discharges are managed so that: 1) they meet these requirements; 2) water quality objectives are met; and, 3) beneficial uses are protected, water quality is controlled (Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board 2019).

## Regional/Local

### City of Gonzales Sphere of Influence Conceptual Drainage Master Plan

The conceptual drainage master plan was prepared in 2019 to identify the backbone storm water infrastructure needed to accommodate future development within the SOI, including the project site. It identifies baseline conditions; provides conceptual level storm drain sizes, structures and channels for the new development; and evaluates the impacts new development will have on existing infrastructure. The document provides planning level analysis; conceptual level pipe and inlet geometry and basin design is provided. Final sizing and configuration of improvements are to be determined when specific individual future development projects are proposed.

### Gonzales Floodplain Management Regulations

Implementing action HS-2.1.3 – Redefinition of Flood Hazard Zone, included in the general plan describes that where specific plans propose modified flood hazard zones, such modifications shall be subject to conformance with applicable flood regulations. The applicable City flood regulation is contained in in City of Gonzales code Chapter 14.04, Floodplain Management. This chapter includes uniform regulations that apply to all publicly and privately owned land within flood prone, mudslide (i.e., mudflow) or flood related erosion areas. These regulations require a floodplain development permit to be obtained before construction or other development where such development is proposed within a flood hazard area. Construction standards listed in Section 14.04.160 include, but are not limited to:

- for residential construction in Zone A, all new construction shall have the lowest floor, including basement, elevated to or above the base flood elevation. In Zone A, base flood elevations may be obtained using methods from the FEMA publication FEMA 265, “Managing Floodplain Development In Approximate Zone A Areas - A Guide For Obtaining And Developing Base (100-Year) Flood Elevations" dated July 1995.
- for non-residential construction, all new construction shall be elevated to conform with the residential requirements or meet Section 14.04.160.C.2 – Elevation and Floodproofing for Nonresidential Construction.

## 12.3 Thresholds of Significance

CEQA Guidelines Appendix G is a sample initial study checklist that includes a number of factual inquiries related to the subject of hydrology and water quality, as it does on a whole series of additional environmental topics. Lead agencies are under no obligation to use these inquiries in fashioning thresholds of significance on the subject of hydrology and water quality, or on any subject addressed in the checklist. Rather, with few exceptions, CEQA grants agencies discretion to develop their own thresholds of significance. Even so, it is a common practice for lead agencies to

take the language from the inquiries set forth in Appendix G and to use that language in fashioning thresholds. The City has done so here. Therefore, for purposes of this EIR, a significant impact would occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

- Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality.
- Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:
  - Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;
  - Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which that result in flooding on- or off-site;
  - Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or
  - Impede or redirect flood flows;
  - In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation; and
  - Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan.

## Issues not Discussed Further in this Section

### Levee or Dam Failure

Neither the project site, nor off-site improvement locations are within an area subject to flooding caused by dam failure (general plan EIR p. 4-220). Therefore, this issue is not discussed further.

### Inundation by Seiche or Tsunami

The general plan EIR concludes that due to the absence of large bodies of water close to the planning area, the potential for tsunamis or seiches is considered non-existent (general plan EIR p. 4-335). Therefore, this issue is not discussed further.

## 12.4 Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

This section includes information and data regarding hydrology and water quality that are relevant to the proposed project based on the thresholds of significance. The information and data are used as a basis for determining impact significance and for mitigation measures.

## Water Quality Standards

IMPACT 12-1	Potential to Violate Water Quality Standards or Waste Discharge Requirements, or Create Additional Polluted Runoff	Less than Significant
----------------	--	-----------------------

### Construction Phase Water Quality Impacts – On- and Off-Site Improvements

Constructing on-site improvements and off-site wastewater collection and circulation network infrastructure would involve soil disturbance associated with site preparation, grading and excavation activities. Delivery, handling and storage of construction materials and wastes; equipment refueling; and construction equipment use and maintenance could result in spills of oil, grease, or related pollutants. These activities have potential to cause water quality degradation if eroded soil or other pollutants are carried by storm water into storm water drainage systems and ultimately into downstream water bodies.

Construction phase water quality degradation can damage aquatic ecosystem health, and deposition of sediment within surface water and creek channels can adversely modify their function while causing additional erosion that exacerbates water quality degradation.

The general plan EIR evaluated water quality impacts from polluted storm water runoff generated during the construction phase of new urban development within the SOI, including project site and off-site improvement locations (pp. 4-206 to 4-207). The general plan EIR concluded that implementing the policies and actions contained in the general plan, particularly the requirement for new development to meet NPDES requirements, would ensure that potential impacts related to the violation of water quality standards and the degradation of water quality resulting from constructing activities would be less than significant. The NPDES permit program for storm water and construction site runoff is designed to reduce the discharge of pollutants in storm water to the maximum extent practicable to protect water quality and beneficial uses of surface waters.

Developing the project site itself, constructing the new segment of Fanoe Road, and constructing the widening improvements for Associated Lane would disturb more than one acre of soil. Therefore, coverage for each of these actions under the Construction General Permit for Discharges of Storm Water Associated with Construction Activity per NPDES requirements must be obtained. Constructing the off-site wastewater collection main would not disturb more than one acre.

The Construction General Permit requires that developers prepare and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan. A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan identifies best management practices (filters, traps, bio-filtration swales, etc.) consistent with the requirements of the NPDES and City of Gonzales Section 10.28.110, Requirements for Reducing Pollutants in Stormwater, that must be implementing during construction. The practices are intended to reduce impacts on surface water by reducing the potential for sediment or other water quality contaminants to be discharged directly or indirectly into a surface water body and to ensure that urban runoff contaminants and sediment are minimized during site preparation and construction periods.

Required compliance of future development with the NPDES water quality standards would ensure that applicable water quality standards are met and consequently, that water quality impacts during construction will be less than significant. No mitigation measures are required.

### **Post-Construction (Operational) Water Quality Impacts – On- and Off-Site Improvements**

Urban development is widely regarded as a leading cause of surface water pollution resulting from altering watershed hydrology and introducing urban pollutants. Constructing the proposed on- and off-site project improvements would alter existing storm water drainage conditions by replacing largely undeveloped land with impervious surfaces such as parking lots, building rooftops, and roadways. The change in surface conditions would substantially increase storm water runoff during project operations relative to existing conditions where a significant portion of storm water currently percolates through exposed soil back to groundwater.

Unless properly managed, storm water runoff from new urban development and roadway widening/new roadway sites will be greater in volume and rate than under existing conditions. Increases in the rate or volume of storm water delivered into receiving waters can cause erosion of downstream drainage courses, termed “hydromodification”, which generates additional sediment that further degrades water quality.

Urban development generally introduces pollutants such as oil and grease and natural and non-natural debris than can be carried in storm water runoff and delivered directly or indirectly to receiving waters. Storm water that travels through landscaped or other pervious developed portions of a development site can also be contaminated with pesticides, fertilizers, and other materials. Where contaminated storm water is delivered into a regulated storm drainage system and then discharged directly or indirectly into a surface water body, water quality degradation can occur.

The general plan EIR analyzed the impacts associated with urbanization within the SOI, including the project site and off-site improvement locations, that could deteriorate surface water quality from polluted storm water runoff (pp. 4-206 to 4-207). The general plan EIR concluded that the policies and actions contained in the general plan and required conformance with NPDES regulations would lessen potential impacts regarding violating water quality standards and degrading water quality to a less-than-significant level (general plan EIR p. 4-210).

In 2014, the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board adopted the post-construction storm water management requirements described in the Regulatory Setting section above. Post-construction requirements to mitigate post-development peak stormwater runoff flows will also be applicable. The City’s conceptual drainage master plan states that stormwater storage basins identified in the plan for the Vista Lucia site have been sized to meet this component of the post-construction requirements (House Moran Consulting 2019, p. 13). The applicant and/or future developers of projects within the project site would be required to prepare a storm water control

plan. The same would be true for constructing the off-site circulation improvements. The plans must identify how new post-construction water quality requirements will be met through incorporating best management practices such as LID, site design, and storm water treatment. A final storm water control plan is required and must be approved by the City prior to construction.

Specific plan Chapter 5.4, Drainage and Stormwater Management, describes planned stormwater management infrastructure and facilities, and describes the planned approach for managing stormwater quality consistent with NPDES and post-construction water quality requirements. Anticipated best management practices and LID features to be employed are summarized.

## Conclusion

Future development within the project site and off-site improvement locations will be required to comply with NPDES permit requirements and post-development storm water management regulations as described above. This will ensure that water quality impacts from polluted storm water runoff during construction and operations of new development and associated infrastructure improvements would be less than significant. No mitigation measures are required.

## Storm Water and Flooding

<b>IMPACT 12-2</b>	<b>Increase in Storm Water Runoff with Potential to Cause Flooding</b>	<b>Less than Significant</b>
------------------------	--	------------------------------

## Change in On- and Off-site Surface Hydrology

The proposed project would substantially increase the extent of impermeable surfaces in the form of roads, walkways, parking areas, roof tops, etc. Off-site circulation improvements would also create new impervious surfaces. Consequently, the volume of storm water runoff from the project site and off-site improvement locations will substantially increase under post-development conditions. The increased runoff could contribute to localized flooding if storm water infrastructure is not designed or sized to accommodate the increased flows.

The general plan EIR determined that development activity could alter drainage patterns and increase amounts of impervious surface area which could increase the rate and amount of surface runoff and increase potential for on- and off-site flooding. These potential impacts of implementing the general plan, including development of the project site, were determined less than significant with implementation of a range of policies reported in subsections 4.9.3.1 and 4.9.3.2 of the general plan EIR. Additional policies HS-W.1 regarding flood safety and COS-7.1 regarding open space and natural habitat in drainage areas also serve to reduce the impact.

The post-construction storm water standards require that rates and volumes of storm water discharged from sites subject to the standards cannot exceed pre-existing conditions. This would ensure that surface runoff from future development within the site and from off-site improvement

sites would not exceed the drainage system capacity or result in localized flooding. As noted previously, the conceptual drainage master plan addresses storm water conveyance and storage requirements under post-development conditions in the SOI, including the project site and off-site improvement locations, as a basis to manage the volume and rate of storm water discharge. Further, as described above, the specific plan includes information regarding planned stormwater management facilities, including storm water detention ponds, that would be integrated into the project site consistent with the drainage master plan. Stormwater infrastructure sizing is also discussed at a general level to demonstrate that preliminary analysis has been conducted by the applicant to ensure that facilities are sized to avoid localized flood hazards.

## Conclusion

The proposed project has potential to contribute to flood hazards conditions and be exposed to flood hazards to which it could contribute. However, development within the project site and the off-site improvement locations must be implemented consistent regulatory requirements identified in the general plan EIR, and with the post-construction storm water management regulations described above and in the specific plan, all of which serve as uniformly applied regulations. This will ensure that flooding impacts from the project would be less than significant. No mitigation measures are required.

## Impede Flood Flows

<b>IMPACT 12-3</b>	<b>The Project Would Impede or Redirect Flood Flows</b>	<b>Less than Significant</b>
------------------------	---	------------------------------

As illustrated in Figure 12-1, Flood Hazard Zones, portions of the project site and off-site circulation improvement locations are within flood hazard Zone A. Zone A defines areas subject to inundation by a one-percent annual chance flood event (100-year flood), but where the extent or depth of flooding has not been determined by detailed methods.

The general plan EIR determined that the policies and actions contained in the general plan, reported in subsections 4.9.3.1 and 4.9.3.2 of the general plan EIR, and policy HS-2.1 regarding flood safety, reduce the potential impacts related to 100-year flood hazards to less than significant. The general plan requires any grading changes that would modify flood zones be designed to be consistent with state and local flood management regulations.

For development within flood hazard Zone A to avoid exacerbating flood impacts by impeding or redirecting flood flows, that development must be designed consistent with the City’s Floodplain Development Standards (Chapter 14.04 Floodplain Management), which serve as uniformly applied development regulations. The standards are in part designed to avoid or minimize impeding or redirecting flood flow created by placing fill or other flood barriers within a flood hazard area. For example, if development within the project site or off-site improvement locations that is within

flood hazard Zone A requires fill to elevate structures above the base flood elevation, an analysis of how such fill affects flood elevations downstream of such development may also be required. Mitigation for impacts resulting from increasing the flood surface elevation or otherwise increasing flood hazard potential must be implemented. As part of this analysis, the need to obtain a conditional letter of map revision or a letter of map revision from FEMA would also be assessed. This need could occur if development has potential to affect flood elevations as currently mapped by FEMA.

## Conclusion

The proposed project would could result in significant impacts associated with impeding or modifying flood hazard conditions. However, development within the project site and off-site improvement locations that is within flood hazard Zone A must comply with uniformly applicable development regulations including the general plan policies and implementing actions noted above, and applicable regulatory requirements described above, including the City’s floodplain management regulations. This will ensure that impacts from impeding or redirecting flood flows would be less than significant. No mitigation measures are required.

## Pollution from Flood Inundation

<b>IMPACT 12-4</b>	<b>Water Quality Impacts from Release of Pollutants due to Flood Inundation</b>	<b>Less than Significant</b>
------------------------	---	------------------------------

As previously discussed, portions of the project site are within flood hazard Zone A. Future development placed within this flood hazard zone could be subject to inundation during a 100-year flood event if not properly designed. Proposed uses that would be located in the flood zone include low- and medium-density residential development. This type of development does not involve significant use or storage of hazardous materials or other materials with potential to cause substantial water pollution in the event of a flood. Further, to be consistent with flood hazard requirements, residential and non-residential uses within Zone A must be designed with finished floors that are a minimum of one foot above the base flood elevation. This would substantially reduce the potential that such uses would be inundated during a flood event with associated release of hazardous or other materials used or stored at such uses.

## Conclusion

The potential for pollutants to be released from future development within the site that is located within Zone A during a flood inundation event would be less than significant; the hazard is substantially reduced through required conformance of future residential and non-residential uses to the City’s flood hazard regulations. The risk of release is further reduced by the fact that the types of future development proposed do not commonly involve the use or storage of significant volumes of pollutants whose release during an inundation event would be an acute source of water pollution. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant and no mitigation measures are required.

## Water Quality Control Plan

<b>IMPACT</b> 12-5	Conflict with or Obstruct Implementation of a Water Quality Control Plan	No Impact
-----------------------	--	-----------

The Basin Plan describes how the quality of surface water and groundwater in the Central Coast Region should be managed to provide the highest water quality reasonably possible. The Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board implements the Basin Plan by issuing and enforcing waste discharge requirements to individuals, communities, or businesses whose waste discharges can affect water quality. These requirements can be either State Waste Discharge Requirements for discharges to land, or federally delegated NPDES permits for discharges to surface water. As has been described above, future development associated with the proposed project would be regulated to protect water quality through NPDES permit conformance.

### Conclusion

Both on- and off-site improvements must be designed consistent with regulations (waste discharge requirements and NPDES requirements) promulgated by the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board to protect water quality consistent with the goals of the Basin Plan. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the water quality control plan. No mitigation measures are required.

*This side intentionally left blank.*

# 13.0 Noise

This section of the EIR examines sources of noise that would be generated by the project, particularly traffic noise stationary noise commonly associated with planned commercial and school uses, and whether those noise sources could adversely impact existing sensitive noise receptors outside the site and/or future noise sensitive receptors within the site. Short-term noise effects of constructing off-site improvements are also addressed. Noise sensitive receptors generally include residential development, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, churches and libraries. The significance of noise impacts is primarily determined based on whether noise levels exceed noise standards identified in the general plan EIR and the municipal code.

The information within this section is largely sourced from the *Acoustical Analysis – Vista Lucia Annexation, Gonzales, California* prepared by WJV Acoustics in August 2020 (“noise report”) for the proposed project and attached as [Appendix E](#). Additional sources of information are introduced where applicable.

The noise report describes the proposed project as an annexation and pre-zoning project. Subsequent to the noise report being completed, the applicant submitted the proposed specific plan and a tentative map that covers a portion of the specific plan area. The land use plan and development capacity identified in the specific plan is essentially unchanged relative to the conceptual land use plan and development capacity associated with the annexation as referenced in the noise report. Information inputs to the noise report, such as projected traffic volumes and distribution, land use types and locations, etc., remain unchanged with submittal of the specific plan and tentative map. Consequently, the technical analysis in the report is valid for assessing the impacts of the annexation, specific plan and tentative map approvals being sought by the applicant.

## Responses to the Notice of Preparation

The Gonzalez Unified School District commented that noise effects on students should be evaluated. Please refer to [Appendix A](#) for the NOPs prepared for the project and the responses to the NOPs.

## 13.1 Environmental Setting

This environmental setting section incorporates information provided in the general plan EIR where applicable, new information that was not available at the time the general plan EIR was certified that is pertinent to assessing potential project impacts, and information specific to the proposed project and/or the project site.

### Existing Noise Conditions at the Project Site

As described in the noise report, existing noise levels in the project vicinity are dominated by traffic noise along U.S. Highway 101 and Fanoe Road, as well as noise associated with various agricultural activities and small aircraft overflights.

Existing sensitive receptors located adjacent to or in the vicinity of the project site include single-family residential land uses located along Fanoe Road, north of 5th Street. The backyards of these residences abut Fanoe Drive. Additional off-site sensitive receptors include two single-family homes located in the vicinity of the proposed elementary school on Fanoe Road a single-family home located along Iverson Road to the northeast of the site, and the Fanoe Vista Apartments to the south along Fanoe Road. [Figure 13-1, Existing Sensitive Residential Receptors](#), presents the locations of these receptors.

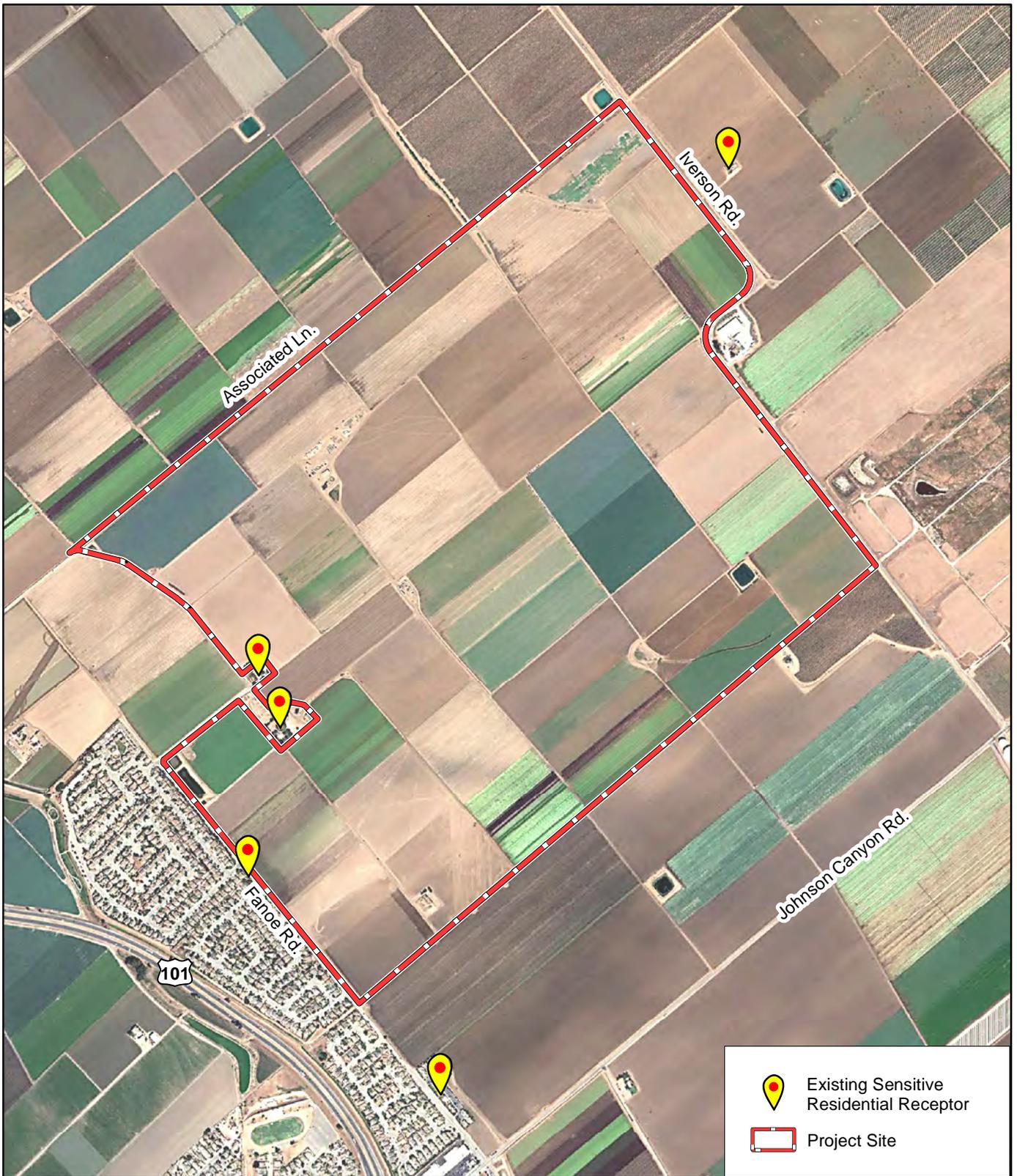
### Existing Noise Conditions in Potential Off-Site Improvement Locations

#### Off-Site Wastewater Collection Main Location

Please refer back to Section 4.2, Project Characteristics, for a discussion of the planned off-site wastewater main and its location. A new approximately 500 linear-foot off-site wastewater collection main would be required to connect the site to the City's existing wastewater collection system. The main would be located on vacant land within an undeveloped corridor located between Zinfandel Drive and Chardonnay Drive. Existing noise levels in the corridor area are similar to the project site itself given the proximity of the main location to the project site. Traffic noise from U.S. Highway 101 is the primary source of noise. Other sources include local traffic, agricultural activities to the east, and small aircraft overflights. Noise sensitive single-family homes are located on both sides of the corridor with backyards that abut the corridor.

#### Off-Site Circulation Network Improvements Locations

Please refer back to Section 4.2, Project Characteristics, for an overview of the types and potential locations of circulation improvements planned to support the project. There are no sensitive receptors located directly adjacent to the planned new segment of Fanoe Road that would extend from the project site north to Associated Lane. Single-family homes border the west side of the segment of Fanoe Road that would be widened, and the Fanoe Vista Apartments are adjacent to the southern end of this segment of the road. There are no sensitive receptors along the segment of Associated Lane that would be widened. Existing traffic on U.S. Highway 101 is the major source of ambient noise in the vicinity of the proposed improvements.



Source: WJV Acoustics, Inc. 2020

Figure 13-1



# Existing Sensitive Residential Receptors

Vista Lucia Project EIR



*This side intentionally left blank.*

## 13.2 Regulatory Setting

Noise exposure standards and regulations identified in the general plan EIR remain applicable for assessing environmental impacts of the proposed project. No new regulatory or other standards have been adopted since the general plan EIR was certified that affect assessment of potential noise impacts. The standards and regulations in the general plan EIR are not replicated here, but are referenced where applicable.

### City of Gonzales General Plan and General Plan EIR

The noise report identifies general plan policies and implementing actions that define noise levels above which significant noise impacts may be assumed. The general plan Community Health and Safety Element establishes land use compatibility noise level criteria in terms of the Day-Night Average Level (Ldn/DNL) for transportation noise sources and criteria for stationary noise sources. The Ldn is the time-weighted energy average noise level for a 24-hour day, with a 10 dB penalty added to noise levels occurring during the nighttime hours (10:00 PM to 7:00 AM). The Ldn represents cumulative exposure to noise over an extended period of time and is, therefore, calculated based upon annual average conditions.

These are summarized as follows:

Policy 8.1 - Transportation Noise Sources. Maintain a citywide noise environment that achieves noise goals by minimizing to the degree practicable the impact of transportation-related noise.

Implementing Action HS-8.1.1 - Noise-Sensitive Land Uses. New development of noise-sensitive land uses shall not be permitted in areas exposed to existing or projected future noise levels from transportation noise sources exceeding 60 dB DNL within outdoor activity areas (65 dB DNL is allowable for residential uses in the Downtown Mixed-Use District) unless appropriate noise mitigation measures have been incorporated into the final project design. An exterior exposure of up to 65 dB DNL within outdoor activity areas may be allowed if a good-faith effort has been made to mitigate exterior noise exposure using a practical application of available noise mitigation measures and interior noise exposure due to exterior sources will not exceed 45 dB DNL.

Implementing Action HS-8.1.2 - New Transportation Noise. Noise created by new transportation noise sources, including roadway improvement projects, shall be mitigated so as not to exceed 60 dB DNL within outdoor activity areas {65 dB DNL is allowable for residential uses in the Downtown Mixed-Use District) and 45 dB DNL within interior living spaces of existing noise-sensitive land uses.

Policy 8.2 - Stationary Noise Sources. Maintain a citywide noise environment that achieves noise goals by minimizing to the degree practicable the impact of stationary noise sources.

Implementing Action HS-8.2.1- Noise-Sensitive Land Uses. The new development of noise-sensitive land uses shall not be permitted in areas where noise levels from existing stationary noise sources may exceed the noise level standards summarized in Table V-3.

Implementing Action HS-8.2. 2 - New Stationary Noise Sources. Noise created by proposed stationary noise sources, or existing stationary noise sources which undergo modifications that may increase noise levels, shall be mitigated so as not to exceed the noise level standards of Table V-3 within outdoor activity areas of existing or planned noise- sensitive land uses.

General plan Table V-3 as referenced in the two implementing actions above identifies non-transportation noise level standards of 55 dBA Leq and 70 dBA Lmax for the daytime hours of 7 AM to 10 PM, and 50 dBA Leq and 65 dBA Lmax for the nighttime hours of 10 PM to 7 AM.

The general plan EIR identifies that impacts from exposure of sensitive receptor to noise and vibration that exceed City standards could be significant. Noise generated by increased traffic was found to have significant impacts on future residential uses planned along several roadways. Potential future stationary noise sources were also found to have potentially significant impacts on future noise sensitive uses. The general plan EIR concluded that general plan policies and implementing actions found in general plan EIR section 4.8 would reduce related noise impacts to less than significant. Several of the implementing actions identify maximum noise exposure for noise sensitive uses and Implementing Action HS-8.3.1 requires acoustical analyses to assess consistency of new development proposals with permitted noise exposure levels. The noise report for the proposed project was prepared to meet this requirement.

## City of Gonzales Municipal Code

Municipal code section 12.112.010 (Commercial and Industrial Performance Standards) states:

At the lot line of all uses specified in chapters 12.76 (Highway Commercial), 12.80 (Neighborhood Commercial), 12.84 (Downtown Mixed Use) and 12.88 (Industrial) of this title, the maximum sound generated by any user shall not exceed seventy-five (75) dBA when adjacent users are industrial or wholesale users. When adjacent to offices or retail, the sound level shall be limited to seventy (70) dBA. When users are adjacent or contiguous to residential, park or institutional uses, the maximum sound level shall not exceed sixty (60) dBA. Excluded from these standards are occasional sounds generated by temporary construction activities or warning devices.

## 13.3 Thresholds of Significance

CEQA Guidelines Appendix G is a sample initial study checklist that includes a number of factual inquiries related to the subject of noise, as it does on a whole series of additional environmental topics. Lead agencies are under no obligation to use these inquiries in fashioning thresholds of

significance on the subject of noise impacts, or on any subject addressed in the checklist. Rather, with few exceptions, CEQA grants agencies discretion to develop their own thresholds of significance. Even so, it is a common practice for lead agencies to take the language from the inquiries set forth in Appendix G and to use that language in fashioning thresholds. The City has done so here. Therefore, for purposes of this EIR, a significant impact would occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

- Generate 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.

The general plan noise standards for transportation noise sources, stationary sources, and construction noise, as referenced in Section 13.2 above, are used as thresholds of significance in the respective impact discussions below. Standards for maximum sound levels allowed at lot lines of individual land use types and standards limiting hours of construction activities are identified in the municipal code as noted above.

- Generate excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.

### Checklist Questions Deemed Not Applicable

- 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.

There are no private or public airports or an airport land use plan adopted within two miles of the project site. As such, the proposed project would have no impact due to exposing people residing or working in the project area to excessive airport related or aircraft overflight noise levels. No further discussion of this issue is necessary.

## 13.4 Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

### Construction Noise

<b>IMPACT</b> 13-1	<b>Construction Activities Would Cause a Substantial Temporary Noise Increase</b>	<b>Less than Significant with Mitigation</b>
-----------------------	---	--

#### On-Site and Off-Site Construction Effects

Construction noise would occur at various locations within and near the project site through the buildout period (assumed to be approximately 20 years) and at locations where off-site infrastructure improvements are planned. Existing sensitive receptors could be located as close as 50 feet from construction activities within the site and along potential off-site circulation improvement areas as illustrated in [Figure 13-1](#). The backyards of homes border both sides of the planned wastewater main corridor, and border the segment of existing Fanoe Road that would be widened.

## Conclusion

A significant noise impact could occur if construction activities do not incorporate mitigation measures, including limiting hours of construction to 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM as required by the City. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce significant impacts associated with construction noise (both on and off-site) to a less-than-significant level.

### *Mitigation Measure*

- 13-1 The following best management practices shall be applied during periods of project construction. The management practices shall be included in all construction documents, subject to review and approval by City Engineer, prior to issuance of a demolition or grading permit:
- a. Per the City of Gonzales Municipal Code, construction activities shall not occur outside the hours of 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM;
  - b. All construction equipment shall be properly maintained and muffled as to minimize noise generation at the source;
  - c. Noise-producing equipment shall not be operating, running, or idling while not in immediate use;
  - d. All noise-producing construction equipment shall be located and operated, to the extent possible, at the greatest possible distance from any noise-sensitive land uses;
  - e. Locate construction staging areas, to the extent possible, at the greatest possible distances from any noise-sensitive land uses; and
  - f. Signs shall be posted at the construction site and near adjacent sensitive receptors displaying hours of construction activities and providing the contact phone number of a noise disturbance coordinator to be identified by the construction contractor. The coordinator shall be responsible for addressing construction noise issues that may be raised by residents or other affected parties. Concerns that cannot be resolved by the coordinator may then be raised with the Community Development Director, who has final authority to resolve such concerns.

## Traffic Noise at Off-Site Receptors

<b>IMPACT 13-2</b>	<b>Generated Traffic Would Increase Noise at Off-Site Sensitive Receptors</b>	<b>Less than Significant</b>
------------------------	---	------------------------------

### Traffic Noise Effects on Off-Site Sensitive Receptors

The noise report modeled traffic noise using the Federal Highway Administration Traffic Noise Model to quantify expected project-related increases in traffic noise exposure along roadways in the

project vicinity. The Federal Highway Administration Model is a standard analytical method used by state and local agencies for roadway traffic noise prediction. The model is based upon reference energy emission levels for automobiles, medium trucks (two axles) and heavy trucks (three or more axles), with consideration given to vehicle volume, speed, roadway configuration, distance to the receiver, and site acoustical characteristics. The model was developed to predict hourly  $L_{eq}$  values for free-flowing traffic conditions, and is generally considered to be accurate within  $\pm 1.5$  dB. To predict  $L_{dn}$  values, it is necessary to determine the hourly distribution of traffic for a typical day and adjust the traffic volume input data to yield an equivalent hourly traffic volume.

Average daily traffic volumes for the analyzed receptor locations were determined by Hexagon Transportations Consultants. WJV Acoustics utilized traffic volume data generated by Hexagon Transportation Consultants as derived from the *City of Gonzales Sphere of Influence Circulation Study*. The traffic volume input data is based on the circulation network assumed in the traffic model.

The average daily trip volumes were applied to model existing conditions traffic noise exposure levels, existing plus project conditions traffic noise exposure levels, cumulative conditions traffic noise exposure levels, and used to determine the project contribution to cumulative conditions.

The percentage of trucks on U.S. Highway 101 in the project vicinity was obtained from Caltrans. The percentage of trucks on the remaining analyzed roadways was provided by Hexagon Transportation Consultants. The day/night distribution of traffic on local roadways used for modeling was approximated. The noise modeling assumptions used to calculate project traffic noise are provided in the noise report.

Project-related significant impacts would occur if an increase in traffic noise associated with the project would result in noise levels exceeding the City's applicable noise level standards at the location(s) of sensitive receptors. For the purpose of this analysis, a significant impact was also assumed to occur if traffic noise levels were to increase by 3 dB at sensitive receptor locations where noise levels already exceed the City's applicable noise level standards (without the project), as 3 dB generally represents the threshold of perception in change for the human ear.

The City's exterior noise level standard for residential land uses is 60 dB  $L_{dn}$  (65 dB  $L_{dn}$  is allowable for residential uses in the Downtown Mixed-Use District). Traffic noise was modeled at nine receptor locations located at roadway setback distances representative of the sensitive receptors (residences) along each roadway segment. The receptor locations are described below and provided graphically on Figure 12 of the noise report.

Table 13-1, [Existing Plus Project Increases in Traffic Noise](#), shows changes in noise intensities at receptors when project traffic is added to existing traffic volumes. With the addition of project traffic, traffic noise volumes would not exceed the allowable exterior noise standard of 60 dB  $L_{dn}$ .

