MONTEREY COUNTY
HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
1441 SCHILLING PL SOUTH 2nd FLOOR, SALINAS, CA 93901
PHONE: (831) 755-5025/FAX: (831) 757-9516

INITIAL STUDY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Project Title:	SALINAS 101 LLC (THE SOBEL COMPANY INC)
File No.:	PLN180441
Project Location:	Intersection of Highway 101, Sala Road & Harrison Road, Salinas
Name of Property Owner:	Salinas 101 LLC
Name of Applicant:	The Sobel Company Inc
Assessor's Parcel Number(s):	113-091-017-000
Acreage of Property:	17.93 acres
General Plan Designation:	Greater Salinas Area Plan/Commercial
Zoning District:	Light Commercial (LC)
Lead Agency:	County of Monterey Housing & Community Development Department
Prepared By:	Denise Duffy & Associates, Inc.
Date Prepared:	September 2023
Contact Person:	Fionna Jensen, Senior Planner
Phone Number:	(831) 755-5025

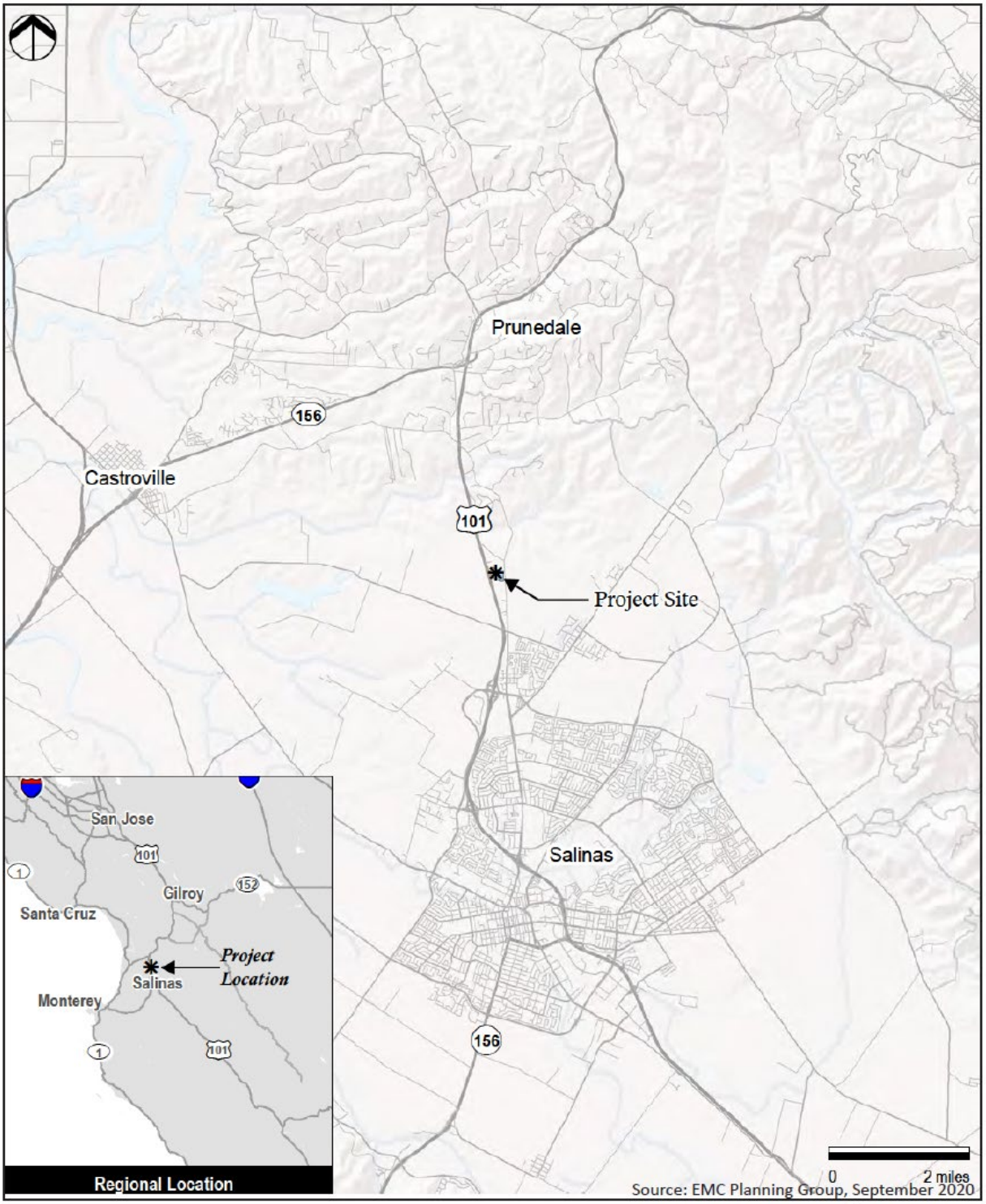
II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Description of Project:

Project Components

The Proposed Project is located at the intersection of Highway 101, Sala Road & Harrison Road, Salinas and consists of a new highway-oriented commercial development that entails the subdivision of an existing lot into 10 parcels and various other on- and off-site improvements, which are described in further detail below. **Figure 1** provides the regional location of the Proposed Project and **Figure 2** provides the Assessor's Parcel Map ("APN"). **Figure 3** provides an aerial view of the Proposed Project site. The Proposed Project includes construction of a total of 10 structures, including an 21,702 square foot retail building, a 96-room hotel, 3 additional retail buildings totaling 18,500 square feet, 4 fast food restaurants with drive-through windows totaling 11,520 square feet, a vehicle service station with 16 fueling positions, and a convenience store and drive-through car wash totaling 5,511 square feet (see **Figure 4**).[1] The Proposed Project also includes for a 57-foot illuminated highway-facing pylon sign on the western portion of the site. The Sobel Company Inc. ("Applicant") is applying for two Variances to increase the allowable height and overall dimensions of the proposed sign so that it can be seen by northbound drivers on Highway 101 above the existing Sala Road Overpass, which is over 23-feet tall and is located immediately south of the site. The Applicant is also applying for a third Variance to increase in the allowable height for main structures, specifically the hotel. **Figures 5a-5d** show the floor plans for the proposed developments and **Figures 6a-6e** shows the proposed building elevations and pylon sign. **Figure 9** illustrates the illumination of the proposed pylon sign. Refer to **Figure 4, Site Plan**, for the locations of the proposed uses. The Proposed Project includes grading consisting of 12,876 cubic yards of cut and approximately 12,309 cubic yards of fill. There are no trees on the Proposed Project site and therefore no tree removal is proposed. **Table 1** shows the individual sizes and proposed uses of each of the subdivided parcels. A complete set of plans for the Proposed Project are available at 1411 Schilling Pl, Salinas, 93901 in HCD-Planning File No. PLN180441.

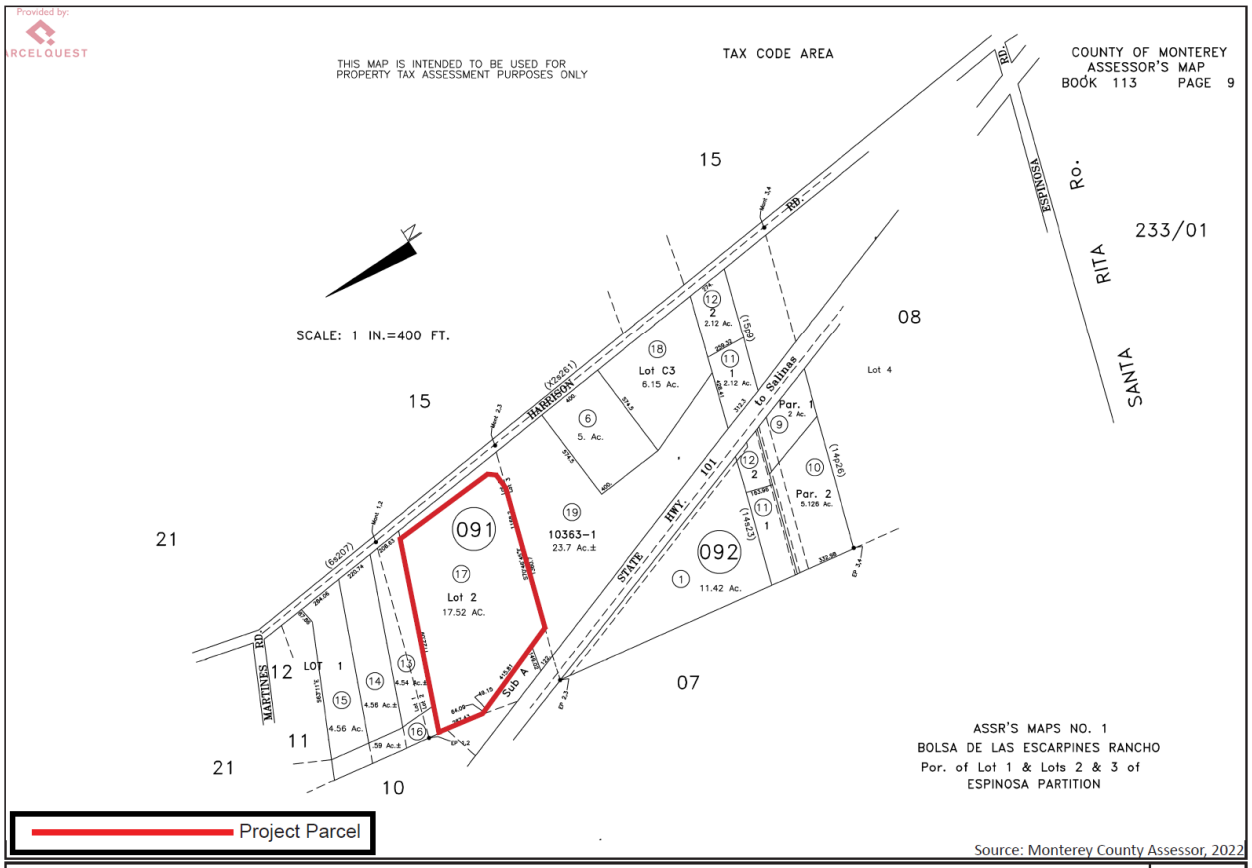
[1] The Proposed Project originally proposed three additional semi-truck fueling stations as part of the overall Convenience Market/Fueling Station, which has since been removed. The three-semi-truck fueling station were accounted for in all technical analyses for the Proposed Project. Figures 7, 8, 10, and 11 illustrate the three-truck fueling station, which has since been removed. Figure 4 accurately illustrated the Proposed Project. The removal of this component of the Proposed Project would reduce overall air quality emissions, vehicle trips, and operational noise compared to what was analyzed in the technical reports. As a result, these analyses provide a conservative analysis of environmental impacts compared to what is currently proposed for development.



Regional Map

Sala Road Commercial Project
Initial Study

Figure
1



APN Map

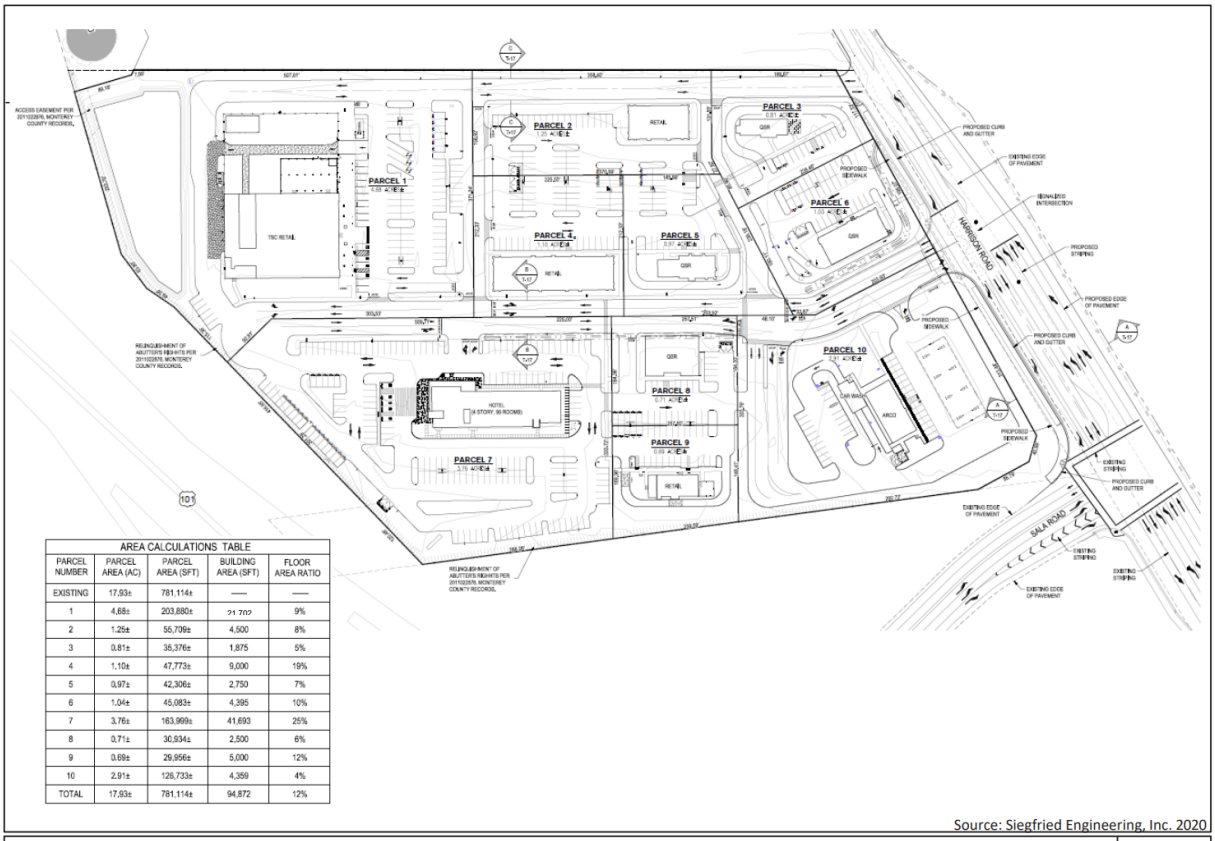
Sala Road Commercial Project
Initial Study

Figure 2

Aerial Map

Sala Road Commercial Project
Initial Study

Figure
3



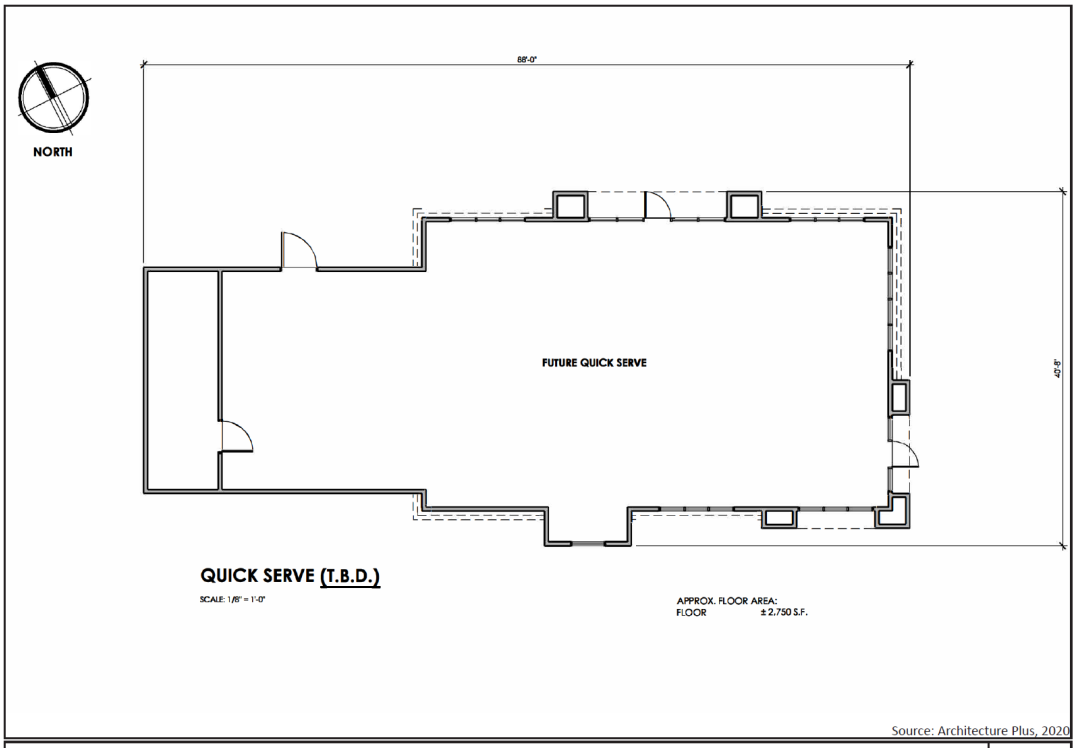
AREA CALCULATIONS TABLE				
PARCEL NUMBER	PARCEL AREA (AC)	PARCEL AREA (SFT)	BUILDING AREA (SFT)	FLOOR AREA RATIO
EXISTING	17.93±	781,114±	—	—
1	4.68±	203,880±	21,700	9%
2	1.26±	55,709±	4,500	8%
3	0.81±	35,376±	1,875	5%
4	1.10±	47,773±	9,000	19%
5	0.97±	42,306±	2,750	7%
6	1.04±	45,083±	4,395	10%
7	3.76±	163,999±	41,693	25%
8	0.71±	30,934±	2,500	6%
9	0.69±	29,956±	5,000	12%
10	2.91±	126,733±	4,359	4%
TOTAL	17.93±	781,114±	94,872	12%

Source: Siegfried Engineering, Inc. 2020

Site Plan

Sala Road Commercial Project
Initial Study

Figure 4

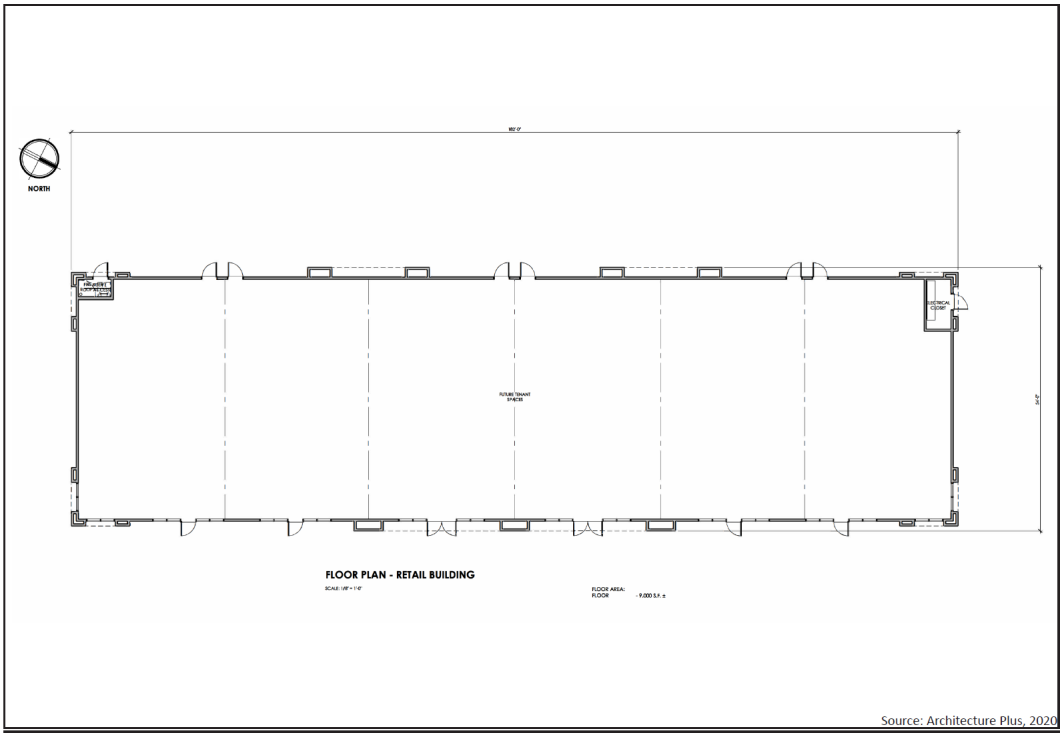


Source: Architecture Plus, 2020

Floor Plan - Convenience Store

Sala Road Commercial Project
Iniitial Study

Figure 5a

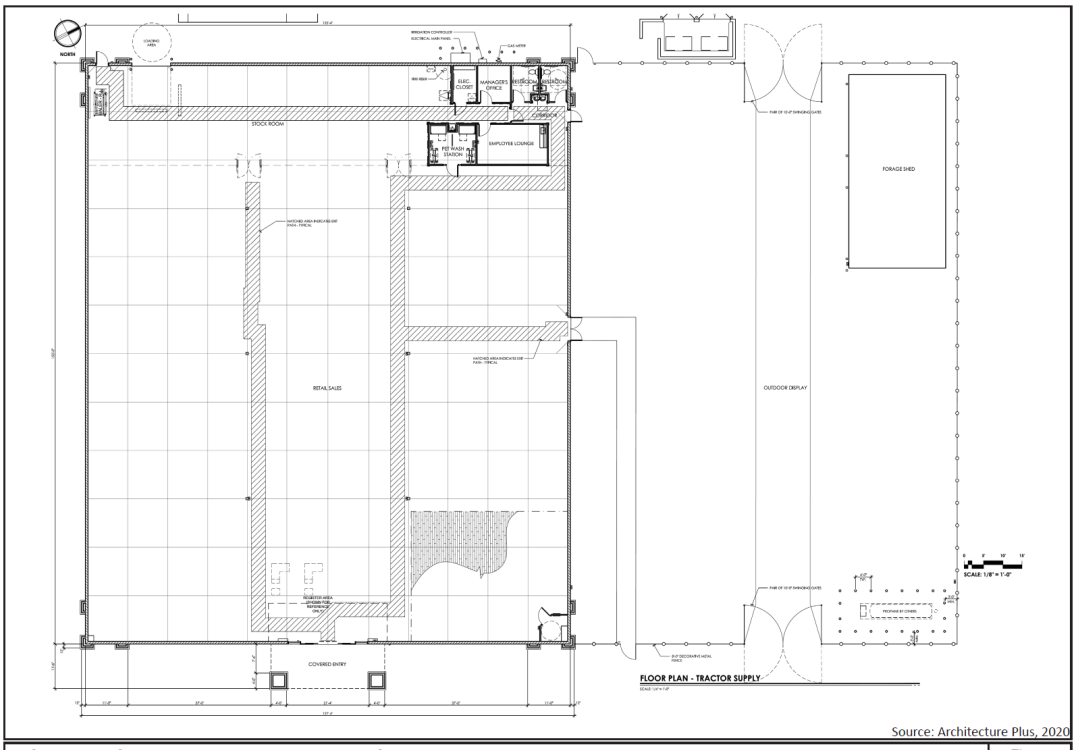


Source: Architecture Plus, 2020

Floor Plan - Retail Building

Sala Road Commercial Project
Iniitial Study

Figure 5b



Source: Architecture Plus, 2020

Floor Plan - Tractor Supply

Sala Road Commercial Project
Iniitial Study

Figure 5c

Source: Architecture Plus, 2020

Floor Plan - Hotel

Sala Road Commercial Project
Iniitial Study

Figure 5d

Source: Architecture Plus, June 2023

Elevations - Tractor Supply

Sala Road Commercial Project
Iniitial Study

Figure 6a

Source: Architecture Plus, June 2023

Elevations - Retail

Sala Road Commercial Project
Iniitial Study

Figure 6b

FRONT ELEVATION - QUICK SERVE

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

0 5' 10' 15'

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Source: Architecture Plus, June 2023

Elevations - Quick Serve

Sala Road Commercial Project
Iniitial Study

Figure
6c

Hotel North Elevation

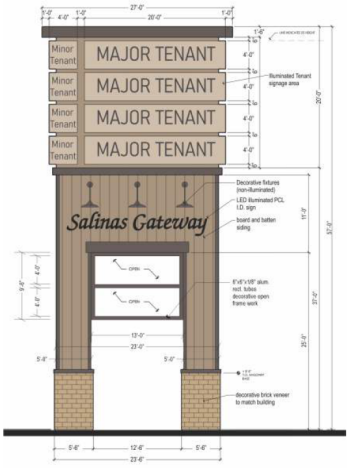
Source: Architecture Plus, 2020

Elevations - Hotel

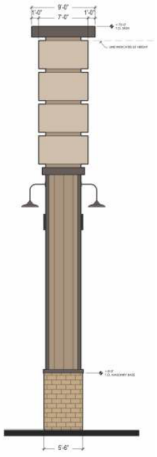
Sala Road Commercial Project
Iniitial Study

Figure
6d

Sign-A



D/F LED ILLUMINATED PYLON SIGN
Scale: 3/32" = 1'-0"



SIDE VIEW
Scale: 3/32" = 1'-0"

D/F ILLUMINATED PYLON SIGN
Scale: 3/32" = 1'-0"
Custom Roof
Fab. Aluminum painted P3
Alum. fab. main cabinet painted P2
Tenant Cabinets
Major tenants -4' x 20' (80 Sq Ft Ea.)
alum. faces painted P1
Copy to be 3" deep pan channel
graphics and color per tenant specs.
LED's illumination.

Minor tenants - 4' x 4' (20 Sq Ft Ea.)
alum. shoe-box faces painted P1
Copy & Graphics to be routed out
w/ 3/4" acrylic push thru copy
graphics and colors per tenant specs
LED's illumination.