**Table 13-1 Existing Plus Project Increases in Traffic Noise**

Modeled Receptor	Existing (dB, Ldn)	Existing Plus Project (dB, Ldn)	Change (Maximum) (dB, Ldn)
R-1	65	65	0
R-2	67	67	0
R-3	56	56	0
R-4	51	57	+6
R-5	51	51	0
R-6 <sup>1</sup>	60	61	+1
R-7	49	49	0
R-8	50	50	0
R-9	37	37	0

SOURCE: WJV Acoustics, Inc. 2020

NOTE:

1. Located in the Downtown Mixed-Use District, 65 dB L<sub>dn</sub> standard applies

## Conclusion

Additional traffic generated by the project would increase noise levels along roadways onto which it is distributed. Noise levels would increase at two modeled locations (R-4 and R-6), but would not exceed City noise exposure standards. Therefore, the project would have a less-than-significant impact from traffic noise under existing plus project conditions. No mitigation is required.

Traffic noise impacts on future on-site sensitive receptors at buildout of the project site are described in Section 20, Cumulative Impacts.

## Proposed Commercial Use Stationary Noise Effects

<b>IMPACT 13-3</b>	<b>Proposed Commercial Uses Could Cause a Permanent Noise Increase at On-Site Sensitive Receptors</b>	<b>Less than Significant with Mitigation</b>
------------------------	---	--

### Proposed Commercial Noise Effects

Noise sources not associated with transportation are considered to be stationary sources. The project includes neighborhood commercial uses that could include a wide variety of stationary noise sources, typical examples of which are:

- Fans and blowers;
- HVAC units;
- Truck deliveries;

- Loading Docks; and
- Compactors.

Noise levels from new stationary noise sources cannot be predicted with any certainty at this time since specific end uses have not yet been proposed and the precise locations of stationary noise sources relative to the locations of new noise sensitive uses are not known. However, under some circumstances there is a potential for such uses to exceed the City's noise standards for stationary noise sources.

## **Conclusion**

At the level of information available about the types of proposed commercial uses, their locations, and their stationary source noise characteristics, it is uncertain, but possible that noise from future commercial uses would exceed City standards at planned adjacent noise sensitive uses, including schools. This would be a potentially significant impact.

The following mitigation measure would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level by requiring additional noise analysis, and mitigation if required, once the types and locations of stationary commercial noise sources are identified as part of the future site-specific development entitlement process for individual commercial projects.

### ***Mitigation Measure***

13-3 Applicants proposing commercial uses shall prepare an acoustical analysis to define the site-specific potential impacts of stationary commercial noise sources. The potential for these noise sources uses to exceed applicable City noise standards at adjacent noise sensitive uses shall be identified. If significant impacts are identified, mitigation measures shall be identified to reduce impacts to less than significant by ensuring compliance with the City's noise standards. Mitigation could include, but may not be limited to site design to separate commercial uses from adjacent sensitive residential uses, building setbacks, noise equipment enclosures, etc. The acoustical analyses shall be subject to review and approval of the Community Development Director prior to approval of entitlements for future commercial projects.

By implementing this mitigation measure, additional information about potential noise impacts on sensitive receptors would be identified to determine if such impacts are significant, and if so, what mitigation measures would be needed to avoid or reduce the impacts. By implementing this mitigation measure, this impact would be reduced to less than significant.

## Proposed School Use Noise Effects

<b>IMPACT</b> 13-4	<b>Noise from Planned Schools Could Exceed Standards at On-Site Sensitive Receptors</b>	<b>Less than Significant with Mitigation</b>
-----------------------	---	--

### School Operational Noise Effects

The project land use plan shown in Figure 4-2, Specific Plan Land Use Plan, and listed in Table 4-2, Projected Overall Development Capacity Summary, show that two elementary and one middle school are planned within the project site. All three school sites are located adjacent to planned noise sensitive residential uses. Sources of operational noise associated with school uses could include mechanical equipment (trash compactors, HVAC, etc.), vehicle and bus movements and noise associated with general school activities (children at play). Where such activities would occur within each of the three proposed school sites has not been determined at this time.

Detailed site planning for individual schools would be the responsibility of the Gonzales Unified School District. The school district would act as the lead agency for preparing and certifying CEQA documentation that evaluates the project specific impacts of constructing and operating each of the schools. The information provided in this EIR regarding noise impacts is intended to disclose, at the level of detail currently available, the potential noise impacts associated with constructing and operating the schools. The school district would be responsible for implementing mitigations for reducing potentially significant noise impacts from school uses to less than significant.

### Mechanical Equipment Noise Sources and Impacts

Detailed information about the types and locations of air conditioners and trash compactors has not yet been developed. However, based upon noise studies conducted by WJV Acoustics for other projects, the maximum noise level produced by a typical un-enclosed trash compactor (Hydra-Fab Model 1200) is approximately 74 dBA at a distance of 10 feet from the equipment. Since trash compactors operate intermittently, the City's 70 dB Lmax daytime noise level standard would apply. To avoid exceeding this standard at proposed sensitive receptor locations, any trash compactor should be located at least twenty feet from any residential land use or be located within an appropriate enclosure.

It can be assumed that the project would include roof-mounted or ground level HVAC units on school buildings. Noise levels associated with air conditioner units typically range from approximately 55 - 75 dB at a distance of ten feet from the unit.

## Conclusion

Noise levels associated with school facility ground level HVAC units located within 100 feet of outdoor common use areas and/or individual patios or balconies for multi-family homes, or backyards of single-family homes could potentially exceed the City's stationary noise standard of 55 dB  $L_{eq}$  if the HVAC units are not adequately shielded. This is a potentially significant impact.

Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce potential impacts of school-associated mechanical equipment noise to a less-than-significant level.

### *Mitigation Measure*

13-4a The Gonzales Unified School District should locate trash compactors a minimum of 20 feet from outdoor common use areas and individual patios or balconies for multifamily homes, or backyards of single-family homes. Locate any ground-level HVAC unit at distance of greater than 100 feet from the outdoor common use areas and individual patios or balconies for multi-family homes, or backyards of single-family homes or provide an adequate equipment enclosure to reduce noise levels to below the City's noise level standard.

The Gonzales Unified School District should include this mitigation in future CEQA documentation it prepares for each of the three proposed school sites or ensure that the schools are designed consistent with these noise impact reduction performance standards.

In compliance with Public Resources Code §21081, the City will need to make a finding that this mitigation measure is the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency (Gonzales Unified School District) and can and should be adopted by that other agency.

This mitigation measure would reduce the potentially significant impact to less than significant by ensuring that the noise sources are placed at sufficient distance from noise receptors to reduce noise levels at the receptors below the threshold of significance.

## Bus and Vehicle Movement Noise Sources and Impacts

Noise due to traffic in parking lots is typically limited by low speeds and is not usually considered to be significant. Human activity in parking lots that can produce noise includes voices, stereo systems and the opening and closing of car doors and trunk lids. Such activities can occur at any time. The noise levels associated with these activities cannot be precisely defined due to variables such as the number of parking movements, type of vehicles, and other factors. It is typical for a passing car in a parking lot to produce a maximum noise level of 60 to 65 dBA at a distance of 50 feet, which is comparable to the level of a raised voice. File data for slowly moving heavy trucks and buses indicate that the maximum noise level ( $L_{max}$ ) is approximately 70-75 dB at 50 feet. Bus movements that do not occur on a public roadway are considered to be a stationary noise source.

## Conclusion

The locations of school parking lots and bus access and loading areas, if such would be included in the design of new schools, were not known at the time of this analysis. If bus movements were to occur, and take place within 90 feet of outdoor activity areas of residential land uses (outdoor common use areas and individual patios and/or balconies for multifamily homes, or backyards of single-family homes), associated noise levels could exceed the City's stationary noise level standard of 70 dB Lmax at residential land uses. This would be a potentially significant impact.

The following mitigation measure would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

### *Mitigation Measure*

13-4b The Gonzales Unified School District should locate bus loading areas, if planned, at a distance of 90 feet or greater from outdoor activity areas of proposed residential uses (outdoor common use areas and individual patios and balconies for multi-family homes and backyards of single-family homes).

The Gonzales Unified School District should include this mitigation in future CEQA documentation it prepares for each of the three proposed school sites or ensure that the schools are designed consistent with this noise impact reduction performance standard.

In compliance with Public Resources Code §21081, the City will need to make a finding that this mitigation measure is the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency (Gonzales Unified School District) and can and should be adopted by that other agency.

This mitigation measure would reduce the potentially significant impact to less than significant by requiring that school parking lots and bus loading and unloading facilities be located at sufficient distance from noise receptors and/or designed to avoid generating noise levels at the receptors that would exceed the threshold of significance.

## School Activity Noise Sources and Impacts

Noise levels from typical school activities are generally limited to noise associated with children at play (yelling, screaming, laughing, etc.) and school bells and alarms. WJV Acoustics previously measured noise levels associated with such school activities at an existing elementary school in Fresno County. For that study, noise measurements were conducted within a residential area across the street from the bus loading, student drop-off and a common play area at the school. Noise measurements were conducted at approximately 8:00 AM when students were arriving at school by bus or car and were gathering in common play areas before the start of school.

Measured noise levels from students gathering or playing at distances of approximately 50-225 feet from the microphone were in the range of 53-63 dB. Noise levels associated with school bells and alarms can vary widely, but are typically in the range of approximately 80-90 dB (or greater) at a distance of twenty feet from the source.

## Conclusion

Noise levels from school activities would be intermittent and mostly occur during periods when students are arriving at school in the morning or leaving school in the afternoon, and during periods of recess or physical education classes on the play fields, and could be audible at nearby residential land uses. School bells or alarms could exceed the City's 70 dB Lmax noise level standard at nearby proposed residential areas. Noise levels associated with such bells cannot be precisely quantified at this time. The type, location, direction and level of shielding were not known at the time of this analysis. However, school bell and alarm noise could exceed City standards if not properly located or shielded. This is a potentially significant impact.

The following mitigation measure would reduce this potential noise impact to a less-than-significant level.

### *Mitigation Measure*

13-4c The Gonzales Unified School District should locate school bells and alarms to ensure that noise levels at outdoor activity areas of proposed residential uses (outdoor common use areas and individual patios and balconies for multi-family homes and backyards of single-family homes) do not exceed the applicable City of Gonzales stationary noise standard. This can be achieved through proper placement and/or by reducing volume levels.

The Gonzales Unified School District should include this mitigation in future CEQA documentation it prepares for each of the three proposed school sites or ensure that the schools are designed consistent with this noise impact reduction performance standard.

In compliance with Public Resources Code §21081, the City will need to make a finding that this mitigation measure is the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency (Gonzales Unified School District) and can and should be adopted by that other agency.

This mitigation measure would reduce the potentially significant impact to less than significant by requiring that school bells be located at sufficient distance from noise receptors and/or controlled to avoid generating noise levels at sensitive receptors that would exceed the threshold of significance.

## Groundborne Vibration Effects

IMPACT 13-5	Groundborne Vibration Intensity from Construction Activities that Exceeds Standards	Less than Significant
----------------	---	-----------------------

### Groundborne Vibration (On and Off-Site)

The dominant sources of man-made vibration are sonic booms, blasting, pile driving, pavement breaking, demolition, diesel locomotives, and rail-car coupling. None of these activities are

anticipated to occur with construction or operation of the proposed project, with the exception of demolition of on-site structures. Vibration from construction activities could be detected at the closest sensitive land uses, especially during movements by heavy equipment or loaded trucks and during some paving activities (if they were to occur). According to the project noise report, these levels would not be expected to exceed any significant threshold levels for annoyance or damage.

It is not expected that ongoing project operational activities would result in vibration impacts at nearby sensitive uses. Activities involved in trash bin collection could result in minor on-site vibrations as the bin is placed back onto the ground. Such vibrations would not be expected to be felt at the closest off-site sensitive uses. Mitigation is not required.

## **Conclusion**

The proposed project is not expected to be a source of vibration during construction or operation. This impact is less than significant and no mitigation measures are required.

# 14.0 Transportation

This section of the EIR focuses analysis of the number of vehicle travel miles (VMT) that would be generated by the project once it is built out and operating. VMT is an indicator of the extent to which the project would generate greenhouse gas emissions from car and truck trips to and from the site. Project consistency with policies that establish the acceptable performance of the circulation network is also reviewed, as is the sufficiency of project planning for emergency vehicle access.

The information in this section is based on the following sources:

- *Vehicle Miles Traveled Analysis for the Proposed Vista Lucia Annexation in Gonzales, California* (“VMT analysis (December 2023);
- *City of Gonzales Vehicle Miles Traveled Policy* (October 2022);
- *City of Gonzales Sphere of Influence Circulation Study* (2019) (“SOI circulation study”);
- *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report* (“general plan EIR”) (December 2010); and
- *Vista Lucia Draft Specific Plan* (Kimley-Horn 2023).

Additional sources of information are introduced where applicable.

## Responses to the Notice of Preparation

Caltrans, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC), and the Monterey County Public Works Department provided comments on the NOP. Caltrans supports evaluating VMT as the metric for transportation impacts, supports the TAMC Regional Fee for transportation improvements as mitigation for cumulative impacts on the regional transportation network, and identifies the need to obtain encroachment permits where necessary. TAMC identified recommended project design features regarding complete streets, bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, electric vehicle infrastructure, transit improvements, and bicycle and pedestrian safety; the need to evaluate pedestrian and bicycle safety; using intersection control evaluations to inform intersection design; and land use design to promote safe routes to school and short walking distances to commercial uses. The Monterey County Public Works Department provided recommendations for preparing a detailed traffic impact analysis and specific topics it should address such as benefits of providing pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and annexing adjacent roads. The Gonzales Unified School District comments that transportation effects on schools, students, and the community should be evaluated. Refer to [Appendix A](#) for the NOPs prepared for the project and the responses to the NOPs.

## 14.1 Environmental Setting

### Vehicle Miles Traveled

In October 2022, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2022-70, adopting VMT as the metric for conducting transportation analyses. This “VMT implementation policy” identifies methodologies for evaluating VMT from a range of land use projects and includes existing baseline VMT for a range of project types. VMT impacts for individual land use types within a project are evaluated for each separate land use type. For the proposed project, the VMT-generating land uses are residential and retail (as a component of the mixed-use land use designation). For residential land uses, the existing citywide VMT is assumed to be the baseline VMT, which is defined as 16.7 VMT/capita. For retail uses, the existing countywide VMT is assumed to be the baseline VMT. These are the two land use types proposed as part of the project for which VMT impacts have been evaluated in the VMT analysis included [Appendix F](#).

Over time, it is possible that the City’s baseline VMT could decline with future anticipated employment growth in the city. The Gonzales industrial business park contains agriculture processing plants that currently employ approximately 800 people per day. Based on the City’s discussions with managers of these businesses, the City anticipates adding an additional 570 jobs within five years from planned new and expanded plants within the business park. At full buildout of the business park, an additional 1,370 new jobs are projected for a total of 2,740 by 2035. These jobs will create opportunities for local residents that now commute outside Gonzales for employment to work locally, thereby reducing their daily VMT. In addition, the City recently approved a new agricultural processing plant located on the east side of U.S. Highway 101 along Gloria Road. That plant would employ over 400 people during its peak operating season and about 80 people during the off season.

## 14.2 Regulatory Setting

This section includes summaries of standards, regulations, and plans that have been adopted or revised by local, regional, state, or federal agencies that bear on the evaluation of environmental impacts of the proposed project.

### California Senate Bill 743

Historically, transportation analyses for development projects being evaluated under CEQA have utilized vehicle delay and congestion on the roadway system as the primary metric for identifying traffic impacts. However, the State of California has recognized the limitations of measuring and mitigating only vehicle delay at intersections and in 2013 passed Senate Bill (SB) 743, which requires jurisdictions to end the practice of using congestion and delay metrics, such as level of service, as the metric for evaluating impacts of new development in Transit Priority Areas.

SB 743 also directed the California Office of Planning and Research to establish new criteria for determining the significance of transportation impacts that “promote the reduction of GHG emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses.” The Office of Planning and Research has updated the CEQA Guidelines for this purpose by adding a new section 15064.3 to the Guidelines. Beginning July 1, 2020, the provisions of SB 743 apply statewide to all projects, even those outside of Transit Priority Areas. VMT is generally defined as the total miles of travel by personal motorized vehicles a project is expected to generate in a day.

In response to revising the CEQA Guidelines pursuant to SB 743, the Office of Planning and Research issued the Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA (“technical advisory”), which provides guidance on how agencies can evaluate VMT in CEQA documents. While the advisory provides guidance on evaluating operational VMT impacts and recommends thresholds of significance, it is silent on thresholds for construction impacts, as SB 743 does not address construction VMT impacts.

## City of Gonzales VMT Policy

As noted previously, in October 2022, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2022-70, adopting VMT as the metric for conducting transportation analyses. This “VMT implementation policy” identifies methodologies for evaluating VMT from a range of land use projects, includes existing baseline VMT for a range of project types using the AMBAG Tri-County transportation model, identifies existing average VMT for a range of land use types against which VMT generated by projects is to be compared, specifies VMT thresholds of significance for a range of land use types, and lists VMT reductions measures that can be incorporated into a project or required as mitigation to reduce VMT. The VMT analysis in [Appendix F](#) references the City VMT policy and its associated technical information in as a basis for conducting the project-specific VMT analysis described in Section 14.3 below.

## City of Gonzales Sphere of Influence Circulation Study

The SOI circulation study was prepared to identify future circulation system improvements and associated right-of-way that would be needed to accommodate buildout of the City’s SOI, including the project site. Improvement needs are based on the goal of ensuring that the circulation network within the SOI would perform at an acceptable level of service “C” consistent with general plan policy as stated in general plan implementing action CIR-1.1.1. The planned system of backbone roadways is based on projected roadway, intersection and interchange capacities that would accommodate buildout traffic volumes. The roadways are designed in a grid pattern. The purpose was to facilitate shorter vehicle trips, balance trip volumes across the grid, and accommodate new development in a phased, orderly manner. The City’s “roundabout first” policy is reflected in the circulation study; roundabouts are planned at street intersections and at interchange access locations.

The SOI circulation study also evaluates access to U.S. Highway 101 at the three interchanges in the city. This analysis informed the preliminary design of improvements to the U.S. Highway 101/North Alta Road interchange described in Section 4.0, Project Description.

The information in the SOI circulation study is germane to the proposed project due to the City's interest in understanding traffic operations effects of future development within the SOI. As discussed below, operational impacts (e.g., level of service impacts) of new development are no longer a topic of CEQA investigation, having been replaced by analysis of VMT effects.

## 14.3 Thresholds of Significance

CEQA Guidelines Appendix G is a sample initial study checklist that includes a number of factual inquiries related to the subject of transportation, as it does on a whole series of additional environmental topics. Lead agencies are under no obligation to use these inquiries in fashioning thresholds of significance on the subject of transportation impacts, or indeed on any subject addressed in the checklist. Rather, with few exceptions, CEQA grants agencies discretion to develop their own thresholds of significance. Even so, it is a common practice for lead agencies to take the language from the inquiries set forth in Appendix G and to use that language in fashioning thresholds. The City has done so here. Therefore, for purposes of this EIR, a significant impact would occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

- Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities;
- Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b);
- Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment); or
- Result in inadequate emergency access.

### City of Gonzales VMT Threshold of Significance Approach

CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b) includes guidance for analyzing the transportation impacts of land use projects. The guidance notes that VMT exceeding an applicable threshold of significance may indicate a significant impact. Generally, projects within one-half mile of either an existing major transit stop or a stop along an existing high-quality transit corridor should be presumed to cause a less than significant transportation impact. Projects that decrease vehicle miles traveled in the project area compared to existing conditions should be presumed to have a less than significant transportation impact.

There are no major transit stops or a transit stops along an existing high-quality transit corridor in Gonzales. Therefore, the significance of project VMT impacts is assessed here based on the guidance and methodology included in the City’s adopted VMT policy as described in Section 14.2, Regulatory Setting.

## 14.4 Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

### Conflicts with Transportation Programs, Plans, Ordinances, or Policies, Leading to Adverse Impacts

The proposed project could result in environmental impacts if it were deemed to conflict with a plan, ordinance or policy related to circulation, and the mitigation to rectify the conflict would result in physical environmental changes with potential to create adverse impacts. The potential for the proposed project to create conflicts and adverse environmental impacts is summarized below.

#### City of Gonzales Roadway Circulation Planning

General plan EIR mitigation measure TT-13 requires that a traffic impact analysis be prepared as part of the future project specific entitlement application process. As stated previously, general plan implementing action CIR-1.1.1 establishes a level of service “C” as the acceptable performance level for the City’s road network. The policies and implementing actions in the general plan, as translated into the more detailed SOI circulation study, constitute the plans for the roadway system based on the projected development capacity for different use types (residential, commercial, public facility, schools, etc.) in the SOI, trip generation/distribution for each use and SOI development as a whole, and internal capture of vehicle trips due to the mix of use types planned within the SOI. Therefore, the SOI circulation study serves the function of a traffic impact analysis for how the applicable plan policy is to be met.

The SOI circulation study identifies roadway improvements within the SOI that are needed to meet the City’s roadway performance standard as described in the general plan as the SOI, including the project site, builds out. The SOI circulation study considers the effects of traffic generation from all land use types planned within the SOI as illustrated in the general plan, including residential, retail, mixed use, schools, public facilities, etc. The SOI circulation study also addresses pedestrian, bicycle and transit facility improvement needs, the standards for which are designed to ensure safety of movement for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users.

As of June 2020, level of service impacts associated with future development is no longer strictly a CEQA topic. Per California Senate Bill 743, VMT impact is now the primary transportation topic to be evaluated in CEQA documents. Therefore, information here about traffic operations and the SOI circulation study is provided primarily for information associated with plans for alternative modes of transportation and to demonstrate that traffic operations improvements will be required of

new development to address their effects on traffic from passenger vehicles and trucks, commercial trucks, transit buses and school buses (the latter should the Gonzales Unified School District elect to operate school buses within the site), and on pedestrian, bicycle, and transit movement.

The on-site roadway circulation improvements identified in specific plan Chapter 3, Circulation and Mobility, are based on the improvements identified in the SOI circulation study that are needed to accommodate the proposed project and future cumulative development within the SOI.

Consequently, the specific plan is consistent with the applicable City policy for the performance of the City road network for facilities within the project site and roadways that border it.

Off-site circulation improvements to Fanoe Road and to Associated Lane are also identified in the SOI circulation study as necessary to accommodate the project and cumulative development in the SOI. These are identified in Chapter 4.0, Project Description. The City will require the project applicant to fund a fair share of these improvements through payment of the City's traffic impact and/or other methods. Therefore, the project would be consistent with the applicable City policy for the performance of the City road network for off-site roadways that would be under the City's jurisdiction.

Constructing circulation improvements will result in a range of environmental effects related to air quality, agricultural land, biological resources, cultural resources, hydrology and water quality, and noise. These effects are identified within each section of this EIR at the level of detail current available about them. Mitigation measures for all construction related impacts of the proposed project have also been identified. No further analysis is necessary.

### **Caltrans Circulation Planning**

As described in Section 4.0, Project Description, future development within the SOI, including the proposed project, will generate substantial new traffic that affects operations of the City's three interchanges with U.S. Highway 101. The proposed project will substantially affect the operations of the U.S. Highway 101/North Alta Road interchange. Based on this fact, the City is working with Caltrans to prepare a project study report for the design and implementation of improvements to the interchange. The final improvement plans will be based on Caltrans design criteria such that the interchange improvements would not conflict with Caltrans criteria for the operations of facilities over which it has jurisdiction.

### **Specific Plan Bicycle, Pedestrian and Transit Planning**

Plans for pedestrian, bicycle and for transit facility improvements are identified in the specific plan. Pedestrian and bicycle features are described in Section 4.0, Project Description. Many of the project objectives listed in Section 4.1, Project Objectives, reference fundamental project goals for creating enhanced non-vehicular access opportunities and linkages throughout the project site and to connect these to external streets. These objectives are consistent with general plan policies and

implementing actions that promote integrating non-vehicular modes of transportation throughout the SOI, including the project site, consistent with direction provided in the SOI circulation study. No conflicts with these policies and implementing actions have been identified.

The specific plan also requires that consultation with MST must occur to define the locations of transit facilities consistent with MST guidance. The specific plan requires that developers install transit facilities consistent with input from MST that project developers are directed to solicit.

All pedestrian and bicycle facilities would be constructed to City standards as identified and illustrated in the specific plan. The standards are designed to ensure safe pedestrian and bicycle operations and to promote ease of access between all uses planned within the site, including movement between residential neighborhoods and school sites, parks, and village centers.

Constructing pedestrian, bicycle and transit improvements will result in a range of environmental effects related to air quality, agricultural land, biological resources, cultural resources, hydrology and water quality, and noise. These effects are identified within each section of this EIR, as they are part of the overall development that would occur within the project site.

## Vehicle Miles Traveled

<b>IMPACT 14-1</b>	<b>Conflict with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 by Exceeding the Applicable Threshold for VMT</b>	<b>Residential Use – Significant and Unavoidable Retail Use – Less than Significant</b>
------------------------	--	---

### VMT Modeling and Analysis

The VMT analysis in [Appendix F](#) was prepared to assess the VMT impacts of the proposed project. The information presented below is derived from that analysis and from the City’s VMT policy.

### VMT Modeling and Results

Very large projects such as the proposed project, can potentially shift travel patterns. For these types of projects, a travel demand forecasting model can be used to project VMT. The AMBAG Tri-County transportation model was used for this purpose.

The AMBAG model is a mathematical representation of travel within the three counties in the Monterey Bay Region and is mainly composed of four components: 1) trip generation, 2) trip distribution, 3) mode choice, and 4) trip assignment. The model uses socioeconomic inputs (i.e., households, number of jobs, hotel rooms) to estimate travel within Monterey County, Santa Cruz County and San Benito County. Socioeconomic inputs are aggregated into geographic areas (transportation analysis zones). There are 1,710 traffic analysis zones within the model to represent the three counties. The Gonzales SOI area is represented by 17 traffic analysis zones.

The City’s VMT policy includes thresholds of significance for VMT impacts of various land use types. Each land use type associated with a new project is to be evaluated against its respective threshold of significance, as is the case for the dominant traffic-generating residential use and for the more minor traffic-generating retail/commercial component of the mixed-use land use included in the specific plan. The VMT threshold for residential use is 15 percent below existing average City VMT/capita, or 14.4 VMT/capita as described in the VMT policy. The threshold for the retail component is no net increase above the average countywide regional VMT.

***Residential VMT Impact Analysis and Impact Determination***

Table 14-1, Residential Vehicle Miles Traveled Analysis Results, shows VMT analysis results for this component of the proposed project. The results partially differ from those in the VMT analysis in Appendix F. Table 14-1 shows an existing population assumption and total VMT/day results for existing conditions that are higher than shown in the VMT analysis. The VMT analysis is based on a model default baseline population of 7,791, which is also the default population value in AMBAG’s regional model. The AMBAG model has a base year of 2015. However, AMBAG’s more recent 2022 Regional Growth Forecast shows a city population of 8,441 in 2015. This higher number was used to revise the baseline VMT/day value upward in Table 14-1 based on the valid assumption that the travel behavior of the additional 650 residents would be similar to the model default population. As described in the VMT analysis, at a population of 7,791, existing VMT/day was calculated at 130,019, with a VMT/capita/day of 16.7. At a population of 8,441, VMT/day increases by 10,855 (650 x 16.7) for a total of 140,874.

**Table 14-1 Residential Vehicle Miles Traveled Analysis Results**

	VMT/Day	Population	VMT/Capita/Day
Existing Conditions (Baseline)	140,874	8,441	16.7
Threshold of Significance - 15% below existing conditions			14.2
Proposed Project	241,639	15,391	15.7
Proposed Residential Use Exceeds Threshold?			Yes (1.5 VMT/Capita or 9.6 %)

SOURCE: Hexagon Transportation Engineers 2023, EMC Planning Group 2023, AMBAG 2022

As can be seen, the 15.7 VMT/capita/day for the residential use exceeds the threshold of significance of 14.2 VMT/capita/day by 1.5 VMT/capita/day or about 9.6 percent. Therefore, the VMT impact for the planned residential use is significant.

***Retail/Commercial VMT Impact Analysis and Impact Determination***

The City’s VMT policy includes screening criteria. If a proposed use meets any one of the criteria, its VMT impact can be considered less than significant. One of the criteria is “local-serving retail”. Under this criterion, it is assumed that introducing local-serving retail uses to an area reduces VMT

by shortening vehicle trip lengths that would otherwise occur to more distant retail uses. To be defined as local-serving retail, individual retail uses must be less than 50,000 square feet in building area and must be considered local-serving by the City.

The proposed project includes a total of 96,000 square feet of retail/commercial use within the two areas designated for mixed use. This use is designed primarily to help meet the daily needs of local residents within the project site, but could also attract residents from nearby existing residential development. No single store is expected to exceed 50,000 square feet in building area. By its design, and as acknowledged by City staff, the retail component is considered local serving. As a result, the retail use would be presumed to have a less-than-significant VMT impact.

## **Residential Use VMT Mitigation and Mitigated VMT/Capita Projection**

### ***Project Design Features***

The VMT analysis does not consider potential project design features that would reduce VMT. Measures that would reduce VMT that are inherent to the project land use and mobility design in the specific plan. Additional measures described in the specific plan that could reduce VMT are identified in Section 6.0, Air Quality. VMT-reducing design measures that incorporated into the specific plan are within the control of future developers include an extensive pedestrian and bicycle networks/facilities. Further, mitigation measures in that section require other VMT-reducing measures that are within the control of the applicant as identified in the specific plan to be implemented as the project site builds out. These address transit stops/facilities and traffic calming measures. As described in Section 6.0, the land use and mobility design features in the specific plan are projected to reduce VMT by 2.8 percent. To assure a conservative approach to the VMT analysis, no quantified reductions have been assumed for other VMT reduction measures that are included in the mitigation measures in Section 6.0.

### ***Other VMT Mitigation Options Considered***

A range of additional measures as having potential to reduce VMT. The City's VMT policy includes a number of transportation demand management measure strategies that address parking, transit, communication and information, commuting, shared mobility, bicycle infrastructure, neighborhood enhancement, and miscellaneous. *The Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions, Assessing Climate Vulnerabilities, and Advancing Health and Equity* (California Air Pollution Control Officers 2021) is also a common reference source for such measures. While the handbook focuses on GHG emissions reduction guidance, it notes that fossil-fuel powered vehicles are the primary source of GHG emissions within the transportation sector and that transportation emissions can be reduced by reducing VMT. Most of the GHG reduction measures identified in the handbook are targeted to reducing VMT and encourage mode shifts from single-occupancy vehicles to shared (e.g., transit) or active modes of transportation (e.g., bicycle). Coordinating trip reduction or incentive programs; optimizing the land use of the project study area; enhancing road, bike and pedestrian networks; implementing parking policies; or improving transit systems are the main categories of VMT reduction measures addressed.

The transportation demand management measures in the VMT policy document and measures in the handbook were reviewed to determine whether additional VMT mitigation is feasible for the project. Trip reduction programs are typically focused on projects that include substantial employment generation and actions employers can take to reduce employment related vehicle trips. The project is not a notable employment generating project, so trip reduction programs were not further considered. Parking and road pricing programs focus on managing parking to promote a shift away from private vehicle use. These measures would generally not be feasible for a suburban context where options for residents to access services located outside the city without private transportation is limited due to the city's geographic location at distance from larger employment and services centers, and where public transit availability is very limited. These measures are commonly applicable to much higher density projects located in urban centers. Neighborhood design measures focus on providing pedestrian and bicycle options to vehicle use – the measures are squarely within the control of the applicant and are promoted in the specific plan as noted previously. Expanding transit services is a function that is not within the direct control of a project applicant. However, as noted above, mitigation is required for the applicant to consult with MST to facilitate MST expanding transit service to the project site.

The VMT analysis identifies additional transit-related VMT reduction measures found in the City's VMT policy document that could be feasible for the proposed project. Expanding transit routes into the site and constructing transit facilities is included as a mitigation measure in Section 6.0, Air Quality. However, as stated there and in the VMT analysis, expanding transit routes is a decision that would be made by MST, not the project applicant or the City. While it appears that expanding transit into the site is feasible, there is no assurance this will occur. Therefore, VMT reductions that would accrue from transit-related measures are not assured or assumed in this analysis.

The VMT analysis states that even if the VMT reduction measure cited in the analysis were to be feasible, they would reduce VMT by about 5.2 percent. As stated above, residential VMT must be reduced by a minimum of 9.6 percent for the impact to be reduced to less than significant.

## Conclusion

The proposed project will generate residential VMT/capita that exceeds the threshold of significance. This is a significant impact. Project design features identified in Section 6.0, Air Quality, are projected to reduce VMT by about 2.8 percent. Additional mitigation is required to reduce VMT. Additional applicable measures (primarily transit related) have been investigated, but their implementation is uncertain as they are not within the control of the applicant or City. A 9.6 percent reduction is needed to reduce VMT to below the threshold of significance. Therefore, the project impact from VMT would be significant and unavoidable.

## Circulation Hazards and Emergency Access

IMPACT 14-2	Substantially Increase Circulation Hazards and/or Result in Inadequate Emergency Access	Less than Significant
----------------	---	-----------------------

The specific plan includes plans for and describes the locations and characteristics of proposed vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation features and improvements. Roadway cross-sections are provided that illustrate both vehicular and bicycle and pedestrian improvements. All tentative maps and use permits must be in substantial compliance with the specific plan by integrating the mobility plans and features identified in the specific plan.

All transportation improvements must be consistent with the City's standard specifications, which are based on standard engineering practice for safe and efficient facility design. This includes specifications for emergency vehicle access, sight distance, vehicle speed, turning radii, etc. Each tentative map will be reviewed by the City of Gonzales Public Works, Fire and Police departments to ensure that circulation improvements are designed consistent with their respective standards for safe movement of vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists and emergency vehicles.

### Conclusion

Circulations hazards for all modes of transportation could occur with future development of the project site if circulation improvements are not designed specifically to anticipate and avoid or substantially reduce potential for such hazards, or to ensure access for emergency vehicles. Hazards would be avoided and adequate emergency access would be assured through the City's design review process, with a particular emphasis on review of each tentative map for consistency with circulation improvement specifications. Given this fact, impacts from circulation hazards and/or inadequate emergency access would be less than significant.

*This side intentionally left blank.*

# 15.0 Public Services

This section of the EIR assesses the potential for the proposed project to increase demand for public services to the extent that new public services facilities must be constructed to meet that demand. The potential environmental effects of constructing and operating those facilities are then examined. The information within this section is based on the specific plan and the City's general plan and general plan EIR. Additional sources of information are introduced where applicable.

## Responses to the Notice of Preparation

The Monterey County Resource Management Agency responded to the NOP, requesting the public services impacts include analysis of any County services in the area that may be affected by development allowed by the rezoning. LAFCO commented that the EIR should include a discussion of public services facility needs.

The Gonzales Unified School District raised numerous issues that generally address new student generation and effects on school capacity conditions, school impact fees, transportation and circulation effects on schools and student safety, noise impacts, and air quality effects. The school district also requested information on a number of other topics, including fiscal impacts on the school district and social effects of the project. CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(e) addresses the limits on addressing fiscal and social effects of a project under CEQA. That section reads, in part:

Economic and social changes resulting from a project shall not be treated as significant effects on the environment. Economic or social changes may be used, however, to determine that a physical change shall be regarded as a significant effect on the environment.

The fiscal and social concerns raised by the school district are not foreseen to result in physical environmental changes. Further, in several cases, the school district requests information that cannot be provided absent speculative forecasting. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 14145, Speculation, if a particular effect is too speculative for evaluation, this conclusion should be noted and discussion of the impact may be terminated. For these reasons, several of the economic and social concerns raised by the school district are not addressed in this EIR.

Other issues raised by the school district are within the school district's responsibility to address based on its decisions for how it will accommodate new students, while others are stated too broadly as to enable a substantive response.

## 15.1 Environmental Setting

This environment setting section incorporates information provided in the general plan EIR as updated with additional communications with applicable service providers and associated provider plans, and information in the specific plan.

### Fire Services

#### Gonzales Rural Fire Protection District

The Gonzales Rural Fire Protection District (“fire district”) was formed on December 18, 1950 to provide fire protection to property surrounding the City of Gonzales that lies within the fire district's boundaries. The fire district boundaries cover a total of 58 square miles. In 2010, this rural area contained an estimated population of 619.

The fire district’s small size does not allow it to economically maintain independent fire protection service, so since 1977, the District Board of Directors has contracted with the City of Gonzales to provide fire protection and emergency medical services within the fire district boundaries (Gonzales Rural Fire Protection District 2020).

If the project site is annexed to the City, the site would also be removed from the Gonzales Rural Fire Protection District. However, the City of Gonzales Fire Department will continue to provide fire protection services to areas within the remainder of the fire district boundary.

#### City of Gonzales Fire Department

According to the Gonzales fire department website, as of 2022 the fire department had 14 firefighters. Seven are full-time employees. The department currently maintains a fleet of four fire-fighting vehicles; each of which serve different functions for the City and surrounding agencies through the Monterey County Mutual Aid Matrix, which is administered under the direction of the Monterey County Fire Chief’s Association.

The existing fire station is located at 325 Center Street, approximately 0.75 miles from the western boundary of the project site. General plan implementing action HS-4.1.10 calls for funding and constructing a second fire station on the east side of U.S. Highway 101. The fire station is planned to meet additional service demand from new development within the SOI, including the proposed project. However, it is possible that two new stations on the east side may be more appropriate due to the level of anticipated development on the east side and to the need to ensure appropriate response time. The City has not identified a location for one or more new fire stations on the east side (email messages from Matthew Sundt, August 13 and August 18, 2020).

## Police Protection

### Monterey County Sheriff's Department

The Monterey County Sheriff's Department is responsible for providing law enforcement services in unincorporated Monterey County, including the project site. The nearest station is located at 1414 Natividad Road in Salinas, approximately 16 miles northwest of the project site. Other stations are located in Monterey and King City.

### City of Gonzales Police Department

The Gonzales police department consists of 15 staff, 12 of which are sworn officers. The department is also supported by a Volunteer's in Policing Program that allows community members to assist the police with day-to-day operations (City of Gonzales 2020c).

The existing police station is located at 109 4<sup>th</sup> Street. The station was designed to accommodate additional personnel that would be needed as the city continues to grow, including from development within the project site. Based on a ratio of 250 square feet of building square footage per employee, existing remaining building capacity, and a projected ratio of one officer needed per new 775 residents (the current ratio of existing police officers to existing city population), the City projects that it can accommodate approximately 2,050 new dwelling units before capacity in the existing station is exceeded. Once capacity is exceeded, a new substation on the east side of U.S. Highway 101 would be needed to ensure adequate service and response times. The station would likely be 3,000 square feet or less in size. Its location has not yet been identified by the City (email message from Matthew Sundt, August 18, 2020).

## Schools

The Gonzales Unified School District ("school district") provides school services for residents within the district boundaries, which includes the City of Gonzales. The school district is comprised of three schools: La Gloria Elementary School, Fairview Middle School, and Gonzales High School. In August 2023, the elementary school had 843 students, the middle school had 421 students, and the high school had 797 students (Joannie Lumbrá, email message, August 11, 2023).

The *Gonzales Unified School District 2019-2020 Facilities Master Plan Update* indicates that the elementary school has a net classroom capacity of 984 students, the middle school has a net classroom capacity of 714 students, and the high school has a net classroom capacity of 1,161 students (Gonzales Unified School District 2020, p. 25). Based on these capacities and the enrollment numbers from the Associate Superintendent, the elementary school is nearing capacity, and the middle and high schools are under capacity.

## Parks

Table 4.12.1 in the general plan EIR includes an inventory of existing park facilities within the city. An additional 0.32-acre park, Venice Park, is located at 477 Venice Way (City of Gonzales 2020d).

Gonzales currently has 22.14 acres of parkland for a population of about 8,300 (California Department of Finance 2023), or about 2.7 acres for every 1,000 residents. The general plan includes a parkland to population goal of five acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents.

## 15.2 Regulatory Setting

Standards, regulations or plans that may apply to mitigating impacts of constructing and operating new or expanded existing public facilities are provided throughout this EIR in the regulatory setting discussions in other individual environmental topic sections.

## 15.3 Thresholds of Significance

CEQA Guidelines Appendix G is a sample initial study checklist that includes a number of factual inquiries related to the subject of public services, as it does on a whole series of additional topics. Lead agencies are under no obligation to use these inquiries in fashioning thresholds of significance on the subject of public services impacts, or on any subject addressed in the checklist. Rather, with few exceptions, CEQA grants agencies discretion to develop their own thresholds of significance. Even so, it is a common practice for lead agencies to take the language from the inquiries set forth in Appendix G and to use that language in fashioning thresholds. The City has done so here. Therefore, for purposes of this EIR, a significant impact would occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

- 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: fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, and other public facilities.

The thresholds for “substantial adverse physical impacts” are presented throughout this EIR for each environmental issue addressed.

## 15.4 Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

This section includes information and data regarding public services that are relevant to the proposed project based on the threshold of significance described above. The information and data are used as a basis for determining impact significance.

### Construction of Fire Protection Facilities

New development within the project site would be served by the Gonzales fire department. The proposed project would result in a population increase of about 15,391 people. Demand for fire

services would increase as assumed in the general plan EIR. As indicated in general plan implementing action HS-4.1.10, a second fire station on the east side of U.S. Highway 101 is needed to meet additional service demand from new development within the SOI, including the proposed project. Consequently, the proposed project could trigger the need to construct a new fire station and could result in related environment impacts.

General plan policy HS-4.1 requires that police and fire protection levels of service meet national and/or regional standards and that proposals for new development be evaluated against the service levels to determine the extent of improvements needed. Implementing action HS-4.1.10 notes the City has already identified that a new fire station is needed to meet acceptable service levels.

General plan implementation action HS-4.1.1 requires that fire facility impacts be identified in specific plans. The specific plan does not specifically identify that a site is being allocated within the project site or elsewhere within the SOI to accommodate a future new fire station. The City will determine, in collaboration with the applicant, if and where a fire facility site may be located.

The types of physical resource impacts that could result from constructing a new fire station within the project site would be similar to those associated with constructing the proposed project as a whole as identified throughout this EIR. These effects could include, but may not be limited to: loss of agricultural resources, air quality degradation, loss of protected biological resources, damage to cultural resources, increased GHGs, water quality degradation, noise impacts on sensitive receptors, increased vehicle miles traveled, etc. These effects are discussed in the other individual environmental topic sections of this EIR.

## Conclusion

The increase in demand for fire protection service generated by the proposed project, as well as other cumulative development within the SOI, would trigger the need to construct a new fire station east of U.S. Highway 101. The analysis of environmental impacts included in this EIR is sufficient to address the general potential environmental effects of constructing a fire station within the project site if such a site is ultimately reserved within the project site. Once a new fire station site and station design is identified, the City of Gonzales would act as the lead agency to prepare project-specific CEQA documentation. The City may elect to tier or streamline the project-specific CEQA documentation from the analyses included in this EIR. No further analysis is required.

## Construction of Police Protection Facilities

Development within the project site would be served by the Gonzales police department. The proposed project includes 3,498 housing units and would generate a population increase of about 15,391 people. The proposed project would increase demand for police protection services.

A new police substation location west of U.S. Highway 101 has not been identified or secured by the City to date. General plan policy HS-4.1 requires that police and fire protection levels of service

meet nation and/or regional standards and that proposals for new development be evaluated against the service levels to determine the extent of improvements needed. The City has identified that at the existing police officer to population ratio in the city today and given the size of the existing police station, the existing station has existing capacity to accommodate new personnel needed to provide service for up to approximately 2,050 new dwelling units, or a population increase of about 9,000 additional residents.

Capacity of the existing station would be insufficient to accommodate the increase in service demand generated by the proposed project. Consequently, the proposed project would likely trigger the need to construct a new police substation west of U.S. Highway 101. As stated in Section 15.2, Environmental Setting, the City projects that a substation of about 3,000 square feet would be sufficient. General plan implementation action HS-4.1.1 requires that police and fire service needs be identified in specific plans. The specific plan does not specifically identify that a location within the project site is being allocated to accommodate a police substation. Consistent with implementation action HS-4.1.1, the City will determine, in collaboration with the applicant, if and where a police substation may be located within the specific plan boundary.

The types of physical resource impacts that could result from constructing a new police substation within the project site would be similar to those associated with constructing the proposed project as identified in this EIR. These effects could include, but may not be limited to: loss of agricultural resources, air quality degradation, loss of protected biological resources, damage to cultural resources, increased GHGs, water quality degradation, noise impacts on sensitive receptors, increased vehicle miles traveled, etc. Once a new police station site and substation design is identified, the City of Gonzales would act as the lead agency to prepare project-specific CEQA documentation. The City may elect to tier or streamline the project-specific CEQA documentation from the analyses included in this EIR. No further analysis is required.

## Conclusion

The increase in demand for police protection generated by the proposed project could trigger the need to construct a new police substation east of U.S. Highway 101. The analysis of environmental impacts included in this EIR is sufficient to address the potential environmental effects of constructing a police substation within the project site if such a site is identified by the City in collaboration with the applicant. No further analysis is required.

## Construction of New Schools

The proposed project would generate new students that would be served by the Gonzales Unified School District. [Table 15-1, Student Generation](#), shows that the project would generate approximately 2,696 elementary, middle school, and high school students. It is possible that some future individual homeowners could construct accessory dwelling units that could, in turn, result in increased population and increased student generation. Because the decision to or not to construct

such units is up to the decisions of future individual home owners, it would be speculative to assume whether such units would be constructed and if so, how many might be constructed and in what timeframe. As noted previously, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 14145, Speculation, if a particular effect is too speculative for evaluation, this conclusion should be noted and discussion of the impact may be terminated.

**Table 15-1 Student Generation**

Number of Proposed Units	Student Generation Rates	Number of New Students
3,498	0.4331 elementary school students (K-6)	1,515
	0.1137 middle school students (7-8)	398
	0.2237 high school students (9-12)	783
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,696</b>

SOURCE: SchoolWorks 2020

It would be similarly speculative to forecast effects on student generation based on the type/density of residential units and their accessibility to different types of home buyers (e.g. seniors, first-time home buyers, or move-up home buyers). There is no way to reliably anticipate the motivations or needs of future home buyers. However, regarding housing affordability, as described in Section 4.0, up to 751 of the 1,247 units (approximately 60 percent) included in the first tentative map are intended to be affordable.

While the rate of residential unit development over time is unknown at present time, it is assumed in other sections of this EIR that residential buildout will occur over the next 20 years or more. The annual number of students to be generated from developing the project cannot be reliably forecast, as the annual number of residential units to be constructed is dependent on demand. It is assumed that residential development would start in the portion of the project site covered by the first tentative map as shown in Figure 4-1.

### School District Capacity/Capacity Needs

In August 2023, the elementary school had 843 students, the middle school had 421 students, and the high school had 797 students (Joannie Lumbra, email message, August 11, 2023).

The *Gonzales Unified School District 2019-2020 Facilities Master Plan* (SchoolWorks 2020) is a guidance framework for ensuring that school district facilities and financial planning are in place to accommodate and support its current and future programs and enrollment. The facilities master plan includes projections of housing growth to the year 2025/2026 within the school district boundaries and how such growth would affect the capacity of existing schools. The facilities master plan assumes that up to 500 new dwelling units would be constructed to the year 2025/2026 and that all

new students from those homes would attend La Gloria Elementary School, Fairview Middle School, and Gonzales High School. New development within the SOI (the project site at 3,500 homes and the Puente del Monte site at 2,622 homes), and within the D'Arrigo Brothers site located within the city limits (at 681 homes) are identified in the facilities master plan to be the main sources of new student generation over time.

No new homes have been constructed within the SOI to date. At this time, it appears that the proposed project would be the first of the three residential projects anticipated in the facilities master plan to be considered for approval. Therefore, the proposed project is likely to be the only significant source of new housing construction to the school year 2025/2026 and it likely would be the sole source of significant new student generation to that date. Further, while possible, it is unlikely that 500 new residential units would be completed within the project site by the end of the 2025/2026 school year.

The school facilities master plan includes a "School Facility Utilization" table. The data shows that if 500 new units were to be constructed within the district by 2025/2026, enrollment at La Gloria Elementary would slightly exceed its current 984-student capacity. Fairview Middle School and Gonzales High School would remain about 30 percent below their existing capacities of 714 and 1,161 students, respectively. With these new housing/student assumptions, new elementary school capacity could be needed once 500 units are constructed within the project site, with new middle school and high school capacity needed at some point after that time. As noted above, it is possible, but unlikely, that 500 new residential units would be constructed within the project site/district by 2025/2026. Therefore, it is possible that the need for additional elementary school capacity would occur sometime after that school year. School capacity need projections beyond the year 2025/2026 are not included in the facilities master plan.

The specific plan includes sites for two new elementary schools and one new middle school. The sites are being reserved to help meet the school district's need to construct new schools with capacity to accommodate additional school-aged children that would reside within the project site and in new developments that could occur in the future, such as the Puente del Monte and D'Arrigo sites noted previously. Each elementary school site is 12 acres. Based on information from the *Guide to School Site Analysis and Development* (California Department of Education 2000, Table 1), elementary school sites of this size generally are built to accommodate approximately 750-800 students. The two elementary school sites could provide enough capacity to accommodate the projected 1,515 elementary school students that would ultimately reside within the project boundaries, though at no single point in time would the project created demand for elementary school capacity reaches this number. The middle school site would be about 18 acres. Extrapolating from data in the school site guide, the middle school site could accommodate approximately 620 students, or about 1.6 times the number of middle school-age children that would be generated from the proposed project. Again, demand from the proposed project would never reach 620 in a single school year.

The specific plan does not include a new high school site. Future development within the site would cause the high school to exceed capacity at some point after 2025/2026 unless a new high school were built by the school district, or capacity at Gonzales High School is expanded to accommodate the new students.

### **School District Funding**

School districts generally have three types of potential funding available to construct new schools – state funding, developer fees, and local general obligation funds. Over time, a range of state senate bills and propositions have been passed/approved to fund school site acquisitions, construct new school facilities, and modernize existing school facilities. Pending assembly and/or senate bills propose new state bonds be issued to support new construction and/or modernization projects. Eligibility for state funding generally is based on the extent to which a school district has “unhoused projected students”.

Senate Bill 50 established a process for determining the amount of fees that developers may be charged to mitigate the impact of development on school facilities. A development project applicant pays developer fees to a school district at the time building permits are issued, unless an alternative school impact mitigation agreement states otherwise. It is possible that developer fees will increase one or more times over the period that residential development occurs within the project site. Payment of the adopted fees represents full and complete mitigation of a development’s impacts on school capacity/overcrowding. These fees do not inherently mitigate potential impacts on school operations or health and safety of school children. These effects are evaluated in other topic-specific sections of this EIR.

### **Impacts of Constructing/Operating New Schools**

The school district has complete and sole discretion over all future school-related actions and functions and would accommodate new students over time in a manner to be determined by the district. Options could include expanding capacity of existing schools (e.g., through installing portable classrooms), constructing one or more new schools, or other approaches it determines to be appropriate. Because new student generation from the project would occur over many years, the school district would be presented with a host of variables and scenarios relating to school capacity that could affect its decision making for how to accommodate new students.

The school district would be the lead agency under CEQA for evaluating the specific environmental impacts of constructing and operating new schools within the site and/or increasing capacity at existing schools. The proposed project would contribute to the need to construct new schools within the project site. Consequently, construction impacts related to the new schools are evaluated at a general, “programmatic” level in this EIR given that no specific information is available about the design or operations of future individual schools. These impacts would be similar to those associated with constructing and operating common types of land development projects, including

the other types of uses proposed within the remainder of the project site. Impacts on agricultural resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, GHGs, water quality, noise, vehicle miles traveled, etc., are possible. Mitigation measures for all construction related impact of the proposed project have also been identified.

As part of the project-specific CEQA documentation it prepares for constructing and operating individual schools within the project site, the school district may streamline that documentation by tiering off of this EIR and may include applicable mitigation measures in this EIR that serve to reduce significant impacts associated with constructing and operating individual new schools.

Should the school district determine that expanding capacity at existing schools is an option for accommodating new students over time, the school district would also be the lead agency for evaluating the effects of constructing/installing new permanent or temporary (e.g., portable classrooms) capacity. It would be speculative at this time to undertake such analysis in this EIR given the current uncertainty about the annual number and age of school-aged children that would require capacity over the 20-year or more buildout period for the project, the number that might be housed at existing school facilities, the types of improvements that would be planned at existing schools, the timing for constructing one or more new schools within the project site, etc.

## Conclusion

The proposed project would require two new elementary schools, and contribute to the need for new middle and high school capacity. The proposed project includes sites reserved for two new elementary schools and one middle school. The capacity of new schools that could be built on these sites would be adequate to meet the demand for new elementary and middle school capacity that would be generated by future development within the project site. A high school site is not provided within the project site. Additional high school capacity would be needed through construction of a new high school or by expanding capacity at the existing high school.

The analysis of environmental impacts and mitigation measures associated with new construction activities included in this EIR is sufficient to address the general potential physical environmental effects of constructing new schools within the project site. This EIR also includes analyses of operational effects of these schools (e.g., air quality, GHGs, noise, VMT, etc.) to the extent possible given the level of information currently available. The analysis in this EIR can and should be used by the school district, acting as lead agency, as part of its future project-specific CEQA documentation for constructing and operating new schools within the project site. The school district is solely responsible for planning and constructing new schools and/or expanding the capacity of existing schools. As noted previously, payment of SB 50 school impact fees by new development within the project site is considered full mitigation for effects of new development on school facilities.

## Construction of New Park and Recreation Facilities

The proposed project includes 57 acres of community and neighborhood parks plus 20 acres of “promenade” as shown in Table 4-1, Projected Vista Lucia Development Capacity. Promenades are described by the applicant as landscaped linear parks that may include pedestrian and bicycle facilities, fitness areas and other recreational features. In total, approximately 77 acres of park and recreation facilities are planned. At a projected population of 15,391 and a parkland ratio of five acres/1,000 new residents, the proposed project would generate demand for approximately 77 acres of park and recreation facilities.

### Conclusion

The increase in demand for park and recreation facilities generated by the proposed project triggers the need to include such facilities in the specific plan. The analysis of environmental impacts of developing the project as a whole, as included in other sections of this EIR, is sufficient to address the potential environmental effects of constructing park and recreation facilities within the project site. No further analysis is required.

*This side intentionally left blank.*

# 16.0 Wastewater

This section of the EIR assesses whether the proposed project has potential to trigger the need to construct new wastewater collection and/or treatment facilities, the construction of which could result in significant environmental effects. The potential for the project itself to trigger such construction is based on several factors, the most significant of which are the new demand for collection and treatment service created by the project, the capacity of existing City collection and treatment infrastructure to meet that demand, and City plans for constructing new and expanded collection/treatment infrastructure.

The information in this section is based on the following sources:

- *Final Report – Existing City Plus Sphere of Influence Wastewater Master Plan* (“wastewater master plan”) (Kimley Horn 2019);
- *Revised Draft City of Gonzales Long Term Wastewater Management Plan* (“wastewater management plan”) (Dudek 2018);
- *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report* (“general plan EIR”) (December 2010); and
- *Vista Lucia Draft Specific Plan* (Kimley-Horn 2021).

Additional sources of information are introduced where applicable.

## Responses to the Notice of Preparation

The County of Monterey Environmental Health Bureau commented that the City will need to work with the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board to determine if the City’s existing sewage system has sufficient capacity to accommodate the project.

## 16.1 Environmental Setting

The environmental setting information in the general plan EIR remains relevant to wastewater conditions. Information in the general plan EIR is supplemented by the wastewater master plan and wastewater management plan referenced above. The wastewater master plan describes pre-development conditions within the SOI of which the project site is a part, general plan land use direction for the area, and locations of existing City wastewater collection infrastructure. The wastewater management plan describes the City’s current wastewater treatment and disposal infrastructure and capacity, as well as projected wastewater flows from cumulative development,

including development within the SOI. The information below regarding existing conditions and planning for wastewater treatment capacity expansion and for new wastewater collection system improvements includes environmental setting information.

## **Wastewater Treatment Capacity Expansion Planning**

The general plan and general plan EIR identify that additional wastewater treatment capacity would be needed to accommodate new development, including development within the SOI. Since 2015, the City has been actively planning to expand the capacity of its wastewater system. The City has also been actively planning improvements to its wastewater conveyance system for the same reason. These plans are summarized below. The purpose is to show how the new demand for wastewater treatment capacity and conveyance infrastructure, including that resulting from the proposed project, would be addressed by the City.

It is important to highlight that the individual components of the City's plans to expand the existing wastewater treatment system would be separate projects under CEQA. Consequently, these actions would be subject to one or more separate CEQA review processes wherein detailed analysis of related impacts and mitigation measures would be conducted. As described below, the CEQA process for the City's planned construction of a new industrial wastewater treatment facility and associated industrial wastewater conveyance improvements has already been completed. The CEQA review process for planned improvements to the existing MWWTP would be initiated once the City has completed more detailed MWWTP expansion plans. Further, plans for improving the conveyance system to accommodate development within the SOI would be subject to CEQA, with that process also being initiated once final conveyance improvement plans have been defined.

Given the discussion above, the scope of analysis in this EIR focuses only on the impacts of constructing and operating wastewater conveyance improvements that are identified in the Vista Lucia project description as reported in Section 4.2, Project Characteristics. These improvements include on-site wastewater conveyance infrastructure and an off-site wastewater conveyance main that is needed to connect the project site to the City's conveyance infrastructure system.

### **Existing Wastewater Treatment Capacity Conditions**

The City currently provides wastewater collection and treatment for Gonzales residents and businesses. The City owns and operates the existing MWWTP, which is permitted to accept up to 1.3 million gallons per day (MGD) of wastewater, averaged over a month. The plant is currently operating at 1.1 MGD, with approximately two-thirds of the flows coming from industrial sources with the balance coming from residential and commercial users within Gonzales. The City expects an increase in wastewater flows in the upcoming years due to industrial and residential developments, including development within the SOI such as the Vista Lucia project.

## Wastewater System Capacity Expansion Information

City staff has been working to upgrade and expand wastewater treatment capacity to accommodate the expected increase in wastewater flows. Since the general plan was adopted in 2010, the City has conducted several studies to investigate options and recommendations for expanding its wastewater treatment capacity. This includes preparing the *Revised Draft City of Gonzales Long Term Wastewater Management Plan* (“wastewater management plan”) (Dudek 2018) submitted to the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board in August 2018. The most recent analysis is the *Final Report – Existing City Plus Sphere of Influence Wastewater Master Plan* (“wastewater master plan”) (Kimley Horn 2019). The wastewater master plan examined options for providing expanded treatment capacity to accommodate new development within the existing city limits and the SOI, including the project site. After completing the wastewater master plan, the City determined it would increase wastewater treatment capacity by expanding the existing MWWTP. Improvements to the City’s existing wastewater conveyance improvements are also needed to deliver wastewater to the MWWTP from new development sites within the SOI, including Vista Lucia.

## Wastewater Treatment Capacity Improvements

The City has decided to expand the wastewater system in a phased approach. The first step is to construct an industrial wastewater reclamation facility and associated collection system to serve select facilities in the Gonzales Agricultural Industrial Business Park. The industrial wastewater reclamation facility would operate under a non-municipal waste discharge permit. Once completed, the industrial wastewater facility would treat industrial flows that are now treated at the MWWTP, thereby substantially increasing available treatment capacity at the MWWTP.

With the reduction of wastewater flows to MWWTP, the City would then implement the next step of its wastewater system capacity expansion; major rehabilitation and upgrade of the existing MWWTP. With the industrial wastewater treatment plant and MWWTP rehabilitation, the City’s wastewater treatment system capacity would meet the City’s current and future wastewater treatment demands, including demand from the Vista Lucia project. The planned industrial wastewater treatment plant and improvements to the existing MWWTP are summarized below.

## Industrial Wastewater Treatment Plant Design and Status

The new industrial wastewater treatment plant is planned on approximately 55 acres of City-owned property located adjacent and northeast of the existing MWWTP. It would include a headworks with influent screening to remove trash and debris, an influent lift station with a flow meter to pump water to an aerated pond system designed to introduce oxygen into wastewater, and effluent percolation beds to dispose of treated effluent that would be dedicated solely for treating flows from industrial sources. The plant would have an initial capacity of 1.0 MGD with potential for expansion up to 4.0 MGD. The plant has been designed and the City has certified an EIR for the project. The plant is expected to be operational in 2026.

### *Industrial Treatment Plant Funding*

The City expects to fund the capital costs of the industrial wastewater treatment plant with a loan obtained through the State Revolving Fund program. The City has nearly completed the State Revolving Fund loan application process. The loan would be repaid through sewer rates, impact fees and and/or other mechanisms available to the City.

### **Planned MWWTP Improvements and Capacity**

The planned improvements to the MWWTP would allow its capacity to increase from the existing 1.3 MGD to 1.9 MGD. The improvements would be complete by late 2025. With 1.0 MGD of industrial flows that were originally treated at the MWWTP already having been diverted to the new industrial wastewater treatment plant, the 1.9 MGD MWWTP would have adequate treatment capacity to handle all wastewater from current customers, any new development within the existing city limits and full buildout of the Vista Lucia development. Projected wastewater flow from the Vista Lucia project is 790,000 gpd at full buildout. Combined with existing and future flows from growth within the city of about 600,000 gpd (for a total of about 1.4 MGD), the MWWTP expansion to 1.9 MGD would be more than sufficient to meet the full buildout demand from the proposed project.

The planned MWWTP improvements include:

1. Upgrading the existing headworks;
2. Upsizing the existing influent pump station;
3. Removing accumulated sludge;
4. Lining the existing infiltration ponds to eliminate percolation of partially treated wastewater;
5. Replacing the pond aeration system to increase the air needed for the treatment process; and
6. Improving groundwater monitoring by deepening existing monitoring wells and installing two new monitoring wells.

With other cumulative development within the SOI, the expanded MWWTP is projected to reach its 1.9 MGD capacity in about 2034. In anticipation of needing additional capacity, the City is already planning to further expand the MWWTP by approximately 0.9 MGD such that it's total capacity would increase to 2.8 MGD. The City plans to complete the additional MWWTP improvements in about 2032, ahead of when they could ultimately be required.

Residential and commercial development within the Vista Lucia project will occur over the next 20 years or longer. The first tentative map for the Vista Lucia project is projected for approval in 2024/2025. Construction approved under the first tentative map would not likely be complete for several years its approval date. The initial new demand for wastewater treatment from the Vista Lucia project would not likely occur until 2026. The City's wastewater treatment capacity expansion plans are intended to ensure that treatment capacity would be available in time to accommodate the

initial demand. Further, the expansion plans will create conveyance and treatment capacity sufficient to meet existing plus total buildout demands. Available wastewater treatment capacity is one of the many contingent items that must be met prior to the City issuing building permits.

### ***MWWTP Expansion Funding***

The City plans to fund the MWWTP expansion work using a combination of existing sewer fund revenues and impact/new connection fees collected from new development within the existing city limits and the SOI.

### **Recycled Water Production**

To continue planning for efficient water use, the City has included provisions in the industrial wastewater treatment plant design to accommodate advanced facilities for producing recycled water in a second phase of plant improvements. The City projects that a minimum of 1.0 MGD of recycled water would be produced at the plant starting in 2029/2030 when the City intends to expand the industrial plant from its initial 1.0 MGD capacity. The recycled water would have three likely end uses: 1) a new source of agricultural irrigation water; 2) a new source of process water for existing and future Gonzales Agricultural Industrial Business Park tenants; and/or 3) direct groundwater recharge using injection wells. For agricultural users, recycled water would replace irrigation water now extracted directly from groundwater. For industrial users, it would replace water provided by the City through the City's groundwater wells.

### **Planned City Wastewater Conveyance Improvements**

With the planned industrial wastewater treatment plant and MWWTP improvements, new conveyance infrastructure will be needed. Approximately 10,000 linear feet of new 24-inch gravity sewer line would be constructed to convey industrial flows from the Gonzales Agricultural Industrial Business Park to the new industrial wastewater treatment plant. It would be located within public street rights-of-way or existing City sewer easements

The City has designed and would construct wastewater conveyance improvements to connect new development within the SOI to the upgraded MWWTP. For the proposed project, improvements are anticipated to include one or more new lift stations, upsizing an existing lift station, approximately 2,500 feet of new 15-inch sewer main, and upsizing 15,000 feet of existing sewer mains. Other improvements may be needed depending on the points at which wastewater from new development is discharged into the City's system and anticipated flow volumes into the system over time. The mains would be constructed within existing city streets. These improvements are defined in the wastewater master plan. Potential refinements to the plans are described in the *2021 Wastewater Conveyance System Evaluation and CIP Program Development* (Psomas 2022).

## 16.2 Regulatory Setting

### Federal

#### Clean Water Act

The Clean Water Act establishes the structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States (waters of the U.S.), including from wastewater treatment plants, and regulating quality standards for surface waters. Its goals are to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has implemented pollution control programs and established water quality standards. The NPDES permit program under section 402 of the Clean Water Act and enabling regulations controls water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants into waters of the United States, including from wastewater treatment plants. The EPA has delegated authority for issuing NPDES permits in California to the State Water Resources Control Board, which has nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards. The Central Coast regional board regulates water quality in the project area.

Section 401 of the Clean Water Act requires that, prior to the issuance of a federal license or permit for an activity or activities that may result in a discharge of pollutants into navigable waters such as the Salinas River, the permit applicant must first obtain a certification from the state. A state certification indicates that the proposed activity or activities would not result in a violation of applicable water quality standards established by federal or state law, or that no water quality standards apply to the proposed activity.

Under the authority of Clean Water Act Section 303(d), the regional board and State board list water bodies as impaired when not in compliance with designated water quality objectives and standards. Section 303(d) also requires preparation of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program for waters identified by the state as impaired. A TMDL is a quantitative assessment of a problem that affects water quality. The problem can include the presence of a pollutant, such as a heavy metal or a pesticide, or a change in a physical property of the water, such as reductions in dissolved oxygen or increases in temperature. A TMDL is established at the level necessary to implement the applicable water quality standards. A TMDL requires that all sources of pollution and all aspects of a watershed's drainage system be reviewed (both point and non-point sources) and establishes load allocations to sources to achieve water quality standards.

The regional board lists numerous water bodies within the lower Salinas River Watershed as impaired. TMDLs have been adopted on the lower Salinas River for the pesticides chlorpyrifos and diazinon<sup>2</sup>, as well as for fecal coliform, and nitrogen compounds and orthophosphate.