I.D. Sign
Graphics - 3" deep PC letters w/
black returns and 3/4" black trim caps
3/16" white acrylic face w/
perforated day/night vinyl overlays
(27" upper case /18" lower case)

Cladding - Aluminum w/ board and batten
siding to match building
2"x4" decorative alum. rect. tubes painted P3
alum. base caps painted P3
alum. base w/ stone veneer S1

SQUARE FOOTAGE CALCULATION:

I.D. SIGN :	2'-3" x 20'-0"	=	45 sq. ft.
MAJOR TENANT SIGN :	4'-0" x 20'-0" x (4)	=	320 sq. ft.
MINOR TENANT SIGNS	4'-0" x 4'-0" x (4)	=	64 sq. ft.
	TOTAL	=	429 sq. ft.

COLORS AND STONE VENEER

P1 SHERWIN WILLIAMS "URBAN PUTTY" SW7532

P2 SHERWIN WILLIAMS "SANDERLING" SW7513

P3 SHERWIN WILLIAMS "MANOR HOUSE" SW7505

S1 BASELITE "SPLITFACE" SANDSTONE

TYPICAL SHOPPING CENTER ARCHITECTURE

Elevations - Pylon Sign

Sala Road Commercial Project
Initial Study

Figure
6e

Table 1.
Proposed Subdivision

Parcel	Parcel Size (acres)	Project Components	Building Area (square feet)
1	4.68	Tractor Supply/Retail	21,702
2	1.25	Retail	4,500
3	0.81	Fast Food	1,875
4	1.10	Retail	9,000
5	0.97	Fast Food	2,750
6	1.03	Fast Food	4,395
7	3.76	Hotel (Four Stories/96 Rooms)	41,693
8	0.97	Fast Food	2,500
9	0.92	Retail	5,000
10	2.41	Convenience Market/Fueling Station (16 Vehicle pumps) and Car Wash/Retail	5,511[1]
Total	**17.93**		**98,926**

SOURCE: Siegfried 2020, EMC Planning Group 2020
Note: [1] Square footage is for total building area of convenience market (4,359 square feet) and car wash structure (1,152 square feet), and does not include the truck fueling stations

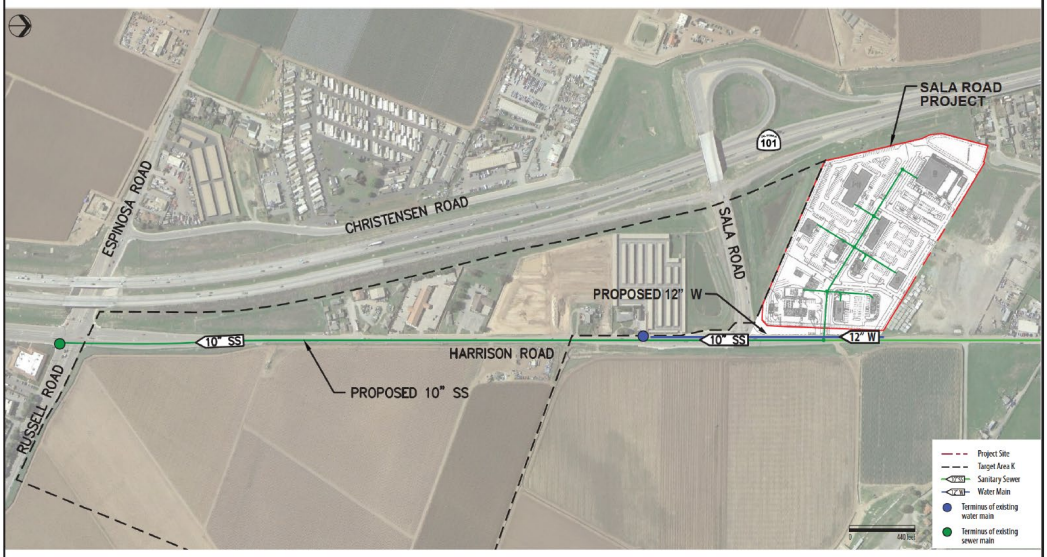
Off-Site Improvements

The Proposed Project includes off-site circulation improvements based on the recommendations of *The Sobel Company Commercial Development Traffic Impact Analysis* prepared by Keith Higgins (2019). A copy of this report (Monterey County Library No. LIB200165 and LIB200166) is available at 1411 Schilling Pl, Salinas, 93901 in HCD-Planning File No. PLN180441**.** The report identified that the Applicant would be responsible for constructing two off-site improvements that would result in physical changes to the environment. **Figures 7** and **8** depict these off-site improvements. A description of the location and nature of these off-site improvements is provided below:

- **Harrison Road/Sala Road Intersection**: This improvement entails restriping the existing median to provide a second eastbound left turn lane on Sala Road, widening the northbound lane of Harrison Road north of Sala Road to accommodate a second receiving lane for the additional eastbound Sala Road left turn lane, and adding a southbound right turn overlap signal phase on Harrison Road.

- **Harrison Road/South Project Driveway**: This improvement entails the addition of traffic signals at the intersection of Harrison Road and the Proposed Project driveway, adding two northbound left turn lanes on Harrison Road, and the addition of a southbound right turn lane on Harrison Road. This improvement also involves the construction of a separate access driveway with eastbound left and right turn lanes onto Harrison Road, adding two westbound project driveway entry lanes from Harrison Road, and adding an eastbound south project driveway right turn overlap signal phase.

- Harrison Road/North Project Driveway: This improvement involves the construction of a separate access driveway near the north Project boundary with northbound Harrison road left turn lane (entry) and a single eastbound (exit) lane onto Harrison Road.

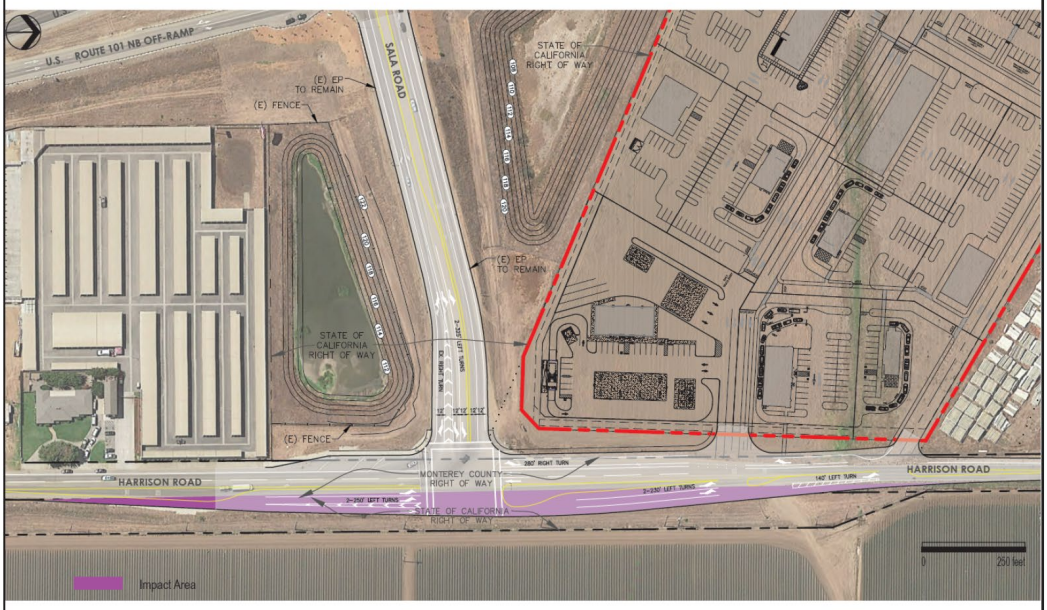


Source: Whitson Engineers, 2020

Off-Site Water and Sewer Infrastructure Improvements

Sala Road Commercial Project
Iniitial Study

Figure 7



Source: Siegfried Engineering, Inc. 2020

Off-Site Circulation Improvements

Sala Road Commercial Project
Iniitial Study

Figure 8

Access and Circulation

The Proposed Project includes construction of two (2) new vehicle driveways connecting to Harrison Road for site access. The Proposed Project would also include the installation of 534 parking spaces. The Proposed Project includes construction of paved roadways within the site to provide internal circulation.

Phasing

Construction would be completed in three phases, with scheduling to be determined based on market conditions. The three development phases are detailed below and include the following:

- Phase 1 – Tractor Supply, Hotel, Convenience Market with Gas Station;
- Phase 2 – Quick Serve Restaurants ("QSR") 1 and QSR 2 (fast food); and
- Phase 3 – QSR 3 and QSR 4 (fast food), and Retail Store buildings.

Phase 1 of the Proposed Project includes construction of a tractor supply store, four-story, 96-guestroom hotel, and combined convenience store, car wash, and fueling station for automobiles. Phase 2 of the Proposed Project includes the construction of two fast-food restaurants. Phase 3 of the Proposed Project includes construction of two additional fast-food restaurants, as well as three buildings intended for retail use.

Utilities

Water Supply Infrastructure

California Water Service Company ("Cal Water") would provide water supply to the Proposed Project. Cal Water has provided a "can-and-will serve-letter" to confirm they will supply water to the Proposed Project (Source: 44). No water infrastructure is currently present on site. The Proposed Project includes construction of a new water line to connect with Cal Water's existing 12-inch water line in Harrison Road, which terminates approximately 970 feet south of the Proposed Project site.

Sewer/Wastewater Infrastructure

The City of Salinas ("City") currently owns and operates a wastewater collection system which collects wastewater originating in its service area and conveys that wastewater through the City disposal system. The project site is located outside of the City's wastewater service area and therefore an extension of wastewater service outside the City's boundaries to a portion of the unincorporated County is required through an agreement with Monterey One Water to accept the Proposed Project's wastewater. The Proposed Project received a "Can and Will Serve Letter" from Monterey One Water and the City of Salinas. Additionally, the Applicant entered into an approved pre-annexation agreement with the City (Source: 41) . Therefore, the Proposed Project site would be provided wastewater service by City of Salinas. The Proposed Project requires construction of a new 10-inch gravity sewer main in Harrison Road from the Proposed Project Site to the existing sewer main at North Main Street and Russell Road in Salinas.

Stormwater Infrastructure

Development of all three Phases of the Proposed Project would result in approximately 626,348 square feet of new impervious surfaces on the site. These surfaces include proposed roads, walkways, structures, and parking areas. A preliminary stormwater control plan is presented in **Figure 10**. The Proposed Project includes several subsurface detention basins to detain stormwater runoff on the site (see **Figure 10**).

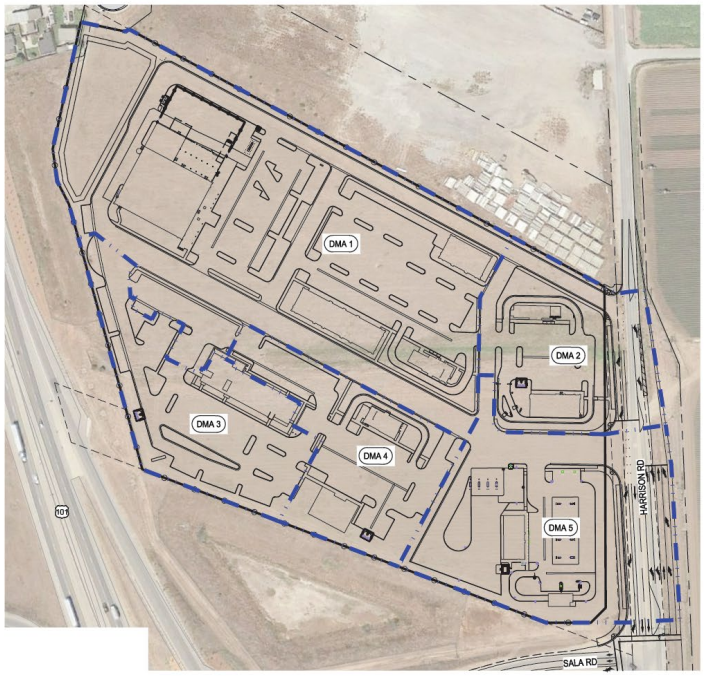
Landscaping

The Proposed Project includes landscaping throughout the site, including 174,430 square feet of various shrubs and groundcover, 9,712 square feet of synthetic turf, and 4,522 square feet of cobble (**Figure 11**). In addition, the Proposed Project includes planting 160 trees throughout the site.

Applicant-Proposed Energy Efficiency Measures

The Applicant has committed to include several measures in the Proposed Project to promote energy efficiency and reduce energy demand, including:

- Constructing new buildings to exceed Title 24 California Building Standards Code requirements for building energy efficiency by 10 percent;
- Installing energy efficient refrigerators, fans, clothes washers, and dishwashers in the hotel, and energy efficient fans and refrigerators in the convenience market, fast food restaurant, and retail stores;
- Installing energy efficiency lighting that reduces lighting energy demand by 16 percent;
- Providing accessible electric vehicle parking spaces and electric vehicle charging stations and signage prohibiting parking for non-electric vehicles; and
- Utilizing California native plants and drought-resistant landscaping that needs minimal to no watering (to reduce energy demand for water treatment and pumping).



POST-PROJECT DRAINAGE MANAGEMENT AREAS			
DMA NUMBER	IMPERVIOUS AREAS (SF)	PERVIOUS AREAS (SF)	TOTAL AREA (SF)
	ROOF / CONCRETE / ASPHALT PAVEMENT	LANDSCAPING	
1	306,632	76,658	383,290
2	83,167	20,792	103,959
3	84,209	21,052	105,261
4	76,998	19,249	96,247
5	135,589	33,897	169,486
TOTAL	686,595	171,648	858,243

LEGEND

DMA BOUNDARY

0' 65 130' 260

SCALE: 1"=130'

Source: Siegfried Engineering, Inc. 2020

Stormwater Control Plan

Sala Road Commercial Project
Initial Study

Figure 10

Source: KLA, Inc. 2020

Landscape Plan

Sala Road Commercial Project
Initial Study

Figure 11

Surrounding Land Uses and Environmental Setting:

The Proposed Project site consists of a 17.93-acre vacant site (APN 113-091-017-000) isnorth of Sala Road and approximately 0.70 miles north of the City of Salinas in unincorporated Monterey County. The Proposed Project site is bordered by a retention pond and Sala Road to the south, another retention pond and Highway 101 to the west, a residential neighborhood to the northwest, a vacant parcel to the north, and Harrison Road to the east. The Proposed Project site is considered disturbed and has historically been used for agricultural use, with the site having been most recently in cultivation in 2012. Site elevations range from a low of 118 feet to a high of 127 feet above sea level, with the site sloping down to the west. The Proposed Project site is located within the boundaries of the *Greater Salinas Area Plan.* The land use designation of the site is "Commercial" and the site is zoned Light Commercial ("LC"). The parcels to the west of the site have a land use designation of "Residential – Low Density" and are zoned Low Density Residential ("LDR"). The parcels to the north and south of the site have a land use designation of "Commercial" and are zoned Light Commercial ("LC"). Photographs of the Proposed Project site are provided in **Figure 12**.

Approvals Required for the Project

The Proposed Project site is greater than one (1) acre and requires preparation of a General Development Plan for approval by the County of Monterey ("County"). The County would also issue the following approvals for the Proposed Project:

- Combined Development Permit consisting of 1) Standard Subdivision and Vesting Tentative Map to divide a 17.93 acre Light Commercial (LC) zoned parcel into ten LC zoned parcels; 2) a General Development Plan and Use Permit to allow a total of 94,660 square feet of mixed commercial space including 4etail buildings, 3 quick serve restaurants, and a motel; 3) a Use Permit to allow construction of a sign; 4) a Variance to increase the allowable height of main structures to 45 feet; 5) a Variance to increase the allowable height of signs to 57 feet; and 6) Variance to increase the allowed sign dimensions to 768 square feet.
- Encroachment Permit.
- Grading Permits.
- Building Permits.

Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required:

The Proposed Project would require approvals from several other public agencies. The Proposed Project would require a Sewer Collection Agreement from the City of Salinas. The Proposed Project is also expected to require an Encroachment Permit from the California Department of Transportation ("Caltrans") and a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board ("CCRWQCB").

① Facing south towards the intersection of Sala Road and Harrison Road

② Facing west at the existing drainage channel

Project Site

Drainage Feature

③ Onsite facing south towards Sala Road

④ Facing west across the northern portion of the project site

Source: EMC Planning Group, September 2020

Site Photos

Sala Road Commercial Project
Initial Study

Figure 12

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

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

General Plan/Area Plan	☒	Air Quality Mgmt. Plan	☒
Specific Plan	☐	Airport Land Use Plans	☐
Water Quality Control Plan	☒	Local Coastal Program-LUP	☐

General Plan/Area Plan: The Proposed Project was reviewed for consistency with the policies from the Monterey County 2010 General Plan ("General Plan") and the Greater Salinas Area Plan (GSAP). The General Plan is intended to maintain and enhance the County's rural character, natural resources, and economic base by providing for adequate residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial growth in areas best suited for the respective development.

The Proposed Project is consistent with the Land Use and Safety elements of the General Plan. The Proposed Project site is zoned "Light Commercial" and has a general plan designation of "Commercial". The Proposed Project is a highway serving commercial development and would be consistent with the existing zoning and general plan designations on the site, in conformance with Policy LU-1.11 of the General Plan. In addition, the Proposed Project would provide access to commercial services consistent with Policy LU-4.8 of the General Plan. The Proposed Project has a site coverage ratio of less than 50% in conformance with Policy LU-4.1 of the General Plan. The Applicant has commissioned a site-specific geotechnical report for the Proposed Project consistent with Policy S-1.7 of the General Plan. The Proposed Project includes stormwater treatment measures to reduce site runoff to pre-development peak flow drainage consistent with Policies S-3.1 and S-3.3 of the General Plan. In addition, the Applicant has prepared a General Development Plan in fulfillment of section 21.18.030 of the County's Municipal Code. The General Development Plan and requested Variances addresses various aspects of the Proposed Project, including the non-conforming height for the proposed hotel and the non-conforming height and dimension of the Pylon sign. Finally, the project requires an exterior lighting plan as a condition of approval consistent with LU-1.13 of the General Plan.

The Proposed Project is consistent with the policies of the GSAP. The Proposed Project is a planned general commercial use on a parcel larger than one acre, consistent with Policy GS-1.6 of the GSAP. The Proposed Project would utilize native plant materials to screen the visual impact of the proposed development consistent with Policy GS-3.2 of the GSAP. Construction and operation of the Proposed Project would not conflict with the General Plan or the GSAP. **CONSISTENT**

Water Quality Control Plan: The subject property lies within Region 3 of the CCRWQCB which regulates sources of water quality related issues resulting in actual or potential impairment or degradation of beneficial uses, or the overall degradation of water quality. The Proposed Project would implement a stormwater control plan as required by the County to manage stormwater runoff on the site. As a result, the project would not generate polluted runoff in amounts that would cause

degradation of water quality. The Applicant is required to submit a drainage and erosion control plan for the Proposed Project to HCD-Environmental Services prior to issuance of building permits in accordance with Chapter 16.12 of the Monterey County Code ("MCC"). Please refer to **Section VI.10** of this Initial Study for additional discussion on hydrology and water quality. **CONSISTENT**

Air Quality Management Plan: The 2012-2015 and the 2008 Air Quality Management Plan ("AQMP") for the Monterey Bay Region address attainment and maintenance of state and federal ambient air quality standards within the North Central Coast Air Basin ("NCCAB"). The NCCAB includes unincorporated areas of Monterey County. California Air Resources Board ("CARB") uses ambient data from each air monitoring site in the NCCAB to calculate Expected Peak Day Concentration over a consecutive three-year period. Monterey County Library No. LIB230239 contains the air quality analysis prepared for the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project would not exceed the criteria air pollutant emissions identified in the AQMP for either the construction or operation phases as shown in Table 2-6 of LIB230239. For additional discussion on air quality, please refer to **Section VI.3** of this Initial Study. **CONSISTENT**

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED AND DETERMINATION

A. FACTORS

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

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

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

☐ Check here if this finding is not applicable

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

EVIDENCE:

Mineral Resources: Mineral resources are determined in accordance with the Surface Mining and Reclamation act of 1975 ("SMARA"), and the California Geological Survey ("CGS"), which maps regional significance of mineral resources. The Proposed Project is not located in an area designated as containing mineral resources (General Plan EIR, Exhibit 4.5-1). The property is also not designated as a mineral resource recovery site on any local land use plan. No impact would result from the loss of availability of a known mineral resource (Source: 2).

Recreation: The Proposed Project would not result in an increase in the use of existing neighborhood and/or regional parks or other recreational facilities causing substantial physical deterioration. The Proposed Project is a commercial development that does not include construction of new residential development or recreational facilities. The nearest park facility to the Proposed Project site is Rogge Commons Park, located approximately 1.5 miles southeast of the site. The Proposed Project would not generate new residents who would place increased demand on existing recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. No parks, trail easements, or other recreational opportunities would be adversely impacted by the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project would not result in impacts related to recreation. (Source: 1, 2, 3)

B. DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

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

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

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

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

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

Fionna Jensen

Signature

September 20, 2023

Date

Fionna Jensen, Senior Planner

V. EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except “No Impact” answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A “No Impact” answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A “No Impact” answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on project-specific screening analysis).

2) All answers must take into account the whole action involved, including offsite as well as onsite, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.

3) Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.

4) "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level mitigation measures from Section XVII, "Earlier Analyses," may be cross-referenced).

5) Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:

   a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
   b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
   c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.

6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a

previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.

7) Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.

8) The explanation of each issue should identify:

   a) The significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
   b) The mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

VI. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

1. AESTHETICS **Would the project:**	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 15, 20)	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 15, 21)	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 59)	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 22)	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

The Proposed Project site is zoned Light Commercial ("LC"). The *Monterey County General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report* ("General Plan EIR") (Source: 2), identifies the County's visual character and resources as being linked to the natural topography, vegetation, and cultural history of the region. Coastal views, agricultural fields, natural ridgelines, and oak woodlands are all examples of prominent elements of visual character within the County. The General Plan EIR (Source: 2, Exhibit 4.14.1, Visual Resource Areas) shows the locations of critical viewsheds, highly sensitive areas, sensitive areas, viewsheds, and view areas within the County. The Proposed Project site is not located within or near any of these identified visual resource areas. In addition, the site is not located within a designated visual sensitivity area as illustrated on *Monterey County Geographic Information System Resource Maps* (Source: 20) and is not located within a California Designated State Scenic Highway (Source: 15).

<u>Aesthetics 1(a). Less than Significant Impact</u>

A scenic vista is typically characterized as a clear, expansive view of significant regional features that have visual and aesthetic qualities of value to the community. The General Plan EIR identifies a number of scenic vistas of particular concern, including the Gabilan Mountains near Pajaro, Castroville and Prunedale; Junipero Serra Peak near Chualar, San Lucas and Pine Canyon (King City); Carmel Valley near Lower Carmel Valley; and Mt. Toro near River Road/Las Palmas, San Benancio/Corral de Tierra, and Toro Park/Serra Village (Source: 2). The

visually sensitive resources closest to the Proposed Project are ridgelines located approximately four (4) miles to the east of the site. In addition, less prominent ridgelines are located approximately four (4) miles to the north of the site near Prunedale. The Proposed Project is not located near these designated scenic vistas. The Proposed Project site is currently vacant, and views are available from the major public viewpoints on Harrison Road and Highway 101 (see **Figure 13, Views from Highway 101 and Harrison Road**). Section 21.06.195 of the County's municipal code defines "Common public viewing areas" as a public area such as a public street, road, designated vista point, or public park from which the general public ordinarily views the surrounding viewshed. A discussion of these views is provided below.

Views of the Project Site from Harrison Road

The Proposed Project site sits at roughly the same elevation as the segment of Harrison Road located to the east of the site. Viewpoint #1 on **Figure 13** shows existing views of the Proposed Project site from the adjacent portion of Harrison Road. Views from Harrison Road consist of the vacant site in the foreground, the Sala Road overpass immediately to the south, and more distant views to the horizon as shown in **Figure 13**. Vehicles traveling past the site on the adjacent portion of Highway 101 are a notable visual feature from Harrison Road. The Proposed Project site is a vacant parcel and is not considered a visual resource. In addition, the existing views over the site from Harrison Road do not include any scenic resources of significance.

Development of the Proposed Project would largely eliminate the existing views over the Proposed Project site from Harrison Road. The existing views from Harrison Road would be blocked due to the development of structures, landscaping, and other site improvements. However, as described above, the existing views do not represent important scenic vistas. In addition, it is unlikely that Harrison Road would be considered a common public viewing area as defined in Section 21.06.195 due to the lack of scenic vistas in the vicinity of the Proposed Project site makes it unlikely. *As a result, the Proposed Project would have no impact on a scenic vista when viewed from Harrison Road.*

Views of the Project Site from Northbound Highway 101

Viewpoint #2 of **Figure 13** shows existing views of the Proposed Project site from northbound Highway 101. The Proposed Project site sits at roughly the same elevation as the adjacent portion of Highway 101. Views of the Proposed Project site are blocked on the northbound approach by the existing elevated highway on- and off-ramps located at Sala Road as shown in **Figure 13**. However, there are existing views of the Proposed Project site at the point where the northbound on-ramp merges with Highway 101, as demonstrated in viewpoint #2 of **Figure 13**. Views offered from this portion of northbound Highway 101 include the Proposed Project site, residential uses, and distant hills to the northeast, as well as the Gabilan Mountains to the east. The existing view of the Gabilan Mountain could potentially be considered a scenic vista. However, this view would not be commonly observed by northbound travelers on the highway as it is only visible for a few seconds and would be perpendicular to the direction of traffic. Moreover, the existing view is unlikely to be impacted by the project due to the speed of vehicles traveling on Highway 101.