#### NPDES Waste Discharge Program

In California, the NPDES program is administered by the State Board through the Regional Water Quality Control Boards and requires point sources to obtain NPDES permits (also called Waste

Discharge Requirements in California). Point sources include municipal and industrial wastewater facilities and stormwater. There are two types of NPDES permits: individual permits tailored to an individual facility and general permits that cover multiple facilities within a specific category. Effluent limitations serve as the primary mechanism in NPDES permits for controlling discharges of pollutants to receiving waters. For inland surface waters and enclosed bays and estuaries, the water-quality-based effluent limitations are based on criteria in the National Toxics Rule and the California Toxics Rule, and objectives and beneficial uses in the Basin Plan.

## State

### Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin

The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act of 1969 (Porter-Cologne) is California's statutory authority for the protection of water quality. The Act applies to surface waters, wetlands, and groundwater, and to both point and nonpoint sources. Under Porter-Cologne, the State Board has the ultimate authority over state water rights and water quality policy. The State Board implements the provisions of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 403 pertaining to wastewater discharges, and California Code of Regulations, Title 23, Chapter 15 with regard to land disposal of wastewater.

## Local

### City of Gonzales General Plan and General Plan EIR

The general plan EIR identified that the City's existing wastewater treatment plant would have insufficient capacity to meet projected treatment demand at general plan buildout. The impact analysis focused on environmental effects that would result from expanding the existing treatment plant by up to 185 acres to construct new treatment ponds and other associated improvements. General plan policies and implementing actions identified in section 4.10.3.1 of the general plan EIR primarily provide guidance on wastewater infrastructure needs and were found insufficient to mitigate significant impacts that would result from constructing an expanded treatment plant, even with implementation of general plan EIR mitigation measure PS-1. This mitigation requires a public facilities impact analysis as part of the specific plan process to identify measures to reduce any environmental effects associated with constructing public facilities to less than significant.

The general plan EIR found that the impact from converting prime farmland, as would be needed to expand the existing treatment plant, would be significant and unavoidable even with implementation of the mitigation measure.

## 16.3 Thresholds of Significance

CEQA Guidelines Appendix G is a sample initial study checklist that includes a number of factual inquiries related to the subject of wastewater, as it does on a whole series of additional topics. Lead agencies are under no obligation to use these inquiries in fashioning thresholds of significance on

the subject of wastewater facilities, or indeed on any subject addressed in the checklist. Rather, with few exceptions, CEQA grants agencies discretion to develop their own thresholds of significance. Even so, it is a common practice for lead agencies to take the language from the inquiries set forth in Appendix G and to use that language in fashioning thresholds. The City has done so here. Therefore, for purposes of this EIR, a significant impact would occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

- Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded wastewater treatment facilities, the construction of which cause significant environmental effects; and
- Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has inadequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments, and that expansion of, or construction of, such treatment facilities would cause significant environmental effects.

## 16.4 Analysis, Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This section includes information and data regarding wastewater treatment facility construction and operation that are relevant to the proposed project based on the thresholds of significance described above. The information and data are used as a basis for determining impact significance and for mitigation measures as needed.

### Construction of Expanded Wastewater Treatment and Collection Infrastructure

#### Proposed Project Wastewater Collection Improvements

As part of the proposed project, an on-site wastewater collection piping and lift station system would be constructed, as would an approximately 500-foot off-site wastewater conveyance main. The off-site main is needed to connect the project site to the City's existing wastewater conveyance infrastructure. Both the on-site and off-site conveyance improvements are described in Section 4.2, Project Characteristics.

Constructing new wastewater conveyance infrastructure would involve excavating soil and installing pump stations and pipes. The types of physical resource impacts that could result from these activities would be similar to those associated with constructing the proposed project as a whole as identified in this EIR. These effects could include, but may not be limited to: loss of agricultural resources, air quality degradation, loss of protected biological resources, damage to cultural resources, increased GHGs, water quality degradation, noise impacts on sensitive receptors, etc. These effects are identified at a general level within each section of this EIR at the level of detail currently available about them. Mitigation measures for all construction related impacts of the proposed project have also been identified. No further analysis is necessary.

## Planned City Wastewater Treatment and Collection Improvements

As described in Section 16.2, Regulatory Setting, the City is planning and implementing a series of actions to construct expanded wastewater treatment capacity. Additional treatment capacity is required to meet the demand that would be created by the proposed project. The City is also planning new wastewater conveyance infrastructure improvements to accommodate future flows from the project site. The treatment capacity improvements and the associated conveyance infrastructure improvements would be initiated by the City. The treatment and conveyance improvements are separate project(s) under CEQA and will undergo separate environmental review. The City has completed the environmental review process for constructing a new industrial wastewater treatment system, an action that comprises one component of expanding the City's overall wastewater treatment capacity.

## Availability of Wastewater Treatment Capacity

As previously discussed, the general plan EIR concluded that adequate wastewater treatment capacity would not be available to serve new development within the SOI, including the proposed project. The general plan EIR identified that the City would need to expand the existing wastewater treatment plant in order to provide necessary capacity. Impacts of that expansion were evaluated in the general plan EIR.

Section 16.1, Environmental Setting, describes the City's plans for expanding wastewater treatment capacity to serve the proposed project as well as other future development within the SOI. The City's plans are targeted to ensure that adequate wastewater treatment capacity is available to serve the initial development planned for Vista Lucia. The City's planned project to expand municipal treatment capacity would undergo separate CEQA analysis as a separate project, with the City acting as lead agency. The environmental impacts of the City's actions to construct new wastewater treatment capacity would be addressed through the separate CEQA processes. No further discussion is required.

*This side intentionally left blank.*

# 17.0

## Water Demand and Supply

This section of the EIR assesses projected water demand from the proposed project and focuses on whether or not the City has access to sufficient water supply to meet project demand. Since the City obtains its water supply from groundwater, potential impacts on groundwater sustainability are examined in the context of the applicable sustainable groundwater management plans. The potential physical impacts of constructing new water supply infrastructure to serve the project are also reviewed.

The information in this section is based on the following reports/documentation:

- *SB 610 Water Supply Assessment for the Vista Lucia Specific Plan Project Public Review Draft* (“water supply assessment”) (Zanero 2023);
- Email from Frank Lyles, Zanjero, to Teri Wissler Adam, EMC Planning Group, September 29, 2023;
- *Final Report – Existing City Plus Sphere of Influence Water Master Plan* (“water master plan”) (Kimley Horn 2019);
- *Gonzales 2010 General Plan* (Revised June 2018); and
- *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report* (“general plan EIR”) (December 2010).

Additional sources of information are introduced where applicable.

### Responses to the Notice of Preparation

LAFCO provided comments regarding water demand. LAFCO has a statutory and policy interest in minimizing overdraft in the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin. LAFCO staff commented that the proposed project’s compatibility with plans prepared by the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency pursuant to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act will be an important consideration for future discussions prior to the Commission’s consideration of this proposal. The Monterey County Environmental Health Bureau commented that the City would need to work with the State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water to amend their current state-regulated water system permit to accommodate the increase in water demand. The NOPs prepared for the project as well as responses to the NOPs are included in [Appendix A](#).

## 17.1 Environmental Setting

This environment setting section incorporates information provided in the general plan EIR where applicable, new information that was not available at the time the general plan EIR was certified that is pertinent to assessing potential project impacts, and information specific to the proposed project and/or the project site. New information in this section is taken primarily from the water supply assessment prepared by Zanero that is included in [Appendix G](#).

### Groundwater Basin Conditions and Management

The City of Gonzales extracts groundwater to provide supply. The city is located above three subbasins of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin: the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin, the Eastside Aquifer Subbasin, and the Forebay Aquifer Subarea. A majority of the existing city limits is within the 180/400-Foot and Eastside subbasins, with U.S. Highway 101 generally serving as the boundary between these two subbasins. The project site is located within the Eastside Subbasin (Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency 2020).

The Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency has prepared groundwater sustainability plans for the multiple groundwater subbasins located within the groundwater basin, as well as the 2021 *Salinas Valley: Valley-Wide Integrated Groundwater Sustainability Plan* (“integrated GSP”).

The integrated GSP describes that groundwater production is primarily from the alluvium that fills the Salinas Valley, most of which does not contain clay layers that divide the alluvium vertically into distinguishable aquifers. The exception is in the northern portion of the basin, where laterally continuous clay layers in the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin create relatively shallow confined conditions, in contrast to the unconfined conditions over most of the basin. Additional deeper clay layers create definable aquifers in the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin, whereas most of the basin includes only a single undifferentiated aquifer. The City of Gonzales and the project site lie at the southern end of the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin, at the transition between confined and unconfined conditions.

The Monterey County Water Resources Agency generated groundwater elevation contours for fall 2017 (the most recent available) from monitored wells suggest that the groundwater gradient (flow direction) throughout the Salinas Valley is generally from the southeast to northwest, towards Monterey Bay. Groundwater elevation contours from fall 2017 indicate elevations range from 90 feet above mean sea level (msl) in the southeastern portion of the City of Gonzales and the project site, to 60 feet above msl in the northwestern portion of the project site. If Gonzales is assumed to be at an average elevation of approximately 135 feet above msl, the fall 2017 groundwater elevation contours represent the presence of water approximately 45 to 75 feet below ground surface. The water resources agency found in its 2017 study that groundwater elevations of the 180-foot aquifer and 400-foot aquifer were very similar near Gonzales, which may suggest that aquitards found further north do not have a significant confining effect under the location of the project site.

Current groundwater extraction rates within the basin will likely continue for the foreseeable future. California experienced a statewide drought from 2012 through 2016, which may have exacerbated rates of groundwater decline in some portions of the subbasin over the past few years, most notably in areas where groundwater extraction increased to supplement reduced or nonexistent surface water supply. It is also important to recognize that the project site has been actively irrigated for agriculture using groundwater. The current and historic site use for irrigated agriculture is reflected in the representative basin groundwater conditions.

Table 5 in the City’s water master plan shows that three groundwater wells (now expanded to four wells) serve as the existing domestic water source of supply. Based on the locations of the wells, groundwater is extracted from both the 180/400-Foot Subbasin and the Eastside Subbasin.

## **On-Site Agricultural Water Use**

Water used for existing agricultural operations on the project site is provided by private wells. The water supply assessment includes an analysis of groundwater demand from the existing agricultural use of the project site. Existing use is estimated at between 1,100 to 1,280 acre-feet per year (AFY) as more fully discussed in Section 17.4, Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures.

## **Citywide Water Supply and Infrastructure**

### **Existing Water Supply Infrastructure and Demand**

The City of Gonzales provides water through wells and storage tanks with a total capacity of at 7.0 million gallons. Existing average day water demand is estimated at 987,120 gallons per day (gpd), or 1,106 AFY (City of Gonzales 2019a, p. 4).

### **Projected Water Supply and Infrastructure**

Within the current developed urban area, excluding the SOI, there are approximately 175 acres of vacant land that can be developed. This growth is expected to add approximately 900 dwelling units, with a related population increase of about 3,400. Based on the water demand factors presented in the water master plan, average day demand is expected to grow by 267,552 gpd, or 300 AFY, and the estimated maximum day water demand is expected to increase by 668,881 gpd, or 750 AFY. With a water loss factor of 10 percent, the maximum day demand is projected to increase to 735,769 gpd, or 825 AFY. Therefore, the resulting total average day demand for the existing city plus infill area is estimated to be 1,254,672 gpd, or 1,406 AFY and the maximum day demand is estimated to be 3,450,349 gpd, or 3,867 AFY, including water loss (City of Gonzales 2019, p. 4).

### **Recycled Water**

Gonzales does not currently recycle water. However, general plan Implementing Action FS-2.1.5 states, “Develop the capacity to recycle wastewater at the Gonzales Wastewater Treatment Plant and/or employ other conservation measures and best practices to meet the demand for water supply in the city.”

As described in Section 16.0, Wastewater, the City is planning to construct an industrial wastewater treatment plant. Wastewater generated from industrial uses in the city would be diverted from the existing municipal wastewater treatment plant for treatment at the new industrial plant. Phase 1 of the new industrial plant is expected to treat 1.0 million gallons per day (MGD). That water will be available for agricultural irrigation and/or as water supply for existing and future industrial uses in the city. The recycled supply would replace 1.0 MGD of groundwater now extracted for agricultural irrigation and/or extracted by the City to supply industrial uses. Phase 2 of the industrial wastewater system will treat 3.5 MGD and will include producing recycled water.

## 17.2 Regulatory Setting

This section includes summaries of standards, regulations and plans that have been adopted or revised by local, regional, state, or federal agencies since the general plan EIR was certified and that bear on the evaluation of environmental impacts of the proposed project. Standards, regulations, and plans identified in the general plan EIR that serve as uniformly applied development standards or are otherwise pertinent to assessment of environmental impacts are not replicated here, but are referenced where applicable.

### State

#### Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) was signed into law in 2014. The act was amended in 2015 to provide clarity to the original law and guidance on groundwater adjudications. SGMA defines sustainable groundwater management as the “management and use of groundwater in a manner that can be maintained during the planning and implementation horizon without causing undesirable results.” The legislation defines “undesirable results” to be any of the following effects caused by groundwater conditions occurring throughout the basin:

- Chronic lowering of groundwater levels indicating a significant and unreasonable depletion of supply;
- Significant and unreasonable reduction of groundwater storage;
- Significant and unreasonable seawater intrusion;
- Significant and unreasonable degraded water quality;
- Significant and unreasonable land subsidence; and
- Surface water depletions that have significant and unreasonable adverse impacts on beneficial uses of the surface water.

SGMA provides financial and enforcement tools to carry out effective local sustainable groundwater management through formation of groundwater sustainability agencies consisting of local public

agencies, water companies regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission, and mutual water companies. Groundwater sustainability agencies within high- and medium- priority basins under the California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring Program subject to critical conditions of overdraft prepare and submit groundwater sustainability plans for the basin by January 31, 2020, and requires groundwater sustainability agencies in all other groundwater basins designated as high- or medium-priority basins to prepare and submit a groundwater sustainability plan by January 31, 2022. Following state approval, the basin would thereafter be managed under the groundwater sustainability plan.

The key intended outcomes and benefits of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act are numerous, and include:

- Advancement in understanding and knowledge of the state’s groundwater basins and their issues and challenges;
- Establishment of effective local governance to protect and manage groundwater basins;
- Management of regional water resources for regional self-sufficiency and drought resilience;
- Sustainable management of groundwater basins through the actions of Groundwater Sustainability Agencies, utilizing state assistance and intervention only when necessary;
- All groundwater basins in California are operated to maintain adequate protection to support the beneficial uses for the resource;
- Surface water and groundwater are managed as a single resource to sustain their interconnectivity, provide dry season base flow to interconnected streams, and support and promote long-term aquatic ecosystem health and vitality;
- A statewide framework for local groundwater management planning, including development of sustainable groundwater management best management practices and plans;
- Development of comprehensive and uniform water budgets, groundwater models, and engineering tools for effective management of groundwater basins;
- Improved coordination between land use and groundwater planning; and
- Enforcement actions as needed by the State Water Resources Control Board to achieve region-by-region sustainable groundwater management in accordance with the 2014 legislation.

The benefits of these outcomes include:

- A reliable, safe and sustainable water supply to protect communities, farms, and the environment, and support a stable and growing economy; and

- Elimination of long-term groundwater overdraft, an increase in groundwater storage, avoidance or minimization of subsidence, enhancement of water flows in stream systems, and prevention of future groundwater quality degradation.

SGMA is landmark legislation that, for the first time in the history of California, requires comprehensive groundwater management, with the mandatory goal of bringing all currently overdrafted basins into sustainable conditions by no later than 2040 or 2042, with five-year increments of progress starting in 2025 and 2027.

## Regional/Local

### Groundwater Sustainability Plans and the Valley-Wide Integrated Groundwater Sustainability Plan

The Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SVBGSA) is the groundwater sustainability agency for six subbasins within the Salinas Valley: the 180/400-Foot Aquifer, Eastside, Forebay, Langley Area, Monterey, and Upper Valley Aquifer subbasins. Gonzales overlies the 180/400-Foot Aquifer, Eastside, and Forebay subbasins, all of which are entirely under the jurisdiction of the SVBGSA. SVBGSA was responsible for producing each subbasin's groundwater sustainability plans, as well as the overarching integrated GSP.

### City of Gonzales General Plan

The general plan EIR concluded that buildout of the SOI would create additional demand (factoring out reduced demand for agricultural uses in the area) of 0.32 MGD of groundwater production capacity, and buildout of the SOI would result in a net additional demand for 1.05 MGD of groundwater. The general plan EIR also concluded that withdrawal of additional groundwater from the aquifers of the Pressure Subarea and the Eastside Subarea of the Salinas Valley groundwater basin could lead to substantial depletion of groundwater supplies (general plan EIR, pg. 4-235 -236).

The general plan EIR concluded that the policies and implementing actions of the Gonzales 2010 General Plan found in general plan EIR section 4.10, plus the requirement for collaborative planning and documentation of water sources required by SB 610 and SB 221, including preparing water assessments, would protect groundwater supplies and to reduce the environmental effects of providing water supply to a less-than-significant level.

## 17.3 Thresholds of Significance

CEQA Guidelines Appendix G is a sample initial study checklist that includes a number of factual inquiries related to the subject of groundwater and water supply, as it does on a whole series of additional environmental topics. Lead agencies are under no obligation to use these inquiries in fashioning thresholds of significance on the subject of water supply impacts, or indeed on any subject addressed in the checklist. Rather, with few exceptions, CEQA grants agencies discretion to

develop their own thresholds of significance. Even so, it is a common practice for lead agencies to take the language from the inquiries set forth in Appendix G and to use that language in fashioning thresholds. The City has done so here. Therefore, for purposes of this EIR, a significant impact would occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

- Not have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years;
- Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin;
- Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a sustainable groundwater management plan; or
- Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects.

### Issues not Discussed Further in this Section

- Construction of New or Expanded Water Facilities.

Regarding the last threshold above, the proposed project does not include construction of new or expanded water facilities. Therefore, no further discussion is necessary.

## 17.4 Analysis, Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This section evaluates the impacts associated with water supply, sustainability of the groundwater basin, and whether the project would conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or groundwater sustainability management plan.

### Water Demand and Supply

<b>IMPACT 17-1</b>	<b>Sufficient Water Supplies are Available to Serve the Project and Reasonably Foreseeable Future Development – No New Water Infrastructure is Necessary</b>	<b>No Impact</b>
------------------------	--	------------------

### Existing Agricultural Water Use and Proposed Project Water Demand – Normal Conditions

The methodology for determining existing agricultural water use and proposed project water demand is detailed in Section 2.2 of the water supply assessment in [Appendix G](#).

The water supply assessment includes an estimate of proposed project water demand and a comparison of that demand to estimated existing agricultural water use to determine the net project effect on groundwater supply. The conclusions are summarized in [Table 17-1, Existing and Proposed Water Demand](#), and explained in the following text.

**Table 17-1 Existing and Proposed Water Demand**

Water Use Scenario	Acre Feet Per Year (AFY)
Existing Agricultural Water Use	1,100 to 1,280 <sup>1</sup>
Projected Project Water Demand	414 <sup>2</sup>
Change in Groundwater Storage	+ 686 to 866

SOURCE: Zanjero 2023

NOTE:

1. 1,900 to 2,000 AFY minus 768 AFY from effective precipitation (numbers are rounded).

2. 1,501 AFY minus 1,087 AFY returning to the groundwater basin as treated wastewater.

The project site is currently used for agricultural crop production using groundwater for irrigation. Groundwater consumption for existing agricultural production was estimated to be approximately 1,900 – 2,000 AFY. This represents the volume of applied irrigation water that is “lost” through evapotranspiration, with the remainder assumed to percolate back to groundwater. It is likely that a greater volume of irrigation water is applied, with excess applied water percolating deeply and returning to the groundwater basin. The volume of irrigation water lost to evaporation is not the total volume of groundwater consumed by existing agricultural activities. Rainfall serves to supply crops with water that partially replaces the need for irrigation. “Effective precipitation” is that part of the total precipitation that replaces, or potentially reduces, a corresponding net quantity of required irrigation water. The water supply assessment includes an estimate that annual effective precipitation that falls on the project site is equivalent to approximately 768 AFY. Consequently, as shown in Table 17-1 and note #1 in the table, the total annual volume of groundwater used for agricultural production is the total annual irrigation volume lost to evaporation (1,900 to 2,000 AFY) minus the effective precipitation volume (768 AFY), or 1,100 to 1,280 AFY.

The proposed project is expected to demand 1,501 acre-feet of water per year under normal conditions. This value was derived by applying water demand factors for each proposed land use to the development capacity for all of the uses. The information is summarized in Table 2-5, Vista Lucia Forecast Water Demands, in the water supply assessment. However, as also described in the water supply assessment, a substantial volume of water consumed by proposed development within the site will be conveyed to the City’s wastewater treatment plant, treated, and percolated back to groundwater. The net consumptive demand for the project has thus been estimated at 414 AFY as shown in Table 17-1. Based on this information, the water supply assessment demonstrates that the proposed project is expected to generate approximately 686 to 866 AFY less consumptive demand for groundwater than the current agricultural land use.

### Single Dry and Multiple Dry Years

A water supply assessment is also required to identify water supply sufficiency in single dry years and multiple dry years – not just under normal, or average, hydrologic conditions. The analysis is for informational purposes and intended to disclose potentially worst-case conditions. The variables used to estimate dry year conditions are described in Section 2.3.1 of the water supply assessment.

Table 17-2, *Proposed Project Water Demands Under Dry-Year Conditions*, presents the required analysis for single dry and multiple dry years. As shown, over the first dry year, groundwater demand would increase by 5 percent to reflect a generalized earlier start to the irrigation season due to limited rainfall. During multiple dry years, demands are also expected to increase during the first in a series of dry years. However, during the second, third or more consecutive dry years, demands also reflect water shortage contingency plans that must be implemented by the retail water purveyor, in this case, the City of Gonzales. Thus, during multiple dry conditions, demands initially increase due to reduced effective precipitation, but then decrease due to short-term conservation measures, with a net effect of a 10 percent reduction from the forecasted normal condition.

**Table 17-2 Proposed Project Water Demands Under Dry-Year Conditions**

			Multiple Dry Year		
	Normal	Single Dry	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3-5
% Change in Demand	0%	5%	5%	0%	-10%
Resulting Change in Demand (AFY)	0	75	75	0	-150
Change in Total Demand (AFY)	1,501	1,576	1,576	1,501	1,351

SOURCE: Zanjero 2023

### Water Supply Reliability

The City of Gonzales and the project site lie at the intersection of three Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin subbasins, and the proposed project could potentially use water pumped from any of these three subbasins. Therefore, it is assumed that the integrated GSP offers the best available wholistic evaluation of the groundwater resources that supply the City of Gonzales and the project site.

The integrated GSP describes that groundwater production is primarily from the alluvium that fills the Salinas Valley, most of which does not contain clay layers that divide the alluvium vertically into distinguishable aquifers. The exception is in the northern portion of the basin, where laterally continuous clay layers in the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin create relatively shallow confined conditions, in contrast to the unconfined conditions over most of the basin. Additional deeper clay layers create definable aquifers in the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin, whereas most of the basin includes only a single undifferentiated aquifer. The City of Gonzales and the project site lie at the southern end of the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin, at the transition between confined and unconfined conditions.

The Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA) generated groundwater elevation contours for fall 2017 (the most recent available) from monitored wells suggest that the groundwater gradient (flow direction) throughout the Salinas Valley is generally from the southeast to northwest, towards Monterey Bay. Groundwater elevation contours from fall 2017 indicate elevations range

from 90 feet above mean sea level (msl) in the southeastern portion of Gonzales and the project site, to 60 feet above msl in the northwestern portion of the project site. If the city is assumed to be at an average elevation of approximately 135 feet above msl, the fall 2017 groundwater elevation contours represent the presence of water approximately 45 to 75 feet below ground surface (bgs). MCWRA found in its 2017 study that groundwater elevations of the 180-Foot aquifer and 400-Foot aquifer were very similar near Gonzales, which may suggest that aquitards found further north do not have a significant confining effect under the location of the project site.

Current groundwater extraction rates within the basin will likely continue for the foreseeable future. However, regional efforts to stabilize the basin are now legally required. A groundwater sustainability plan now exists for each subbasin within the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin.

It is important to note that California experienced a statewide drought from 2012 through 2016, which may have exacerbated rates of groundwater decline in some portions of the subbasin over recent years, most notably in areas where groundwater extraction increased to supplement reduced or nonexistent surface water supply. It is also important to recognize that the project site has been actively irrigated for agriculture using groundwater. The current and past demand for groundwater for irrigating the project site is reflected in the representative basin groundwater conditions.

An additional important attribute of the basin is the base of freshwater. This term describes the interface of freshwater and brackish water in an aquifer system, or increased consolidation and cementation of sediments which decreases well yield. Although the sedimentary sequence in the Salinas Valley structural trough is 10,000 to 15,000 feet thick, the productive freshwater aquifers are only at shallower depths. The base of the Salinas Valley groundwater basin was characterized by the USGS. The integrated GSP displays data from this study, which suggests that the base of the groundwater basin slopes steeply towards the west under Gonzales. It is estimated that the base of freshwater occurs at an elevation of approximately 800 to 1,400 feet below msl beneath the middle of the project site, or at a depth of approximately 900 to 1,500 feet bgs. Saltwater intrusion from Monterey Bay, which has been an issue in the northern portion of the basin, has not been projected to affect the area around Gonzales.

Given the approximate groundwater elevation of 60 to 90 feet above msl beneath the project site in fall 2015, as shown in Figure 4-3 of the water supply assessment, the data suggest that there is 800 to 1,400 feet of saturated freshwater-bearing aquifer material in the immediate vicinity of the project site. These groundwater levels reflect conditions during the peak of a record-setting drought.

Groundwater levels fluctuate by as much as 20 feet between wet and dry seasons, but have been relatively stable year-to-year. Of the subbasins within the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin, the greatest historic declines have occurred in the Eastside Subbasin. From 1944 to 2021, the Eastside Subbasin declined by almost 60 feet, or a long-term average rate of approximately 9.3 inches per year. If the basin experienced a worst-case scenario rate of decline of two feet a year on a long-term average basis (a conservative assumption, very likely an overestimate of the actual rate of decline and

a violation of the recent State-wide groundwater sustainability provisions), the projected decline over the next 30 years would be 60 feet. The base of freshwater is reported to be at an elevation of at least 800 feet below msl, as discussed above, indicating there is currently approximately 860 feet of saturated aquifer available. The rate of decline in this portion of the subbasin can be expected to slow or even stabilize during the next sequence of consecutive “wet” years. There is more than sufficient depth of saturated aquifer under the project site to provide a reliable water supply.

While this demonstrates that a reliable water supply is physically available to serve the proposed project, the analysis above does not address the legal standard of groundwater sustainability as established by SGMA. That analysis is presented below.

### Recycled Water

The City of Gonzales does not currently have a recycled water program. However, as described in Section 16, Wastewater, and Section 17.3 above, as part of a project that is independent of the Vista Lucia project, the City is planning to construct a new industrial wastewater treatment facility. That facility is being designed to produce 1.0 MGD of recycled water starting in 2028/29. The recycled water supply would support the City’s effort to enhance sustainable groundwater management by replacing an equivalent volume of groundwater now extracted for agricultural irrigation and/or for domestic use by industrial end users in the city.

### Conclusion

Sufficient water supplies are available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years. Supplying the proposed project with water would not result in an environmental impact.

## Sustainable Groundwater Management of the Basin

<b>IMPACT 17-2</b>	<b>Groundwater Demand Would Not Impede Sustainable Groundwater Management of the Basin</b>	<b>Beneficial</b>
------------------------	--	-------------------

### Groundwater Demand

As presented in Impact 17-1 above, the proposed project would reduce existing demand for groundwater by 686 to 866 AFY. This is considered a beneficial environmental impact. Therefore, the proposed project would not impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin.

<b>IMPACT 17-3</b>	<b>Interfere with Groundwater Recharge but Would not Impede Sustainable Groundwater Management of the Basin</b>	<b>Less than Significant</b>
------------------------	---	------------------------------

### Groundwater Recharge

The project site is located within the Eastside Subbasin. The Eastside Subarea includes unconfined and semi-confined aquifers in the northern portion of the basin that historically received most of its

recharge from percolation from stream channels on the west slope of the Gabilan Range. As a result of extractions in excess of recharge, the declines in groundwater level in the Eastside subarea have induced subsurface recharge (i.e., recharge from one aquifer to another) from the Pressure subarea and the Forebay subarea (general plan EIR, page 4-194).

Regarding groundwater depletion through the interference of groundwater recharge, an urban landscape contains substantial areas of impervious surface, which could inhibit groundwater recharge. If groundwater recharge is substantially altered due to urbanization, this could also lead to a substantial groundwater depletion. Development of the project site would result in an increase in impervious surfaces, which could have a significant adverse impact on groundwater recharge.

General plan policy COS-7.1, Create Open Space and Natural Habitat in Drainage Areas, states, “Protect the community from flooding hazards in a manner that creates open space and natural habitat and does not diminish groundwater recharge in the Planning Area.” According to the project description, storm water detention, storm water drainage facilities, buffers and other open space uses are planned on 30 acres.

The *City of Gonzales Conceptual Drainage Master Plan, Proposed Developments within Sphere of Influence* (House Moran Consulting February 2019), provides preliminary storm drainage design requirements for the Gonzales SOI, including the project site.

Stormwater management requirements for Tier 4 projects (Tier 4 projects are projects that create or replace 22,500 square feet of impervious surface, which would include development of the project site) require projects to treat a rainfall intensity of at least 0.2 in per hour, prevent offsite discharge from events up to the 95th percentile rainfall event, and mitigate post-development peak stormwater runoff flows to at least pre-project peak flows for the 2- through 10-year storm events (aka “hydromodification requirements”). Design guidance to meet these requirements is provided in the CCRWQCB Monterey County Stormwater Technical Guide for Low Impact Development dated March 2015 (LID Guide). The LID Guide provides guidance for the sizing and design of LID facilities that are distributed throughout a site. These facilities are sized and located on a site-by-site case during the design phases of a project. Conceptual level sizing, based on the proposed land uses associated with the proposed project, are included in the drainage master plan.

Consistent with City and County stormwater management goals, the specific plan provides guidance for incorporating design measures (e.g., stormwater retention basins, bio-swales, rain gardens, and other Low Impact Development measures) into future development projects with the objective of capturing, conserving, and infiltrating stormwater runoff to the maximum extent practical. For example, specific plan Figure 5-6, Conceptual Drainage System, shows the planned locations of stormwater storage basins. Applications for each future individual tentative proposed within the project site must be accompanied by a stormwater control plan to demonstrate how stormwater management features will be integrated to ensure consistency with stormwater management

improvements in the *City of Gonzales Conceptual Drainage Master Plan, Proposed Developments within Sphere of Influence* and with CCRWQCB hydromodification requirements. These features would act to reduce potential for the project to interfere with groundwater recharge, as a significant volume of stormwater would, by design, be retained onsite and percolated back to groundwater.

## Sustainable Groundwater Management Plan

<p><b>IMPACT 17-4</b></p>	<p><b>Would not Conflict with or Obstruct Implementation of a Sustainable Groundwater Management Plan</b></p>	<p><b>No Impact</b></p>
-------------------------------	---	-------------------------

As previously discussed, the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency has prepared the integrated GSP. The City of Gonzales obtains water from both the 180/400 Foot Aquifer Subbasin and the East Side Aquifer Subbasin. While the agency has completed the 180/400 Foot Aquifer Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (adopted January 9, 2020), the integrated has yet to be completed and adopted, but preliminary draft chapters of a plan were prepared in May 2020 and are available for public review (Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency 2020).

As presented in Impact 17-1 above, the proposed project would reduce existing demand for groundwater by 686 to 866 AFY. Therefore, the project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a sustainable groundwater management plan.

*This side intentionally left blank.*

# 18.0 Effects Adequately Addressed in the General Plan EIR

## 18.1 Introduction

This section summarizes those environmental effects of the proposed project that were adequately addressed in the general plan EIR. The analysis here is based on the tiering provisions in CEQA Guidelines section 15152, which in part state:

Tiering refers to using the analysis of general matters contained in a broader EIR (such as one prepared for a general plan or policy statement) with later EIRs and negative declarations on narrower projects; incorporating by reference the general discussions from the broader EIR; and concentrating the later EIR or negative declaration solely on the issues specific to the later project.

For the environmental topics described below, the information in the general plan is sufficient to make determinations of their significance for the proposed project. Where the general plan includes mitigation measures to reduce the significance of impacts for these topics, the mitigation measures that are applicable to the proposed project are identified.

## 18.2 Aesthetics

### Thresholds of Significance

The general plan EIR identifies that a significant environmental effect related to aesthetics would occur if the project would result in any of the following:

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

## Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

As identified in the general plan EIR, development activity associated with buildout of the general plan that could irreversibly degrade the visual character of the central Salinas Valley, and light trespass, light pollution, and glare in the planning area. For example, street and other exterior lighting would increase ambient lighting levels in the planning area leading to night glow above the city. Also, new office or commercial buildings with reflective glass exteriors could result in new sources of glare. General plan policies and implementing actions would lessen these impacts. Mitigation measure AES-1, which requires new development to incorporate a naturalistic visual screen along the City's planned "Permanent Agricultural Edge", and AES-2, which prohibits building exteriors with large expanses of glass or other reflective material that could become a significant source of glare, were included in the general plan EIR to lessen each of the impacts. However, the impacts were still found to be significant and unavoidable.

The proposed project has potential to contribute to these significant and unavoidable aesthetic impacts, as it would convert farmland to urban development and new non-residential buildings would be constructed. In addition to general plan policy CC-8.1, whose implementation is intended to reduce light pollution, the general plan EIR mitigation measures must be implemented for individual future development projects (e.g., tentative maps and use permits) within the specific plan area.

Section B.8 of specific plan Appendix B, Design Guidelines, addresses landscaping within permanent agricultural buffers associated with general plan AES-1. It states:

Concurrent with development adjacent to these areas of the project site, a landscape screening plan shall be submitted to the City. The landscape plans shall specify the location and phasing of a naturalistic visual screen separating the Project Area from the agricultural operations consisting of dense plantings of tall trees, screening shrubs, or other vegetation that are native or adaptive to the Salinas Valley region. The trees, shrubs, and other vegetation chosen for the visual screen shall be sufficiently mature when planted to ensure that the visual screen will be effective within five (5) years of approval of the first subdivision in the Project area. The landscape plans shall also specify maintenance requirements and responsibilities for the visual screen (specific plan Appendix B, p. B-17)

The requirement meets the intent of general plan EIR mitigation measure AES-1 regarding reducing visual impacts from development at the urban fringe. The requirement would reduce the significant unavoidable visual impact, but not to a less-than-significant level. The City Council adopted a statement of overriding considerations when adopting the general plan for this impact; therefore, no additional finding of overriding consideration for the impact is necessary.

The specific plan design guidelines do not include design standards related to minimizing building glare. Therefore, general plan EIR mitigation measure AES-2 remains applicable and is included here as mitigation measure 18-1.

### ***Mitigation Measure***

18-1 (General plan EIR mitigation measure AES-2). Building exteriors with large expanses of glass or other reflective material that could become a significant source of glare shall be prohibited for future development within the specific plan boundary. The Community Development Direction shall ensure that this limitation is enforced through the development review process for individual residential and non-residential projects prior to approving associated building permits.

Implementation of the mitigation measure would reduce visual impacts of future development by reducing sources of glare from buildings. However, as described in the general plan EIR, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable. The City Council adopted a statement of overriding considerations when adopting the general plan; therefore, no additional finding of overriding consideration for the impact is necessary.

## **18.3 Geology and Soils**

### **Thresholds of Significance**

The general plan EIR identifies that a significant environmental effect related to geology and soils would occur if the project would result in any of the following:

- Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: i) rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault; ii) strong seismic ground shaking, and iii) seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction; or iv) landslides;
- Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil;
- Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site liquefaction;
- Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property;
- Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water; or
- Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature.

### **Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures**

The general plan EIR found that impacts associated with seismic hazards (ground rupture and ground shaking), soil erosion, and location of development on unstable soils/soils subject to

liquefaction or expansion would be less than significant with implementation of general plan policies and implementing actions found in sections 4.16.3.1 and 4.16.3.2 of the general plan EIR, and compliance with applicable uniformly applied standards (e.g., the Uniform Building Code). No mitigation measures were identified.

Regarding paleontological resources, the general plan EIR describes such resources as fossil remains of aquatic and terrestrial vertebrates, remains of plants and animals. Most of the fossils found in Monterey County are of aquatic vertebrates and are evidence of the region's geologic history, which has been heavily affected by the Pacific Ocean. Due to the proximity to the ocean, the area lacks large, terrestrial fossils, such as the dinosaur, found in other regions of the United States. Most of the fossils in Monterey County are micro-organisms such as foraminifera or diatoms, or assemblages of mollusks and barnacles most commonly found in sedimentary rocks ranging from Cretaceous age (138 to 96 million years old) to Pleistocene age (1.6 million to 11 thousand years old).

As described in the *Monterey County General Plan Draft EIR* section 4.10.2.3, Paleontological Resources, fossils are found throughout the county because of the widespread distribution of marine deposits (Monterey County 2007). The Monterey County General Plan identifies twelve fossil sites in the county with outstanding scientific value. None are located in the immediate vicinity of Gonzales or the project site (Monterey County 2010).

Based on geologic information shown on the Preliminary Oblique Geologic Map of Part of Monterey County (Rosenberg and Monterey County Planning Department 2001), soils within the Salinas Valley located east of the Salinas River in the Gonzales area derive from alluvial floodplain deposits. This material was deposited during the Holocene epoch (Feeney and Rosenberg 2003). The Holocene epoch spans the geologic time period from the present day to about 11,700 years ago. To be considered a fossil, an object generally must be more than 10,000 years old. As noted above, most fossils recorded in the county to date have been found in geologic formations that are millions of years old. Consequently, it is unlikely that fossils would be found during excavations or other related construction activities associated with development within the project site or off-site improvement locations.

Based on this information, it is unlikely that paleontological resources (fossils) would be found during excavations or other related construction activities associated with development within the project site and off-site improvement locations. Additionally, neither the project site, nor off-site improvement locations contain unique geologic features.

Future development planned as part of proposed and future tentative maps and as part of future use permits must comply with general plan policies and implementation measures, and with uniformly applied performance standards.

## 18.4 Mineral Resources

The initial study prepared prior as part of the general plan EIR process concluded that buildout of the general plan, including the project site, has no potential to result in adverse effects to mineral resources. Therefore, this topic is not addressed in the general plan EIR.

*This side intentionally left blank.*

# 19.0 Growth Inducing Impacts

## 19.1 CEQA Requirements

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.2 states that an EIR shall discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Included in this are projects which would remove obstacles to population growth (a major expansion of a waste water treatment plant might, for example, allow for more construction in service areas). Increases in the population may tax existing community service facilities, requiring construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. Also discuss the characteristic of some projects which may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. It must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

## 19.2 Impact Analysis

Urban development of the project site has been envisioned by the City of Gonzales at least since the general plan was adopted in 2010. This is reflected in the fact that the general plan shows the project site as within the Urban Growth Area and includes a conceptual land use plan for the site. The site was subsequently included in the SOI through an SOI amendment that was approved by LAFCO in 2014. Consequently, future urban development of the site has already been planned.

The proposed project is consistent with the general plan land use vision for the project site, and the effects of extending infrastructure and expanding public services to accommodate new development have already been identified. The environmental impacts of physical development, population growth, and employment that would be created by future development of the site have already been evaluated as part of the general plan EIR and mitigated to less than significant where feasible.

The project potential to be growth-inducing arises from its new resident and employment generation and proposed extension of infrastructure. However, the project would not have substantial growth-inducing effects that have not already been contemplated by the City. The City has already evaluated the programmatic environmental effects of these changes in the general plan EIR.

*This side intentionally left blank.*

# 20.0 Cumulative Impacts

## 20.1 CEQA Requirements

CEQA Guidelines section 15130 requires a discussion of cumulative impacts when the project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable, as defined in section 15065(a)(3), which states, "The project has possible environmental effects that are individually limited but cumulative considerable. Cumulatively considerable means that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects." A cumulative impact consists of an impact that is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing related impacts.

Where a lead agency is examining a project with an incremental effect that is not "cumulatively considerable," a lead agency need not consider that effect significant, but shall briefly describe its basis for concluding that the incremental effect is not cumulatively considerable. The discussion of cumulative impacts shall reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, but the discussion need not provide as great detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone. The discussion should be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness and should focus on the cumulative impact to which the other identified projects contribute rather than the attributes of other projects which do not contribute to the cumulative impact.

Sections 15130(d) and 15130(e) of the CEQA Guidelines are particularly relevant to evaluating cumulative effects of the proposed project. These sections state:

(d) Previously approved land use documents, including, but not limited to, general plans, specific plans, regional transportation plans, plans for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and local coastal plans may be used in cumulative impact analysis. A pertinent discussion of cumulative impacts contained in one or more previously certified EIRs may be incorporated by reference pursuant to the provisions for tiering and program EIRs. No further cumulative impacts analysis is required when a project is consistent with a general, specific, master or comparable programmatic plan where the lead agency determines that the regional or areawide cumulative impacts of the proposed project have already been adequately addressed, as defined in section 15152(f), in a certified EIR for that plan.

(e) If a cumulative impact was adequately addressed in a prior EIR for a community plan, zoning action, or general plan, and the project is consistent with that plan or action, then an EIR for such a project should not further analyze that cumulative impact, as provided in Section 15183(j).

As described in Section 3.4, Plan Consistency, the proposed project has been evaluated for its consistency with the general plan. The specific plan provides guidance for future development, with the proposed land use plan and development capacity information as a foundation for that guidance. The project was found to be consistent with the land use and development capacity projections in the general plan. This consistency determination allows analysis of cumulative impacts to be streamlined as described in CEQA Guidelines sections 15130(d) and 15130(e) because the general plan EIR serves as a prior EIR which adequately addresses cumulative impacts of buildout as guided by the general plan. Consequently, where appropriate, cumulative impact analyses in this EIR have been abbreviated where appropriate, with reference made to the analysis of cumulative impacts as described in the general plan EIR.

## 20.2 Cumulative Development Scenario

CEQA requires a cumulative development scenario to consist of either 1) a “list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency” or 2) a “summary of projections contained in an adopted local, regional or statewide plan, or related planning document, that describes or evaluates conditions contributing to the cumulative effect. Such plans may include a general plan, regional transportation plan, or plans for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. A summary of projections may also be contained in an adopted or certified prior environmental document for such a plan. Projections may be supplemented with additional information such as a regional modeling program.

### Geographic Scope

The geographic scope of the area affected by cumulative impacts can vary with the specific environmental topic being evaluated. Generally, the geographic scope of the area affected by cumulative projects impacts is larger than the boundary of the project site itself. For purposes of analyzing cumulative projects impacts, the geographic scope of the area affected ranges from development within the City of Gonzales to much broader areas such as Monterey County or the air basin. For example, aesthetic impacts are evaluated within the context of buildout of the Gonzales general plan; the entire air basin is the geographic boundary used in the cumulative air quality analysis; and the proposed project effect on climate change is evaluated at a state scale. Identification of the geographic scope is included in each cumulative impact discussion, and is summarized in [Table 20-1, Cumulative Impact Analysis Geographic Scope](#).

**Table 20-1 Cumulative Impact Analysis Geographic Scope**

Resource Area	Geographic Area
Agricultural Resources	Monterey County
Air Quality	North Central Coast Air Basin
Biological Resources	Salinas Valley Region
Cultural and Tribal Resources	Gonzales General Plan Buildout
Energy	State of California
Greenhouse Gases	State of California
Hazards	Gonzales General Plan Buildout
Hydrology and Water Quality	Gonzales General Plan Buildout
Noise	Gonzales General Plan Buildout
Public Services	Gonzales General Plan Buildout
Transportation	Gonzales General Plan Buildout
Sewer Generation and Treatment	Gonzales General Plan Buildout
Water Demand and Supply	Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin Eastside Subbasin and 180/400 Foot Subbasin

SOURCE: EMC Planning Group 2023

## Plan Projections and Projects Contributing to Cumulative Development Conditions for the City

As noted above, for a number of environmental topics, the geographic scope of the area affected by a cumulative effect is the City’s planning area as described in the general plan. The cumulative development scenario for the city consists of buildout projections contained in the general plan, which include 7,700 new dwelling units, 2,610,000 square feet of new industrial buildings, 1,560,000 square feet of new commercial buildings, and a population of 37,825 people. The proposed project accounts for approximately 45 percent of the cumulative residential use, six percent of the commercial use, and 41 percent of the population under cumulative development conditions.

### 20.3 Cumulative Impacts

The methodology for addressing each cumulative impact topic is to: 1) identify the geographic boundary or scope for the environmental topic; 2) determine whether past projects, other current projects, and probable future projects (including the proposed project), have or will likely combine to create a significant cumulative environmental impact based on information contained in the

general plan EIR, or based on other pertinent information for the geographic scope of the cumulative effect; and, if so, 3) evaluate the contribution of the project to the cumulative effect and determine whether that contribution is considerable (and therefore significant).

Required conformance of future development within the project site to general plan policies and implementation actions, and to general plan EIR mitigation measures would reduce most, but not all of significant general plan buildout cumulative impacts to less than significant. Mitigation measures included in the general plan EIR are referenced in the individual topic sections of this EIR where appropriate, as they apply to all new development within the city, including the proposed project. In some cases, mitigation measures included in this EIR modify the general plan EIR mitigation language to ensure the mitigation applies specifically to the proposed project.

### **Cumulative Effects Adequately Addressed in the General Plan EIR**

For purposes of this EIR, where the general plan EIR adequately addresses an environmental impact, the project contribution to that impact is also already adequately addressed. Section 18.0, Effects Adequately Addressed in the Gonzales General Plan EIR, includes summaries of environmental topics for which the proposed project contribution to cumulative effects is adequately addressed. These topics include aesthetics, geology and soils, and mineral resources. These topics are not addressed in the discussions of cumulative impacts below.

## **Agricultural Resources**

### **Proposed Project Impact Summary**

Agricultural resources impacts are discussed in Section 5.0, Agricultural Resources. The proposed project would result in the following agricultural resources impacts:

- Impact 5-1. Conversion of 767 acres of important farmland, of which 756 acres are within the project site and approximately 11 acres located off-site associated with constructing off-site circulation improvements, to non-agricultural use (Significant and Unavoidable); and
- Impact 5-2. Urban/Agricultural Land Use Conflicts with Potential to Convert Farmland to Non-Agricultural Use (Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures).

### **Geographic Scope**

The geographic scope for cumulative agricultural resources impacts is Monterey County. Agricultural resources are critical to the economies of Gonzales and all of Monterey County. Therefore, the geographic scope is extended beyond the limits of the City's planning area as described in the general plan.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

Past and existing cumulative development consist primarily of urban development (residential, commercial, industrial, infrastructure, etc.) within incorporated cities, including Gonzales, and development within unincorporated areas of the county that have converted important farmland

(Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland) to non-agricultural use. Past and present projects have contributed to substantial loss of important farmland in the county over time. The California Department of Conservation monitors conversion of important farmland through its Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program.

The Department of Conservation reports in its Monterey County 1984 to 2018 Land Use Summary table (the most current report available as of the date of this SEIR) that approximately 11,154 acres of Prime Farmland within the county were converted to non-agricultural use or reclassified as another type of farmland during this period. However, acreage in farmland that is classified as Farmland of Statewide Importance increased by 6,940 acres and acreage classified as Unique Farmland increased by 15,791 acres. These significant acreage increases may well result from the fact that 19,313 acres of land formerly classified as Grazing Land have been converted, likely as a result of reclassification to one or both of the noted farmland classifications, as former grazing land has been brought into agricultural production. A large percentage of this conversion may owe to significant expansion of vineyard land in south Monterey County. This data does not include farmland lost to non-agricultural use prior to 1984. Consequently, the data substantially under represents the total acreage of important farmland converted over time. The total cumulative loss of important farmland solely from conversion to urban development has been substantial over time.

Buildout of the Gonzales general plan will contribute to converting approximately 4,280 acres of important farmland. Other cities within the Salinas Valley will continue to expand at their edges over time into land in agricultural use and the County may continue to permit individual development projects on agricultural land in unincorporated areas that convert agricultural land to non-agricultural use.

Past and existing development within the county has resulted in a cumulatively significant impact on important farmland, especially Prime Farmland, through conversion to urban and other uses. Probable future development within city spheres of influence, including the proposed project, if approved, and within unincorporated areas of the county consisting of farmland, will worsen the significant cumulative impact.

### **Project Contribution to Cumulative Impacts**

As reported in Section 5.0, Agricultural Resources, the project site is 768 acres in size, of which 756 acres are classified as important farmland that would be permanently converted to non-agricultural uses. Conversion of the 12-acre balance of the site to non-agricultural use is not a significant impact of the project. An additional approximately 11 acres of important farmland would be converted to non-agricultural use as a result of constructing off-site roadway improvements. Mitigation measure 5-1 in Section 5.0, Agricultural Resources, requires the applicant to mitigate for the conversion of important farmland consistent with the City's farmland mitigation ordinance. This mitigation measure would not reduce the significant impact to less than significant, as the project will still result

in the irreversible loss of important farmland. Due to the high value of important agricultural land to the City and the County, the project's incremental contribution to the significant cumulative impact is considered to be cumulatively considerable and thus, significant and unavoidable. The City will need to make a finding of overriding consideration for this impact.

## Air Quality

### Proposed Project Impact Summary

Air quality impacts are discussed in Section 6.0, Air Quality. The proposed project would result in the following significant air quality impacts:

- Impact 6-1. Conflict with the Air Quality Plan (No Impact);
- Impact 6-2. Fugitive Dust Emissions During Construction Will Exceed the Air District Thresholds and Degrade Air Quality (Less than Significant with Mitigation);
- Impact 6-3. Criteria Air Pollutants During Operations Will Exceed Air District Thresholds and Degrade Air Quality (Significant and Unavoidable for VOC); and
- Impact 6-4. Construction Equipment Could Expose Sensitive Receptors to Toxic Air Contaminants (Less than Significant with Mitigation).

### Geographic Scope

The geographic scope for criteria air emissions impacts of the proposed project is the boundary of the North Central Coast Air Basin (air basin), which encompasses Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties. This is the area for which the Monterey Bay Air Resources District (air district) has prepared plans for reducing specific types of air emissions and otherwise manages air quality to meet federal and state air quality standards.

### Cumulative Impacts

Past and present projects within the air basin have generated criteria air emissions through construction and operational activities. The air basin is currently in state non-attainment for ozone and particulate matter. That is, past and present projects have generated these emission types to the extent that their concentration within the air basin exceeds applicable state standards. The air district has prepared air quality plans designed to bring cumulative emissions from past, present, and future projected development to below the standards. Though the effect has been diminishing in recent years with cleaner fuel and engine technologies, cumulative development, including the proposed project if approved, also has potential to result in traffic congestion wherein vehicles can produce air emissions, particularly carbon monoxide, at concentrations in localized areas (e.g., at congested intersections or along congested roadways) that could adversely affect adjacent sensitive receptors. Point sources of air emissions can adversely affect adjacent sensitive receptors, but due to the localized effects of point sources, it is unlikely that they would combine in a cumulative context to adversely affect the same population of sensitive receptors, and are considered less than cumulatively significant.

## Project Contribution to Cumulative Impacts

### *Consistency with Air Quality Plan*

AMBAG's housing unit projections are made in five-year increments to the year 2045. The proposed project is projected to be built out over a period of approximately 20 years, with the first residential units projected to be completed in 2025. The project would contribute to cumulative residential development. Its contribution to potential inconsistency with the air quality plan is contingent on whether its residential development could exceed AMBAG's housing projections. The air district's consistency determination procedure for residential development projects was used to make this determination. The results, included in [Appendix B](#), show that the project would not exceed AMBAG housing unit projections for any five-year increment up to 2045. Therefore, the project would have no cumulative impact regarding consistency with the air quality plan.

### *Fugitive Dust Emission from Grading and Construction*

The proposed project would temporarily generate construction PM<sub>10</sub> emissions that would exceed air district thresholds, which is a cumulatively considerable contribution to regional air quality impacts. The air district considers a cumulative contribution of particulate matter to be less than cumulatively considerable if individual projects implement measures to reduce production of particulate matter during construction activities. Mitigation measure 6-2 reduces the project contribution to regional PM<sub>10</sub> levels to less than considerable by requiring that air district dust control measures be implemented during construction.

### *Operational Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions*

During its operation, the proposed project would generate VOC, NO<sub>x</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, and CO emissions in excess of the air district thresholds. The thresholds are set to ensure that cumulative development does not result in the air basin falling into non-attainment for the respective pollutants. If the thresholds are exceeded, the proposed project would have a cumulatively considerable air quality impact. With implementation of mitigations identified in Section 6.0, Air Quality, the project contribution to cumulatively significant NO<sub>x</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub> and CO emissions would be reduced to less than cumulatively considerable. However, VOC emissions would remain above its thresholds. Therefore, the proposed project would have a significant cumulative VOC impact. The City will need to make a finding of overriding consideration for this impact.

### *Toxic Air Contaminants from Construction Equipment*

The proposed project could adversely affect the nearest sensitive receptors by exposing the receptors to TACs from heavy equipment diesel exhaust during construction. Mitigation measures in Section 6.0, Air Quality, would reduce this impact to less than significant. While unknown, it is unlikely that other construction activities unrelated to the proposed project would occur simultaneously in the immediate areas of these receptors. Therefore, cumulative TAC exposure impacts during construction are unlikely to occur, and the proposed project would not contribute to cumulative TAC impacts.

## Biological Resources

### Proposed Project Impact Summary

The biological resource impacts of the project are discussed in Section 7.0, Biological Resources.

The proposed project would result in the following biological resource impacts:

- Impact 7-1. Potential Effect on Candidate, Sensitive, or Special-Status Species (Congdon's Tarplant) (Less than Significant with Mitigation);
- Impact 7-2. Potential Effect on Candidate, Sensitive, or Special-Status Species (California Tiger Salamander) (Less than Significant);
- Impact 7-3. Potential Effect on Candidate, Sensitive, or Special-Status Species (Burrowing Owl) (Less than Significant with Mitigation);
- Impact 7-4. Potential Effect on Candidate, Sensitive, or Special-Status Species (Nesting Raptors and Migratory Birds) (Less than Significant with Mitigation);
- Impact 7-5. Loss of Federally- and State-Protected Waters of the U.S. (Less than Significant with Mitigation);
- Impact 7-6. Damage or Removal of Regulated Trees (Less than Significant);
- Impact 7-7. Interfere with Movement of Wildlife Species or with Established Wildlife Corridors (Less than Significant); and
- Impact 7-8. Effect on Riparian Habitat or Other Sensitive Natural Communities (Less than Significant with Mitigation).

### Geographic Scope

The geographic distribution ranges for special-status species vary greatly depending largely on environmental factors such as habitat suitability criteria (e.g., some species may only occur locally while others may range throughout large geographic areas such as the western U.S.). For the purposes of cumulative analysis for special status species and other biological resources, including jurisdictional wetlands and waterways, the geographic boundary for cumulative impacts is generally defined as the Salinas Valley region, particularly the Gonzales general plan growth boundary and immediate vicinity. An analysis at this level is considered adequate for determining whether impacts could affect the sustainability of special status species and their habitats. Within this area, regulatory agencies and conservation organizations including U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and California Native Plant Society, work to establish and update critical distribution range information for species thought to be declining within their geographic ranges due to habitat loss and degradation.

## Cumulative Impacts

Past and present projects in and around the City of Gonzales have permanently removed plant and wildlife habitats to varying degrees. This development has reduced the range and number of multiple plant and wildlife species and contributed to threats to their continued viability. The fact that federal and state agencies recognize numerous plant and wildlife species with special status, which requires that the species be given specific consideration and protection, reflects the agencies' concern that the species are declining in number and range relative to their historic occurrences. Special-status species are generally considered rare, restricted in distribution, declining throughout their range, and/or to have a critical, vulnerable stage in their life cycle, that warrants their protection and monitoring. Such development has also caused the loss and decline of sensitive natural plant communities including riparian, woodlands, and wetland communities; constrained wildlife movement; and reduced nesting and foraging habitat for resident and migratory avian species. The impacts of past and present projects on special-status species and protected habitat communities are cumulatively significant. Future probable projects, including the proposed project if approved, would further exacerbate these impacts and worsen cumulative impacts.

Past and present cumulative projects have resulted in impacts to wetlands and waterways under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. Many of these projects were approved since enactment of federal and state legislation that mandate protecting or conserving these resources through regulatory permitting processes. These permits commonly include wetland habitat restoration requirements or other appropriate mitigation to ensure no net loss of habitat functions and values. Probable future projects, including the proposed project if approved, will be subject to the same regulatory requirements. Regardless, impacts of cumulative development on wetlands and waterways are cumulatively significant.

## Project Contribution to Cumulative Impacts

Potential impacts to special-status Congdon's tarplant, burrowing owl, nesting and migratory birds, and federally- and state-protected waters of the U.S. were identified as potentially significant as a result of the proposed project. Implementation of mitigation measures identified in Section 7.0, Biological Resources, would reduce potential impacts to these species and habitats to less than significant. Project impacts on protected trees are less than significant, as few if any protected trees are likely to be present within areas to be disturbed. The potential for the site to be used as wildlife corridors is minimal given that the project site and off-site improvement areas are generally located within developed areas or areas in agricultural use with little to no natural corridors. Movement is likely restricted to that of common wildlife species and these areas do not function as regional wildlife movement corridors or habitat linkages. The site and off-site improvement locations may contain limited, highly impacted isolated wetlands along irrigation canals, drainage channels, and the Gonzales Slough. Mitigation measures assure that impacts to them are reduced to less than significant through the regulatory permitting process.

Given that the project site and off-site circulation improvement locations are heavily disturbed by agricultural activities and/or maintenance activities, that biological resources are limited, and the historical effectiveness of the proposed mitigation measures, impacts of the proposed project on biological resources are considered to be less than cumulatively considerable and less than cumulatively significant.

## Cultural and Tribal Resources

### Proposed Project Impact Summary

The proposed project impacts on cultural and tribal resources are discussed in Section 8.0, Cultural and Tribal Resources. The proposed project would result in the following cultural and tribal resource impacts:

- Impact 8-1. Potential Adverse Change to Historic Resources and/or Unique Archaeological Resources During Project Construction (Less than Significant with Mitigation);
- Impact 8-2. Potential Adverse Impact to Human Remains (Less than Significant with Mitigation); and
- Impact 8-3. Potential Adverse Impact to Tribal Cultural Resources (Less than Significant with Mitigation).

### Geographic Scope

The geographic scope for cumulative impacts on cultural resources is the City's planning area as identified in the general plan. This scope boundary was selected because it identifies the limits within which the City exercises control over activities with potential to impact cultural resources, including the proposed project. The cultural resources effects of the proposed project are common to land use projects over which the City has discretionary authority.

### Cumulative Impacts

The general plan EIR identified that potential impacts on known historical resources, unique archaeological resources, Native American human remains, and tribal cultural resources from buildout of the general plan would be less than cumulatively significant with implementation of general plan policies and implementation actions, and with implementation of general plan EIR mitigation measures CUL-1 and CUL-2.

### Project Contribution to Cumulative Impacts

The proposed project would be required to implement general plan EIR mitigation measures and additional mitigation measures as identified in in Section 8.0, Cultural and Tribal Resources to reduce its contribution to cumulative cultural resources impacts to less than significant. Therefore, the project contribution to cumulative impacts would be less than considerable.

# Energy

## Proposed Project Impact Summary

Energy impacts are discussed in Section 9.0, Energy. The proposed project would result in the following energy impact:

- Impact 9-1. Proposed Project Results in the Wasteful, Inefficient, or Unnecessary Consumption of Energy Resources (Less than Significant).

## Geographic Scope

The geographic scope for this effect is cumulative development in California. This broad scope is reflective of the rigorous state effort, as expressed through multitude of legislative acts and regulations, to reduce energy consumption across energy consumptive uses and sectors. The state effort has and continues to focus on the benefits of energy conservation with specific regard to addressing climate change and natural resource conservation.

## Cumulative Impacts

The general plan EIR concluded that energy impacts from buildout of the general plan, including the project site, would be less than significant with implementation of general plan policies and implementing actions. However, since 2010 when the general plan EIR was certified, the City and state have continued to advance energy conservation and efficient initiatives that create greater expectations of land use projects and local jurisdictions.

There is no codified or single CEQA analysis practice standard for determining what constitutes a significant impact relative to guidance provided in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines regarding wasteful or inefficient use of energy. However, it can be assumed that past cumulative projects have been less energy efficient with regard to electricity and natural gas use and that older transportation technologies have been less efficient with regard to fuel use than would be current and future projects and technologies. As California continues to implement more and more rigorous legislation and regulations to reduce energy use through improved energy efficiency and transportation technology changes, it can be assumed that current and future projects, particularly land development projects, will not be sources of wasteful or inefficient energy use. Further, the City's continuing local efforts to implement energy reduction initiatives identified in the City's C3 initiative are resulting in a reduced rate of energy consumption. Nevertheless, given the large geographic scope considered for this impact and the broad scale of past economic development in the state, the cumulative impact is considered to be significant.

## Project Contribution to Cumulative Impacts

Because the general plan EIR found energy impacts to be less than significant when evaluated in the context of cumulative impacts within the state, based on the information available at that time, the project contribution to this cumulative impact would be less than cumulatively considerable as further discussed below.

Relative to conditions in 2010 when the general plan EIR was certified, project energy and transportation fuel use projections for development of the project site would be further reduced for several reasons. These include, but are not limited to, required project conformance with relevant Gonzales CAP GHG reduction measures, air quality mitigation measures included in this EIR which will have the co-benefit of reducing VMT and associated transportation fuel use, the City's continuing efforts to implement G3 initiatives that reduce energy demand, and required conformance with the most recent state regulatory requirements for green building, residential building energy efficiency, and reducing VMT from land use projects, etc. These measures further act to ensure that the project contribution to cumulative energy impacts would be less than considerable.

## Greenhouse Gas Emissions

### Proposed Project Impact Summary

The GHG impacts of the project are discussed in Section 10.0, Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The proposed project would result in the following GHG impacts:

- Impact 10-1. Proposed Project Generates Greenhouse Gas Emissions That Have a Significant Impact on the Environment (Less than Significant with Mitigation); and
- Impact 10-2. Proposed Project Conflicts with the Applicable Plan to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Less than Significant with Mitigation).

### Geographic Scope

GHG emissions effects are not localized to areas where they are produced. Climate change is a global phenomenon resulting from the combined effects of GHG emissions produced worldwide. Consequently, the analysis of climate change impacts from production of GHGs as included in Section 10.0, Greenhouse Gases, is inherently cumulative in nature. While the true geographic scope of the area affected by GHG emissions is global, for purposes of this EIR, the geographic scope is considered to be the state. This scope is selected because the broad array of state legislation and regulatory requirements for reducing GHGs includes direction for local agency actions needed to reduce GHGs for the purpose of helping to meet statewide GHG reduction goals. The *Gonzales Climate Action Plan: 2018 Update* (CAP) is the City's primary tool for reducing GHGs in a manner that contributes to statewide GHG reduction goals. The CAP is designed to reduce GHG emissions from sources that are within the control of City, including from land use projects.

### Cumulative Impacts

The general plan EIR found that GHG impacts from buildout of the general plan would be significant and unavoidable. This determination was made due to uncertainty regarding applicable numerical thresholds of significance and uncertainty about the timing and effectiveness of state programs to reduce GHGs statewide. The general plan EIR concluded that the impact would be lessened with implementation of general plan policies and implementing actions, and with required

implementation of general plan EIR mitigation measures GHG-1 (City to prepare a climate action plan), GHG-2 (implement GHG best management practices), and GHG-3 (City to adopt a green building code), but not to a less-than-significant level.

The City has since implemented general plan mitigation measure GHG-1 by adopting the CAP. The CAP meets the requirements identified in CEQA Guidelines section 15183.5 as a qualified plan for reducing GHG emissions. As described below, the CAP is now the basis for determining whether new development within the city may result in cumulatively considerable GHG impacts. Mitigation measure GHG-2 is being implemented on a case-by-case basis for new projects. The City is modifying its development code to be consistent with the state's CALGreen green building code requirements.

The CAP bases GHG emissions projections on growth anticipated in Gonzales to the year 2050. The CAP assumes Gonzales will grow to a population of nearly 40,000 by 2050. The CAP includes GHG reduction measures that apply to all new development in the city that are designed to reduce GHG emissions to a specified target volume. The population projection for 2050 considers anticipated population growth within the SOI, including the project site. Therefore, future GHG emissions that would be generated from new development within the site are included in the overall CAP GHG emissions projections. Similarly, GHG emissions reductions that would result from applying GHG reduction measures in the CAP to new development within the site are also assumed in the CAP.

### **Project Contribution to Cumulative Impacts**

As described in CEQA Guidelines section 15130(d), the contribution of a project to a cumulative GHG impact is not cumulatively considerable if the project complies with the requirements in a previously adopted plan for reducing GHGs. The City's CAP qualifies as such a plan. For the proposed project to comply with the applicable GHG reduction measures in the CAP, those measures must be incorporated into future develop projects within the project site. Mitigation measure 10-1 in Section 10.0, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, ensures that this will occur. The mitigation identifies the GHG reduction measures in the CAP that apply to the types of development being proposed within the site as described in Section 4.2, Project Characteristics, and requires that these measures be incorporated into the future new development. Mitigation measure 10-2 in the same section requires that new development be consistent with GHG reduction measures that are not in the CAP, but designed to ensure new development makes a substantial contribution to meeting the state's zero net GHG emissions goal for 2045.

With required implementation of the mitigation measures, the project contribution to cumulative GHG impacts would be less than cumulatively considerable.

## Hazards and Hazardous Materials

### Proposed Project Impact Summary

Hazards and hazardous materials impacts are discussed in Section 11.0, Hazards and Hazardous Materials. The proposed project would result in the following hazards and hazardous materials impacts:

- Impact 11-1. Risks Involving the Routine Transport, Use, or Disposal of Hazardous Materials (Less than Significant);
- Impact 11-2. Hazard to the Public or the Environment from Release of Hazardous Materials into the Environment (Less than Significant with Mitigation);
- Impact 11-3. Risks from Handling or Emitting Hazardous Emissions Within One-Quarter Mile of a Proposed School (Less than Significant); and
- Impact 11-4. Potential to Impair or Interfere with an Adopted Emergency Response Plan or Emergency Evacuation Plan (No Impact);

### Geographic Scope

The geographic scope for cumulative hazardous materials conditions is the City's planning area as described in the general plan. This scope boundary was selected because it identifies the limits within which the City exercises control over hazards and hazardous materials conditions that could pose risk to the public. The hazards and hazardous material conditions associated with the proposed project are common to land use projects over which the City has discretionary authority.