① Harrison Road facing west across the project site

③ Southbound U.S. 101 facing southeast across the project site

② Northbound U.S. 101 facing northeast across the project site

Project Site

④ Southbound U.S. 101 facing southeast across the project site

Source: EMC Planning Group, September 2020

Views from US Highway 101 and Harrison Road

Sala Road Commercial Project
Iniitial Study

Figure
13

The existing views over the Proposed Project site would be largely eliminated by the Proposed Project. However, as described above, the existing views do not represent important scenic vistas. *As a result, the Proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on a scenic vista when viewed from Northbound Highway 101.*

Views of the Project Site from Southbound Highway 101

Viewpoints #3 and #4 of **Figure 13** show the existing views of the Proposed Project site from northbound Highway 101. The Proposed Project site sits at roughly the same elevation as the adjacent portion of Highway 101 as described above. Views of the Proposed Project site to southbound travelers are initially blocked by an existing sound wall along the eastern boundary of the highway prior to the first point where a southbound traveler is directly adjacent to the site before opening up at viewpoints #3 and #4. Available views include the approximately three-foot tall concrete center divider separating the highway, the Proposed Project site, and the Gabilan Mountains. Due to the view of the Gabilan Mountains in the background, southbound views are considered to have higher aesthetic value as a scenic vista than views in the northbound direction. These representative views are available for a duration of about ten seconds before being blocked by the northbound Sala Road on-ramp to the highway.

Development of the Proposed Project would largely eliminate the existing views over the Proposed Project site. The long-distance view from southbound Highway 101 would be considered to be moderately scenic. However, the overall quality of these views is compromised by the concrete center divider, the absence of any visually valuable features in the near or midground view, and the brief duration of the view. More valuable scenic vistas are present along Highway 101 to the north and south of the Proposed Project site. (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 15, 20). *Therefore, loss of this marginally scenic vista represents a less than significant impact.*

Conclusion

As described above, the Proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on a scenic vista.

<u>Aesthetics 1(b). No Impact</u>

The Proposed Project is located immediately east of a portion of Highway 101. This segment of Highway 101 has not been designated as a state scenic highway and is not listed as an eligible scenic highway, based on a review of the California Department of Transportation's ("Caltrans") list of eligible and officially designated state scenic highways (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 15, 21). *As a result, the Proposed Project would not damage scenic resources within the vicinity of a State-designated scenic highway. No impact would occur.*

<u>Aesthetics 1(c). Less than Significant Impact</u>

The Proposed Project site is located in a non-urbanized area that has been vacant for over eight years and does not contain any features that would constitute unique or valuable visual resources. The visual character of the area is primarily agricultural in nature, with additional nearby land

uses including residential uses to the northeast and commercial uses to the south. In addition, the adjacent parcel to the north is used as a part-time construction material storage yard. Local roadways in the vicinity of the Proposed Project are not considered features that add to visual quality of the surrounding area. However, the existing agricultural land uses located east of Harrison Road add to the existing visual character of the area. The Proposed Project would result in a significant impact if it would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. The analysis above under impact 1(a) identified that potential impacts from common public viewing areas would be less than significant.

The Proposed Project would add commercial development to a previously vacant site, which has the potential to impact the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. The Proposed Project site is designated for commercial use on the County's General Plan and Zoning Ordinance and is surrounded by existing development to the north and south. Additionally, the Proposed Project site is located within an the City of Salinas's Economic Development Element "Opportunity Area" identified as "North Entrance (Area K)" and adjacent to "Target Area K" (EDE; Source 36). The City of Salinas EDE identifies Area K as being a priority opportunity site for predominately office and retail space. All of Area K is currently within the County of Monterey's jurisdiction and would require approval of an annexation from the Local Agency Formation Commission of Monterey County to be a part of the City of Salinas jurisdictional boundaries. No annexation is currently being sought by the City of Salinas. If and when Area K is annexed into the City of Salinas and is developed according to the EDE, it will be considered an urbanized area, as defined by CEQA Guidelines and the Census Bureau. This is provided for informational purposes and offers context relative to the development potential of the areas surrounding the Proposed Project site.

The Proposed Project includes several architectural design features to ensure visual cohesiveness throughout the site. Architecture Plus, Inc. prepared an exhibit featuring proposed architectural design elements of the Proposed Project (including building colors, roof and trellis designs, and security lighting) (Source: 59). The proposed building colors would be a mix of neutral and earthtone colors including shades of beige, grey, and brown. These types of colors are typical of commercial development alongside highways in Monterey County and would not be visually obtrusive to drivers passing alongside the Proposed Project.

The proposed hotel, Tractor Supply building, and the illuminated pylon sign would be the most visible components of the Proposed Project from Highway 101 (see **Figure 6a-6e, Elevations**). All building heights were designed to conform to development standards for the Light Commercial zoning district, with the exception of the proposed hotel, which would have a maximum height of 45 feet, exceeding the 35-foot maximum height by 10 feet. A development standard that would allow for the height exception for the hotel is provided in the General Development Plan for the Proposed Project. Additionally, the applicant has applied for a Variance to increase the allowed main structure (hotel) height from 35 to 45 feet.

In addition, the illuminated pylon sign would be approximately 57 feet tall. Signage in inland Monterey County, including the project site, is regulated by Title 21, Chapter 21.60. These regulations are intended, in part, to protect the visual character of existing public views. Chapter

21.60 does not address highway adjacent pylon signs and therefore the height regulations for structures within the LC zoning district applies in this case. The proposed 57-foot pylon sign exceeds the allowable 35 feet, as established by Title 21 section 21.18.070.A(1). Therefore, the Applicant has applied for a Variance to increase the allowable sign height to 57 feet. The Applicant's justification to increase the height relies on the visual impediment of the Highway 101 and Sala Road interchange. Views to and over the site from northbound Highway 101 are blocked on the approach to the site by the intervening embankments of the elevated on- and off-ramps at Sala Road. According to California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) data, the clearance for the bridge connecting to the adjacent off ramp is at 19 feet 9 inches and the roof of the bridge is at 23 feet 5 inches. Vegetation along the bridge and off ramp intersection increases the height to approximately 25.5 feet. To determine most appropriate siting and height of the site, the Applicant conducted various visibility tests using a boom crane to elevate a 12-foot by 8-foot wood placard above the ground to identify the height at which the lowest tenant sign could be visible in both direction on Highway 101. The results concluded that for adequate visibility the bottom of the lowest tenant sign on the proposed pylon sign would need to be at least 37 feet above average natural grade. The tenant advertisement area is approximately 20 feet tall (four rows of 3.5-foot-tall tenant signs with 6 inches of spacing in between). Accordingly, the Proposed Project includes a 57-foot-tall pylon sign. In the southbound direction along Highway 101, the proposed sign would be entirely visible for approximately 0.8 miles (expect for a moment when travelling under the Highway 101/Sala Road interchange). When approaching the Sala Road northbound exist, the proposed sign would be generally subordinate to the surrounding area as the area is visually "busy" with the various Highway 101 directional signage, a Caltrans message boards and other traffic related signs, Salinas Self-Storage sign, and views of the surrounding mountain ranges and low lying residential and commercial development. When directly adjacent to Proposed Project site, the proposed development and pylon sign would be less subordinate with the surrounding area. In the southbound direction, with a placard bottom height of 37 feet (top height of 45 feet), the entire placard is blocked by an intervening soundwall and neighboring trees until about 50 yards prior to the Sala Road offramp exit or when traveling adjacent to the Proposed Project site. When directly adjacent to Proposed Project site, the proposed development and pylon sign would be less subordinate with the surrounding area. At the proposed height (57 feet), the Applicant found that the sign height would not be sufficient to safely capture a significant percentage of the southbound traffic via the Sala Road exit; however, the Applicant found that the northbound visibility was sufficient. Although the proposed 57-foot illuminated pylon sign would create a new prominent visual landmark for northbound and southbound travelers on Highway 101, it would not substantially impact visual quality of the site. All views of the illuminated pylon sign would be limited in duration and would not detract from the overall visual quality of the surrounding area.

Title 21 section 21.60.090(C)(2) requires the granting of a Use Permit for any commercial or industrial sign that exceeds, in the aggregate, a total of 75 square feet. Chapter 21.60 does not contemplate highway orientated development or multi-tenant commercial development. Therefore, the 75 square foot limitation is applied to tenant sign of the proposed pylon sign. Although the Proposed Project contemplates 16 tenants, only four major tenants and four minor tenants would be advertised on the proposed pylon sign. Each of the major tenant sign would be 70 square feet, while each of minor tenant signs would be 12 square feet. Additionally, due to the

location of the proposed sign being adjacent to a state highway that approaches, passes through, or goes near a city, HCD-Planning interpreted the 400 square foot limitation of Title 21 section 21.60.100(A) to apply to the proposed pylon sign. As proposed, the double-sides pylon sign would be approximately 768 square feet, or 368 square feet over the allowed sign size. Accordingly, the Applicant has applied for a Variance to increase the allowed sign size to 768 square feet.

The County has established maximum site coverage percentages applied to each zoning designation type identified in Title 21 of the County's zoning code. These coverage percentages are intended, in part, to regulate the visual mass of proposed developments from publicly available views within the County. The Proposed Project site is zoned as Light Commercial. The maximum site coverage standard for the Light Commercial zoning district is 50 percent. The Proposed Project would have a building site coverage below 50 percent. The proposed hotel and Tractor Supply buildings have setbacks of 350 feet each from the centerline of Highway 101. This setback would be consistent with the Light Commercial zoning district and substantially reduce the apparent visual mass of the structures as seen from the highway. The Proposed Project's conformance with site coverage as identified in the County's zoning designation for Light Commercial would ensure conformance to applicable zoning regulations governing scenic quality.

The Proposed Project features landscaping integrated into overall site development and the proposed structures as shown in **Figure 11**. The Light Commercial zoning district sets a minimum of ten percent site coverage for landscaping. The landscape plan exceeds the minimum ten percent site coverage standard. The Proposed Project includes planting of 160 trees throughout the site, including all parking areas. The proposed landscaping would provide visual diversity and would reduce the apparent mass of the development. The Proposed Project includes planting of trees and a continuous evergreen screen hedge along the western site boundary to minimize views from Highway 101. In addition, a dense row of trees was planted by Caltrans adjacent to the western boundary of the Proposed Project site within the adjacent segment of the highway right-of-way. These plantings will further soften views of the Proposed Project from Highway 101. The Proposed Project's conformance with landscaping coverage as identified in the County's zoning designation for Light Commercial would ensure that potential aesthetic impacts would be further minimized.

The Proposed Project would not result in the substantial degradation of existing visual quality of the site or views of the site and surroundings for the reasons described above. The Proposed Project would not substantially affect existing views as perceived from a common public viewing area, is consistent with applicable development standards intended to address potential aesthetic-related impacts, and the Proposed Project includes significant landscaping to screen views of the development from nearby public viewing areas (see analysis under impact 1(a), above for discussion of potential impacts from public viewing areas). The Proposed Project site is vacant and does not contain any unique or valuable visual resources. Similarly, the Proposed Project is located adjacent to existing uses that do not contain any unique or valuable visual resources. In addition, adjacent parcels to the north and east of the Proposed Project site will also likely be built-out with commercial uses in the future. The Proposed Project includes design

features intended to promote visual compatibility with the surrounding land uses, as described above. Development of the Proposed Project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the Proposed Project site and adjacent parcels.[2]

The Proposed Project would not result in the substantial degradation of existing visual quality of the site or views of the site and surroundings. The Proposed Project includes a Variance for the proposed illuminated pylon sign to allow a maximum height of 57 feet, as well as a Variance to increase the allowable dimensions of the sign (768 square feet). All other aspects of the Proposed Project would be consistent with Title 21 as it relates to aesthetics impacts. As discussed above, the General Plan EIR anticipated changes in visual quality associated with development of the Proposed Project site (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 59). *As a result, the Proposed Project would result in a less than significant impact related to visual resources.*

Aesthetics 1(d). Less than Significant Impact

The Proposed Project consists of the development of a vacant site and would introduce new sources of light and potential glare from building and pylon sign lighting and parking lot lighting compared to existing uses.

The Proposed Project would include lighting for site illumination and security. Sheet A-3 of the *Architectural Site Plan* provides lighting specifications for the Proposed Project. The proposed lighting design is consistent with regulations in Title 21 section 21.63.020. Lighting design for the Proposed Project includes features to ensure that site lighting would be cast downward to avoid offsite light pollution and to avoid sky glow. Rather than having the proposed tenant signage be overlain with white vinyl (typical of pylon signage), which would illuminate the entire tenant sign (12 – 70 square feet per sign), the proposed pylon sign would only include low wattage illumination of the tenant's individual name or logo, as shown in the **Figure 9** This design component would minimize the amount of light produced by the pylon sign at night.

[2] In addition, it is also important to recognize that Monterey County General Plan EIR considered potential aesthetic-related impacts associated with General Plan buildout. Section 15183(a) of the CEQA guidelines states: "CEQA mandates that projects which are consistent with the development density established by existing zoning, community plan, or general plan policies for which an EIR was certified shall not require additional environmental review, except as might be necessary to examine whether there are project-specific significant effects which are peculiar to the project or its site..." The General Plan EIR considered potential impacts associated with buildout under the 2010 Monterey County General Plan. These changes in land use would result in the permanent loss of natural aesthetic features, which was determined to be a significant and unavoidable impact in the General Plan EIR. As a result, the analysis contained in the General Plan EIR considered future significant visual changes on the Proposed Project site and in the surrounding area.

Figure 9. Proposed Pylon sign illumation, day and night time visibilty. Note: all tenants shown on the below sign figure are for example only and are not meant to be representative of the Proposed Project's tenants.

The proposed General Development Plan for the Proposed Project includes guidelines for design and installation of exterior lighting features in accordance with the County's *Design Guidelines for Exterior Lighting*. The following guidelines would apply to the Proposed Project:

- Exterior and accessory building lighting shall provide adequate illumination that ensures pedestrian safety, while being unobtrusive to adjacent buildings;
- Lighting shall be designed with fixtures that provide visual interest, but are appropriate to the architectural context of the primary structure;
- Lighting fixtures shall be compatible with and complement the building design and architectural style. Fixtures shall be appropriately sized and in scale with the building façade and surrounding context;
- Exterior building lighting shall be used to accentuate the building design and highlight architectural details and features integral to the building design;
- Building entrances and street numbers shall be illuminated and visible from the street; and
- Parking lot light sources shall be designed, located and/or shielded to prevent light spill on abutting residential units .

The Proposed Project would be designed and constructed in compliance with the lighting standards and guidelines listed above (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 22). *Adherence to these standards and guidelines would ensure that the Proposed Project would result in a less-than-significant impact regarding lighting effects on day or nighttime views.*

2. AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST RESOURCES

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

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use? (Source: 1, 2, 23)	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract? (Source: 1, 2, 45)	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))? (Source: 1, 2, 46)	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? (Source: 1, 2)	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? (Source: 1, 2, 7)	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

The Proposed Project site has historically been utilized for agricultural activities. However, the site has been vacant for the last eight years and has not been cultivated. Agricultural activities on the site have been limited to periodic disking. The 2018 Important Farmland Map for North Monterey County shows the site as Grazing Land and Other Land.

Agricultural and Forest Resources 2(a). No Impact

As stated above, the 2018 Important Farmland Map for North Monterey County designates the site as Grazing Land and Other Land. The Proposed Project site does not contain any prime farmland, unique farmland, or farmland of statewide importance. The Proposed Project site is designated Commercial in the 2010 Monterey County General Plan and is zoned Light Commercial. The Proposed Project is consistent with the land use designation and zoning (Source: 1, 2, 23). *Conversion of the site to urban use would not result in an impact related the loss of prime farmland, unique farmland, or farmland of statewide importance on the site.*

Agricultural and Forest Resources 2(b). No Impact

The Proposed Project site is not under a Williamson Act contract or any other type of Agricultural Preservation Contract. The site is zoned Light Commercial, which is compatible with the intended development (Source: 1, 2, 45). *The Proposed Project would have no impact with respect to conflicting with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract.*

Agricultural and Forest Resources 2(c). No Impact

The Proposed Project site does not contain any forestland or timberland resources. The site is zoned Light Commercial, which is compatible with the intended development, and does not propose any rezoning of forestland or timberland to non-forest uses, since none exists on the site (Source: 1, 2, 46). *The Proposed Project would have no impact with respect to conflicting with existing zoning for forestland or timberland.*

Agricultural and Forest Resources 2(d). No Impact

The Proposed Project site is not zoned for forestland or timberland uses and no forest resources exist within or adjacent to the Proposed Project site. See also response 2(c), above (Source: 1, 2). *The Proposed Project would have no impact with respect to conflicting with an existing zoning for agricultural or forestry uses or result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.*

Agricultural and Forest Resources 2(e). Less Than Significant Impact

The Proposed Project would develop new urban land uses adjacent to active agricultural operations, including active farmland. This could result in the conversion of the adjacent farmland to non-agricultural uses. Active agricultural operations occur on the parcel across Harrison Road to the east and across Highway 101 to the west. The Proposed Project site is not directly adjacent to these or any other agricultural uses as the existing Harrison Road and Highway 101 provide physical separation between these uses and the site. In addition, the Proposed Project includes a 50-foot building setback from Harrison Road, which would further separate the Proposed Project from nearby agricultural operations. The proposed project is located outside more than 200 feet from nearby agricultural uses (Source: 1, 2, 7).

In addition, it is also important to recognize that Monterey County General Plan EIR considered potential agricultural resources-related impacts associated with General Plan buildout. The County's General Plan EIR previously determined that implementation of the 2010 Monterey

County General Plan could result in the conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses. The Proposed Project would not result in any additional impacts related to the conversion of farmland beyond those described in the General Plan EIR. Moreover, the Proposed Project site is designated "Commercial" under the Monterey County 2010 General Plan. As a result, the analysis contained in the General Plan EIR considered conversion of farmland on and adjacent to the Proposed Project site. The Proposed Project would not directly or indirectly cause the conversion of farmland. *Therefore, impacts from potential farmland conversion to nonagricultural use would be less than significant.*

3. AIR QUALITY

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

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 8, 24)	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard? (Source: 1, 2, 5, 7, 8)	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 8)	☐	☒	☐	☐
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people? (Source: 1, 2, 5, 7)	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

The Proposed Project site is located within the North Central Coast Air Basin ("NCCAB"), which is under the jurisdiction of the Monterey Bay Air Resources District ("MBARD"). The MBARD is responsible for producing an AQMP that reports air quality and regulates stationary sources throughout the NCCAB. Construction of the Proposed Project would involve typical construction equipment. This equipment would emit air pollutants such as carbon monoxide ("CO"), particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter ("PM_{10}") and 2.5 microns in diameter ("$PM_{2.5}$"), and nitrogen oxides ("NO_X"). Impacts related to the emission of air pollutants during construction would be temporary and would cease upon conclusion of construction activities.

An Air Quality Assessment (Monterey County File No. LIB230239) (Source: 8) was prepared for the Proposed Project. The following analysis is based, in part, on the findings of the Air Quality Assessment. [3]

Air Quality 3(a). Less than Significant Impact

The Proposed Project site is located within the NCCAB, which is under the jurisdiction of MBARD as described above. MBARD's currently adopted plan is the *2012-2015 Air Quality Management Plan for the Monterey Bay Region* ("AQMP"). The AQMP addresses attainment of the State ozone standard and Federal air quality standard. The AQMP accommodates growth by projecting growth in emissions based on population forecasts prepared by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments ("AMBAG") and other indicators. AMBAG issues consistency determinations for commercial, industrial, residential, and infrastructure related projects that have the potential to induce population growth. The Proposed Project consists of the construction of new retail, restaurant, hotel, and fueling station uses, and does not have any residential components that would directly result in a population increase. While the Proposed Project would generate additional jobs in the area, these positions are anticipated to be filled by existing residents in the surrounding area and would not be expected to significantly induce population growth in conflict with the AQMP (Source: 1, 2, 7, 8, 24). *As a result, the Proposed Project would not conflict with or obstruct the implementation of any applicable air quality plans, resulting in a less than significant impact.*

Air Quality 3(b). Less than Significant Impact

Air quality standards define the maximum concentration of pollutants, averaged over a specified period of time, that can be present in outdoor air without significant harmful effects on people or the environment. The NCCAB is in non-attainment with state standards for ozone and suspended particulate matter. With respect to federal standards, the NCCAB has either achieved attainment or is unclassified. MBARD's *CEQA Air Quality Guidelines* include criteria air pollutant emissions thresholds, which are used to determine whether a project would result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria air pollutants during operations and/or construction. **Table 2, Thresholds of Significance for Criteria Air Pollutants** summarizes thresholds for criteria air pollutants. Impacts for construction and operation of the Proposed Project are discussed below.

[3] The Proposed Project originally proposed three additional truck fueling stations as part of the overall Convenience Market/Fueling Station, which has since been removed. The three-truck fueling station was accounted for in all technical analyses for the Proposed Project, including the Air Quality Assessment (Monterey County File No. LIB230239. The removal of this component of the Proposed Project would reduce overall air quality emissions compared to what was analyzed in LIB230239. As a result, LIB230239 provides a conservative analysis of air quality impacts compared to what is currently proposed for development.

Table 2
Thresholds of Significance for Criteria Air Pollutants

Pollutants	Threshold(s) of Significance (lb./day)
VOC	137
NO_x	137
PM_{10}	82
CO	590
SO_2	150

(Source: 5)

Construction Impacts

California Emissions Estimator Model ("CalEEMod") version 2016.3.2 software was used to estimate the criteria air pollutant emissions that would be generated by on-site construction activities and the Roadway Construction Emission Model ("RoadMod") Version 9 was used to estimate the criteria air pollutant emissions generated by construction of off-site improvements. **Table 3, Unmitigated Construction Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions)** summarizes the unmitigated criteria air pollutant emissions from overall construction activities (both onsite and offsite).

Construction activities would generate a maximum of 39.06 pounds per day of PM_{10} emissions as described in **Table 3**, which is below the PM_{10} threshold of 82 pounds per day established by MBARD. Ozone precursor emissions from construction projects using typical equipment were accounted for in the emission inventories of the AQMP as described in MBARD's *CEQA Air Quality Guidelines* (Source: 5, page 5-3). The Proposed Project would utilize typical construction equipment. Consequently, ozone precursor emissions from construction were accounted for in the emission inventories and would have a less than significant impact on the attainment and maintenance of the national or state ambient air quality standards for ozone. *As a result, construction of the Proposed Project would not result in the cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria air pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment, resulting in a less than significant impact.*

Table 3
Unmitigated Construction Criteria Pollutant Emissions

Maximum Daily Emissions[1,2]	VOC	NO_x	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$	CO	SO_2
Summer	181.29	47.09	39.06	15.76	31.67	0.09
MBARD Thresholds	N/A	N/A	82	N/A	N/A	N/A
Exceeds Thresholds?	*N/A*	*N/A*	*No*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
Winter	181.31	47.11	39.06	15.76	32.02	0.09
MBARD Thresholds	N/A	N/A	82	N/A	N/A	N/A
Exceeds Thresholds?	*N/A*	*N/A*	*No*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*

(Source: 8)
Notes:
1. Expressed in pounds per day.
2. Results may vary due to rounding.

Operational Impacts

Criteria air pollutant emissions would be generated from operation of the Proposed Project. CalEEMod was used to estimate operational emissions for the Proposed Project (see Monterey County File No. LIB230239), with adjustments to the modeling inputs to account for required compliance with applicable state and local regulations, as well as to account for reductions in overall emissions as a result of implementation of the Applicant-proposed energy efficiency and conservation measures described in **Chapter 2** of this Initial Study.

Table 4, Operational Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions summarizes operational emissions from buildout of the Proposed Project. **Table 4** shows that the emissions of VOC, NO_X, PM_{10}, CO, SO_2 would not exceed MBARD's adopted thresholds (Source: 1, 2, 5, 7, 8). *As a result, operation of the Proposed Project would not result in the cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria air pollutant for which the region is non-attainment, resulting in a less than significant impact.*

Table 4
Operational Criteria Pollutant Emissions

Maximum Daily Emissions[1,2]	VOC	NO_x	SO_2	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$	CO
Summer[3]	19.89	58.38	0.29	19.53	5.49	94.90
MBARD Thresholds	137	137	150	82	N/A	550
Exceeds Thresholds?	*No*	*No*	*No*	*No*	*N/A*	*No*
Winter[3]	18.55	59.70	0.28	19.53	5.49	108.64
MBARD Thresholds	137	137	150	82	N/A	550
Exceeds Thresholds?	*No*	*No*	*No*	*No*	*N/A*	*No*

(Source: 8)
Notes:
1. Expressed in pounds per day.
2. Results may vary due to rounding.
3. Results include emissions reductions from compliance with 2019 BEES and Applicant-proposed emissions reduction measures.

<u>Air Quality 3(c). Less than Significant with Mitigation</u>

Construction of the Proposed Project would include ground-disturbing construction activities that would result in localized emissions of dust and toxic air contaminants ("TACs") from heavy equipment diesel exhaust. These emissions could result in temporary impacts to adjacent land uses that include sensitive receptors. Sensitive receptors typically consist of facilities where sensitive population groups are located, including residences, schools, childcare centers, convalescent homes, and medical facilities. The closest sensitive receptors are the residents of the nearby residential development adjacent to the northwest border of the Proposed Project Site. The effect of TAC emissions on sensitive receptors as a result of construction activities are described below.