### Cumulative Impacts

The general plan EIR identified that potential impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials from development within the planning area, including the project site, would be reduced to less than significant with implementation of applicable general plan policies and implementing actions, regulatory requirements listed in the general plan EIR, and general plan EIR mitigation measures HAZ-1 (avoid hazard conflicts between industrial and school uses), HAZ-2 (remediation plan for Fanoe Ranch), HAZ-3 (soil contamination reports required for specific plans), and HAZ-4 (prepare hazard reports for projects within a high fire hazard area). Because the proposed project does not include industrial uses; mitigation measure HAZ-1 is not applicable.

### Project Contribution to Cumulative Impacts

Proposed project impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials are described in Section 11.0, Hazards and Hazardous Materials. The potential project impacts are reduced to less than significant with implementation of mitigation measure 11-1. This mitigation requires that the recommendations of the soil management plan prepared for the project, which identifies soil remediation protocols and guidance to address hazardous materials conditions, be implemented prior to grading activities in the locations of those conditions. Therefore, the proposed project contribution to hazard and hazardous material impacts would be less than cumulatively considerable.

## Hydrology and Water Quality

### Proposed Project Impact Summary

Hydrology and water quality impacts are discussed in Section 12.0, Hydrology and Water Quality. The proposed project would result in the following hydrology and water quality impacts:

- Impact 12-1. Potential to Violate Water Quality Standards or Waste Discharge Requirements, or Create Additional Polluted Runoff (Less than Significant);
- Impact 12-2. Increase in Storm Water Runoff with Potential to Cause Flooding (Less than Significant);
- Impact 12-3. Potential to Impeded or Redirect Flood Flow (Less than Significant);
- Impact 12-4. Water Quality Impacts from Release of Pollutants due to Flood Inundation (Less than Significant); and
- Conflict with or Obstruct Implementation of a Water Quality Control Plan (No Impact).

### Geographic Scope

The geographic scope for assessment of cumulative hydrology and water quality impacts is the City's planning area, including the project site, as described in the general plan. This scope boundary was selected because it identifies the limits within which the City exercises control over water hydrology and water quality conditions. The hydrology and water quality conditions associated with the proposed project are common to land use projects over which the City has discretionary authority.

### Cumulative Impacts

The general plan EIR found that hydrology and water quality impacts from buildout of the general plan would be less than significant with required consistency with general plan policies and implementing actions, and with required implementation of related regulatory requirements. No hydrology and water quality mitigation measures were required.

### Project Contribution to Cumulative Impacts

Because hydrology and water quality impacts of general plan buildout were found to be less than significant and the proposed project substantially conforms with the general plan, and because new development within the project site must be designed consistent with uniformly applied development regulations for managing storm water runoff to reduce impacts on water quality, the proposed project contribution to cumulative impacts would be less than considerable.

## Noise

### Proposed Project Impact Summary

Noise impacts are discussed in Section 13.0, Noise. The proposed project would result in the following noise impacts:

- Impact 13-1. On-and Off-Site Construction Activities Would Cause a Substantial Temporary Noise Increase (Less than Significant with Mitigation);
- Impact 13-2. Project-Generated Traffic Would Increase Noise at Off-Site Sensitive Receptors (Less than Significant);
- Impact 13-3. Proposed Commercial Uses Could Result in a Permanent Substantial Noise Increase at On-Site Sensitive Receptors (Less than Significant with Mitigation); and
- Impact 13-4. Noise from Planned Schools Could Exceed Standards at On-Site Sensitive Receptors (Less than Significant with Mitigation).

## Geographic Scope

The geographic scope for cumulative noise impacts is the City’s planning area as described in the general plan. This geographic scope was selected because it incorporates the portion of the local road network onto which the greatest volume of traffic from future development within the site would be distributed. Project impacts from increased traffic noise would extend over a larger geographic area than other potential project noise impacts. Therefore, traffic noise impacts are the basis for defining the geographic scope.

## Cumulative Impacts

The general plan EIR found that noise impacts from buildout of the general plan would be less than significant with required consistency with general plan policies and implementing actions, and with required implementation of related regulatory requirements. Several of the implementing actions identify noise exposure thresholds for sensitive land uses. No noise mitigation measures were required. Given the substantial new development capacity that would be enabled by the general plan, including new development within the project site, it is assumed that cumulative development within the city could result in an increase in traffic noise volumes on local roads that would generate noise which exceed the applicable noise exposure standards. This would be a significant cumulative impact. Stationary noise associated with new development is not assumed to result in significant cumulative impacts because noise effects would be localized; multiple stationary noise sources not associated with the same project are not likely to occur and collectively contribute to noise exposure at sensitive receptors that exceeds the applicable noise exposure standards.

General plan implementing action HS-8.3.1 requires that an acoustical analysis be prepared where the development of a project may result in land uses being exposed to existing or projected future noise levels that exceed City noise thresholds. The acoustical analysis is to identify noise impacts and provide noise mitigation for inclusion in the design of such projects such that their individual project impacts and contribution to cumulative noise impacts is reduced.

## Project Contribution to Cumulative Impacts

Consistent with general plan EIR implementing action HS-8.3.1 as described above, a noise analysis was prepared for the project. It is included in [Appendix E](#). Regarding cumulative impacts, the noise analysis evaluated cumulative traffic noise impacts, including the contribution of traffic noise from proposed project, on off-site sensitive receptors and on future on-site sensitive receptors.

Traffic volumes modeled for cumulative conditions were derived from Hexagon Transportation Consultants documentation based on the City's traffic model, with project related traffic volumes adjusted to reflect current proposed project land uses and traffic data associated with general plan buildout conditions. Federal Highway Administration Traffic Noise Model was used to quantify expected project-related increases in traffic noise exposure along roadways in the project vicinity. Refer to the discussion under Impact 13-2 in Section 13.0, Noise, and to [Appendix E](#) for information on the data inputs to and the modeling methodology utilized for developing transportation-source noise information.

### *Traffic Noise Impacts on Off-Site Sensitive Receptors*

Table 20-2, [Existing and Cumulative Traffic Noise Levels, dB, L<sub>dn</sub>](#), provides existing and cumulative traffic noise exposure levels at the nine analyzed representative sensitive receptor locations identified in the noise report. The nine locations are shown in Figure 12 of the noise report. The City's exterior noise level standard for residential land uses (and all other sensitive receptor types) is 60 dB L<sub>dn</sub>, with 65 dB L<sub>dn</sub> allowable for residential uses in the Downtown Mixed-Use District. As can be seen in the table, existing transportation related noise levels exceed the 60 dB threshold of significance at receptors R-1 and R-2. These receptors are located directly adjacent to U.S. Highway 101. The noise level at receptor R-6 just reaches the 60 dB threshold, but this location is within the Downtown Mixed-Use District where the threshold is 65 dB; therefore, the applicable threshold is not exceeded. Noise levels at all other receptors are below the 60 dB threshold.

Under cumulative conditions where cumulative traffic volumes are added to the roadway network, including traffic from the proposed project, noise levels increase at all of the receptor locations. However, at all but receptors R-1, R-2, and R-6, cumulative noise levels, including the proposed project contribution, remain below the 60 dB threshold; cumulative noise impacts at these receptors would be less than significant. At receptors R-1 and R-2, cumulative noise levels increase by 1 dB relative to existing conditions. For the purpose of this analysis, a significant cumulative impact would occur if traffic noise levels were to increase by 3 dB or more at sensitive receptor locations where existing traffic noise levels already exceed the applicable noise level standard of 60 dB, as 3 dB generally represents the threshold of perception in change for the human ear. This is the case at receptors R-1 and R-2, where existing noise levels already exceed the 60 dB threshold. Therefore, even with the addition of cumulative traffic from general plan buildout, traffic noise impacts are less than significant. Since the proposed project represents only a portion of the cumulative traffic volume, its contribution to the less than significant cumulative impact is less than considerable.

**Table 20-2 Existing and Cumulative Traffic Noise Levels, dB, L<sub>dn</sub>**

Modeled Receptor	Existing	Cumulative Conditions
R-1	65	66
R-2	67	68
R-3	56	57
R-4	51	58
R-5	51	56
R-6 <sup>1</sup>	60	62
R-7	49	58
R-8	50	58
R-9	37	41

SOURCE: WJV Acoustics, Inc. 2020

NOTE:

1. Located in the Downtown Mixed-Use District, 65 dB L<sub>dn</sub> standard applies

### *Cumulative Traffic Noise Impacts on Future On-Site Sensitive Receptors*

The proposed project includes sensitive receptors (residential and school uses) adjacent to or near arterial roadways that could be impacted by cumulative traffic noise on those roadways. The roadways include Fanoe Road, Associated Lane (proposed Vista Lucia Parkway), and Iverson Road. The noise report identifies the distances from the center of the roadways to the 60 dB L<sub>dn</sub> and 65 dB L<sub>dn</sub> noise exposure contours as shown in [Table 20-3, Distances to Traffic Noise Contours \(Cumulative Conditions\)](#).

A significant cumulative noise impact would occur if the outdoor activity areas of proposed sensitive receptors within the project site are located within the distances from the roadway centerline to the 60 dB contour shown in Table 20-3. This could be the case for residential uses planned along Fanoe Road and Associated Lane (proposed Vista Lucia Parkway), and for a school use on Associated Lane as shown on the land use plan illustrated in Figure 4-2. Since cumulative traffic volumes on these two roadways would likely be dominated by project-generated traffic, the proposed project contribution to the potential significant cumulative impact would be considerable. The 60 dB contour along Iverson Road would likely fall within the roadway right-of-way itself and not extend to outdoor activity areas of future homes planned along it. Therefore, the project contribution to cumulative traffic noise effects along this roadway would be less than considerable.

For the significant cumulative impact to be reduced to less than significant, future development within the project site must be designed to avoid placing outdoor activity areas of residential uses and schools within distances from Fanoe Road and Associated Lane (proposed Vista Lucia Parkway) identified in Table 20-3.

**Table 20-3 Distances to Traffic Noise Contours (Cumulative Conditions)**

Roadway Segment (Description)	Distance (feet) to 60 dB L <sub>dn</sub>	Distance (feet) to 65 dB L <sub>dn</sub>
Fanoe Rd (north of 5th St./Johnson Canyon Rd.)	80	37
Associated Ln./Vista Lucia Parkway (east of Fanoe Rd.)	95	44
Iverson Rd. (north of Johnson Canyon Rd.)	25	11

SOURCE: WJV Acoustics, Inc. 2020

As shown in Figure 4-1, Tentative Map, homes planned along Fanoe Road would be separated from Fanoe Road by a “fronting local roadway”. This tentative map design feature is intended to avoid traffic noise impacts on these homes by creating greater separation between the traffic noise source (Fanoe Road) and the outdoor activity areas (commonly backyards) of noise-sensitive residences. To determine whether this feature would achieve the intended result, WJV acoustics reviewed the design and prepared a supplemental memo. The memo, *Vista Lucia Traffic Noise Levels, Phase 1 Tentative Map*, is included in [Appendix E](#). WJV determined that the outdoor activity areas of the homes along Fanoe Road would be setback a sufficient distance that the 60 dB noise limit at their backyards would not be exceeded. Since WJV prepared the supplemental memo, the applicant modified the first tentative map. However, the current tentative map submittal retains the same fronting local roadway design and lotting plan as shown in the prior tentative map evaluated by WJV. Consequently, the analysis in the supplemental WJV memo remains valid.

Future tentative maps for phases of homes to be located along Associated Lane (proposed Vista Lucia Parkway) would require a similar design treatment (adequate setback/shielding from the traffic noise source), as would the proposed elementary school, to avoid the potential cumulative noise impact. Implementation of the following mitigation measures would ensure this potential cumulative impact would be reduced to less-than-significant.

### ***Mitigation Measures***

20-1 The applicant shall locate outdoor activity areas of proposed residential uses (outdoor common use areas and individual patios and balconies for multi-family homes and backyards of single-family homes) outside the cumulative 60 dB L<sub>dn</sub> traffic noise contour along Associated Lane (Vista Lucia Parkway). If noise sensitive residential uses are proposed within the 65 dB L<sub>dn</sub> noise contour, the applicant shall prepare a traffic noise mitigation plan which demonstrates how traffic noise exposure at these uses will be reduced to 59 dB L<sub>dn</sub> or lower. Mitigation could include building orientation, sound walls, or other feasible design or improvements options. The mitigation plan shall be subject to review and approval of the Gonzales Community Development Director for conformance with these noise exposure performance standards prior to approval of a future specific plan.

20-2 As part of its future design of the planned elementary school that would front on Associated Lane, the Gonzales Unified School District should locate outdoor activity areas outside the cumulative 60 dB Ldn traffic noise contour along Associated Lane (Vista Lucia Parkway). If outdoor activity areas are proposed within the 65 dB Ldn noise contour, the school district should prepare a traffic noise mitigation plan which demonstrates how traffic noise exposure will be reduced to 59 dB Ldn or lower. Mitigation could include building orientation, sound walls, or other feasible design or improvements options.

The Gonzales Unified School District should include mitigation measure 20-2 in future CEQA documentation it prepares for the subject elementary school. In compliance with Public Resources Code §21081, the City will need to make a finding that this mitigation measure is the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency (Gonzales Unified School District) and can and should be adopted by that other agency.

## Transportation

### Proposed Project Impact Summary

Transportation impacts are discussed in Section 14.0, Transportation. The proposed project would result in the following transportation impacts:

- Impact 14-1. Conflict with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 by Exceeding the Applicable Threshold for VMT (Significant and Unavoidable for Residential Uses);
- Impact 14-2. Significantly Increase Circulation Hazards (Less than Significant); and
- Impact 14-3. Result in Inadequate Emergency Access (Less than Significant).

### Geographic Scope

The geographic scope for cumulative VMT is the area included in the City's SOI traffic model, which is derived from the AMBAG regional traffic model. The regional traffic model covers Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito counties. The scope for other cumulative transportation effects is the immediate vicinity of the project site (Impacts 14-2 and 14-3).

### Cumulative Impacts

#### *Conflict with Pedestrian, Bicycle, Transit, and Circulation Plans*

The general plan EIR determined that the plans for bicycle facilities included in the general plan could conflict with the Transportation Agency for Monterey County's then most recent 2006 bicycle improvements plan. The impact was mitigated to less than significant by requiring modifications to the general plan circulation diagram. Other potential impacts from conflicts with applicable pedestrian, bicycle, transit and circulation plans were found to be reduced to less than significant with implementation of general plan policies and implementing actions.

### *Vehicle Miles Traveled*

The general plan EIR assessment of cumulative transportation impacts focused on effects of general plan buildout on the operations of the local and regional roadway network, based on level of service as a circulation performance threshold of significance. As described in Section 14.4, Thresholds of Significance, level of service is no longer a threshold of significance for use in CEQA analyses of transportation impacts. Rather, as of July 1, 2020, the change in VMT created by a new project is the focus of assessing transportation impacts. Thus, the general plan EIR did not address VMT impacts of general plan buildout.

### *Circulation Hazards and Emergency Access*

The general plan EIR analysis of circulation safety hazards and adequacy of emergency focused on design of proposed circulation facilities, including new roadways, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The general plan EIR found that potential circulation hazard and emergency access impacts would be reduced to less than significant with implementation of general plan policies and implementing actions, and with implementation of mitigation measure TT-13. General plan mitigation measure TT-13 requires that these issues and related potential adverse impacts be evaluated and mitigated as part of a traffic impact analysis to be conducted at the time specific plans are prepared.

## **Project Contribution to Cumulative Impacts**

### *Vehicle Miles Traveled*

The *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA* (California Office of Planning and Research 2018) provides guidance on evaluating cumulative VMT impacts. The document states that a project whose VMT falls below an efficiency-based threshold of significance metric such as VMT per capita or VMT per employee and that is aligned with long-term environmental goals and relevant plans, would have no cumulative impact distinct from the project impact (California Office of Planning and Research 2018, p. 6). Thus, a finding of a less-than-significant project impact would imply a less than significant cumulative impact. The threshold being used to assess project-specific VMT impacts is VMT per capita for planned residential uses and a screening criterion for the retail component of the planned mixed use as described in Section 14.3, Thresholds of Significance.

The VMT impact for the proposed residential use is significant and unavoidable, even with implementation of mitigation measures included in Section 6.0, Air Quality, that are designed to reduce VMT (and in turn, criteria air emissions and GHG emissions). Therefore, the cumulative VMT impact is also significant and unavoidable. The same mitigation measures would apply for lessening the cumulative VMT impact as apply to reducing the project VMT impact. The VMT impact for the retail component is less than significant based on the screening criteria for such uses. Therefore, its contribution to cumulative VMT impacts is less than considerable. The City will need to make a finding of overriding consideration for the residential VMT impact.

### *Circulation Hazards and Emergency Access*

General plan EIR mitigation TT-13 reduces circulation hazards and emergency access impacts to less than significant. Analysis is provided in Section 14.0, Transportation, which demonstrates that required conformance with City standards and with circulation and emergency access criteria of the Gonzales police and fire departments would be required. Circulation hazards associated with potential conflicts between project traffic and its shared use of adjacent roads with agricultural equipment and machinery are also adequately addressed. Therefore, the proposed project contribution to cumulative impacts would be less than cumulatively considerable.

### **Public Services**

Public services impacts are discussed in Section 15.0, Public Services. The impacts of constructing new public facilities including fire and police protection facilities, schools, and parks, are addressed in other sections of this EIR. These impacts would be similar to those resulting from constructing the project as a whole. Therefore, the cumulative impacts of constructing these facilities are part of the analysis of cumulative impacts for other topics discussed in Section 20.0, Cumulative Impacts.

Cumulative impacts from operating new schools within the site (e.g., air quality, energy, GHG, noise, and transportation) are also considered as part of the cumulative analyses for these topics included in Section 20.0, Cumulative Impacts. No further discussion is required.

### **Wastewater**

Wastewater issues are discussed in Section 16.0, Wastewater. The impacts of constructing new on-site wastewater collection infrastructure and an off-site collection main are addressed in other sections of this EIR. These impacts would be similar to those resulting from constructing the project as a whole. Therefore, the cumulative impacts of constructing these facilities are part of the analysis of cumulative impacts for other topics discussed in Section 20.0, Cumulative Impacts.

As also described in Section 16.0, the City is implementing plans for constructing expanded wastewater treatment facilities, in part to meet the needs of the proposed project. These projects are being initiated by the City and are subject to separate, independent CEQA analysis processes.

### **Water Demand and Supply**

#### **Proposed Project Impact Summary**

Water supply impacts are discussed in Section 17.0, Water Demand and Supply. The proposed project would result in the following water supply effects:

- Impact 17-1. Sufficient Water Supplies are Available to Serve the Project and Reasonably Foreseeable Future Development During Normal, Dry and Multiple Dry Years (No Impact);
- Impact 17-2. Groundwater Demand Would Not Impede Sustainable Groundwater Management of the Basin (Beneficial Impact);

- Impact 17-3. Interfere with Groundwater Recharge but Would not Impede Sustainable Groundwater Management of the Basin (Less than Significant Impact); and
- Impact 17-4. Would not Conflict with or Obstruct Implementation of a Sustainable Groundwater Management Plan (No Impact).

## Geographic Scope

The geographic scope for assessment of cumulative water supply impacts is the Eastside Subbasin and the 180/400 Foot Subbasin of the larger Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin. The City of Gonzales pumps water from both subbasins to supply potable water within the city limits. The project site is within the Eastside Subbasin. These subbasins were selected as they represent a defined boundary for water supply management within the city of Gonzales. Refer to Sections 17.2 and 17.3 of Section 17.0, Water Supply for discussion of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin and its associated subbasins.

## Cumulative Impacts

### *Groundwater Demand and Supply*

As described in Section 17.0, Water Demand and Supply, past and present development within the boundary of the groundwater basins has contributed to groundwater overdraft conditions - a significant cumulative impact. Future development that requires water from the basins, including the continuing conversion of grazing lands to vineyards and other uses that increase water consumption, is likely to exacerbate overdraft conditions, including increasing demands for groundwater resulting from a trend towards rangeland being converted to agricultural use. As described in Section 17.2, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) requires comprehensive groundwater management, with the mandatory goal of bringing all currently overdrafted basins into sustainable conditions by no later than 2040 or 2042. A process is underway in Monterey County to implement the SGMA. Therefore, although cumulative impacts related to water supply are cumulatively significant, the purpose of the SGMA is to stabilize and improve groundwater sustainability in the foreseeable future.

### *Groundwater Recharge*

According to the draft *Salinas Valley: Eastside Aquifer Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan Volume 1* (May 25, 2020), there is no managed recharge in the Subbasin (page 3-10). Natural groundwater recharge occurs through the following processes:

- Infiltration of surface water from the streams originating in the Gabilan Range;
- Deep percolation of infiltrating precipitation; and
- Subsurface inflow from the adjacent subbasins.

Cumulative development within the Eastside Subbasin has the potential to result in cumulatively significant impact to groundwater recharge, that could impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin.

## **Project Contribution to Cumulative Impacts**

### ***Groundwater Demand and Supply***

Per the water supply assessment prepared for the proposed project, the projected project water use would decrease groundwater extraction by 686 to 866 AFY relative to the existing agricultural use of the site. Therefore, the project would have a positive cumulative impact on groundwater supply.

### ***Groundwater Recharge***

The potential groundwater recharge impacts associated with future development of the 768-acre project site could be considerable in the cumulative context. However, as discussed in Section 17.0, Water Demand and Supply, the project impacts associated with groundwater recharge would not be considerable with implementation of relevant general plan policies and implementing actions, and with the requirements of the storm drainage master plan. The project includes stormwater management best management practices, including storm water detention ponds, that would facilitate groundwater recharge. Therefore, the proposed project impact would be less than cumulatively considerable.

# Significant Unavoidable Impacts

## 21.1 CEQA Requirements

A significant adverse unavoidable environmental impact is a significant adverse impact that cannot be reduced to a less-than-significant level through the implementation of mitigation measures. CEQA Guidelines section 15093 requires that a lead agency make findings of overriding considerations for unavoidable significant adverse environmental impacts before approving a project.

CEQA Guidelines section 15093(a) requires the decision-making agency to balance, as applicable, the economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of a project against its unavoidable environmental risks when determining whether to approve the project. If the specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of a project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, the adverse environmental effects may be considered “acceptable.” CEQA Guidelines section 15093(b) states that when the lead agency approves a project which will result in the occurrence of significant effects which are identified in the final EIR but are not avoided or substantially lessened, the agency shall state in writing the specific reasons to support its action based on the final EIR and/or other information in the record. The statement of overriding considerations shall be supported by substantial evidence in the record.

## 21.2 Impact Analysis

Based on the environmental analysis provided in this EIR, most of the significant impacts of the proposed project can be reduced to less than significant by implementing general plan policies and implementing actions, mitigation measures included in the general plan EIR, and mitigation measures presented in this EIR. However, the project would result in several significant unavoidable impacts as summarized below.

### Aesthetics

As identified in the general plan EIR, development activity associated with buildout of the general plan could irreversibly degrade the visual character of central Salinas Valley by converting agricultural land to urban use. New development would also create glare from reflective surfaces of new buildings that could create daytime glare. These impacts were identified in the general plan EIR as significant and unavoidable and the City made findings of overriding consideration for them. The

proposed project would contribute to these significant and unavoidable aesthetic impacts, even with implementation of mitigation measures included in Section 18.0, Effects Adequately Addressed in the General Plan EIR.

## **Agricultural Resources**

The general plan EIR concluded that buildout of the general plan would convert Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use – a significant and unavoidable impact. Future development of the project site would convert 756 acres of agricultural land, comprised of 202 acres of Prime Farmland and 554 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance, to non-agricultural use. Approximately 11 acres of additional farmland with the same classifications would be converted as a result of widening existing and constructing new off-site circulation improvements as described in Section 4.0, for a total of 767 acres of farmland conversion. The proposed project would contribute to the significant unavoidable impact on agricultural resources even with implementation of mitigation measures included in Section 5.0, Agricultural Resources. The City Council already adopted a statement of overriding considerations for this impact when adopting the general plan.

## **Air Quality**

The general plan EIR found that buildout of the general would not conflict with the air district's air quality management plan because population growth projections for the city that were included in that plan. Consequently, the general plan EIR concluded that buildout of the general plan would have a less than significant impact on air quality.

The general plan EIR air quality analysis is based air quality impacts of cumulative development within the city as a whole, not potential impacts of future individual projects within the city. The air district has established thresholds of significance for individual projects that are set to manage emissions from cumulative development within the air basin. As described in Section 6.0, the proposed project would exceed air district thresholds for VOC emissions, even with implementation of mitigation measures. Therefore, the proposed project would have a significant unavoidable impact on air quality associated with VOC emissions. The City Council will be required to adopt a statement of overriding considerations when approving the proposed project.

## **Transportation**

The general plan EIR does not address VMT because use of VMT as a threshold of significance has been required only since July 1, 2020. As described in Section 14.0, Transportation, the proposed residential component of the project would exceed the VMT/capita/day threshold of significance. Daily VMT would be reduced by implementing mitigation measures included in Section 6.0, Air Quality. The reduction is insufficient to reduce the impact to less than significant. Therefore, the impact is significant and unavoidable. The City Council will be required to adopt a statement of overriding considerations when approving the proposed project.

## 22.1 CEQA Requirements

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(a) requires a description of a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed project, or to the location of the project, which could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project. It also requires an evaluation of the comparative merits of the alternatives. An EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project, but must consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives that will foster informed decision-making and public participation.

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(b) further requires that the discussion of alternatives focus on those alternatives capable of eliminating any significant adverse environmental impacts or reducing them to a level of insignificance, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives or would be more costly. The EIR must present enough information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis and comparison with the proposed project. If an alternative would cause one or more significant effects in addition to those that would be caused by the project as proposed, the significant effects of the alternative shall be discussed, but in less detail than the significant effects of the project as proposed.

## 22.2 Project Objectives and Significant Impacts

As discussed above, alternatives must be able to meet most of the basic objectives of the project and avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project. Therefore, the proposed project objects and significant effects are summarized here.

### Objectives

The underlying purpose of the project is to support the City's projected growth needs consistent with general plan goals and policies. The applicant's primary principles and objectives are based largely on the conceptual land use concepts for the project and on the applicant's vision for development as would be included in future specific plan to be included in the subsequent project-specific application. As outlined in Section 4.1, Project Objectives, the project objectives are reiterated here as follows:

1. Maintain consistency with General Plan land use policies and priorities.

2. Maintain consistency with the Neighborhood Design Guidelines and Standards for land planning, circulation planning, and site design.
3. Create a plan with a balance of land uses, that optimizes residential opportunities and also provides educational, recreational, shopping and job opportunities, all brought together to create a strong sense of place and community.
4. Include a wide array of residential densities and housing types for people of different income levels, age groups, and lifestyles.
5. Create two community-centric neighborhood villages by orienting residential land uses around central neighborhood village features, including local retail centers, community parks, and public schools.
6. Establish two mixed-use neighborhood village centers and neighborhood village greens to provide activity hubs and gathering destinations to enhance the community experience and support the residents, visitors, and employees.
7. Provide employment opportunities to assist in meeting the City of Gonzales employment goals.
8. Plan for the inclusion of two proposed elementary school sites and a middle school site that are centrally located, integrated into the overall activity core of the community, and readily accessible via non-vehicular pathways, trails and promenades.
9. Locate lower density uses on the outer perimeter areas of each neighborhood village, with densities increasing as one moves toward the neighborhood village centers, thereby providing services accessible to the highest density of residents.
10. Plan residential land uses for orderly, compact growth, achieving a minimum net density of seven dwelling units per acre, as provided in the General Plan.
11. Establish neighborhoods that are inviting for residents and buffered from noise, arterial traffic, and other factors associated with agricultural practices in accord with good planning design.
12. Circulation Design
  - a. Design multimodal streets that effectively circulate vehicular traffic and provide for future transit connections while providing a safe, attractive, and connective circulation system throughout the community.
  - b. Design for consistency with General Plan Land Use and Circulation polices related to street connectivity to form a pattern that provides direct travel routes, facilitates walking and biking, and provides more than one way of reaching a destination.
  - c. Design an arterial framework that accomplishes General Plan objectives for efficient access and through traffic, without interfering with the small town feel of neighborhood village centers.
  - d. Set up a framework that allows efficient grid-like or concentric local residential blocks to conform to optimum lengths and patterns.

- e. Minimize the use of cul-de-sacs to provide multiple routes in and out of residential neighborhoods.
  - f. Design narrow residential streets to reduce traffic speeds and create safer, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods.
  - g. Design a connective greenway system that, to the extent feasible, maintains separation between autos, pedestrians, and bicycles, including a system of promenades.
  - h. Create a park-to-park, park-to-school, and school-to-neighborhood-village-center connective pedestrian system that establishes safe routes to the school, parks, and other community gathering places.
  - i. Employ roundabouts and other traffic calming features to promote efficient movement, safety and a relaxed residential neighborhood environment.
  - j. Design local residential and commercial neighborhood streets such that buildings front on community amenities and park features.
  - k. Create a network of multi-use trails within parks and open spaces that complements the other pedestrian-bicycling networks to encourage walking and bicycling.
13. Community Facilities and Services
- a. Plan for the development of community facilities that are the central elements of the Vista Lucia Project.
  - b. Plan for the inclusion of two elementary schools and a middle school that are integrated into the overall land plan and serve as residential neighborhood gathering places.
  - c. Provide park and open space amenities, including residential neighborhood parks, community parks, two neighborhood village greens, and interconnecting pedestrian-friendly and bicycle friendly routes.
  - d. Provide for potential civic uses within neighborhood village centers to serve the local residents.
  - e. Plan for the development of supporting utility services and infrastructure that would be phased in accordance with development.
  - f. Provide community facilities and services (water service, sewer service, parks and open spaces, retail services, etc.) that accommodate the needs of the community and do not place an unfair burden on the City of Gonzales or Monterey County.
14. Natural and Environmental Features
- a. Minimize water waste through water conservation techniques including management of stormwater runoff through Low Impact Development (LID), use of retention basins and other devices to recharge groundwater tables, and use of drought-tolerant landscaping and efficient irrigation practices.
  - b. Maintain consistency with the Water Supply Assessment (WSA).

- c. Adopt green building practices for site and building design that focus on resource and energy efficiency.
- d. Design landscape plans and guidelines to encourage native and adaptive plants that harmonize with the region's environment.

15. Agricultural land conservation and protection

- a. Phase development of neighborhood villages, so as to allow continued agricultural use of undeveloped properties until such time as site preparation requires termination of use. Minimize the impact on existing agricultural operations, including the neighboring permanent and operational agricultural lands outside of Vista Lucia.
- b. Provide a minimum 200-foot buffer or transitional zone within Vista Lucia adjacent to all permanent and operational agricultural areas. Provide a minimum 200-foot buffer zone as a transition area adjacent to agricultural properties which have been identified for future growth.
- c. Mitigate impacts to permanent agricultural areas by recording a Right-to-Farm Notice on all Vista Lucia neighboring residential properties.

16. Economic Vitality

- a. Promote a long-term financially viable project that provides for housing, recreation, educational opportunities, and the creation of new jobs.
- b. Provide housing choices for a range of income levels to help meet Monterey County housing demand.
- c. Establish financing mechanisms to develop and maintain the necessary infrastructure (e.g., water, sewer, storm drain, parks, open space, and roadways) to create a fiscally neutral project for the City.
- d. Phase development with adequate financing for infrastructure, public services, facilities, and amenities.

## Significant Impacts

### Significant Impacts Reduced to Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures

1. Urban/Agriculture Land Use Conflicts Leading to Indirect Conversion of Agricultural Land (Mitigation Measures 5-2a and 5-2b);
2. Fugitive Dust Emissions During Construction (Mitigation Measure 6-2);
3. Operation of Construction Equipment Would Expose Sensitive Receptors to Toxic Air Contaminants (Mitigation Measures 6-4a and 6-4b);
4. Potential Effect on Congdon's Tarplant (Mitigation Measure 7-1);
5. Potential Effect on Burrowing Owl (Mitigation Measures 7-3a and 7-3b);
6. Potential Effect on Nesting Raptors and Migratory Birds (Mitigation Measure 7-4);

7. Impact on Protected Waters of the U.S. (Mitigation Measures 7-5a, 7-5b and 5c);
8. Effect on Riparian Habitat or Other Sensitive Natural Communities (Mitigation Measure 7-5b);
9. Adverse Change to Historic Resources and/or Unique Archaeological Resources During Construction (Mitigation Measures 8-1a, 8-1b, and 8-1c);
10. Adverse Impact to Native American Human Remains During Construction (Mitigation Measures 8-1a, 8-1b, 8-1c and 8-2);
11. Adverse Impact to Tribal Cultural Resources During Construction (Mitigation Measure 8-3);
12. Generation of Greenhouse Gases (Mitigation Measures 10-1 and 10-2);
13. Conflict with the Gonzales Climate Action Plan (Mitigation Measure 10-1);
14. Release of Hazardous Materials (Mitigation Measure 11-1);
15. Construction Noise (Mitigation Measure 13-1);
16. Noise from Proposed Commercial Uses (Mitigation Measure 13-3);
17. Noise from Planned School Uses (Mitigation Measures 13-4a, 13-4b, and 13-4c); and
18. Cumulative Transportation Noise Impacts on On-Site Receptors (Mitigation Measure 20-1).

### **Significant and Unavoidable Impacts**

1. Substantially degrade the visual character of this part of the central Salinas Valley through conversion of the rural/open space landscape (farmland) that currently characterizes the planning area, to a built landscape associated with urban uses (Mitigation Measure 18-1);
2. Introduce new sources of night time lighting that could result in light trespass, light pollution, and glare (Mitigation Measure 18-2);
3. Convert 756 acres of the 768-acre site classified as Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use and convert 11 additional acres located off site for constructing circulation improvements (Mitigation Measure 5-1);
4. Generate VOC criteria emissions (Mitigation Measures 6-3a, 6-3b, 6-3c and 6-3d); and
5. Generate residential VMT.

## **22.3 Alternatives Considered but Rejected**

### **Alternative Project Location**

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(f)(2) identifies considerations for evaluating an alternative project location. Among these are whether any of the significant effects of the project would be avoided or substantially lessened and whether feasible alternative locations exist. Feasibility is described in section 15126.6(f)(1) and includes factors such as site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, general plan consistency, other plans or regulatory limitations, jurisdictional boundaries, and whether the proponent can reasonably acquire, control or otherwise have access to the alternative site.

The applicant is requesting approval of an annexation among other entitlements. Annexations that are consistent with the Gonzales general plan and County general plan policies regarding city-centered development are possible only for land located within the City’s SOI. The environmental setting for other vacant land within the SOI is similar to the proposed project site. Consequently, the significant impacts of developing other land within the SOI are likely to be similar to the proposed project, particularly the significant and unavoidable impacts identified for the proposed project. For this reason, an alternative project site alternative was not evaluated in detail.

## Phased Annexation Alternative

A phased annexation alternative was considered in recognition of LAFCO’s NOP comments suggesting a phased annexation approach, beginning with annexing only the areas of the site most likely to be built in the near term. Refer to LAFCO’s comment letters included in [Appendix A](#).

From a CEQA perspective, the concept of phasing annexation would relate to the timeframe over which the significant impacts of the proposed project would occur. For example, the impact of converting agricultural land to non-agricultural use would be limited to the acreage within each phase of annexation over time. However, from a development market potential, the applicant would have no incentive to construct new residential uses in advance of there being a clear market for selling new residential products. The market for residential development effectively serves as a development phasing tool. Therefore, the “rate” at which the significant impacts of the project would occur would be the same with or without annexation that is limited to individual phases.

The significant environmental impacts of the project would occur regardless of whether or not a regulatory mechanism is used to require phasing or phasing occurs by default consistent with market demand for residential development. Consequently, this alternative was not considered for detailed evaluation as it would result in no net reduction or avoidance of the significant project impacts.

## 22.4 Alternatives Considered

The following alternatives to the project are considered:

1. Alternative 1: No Project – Development Consistent with Existing Monterey County Farmland Zoning;
2. Alternative 2: Reduced Scale; and
3. Alternative 3: Increased Density.

Per CEQA Guidelines section 15130, a no project alternative must be evaluated. Alternatives 2 and 3 were selected based on their ability to substantially reduce or avoid one or more of the significant mitigable impacts and/or the significant unavoidable impacts of the proposed project as summarized in Section 22.2 above. The City considered NOP comments recommending that a reduced scale alternative and an increased density alternative be evaluated. Alternatives 2 and 3

consider these recommendations. The City has defined these two alternatives based specifically on their ability to avoid or substantially lessen one or more of the significant project impacts. The descriptions of each alternative identify the significant impacts which each alternative is intended to substantially reduce or avoid.

The alternatives are described below, along with analysis of how each has potential to avoid or substantially lessen significant impacts associated with the proposed project.

## **Alternative 1: No Project - Development Consistent with Existing Monterey County Farmland Zoning**

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6 (e) requires the “No Project” alternative be evaluated along with its impacts. The “No Project” alternative analysis must discuss the existing conditions, as well as what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services.

### **Alternative Description**

This alternative investigates what could be reasonably expected to occur on the project site in the reasonably foreseeable future if the proposed project were not approved. For purposes of identifying the no project alternative here, the “current plan” regulating land use within the site is the County general plan, as the project site is located within unincorporated Monterey County. The Monterey County general plan land use designation for the site is Farmlands 40 acre Minimum. According to the Monterey County Zoning Ordinance (Title 21), the following uses are allowed on properties with a Farmlands designation.

- A. Soil dependent agricultural uses, including crop and tree farming, dry land farming, livestock farming, greenhouses and vineyards;
- B. Single family dwellings accessory to the agricultural use of the property, not exceeding three (3) in total, for an owner, operator or employees employed on-site;
- C. All non-habitable accessory structures such as barns, stables, storage structures, and farm shops;
- D. Guesthouses meeting the development standards of Section 21.64.020;
- E. Cultivation, cutting and removal of Christmas trees;
- F. Temporary residence, pursuant to Section 21.64.070, used as living quarters during the construction of the first dwelling on a lot;
- G. Small family day care home;
- H. Small residential care facility, subject to the same standards as a single-family dwelling;

- I. Water system facilities including wells and storage tanks serving four (4) or fewer service connections, pursuant to Chapter 15.04, Monterey County Code, and replacement of water tanks and wells where no increase in service connections is created. Service connections do not include livestock watering facilities;
- J. Rooming and boarding of not more than two (2) persons;
- K. Hunting and fishing;
- L. Reserved;
- M. Stands for the sale of agricultural products grown on the premises having no permanent electricity, plumbing or paving;
- N. Home occupations, pursuant to Section 21.64.090;
- O. The keeping of pets;
- P. Other uses of a similar character, density and intensity to those listed in this section; and
- Q. Agricultural employee housing consisting of not more than thirty-six (36) beds in a group quarters or twelve (12) units or spaces designed for use by a single family or household.

### **No Project Alternative Attainment of Project Objectives**

This alternative does not meet any of the basic project objectives, as it would not allow urban development of the project site. Only agricultural related uses, consistent with County zoning, could be developed.

### **No Project Alternative Impacts Comparison**

This analysis identifies potential impacts associated with this alternative and compares it with the significant, mitigable impacts and significant and unavoidable impacts of developing the site with urban uses after annexation to the City of Gonzales and consistent with the proposed specific plan. The environmental effects of this alternative as compared to the proposed project are summarized by topic area below.

#### ***Aesthetics***

This alternative eliminates the urban development proposed, although very limited development is allowed consistent with Monterey County zoning, the visual impact of which would be limited. Therefore, this alternative would avoid the significant avoidable visual impact associated with general plan buildout regarding converting rural/open space landscape (farmland) as identified in the general plan EIR. This alternative would also avoid the significant unavoidable impact of the proposed project regarding new sources of night time lighting that could result in light trespass, light pollution, and daytime glare impacts from the reflective surfaces of buildings.

#### ***Agricultural Resources***

This alternative could have very limited impacts on agricultural resources, as very limited development of the site could occur under the existing Farmland designation. This alternative greatly

reduces or avoids the significant unavoidable loss of important farmland associated with the proposed project. The alternative is superior to the proposed project from an agricultural resources impact perspective.

### *Air Quality*

This alternative could result in very limited adverse effects on air quality in addition to those occurring with existing on-site farming operations. Therefore, this alternative greatly reduces the air quality impacts of the project, including those that are significant and unavoidable. The alternative is superior to the proposed project from an air quality impact perspective.

### *Biological Resources*

This alternative could result in some impacts to biological resources, depending up where the allowable, limited, development would occur, but certainly to a lesser degree than the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative greatly reduces the biological resources impacts of the proposed project, which are less than significant or less than significant with mitigation. This alternative is superior to the proposed project from a biological resources impact perspective.

### *Cultural and Tribal Resources*

This alternative could have very limited impacts on cultural and tribal resources, as the amount of development allowed under the County general plan is significantly less than that allowed by the City general plan. Therefore, this alternative greatly reduces the potential cultural and tribal resources impacts that could be associated with the proposed project, which are less than significant or less than significant with mitigation. This alternative is superior to the proposed project from a cultural and tribal resources impact perspective.

### *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*

This alternative could result in limited, new GHG emissions impacts in addition to those occurring with existing on-site farming operations. However, because the potential for new development is limited, this alternative greatly reduces the volume of GHGs that would be produced. In absence of the City's Climate Action being the applicable GHG reduction plan for development in the county, this alternative would likely have a less-than-significant GHG impact. This alternative is superior to the proposed project from a GHG emissions impact perspective.

### *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*

This alternative could result in limited new hazards or hazardous materials impacts in addition to those occurring with existing on-site farming operations. The potential hazardous materials impacts associated with the proposed project are related to past and current agricultural practices and related activities at the project site. This alternative would result in the same hazardous materials issues, but avoids impacts from exposing future residents to such hazards. These impacts associated with the proposed project are less than significant with mitigation. Therefore, this alternative is superior to the proposed project.

### *Noise*

This alternative could result in limited new sources of noise. However, this alternative greatly reduces the significant noise impacts of the proposed project, which are less than significant with mitigation. This alternative is superior to the proposed project from a noise impact perspective.

### *Transportation*

This alternative could result in limited new transportation impacts above those occurring with existing on-site farming operations. This alternative would greatly reduce VMT relative to the proposed project and avoids the associated significant and unavoidable impact. The alternative is superior to the proposed project from a transportation impacts perspective.

### *Wastewater*

This alternative could have limited wastewater impacts associated with limited development and associated septic systems. Therefore, this alternative avoids the significant impacts of constructing new wastewater conveyance infrastructure. This alternative is superior to the proposed project.

### *Water Demand and Supply*

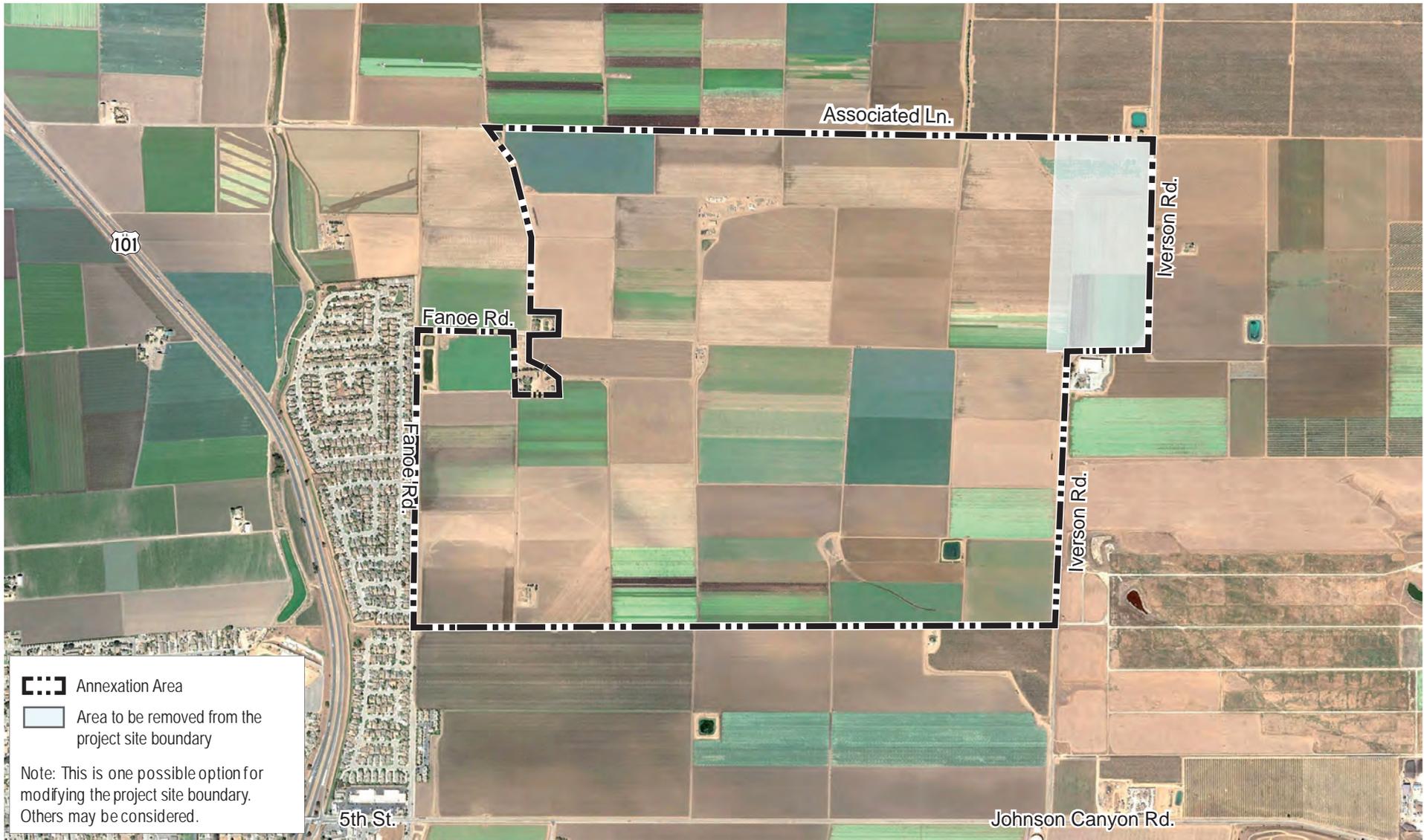
This alternative would result in greater demand for groundwater resources than the proposed project. Current agricultural irrigation and ancillary water demand is estimated at 1,100 to 1,280 AFY, while the net consumptive use for the proposed project is estimated at 414 AFY. This alternative is inferior to the proposed project.

## **Alternative 2: Reduced Scale Alternative Description**

The reduced scale alternative (“reduced scale alternative”) consists of a reduction in residential development capacity sufficient to avoid the significant unavoidable project impact from volatile organic compounds (VOC).

Figure 22-1, *Reduced Scale Alternative (Possible Project Site Boundary)*, presents one possible option for reducing the project site size commensurate with the reduction in total dwelling units. This figure is illustrative and not meant to limit the City of Gonzales in defining a different project site boundary if the City Council were to choose this alternative.

As identified in Section 6.0, *Air Quality*, the proposed project would result in a significant unavoidable air quality impact by exceeding the air district thresholds of significance for VOCs even with implementation of air quality mitigation measures as summarized in that section. With implementation of feasible mitigation measures, VOC emissions would still exceed the applicable threshold of significance by approximately 47 pounds per day.



Source: Google Earth 2020

Figure 22-1

## Reduced Scale Alternative (Possible Project Site Boundary)



*This side intentionally left blank.*

To reduce VOC emissions to below the threshold of significance, the volume of VOC produced by an individual dwelling unit must be determined. The number of dwelling units that must be eliminated from the project to reduce VOCs by 47 pounds per day can then be calculated. The 3,498 proposed dwelling units would produce 183.84 pounds per day of VOCs after mitigation measures are applied as shown in Table 6-5. The volume by which an individual dwelling unit would contribute to exceeding the threshold is 47 pounds per day/3,498 dwelling units, or 0.01 pounds per day per unit. To reduce CO emissions below the threshold, 47 pounds/0.01 pounds per day per unit, or 400 units, must be eliminated from the project. This represents a 12 percent reduction in dwelling units.

The applicant has proposed a minimum average residential density for the project of 7.7 dwelling units per acre as noted in Table 4-2. The residential acreage reduction needed to reduce VOC emissions to below the threshold of significance would be 400 units/7.7 units per acre, or 52 acres. At a project site size of 771 acres, this alternative would reduce the site size by about seven percent.

As a co-benefit of reducing residential development capacity to avoid the VOC impact, all other criteria air emissions volumes would decline, as would GHG emissions.

CEQA Guidelines section 15041, Authority to Mitigate states the following:

Within the limitations described in Section 15040:

(c) With respect to a project which includes housing development, a Lead or Responsible Agency shall not reduce the proposed number of housing units as a mitigation measure or alternative to lessen a particular significant effect on the environment if that agency determines that there is another feasible, specific mitigation measure or alternative that would provide a comparable lessening of the significant effect.

The reduced scale alternative reduces the number of proposed housing units as a basis to lessen and avoid significant effects. However, residential uses are the dominant proposed land use. Residential uses would have dominant responsibility for generating the significant project impacts. The proposed project also includes approximately 96,000 square feet of local neighborhood commercial uses that would contribute to the significance of a variety of significant project impacts. However, eliminating these uses as an option to eliminating residential uses could result in new or more severe significant impacts related to air quality, GHGs, noise, and transportation (VMT). The neighborhood commercial uses would serve to reduce vehicle trip number and length by providing close, convenient access to services for project residents that otherwise would only be available at greater distance, and also provide local employment opportunities. The smart growth advantages of creating a mix of residential and commercial services would be substantially diminished if the commercial uses, in lieu of residential uses, were to be eliminated as a component of avoiding the VOC impact.

It is assumed that the planned off-site circulation improvements would remain necessary; impacts of constructing off-site improvements would remain similar to those for the proposed project.

### **Reduced Scale Alternative Attainment of Project Objectives**

This alternative could achieve most of the project objectives. Two objectives directly related to total residential development capacity would be achieved to a lesser degree than for the proposed project:

- Maintain consistency with General Plan land use policies and priorities.

The general plan includes land use direction that supports buildout of the project site predominantly with residential uses. The residential development yield assumed for the site would be reduced with the reduced scale alternative.

- Create a specific plan with a balance of land uses that optimizes residential opportunities and provides educational, recreational, shopping and job opportunities, all brought together to create a strong sense of place and community spirit.

The reduced scale alternative would not optimize residential opportunities as it would delete approximately 12 percent of the proposed residential units.

### **Reduced Scale Alternative Impacts Comparison**

The environmental effects of the reduced scale alternative are evaluated and compared to the proposed project, summarized by topic area below.

#### ***Aesthetics***

This alternative reduces the developed area footprint of the proposed project by 52 acres, or about 7 percent. Therefore, this alternative reduces the magnitude of visual change associated with the proposed change. This alternative would reduce the significant avoidable visual impact associated with general plan buildout regarding converting rural/open space landscape (farmland) to developed urban uses as identified in the general plan EIR; however, the impact would still be significant and unavoidable. This alternative is superior to the proposed project from a visual resource perspective, as the visual impact of urban development is reduced by 52 acres.

This alternative would be similar to the proposed project regarding significant unavoidable new sources of night time lighting that could result in light trespass, light pollution, and daytime glare impacts from the reflective surfaces of buildings.

#### ***Agricultural Resources***

This alternative reduces the developed area footprint of the proposed project by 52 acres. Therefore, this alternative eliminates 52 acres of Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance within the project site from being converted to non-agricultural use and would substantially lessen this significant unavoidable impact of the project. This alternative is superior to the proposed project from a loss of agricultural resources perspective; however, the impact would remain significant and unavoidable.

Regarding project impacts associated with indirect conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural use, this alternative would be similar to the proposed project. It is assumed that this alternative would also include agricultural buffers similar to the proposed project.

### *Air Quality*

The reduced scale alternative eliminates 400 dwelling units from the proposed project and is designed to avoid the significant unavoidable project impact from VOC emissions. The VOC emissions impacts would be less than significant with this alternative. The reduced scale alternative is also superior to the proposed project regarding lessening the significant CO impact. This alternative would also lessen, but not avoid, the significant impacts of the proposed project regarding fugitive dust and toxic air emissions during construction, as this alternative would require less land disturbance and less construction activity. Therefore, the reduced scale alternative is also superior to the proposed project relative to these effects.

### *Biological Resources*

By reducing the developed area footprint of the proposed project by 52 acres, this alternative would reduce the area of disturbance within which sensitive biological resources may be located. This alternative would lessen the significance of, but not avoid, potentially significant, mitigable impacts of the proposed project on biological resources. Therefore, it would be superior to the proposed project from a biological resource perspective.

### *Cultural and Tribal Resources*

By reducing the developed area footprint of the proposed project by 52 acres, this alternative would reduce the area of disturbance within which unknown cultural and tribal cultural resources could be uncovered and potentially damaged or destroyed. Therefore, this alternative would reduce the potential cultural and tribal resources impacts of the proposed and would be superior to the proposed project from a cultural and tribal resources perspective.

### *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*

The reduced scale alternative would result in substantial reductions in GHG emissions because electricity use, natural gas use and vehicle use activity that generates GHGs would decline. However, the significance of GHG impacts is assessed in context of development consistency with the Gonzales Climate Action Plan. The reduced scale alternative impact would be less than significant providing the same mitigation required of the proposed project is applied. With the same mitigation required, this alternative would, like the proposed project, be consistent with the applicable GHG reduction plan and would further demonstrate substantial progress towards meeting the states AB 1279 net zero emissions target by 2045. Thus, the impacts of the reduced scale alternative would be similar to the proposed project.

### *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*

A number of hazardous materials conditions have been reported to exist or to have existed within the site. These impacts are mitigated to less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures. By reducing the size of the project site, this alternative avoids disturbing 52 acres within which hazardous materials conditions may exist. This could substantially lessen the potential that construction activities associated with the project could result in accidental release of hazardous materials. This alternative is superior to the proposed project from a hazards and hazardous materials perspective.

### *Noise*

The reduced scale alternative would have potentially significant impacts that are similar to the proposed project. Though the area over which construction activity would occur is reduced relative to the proposed project, construction would still occur in the vicinity of sensitive receptors. Traffic volumes generated by this alternative would be lower than for the proposed project. This could lessen the potentially significant traffic noise impact on future homes and the future elementary school planned along Associated Lane. Planned commercial uses within the site would likely still be located adjacent to planned residential uses such that noise exposure at the receptors could still exceed applicable thresholds. School sites would still be reserved within the project site from which noise impacts could still originate. Because this alternative has potential to lessen or avoid a potentially significant impact, this alternative would be superior to the proposed project from a noise perspective.

### *Transportation*

The reduced scale alternative would generate fewer total daily residential VMT than the proposed project. However, the VMT threshold of significance is based on the rate of VMT generated per capita per day. This VMT rate would likely be similar for this alternative as for the proposed project because the ratio of population to VMT traveled would be similar. Therefore, this alternative is also assumed to have a significant unavoidable residential VMT impact and would be similar to the proposed project from a VMT impact perspective.

### *Wastewater*

The reduced scale alternative would result in reduced need for constructing on-site wastewater conveyance facilities. Thus, the related construction impacts would be reduced relative to the proposed project.

### *Water Demand and Supply*

This alternative would result in 400 fewer residential units being constructed. The WSA prepared for the project assumes that medium density residential units (at 7.0 dwellings per acre) demand about .36 AFY/dwelling unit. At 400 fewer dwelling units (assumed to be medium density give that

the average residential density per acre for the project as a whole is 7.7 dwelling per acre), annual groundwater water demand would be reduced by approximately 144 AFY. This alternative would be superior to the proposed project from a groundwater sustainability perspective.

### Alternative 3: Increased Residential Density Alternative Description

This increased residential density alternative (“increased density alternative”) consists of increasing the density for the proposed Neighborhood Residential Low and Neighborhood Residential Medium land use designations by one third (33.3 percent) each. This would have the net effect of maintaining the total proposed number of residential units, but reducing the overall footprint of development. The overall minimum net density of development would also increase. This alternative would lessen significant impacts of the proposed project that are related to development footprint size, and potentially lessen impacts that are density related.

Figure 22-2, *Increased Residential Density Alternative (Possible Project Site Boundary)*, presents one possible option for reducing the project site size. This figure is illustrative and not meant to limit the City in defining a different project site boundary if the City Council were to choose this alternative.

Table 22-1, *Increased Residential Density Scenario*, shows how the combined acreage for the two subject land use designations would decrease when the target density for each is increased by 33.3 percent. The proposed residential development capacity, target density and acreage for each use are taken from Table 4-1, Residential Development Summary. As Table 22-1 indicates, acreage for the Neighborhood Residential Low designation would decline from 242 acres to 161 acres. Acreage in the Neighborhood Residential Medium designation would decline from 173 acres to 116 acres. Total project site area would decline by 138 acres.

**Table 22-1 Increased Residential Density Scenario**

Residential Designation	Proposed Project			Increased Density Alternative		
	Units	Target Density	Acres	Units	Target Density	Acres
Neighborhood Residential Low	1,210	5 du/ac	242	1,210	7.5 du/ac	161
Neighborhood Residential Medium	1,217	7 du/ac	173	1,217	10.5 du/ac	116
Total	2,427		415	2,427		277
Total Reduction in Residential Acreage at 33.3% Density Increase				415 Acres – 277 Acres = 138 Acre Reduction		

SOURCE: EMC Planning Group 2023; Pembroke Development 2023

It is assumed that the planned off-site circulation improvements for the proposed project would remain necessary such that impacts of constructing off-site improvements would remain similar to those for the proposed project.

### **Increased Density Alternative Attainment of Project Objectives**

This alternative would achieve the objectives of the proposed project. However, one objective would potentially be achieved to a lesser degree than for the proposed project. This objective is to “include a wide array of residential densities and housing types for people of different income levels, age groups, and lifestyles.” The increased density alternative would potentially reduce the array of housing types provided. By increasing density for the two noted land use types, the range of densities for the project as a whole would be narrowed. It may then become less feasible to construct more traditional types of low-density residential product types on larger lots.

### **Increased Density Alternative Impacts Comparison**

The environmental effects of the increased density alternative are evaluated here and compared to the significant, mitigable impacts and significant and unavoidable impacts are summarized by topic area below.

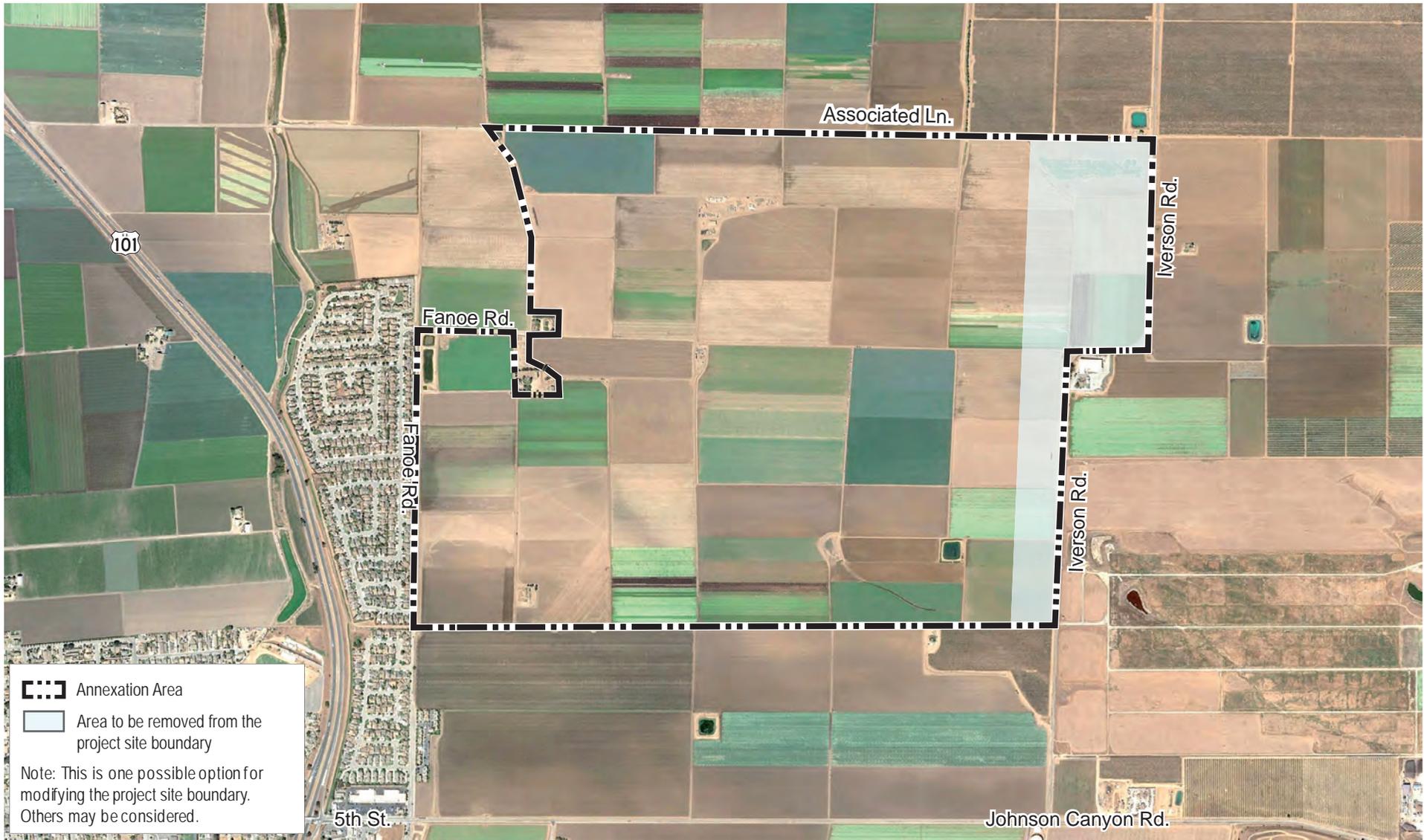
#### ***Aesthetics***

The increased density alternative reduces the developed area footprint of the proposed project by 138 acres. Therefore, this alternative significantly reduces the magnitude of visual change associated with the proposed change in use of the site from agriculture to urban. This alternative would substantially lessen the proposed project contribution to the significant avoidable visual impact of converting rural/open space landscape (farmland) to developed urban uses as identified in the general plan EIR. This alternative is superior to the proposed project from this visual resource impact perspective.

When compared to the proposed project, this alternative would result in reduced significant unavoidable new sources of night time lighting that could result in light trespass, light pollution, but would be similar to daytime glare impacts from the reflective surfaces of buildings associated with commercial and retail uses.

#### ***Agricultural Resources***

This alternative reduces the developed area footprint of the proposed project by 138 acres or about 18 percent. This alternative substantially reduces the 756 acres of Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance within the project site that would be converted to non-agricultural use with implementation of the proposed project by approximately 18 percent. This alternative would substantially lessen this significant unavoidable impact of the proposed project. This alternative is superior to the proposed project from a loss of agricultural resources perspective.



Source: Google Earth 2020

Figure 22-2

## Increased Density Alternative (Possible Project Site Boundary)



*This side intentionally left blank.*

Regarding project impacts associated with indirect conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural use, this alternative would be similar to the proposed project. It is assumed that this alternative would also include agricultural buffers similar to the proposed project.

### *Air Quality*

The increased density alternative is assumed to slightly lessen the significant and unavoidable and significant criteria emissions impacts of the proposed project. A slight reduction is possible because the project would become more compact with more future project residents located in closer proximity to schools, planned commercial uses, and other project amenities. This could result in a minor shift in transportation mode from vehicle travel to pedestrian and/or bicycle travel. While the impact of this alternative would remain significant and unavoidable, it would be superior to the proposed project from a criteria emissions impact perspective.

This alternative would lessen but not avoid the significant impacts of the proposed project regarding fugitive dust and toxic air emissions during construction because this alternative would require 138 fewer acres of land disturbance during construction. Therefore, the reduced scale alternative is superior to the proposed project relative to these effects.

### *Biological Resources*

By reducing the developed area footprint of the proposed project by 138 acres, this alternative would reduce the area of disturbance within which sensitive biological resources may be located. Consequently, this alternative would lessen the significance of, but not avoid, potentially significant impacts of the proposed project on sensitive biological resources. This alternative is superior to the proposed project from a biological resource perspective.

### *Cultural and Tribal Resources*

This alternative results in approximately 138 acres of agricultural land being retained rather than converted to residential uses. By reducing the developed area footprint of the proposed project, this alternative would reduce the area of disturbance within which unknown cultural and tribal cultural resources could be uncovered and potentially damaged or destroyed. This alternative would substantially lessen the significance of all potential cultural and tribal resources impacts and would be superior to the proposed project from a cultural and tribal resource perspective.

### *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*

The increased density alternative is assumed to slightly reduce VMT and associated transportation fuel demand because the project would become more compact with more future project residents located closer to schools, planned commercial uses, and other project amenities. This could result in a minor shift in transportation mode from vehicle travel to pedestrian and/or bicycle travel. This could result in a small decrease the GHG emissions. However, the significance of GHG impacts is assessed in context of development consistency with the Gonzales CAP. The increased density alternative impact would be also be less than significant provided the same mitigation required of

the proposed project would be required of this alternative to ensure its consistency with the CAP. Thus, the impact of this alternative would be similar to the proposed project. For the same reason, this alternative would have a similar impact regarding conflict with the CAP.

### *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*

This alternative reduces the physical area of disturbance by 138 acres relative to the proposed project. A number of hazardous materials conditions have been reported to exist within the site. By reducing the size of the project site, the reduced scale alternative would reduce the acreage of land disturbance on which one or more hazardous materials conditions may exist. Consequently, this alternative could substantially lessen, but not avoid the significant impacts of the project associated with accidental release of hazardous materials and the risks from emitting hazardous materials near existing or planned school site.

### *Noise*

Though the area over which construction activity would occur is reduced relative to the proposed project, construction would still occur in the vicinity of sensitive receptors. Construction noise impacts of this alternative would be similar to the proposed project.

This increased density alternative is assumed to have similar significant impacts as the proposed project regarding exposure of on-site noise sensitive uses to on-site stationary noise sources associated with on-site commercial uses and schools because these uses would remain a part of the project and would likely still be placed adjacent to on-site sensitive uses.