Construction Impacts on Sensitive Receptors

The sensitive receptors closest to the Proposed Project site consist of several homes located to the northwest, the closest of which is approximately 200 feet from the boundary of the site. Construction activity located within 500 feet of sensitive receptors may contribute to exposures to TACs that have the potential to adversely affect human health. (Source: 8). As a result, construction of the Proposed Project could expose sensitive receptors to TACs, which is a potentially significant impact. *Implementation of mitigation measures AQ-1 through AQ-3 would reduce the potential exposure of nearby sensitive receptors to pollutant concentrations during construction of the Proposed Project to a less-than-significant level.*

Operational Impacts on Sensitive Receptors

Operation of the service station component of the Proposed Project could result in operational air quality impacts. More specifically, fueling activity at the service station would generate gasoline vapors that contain a number of toxic chemicals. Chemicals associated with fueling stations notably include benzene, a known carcinogen. The proposed service station would be located about 1,300 feet from the nearest sensitive receptors. Operation of the service station would be required to conform to the requirements of MBARD Rule 1000, Permit Guidelines and Requirements for Sources Emitting Toxic Air Contaminants. Rule 1000 applies to any source which requires a permit to construct or operate pursuant to air district Regulation II and has the potential to emit carcinogenic or non-carcinogenic TACs into the atmosphere. Rule 1000 requires any new source of TACs to prepare a risk assessment and reduce health risks to below the TAC thresholds. Compliance with the air district's Rule 1000 would ensure that operation of the proposed service station does not result in significant TACs (Source: 1, 2, 7, 8). *Therefore, operation of the Proposed Project would have a less-than-significant impact on sensitive receptors.*

Mitigation Measures

AQ-1 To reduce the exposure of nearby sensitive receptors to dust emissions from grading and construction activities on the project site, the following language shall be included on all grading and construction plans for the project prior to issuance of grading permits, subject to review and approval by County of Monterey HCD:

Dust control measures shall be employed to reduce visible dust leaving the site. The following measures recommended by the air district, 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 until all grading activities are complete and disturbed soils are revegetated and/or developed, 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 to disturbed soils where grading is completed, but not 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 2.5 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 MBARD shall also be visible to ensure compliance with Rule 402 (Nuisance); and

j. Limit the area under construction at any one time.

Mitigation Monitoring Action AQ-1a: Prior to issuance of any grading and/or building permit, the Applicant shall include a note on the construction plans that includes the language contained in Mitigation Measure AQ-1.

Mitigation Monitoring Action AQ-1b: The applicant/contractor shall adhere and implement the measures contained in Mitigation Measure AQ-1 until completion of grading and construction of the Project.

Mitigation Monitoring Action AQ-1c: Prior to final of any grading and/or building permit, the Applicant shall provide evidence to County of Monterey HCD that Mitigation Measure AQ-1 has been successfully implemented.

AQ-2 Prior to the issuance of any grading and/or building permits, the Applicant shall prepare a Construction Staging Management Plan. The Construction Staging Management Plan shall be provided to Monterey County HCD for review and approval. 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.

Mitigation Monitoring Action AQ-2: Prior to issuance of any grading and/or building permit, the HCD-Planning and Engineering Services shall review and approve the Construction Staging Management Plan to ensure that it contains the restrictions on construction equipment identified in Mitigation Measure AQ-2.

AQ-3 Prior to the issuance of any grading and/or building permits, the Applicant shall provide construction documents to the County of Monterey HCD for review and approval. The following language shall be included in all construction documents: "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."

Mitigation Monitoring Action AQ-3: Prior to issuance of any grading and/or building permit, HCD-Planning shall review and approve the construction documents to ensure that they contain the language contained in Mitigation Measure AQ-3.

Air Quality 3(d). Less than Significant

Odors are defined as the emission of one or more pollutants that are a nuisance to healthy persons and may trigger asthma episodes in people with sensitive airways (Source: 5). Sources of odors typically include landfills, chemical plants, agricultural uses, wastewater treatment plants, and refineries. The Proposed Project does not include any uses that are identified by MBARD as odor producers. Construction of the Proposed Project may result in intermittent odors from diesel exhaust that could be noticeable at times to nearby residences. However, these odors would be temporary, and emission of these odors would cease following construction. Given the temporary nature of construction activities and the relative lack sensitive receptors in the area, potential intermittent odors are not anticipated to result in odors that would affect a substantial number of people (Source: 1, 2, 5, 7). *The Proposed Project would have a less than significant impact resulting from emissions of odors.*

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51)	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11)	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11)	☐	☒	☐	☐
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11)	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11)	☐	☒	☐	☐
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan? (Source: 1, 2)	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

A biological and cultural resources assessment and a focused Congdon's tarplant survey were completed for the Proposed Project site and are contained in Monterey County File No. LIB200170 (Source: 9 and 10). This section is based on the findings of the report and survey. The prepared biological and cultural resources assessment also includes a copy of a request made to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to determine jurisdiction of a drainage channel located on the site. Site visits were conducted in connection with each of these studies.

The Proposed Project site is approximately 17.93 acres and is located within the Salinas U.S. Geological Survey quadrangle map. Surrounding land uses include agricultural fields located to the east, a residential subdivision and commercial uses to the north, Highway 101 and Caltrans detention pond facilities to the west, and a Caltrans detention pond on the south. The adjacent, off-site detention ponds contained ruderal vegetation and stagnant, shallow water containing algae at the time of the site visits. Red-winged blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) were observed flying around the ponds and perching on adjacent fences.

The dominant plant community on the Proposed Project site and in the off-site improvements area on Harrison Road is ruderal (non-native) open grassland. Small animal burrows were observed in the open area along the southern portion of the Proposed Project site and near the fence line between the property and the southern retention pond. No biological resources, aside from ruderal grasslands, are present at the location of the off-site improvements on Harrison Road.

Biological Resources 4(a). Less than Significant with Mitigation

The following discussion analyzes the Proposed Project's potential to impact species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status. A list of special-status species with the potential to occur in the project vicinity was generated based on a search of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife ("CDFW") California Natural Diversity Database ("CNDDB") of nine nearby U.S. Geological Survey quadrangles (Source: 47). Additional records searches were conducted using the quadrangles in the California Native Plant Society ("CNPS") Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants (Source: 48) and the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service ("USFWS") Endangered Species Program (Source: 49) (see **LIB200170**). Special-status species include species listed as Endangered, Threatened, or Rare, or as Candidates for listing by the USFWS and/or CDFW, Species of Special Concern or Fully Protected species as identified by CDFW, or as Rare Plant Rank 1B or 2B as identified by CNPS.

Figure 14, Special-Status Species Map, provides the results of the CNDDB search, as well as the location of aquatic features in relation to the Proposed Project site. **Table 5** shows special-status plant and **Table 6** shows wildlife species and summarizes their potential to be present in the project area.

Table 5.
Special-Status Plant Species

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status	General Habitat	Habitat Present/Absent	Rationale
Centromadia parryi ssp *congdonii*	Congdon's tarplant	CNPS List 1B.1	Grassland, moist areas	Absent	Not observed during focused survey, presumed absent.

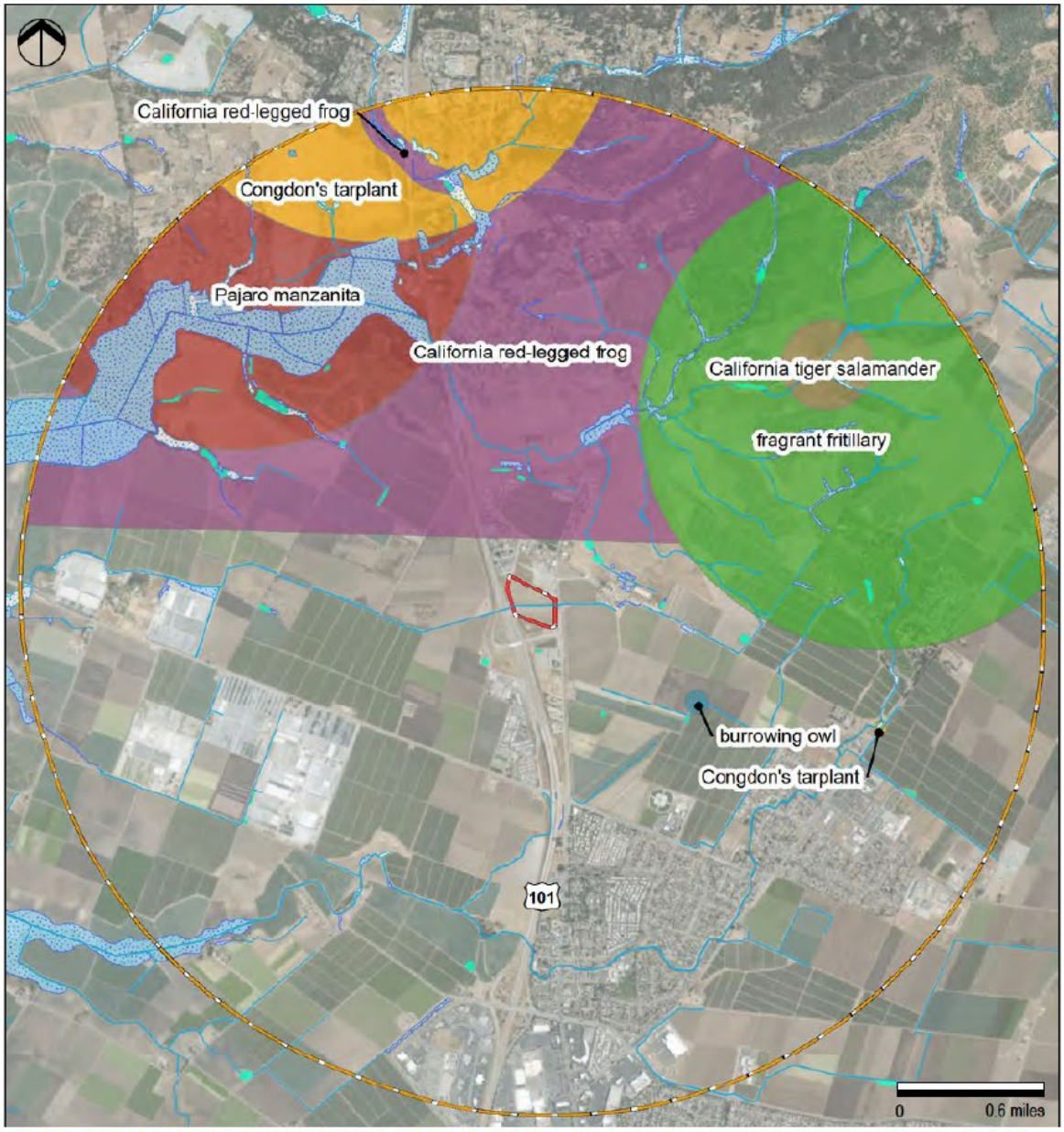
Table 6.
Special-Status Wildlife Species

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status	State Status	CDFW Status	Habitat Preference and Potential for Occurrence in Project Impact Areas
Ambystoma californiense	California tiger salamander	Threatened	Threatened	None	UNLIKELY. Suitable habitat is not present at the project site.
Athene cunicularia	burrowing owl	None	None	SSC	MODERATE. Found in grasslands, rangelands, agricultural areas and other open dry areas with low vegetation. Marginally suitable foraging habitat is present on project site and off-site improvements area.
Rana draytonii	California red-legged frog	Threatened	None	SCC	UNLIKELY. Suitable habitat is not present at the project site.

Congdon's Tarplant

The prepared biological and cultural resources assessment (Source: 9) identified potential habitat for Congdon's tarplant (*Centromadia parryi* ssp. *congdonii*), which is classified as a Rare Plant Rank 1B by CNPS. Congdon's tarplant is found on a range of substrates and is known to be tolerant of disturbed and ruderal (non-native) areas. Congdon's tarplant is typically found in the East San Francisco Bay Area, Salinas Valley, and Los Osos Valley, and may occur within patches of non-native grassland. This species is most observable from late summer to early fall, during its peak blooming period.

A focused plant survey was conducted on September 25, 2018 (Source: 10). No Congdon's tarplant was observed at the Proposed Project site.



Note: This figure presents California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) occurrence records maintained by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Species records indicate positive occurrences only; lack of occurrence data does not indicate species are not present. Some records represent historical and/or extirpated occurrences. There may be additional special-status species occurrences within this area which have not been observed or reported.

Legend

- Project Boundary
- 2 Mile Buffer

Wetland Type

- Riverine
- Freshwater Emergent Wetland
- Freshwater Forested/ Shrub Wetland

Source: EMC Planning Group, September 2020

Special-Status Species Map

Sala Road Commercial Project
Initial Study

Figure
14

Burrowing Owl

Burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) is listed as a California Species of Special Concern. Burrowing owls are known to live and breed in abandoned ground burrows, especially those of the California ground squirrel. Ideal habitat conditions for Burrowing owls consist of large, open, dry and nearly level grasslands or prairies with short to moderate vegetation height and cover, and areas of bare ground with significant populations of burrowing mammals. The nearest recorded observation of Burrowing owl is from 2007, located approximately 0.6 miles southwest of the Proposed Project site.

Non-native grassland within the Proposed Project site and within the Harrison Road improvement impact area could provide marginally suitable foraging habitat for Burrowing owl. In addition, scattered small mammal burrows on the site could be utilized for nesting habitat. As a result, construction activities could result in the loss or disturbance of individual animals if Burrowing owl is present on or adjacent to the Proposed Project site or within the Harrison Road impact area, which would represent a significant adverse environmental impact. *However, implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1 would reduce potential impacts to Burrowing owl to a less than significant level.*

Nesting Birds

Various bird species, such as the California horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris actia*), may nest on open ground or in any type of vegetation at or adjacent to the Proposed Project site, as well as within the Harrison Road widening impact area. Construction activities have the potential to impact nesting birds protected under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code. Noise-generating construction activities could result in the loss of fertile eggs, nestlings, or otherwise lead to nest abandonment, which would represent a significant impact. This would be a potentially significant impact that can be reduced to a less than significant level with application of the County's standard "RAPTOR/MIGRATORY BIRD NESTING" condition of approval which requires the Applicant to retain a qualified biologist to conduct pre-construction bird nesting survey during the typical nesting season (February 22 - August 1), if construction occurs during this period. If nesting birds or other protected avian species are found on within 300 feet of the project site and within 30 days of construction activities, an appropriate buffer plan shall be established by the project biologist. *The Proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on nesting birds with implementation of this standard permit condition.*

California Tiger Salamander

The California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*) is a federally-listed and state-listed threatened species. California tiger salamander ("CTS") is characterized as a large, stocky terrestrial salamander. CTS have two primary habitat components: aquatic breeding sites and upland terrestrial refuge sites. Aquatic habitats typically include ephemeral water bodies such as vernal pools, ponds, depressional pools, and other wetlands. Suitable upland habitat for CTS consists of grazed annual grassland that contains concentrations of small mammal burrows or

other underground habitat, and that is within 1.24 miles of potential aquatic breeding habitat where there are no obvious barriers to dispersal (Source: 50).

The recorded observation of CTS nearest to the Proposed Project site is located approximately 1.2 miles from the site. Larvae were observed in a stock pond/reservoir in non-native grassland/coast live oak in 1990, though a follow up survey in 1999 did not find any larvae at this same location. The Proposed Project site and Harrison Road widening impact area are in an isolated area that does not provide contiguous open habitat between the Proposed Project site and the nearest known occurrence of CTS. As a result, CTS are not expected to occur at the site. CTS are also not expected to be present on the Proposed Project site or within the Harrison Road widening impact area due to the poor habitat conditions of the off-site detention ponds adjacent to the site. *The Proposed Project would not result in any impacts to CTS.*

California Red-legged Frog

California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*) is a federally-listed threatened and state-listed species of special concern that occurs in streams, ephemeral ponds, and pools where water remains long enough for breeding. California red-legged frog ("CRLF") are almost always found near water. However, CRLF are known to disperse to upland habitats up to one mile from their aquatic breeding habitats during the dry season (Source: 51). The nearest recorded observation of CRLF is located approximately 1.5 miles from the site and was recorded in 2003. Adults and larvae were observed in deep pools with adjacent wetland vegetation, oak woodland, pastureland, and willows.

The Proposed Project site and the Harrison Road widening impact area are located in an isolated area that does not provide contiguous open habitat between the Proposed Project site and the nearest known occurrence of CRLF. As a result, this species is not expected to occur. CRLF are also not expected to be present on the Proposed Project site or within the Harrison Road widening impact area due to the poor habitat conditions of the off-site detention ponds adjacent to the site. *The Proposed Project would not result in any impacts to CRLF.*

Conclusion

The Proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on candidate, sensitive, and special-status species with incorporation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 and standard permit conditions as identified above, (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51).

Mitigation Measure

BIO-1 To avoid/minimize impacts to Burrowing owls potentially occurring onsite or within the Harrison Road widening impact area, the Applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to conduct a two-visit (i.e., morning and evening) presence/absence survey at areas of suitable habitat in these areas no less than 14 days prior to the start of construction or ground disturbance activities. The Applicant shall initiate consultation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife if these pre-construction surveys locate occupied

burrows in or near construction areas. If Burrowing owls are found present, the Applicant will work with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to interpret survey results and develop a project-specific avoidance and minimization approach.

Mitigation Monitoring Action BIO-1: Prior to the issuance of grading and/or building permits, the Applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to provide a report documenting survey results shall be submitted to the HCD-Planning for review and approval. If the survey results are negative, construction may proceed without consultation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. If the survey results are positive, construction may not proceed until consultation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife has occurred.

Biological Resources 4(b). Less than Significant with Mitigation

The Proposed Project contains a drainage channel that crosses the site from east to west. This drainage channel was determined to not be a wetland but subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ("USACE") following an on-site field visit. USACE determined that an after-the-fact Nationwide 39 permit was required to address past disturbances to the drainage channel. Mitigation would be implemented to reduce impacts to the drainage channel to a less than significant level as described under impact 4(c), below (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11).

Aside from the drainage channel described above, the Proposed Project site does not support any additional riparian habitats or other sensitive natural communities identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, including any state or federally protected wetlands or creeks subject to CDFW or USFWS jurisdiction. In addition, the widening impact area of Harrison Road does not contain any protected wetlands. *As a result, the Proposed Project would result in a less than significant impact with respect to direct removal, filling, or hydrological interruption of state or federally protected wetlands with incorporation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2*.

Biological Resources 4(c). Less than Significant with Mitigation

The Proposed Project could potentially have an adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands. The Proposed Project site includes a drainage channel that crosses the site from east to west that has been subject to periodic disturbance by mowing and discing associated with maintenance of the site. A letter providing site information, maps, jurisdictional information, and a request for a site visit was submitted to the USACE in 2018 to determine jurisdiction of the drainage channel (Source: 11). Following the on-site meeting and subsequent coordination with Keith Hess, regulator with the USACE, the wetland feature was determined to be under USACE jurisdiction. An after-the-fact Nationwide 39 permit was determined to be required for the Proposed Project to address past disturbances to the drainage channel and to reduce impacts to the wetland feature to a less than significant level. A pre-construction notification and mitigation plan was also identified as a required approval, due to past impacts to the drainage channel occurring over an area greater than half an acre.

Final design and specifications for the mitigation for the drainage channel would be determined in consultation with USACE prior to the issuance of the Nationwide 39 Permit. Impact

mitigation is expected to consist of rerouting the drainage channel using a series of open channels and underground piping from the culvert on the west side of Harrison Road around the perimeter or through the property, exiting at the western boundary into an existing drainage ditch parallel to the freeway. A seeding and monitoring plan to vegetate the new channel and verify establishment of the plants is also expected to be a requirement of the Nationwide 39 Permit. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce significant impacts to jurisdictional waterways to a less than significant level (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11). *The Proposed Project would have a less than significant impact with respect to substantial adverse effects on any state or federally protected wetlands with incorporation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2.*

Mitigation Measure

BIO-2 Prior to any additional grading, filling, or rerouting of the existing drainage channel, a Clean Water Act Section 404 Nationwide Permit (NWP) 39 from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ("USACE") shall be obtained. As part of the application for the NWP 39 Permit, a wetland mitigation plan for rerouting the drainage channel through the property as mitigation for impacts to the on-site wetland is required for review and approval by the USACE. A Water Quality Certification (per Section 401 of the Clean Water Act) from the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board ("RWQCB") shall also be obtained.

Mitigation Monitoring Action BIO-2: Prior to issuance of grading permits, HCD-Planning shall be provided with copies of the NWP 39 Permit from USACE and a Water Quality Certification from the Central Coast RWQCB.

<u>Biological Resources 4(d). Less than Significant Impact</u>

Wildlife movement corridors provide connectivity between habitat areas, enhancing species richness and diversity, and usually also provide cover, water, food, and breeding sites. The Proposed Project site is disturbed and has historically been used for agricultural purposes. The Harrison Road widening impact area is also located in a disturbed area. Neither site is considered likely to facilitate major wildlife movement due to site disturbance. While scattered small animal burrows are present on-site this habitat is considered marginal (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11). *The Proposed Project would have a less-than-significant impact on wildlife movement.*

<u>Biological Resources 4(e). Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation</u>

The County's 2010 General Plan contains various policies intended to protect biological resources within Monterey County as described above. The Proposed Project includes mitigation measures to reduce impacts to biological resources. The Proposed Project would implement mitigation measures BIO-1 and BIO-2 to reduce potentially significant impacts to biological resources to less than significant level. The Proposed Project would not require the removal of trees as none are present on site (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11). The Proposed Project would not conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. *This represents a less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated.*

Biological Resources 4(f). No Impact

Neither the Proposed Project site nor the proposed locations of offsite improvements are located in an area with critical habitat designations, adopted habitat conservation plans, natural community conservation plans, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plans (Source: 1, 2). *No impact would occur.*

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES **Would the project:**	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5? (Source: 1, 2, 4, 7, 9)	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5? (Source: 1, 2, 4, 7, 9)	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries? (Source: 1, 2, 4, 7, 9)	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

The Proposed Project site has historically been used for agricultural purposes and does not contain any structures. The Proposed Project site is mapped in a low sensitivity area for archaeological resources (Source: 2). The Proposed Project site has been highly disturbed by past agricultural uses. Therefore, the potential presence of unique archaeological resources on the site is considered low.

A biological and cultural resources assessment was prepared for the Proposed Project (Source: 9, 10 and 11). The assessment indicated that there are no recorded prehistoric properties, structures, or sites within the boundaries of the Proposed Project. This section is based, in part, on the discussion contained in Source 9.

Cultural Resources 5(a). Less than Significant Impact

The Proposed Project site has historically been used for agricultural purposes and does not contain any structures. A biological and cultural resources assessment was prepared for the Proposed Project, which included an evaluation of historic resources in the vicinity of the Proposed Project site. The assessment indicated no recorded historic properties, structures, or sites within the Proposed Project boundaries. The assessment identified one historic structure in the vicinity of the property. This historic structure is not located within or adjacent to the site and would not be impacted by development of the Proposed Project (Source: 1, 2, 4, 7, 9). *Therefore, the Proposed Project would have a less than significant impact with respect to causing a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource.*

Cultural Resources 5(b and c) Less than Significant

The prepared biological and cultural resources assessment indicated that no recorded prehistoric properties, structures, or sites are located within the boundaries of the Proposed Project. No archaeological resources were observed during site visits, although a full archaeological reconnaissance survey was not conducted. Although it is possible that archaeological resources could be discovered during earth-moving activities, the report concluded that the potential of discovery and disturbance was low (Source: 1, 2, 4, 7, 9). Therefore, the potential for inadvertent impacts to archaeological resources is limited and would be controlled by application of the County's standard condition which requires the contractor to stop work if previously unidentified resources are discovered during construction. No Native American human remains, or significant cultural resources are known to exist on the project site. If unanticipated human remains are unearthed, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 requires no further disturbance to occur until the County Coroner has made the necessary findings as to the origin and disposition pursuant to the Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. If the remains are determined to be of Native American descent, the coroner has 24 hours to notify the Native American Heritage Commission which will determine and notify a most likely descendant (MLD). The MLD shall complete the inspection of the site and make recommendations to the landowner within 48 hours of being granted access. *Adherence to the County's standard cultural resource condition of approval would result in less than significant impacts on cultural resources.*

6. ENERGY **Would the project:**	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 8, 52, 53, 54)	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 52)	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

Starting in 2018, all PG&E customers within Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties were automatically enrolled in Central Coast Community Energy ("3CE"), formerly known as Monterey Bay Community Power. 3CE is a locally controlled public agency providing carbon-free electricity to residents and businesses. Formed in February 2017, 3CE is a joint powers authority, and is based on a local energy model called community choice energy. 3CE partners with PG&E, which continues to provide billing, power transmission and distribution, customer service, grid maintenance services and natural gas services to Monterey County. 3CE's standard electricity offering, is carbon free and is classified as 30 percent renewable. Of the electricity

provided by 3CE in 2018, 40 percent was hydroelectric, and 30 percent was solar and wind (eligible renewables) (Source: 52).

Various state regulations and legislative acts are aimed at improving vehicle fuel efficiency, energy efficiency, and enhancing energy conservation. Representative legislation for the use of renewable energy includes Senate Bill 350, which sets state-wide goals for renewable energy. In addition, the California Building Standards Code would apply to the Proposed Project. The County of Monterey enforces the California Building Standards Code at a project-level through the development process.

This section is based on the results of the Sala Road Project – Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report (Source: 8) prepared for the Proposed Project.

Energy 6(a). Less than Significant Impact

Energy impacts associated with the Proposed Project were assessed based on the total energy demand for the completed development. The Proposed Project could result in a potentially significant impact if it would result in the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy, if its energy demand is determined to be excessive compared to common land use types, and/or if the gross energy demand for the Proposed Project is determined to be excessive relative to total demand in Monterey County.

Projected Energy Demand

The Proposed Project would result in increased demand for energy due to construction activities and long-term operation. Energy consumed during construction activities would be temporary. The primary sources of operational energy consumption from the Proposed Project consist of vehicle fuel, natural gas, and electricity. A summary of projected energy demand is provided below.

Transportation Fuel

Operation of the Proposed Project would generate new traffic trips that would result in increased demand for and consumption of transportation fuel. Based on CalEEMod results, the annual unmitigated project VMT would be 8,987,181 miles (Source: 8, LIB230239)[4]. Whereas, the prepared VMT Analysis, which utilized the AMBAG travel demand model, estimated that the unmitigated project VMT would be 7,094,430 miles (Source: 18). According to the 2017 Emissions Factor Model ("EMFAC2017") results, transportation fuel demand is forecast at about 385,581 gallons per year. By design, the Proposed Project includes a diversity of complementing

[4] The Proposed Project originally proposed three additional truck fueling stations as part of the overall Convenience Market/Fueling Station, which has since been removed. The three-truck fueling station was accounted for in the prepared Air Quality Assessment (Monterey County File No. LIB230239; Source: 8) and VMT analysis. The removal of this component of the Proposed Project would reduce overall energy use compared to what was analyzed in Sources: 8 and 18. As a result, LIB230239C provides a conservative analysis of energy impacts compared to what is currently proposed for development.

land uses located within close proximity to one-another, which serves to reduce VMT and overall consumption of transportation fuel.

Electricity

Total electricity consumption in Monterey County was approximately 2,434,272,857 kWh in 2020 (Source: 53). The results of the CalEEMod modeling for the Proposed Project show that electricity demand would be approximately 2,177,885 kWh/year. This represents a negligible amount of the total 2020 electricity consumption for Monterey County. The Applicant has identified several energy efficiency/conservation measures that are part of the Proposed Project, as described in **Chapter 2** of this Initial Study**.** These measures include committing to a 10 percent improvement over current Title 24 energy standards; installing high efficiency lighting to reduce lighting energy by 16 percent; planting native and/or drought-resistant species of trees and other vegetation to reduce energy used for irrigation, and; installing energy efficient appliances in the hotel, convenience market, fast food restaurant, and retail stores. Implementation of these measures would reduce overall energy demand associated with the Proposed Project.

Natural Gas

Total natural gas consumption in Monterey County was 110,009,822 therms in 2020 (Source: 54). The results of the CalEEMod modeling for the Proposed Project show that natural gas demand would be approximately 8,370,602,000 BTU/year (or 83,726 therms/year). This represents a negligible amount of the total 2020 natural gas consumption for Monterey County. The Applicant's commitment to exceed Title 24 energy requirements would further reduce natural gas consumption.

Conclusion

The Proposed Project would not result in an energy demand that would be considered excessive relative to cumulative energy demand in the County. Operation of the Proposed Project would not result in inefficient, wasteful, and unnecessary consumption of energy (Source: 1, 2, 7, 8, 52, 53, 54). Moreover, the Proposed Project also includes measures to reduce anticipated energy demand to ensure that the Proposed Project would not result in the wasteful or inefficient use of energy. *This represents a less than significant impact.*

Energy 6(b). Less than Significant Impact

The Proposed Project involves development of a vacant parcel. Operation of the Proposed Project would generate increased energy demands on the site compared to existing uses. The Proposed Project has been designed to comply with existing state and local plans for renewable energy and/or energy-efficiency. The Proposed Project would comply with California Green Building Code, Title 24 energy efficiency requirements, and the California Building Standards Code. In addition, the Proposed Project includes the following Applicant-proposed measures of further reduce anticipated energy demand:

- Constructing new buildings to exceed Title 24 California Building Standards Code requirements for building energy efficiency by 10 percent;
- Installing energy efficient refrigerators, fans, clothes washers, and dishwashers in the hotel, and energy efficient fans and refrigerators in the convenience market, fast food restaurant, and retail stores;
- Installing energy efficiency lighting that reduces lighting energy demand by 16 percent;
- Providing accessible electric vehicle parking spaces and electric vehicle charging stations and signage prohibiting parking for non-electric vehicles; and
- Utilizing California native plants and drought-resistant landscaping that needs minimal to no watering (to reduce energy demand for water treatment and pumping).

As a result, the Proposed Project would comply with State and local regulations related to energy efficiency (Source: 1, 2, 7, 52). *This represents a less than significant impact.*

7. GEOLOGY AND SOILS **Would the project:**	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Source: 1, 2, 25) Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	☐	☐	☐	☒
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking? (Source: 1, 2, 12, 20)	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction? (Source: 1, 2, 12, 20)	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) Landslides? (Source: 1, 2, 12, 20)	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 12, 14, 20)	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 12, 20)	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Be located on expansive soil creating substantial risks to life or property? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 12, 20)	☐	☐	☒	☐

7. GEOLOGY AND SOILS Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 12, 20)	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 20)	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

This section is based on information obtained from the *Geotechnical Engineering Investigation, Proposed Commercial Development, Harrison Road and La Sala Road, Salinas, California* report ("Geotechnical Report") prepared for the Proposed Project by Krazen and Associates in 2018 (Monterey County File No. LIB200168; Source: 12).

According to the *Monterey County GIS* (Source: 20) and as discussed in the Geotechnical Report (Source: 12), the Proposed Project site is not located within an active or potentially active fault zone. The nearest active faults to the Proposed Project site include the Zayante-Vergeles fault, located approximately 5.3 miles to the northeast; the Rinconada fault, located approximately 7.3 miles south; the San Andreas fault, located approximately 9.8 miles to the northeast; the Monterey Bay-Tularcitos fault, located approximately 15.2 miles to the west; and the Calaveras fault, located approximately 15.6 miles northeast of the site. These faults are considered active as they have demonstrated geologic displacement within the past 10,000 years.

Liquefaction is the loss of strength in saturated granular soils produced by seismic shaking and is often accompanied by the surface occurrence of free water produced by sand boils. The Proposed Project site and Harrison Road widening impact area are mapped in an area that is designated with low liquefaction susceptibility (Source: 20). Expansive soils tend to swell with seasonal increases in soil moisture and shrink during the dry season as the soil moisture decreases. Shrinking and swelling of some soils can cause damage to building foundations, basement walls, roads and other structures unless precautionary measures are incorporated into the design.

<u>Geology and Soils 7(ai). No Impact</u>

The Proposed Project site is not located within an area mapped in an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map. As described above, the nearest mapped fault is located over five miles from the Proposed Project site (Source: 1, 2, 25). *There would be no impact*.

<u>Geology and Soils 7(aii). Less than Significant Impact</u>

As described above, the Proposed Project site is not located within an active or potentially active fault zone. No active faults are located within five (5) miles of the Proposed Project site.

However, the Proposed Project is located about 9.8 miles from the San Andreas Fault zone. Damage to structures and loss of life would potentially occur due to ground shaking along this fault associated with seismic activity. As a result, the Proposed Project would be expected to be subject to strong ground shaking during the design life of the development.

The Proposed Project has been designed in accordance with the California Building Code (CBC) to reduce impacts associated with future seismic activity leading to ground shaking. The CBC contains construction specifications to reduce hazards from seismic activity. In addition, the *Geotechnical Engineering Investigation, Proposed Commercial Development, Harrison Road and La Sala Road, Salinas, California* (Source: 12) includes recommendations for construction design and criteria for the site preparation. The Proposed Project would be constructed in conformance with these requirements. In addition, future development of the site would be required to comply with the recommendations of a design-level geotechnical analysis (Source: 1, 2, 12, 20). *Implementation of the recommendations contained in the geotechnical report, as well as compliance with the recommendations of a design-level analysis would reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level*.

Geology and Soils 7(aiii). Less than Significant Impact

As described above, the Proposed Project is in an area that is mapped in an area with low susceptibility to liquefaction (Source: 20). In addition, the Geotechnical Report (Source: 20) concluded that the potential for seismic settlement at the Proposed Project site was low. As a result, mitigation measures to reduce liquefaction would not be required for the Proposed Project (Source: 1, 2, 12, 20). *This represents a less than significant impact.*

Geology and Soils 7(aiv). No Impact

The Proposed Project is located in a relatively flat area that is considered to be at low risk for landslides (Source: 20). The Proposed Project, including off-site improvements and would not be subject to landslides (Source: 1, 2, 12, 20). *No impact would occur*.

Geology and Soils 7(b). Less than Significant Impact

The Monterey County Geologic Hazards Map shows that both the Proposed Project site and the Harrison Road improvements impact area are located in areas that have a low potential for soil erosion hazards (Source: 20). However, development of the Proposed Project would result in a substantial increase in the amount of impervious surfaces on the site. These new impervious surfaces would increase stormwater runoff on the site and increase the potential for erosion. An erosion control plan was prepared for the Proposed Project. The erosion control plan identifies best management practices to implement erosion and sediment control for the purpose of preventing sediment transport offsite.

The Applicant would be required to implement erosion control measures in accordance with Erosion Control Ordinance, Chapter 16.12. In addition, all grading activities associated with construction of the Proposed Project must comply with MCC section 16.12.80, Land Clearing. The County of Monterey HCD-Environmental Services would review and approve grading plans for the Proposed Project to ensure compliance with these requirements. Additionally, the

Applicant has prepared a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan ("SWPPP") (Source: 14) identifying best management practices (e.g., filters, traps, bio-filtration swales, etc.) to be implemented during construction. Implementation of these best management practices would ensure that urban runoff contaminants and sediment are minimized during site preparation and construction activity. Best management practices would be included in all applicable construction permit plans. The Applicant has prepared an erosion control plan (Source: 1) for the purpose of implementing erosion control measures consistent with the regulations above. The Proposed Project would comply with all regulations regarding stormwater runoff and soil erosion (Source: 1, 2, 7, 12, 14, 20). *This represents a less than significant impact*.

Geology and Soils 7(c). Less than Significant Impact

The Proposed Project site and Harrison Road Widening Impact area are mapped in an area that is designated with low liquefaction susceptibility as described under impact aiii), above (Source: 1, 2, 7, 12, 20). *This represents a less than significant impact*.

Geology and Soils 7(d). Less than Significant Impact

Soils at the Proposed Project site consist of very dense silty sand with clay, clay-like sand, or clay-like silty sand. These soil types have a low to moderate expansion potential. This represents a minor to moderate hazard to the Proposed Project, due to the possibility post-construction movement on slab-on-grade construction. Monterey County Code section 16.08.410 requires that all recommendations contained in a geotechnical or geological report (Source: 12) be incorporated into the approved grading plan. The associated construction permit would not be issued by HCD-Building Services until all soil and geological report recommendations are incorporated. Adherence to Monterey County Code would ensure that the proposed structures are supported by a minimum of 24 inches of non-expansive engineered fill soils to reduce impacts related to expansive soils. In addition, the Proposed Project would be developed the California Building Code (Source: 1, 2, 7, 12, 20). *As a result, the impacts from expansive soils would be less than significant.*

Geology and Soils 7(e). No Impact

The Proposed Project does not include septic tanks or other types of alternative wastewater disposal systems. The Proposed Project would include construction of a new sewer line to connect to the City of Salinas' wastewater system (Source: 1, 2, 7, 12, 20). *No impact would occur*.

Geology and Soils 7(f). No Impact

The Proposed Project is not located within an area identified as containing paleontological resources nor is it located in close proximity to any known paleontological resources (Source: 2, Exhibit 4.10.1). The Proposed Project would not impact any paleontological resources, as none are known to exist in the Proposed Project area (Source: 1, 2, 7, 20). *No impact would occur.*

8. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 8)	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 8)	☐	☒	☐	☐

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

This section is based in part on the *Sala Road Project – Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report* prepared for the Proposed Project (Source: 8).

Various gases in the earth's atmosphere, when exceeding the naturally occurring or 'background' levels due to human activity, create a warming or greenhouse effect, and are classified as atmospheric greenhouse gases ("GHGs"). These gases play a critical role in determining the earth's surface temperature. Solar radiation enters the atmosphere from space and a portion of the radiation is absorbed by the earth's surface. The earth emits this radiation back toward space, but the properties of the radiation change from high-frequency solar radiation to lower-frequency infrared radiation. Greenhouse gases, which are transparent to solar radiation, are effective in absorbing infrared radiation. As a result, the radiation that otherwise would have escaped back into space is retained, resulting in a warming of the atmosphere known as the greenhouse effect. Among the prominent GHGs contributing to the greenhouse effect, or climate change, are carbon dioxide ("CO_2"), methane ("CH_4"), ozone ("O_3"), water vapor, nitrous oxide ("N_2O"), and chlorofluorocarbons ("CFCs"). Human-caused emissions of these GHGs in excess of natural ambient concentrations are responsible for the greenhouse effect. In California, the transportation sector is the largest emitter of GHGs.

The California Legislature has enacted a series of statutes in an effort to reduce greenhouse ("GHG") emissions across the state. Effective January 1, 2017, Senate Bill ("SB") 32 requires that statewide GHG emissions be reduced to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. SB 32 represents the current state legislative framework commonly used by local and regional agencies across the state as guidance for reducing GHG emissions from activities within their respective jurisdictions.

The County of Monterey has not formally adopted a quantified threshold of significance for GHGs and to date, has not adopted a qualified climate action plan. Further, MBARD has not adopted thresholds of significance for non-stationary GHG sources that could be used as guidance for assessing the significance of GHG impacts.

Carbon sequestration is the process of removing and storing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere in carbon sinks (such as oceans, forests, vegetation, or soils) through physical or biological processes, such as photosynthesis. Carbon stored in soils and vegetation is commonly released back to the atmosphere when a land use development project requires existing soils be disturbed and/or existing vegetation with significant sequestration capacity (e.g. mature trees) be removed from a development site.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions 8(a). Less than Significant with Mitigation

Neither the County nor MBARD has adopted a regional GHG threshold. As a result, a GHG threshold of significance for the Proposed Project was developed based on a GHG efficiency metric that represents a rate of emissions generation. A GHG threshold of 3.82 MT CO_2e per service population has been established for the Proposed Project's buildout year of 2024 (see Source: 8[5]), based on a methodology that considers statewide emissions, projected population, and employment growth in the state. GHG emissions resulting from the Proposed Project would not conflict with the state's ability to achieve statewide GHG reduction targets embodied in SB 32 if the rate of emissions by the Proposed Project is equal to or below the threshold of 3.82 MT CO_2e per service population.

GHG emissions from baseline operations, construction, and operations were estimated using CalEEMod (see Source: 8; Monterey County File No. LIB230239). These estimates also accounted for the changes in the carbon sequestration potential of the Proposed Project site based on changes in natural vegetation communities and the number of new trees that would be planted as part of the Proposed Project.

Baseline Conditions

The Proposed Project site was in active agricultural production until 2012, when agricultural production on the site ceased. For the purposes of this analysis, GHG emissions generated by previous agricultural activities are considered sources of baseline GHG emissions. The primary source of GHG emissions from baseline agricultural production activities on the site resulted from electricity generation for irrigation water pumping and operation of farm equipment. To provide a conservative analysis and due to uncertainty about the type and intensity of farm equipment used on the site, this component of the Proposed Project's baseline GHG emissions is not evaluated in further detail. The GHG emissions baseline volume from electricity generation for water pumping is estimated at 4.10 MT CO_2e per year.

[5] The Proposed Project originally proposed three additional truck fueling stations as part of the overall Convenience Market/Fueling Station, which has since been removed. The three-truck fueling station was accounted for in the prepared Air Quality Assessment (Monterey County File No. LIB230239). The removal of this component of the Proposed Project would reduce overall GHG emissions compared to what was analyzed in Monterey County File No. LIB230239. As a result, LIB230239 (Source: 8) provides a conservative analysis of GHG emission impacts compared to what is currently proposed for development.

Construction and Operational Emissions

The Proposed Project would generate GHG emissions during both the construction and operation phases. Construction GHG emissions would be generated primarily by equipment used during site preparation, grading, and building construction, while direct operational GHG emissions would be generated primarily by vehicle trips accessing the Proposed Project site. The Proposed Project would also include indirect sources of GHG emissions, including electricity and natural gas used on site, electricity used to pump water supply and treat wastewater, and decomposition of solid waste generated by Proposed Project. According to the CalEEMod results (see Source: 8), construction activity would generate a total of 1,412.52 MT CO_2e (metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent). MBARD recommends amortizing the short-term GHG construction emissions over a 30-year time period to yield an annual emissions volume. Averaged over a 30-year operational project lifetime period, the annual amortized emissions equal 47.08 MT CO_2e (1,412.52 MT CO_2e/30 years), while the unmitigated operational GHG emissions would be 5,648.29 MT CO_2e.

Carbon Sequestration

The Proposed Project would remove approximately 17.93 acres of grassland. However, there are no trees on the site and no tree removal is included as part of the Proposed Project. In addition, the Proposed Project includes planting 160 new trees and other landscaping. These changes would affect carbon dioxide sequestration on the Proposed Project site. The CalEEMod results (Source: 8) estimated a gain of 36 MT CO_2e in sequestration potential over the lifetime of the Proposed Project. The annual gain in sequestration potential would be equivalent to 1.2 MT CO_2e (36 MT CO_2e/30 years) averaged over a 30-year period.

Applicant-Proposed Emissions Reductions

The Applicant has included several on-site energy efficiency/conservation measures as part of the Proposed Project that would result in GHG emissions reductions:

- Buildings Exceed Title 24 Building Energy Efficiency Standards (BEES);
- Install Energy Efficient Appliances;
- Install High Efficiency Lighting;
- Provide Electric Vehicle Parking; and
- Plant Native or Drought-Resistant Trees and Vegetation.

CalEEMod results show that implementation of the first three measures would reduce anticipated emissions by 73.18 MT CO_2e per year (see Monterey County File No. LIB230239; Source: 8). The emissions reductions from the remaining two measures are not quantifiable using CalEEMod or out-of-model techniques, but would still have GHG reduction benefits. These GHG reduction measures are implemented to ensure a conservative analysis.

Service Population

The Proposed Project's service population is determined based on the sum of the new population and employment it generates through both direct (provision of new housing) and indirect (creation of new employment opportunities) means. The Proposed Project would not directly generate a new population as it does not include any permanent residential land uses. The Proposed Project is expected to generate approximately 221 new jobs at full build-out – this represents the full-service population for the Proposed Project.

GHG Emissions Attributable to the Proposed Project

Table 7, Project GHG Emissions Summary provides a summary of the GHG emissions attributable to the Proposed Project at buildout. **Table 7** shows how net emissions compare to the threshold of significance.

Table 7
Project Greenhouse Gas Emissions Summary

Emission Source	Annual GHG Emissions[1]
Amortized Construction	47.08
Unmitigated Operational	5,648.29
Carbon Sequestration Potential (Gain)	<1.20>[2]
Total Annual Unmitigated Emissions	**5,694.17**
Baseline Emissions	<4.10>[2]
Regulatory Emissions Reductions	<158.99>[2]
Applicant-Proposed Emissions Reductions	<73.18>[2]
Net GHG Emissions	**5,457.90**
Service Population	**221**
Net GHG Emissions Per Service Population	**24.70**
Efficiency-Based Threshold	**3.82**
Project Emissions Exceed Threshold?	***Yes***

(Source: 8)
NOTES:
1. Expressed in MT CO_2e per year.
2. <Brackets> indicate deductions.

The Proposed Project would generate approximately 24.70 MT CO_2e of GHG emission per year per service population (5,457.90 MT CO_2e per year/221 service population) as summarized in **Table 7**. The Proposed Project would exceed the threshold of significance of 3.82 MT CO_2e per year per service population for the year 2024 by a total of 4,614.48 MT CO_2e per year. Therefore, the Proposed Project would generate GHG emissions that would have a potentially significant impact on the environment. Implementation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1 would reduce GHG emissions from the Proposed Project to below the threshold of significance of 3.82 MT CO_2e per year per service population (Source: 1, 2, 7, 8). *This represents a less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated.*

Mitigation Measure

GHG-1 To ensure the Proposed Project's GHG emissions are below the threshold of significance of 3.82 MT CO_2e per year per service population, a minimum reduction of 4,614.48 MT CO_2e per year (or 20.88 MT CO_2e per year per service population) shall be achieved through implementing one or more of the following approaches:

A. Include additional on-site GHG emissions reduction measures;

B. Participate in one or more off-site GHG reduction program(s); and/or

C. Purchase carbon off-sets.

If additional on-site GHG emissions reduction measures are utilized, the Applicant shall prepare a GHG Reduction Plan. The GHG Reduction Plan shall identify the proposed additional GHG reduction measures, GHG emissions reductions volumes associated with each, and evidence to support the level of reduction calculated for each. The GHG Reduction Plan shall be subject to review and approval of the County of Monterey Housing and Community Development Department prior to approval of any grading and/or building permits.

If the Applicant chooses to participate in an off-site GHG reduction project or program, evidence of such participation shall be provided to the County of Monterey Housing and Community Development Department by the agency/interest that is implementing the project or program. Evidence shall describe how the Applicant is participating, the expected GHG reduction volume that can be assigned to the project as a result of the Applicant's participation, and verification that the Applicant has met participation requirements. The evidence shall be subject to review and approval of Monterey County Housing and Community Development Department prior to issuance of any grading and/or building permits.

If the Applicant chooses to purchase carbon off-sets to secure all or the balance of GHG emission reductions not achieved through onsite measures or participation in off-site reduction programs, the Applicant shall provide evidence to the Monterey County Housing and Community Development Department that a contract for such purchase has been executed through a credible carbon off-set registry such as the Climate Action Reserve, a certified carbon off-set Applicant, or a broker. The evidence shall be subject to review and approval of the Monterey County Housing and Community Development Department prior to issuance of a grading and/or building permit.

Mitigation Monitoring Action GHG-1: Monitoring actions for this mitigation measure will consist of one or more of the following actions:

A. If additional on-site GHG reduction measures are proposed the Applicant shall provide a GHG Reduction Plan to HCD-Planning for review and approval, prior to issuance of any grading and/or building permits.

B. If the Applicant chooses to participate in an off-site GHG reduction project or program, the Applicant shall provide evidence of these actions to HCD-Planning for review and approval prior to issuance of any grading and/or building permits.

C. If the Applicant chooses to purchase carbon off-sets, the Applicant shall provide evidence of these actions to HCD-Planning for review and approval prior to issuance of any grading and/or building permits.

If participating in one or more off-site GHG reduction programs the Applicant shall procure evidence of participation issued by the agency/interest overseeing the program. The Applicant shall provide this evidence to HCD-Planning for review and approval prior to issuance of any grading and/or building permits.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions 8(b). Less than Significant with Mitigation

As discussed above, neither the County of Monterey nor MBARD has prepared a qualified climate action plan or a GHG reduction plan that is applicable to the Proposed Project. As a result, GHG Emissions from the Proposed Project are evaluated per the state legislative guidance included in SB 32. The Proposed Project would conflict with SB 32 emissions reduction goals since emissions from the Proposed Project exceed the threshold of significance (3.82 MT CO_2e per service population), (Source: 1, 2, 7, 8). *This represents a significant impact. However, this would be reduced to a less than significant impact with implementation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1, identified above.*

9. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS **Would the project:**	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials? (Source: 1, 2, 4, 7, 13)	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment? (Source: 1, 2, 4, 7, 13)	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school? (Source: 1, 2, 4, 7, 13)	☐	☐	☐	☒

9. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment? (Source: 26, 27)	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area? (Source: 20)	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 20, 28)	☐	☐	☒	☐
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires? (Source: 29, 57)	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

The California Code of Regulations defines hazardous materials as substances with certain physical properties that could pose a substantial present or future hazard to human health or the environment when improperly handled, disposed, or otherwise managed. Hazardous waste is any hazardous material that is discarded, abandoned, or slated to be recycled. Hazardous materials and waste can result in public health hazards if improperly handled, released into the soil or groundwater, or through airborne releases in vapors, fumes, or dust. Soil and groundwater having concentrations of hazardous constituents higher than specific regulatory levels must be handled and disposed of as hazardous waste when excavated or pumped from an aquifer.

The California Department of Toxic Substances Control's ("DTSC") EnviroStor database, an online data management system for tracking DTSC's cleanup, permitting, enforcement, and investigation efforts at hazardous waste facilities and sites with known or suspected contamination issues, does not identify any contaminated sites within the vicinity of the Proposed Project. No hazardous materials are stored within the project site.

The Hazardous Waste and Substances Site ("Cortese") List is a planning tool used by the state, local agencies, and developers to comply with CEQA requirements related to the disclosure of information about the location of hazardous materials release sites. California Government Code Section 65962.5 requires the California EPA ("CalEPA") to develop at least annually an updated Cortese List. Various state and local government agencies are required to track and document

hazardous material release information for the Cortese List. The Proposed Project area is not within 0.25 miles of a hazardous materials site on the Cortese Site.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials 9(a, b). Less than Significant Impact

Construction

Construction of the Proposed Project would not involve the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Construction activities would, however, require the temporary use of hazardous substances, such as fuel for construction equipment. These impacts would be temporary in nature. Minor hazardous materials used during construction would not constitute a significant hazard to the public due to the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Any handling of potential hazardous materials would be required to comply with all existing laws pertaining to the transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials.