Under general plan buildout conditions, cumulative traffic noise along Fanoe Road, Associated Lane, and Iverson Road would increase. The noise analysis in Section 13.0 concludes that traffic noise impacts on residential and school uses planned along Associated Lane could be potentially significant, but mitigated to less than significant. This alternative would contribute similar volumes of traffic to the cumulative condition on Associated Lane, and therefore, would likely have a similar impact as the proposed project.

### *Transportation*

The proposed project VMT impact is significant and unavoidable. This alternative would potentially reduce VMT because the project would become more compact with more future project residents located closer to schools, planned commercial uses, and other project amenities. This could result in a minor shift in transportation mode from vehicle travel to pedestrian and/or bicycle travel and/or result in slightly shorter trip lengths.

It is unlikely that a minor daily VMT reduction that might accrue to this alternative would be sufficient to avoid the significant unavoidable impact identified for the proposed project. Therefore, the VMT impact from this alternative is assumed to be significant and unavoidable, and this alternative is assumed to be similar to the proposed project from a VMT impact perspective.

### *Wastewater*

The reduced scale alternative would result in reduced need for constructing on-site wastewater conveyance facilities. Thus, the related construction impacts would be reduced relative to the proposed project.

### *Water Demand and Supply*

Water demand from residential units typically declines with increased residential density. This is reflected in Table 2-1, Summary of Residential Demand Factors for VLSP, in the WSA in Appendix G. Thus, by increasing average residential density, this alternative would result in incrementally reduced demand for groundwater. Therefore, this alternative is superior to the proposed project from a groundwater sustainability perspective.

## 22.5 Comparison of Alternatives

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(a), an EIR shall evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives. The significance of effects of the alternatives relative to the proposed project are summarized Table 22-2, [Comparison of Alternatives Impacts Compared to the Proposed Project Impacts](#). The table includes information on whether the alternatives have potential to lessen or avoid the significant mitigable impacts and the significant and unavoidable impacts of the proposed project, or whether the alternatives have a similar or greater impact than the proposed project.

## 22.6 Environmentally Superior Alternative

The no project alternative is the environmentally superior alternative. It would avoid the significant unavoidable construction and operational VOC and CO impacts of the proposed project, significantly reduce conversion of important farmland, and avoid or substantially reduce other significant, mitigable impacts of the proposed project.

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(e)(2) states that if the environmentally superior alternative is the “no project” alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives. Alternative 2, the Reduced Scale alternative, is considered to be the environmentally superior alternative among the remaining alternatives. It avoids a significant unavoidable impact (VOC emissions) and substantially reduces the significance of a greater number of significant impacts relative to Alternative 3, the Increased Residential Density alternative.

**Table 22-2 Summary of Alternatives Impacts Compared to the Proposed Project Impacts**

Environmental Impact	Proposed Project	Alternative #1 No Project	Alternative #2 Reduced Scale	Alternative #3 Increased Density
<b>General Plan EIR Impact AES-1.</b> Substantial degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.	SU	NI Avoids Impact	SU Less than Proposed Project	SU Less than Proposed Project
<b>General Plan EIR Impact AES-2.</b> Light trespass, light pollution, and glare – glare from reflective surfaces	SU	NI Avoids Impact	SU Same as Proposed Project	SU Same as Proposed Project
<b>Impact 5-1.</b> Conversion of 767 Acres of Farmland to Non-Agricultural Use	SU	LTS Less than Proposed Project	SU Less than Proposed Project	SU Less than Proposed Project
<b>Impact 5-2.</b> Urban/Agricultural Land Use Conflicts with Potential to Convert Farmland to Non-Agricultural Use	LTSM	NI Avoids Impact	LTSM Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Same as Proposed Project
<b>Impact 6-2.</b> Fugitive Dust Emissions During Construction Would Exceed the Air District Thresholds and Degrade Air Quality	LTSM	LTS Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project
<b>Impact 6-3.</b> Criteria Air Pollutants During Operations Would Exceed Air District Thresholds and Degrade Air Quality	SU	LTS Less than Proposed Project	SU Less than Proposed Project	SU Less than Proposed Project
<b>Impact 6-4.</b> Operation of Construction Equipment Would Expose Sensitive Receptors to Toxic Air Contaminants	LTSM	LTS Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project
<b>Impact 7-1.</b> Potential Effect on Candidate, Sensitive, or Special-Status Species (Congdon's Tarplant)	LTSM	LTSM Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project
<b>Impact 7-3.</b> Potential Effect on Candidate, Sensitive, or Special-Status Species (Burrowing Owl)	LTSM	LTSM Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project

Environmental Impact	Proposed Project	Alternative #1 No Project	Alternative #2 Reduced Scale	Alternative #3 Increased Density
<b>Impact 7-4.</b> Potential Effect on Candidate, Sensitive, or Special-Status Species (Nesting Raptors and Migratory Birds)	LTSM	LTSM Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project
<b>Impact 7-5.</b> Loss of Federally Protected Waters of the U.S.	LTSM	LTSM Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project
<b>Impact 7-8.</b> Effect on Riparian Habitat or Other Sensitive Natural Communities	LTSM	LTSM Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project
<b>Impact 8-1.</b> Adverse Change to Historic Resources and/or Unique Archaeological Resources During Construction	LTSM	LTSM Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project
<b>Impact 8-2.</b> Adverse Impact to Native American Human Remains During Construction	LTSM	LTSM Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project
<b>Impact 8-3.</b> Adverse Impact to Tribal Cultural Resources During Construction	LTSM	LTSM Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project
<b>Impact 10-1.</b> Generation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions That Have a Significant Impact on the Environment	LTSM	LTS Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Same as Proposed Project	LTSM Same as Proposed Project
<b>Impact 10-2.</b> Conflict with the Gonzales Climate Action Plan: 2018 Update	LTSM	LTS Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Same as Proposed Project	LTSM Same as Proposed Project
<b>Impact 11-2.</b> Hazard to the Public or the Environment from Release of Hazardous Materials into the Environment	LTSM	LTSM Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project
<b>Impact 13-1.</b> On-and Off-Site Construction Activities Would Cause a Substantial Temporary Noise Increase	LTSM	LTS Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Same as Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project

Environmental Impact	Proposed Project	Alternative #1 No Project	Alternative #2 Reduced Scale	Alternative #3 Increased Density
<b>Impact 13-3.</b> Commercial Uses Could Result in a Permanent Substantial Noise Increase at On-Site Sensitive Receptors	LTSM	NI Avoids Impact	LTSM Same as Proposed Project	LTSM Same as Proposed Project
<b>Impact 13-4.</b> Noise from Schools with a Permanent Substantial Noise Increase at On-Site Sensitive Receptors	LTSM	NI Avoids Impact	LTSM Same as Proposed Project	LTSM Same as Proposed Project
<b>Cumulatively Considerable Impact.</b> Traffic Noise Impacts on Future On-Site Residential and School Sensitive Receptors Along Associated Lane	LTSM	LTS Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Less than Proposed Project	LTSM Same as Proposed Project
<b>Impact 14-2.</b> Conflict with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 by Exceeding the Applicable Threshold for VMT	SU	LTS Less than Proposed Project	SU Same as Proposed Project	SU Same as Proposed Project
<b>Project Objectives</b>	Met	Not Met	Partially Met	Partially Met

SOURCE: EMC Planning Group 2023

NOTE: NI – No Impact; LTS – Less Than Significant; LTSM – Less-Than-Significant with Mitigation; LTS – Less than Significant; SU – Significant and Unavoidable

## 23.1 Documents, Persons Contacted and Web Sources

This section provides the document, persons contacted and web sources referenced in the supplemental EIR. Sources are provided by section.

### Introduction

City of Gonzales. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report*.

[https://gonzalesca.gov/sites/default/files/2018-09/Gonzales\\_GP\\_DEIR\\_Volume\\_1\\_Web.pdf](https://gonzalesca.gov/sites/default/files/2018-09/Gonzales_GP_DEIR_Volume_1_Web.pdf)

### Environmental Setting

California Association of Local Agency Formation Commissions website. “What are Sphere of Influence studies?” Accessed May 18, 2020. <https://calafco.org/lafco-law/faq/what-are-sphere-influence-studies>

City of Gonzales. 2010. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report*.

[https://gonzalesca.gov/sites/default/files/2018-09/Gonzales\\_GP\\_DEIR\\_Volume\\_1\\_Web.pdf](https://gonzalesca.gov/sites/default/files/2018-09/Gonzales_GP_DEIR_Volume_1_Web.pdf)

———. 2018. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan (revised June 2018)*. January 2011.

Accessed June 3, 2020. [https://gonzalesca.gov/sites/default/files/2018-11/2010%20General%20Plan%20Revised%202018\\_0.pdf](https://gonzalesca.gov/sites/default/files/2018-11/2010%20General%20Plan%20Revised%202018_0.pdf)

City of Gonzales and County of Monterey. 2014. *Memorandum of Agreement Between the City of Gonzales and the County of Monterey Regarding Working Cooperatively on Common Planning, Growth and Development Issues in Order to be as Efficient as Possible in the Implementation of Their Respective General Plans*. <https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/home/showdocument?id=72656>

County of Monterey. 2010 *Monterey County General Plan*

<https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/home/showdocument?id=45962>

### Project Description

City of Gonzales. 2018. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan (revised June 2018)*. January 2011.

Accessed June 3, 2020. [https://gonzalesca.gov/sites/default/files/2018-11/2010%20General%20Plan%20Revised%202018\\_0.pdf](https://gonzalesca.gov/sites/default/files/2018-11/2010%20General%20Plan%20Revised%202018_0.pdf)

- . *Title 12 Zoning Regulations*. Accessed May 1, 2023:  
<https://www.codepublishing.com/CA/Gonzales/#!/Gonzales12/Gonzales12.html>
- . September 21, 2015. *City of Gonzales 2015-2013 Housing Element*.
- House Moran Consulting, Inc. February 2019. *Conceptual Drainage Master Plan – Proposed Developments within Sphere of Influence, City of Gonzales*. Ferndale, CA.
- Kimley Horn. June 2019a. *City of Gonzales Existing City Plus Sphere of Influence Water Master Plan*. Salinas, CA.
- . December 2019b. *City of Gonzales Existing City Plus Sphere of Influence Wastewater Master Plan*. Salinas, CA.
- . December 2019c. *City of Gonzales Sphere of Influence Circulation Study – Transportation Impact Analysis Final Report*. Salinas, CA.
- Psomas. 2022. *Wastewater Conveyance System Evaluation and CIP Program Development*.

## Agricultural Resources

- California Department of Conservation. 2018. California Important Farmland.  
<https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/ciftimeseries/>
- City of Gonzales. July 2010. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report – Volume 1*. Gonzales, CA.
- . January 2011. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan*. Gonzales, CA.
- City of Gonzales and County of Monterey 2014. *Memorandum of Agreement between the City of Gonzales and the County of Monterey Regarding Working Cooperatively on Common Planning, Growth and Development Issues in Order to be as Effective as Possible in the Implementation of their Respective General Plans*.
- Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office. Williamson Act Map.  
<https://montereyco.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=9aa9d5bf30904f3c904eb5fe869f62b7>

## Air Quality

- Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments. 2022. *2022 Regional Growth Forecast*.  
[https://www.ambag.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/REVISED\\_PDFAAppendix%20A\\_2022%20RGF.pdf](https://www.ambag.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/REVISED_PDFAAppendix%20A_2022%20RGF.pdf)
- California Air Pollution Control Officers Association. 2021. *Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions, Assessing Climate Vulnerabilities, and Advancing Health and Equity*.  
<https://www.calemod.com/handbook/index.html>

California Air Resources Board. “Summary: Diesel Particulate Matter Health Impacts.” Accessed March 31, 2020. <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/summary-diesel-particulate-matter-health-impacts>

———. April 2005. *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective*. <https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/ch/handbook.pdf>

DieselNet. “United States: Nonroad Diesel Engines.” Last modified December 2017. <https://www.dieselnet.com/standards/us/nonroad.php>

EMC Planning Group. September 2020. *Vista Lucia Annexation Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report*. Monterey, CA.

———. 2023. Vista Lucia Air Quality and GHG Modeling and Regulatory Setting Update Memo.

Monterey Bay Air Resources District. March 2017. *2012-2015 Air Quality Management Plan*. Monterey, CA. <http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/home/showdocument?id=62318>

———. No Date. *Consistency Determination Procedure for Residential Development Projects*. <https://www.mbard.org/ceqa>

Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District. February 2008. *CEQA Air Quality Guidelines*. Monterey, CA. [https://www.mbard.org/files/f665829d1/CEQA\\_full+%281%29.pdf](https://www.mbard.org/files/f665829d1/CEQA_full+%281%29.pdf)

## Biological Resources

California Burrowing Owl Consortium (CBOC). 1993. *Burrowing Owl Survey Protocol and Mitigation Guidelines*.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). 2023. *California Natural Diversity Database*. Records of occurrence for Gonzales, Natividad, Mount Harlan, Paicines, Mount Johnson, Soledad, Palo Escrito Peak, Rana Creek, and Chualar quadrangle maps. Sacramento, CA. <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/cnddb/mapsanddata.asp>.

———. 2018. *Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Sensitive Natural Communities*.

<https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=18959&inline>

———. 2012. *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation*. Sacramento, CA. <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=83843&inline=true>

California Native Plant Society (CNPS). 2023. *Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants*. Records of occurrence for Gonzales, Natividad, Mount Harlan, Paicines, Mount Johnson, Soledad, Palo Escrito Peak, Rana Creek, and Chualar quadrangle maps. Sacramento, CA. <http://www.cnps.org/inventory>

- . 2001. *CNPS Botanical Survey Guidelines*. [https://cnps.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/cnps\\_survey\\_guidelines.pdf](https://cnps.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/cnps_survey_guidelines.pdf)
- City of Gonzales. July 2010. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report – Volume 1*. Gonzales, CA.
- . January 2011. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan*. Gonzales, CA.
- . 2020. Gonzales City Code – Chapter 9.16: Street Trees and Tree Protection. <https://www.codepublishing.com/CA/Gonzales/#!/Gonzales09/Gonzales0916.html>
- Johnson and Shaffer. 2006. *Fanoe Pond Tiger Salamander Genotyping*.
- Live Oak Associates, Inc. 2003. *Biological Constraints Analysis, Assessor's Parcel Numbers 223-031-024, 223-031-025, and 223-031-027, Gonzales, California*.
- . 2006. *Investigation of Waters of the United States, Cielo Grande Ranch, Monterey County, California*.
- . 2019. *Historical and Current Genetic Composition of Mole (Ambystoma) Salamanders at Vista Lucia, City of Gonzales, Monterey California*.
- Riley et. al. 2003. Hybridization between a rare, native tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*) and its introduced congener. *Ecological Applications*. Volume 13: 1263-1275.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. 2007. Letter to Ms. Franlinda Khuon, *File Number 400217S*.
- . 2014. Letter to Ms. Franlinda Khuon plus jurisdictional features stamped map, *File Number 2006-400217S*.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2023a. *Information Planning and Conservation System Official Species List* <https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/>
- . 2023b. *National Wetlands Inventory Wetland Mapper*. Accessed April 2020. <https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/data/mapper.html>
- . 2007. *Regulatory Status of the Tiger Salamander Population at Cielo Grande Ranch (Assessor's Parcel Numbers 014-030-029 through 014-020-032, 014-030-034 through 014-030-039; and 014-030-056) in Gonzales, Monterey County, California*.

## Cultural and Tribal Resources

- Archaeological Resource Management. April 8, 2020. *Historic Evaluation of the Structures within the Proposed Vista Lucia Annexation Areas for the City of Gonzales*.
- California Historical Resources Information System. 2020. Northwest Information Center, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California. NWIC File No.: 19-1576.
- County of Monterey. *2010 Monterey County General Plan*. <https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/home/showdocument?id=45962>

County of Monterey. 2007. *Monterey County Draft General Plan Environmental Impact Report*.

<https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-i-z/resource-management-agency-rma-/planning/resources-documents/2010-general-plan/draft-environmental-impact-report-deir>

Native American Heritage Commission. 2020. Sacred Lands File & Native American Contacts List Request. <http://nahc.ca.gov/>

Roper, C. Kristina. January 4, 2004. A Cultural Resources Survey of the 771-Acre Fanoe Road Property, Assessor's Parcel Numbers 223-031-024, 223-031-025, and 223-031-027, Gonzales, Monterey County, California.

Sierra Valley Cultural Planning. *A Cultural Resources Survey of the 771-Acre Fanoe Road Property, Assessor's Parcel Numbers 223-031-024, 223-031-025, and 223-031-027, Gonzales, Monterey County, California*. January 4, 2004.

Sundt, Matthew, (Former) Planning Director, City of Gonzales. Personal conversation with EMC Planning Group, 17, July, 2020.

## Energy

California Energy Commission. 2021. *2022 Building Energy Efficiency Standards Summary*. Accessed July 19, 2023. [https://www.energy.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2021-08/CEC\\_2022\\_EnergyCodeUpdateSummary\\_ADA.pdf](https://www.energy.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2021-08/CEC_2022_EnergyCodeUpdateSummary_ADA.pdf)

———. *Electricity Consumption by County*; Accessed July 18, 2023. <http://www.ecdms.energy.ca.gov/elecbycounty.aspx>

———. *Gas Consumption by County*; Accessed July 18, 2023. <http://www.ecdms.energy.ca.gov/gasbycounty.aspx>

EMC Planning Group. September 2020. *Vista Lucia Annexation Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report*. Monterey, CA.

———. 2023. *Vista Lucia Air Quality and GHG Modeling and Regulatory Setting Update Memo*.

Zero City. August 20, 2018. *Gonzales Climate Action Plan: 2018 Update*. <https://gonzalesca.gov/sites/default/files/2019-11/Adopted%202018%20Gonzales%20CAP%20Update.pdf>

Zhou, Ollie, Senior Associate, Hexagon Transportation Consultants. Email message to EMC Planning Group, 6 December 2023.

## Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Bay Area Air Quality Management District. 2022. *Justification Report: CEQA Thresholds for Evaluating the Significance of Climate Impacts from Land Use Projects and Plans.*

[https://www.baaqmd.gov/~/\\_media/files/planning-and-research/ceqa/ceqa-thresholds-2022/justification-report-pdf.pdf?la=en](https://www.baaqmd.gov/~/_media/files/planning-and-research/ceqa/ceqa-thresholds-2022/justification-report-pdf.pdf?la=en)

EMC Planning Group. September 2020. *Vista Lucia Annexation – Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report.* Monterey, CA.

———. 2023. *Vista Lucia Air Quality and GHG Modeling and Regulatory Setting Update Memo.*

Zero City. August 20, 2018a. *Gonzales Climate Action Plan: 2018 Update.*

<https://gonzalesca.gov/sites/default/files/2019-11/Adopted%202018%20Gonzales%20CAP%20Update.pdf>

———. July 2018b. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (February 2013): (SCH# 2009121017) Addendum.* [https://gonzalesca.gov/sites/default/files/2019-11/2018%20Addendum%20to%202013%20GP%20SEIR\\_0.pdf](https://gonzalesca.gov/sites/default/files/2019-11/2018%20Addendum%20to%202013%20GP%20SEIR_0.pdf)

## Hazards and Hazardous Materials

California Department of Toxic Substances Control. *DTSC's Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List – Site Cleanup (Cortese List)*; Accessed March 12, 2020.

[https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/search?cmd=search&reporttype=CORTESE&site\\_type=CSITES,FUDS&status=ACT,BKLG,COM&reporttitle=HAZARDOUS+WASTE+AND+SUBSTANCES+SITE+LIST+%28CORTESE%29](https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/search?cmd=search&reporttype=CORTESE&site_type=CSITES,FUDS&status=ACT,BKLG,COM&reporttitle=HAZARDOUS+WASTE+AND+SUBSTANCES+SITE+LIST+%28CORTESE%29)

California Environmental Protection Agency. “Sites Identified with Waste Constituents above Hazardous Waste Levels Outside the Waste Management Unit.” Accessed on July 13, 2020a. <https://calepa.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2016/10/SiteCleanup-CorteseList-CurrentList.pdf>

———. “List of hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action pursuant to Section 25187.5 of the Health and Safety Code, identified by DTSC.” Accessed on July 13, 2020b. <https://calepa.ca.gov/SiteCleanup/CorteseList/>

CalFire. 2008. Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones in LRA. Accessed on August 2, 2023. [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/media/6728/fhszl\\_map27.pdf](chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/media/6728/fhszl_map27.pdf)

City of Gonzales. July 2010. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report – Volume 1.* Gonzales, CA.

———. January 2011. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan.* Gonzales, CA.

Lowney Associates. November 2004. *Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessment Fanoe Ranch Gonzales, California.* San Ramon, CA.

McCloskey Consultants. 2022. *Soil Mitigation Plan, Vista Lucia.*

Monterey County. “GIS Map Viewer.” Accessed on March 12, 2020.

[https://maps.co.monterey.ca.us/Html5Viewer/index.html?viewer=PBI\\_Map.PBI\\_Map\\_Viewer](https://maps.co.monterey.ca.us/Html5Viewer/index.html?viewer=PBI_Map.PBI_Map_Viewer)

State Water Resources Control Board. “GeoTracker.” Accessed on July 13, 2020.

<https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/map/?myaddress=California&from=header&ccqid=1173825919>

## Hydrology and Water Quality

City of Gonzales. July 2010. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report – Volume 1*. Gonzales, CA.

Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. 2015. *Stormwater Technical Guide for Low Impact Development; Compliance with Stormwater Post-Construction Requirements for the Monterey Regional Stormwater Management Program*. <https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/home/showdocument?id=11941>

———. 2019. *Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin*,

[https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/publications\\_forms/publications/basin\\_plan/docs/2019\\_basin\\_plan\\_r3\\_complete\\_webaccess.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/publications_forms/publications/basin_plan/docs/2019_basin_plan_r3_complete_webaccess.pdf)

House Moran Consulting. 2019. *Conceptual Drainage Master Plan - Proposed Developments within Sphere of Influence City of Gonzales*. <https://gonzalesca.gov/sites/default/files/2019-11/City%20of%20Gonzales%20Wastewater%20Master%20Plan-Final.pdf>

United States Environmental Protection Agency. National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). <https://www.epa.gov/npdes/construction-general-permit-cgp-frequent-questions>

## Noise

Brown-Buntin Associates, Inc. April 19, 2010. *Noise Element Update, Gonzales 2010 General Plan, City of Gonzales, California*. Visalia, CA.

City of Gonzales. July 2010. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report – Volume 1*. Gonzales, CA.

WJV Acoustics, Inc. August 19, 2020. *Acoustical Analysis – Vista Lucia Annexation, Gonzales, California*. Visalia, CA.

## Public Services

California Department of Finance. 2023 “E-4 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State, 2021-2023 with 2020 Census Benchmark”.

<https://dof.ca.gov/forecasting/demographics/estimates/e-4-population-estimates-for-cities-counties-and-the-state-2021-2023-with-2020-census-benchmark/>

- California Department of Education. 2000. *Guide to School Site Analysis and Development*.  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/fa/sf/documents/schoolsiteanalysis2000.pdf>
- City of Gonzales. July 2010. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report – Volume 1*.  
 Gonzales, CA.
- . “Apparatus.” Accessed on March 13, 2020a. <https://gonzalesca.gov/services/fire-department/apparatus>
- . “Parks and Facilities.” Accessed on March 23, 2020b.  
<https://gonzalesca.gov/services/recreation/parks-and-facilities>
- . “Fire Department.” Accessed on August 10, 2023a. <https://gonzalesca.gov/services/fire-department>
- . “Police.” Accessed on August 10, 2023b. <https://gonzalesca.gov/services/police>
- Gonzales Rural Fire Protection District. “Home.” Accessed in 2020. <http://gonzalesrfpd.org/>
- Lumbra, Joannie, Associate Superintendent/CBO, Gonzales Union School District. Email correspondence with consultant, 11 August 2023.
- SchoolWorks. February 2020. *Gonzales Unified School District 2019-2020 Facilities Master Plan Update*.  
<https://4.files.edl.io/2bce/07/04/20/033204-fcf955a4-fde4-4717-a75d-97a598c6b9a1.pdf>
- Sundt, Matthew, (Former) City of Gonzales Planning Director. Emails to EMC Planning Group, 13 May and 18 May 2020.

## Transportation

- Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments. June 13, 2022. *2022 Regional Growth Forecast*.  
 Monterey, CA. [https://www.ambag.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/REVISED\\_PDFA Appendix%20A\\_2022%20RGF.pdf](https://www.ambag.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/REVISED_PDFA%20Appendix%20A_2022%20RGF.pdf)
- California Association of Air Pollution Control Officers. 2021. *Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions, Assessing Climate Vulnerabilities, and Advancing Health and Equity*.  
[https://www.airquality.org/ClimateChange/Documents/Handbook%20Public%20Draft\\_2021-Aug.pdf](https://www.airquality.org/ClimateChange/Documents/Handbook%20Public%20Draft_2021-Aug.pdf)
- City of Gonzales. July 2010. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report – Volume 1*.  
 Gonzales, CA.
- . January 2011. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan*. Gonzales, CA.
- Hexagon Transportation Consultants, Inc. December 2023. *Vehicle Miles Traveled Analysis for the Proposed Vista Lucia Annexation in Gonzales, California*. San Jose, CA.
- Kimley-Horn. December 18, 2019. *City of Gonzales Sphere of Influence Circulation Study – Transportation Impact Analysis Final Report*. Salinas, CA.

## Wastewater

City of Gonzales. July 2010. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report – Volume 1*. Gonzales, CA.

Kimley Horn. 2019. *Final Report – Existing City Plus Sphere of Influence Wastewater Master Plan*. Gonzales, CA. <https://gonzalesca.gov/sites/default/files/2019-11/City%20of%20Gonzales%20Wastewater%20Master%20Plan-Final.pdf>

Psomas. 2022. *Wastewater Conveyance System Evaluation and CIP Program Development*.

Ruggeri-Jensen-Azar. 2020. *Project Description for the Satellite Wastewater Treatment Plant(s) Memorandum*.

## Water Demand and Supply

California Department of Water Resources. October 2023. *Water Year 2023: Weather Whiplash, From Drought To Deluge*. [https://water.ca.gov/-/media/DWR-Website/Web-Pages/Water-Basics/Drought/Files/Publications-And-Reports/Water-Year-2023-wrap-up-brochure\\_01.pdf](https://water.ca.gov/-/media/DWR-Website/Web-Pages/Water-Basics/Drought/Files/Publications-And-Reports/Water-Year-2023-wrap-up-brochure_01.pdf)

City of Gonzales. July 2010. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report – Volume 1*. Gonzales, CA.

House Moran Consulting, Inc. February 2019. *City of Gonzales Conceptual Drainage Master Plan, Proposed Developments within Sphere of Influence*. [https://gonzalesca.gov/sites/default/files/2019-11/Drainage%20Report%20%26%20Appendix\\_1.pdf](https://gonzalesca.gov/sites/default/files/2019-11/Drainage%20Report%20%26%20Appendix_1.pdf)

Kimley-Horn. June 2019. *Final Report – Existing City Plus Sphere of Influence Water Master Plan*. Gonzales, CA. <https://gonzalesca.gov/sites/default/files/2019-11/City%20of%20Gonzales%20Wastewater%20Master%20Plan-Final.pdf>

Lyles, Frank, Zanjero. September 29, 2023. Email to Teri Wissler Adam, EMC Planning Group.

Psomas. 2022. *2021 Wastewater Conveyance System Evaluation and CIP Program Development*.

Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Coast Region. June 2019. *Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin*. [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/publications\\_forms/publications/basin\\_plan/docs/2019\\_basin\\_plan\\_r3\\_complete.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/publications_forms/publications/basin_plan/docs/2019_basin_plan_r3_complete.pdf)

Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency. January 2020. *Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan*.

———. May 2020. *Salinas Valley: Eastside Aquifer Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan Draft Chapters*.

———. August 2022. *Salinas Valley Integrated Implementation Plan*. Email from Sarah Hardgrave to Teri Wissler Adam, September 5, 2023.

State Water Quality Control Board. December 2018. *Water Quality Control Policy for Recycled Water*.  
[https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board\\_decisions/adopted\\_orders/resolutions/2018/121118\\_7\\_final\\_amendment\\_oal.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/2018/121118_7_final_amendment_oal.pdf)

———. Summary of the California State Water Quality Control Board’s New Recycled Water General Order. <https://www.westyost.com/post/summary-california-state-water-resources-control-boards-new-recycled-water-general-order>

Water Education Foundation. Accessed on July 31, 2020.

<https://www.watereducation.org/aquapedia/water-recycling-and-title-22>

[Zanero. February 2023. \*SB 610 Water Supply Assessment for the Vista Lucia Specific Plan Project Public Review Draft.\*](#)

## Effects Adequately Addressed in the Gonzales General Plan EIR

### Aesthetics

City of Gonzales. July 2010. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report – Volume 1*. Gonzales, CA.

———. January 2011. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan*. Gonzales, CA.

### Geology and Soils Section

City of Gonzales. July 2010. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report – Volume 1*. Gonzales, CA.

———. January 2011. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan*. Gonzales, CA.

Feeney, Martin and Lewis Rosenberg. 2003. *Deep Aquifer Investigation—Hydrogeologic Data Inventory, Review, Interpretation and Implications*.

<https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/home/showdocument?id=19614>

Lowney Associates. February 2004. *Geotechnical Feasibility Evaluation – Fanoe Ranch Mixed-Use Development Gonzales, California*. San Ramon, CA.

Rosenberg, Lewis and Monterey County Planning Department. 2001. Preliminary Oblique Geologic Map of Part of Monterey County.

[https://www.google.com/search?q=Geologic+Map+of+Monterey+County&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=a9yW9YYwxh28BM%252CuHBu2-5HNt8PMM%252C\\_&vet=1&usg=AI4\\_-kSzob4-uA7o3gf0NdTUdL66IAiVuw&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjXkMiC18vsAhUMIjQIHZfEDFkQ9QF6BAGMEEA#imgrc=a9yW9YYwxh28BM](https://www.google.com/search?q=Geologic+Map+of+Monterey+County&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=a9yW9YYwxh28BM%252CuHBu2-5HNt8PMM%252C_&vet=1&usg=AI4_-kSzob4-uA7o3gf0NdTUdL66IAiVuw&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjXkMiC18vsAhUMIjQIHZfEDFkQ9QF6BAGMEEA#imgrc=a9yW9YYwxh28BM)

## Mineral Resources

City of Gonzales. July 2010. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report – Volume 1*. Gonzales, CA.

———. January 2011. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan*. Gonzales, CA.

## Cumulative Impacts

California Department of Conservation. *Monterey County 19984-2018 Land Use Summary*. Accessed on August 14, 2023. <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/Monterey.aspx>.

California Office of Planning and Research. 2018. *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA*.

[https://www.cityofsalinas.org/sites/default/files/departments\\_files/community\\_development\\_files/draft\\_sb\\_743\\_vmt\\_implementation\\_policy\\_review\\_copy.pdf](https://www.cityofsalinas.org/sites/default/files/departments_files/community_development_files/draft_sb_743_vmt_implementation_policy_review_copy.pdf)

House Moran Consulting, Inc. February 2019. *City of Gonzales Conceptual Drainage Master Plan, Proposed Developments within Sphere of Influence*.

Ramirez, Tanya, OA II, Monterey County Resource Management Agency – Records Team. E-mail message to EMC Planning Group, 4 May 2020.

## Alternatives

City of Gonzales. 2018. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan (revised June 2018)*. January 2011. Accessed September 3, 2020. [https://gonzalesca.gov/sites/default/files/2018-11/2010%20General%20Plan%20Revised%202018\\_0.pdf](https://gonzalesca.gov/sites/default/files/2018-11/2010%20General%20Plan%20Revised%202018_0.pdf)

City of Gonzales. July 2010. *Gonzales 2010 General Plan Environmental Impact Report – Volume 1*. Gonzales, CA.

Dudek. August 2018. *Revised Draft – City of Gonzales Long Term Wastewater Management Plan*. Encinitas, CA.

Sundt, Matthew, (Former) City of Gonzales Planning Direction. Email to EMC Planning Group, 20 May, 2020.

## 23.2 Report Preparers

### EMC Planning Group

Ron Sisseem, MRP, Senior Principal

Project Manager

Teri Wissler Adam, Senior Principal

Principal-in-Charge

**Janet Walther, MS, Principal Biologist**

Biological Peer Review/Report Preparation

**Gail Bellenger, MA, RPA, Archaeologist**

Archaeological Peer Review/Report Preparation

**Stuart Poulter, AICP, MCRP, Senior Planner**

Assistant Project Manager/Report Preparation

**Zane Mortensen, Associate Planner**

Report Preparation

**Patrick Furtado, Associate Biologist**

Report Preparation/Biological Survey

**Shoshana Wangerin, Associate Planner**

Report Preparation

**Hexagon Transportation Consultants**

**Robert Del Rio, T.E., Vice President**

Traffic Analysis Preparation

**Ollie Zhou, T.E., Senior Associate**

Traffic Analysis Preparation

**WJV Acoustics, Inc.**

**Walter Van Groningen, President**

Noise Assessment Preparation

**Archaeological Resource Management**

**Robert Cartier, Ph.D., Principal Investigator**

Historic Evaluation Preparation

**Doug Jones**

Historic Evaluation Preparation and Survey