In addition, the Proposed Project would be required to implement a spill prevention, containment, and countermeasures plan or, for smaller quantities, a spill prevention and response plan would be established for the Proposed Project, pursuant to 40 CFR 112. The plan would identify Best Management Practices ("BMPs") for spill and release prevention and provide procedures and responsibilities for clean-up and disposal of any spills or releases that could potentially occur during operation of the Proposed Project. Plans for notification and evacuation of site workers and local residents in the event of a hazardous materials release would be in place throughout the construction phase as required under state and federal law. Inspections by County staff would be performed to verify that general construction permit conditions and BMPs are implemented consistently to avoid and minimize the potential for spills and releases, and to ensure that the construction contractors are prepared to initiate immediate cleanup and response in the event of a spill or release. BMPs are anticipated to include the designation of special storage areas and labeling of hazardous material storage areas, containment berms, coverage from rain, and concrete washout areas. The Proposed Project's compliance with various federal, state, and local regulations as implemented by Monterey County would minimize the risk of a spill or accidental release of hazardous materials. *This represents a less than significant impact.*

Operations

Operation of the Proposed Project would involve the routine use, transport, and handling of hazardous materials. Specifically, operation of the proposed fueling station would include the regular transportation of gasoline to refill underground storage tanks (USTs), refilling USTs and pumping gasoline to fuel dispensers, and regular use of the fuel dispensers by motorists. As a result, the Proposed Project could result in potentially adverse impacts to people and the environment as a result of hazardous materials being accidentally released into the environment.

However, the Proposed Project would be required to operate in compliance with all with applicable federal, state, and local requirements which lessen the potential for these impacts. Some of these regulations include:

- Per California State Water Resources Control Board ("SWRCB") Health and Safety Code, Section 25280, USTs installed after 1988 are required to have a leak detection system consisting of at least one of the following detection methods: secondary containment with interstitial monitoring, automatic tank gauging systems (including continuous automatic tank gauging systems), vapor monitoring (including tracer compound analysis), groundwater monitoring, statistical inventory reconciliation, or other method meeting established performance standards.
- Efficacy requirements established by Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") require that leak detection methods be able to detect certain leak rates and that they also give the correct answer consistently. In general, methods must detect the specified leak rate with a probability of detection of at least 95 percent and a probability of false alarm of no more than 5 percent. EPA found that, with effective leak detection, operators can respond quickly to signs of leaks and minimize the extent of environmental damage and the threat to human health and safety.
- USTs and associated fuel delivery infrastructure (i.e., fuel dispensers) would be required to comply with applicable federal, state, and local regulations, including those provisions established by Section 2540.7, Gasoline Dispensing and Service Stations, of the California OSHA Regulations; Chapter 38, Liquefied Petroleum Gases, of the California Fire Code; the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act; and the County Fire Department Hazardous Materials Division.
- The Proposed Project Would also be required to incorporate high-efficiency Phase I and Phase II enhanced vapor recovery (EVR) systems to capture and control gasoline fumes. EVR refers to a new generation of equipment to control emissions at gasoline dispensing facilities in California. EVR systems collect gasoline vapors that would otherwise escape into the atmosphere during bulk fuel delivery (Phase I) or fuel storage and vehicle refueling (Phase II). Since 2009, the installation of Phase I and Phase II EVR systems has been required for gasoline dispensing facilities.
- The fuel dispensers, USTs, and associated fuel delivery infrastructure would be subject to routine inspection by federal, state, and local regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over convenience service station facilities.
- The handling, transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials must comply with applicable federal, state, and local agencies and regulations.

Operation of the Proposed Project would conform with Federal Department Office of Hazardous Materials Safety regulations for the safe transportation of hazardous materials described in CFR Title 49 and with hazardous materials spill requirements pursuant to 40 CFR 112. Adherence to these guidelines during operation of the Proposed Project would prevent hazardous materials spills and provide a pre-defined response to hazardous materials spills should they occur. In addition, federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards, as identified in 29 CFR 1910. CFR Chapter 29, Sections 1910 (General Industry) and 1026 (Construction), provide regulations for the preparation of Health and Safety Plans. Health and Safety Plans are intended to identify potential hazards associated with a proposed land use and provide mitigation measures as required. The Monterey County Environmental Health Bureau (EHB) implements

this regulation at the local level through its role as the designated Certified Unified Program Agency as granted by the California Environmental Protection Agency.

Risks associated with the transport of hazardous materials would be minimized through required compliance with federal regulations as implemented in the state through regulations contained in 26 CCR on the part of all transportation operators. In addition, the State regulates the transportation of hazardous waste originating in the state and passing through the state, with enforcement provided by the California Highway Patrol and the California Department of Transportation. The Monterey County EHB also is also responsible for reviewing the Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan for the proposed above-ground storage tanks to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations (California Aboveground Petroleum Storage Act [Health & Safety Code § 25270 et seq.] and the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, Title 40, part 112 [40CFR112]).

These regulations are intended to minimize risks associated with all forms of hazardous materials transportation, handling, storage, and disposal, as well as avoiding risks associated with any existing hazards or hazardous materials conditions. The regulations identify procedures to be followed during operation of the Proposed Project (Source: 1, 2, 4, 7, 13). *Adherence to existing regulations and compliance with the safety procedures mandated by federal, state, and local laws and regulations would minimize the risks resulting from the routine transportation, use, storage, or disposal of hazardous materials or hazardous wastes associated with operation of the Proposed Project to a less than significant level.*

Hazards and Hazardous Materials 9(c). No Impact

The Proposed Project site is not located within a quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. The closest school to the Proposed Project site is Gavilan View Middle School, located at Van Buren Avenue and Russel Road approximately 0.87 miles southeast of the Proposed Project site. (Source: 1, 2, 4, 7, 13). *There would be no impact.*

Hazards and Hazardous Materials 9(d). No Impact

A *Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (Monterey County File No. LIB200169)*was prepared for the Proposed Project (Source: 13). The Phase I includes a review of the State of California Department of Toxic Substances Control's ("DTSC's") Envirostor database, which indicates that the Proposed Project site, adjacent properties, and other properties within 500 feet of the site do not have any records of cleanup sites, including state response sites, voluntary cleanup sites, school cleanup sites, or military or school evaluation sites. Additionally, no Federal Superfund – National Priorities List sites were located within a one-mile radius of the Proposed Project site.

The SWRCB GeoTracker indicates no hazardous sites or facilities on the Proposed Project site; the nearest identified leaking UST clean-up site is located approximately 0.2 miles to the south of the Proposed Project site (SWRCB 2020). Additionally, the Proposed Project site is not listed on the California Environmental Protection Agency's ("CalEPA's") list of solid waste sites with waste constituents above hazardous waste levels outside the waste management unit, as identified by the SWRCB (Source: 26).

The Proposed 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 the DTSC (Source: 27). *No impact would occur*.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials 9(e). No Impact

The Proposed Project site is not located within the jurisdiction of an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport. The closest public airport to the Proposed Project site is the Salinas Municipal Airport, which is located approximately 5.8 miles to the southeast. As a result, the Proposed Project would not result in either safety hazards or excessive noise for occupants of the site (Source: 20). *No impact would occur*.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials 9(f). Less than Significant Impact

The County's adopted Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan addresses procedures for reducing the potential for future damages and economic losses, grant funding qualification, government coordination, and complying with federal and state requirements for local hazard mitigation plans. The plan outlines the designated emergency evacuation routes within the County. Evacuation routes designated by the plan include State Route 1, Highway 101, and various other County roadways. Highway 101 is located directly adjacent to the Proposed Project site to the west. No other designated emergency evacuation routes are located in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Project. Construction and operation of the Proposed Project would not impede the use of designated emergency access routes such as Highway 101. The Proposed Project would not interfere with any adopted hazard mitigation plans or emergency evacuation plans (Source: 1, 2, 7, 20, 28). *This represents a less than significant impact.*

Hazards and Hazardous Materials 9(g). Less than Significant Impact

The Proposed Project is not located within or near a fire hazard severity zone in a state responsibility area (Source: 57). In addition, the Proposed Project would be built in compliance with wildfire safety measures as identified in MCC Chapter 18.56, including incorporation of all conditions of approval required by the County. As a result, the Proposed Project would not expose people or structures to a risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires (Source: 29). *Therefore, the project would have a less than significant impact due to exposure of people or structures to wildfire risk.*

10. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY **Would the project:**	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality? (Source: 1, 2)	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 9, 30, 31, 32, 34, 58)	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 14)	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 14)	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 14)	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) Impede or redirect flood flows? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 14)	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation? (Source: 20, 55)	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan? (Source: 1, 7, 33, 34)	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System ("NPDES") Permit Program regulates water quality for all projects that result in the disturbance of more than one (1) acre of land. The NPDES Permit Program was established by the Clean Water Act and is intended to control water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants into waters of the United States. Responsibility for implementation of the NPDES Permit Program in California is undertaken by

the State Water Resources Control Board. The Proposed Project site is located within the boundaries of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board ("RWQCB").

All projects that result in the disturbance of more than one (1) acre of land during construction are required to file a notice of intent to be covered under the State NPDES Construction General Permit for discharges of storm water associated with construction activities. The Construction General Permit requires the development and implementation of a project-specific Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan ("SWPPP") detailing how water quality would be protected during construction activities. The SWPPP is required to include a site map(s) showing the construction site perimeter, existing and proposed buildings, lots, roadways, storm water collection and discharge points, general topography (pre- and post-construction), and drainage patterns across the project site. BMPs are implemented to protect water quality as specified by each permit.

Groundwater is the primary source of water supply for both agricultural and municipal water demands in the Salinas Valley, with agricultural water use representing approximately 90 percent of all water demand in the Salinas Valley. California Water Service ("Cal Water") would provide water to the Proposed Project. Cal Water extracts groundwater from two hydraulically connected subbasins of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin known as the 180/400 Foot Aquifer (or Pressure Subarea) and the East Side Aquifer. Impacts have resulted over time related to groundwater availability and quality due to the increased demand for groundwater within the Salinas Valley. However, Cal Water's 2020 Urban Water Management Plan ("UWMP") concluded that sufficient water supply is available to meet demand through 2035 under all hydrologic year-type scenarios (normal, dry, and multiple dry years).

The Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency is in the process of preparing the Valley-Wide Integrated Groundwater Sustainability Plan. The *180/400 Foot Aquifer Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan* (adopted January 9, 2020) has been completed, however, the Valley-Wide plan has yet to be completed and adopted.[6] The Proposed Project site is located within the East Side Aquifer Subbasin. A sustainability plan for the East Side Aquifer Subbasin has not been completed.

A comprehensive hydrological assessment for the Proposed Project was prepared by Balance Hydrologics, Inc. (May 2023) (Source: 58). The hydrological assessment examines existing hydrological conditions to determine whether there is an intensification of water use associated with the Proposed Project compared to baseline conditions. The water use baseline used for this analysis is based on the average water use over a 20-year baseline period spanning from 2000-2019.

Hydrology and Water Quality 10(a). Less than Significant Impact

The Proposed Project would increase the amount of impervious surfaces on the site by 626,348 square feet compared to current conditions. As a result, the Proposed Project would increase site runoff, which would have the potential to degrade surface or groundwater quality in violation of

[6] Some draft chapters of the plan were released in January, March, and May 2019 for public comment.

water quality and/or waste discharge requirements. The Proposed Project would disturb more than one (1) acre and would therefore be required to obtain a State NPDES Construction General Permit. Compliance with the requirements of the Construction General Stormwater Permit would ensure that potential water quality impacts resulting from construction of the Proposed Project would be minimized. The Proposed Project would reduce impacts on violating any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality during construction of the Proposed Project through adherence to the Construction General Stormwater Permit requirements.

The Proposed Project would require a stormwater retention volume of 172,089 cubic feet to manage runoff from a 100-year 24-hour rain event (4.71 inches of rain) (Source: 14). The Proposed Project includes stormwater retention facilities to manage flood flows during project operation. These facilities are designed to manage worst case flooding scenarios. As a result, the Proposed Project would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality during operation of the Proposed Project (Source: 1, 2). *This represents a less than significant impact.*

Hydrology and Water Quality 10(b). Less than Significant Impact

Balance Hydrologics prepared a hydrological analysis for the Proposed Project as described above (Source: 58). The project site had an average on-site water usage of 24.42 acre feet ("AF") based on the 20-year baseline period spanning 2000-2019. The Proposed Project would have a water demand of 23 AF per year. As a result, the Proposed Project would result in a 1.42 AF reduction of water use compared to historical demand.

Historically, water on the project site was provided by groundwater wells located on the project site. No groundwater would be pumped on site for the Proposed Project. Instead, Cal Water would provide water to the Proposed Project. Cal Water's supply comes from multiple subbasins within their service area. As stated above, Cal Water's 2020 UWMP concluded that sufficient water supply is available to meet demand through 2035 under all hydrologic year-type scenarios (normal, dry, and multiple dry years). The UWMP notes that some shortfalls may occur in 2040 and 2045 under single-year drought or multi-year drought conditions. However, the UWMP notes that shortfalls would be alleviated by proactive drought planning on the part of Cal Water. Groundwater monitoring, including the potential effects on neighboring wells, for this water supply is the responsibility of Cal Water. However, the anticipated future water demand associated with the Proposed Project (23 AF) would have a minimal impact on groundwater supply due to the existing overall volume of water pumped by Cal Water to serve their overall system (Balance Hydrologics, 2023). The 2020 available excess source capacity for groundwater basins underlying Cal Water's Salinas District was 7,102 AF, while projected excess capacity ranged from 3,727 AF per year to 6,960 AF per year between 2021 and 2045 (Balance Hydrologics, 2023). The increased water demand for the Proposed Project (23 AF) would be accommodated by existing supplies as forecasted in the UWMP (Source: 58). Moreover, Cal Water has issued a "will serve" letter indicating that they have available water supply to serve the Proposed Project.

Development of all three Phases of the Proposed Project would result in approximately 626,348 square feet of new impervious surfaces on the site. These surfaces include proposed roads, walkways, structures, and parking areas. These new impervious surfaces would decrease on-site groundwater recharge compared to existing conditions. However, the Proposed Project includes a stormwater infiltration system that would increase site recharge by an average of 10 AF per year, which would partially offset demands on local and regional groundwater. As a result, the Proposed Project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge. (Source 1, 2 ,7, 9, 30, 31, 32, 34, 58) *This represents a less than significant impact*.

Hydrology and Water Quality 10(c). Less than Significant Impact

The Proposed Project would result in the coverage of approximately 626,348 square feet of the site (or about 80 percent of the project site) with impermeable surfaces. These new impervious surfaces would consist of roads, walkways, parking areas, roof tops, etc. The preliminary stormwater control plan (Source: 14) shows additional details of the types and locations of impervious surfaces associated with the Proposed Project (see also **Figure 10** and **11**).

The increase in impervious surfaces would result in a substantial increase in stormwater runoff from the site compared to existing conditions, where a significant portion of stormwater currently percolates through pervious surfaces back to the groundwater basin. The Proposed Project would reduce the natural capacity of soils and vegetation to remove pollutants contained in stormwater compared to existing conditions. Stormwater runoff from development of the Proposed Project site would be greater in volume and velocity than runoff generated under existing conditions. Erosion can occur due to changes in the rate and/or volume of stormwater delivered into receiving waters as a result of hydromodification of downstream drainage courses. The increased runoff associated with the Proposed Project also has the potential to contribute to localized flooding if existing stormwater infrastructure is not designed or sized to accommodate the increased flows. The Proposed Project would require a stormwater retention volume of 172,089 cubic feet to manage runoff from a 100-year 24-hour rain event (4.71 inches of rain). The Proposed Project includes stormwater retention facilities with a maximum capacity that is sufficient to manage these worse-case flood flows.

The Proposed Project site is covered by Monterey County's NPDES Municipal General Permit as described above. Development of the Proposed Project is subject to the post-construction discharge requirements of the NPDES permit, as well as the Central Coast Water Board Post-Construction Storm Water Requirements. The Construction General Permit requires that the discharger preserve the pre-construction drainage density (miles of stream length per square mile of drainage area) for all drainage areas within the area that serve either a first order stream (small tributaries) or a larger stream. In addition, the Construction General Permit requires that the discharger ensures that the post-project time of runoff concentration is equal or less than pre-project time of concentration.

The Proposed Project includes an erosion control plan and a preliminary stormwater control plan. These plans incorporate BMPs to ensure that urban runoff contaminants and sediment associated with development of the Proposed Project are minimized during post-construction. The on-site

storm water retention features are designed to provide a volume greater than what is required to ensure that post-construction peak flows associated with development of the Proposed Project do not exceed the peak flows identified under existing site conditions. In addition, the proposed on-site storm water retention features are designed to retain runoff to the degree that post-project conditions would not exceed pre-project runoff rates so that downstream hydrology modification potential is reduced. The Proposed Project would have a less than significant impact related to erosion, on- or off-site flooding, and runoff exceeding stormwater facility capacities through implementation of the required preliminary stormwater control plan and the erosion control plan. (Source: 1, 2, 7, 14). *Adherence to these requirements would reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.*

Hydrology and Water Quality 10(d). No Impact

The Proposed Project site is located in an inland area that protected from tsunamis. Additionally, potential hazards from seiches are considered negligible as the Proposed Project site is not near contained water bodies. No mudflow hazard areas occur within the vicinity of the Proposed Project site (Source: 20, 55). *No impact would occur.*

Hydrology and Water Quality 10(e). Less than Significant Impact

The Proposed Project would result in changes to the existing runoff characteristics of the site, which would potentially conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. The RWQCB is responsible for implementing the *Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin* (Source: 33). This plan is intended to show how management of the quality of surface water and groundwater in the Central Coast Region should be undertaken to achieve the highest water quality reasonably possible. The Proposed Project includes a SWPPP to manage runoff, reduce erosion, and eliminate pollutants in conformance with the Water Quality Control Plan.

Through implementation of the mitigation measures contained **Section 4.0, Biological Resources** and compliance with the regulatory requirements outlined in **Section 7.0, Geology and Soils**, as well as the Post-Construction Storm Water Requirements discussed above, the Proposed Project would be in compliance with the Water Quality Control Plan. (Source: 1, 7, 33, 34). *This represents a less than significant impact*.

11. LAND USE AND PLANNING **Would the project:**	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7)	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 31)	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

The Proposed Project site is located on APN 113-091-017-000. The site is zoned Light Commercial ("LC") and is designated Commercial under the Monterey County General Plan. The site is located within the boundaries of the *Greater Salinas Area Plan* (Source: 3). The Proposed Project site is located to the east of Highway 101. Adjacent land uses include agricultural fields to the east across Harrison Road, a residential neighborhood to the northeast, vacant land to the north, and vacant land to the south across Sala Road. The Proposed Project would be constructed on a vacant property designated for commercial use. The site has historically been used for agriculture but has not been cultivated since 2012 and is currently vacant.

Land Use and Planning 11(a) – No Impact

The Proposed Project would be constructed on a vacant site designated for commercial use in the Monterey County General Plan. The Proposed Project does not include any new roads, linear infrastructure, or other development features that would divide an established community or limit movement, travel or social interaction between established land uses. (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7). *Construction of the Proposed Project would not physically divide an established community, resulting in no impact.*

Land Use and Planning 11(b) – Less than Significant Impact

As identified throughout this document, a range of federal, state, and local regulations apply to the Proposed Project. These regulations and standards are intended to mitigate potentially significant environmental effects. The Proposed Project has been designed according to the regulations of governing land use policy documents, including the Greater Salinas Area Plan and the Monterey County General Plan. The County will confirm that the Proposed Project meets all applicable local policies and regulations identified in these plans as part of the final approval following completion of the design process.

Section III of this document consists of a consistency analysis that evaluates the Proposed Project compared to the stated policies of the Monterey County 2010 General Plan, Greater Salinas Area Plan, and the 2012-2015 and 2008 MBARD AQMPs. The Proposed Project is a highway serving commercial development and would be consistent with the existing zoning (Light Commercial) and general plan designation (commercial) on the site, which would be consistent with the uses identified in the General Plan and Greater Salinas Area plans. The Proposed Project would not exceed the thresholds for criteria air pollutant emissions for either the construction or operation phases and would be consistent with the AQMP. The Proposed Project would also be consistent with General Plan policies related to stormwater runoff, and would be required to submit a drainage and erosion control plan to HCD-Environmental Services pursuant to Chapter 16.12 of the MCC.

Cal Water would supply water to the Proposed Project. Cal Water's Salinas-area service is guided by the *2020 Urban Water Management Plan – Salinas District*. The Proposed Project is consistent

with the applicable policies. Cal Water's 2020 UWMP concluded that sufficient water supply is available to meet demand through 2035 under all hydrologic year-type scenarios (normal, dry, and multiple dry years). The UWMP notes that some shortfalls may occur in 2040 and 2045 under single-year drought or multi-year drought conditions. However, the UWMP notes that shortfalls would be alleviated by proactive drought planning on the part of Cal Water. The Proposed Project has a projected water demand of 23 AF per year, which would be accommodated within the existing water supply forecasts in the UWMP. The Proposed Project would therefore be considered consistent with the UWMP.

The Proposed Project includes the construction of a 57-foot tall, illuminated pylon sign and a 45 foot height hotel. The proposed heights would be inconsistent with the provisions of Title 21, Chapter 21.60 and Chapter 21.18, as discussed previously in this document. However, the Applicant is applying for three Variances to increase the allowable height and overall dimensions of the proposed sign and increase the height of the hotel. The sign related Variances would be required to ensure that the sign would be visible to northbound traffic on Highway 101 above the existing 22.5-foot tall Sala Road Overpass located immediately south of the site. The main structure height Variance would be required to ensure that a standard prototypical highway-oriented hotel could be built on this site. Approval of these Variances would ensure that the Proposed Project is compliant with Title 21, Chapters 21.60 and 21.18, and other applicable County Municipal Code. *This would represent a less than significant impact with regards to consistency with all applicable land use plans, policies, and regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect* (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 31).

12. MINERAL RESOURCES **Would the project:**	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state? (Source: 2)	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan? (Source: 2)	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation: See **Sections II** and **IV**. *The project would have no impact related to mineral resources*.

13. NOISE Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 16, 17)	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 16)	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 16)	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

Noise is commonly defined as unwanted sound. Airborne sound is a rapid fluctuation of air pressure above and below atmospheric pressure. Sound levels are usually measured and expressed in decibels ("dB") with 0 decibels corresponding roughly to the threshold of hearing. Most sounds consist of a broad band of frequencies, with each frequency differing in sound level. The intensities of each frequency add together to generate a sound. Most environmental noise includes a conglomeration of noise from distant sources, which create a relatively steady background noise in which no particular source is identifiable. The primary source of existing noise in the Project vicinity is vehicle traffic along Highway 101. In determining the daily level of environmental noise, it is important to account for the difference in response of sensitive receptors to daytime and nighttime noises.

The Monterey County General Plan includes guidance for noise and provides land use compatibility guidelines for exterior community noise levels (Source: 2). The nearest sensitive receptors are residences located approximately 200 feet northwest of the Proposed Project site.

The information in this section is taken from the *Environmental Noise Assessment, Sala Road Project* ("noise assessment") (Source: 16) prepared for the Proposed Project[7].

[7] The Proposed Project originally proposed three additional truck fueling stations as part of the overall Convenience Market/Fueling Station, which has since been removed. The three-truck fueling station was accounted for in **Environmental Noise Assessment (Source: 16)** for the Proposed Project. The removal of this component of the Proposed Project would reduce overall operational noise compared to what was analyzed in **the Environmental Noise Assessment**. As a result, **the Environmental Noise Assessment** provides a conservative analysis of environmental impacts compared to what is currently proposed for development.

Noise 13(a). Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation

Existing Noise Environment

The existing noise environment within and near the Proposed Project site consists primarily of traffic noise from Highway 101, which passes adjacent to the site on the west. No other substantial, permanent sources of noise exist in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Project. Adjacent land uses include agricultural fields to the east across Harrison Road, a residential neighborhood to the northeast, vacant land to the north, and vacant land to the south across Sala Road. Short- and long-term ambient noise levels at the site were measured and are reported in the noise assessment (Source: 16).

Temporary Construction Noise

For construction noise, impacts are considered significant if they would conflict with applicable noise restrictions contained in the County code and/or general plan policies. These policies include:

- General Plan Policy S-7.1: New noise sensitive land uses may only be allowed in areas where existing and projected noise levels are "acceptable" according to "Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Table" (Source: 16).
- General Plan Policy S-7.2: Proposed development shall incorporate design elements necessary to minimize noise impacts on surrounding land uses and to reduce noise in indoor spaces to an acceptable level.
- General Plan Policy S-7.3: Development may occur in areas identified as "normally acceptable" provided effective measures to reduce both the indoor and outdoor noise levels to acceptable levels are taken.
- General Plan Policy S-7.4: New noise generators may be allowed in areas where projected noise levels are "conditionally acceptable" only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements is made and needed noise mitigation features are included in project design.
- General Plan Policy S-7.5: New noise generators shall be discouraged in areas identified as "normally unacceptable." Where such new noise generators are permitted, mitigation to reduce both the indoor and outdoor noise levels will be required.
- General Plan Policy S-7.6: Acoustical Analysis shall be part of the environmental review process for projects when:
    - Noise sensitive receptors are proposed in areas exposed to existing or projected noise levels that are "normally unacceptable" or higher according to Table S-2 ("Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise") of the General Plan.
    - Proposed noise generators are likely to produce noise levels exceeding the levels shown in the adopted Community Noise Ordinance when received at existing or planned noise-sensitive receptors.
- General Plan Policy S-7.7: All proposed discretionary residential projects that are within roadway or railroad noise contours of 60 dB CNEL or greater shall include a finding of consistency with the provisions of the Noise Hazards section of the Safety Element. If found that the roadway noise exceeds 60 dB CNEL within the project site, a

project-specific noise impact analysis shall be required. If impacts are identified, the applicant shall conduct mitigation analysis using published Caltrans/Federal Highway Administration guidelines and implement mitigation measures as required. Mitigation measures may include, but are not limited to sound walls, adjacent roadway design, dual pane glass, building location or design, etc. Any proposed mitigation measures shall be concurrently implemented with the implementation of the project.

- Monterey County Code §10.60.030 – Operation of noise-producing devices restricted: At any time of the day, it is prohibited within unincorporated area of the County of Monterey to operate, assist in operating, allow, or cause to be operated any machine, mechanism, device or contrivance which produces a noise level exceeding eighty-five (85) dBA measured fifty (50) feet therefrom. The prohibition in this Section shall not apply to aircraft nor to any such machine, mechanism, device or contrivance that is operated in excess of two thousand five hundred (2,500) feet from any occupied dwelling unit. The following regulations shall apply to nighttime noise:
    - It is prohibited within the unincorporated area of the County of Monterey to make, assist in making, allow, continue, create, or cause to be made any loud and unreasonable sound any day of the week from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. the following morning.
    - Within the period of 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. the following morning, and for the purposes of this Section, a loud and unreasonable sound shall include any sound that exceeds the exterior noise levels standards described below.
        - Nighttime hourly equivalent sound level (L_{eq} dBA) – 45 dBA
        - Maximum (L_{max}) level, dBA – 65 dBA

Construction activities would result in a temporary increase in noise levels in the vicinity of the Proposed Project. Grading, trenching, paving equipment, pneumatic tools, trucks and a variety of other equipment would be used to prepare the site for construction and to build improvements. **Table 8** shows the maximum noise levels for typical construction equipment.

Table 8
Typical Construction Equipment Maximum Noise Levels at 200 Feet (dBA)

Type of Equipment	dBA
Concrete Saw	78
Crane	69
Excavator	69
Front End Loader	67
Jackhammer	77
Paver	65
Pneumatic Tools	73
Dozer	70
Rollers	68
Trucks	72
Pumps	68
Scrapers	75
Portable Generators	68

Type of Equipment	dBA
Backhoe	74
Grader	74

Construction noise would occur at various locations within and near the site. The distance from the closest residences to the site is approximately 200 feet. Construction activities would expose occupants at the adjacent residences to temporary, short-term increases in noise and groundborne vibrations at a range between 61-74 dBA. This impact is not anticipated to be significant for several reasons. First, noise dissipates at a rate of about 6 dBA for each additional 50 feet between the source of noise and the sensitive receptor. In addition, construction noise is temporary and is not considered to be a significant impact, provided that construction is limited to the daytime hours and construction equipment is adequately maintained and muffled. No pile driving or other sources of extraordinary noise-producing activities are anticipated. Construction noise impacts could result in annoyance or sleep disruption for nearby residents if nighttime operations were to occur or if equipment is not properly muffled or maintained. Finally, all construction activity would be confined to daytime hours per the requirements of the Monterey County Noise Element, which strictly prohibits construction activity in the evening/nighttime hours as well as Sundays and holidays. *The Proposed Project would implement the following Mitigation Measure N-1 to ensure that construction noise impacts would be less-than-significant.*

Traffic Noise

The Proposed Project would generate additional traffic on nearby roadways, including Harrison Road. The noise assessment (Source: 16) includes the results from traffic noise modeling on residential noise-sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the Proposed Project. These sensitive receptors consist of residences along Harrison Road to the north and south of the site, on Russell Road in Salinas, and on San Juan Grade Road. Noise levels related to traffic exposure for existing, existing plus project, cumulative no project and cumulative plus project traffic conditions were determined based on inputs sourced from the traffic impact assessment prepared for the Proposed Project. The receptor locations are shown in Figure 5 of the noise assessment (Source: 16). **Table 9, Project Related Increases in Traffic Noise (dB, CNEL)** summarizes the results of the analysis.

A significant traffic noise impact would occur if the increase in traffic noise associated with the Proposed Project would result in noise levels exceeding the County's applicable noise level standards at the location(s) of sensitive receptors. A significant impact is also assumed to occur if traffic noise levels were to increase by three (3) dB at sensitive receptor locations where noise levels already exceed the applicable noise level standards (without the project) since three (3) dB generally represents the threshold at which change in noise level can be perceived.

Table 9
Project Related Increases in Traffic Noise (dB, CNEL)

Modeled Receptor	Existing	Existing + Project	Cumulative	Cumulative + Project	Change	Significant Impact
1	60	60	61	62	1	No
2	47	48	51	51	1	No

Modeled Receptor	Existing	Existing + Project	Cumulative	Cumulative + Project	Change	Significant Impact
3	58	59	63	63	1	No
4	63	64	65	65	1	No
5	64	65	65	65	0	No
6	64	64	68	68	0	No
7	58	58	61	61	0	No
8	58	58	62	62	0	No

(Source: 16)

As shown in **Table 9**, the addition of traffic from the Proposed Project to existing conditions would not result in an increase in noise levels that would cause noise exposure to exceed the applicable exterior noise exposure standard of 60 dB under existing plus project conditions. Noise levels that already exceed 60 dB under existing conditions would increase by one (1) dB at four (4) of the eight (8) locations and would not increase at the other four (4) locations. The addition of traffic from the Proposed Project would not result in a significant impact at any of the receptor locations under cumulative plus project conditions. Noise levels would increase by one (1) dB at five of the eight receptors. The Proposed Project's traffic noise level increases would not be noticeable at any of the receptors where noise levels without the project are already above the 60 dB noise standard. Therefore, impacts related to traffic noise are considered less than significant.

On-Site Operational Noise

The noise assessment (Source: 16) also includes an analysis of the projected noise levels resulting from new on-site sources of noise as a result of the Proposed Project. These sources of noise would include loading dock activities, mechanical equipment, trash compactors and parking lot noise (vehicles and truck movement). Impacts from each source are summarized below.

Loading Dock Activities

The Proposed Project includes a Tractor Supply Company store that would include a loading dock on the west side of the building. The loading dock would be located approximately 250 feet from the nearest existing residential uses to the north. The Tractor Supply Company could receive between five (5) to six (6) truck deliveries each week. Deliveries would typically occur between the hours of 8:00 am and 6:00 pm. The loading dock noise levels would be expected to be in the range of 50 to 68 dBA at a distance of 250 feet (i.e., the location of the nearest residence to the north). Existing noise levels in the vicinity of the nearest residential use exceeded 65 dB L_{max} during 19 hours of the 24-hour measurement period due to the proximity of Highway 101 and adjacent commercial land uses. Noise from truck deliveries during daytime hours are not expected to exceed the existing noise levels at this location. However, if loading activities occur during the nighttime hours of 10:00 pm to 7:00 am, noise levels could exceed the nighttime noise level standard of 65 dB L_{max}. This would be a significant impact. *Implementation of Mitigation Measure N-2 would reduce this significant impact to a less-than-significant level by limiting loading dock activities at the Tractor Supply Company to the daytime.*

Mechanical Equipment

The Tractor Supply Company store would include a trash compactor located at the rear of the building, which could create noise levels up 46 dBA at a distance of 250 feet at the nearest noise-sensitive residential use. This noise level would not exceed the nighttime stationary noise standard of 65 dB L_{max} and would not exceed existing (pre-project) ambient noise levels measured in the vicinity of the closest sensitive receptors. As a result, noise impacts from this source would be less than significant.

In addition, roof-mounted HVAC units are proposed on top of the buildings, including the Tractor Supply Company store. Noise levels from continuous operation over a 24-hour period are estimated to range from 43 to 48 dBA CNEL at the closest residences to the north. This noise level range would be below the 60 dB CNEL standard identified in the Noise Element. This noise level would also be below the standards identified in the Noise Ordinance. Noise levels would also be below the existing (pre-project) ambient noise levels at the nearest residential uses and the increase in noise would not be noticeable at those locations. Therefore, noise impacts from this source would be less than significant.

Parking Lot Activities

Noise from vehicles within parking lots is typically limited by low speeds and is not considered significant. A passing car in a parking lot would typically produce a maximum noise level of 60 to 65 dBA at a distance of 50 feet. All parking areas within the Proposed Project site would be located a minimum of 400 feet from the nearest existing residences to the north. As a result, the maximum (L_{max}) noise levels would be expected to be approximately 42 to 47 dB from parking lot vehicle movements at the nearest residential uses, which would not exceed County standards or exceed existing ambient noise levels at the nearest residential uses to the north. Parking lot noise would not be noticeable at the residences. Therefore, noise impacts from this source would be less than significant.

Slowly Moving Trucks

The noise assessment identified that noise resulting from slowly moving trucks on the Proposed Project site could affect the residential uses to the north. Noise from trucks moving to and from the Tractor Supply loading dock would be expected to produce noise levels in the range of 60 to 66 dBA at the nearest residential land uses. The range in measured truck noise levels varies due to different size of trucks, varying movement speeds, and whether they have refrigeration units in operation during the pass-by. Noise levels could exceed the 65 dB L_{max} noise level standard at the nearest residential land uses if truck deliveries were to occur during nighttime hours (10:00 pm to 7:00 am). *Implementation of Mitigation Measure N-3 would reduce this significant impact to a less-than-significant level by limiting deliveries at the Tractor Supply Company to the daytime.*

On-Site Noise-Sensitive Uses

The Proposed Project includes a hotel, which would be the only noise-sensitive use planned within the Proposed Project site. The exterior noise exposure level for a hotel use is 65 dB CNEL, which is commonly applied at outdoor common and amenity areas. The noise levels were projected to range from 70 to 72 dB CNEL under cumulative plus project worst-case conditions at the exterior of the proposed hotel. However, the proposed hotel does not include exterior noise sensitive amenities such as pools, courtyards, or picnic areas. Therefore, no exterior noise exposure impacts would occur.

The Monterey County General Plan does not explicitly state thresholds for interior noise levels at hotels. However, it is common to ensure that interior noise levels not exceed 45 dB CNEL (or Ldn) within residential land uses (including transient lodging), consistent with Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations for residential construction and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD") regulations.

Based on the noise assessment, interior noise levels would range from approximately 41.4 to about 42.7 dB CNEL, below the threshold of 45 dB CNEL. (Source: 1, 2, 7, 16, 17). *Therefore, interior noise exposure level should be below the accepted standard and the related impact would be less than significant.*

Mitigation Measures

N-1 The Applicant shall implement the following measures to limit construction-related noise:

a. Limit noise-generating construction operations to non-holidays, Monday through Saturday, between the least noise-sensitive periods of the day (i.e. 7:00 am to 7:00 pm);

b. Locate construction equipment and equipment staging areas at the furthest distance possible from nearby noise-sensitive land uses (i.e. residential uses to the northwest);

c. Ensure that construction equipment is properly maintained and in good condition. All internal combustion engine driven machinery shall use intake and exhaust mufflers and engine shrouds, as applicable. Equipment engine shrouds shall be closed during equipment operation. Whenever feasible, electrical power shall be used to run air compressors and similar power tools rather than diesel equipment. The Applicant shall require all contractors, as a condition of contract, to maintain and tune-up all construction equipment to minimize noise emissions;

d. Construction vehicles and equipment shall not be left idling for longer than five minutes when not in use; and

e. Install temporary noise barriers when activities would affect daytime noise-sensitive receptors (i.e. residential uses to the northwest).

Mitigation Monitoring Action N-1: Prior to issuance of any grading and/or building permits from Monterey County HCD, the Applicant shall provide copies of all contractor work documents, including all plan sheets, containing the conditions identified in Mitigation Measure N-1 to HCD-Planning for review and approval.

N-2 Loading dock activities at the Tractor Supply Company store shall be limited to daytime hours of 7:00 am to 10:00 pm. This requirement shall be included in any lease or sale agreement with the Tractor Supply Company with evidence of this agreement provided to the County of Monterey HCD prior to approval of an occupancy permit.

Mitigation Monitoring Action N-2a: Prior to issuance of any occupancy permit for the Tractor Supply Company, the Applicant shall submit copies of the lease or sale agreements with the Tractor Supply Company that contain the restriction on loading dock activities identified in Mitigation Measure N-2 to HCD-Planning for review and approval.

Mitigation Monitoring Action N-2b: On and ongoing basis, loading dock activities at the Tractor Supply Company store shall be limited to daytime hours of 7:00 am to 10:00 pm.

N-3 Truck deliveries to the Tractor Supply Company shall be limited to daytime hours of 7:00 am to 10:00 pm. This requirement shall be included in any lease or sale agreement with the Tractor Supply Company with evidence of this agreement provided to the HCD-Planning prior to approval of an occupancy permit.

Mitigation Monitoring Action N-3a: Prior to issuance of any occupancy permits for the Tractor Supply company, the Applicant shall submit copies of the lease or sale agreements with the Tractor Supply Company that contain the restriction on truck deliveries identified in Mitigation Measure N-3 to Monterey County HCD for review and approval.

Mitigation Monitoring Action N-3b: On and ongoing basis, truck deliveries to the Tractor Supply Company shall be limited to daytime hours of 7:00 am to 10:00 pm.

Noise 13(b). Less than Significant Impact

The noise assessment (Source: 16) includes an evaluation of potential impacts as a result of vibration-generating activities associated with construction of the Proposed Project. Common sources of man-made vibration include blasting, pile driving, and pavement breaking. None of these activities are anticipated during construction of the Proposed Project. Vibration from construction activities could be detected at the closest sensitive land uses, particularly during any movements of heavy equipment or loaded trucks and during some paving activities throughout

construction. However, these impacts would be temporary and would cease upon completion of construction of the Proposed Project.

Ongoing operational activities from the Proposed Project are not expected to result in substantial vibration impacts at nearby sensitive uses. Activities involved in trash bin collection could result in minor on-site vibrations, but such vibrations would be minor and would not be expected to be felt at the closest off-site sensitive uses (Source: 1, 2, 7, 16). *As a result, impacts related to vibration would be less than significant.*

Noise 13(c). No Impact

The Proposed Project is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan, or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport which has not adopted such a plan. The nearest public airport to the Proposed Project site is the Salinas Municipal Airport, which is located approximately 5.8 miles southeast of the site. (Source: 1, 2, 7, 16). *As a result, the Proposed Project would have no impact related to exposure of future site users excessive noise levels generated by aircraft.*

14. POPULATION AND HOUSING **Would the project:**	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 7, 35, 36)	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? (Source: 1, 2, 7)	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

According to the California Employment Development Department, the unemployment rate for Monterey County was 8.8 percent in February 2022. The reported unemployment rates for Salinas were 8.3 percent for the 2019 annual average (pre-COVID-19 pandemic), 11.2 percent for June 2020 (during the COVID-19 pandemic) and 8.3 percent for the 2021 annual average (Source: 35).

Population and Housing 14(a). Less than Significant Impact

The Proposed Project does not include any residential uses and would not be a source of direct population growth. However, the Proposed Project would be a source of new employment opportunities, which could indirectly result in population growth. Based upon the unemployment rates described above a substantial number of the jobs created by the Proposed Project would likely be filled by local residents. Consequently, the Proposed Project would not directly result in

a substantial indirect increase in population growth as a result of the employment opportunities it creates.

The Proposed Project could, however, indirectly facilitate growth through the extension of infrastructure. As described in **Chapter 2** of this Initial Study, Project Description, the Proposed Project includes off-site wastewater collection infrastructure that would serve the Proposed Project. Specifically, a sewer main would be extended from an existing main located at Harrison Road/Russell Road north to the Proposed Project site. The new main would pass by a largely undeveloped area located along Harrison Road known as Area K. Area K is a planned growth area as defined in the City of Salinas General Plan. The main would be sized to accommodate new development within Area K. While the main could indirectly facilitate development in Area K by removing an existing infrastructure constraint to development, that future development is already planned and the environmental impacts of that growth were previously evaluated in an EIR prepared by the City (Source: 36). Development of Area K is not a component of the Proposed Project. Thus, the extension of infrastructure to serve the Proposed Project would not induce any additional development that is not already planned to occur in Area K, as these impacts were previously identified in the City's EIR (Source: 36). The sewer main that would serve the Proposed Project is also sized to accommodate wastewater flows from a planned farmworker housing project being considered by the County for a site located on Harrison Road approximately 2,700 feet north of the project site. However, additional infrastructure improvements, including additional segments of wastewater pipeline to connect to the proposed farmworker development, would be necessary to serve the proposed farmworker housing project north of the site. Population growth associated with future farmworker housing project would be analyzed in the environmental documentation for that project (Source: 1, 2, 3, 7, 35, 36).

While the Proposed Project would not directly induce population growth, development of the Proposed Project could result in indirect population growth through the provision of new jobs and expansion of infrastructure. However, as described above, the new jobs generated by the Proposed Project are likely to be filled by local residents. In addition, indirect population growth associated with the extension of wastewater infrastructure would not induce substantial population growth. Moreover, the potential environmental effects associated with future planned development in the project vicinity would be evaluated separately as part of other development proposals for Area K and for farmworker housing as described above. *The Proposed Project would have a less than significant impact with respect to inducing substantial unplanned population growth*.

<u>Population and Housing 14(b). No Impact</u>

The Proposed Project would be located on an undeveloped parcel that does not contain any existing housing. As a result, the Proposed Project would not result in displacement of existing people or housing and would not require the construction of replacement housing elsewhere (Source: 1, 2, 7). *No impact would occur.*

15. PUBLIC SERVICES Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
a) Fire protection? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 20, 37)	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Police protection? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 20, 38)	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Schools? (Source: 1, 20)	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Parks? (Source: 1)	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Other public facilities? (Source: 1)	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

Fire Protection

The Proposed Project site is located within the jurisdiction of the Monterey County Regional Fire District ("Fire District"), near the Fire District's northern service boundary. The nearest fire station operated by the Fire District is located at 13630 Sherman Boulevard in East Garrison, which is located approximately seven (7) miles southwest of the Proposed Project site. The Fire District has an active contract with the City of Salinas to provide fire and emergency medical services to approximately 35 square miles of the northern corner of the Fire District, including the Proposed Project site. The City of Salinas' Fire Station 6 is located approximately 1.5 miles south of the Proposed Project site.

In addition, the Fire District is part of the Monterey County Fire Service Mutual Aid system in which the Fire District provides and receives assistance when emergency situations cannot be handled by the primary fire district serving the area. If support from neighboring departments is needed, fire engines from agencies closest to the incident will be dispatched (Source: 37). The Proposed Project is also located immediately south of the North County Fire Protection District's southern boundary. This North County Fire Protection District's nearest fire station is located at 17639 Pesante Road in Prunedale, approximately 2.3 miles from the Proposed Project site. Both this fire station and the Proposed Project site have immediate access to Highway 101.

Police Protection

These services would be provided by the Monterey County Sheriff's Office ("Sheriff's Office"). The Sheriff's Office is located at 1414 Natividad Road in Salinas, approximately three miles southeast of the Proposed Project site. The Sheriff's Office is staffed with about 450 employees and 90 volunteers and has mutual aid agreements with all cities within the County. Additionally, the County has mutual aid agreements with the surrounding counties such as Santa Cruz, San Benito, and San Luis Obispo (Source: 38).

Schools

The Proposed Project is located within Santa Rita Union School District. The closest school to the Proposed Project is McKinnon School which is located approximately 2.25 miles southeast of the Proposed Project site.

Parks

The nearest park facility to the Proposed Project site is Rogge Commons Park, located about 1.5 miles southeast of the site. Rogge Commons Park is under the jurisdiction of the Monterey County Parks Department.

Public Services 15(a). Less than Significant Impact

The Proposed Project would result in increased demand for fire protection services, which is provided to the site by the Fire District, as well as the City of Salinas and the North County Fire Protection District through mutual aid agreements. Policy S-6.5 of the County's General Plan establishes service goals of 45 minutes or less for rural areas, 12 minutes or less for rural centers, and eight (8) minutes or less for community areas (Source: 2).

As stated above, the nearest fire station operated by the Fire District is located at 13630 Sherman Boulevard in East Garrison, approximately seven (7) miles southwest of the Proposed Project site. Responding to an emergency at the Proposed Project site from this fire station would likely take an unacceptable amount of time as there is no direct route from the station to the site. However, the Fire District has been under contract with the City of Salinas since the 1980's to provide fire and emergency medical services to approximately 35 square miles of the northern corner of the district, which includes the Proposed Project site. In addition, fire service can be provided without the need to construct new fire protection facilities as a result of the mutual aid agreements between the fire district and neighboring departments and agencies. The Proposed Project site is not within either a rural center or community area. However, response time from the nearest fire station to the site is expected to be within the required range noted for rural centers and community areas, due to its nearby location. Response time to the Proposed Project site would be considered acceptable in the event of an emergency.

General Plan Policy PS-1.4 requires that new development pay its fair share of the cost of providing adequate public facilities and services, including fire protection services. The

Applicant would be required to pay such fees to off-set the costs of its demand for such services (Source: 1, 2, 7, 20, 37). *This represents a less than significant impact.*

Public Services 15(b). Less than Significant Impact

The Proposed Project would result in increased demand for police protection services, which is provided to the site by the Sherriff's Office. General Plan Policy PS-1.6 defines acceptable Sheriff's response time to rural centers as 12 minutes and to community areas as five (5) to eight (8) minutes (the shortest response time period described in the Monterey County General Plan). The Proposed Project site is not within either a rural center or community area. However, due to its nearby location, response time from the nearest Sheriff's station to the site is expected to be within the required range noted for rural centers and community areas. Construction of new police protection facilities would not be required to ensure response time to the site is adequate.

General Plan Policy PS-1.4 requires that new development pay its fair share of the cost of providing adequate public facilities and services, including police protection services. The Applicant would be required to pay such fees to off-set the costs of its demand for such services (Source: 1, 2, 7, 20, 38). *This represents a less than significant impact*.

Public Services 15(c). No Impact

The Proposed Project is a highway-oriented commercial development project. The Proposed Project would not result in increased demand for additional schools or other educational facilities (Source: 1, 20). *No impact would occur*.

Public Services 15(d). No Impact

The Proposed Project is a highway-oriented commercial development project. The Proposed Project would not result in increased demand for additional parks or other recreational facilities (Source: 1). *No impact would occur.*

Public Services 15(e). No Impact

The Proposed Project is a highway-oriented commercial development project. The Proposed Project would not result in increased demand for other public facilities (Source: 1). *No impact would occur.*

16. RECREATION Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated? (Source: 1)	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment? (Source: 1)	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation: See **Sections II** and **IV**. *The project would have no impact related to recreational facilities.*

17. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 17, 36, 56)	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 18)	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 17)	☐	☒	☐	☐
d) Result in inadequate emergency access? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 17)	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

Pursuant to SB 743, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research prepared the Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA in 2018 as a guide for evaluating Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) impacts of new development projects in CEQA documents. The Office of Planning and Research recommends the threshold for retail projects to be "a net increase in total VMT". For the purpose of this analysis and as recommended in the technical advisory, the region evaluated for the change in total daily VMT is Monterey County.

The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments' regional travel demand model was used as the primary forecasting tool for VMT. The 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. The model is calibrated to represent trip making characteristics within the region using year 2015 data and is the best available tool to evaluate and forecast VMT.

This section is based on *The Sobel Company Commercial Development Traffic Impact Analysis* ("Traffic Impact Analysis") prepared for the Proposed Project by Keith Higgins, Traffic Engineer, in April 2019 (Source: 17). In addition, Hexagon Transportation Consultants prepared a technical memorandum, *Vehicle Miles Traveled Analysis for the Sobel Mixed-Use Development near Salinas, California* ("VMT Analysis") on June 22, 2020 for the Proposed Project (Source: 18).

The Proposed Project originally proposed three additional truck fueling stations as part of the overall Convenience Market/Fueling Station, which has since been removed. The three-truck fueling stations were accounted for in the original Traffic Impact Analysis (Source: 17). Removal of this component of the Proposed Project would reduce the overall vehicle trip generation and slightly improve the level of service operations when compared to the Project with the truck fueling station, as analyzed in the Traffic Impact Analysis. As a result, the April 2019 Traffic Impact Analysis provides a conservative analysis of environmental impacts compared to what is currently proposed for development. On June 22, 2023, the Project Traffic Engineer submitted a supplemental traffic impact analysis to reflect the change in project scope (Project without truck fueling station) (Source: 61). This supplemental analysis indicated that elimination of the Truck Fueling Facility would result in a slight reduction in the Project's trip generation estimate as indicated in the Traffic Impact Analysis. The supplemental analysis found that without the truck fueling facility project traffic would be reduced by approximately 115 daily, 10 AM peak hour, 14 PM peak hour and 5 Saturday peak hour trips. This equates to an approximate 0.5% to 1.4% reduction in overall Project traffic. Based on the updated analysis, with the proposed mitigation improvements, Harrison and Sala Road would operate at an LOS of C or better under existing plus project and cumulative plus project conditions. Harrison Road and the main access (south driveway) would operate and an LOS of B or better under existing plus project and LOS C or better under cumulative plus project conditions.

Transportation/Traffic 17(a). Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation

The Proposed Project could result in environmental impacts if it were determined to be in conflict with a plan, ordinance or policy related to circulation, and if required mitigation proposed would result in physical environmental changes that have *potential* to result in adverse impacts. The Proposed Project involves the development of a highway-oriented commercial land use, as described throughout this document. The Proposed Project's potential to result in conflicts with plans, ordinances, or policies and adverse environmental impacts associated with required mitigation is summarized below.

Roadway Circulation

The Traffic Impact Analysis (Source: 17) included an analysis of peak periods for existing conditions, existing plus project conditions, background conditions, background plus project conditions, cumulative without project conditions, and cumulative plus project conditions. The intersections and roadway segments evaluated fall under the jurisdiction of the County, City of Salinas or Caltrans.

Traffic operations were evaluated based upon Level of Service standards for each intersection. Level of Service D is the adopted standard for the County of Monterey and the City of Salinas, while the Caltrans level of service standard is the transition from Level of Service C to D. The Traffic Impact Analysis identified that under existing plus project buildout conditions, the Proposed Project would result in traffic operations that would be in conflict with the County's level of service standard. As a result, the Proposed Project includes the following off-site circulation improvements that would result in physical environmental changes. The following is a summary of the project responsibilities to mitigate traffic impacts, based upon the recommendations provided in the traffic report:

1. Implement the following at the US 101 Northbound Ramps / Sala Road intersection:
    a. Signalize intersection (Modify existing signalized intersection).
    b. Add a special (overlap) signal phase that combines the northbound US 101 Northbound Ramps right turn and westbound Sala Road through movements.
2. Implement the following at the Harrison Road / Sala Road intersection:
    a. Add second eastbound Sala Road left turn lane.
    b. Widen northbound Harrison Road north of Sala Road to accommodate second receiving lane (from second eastbound left turn lane).
    c. Add southbound Harrison Road right turn overlap signal phase.
    d. Add second southbound Sala Road through lane.
    e. Add second southbound Harrison Road right turn lane.
3. Implement the following at the Harrison Road / Project Driveway (South) intersection:
    a. Signalize intersection.
    b. Add two northbound Harrison Road left turn lanes.
    c. Add a southbound Harrison Road right turn lane.
    d. Provide separate Project driveway eastbound left and right turn lanes.
    e. Provide two westbound Project driveway entry lanes.
    f. Add an eastbound Project Driveway (South) right turn overlap signal phase.
4. Widen Harrison Road to four lanes (two northbound and southbound through lanes) along the Project frontage between the Project South Driveway and Sala Road.

Figure 8, Off-Site Circulation Improvements shows the area of physical impact resulting from constructing these improvements. The environmental effects of constructing the proposed off-site improvements are evaluated throughout this initial study.

Pedestrian Circulation

The Proposed Project consists of a highway-oriented commercial use and would not be expected to generate substantial pedestrian traffic. Opportunities for shifting vehicle trips to pedestrian trips are limited due to the proposed highway-oriented uses. The nearest major residential neighborhoods are located about 0.7 miles to the south in Salinas at Russell Road and Harrison Road. While there are sidewalks along both sides of Harrison Road south of the Proposed Project site, they do not connect to the residential areas located further to the south. Nevertheless, the Proposed Project includes pedestrian improvements along its frontage with Harrison Road. The proposed pedestrian improvements would connect to the existing crosswalks across Sala Road at Harrison Road. The proposed pedestrian improvements would integrate the Proposed Project with the existing pedestrian facilities on Harrison Road, as well as with future pedestrian facilities constructed on Harrison Road as part of the future development of Area K.

General Plan Policy LU-4.7 states, "In areas of anticipated commercial growth and expansion, provisions shall be made to designate adequate access routes, street and road rights-of-way, off street parking, bike paths and pedestrian walkways." Policy OS-9.6 states, "Development shall incorporate features that reduce energy used for transportation, including pedestrian and bicycle pathways, access to transit, and roadway design as appropriate."

The planned construction of new pedestrian facilities as part of the Proposed Project would improve pedestrian connectivity in the area. As a result, the Proposed Project would not conflict with applicable policies for providing pedestrian facilities.

Bicycle Circulation

Due to the highway-oriented nature of the Proposed Project, demand for bicycle access is anticipated to be low. There are currently no designated bicycle lanes or paths on the segment of Harrison Road between the site and nearby Salinas neighborhoods. The Transportation Agency for Monterey's 2011 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan shows a planned Class II bicycle path on Harrison Road north of the existing City limits that would pass the site and extend further to the north (Source: 56). This improvement has not been constructed.

Bicycle connectivity on Harrison Road between the site and Salinas would be improved in the future as a result of the future development of Area K as planned in the City of Salinas General Plan, which is likely to include construction of a bicycle path along the east side of Harrison Road. These improvements are not a component of the Proposed Project. As a result, the Proposed Project does not conflict with General Plan Policies LU-4.7 or OS-9.6 and would not require construction of bicycle facilities that could result in significant environmental impacts (Source: 2). This represents a less than significant impact.

Transit Circulation

The primary sources of vehicle trips to the Proposed Project site would result from diverted-link trips from Highway 101, as well as pass-by trips on Sala Road and Harrison Road. The density

of transit demand under existing and post-project conditions would be insufficient to warrant extending existing transit services to the Proposed Project Site, which limits the potential to shift such trips to transit service. The potential for expanding local transit service, including potential for future service to the site, could be significantly increased in the future with development of Area K (Source: 36). Future development of Area K is not a component of the Proposed Project.

The Proposed Project is projected to generate about 221 jobs, which would render the potential for an Applicant operated alternative to public transit to be financially infeasible. As a result, the Proposed Project would not conflict with General Plan Policies LU-4.7 or OS-9.6 and would not require new or expanded transit facilities whose construction could result in significant environmental impacts (Source: 1, 2, 7, 17, 36, 56). *This represents a less than significant impact.*

Conclusion

The Proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on Conflicts with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities *with incorporation of Mitigation Measure TI-1.*

Mitigation Measures

TI-1 The Applicant/Owner shall install and construct following measures to ensure compliance with the County's level of service standards.

1. Implement the following at the US 101 Northbound Ramps / Sala Road intersection: 1) Signalize intersection (Modify existing all way stop-controlled intersection), 2) Add a special (overlap) signal phase that combines the northbound US 101 Northbound Ramps right turn and westbound Sala Road through movements,
2. Implement the following at the Harrison Road / Sala Road intersection: 1) Restripe existing striped median to add second eastbound Sala Road left turn lane, 2) Widen northbound Harrison Road north of Sala Road to accommodate second receiving lane (from second eastbound left turn lane), 3) Add southbound Harrison Road right turn overlap signal phase, 4) Add second southbound Sala Road through lane, 5) Add second southbound Harrison Road right turn lane.
3. Implement the following at the Harrison Road / Project Driveway (South) intersection: 1) Signalize intersection, 2) Add two northbound Harrison Road left turn lanes, 3) Add a southbound Harrison Road right turn lane, 4) Provide separate Project driveway eastbound left and right turn lanes, 5) Provide two westbound Project driveway entry lanes, 6) Add an eastbound Project Driveway (South) right turn overlap signal phase.
4. Widen Harrison Road to include four through lanes (two northbound and southbound through lanes) along the Project frontage between the Project South Driveway and Sala Road.

5. Implement the following at Harrison Road/Project Driveway (North) intersection: 1) Add a northbound Harrison Road left turn lane, 2) Provide a combined eastbound left/right turn exit land and single entrance lane.

Mitigation Monitoring Action TI-1: Prior to Final Map recordation, the Applicant shall enter into a Subdivision Improvement Agreement and provide to HCD-Planning, Engineering Services, and the County Survey for review and approval a Subdivision Improvements Plan illustrating the required traffic improvements.

Transportation/Traffic 17(b). Less than Significant Impact

Hexagon Transportation Consultants prepared a technical memorandum, *Vehicle Miles Traveled Analysis for the Sobel Mixed-Use Development near Salinas, California* ("VMT Analysis") on June 22, 2020 for the Proposed Project. The following information is taken largely from the VMT Analysis (Source: 18).

OPR recommends the threshold for retail projects to be a net increase in total Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). Therefore, the Proposed Project would represent a significant VMT impact if it would represent a net increase in total VMT. The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG)'s regional travel demand model (the model) serves as the primary forecasting tool for jurisdictions with the Monterey Bay Region. The AMBAG model is the best available tool to evaluate and forecast VMT.

Hexagon compared the total daily VMT generated by similar land uses within the County of Monterey with and without the project. A VMT reduction occurred as the Proposed Project would provide hotel rooms between Watsonville and Salinas, which would provide lodging closer to coastal attractions near Moss Landing compared to staying at existing hotels in Salinas or the surrounding area. The VMT analysis assumes that the demand for retail and hotel uses are constant with and without the Proposed Project. As a result, the availability of hotel rooms closer to coastal attractions would result in a reduction of the trip lengths for visitors to the area (Source: 18). Total VMT for existing conditions of the region was calculated at 7,094,430 vehicle miles traveled. When the Proposed Project was added to the model, VMT for the region declined to 7,085,159 vehicle miles traveled, a reduction of 0.13 percent, as a result of the hotel component of the Proposed Project. *As a result, the Proposed Project would not cause an increase in the total countywide VMT and would not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b). The Proposed Project would have a less than significant impact related to VMT.*

Transportation/Traffic 17(c). Less than Significant with Mitigation

The Proposed Project includes two new driveway access points onto Harrison Road and a widening of a segment of Harrison Road to comply with the County's level of service standards. The south driveway, which is a signalized intersection, would be the main access driveway and it is proposed to extend the full depth of the site, while the north driveway, which is a stop-controlled intersection, would be considered the secondary driveway and would extend the entire length of the site and terminate at the proposed Tractor Supply store. Monterey County

Department of Public Works has reviewed the Proposed Project's access plan for safety considerations. The Harrison Road widening component of the Proposed Project would be a typical roadway capacity improvement project and is not expected to result in unsafe circulation conditions. All improvements would be reviewed for conformance County design standards and implementation of these improvements would occur through compliance with Mitigation Measure TI-1 above (Source: 1, 2, 7, 17). *Therefore, Proposed Project would result in a Less than Significant impact regarding increasing traffic hazards due to a design feature with incorporation of the mitigation for off-site improvements*.

Transportation/Traffic 17(d). No Impact

As discussed above, the Proposed Project would include new driveway access onto Harrison Road. In addition, the Proposed Project would include construction of internal roadways to provide on-site circulation. The on-site circulation plan has been designed to comply with fire access requirements for lane widths and turnaround requirements. These improvements are shown on the tentative map included in the Proposed Project plans. The plans will be subject to review and approval of the fire district for conformance with applicable development standards (Source: 1, 2, 7, 17). *The Proposed Project would have no impact resulting from inadequate emergency access.*

18. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES **Would the project:**	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k); or (Source: 1, 2, 20)	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe. (Source: 1, 2, 20)	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

The Proposed Project site is located in an area of low archaeological sensitivity according to Monterey County GIS Archaeological Sensitivity Map (Source: 20). The Proposed Project site is located on land associated with the tribal history of regional native groups. California Assembly Bill ("AB") 52 provides CEQA protections for tribal cultural resources. All lead agencies approving projects under CEQA are required, if formally requested by a culturally affiliated California Native American Tribe, to consult with such tribe regarding the potential impact of a project on tribal cultural resources before releasing an environmental document. Under California Public Resources Code §21074, tribal cultural resources include site features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, or objects that are of cultural value to a tribe and that are eligible for or listed on the CRHR or a local historic register, or that the lead agency has determined to be of significant tribal cultural value.

Monterey County Housing and Community Development sent a notification letter to the Esselen Tribe of Monterey County, Ohlone/Costanoan Esselen Nation ("OCEN"), and the KaKoon Ta Ruk Band of Ohlone-Costanoan on May 31, 2023. None of the notified culturally affiliated tribes responded within 30 days or prior to the preparation of this Initial Study (September 2023)

Tribal Cultural Resources 18(ai and aii). Less than Significant

Construction of the Proposed Project would consist of minor ground disturbance that has potential to result in adverse changes to the significance of tribal cultural resources, if such resources were exposed or damaged during construction activities. However, as discussed below, no evidence of tribal cultural resources were identified in the cultural resources report.

The Proposed Project would not result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, as defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074, that is listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources, or in a local register of historic resources. Public Resources Code Sec. 21074 defines a tribal cultural resource as "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, [or] b) included in a local register of historical resources as defined in subdivision (k) of [Public Resources Code] Section 5020.1" (Public Resources Code Sec. 21027(a)).

The Proposed Project site is not listed in the California Register of Historic Resources nor is the site included in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Sec. 5020.1(k). Similarly, the Proposed Project site is not listed as eligible, nor has the site previously been identified as eligible for listing on the California Register of Historic Resources. The Proposed Project site is also not identified in a local register as defined in Public Resources Code Sec. 5020.1(k).

The Proposed Project site is considered disturbed due to previous agricultural use on the site. Given the historic site disturbance associated with prior use, it is unlikely that the Proposed Project would affect an unknown or previously unidentified tribal cultural resource.

Although unlikely, it is possible that unrecorded tribal cultural resources are present beneath the ground surface and that such resources could be exposed and damaged during construction of the Project. *The possibility of inadvertent discovery of Tribal Cultural Resources, human remains, or other subsurface resources is low, and with implementation of the County's condition of approval for cultural resources (PD003A), the potential impact to Tribal Cultural Resources would be less than significant*.

19. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS **Would the project:**	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 14, 19, 41, 44)	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years? (Source: 1 , 2, 7, 30, 31, 41, 44, 58)	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments? (Source: 1, 2, 7, 19, 42, 60)	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals? (Source: 1, 2, 39, 40)	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste? (Source: 1, 2, 39)	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

Existing utility providers would serve the Proposed Project. The Applicant has entered into an Extraterritorial Wastewater Service agreement with the City of Salinas to provide wastewater treatment and sewer service (Source: 41). Though the Proposed Project would tie into the City's sewer system, the Proposed Project requires construction of new sewer lines and connections to connect to the existing system at the intersection of Harrison Road and Russel Road. The Proposed Project has received a can-and-will serve letter from the City of Salinas, dated April 19, 2022 (Source: 42) and a can-and-will serve letter from Monterey One Water (Source: 60).

Cal Water would provide water service to the site. The site does not currently contain water supply infrastructure; the required infrastructure to serve the site would be installed as part of the Proposed Project, as described below. Solid waste will be hauled by Waste Management, Inc. of Monterey County. Additionally, natural gas & electricity will be provided by 3CE and PG&E.

Utilities and Service Systems 19(a). Less than Significant Impact

The following analysis describes the Proposed Project's potential impact with relation to the relocation or construction of new or expanded utilities infrastructure. The Proposed Project is located in Area K, which is a planned growth area defined in the City of Salinas' General Plan. The pre-annexation agreement for the Proposed Project site has been approved, with the expectation that the site and the surrounding area, as part of Area K, would be annexed into the City in the future (Source: 41). The Applicant has received a can-and-will serve letter from the City of Salinas, indicating that the City would provide future sanitary sewer service to the Proposed Project. In addition, the Applicant has received a can-and-will serve letter from Cal Water, indicating that Cal Water would have sufficient water supply to provide service to the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project includes the installation of both new sewer lines to connect to the City's existing system and new water lines to connect to Cal Water's existing system, as described below.

Water Service

No water supply infrastructure currently exists at the Proposed Project site. An existing 12-inch water line is located in Harrison Road. This water line terminates about 970 feet south of the Proposed Project site. The line would be extended north to the Proposed Project site to provide water service as part of the Proposed Project. The extension is shown on **Figure 7, Off-Site Water and Sewer Infrastructure Extensions**. The new segment of the water main extension would be constructed within the paved section of Harrison Road. The impacts of constructing the main and all on-site water supply infrastructure are evaluated as part of the Proposed Project.

Wastewater Service

No wastewater infrastructure currently exists at the Proposed Project site. The nearest existing sewer collection main is located at North Main Street and Russell Road, which is approximately 4,100 feet south of the Proposed Project site. This sewer main is owned and maintained by the City of Salinas. The Proposed Project includes construction of a new 10-inch gravity sewer main in Harrison Road. The new segment of sewer would connect to the existing 10-inch sewer main south of the Proposed Project site. Once completed, the new sewer main would be dedicated to the City. The proposed sewer main extension is presented in **Figure 7, Off-Site Water and Sewer Infrastructure Extensions**. The sewer main extension would be constructed within the paved section of Harrison Road. The impacts of constructing the sewer main and all on-site wastewater collection infrastructure are evaluated as part of the Proposed Project.

Stormwater Drainage

A preliminary stormwater control plan was prepared for the Proposed Project in May 2020 and is provided in preliminary stormwater control plan (Source: 14). All new required stormwater improvements associated with the Proposed Project would be constructed onsite. The impacts of constructing the improvements are evaluated as part of the Proposed Project.

Other Public Utilities

Public utilities, including energy (gas and electric) are currently available at the perimeter of the subject parcel to serve future development. PG&E maintains primary power service lines in close proximity to the site, including existing service lines along Harrison Road. Improvements to the existing energy distribution systems are not anticipated for development of the Proposed Project.

Overall, *the Proposed Project would have a less than significant impact with respect to requiring the construction or expansion of utilities.* (Source: 1, 2, 7, 14, 19, 41, 44)

Utilities and Service Systems 19(b). Less than Significant Impact

As discussed previously, Cal Water would supply potable water to the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project has a projected water demand of 23 AF per year. Cal Water's 2020 UWMP concluded that sufficient water supply is available to meet demand through 2035 under all hydrologic year-type scenarios (normal, dry, and multiple dry years). The UWMP notes that some shortfalls may occur in 2040 and 2045 under single-year drought or multi-year drought conditions. However, the UWMP notes that shortfalls would be alleviated by proactive drought planning on the part of Cal Water. The additional demand associated with the Proposed Project would have a minimal impact on groundwater supply due to the existing overall volume of water pumped by Cal Water to serve their overall system. Moreover, Cal Water has issued a "will serve" letter indicating that they have available water supply to serve the Proposed Project. As a result, sufficient water supplies would be available to serve the Proposed Project during normal, dry, and multiple dry years. (Source: 1 , 2, 7, 30, 31, 41, 44, 58) *This represents a less than significant impact.*

Utilities and Service Systems 19(c). Less than Significant Impact

Wastewater collection service would be provided to the Proposed Project by the City of Salinas, as described above. The Proposed Project site is subject to a pre-annexation agreement, with the expectation that the site and the surrounding area would be annexed into the City in the future. The Applicant has received a can-and-will serve letter from the City of Salinas, indicating that the City would provide future sanitary sewer service to the Proposed Project. As part of the Proposed Project, a new sewer line would be installed within the site and Harrison Road, connecting the development to the existing sanitary sewer line located at the intersection of Harrison Road and Russel Road.

Wastewater is collected through the City's wastewater system and transferred to Monterey One Water's regional wastewater treatment plant. The Monterey One Water regional wastewater

treatment plant has a permitted flow of 29.6 million gallons per day ("MGD") and an average dry weather flow of 18 MGD. The regional wastewater treatment plant received and treats approximately 18 MGD of wastewater at the end of 2019. Therefore, the regional wastewater treatment plant has existing capacity to treat additional flows generated by the Proposed Project (Source: 7). Monterey One Water has issued a will serve letter to accommodate the additional wastewater flow generated by the Proposed Project.

The Proposed Project is anticipated to generate a peak dry weather flow of approximately 24,260 gallons per day (or 0.02 MGD). This increased flow would be readily accommodated within the remaining capacity at the M1W's wastewater treatment plant (Source: 19). While the Proposed Project would result in increased demand for wastewater treatment, it would not exceed available existing capacity (Source: 1, 2, 7, 19, 42, 60). *This represents a less than significant impact*.

Utilities and Service Systems 19(d). Less than Significant Impact

The Proposed Project would generate solid waste during both the construction and operation phases. The transfer station closest to the Proposed Project site is the Sun Street Transfer and Recycling Center and Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility, located approximately 4.75 miles to the south. Solid waste generated by the Proposed Project is anticipated to be delivered to the Johnson Canyon Landfill for disposal (Source: 39), located approximately 2.5 miles east of the City of Gonzales and operated by the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority ("SVSWA").

SVSWA manages the cumulative solid waste disposal capacity needs of its municipal clients. SVSWA ensures that solid waste disposal is available through the expansion of existing or creation of new landfill capacity, as well as deployment of waste conversion technology that substitutes for landfill disposal capacity. The end of operation of the Johnson Canyon Landfill is designated to occur in December 2066. The Johnson Canyon Landfill has a maximum permitted throughput of 1,694 tons of solid waste per day and a remaining capacity of 12,590,000 cubic yards (Source: 40). The Johnson Canyon Landfill has adequate storage capacity to accommodate the Proposed Project's increased demand for waste management services. SVSWA has several other options for future disposal of waste, in the event that the Johnson Canyon Landfill reaches full capacity ahead of its planned closure date of December 2066, including expansion of the Johnson Canyon Landfill beyond its current permitted capacity, expansion of the closed Jolon Road Landfill, or diverting waste to regional landfills outside of their service area (i.e., Monterey Peninsula Landfill located north of Marina, Kirby Canyon Landfill in Santa Clara County or John Smith Landfill in San Benito County). The Proposed Project's generation of solid waste would be minimal compared to region-wide waste generation and would not generate waste in exceedance of State or local standards or beyond the capacity of local waste disposal infrastructure (Source: 1, 2, 39, 40). *This represents a less than significant impact*.

Utilities and Service Systems 19(e). Less than Significant Impact

The California Integrated Waste Management Act (AB 939) requires cities and counties to divert a minimum of 50 percent of their solid waste from landfills. In December 2006, the SVSWA Board of Directors increased this goal to a 75 percent reduction in solid waste by 2015 for the

cities in its jurisdiction (Source: 39). SVSWA would provide solid waste collection and recycling services for the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project would not generate solid waste in excess of the capacity of local landfills and would comply with applicable regulations pertaining to solid waste. (Source: 1, 2, 39). *This represents a less than significant impact*.

20. WILDFIRE **If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:**	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? (Source: 1, 2, 28)	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire? (Source: 1, 2, 20)	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment? (Source: 1, 2, 29, 37, 43)	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes? (Source: 1, 2, 20)	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

The Proposed Project site is surrounded by agricultural, open space, and residential land uses. The Proposed Project site is in a State Responsibility Area and is not designated as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone for wildland fires. However, the Proposed Project site is located within a Wildfire Urban Interface Zone according to the Monterey County Fire Protection Areas Map (Source: 20).

Wildfire 20(a). No Impact

The County has adopted a Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan that addresses reducing the potential for future damages and economic losses, grant funding qualification, government coordination, and complying with federal and state requirements for local hazard mitigation plans. The plan outlines the designated emergency evacuation routes within the County. Designated evacuation routes include State Route 1, Highway 101, and various other County roadways. Highway 101 is located directly adjacent to the Proposed Project site to the west. No other designated emergency evacuation routes are located in the immediate vicinity of the

Proposed Project. Construction and operation of the Proposed Project would not impede the use of designated emergency access routes such as Highway 101. For these reasons, the Proposed Project would not substantially impair the execution of an established emergency evacuation plan. (Source: 1, 2, 28). *No impact would occur*. Refer also to **Section 9.0, Hazards and Hazardous Materials**, checklist question "f").

Wildfire 20(b). No Impact

Construction and operation of the Proposed Project would not exacerbate wildfire risks due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors. Wildfire risks are substantially reduced at the Proposed Project site due to the relatively level area that the project lies on and the lack of fire hazard area within the site. The Proposed Project site is not located within an area identified as moderate, high, or very high Fire Hazard Severity for either State or Local Responsibility Areas. The nearest high fire hazard severity zone being approximately 0.7 miles north of the project site (Source: 1, 2, 20). *The Proposed Project would have no impact related to exacerbation of wildfire risks*.

Wildfire 20(c). Less than Significant Impact

The Proposed Project site is not located within an area identified as moderate, high, or very high Fire Hazard Severity for either State or Local Responsibility Areas. As a result, the wildfire risk at the site is low and the Proposed Project would not require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment. The County identifies the Proposed Project site within a Wildfire Urban Interface Zone, according to the Monterey County Fire Protection Areas Map (Source: 43). However, the Proposed Project would be required to comply with the Fire District's standard requirements for commercial facilities, which would include removal of dry, flammable vegetation from the site (Source: 1, 2, 29, 37, 43). *This represents a less than significant impact*.

Wildfire 20(d). Less than Significant Impact

As discussed above, the Proposed Project is located on a relatively level site that does not directly interface with any State fire hazard zones. The County identifies the Proposed Project site within a Wildfire Urban Interface Zone, however, the Proposed Project would be required to comply with the Fire District's standard requirements for commercial facilities as described under impact 20c). As a result, the Proposed Project would not expose people or structures to significant wildfire related risks regarding flooding or landslides (Source: 1, 2, 20). *This represents a less than significant impact*.

VII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

NOTE: If there are significant environmental impacts which cannot be mitigated and no feasible project alternatives are available, then complete the mandatory findings of significance and attach to this initial study as an appendix. This is the first step for starting the environmental impact report (EIR) process.

Does the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory? (Source: 1-60)	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)? (Source: 1-60)	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly? (Source: 1-60)	☐	☒	☐	☐

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

<u>Mandatory Findings of Significance VII(a). Less than Significant with Mitigation</u>

The Proposed Project would not 1) degrade the quality of environment, 2) substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, 3) cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, 4) threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, 5) reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or 6) eliminate important examples of major periods of California history or prehistory. The Proposed Project would result in temporary construction-related impacts that would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level through the incorporated of mitigation measures identified in this Initial Study. All operational impacts associated with the Proposed Project would also be reduced to a less-than-significant level through the incorporation of mitigation.

The Proposed Project could result in potentially significant impacts on candidate, sensitive, or special status species. *However, implementation of mitigation measures BIO-1 and BIO-2*

identified above under ***Section VI.4 Biological Resources****, would reduce these impacts to less-than-significant levels.*

Regarding cultural resources, potential impacts to known prehistoric archaeological sites and any unknown or undiscovered resources on the project site would be reduced to a less than significant level by implementing the County's Conditions of Approval for cultural resources PD003(A), Discovery of Cultural Resources.

No additional mitigation is necessary beyond mitigation identified in each of the respective topical CEQA sections contained in this IS/MND.

Mandatory Findings of Significance VII(b). Less than Significant with Mitigation

In order to determine whether a cumulative effect requires an EIR, the lead agency shall consider whether the impact is significant and whether the effects of the project are cumulatively considerable (CEQA Guidelines §15064(h)(1). This IS/MND contains mitigation to ensure that all impacts would be minimized to a less-than-significant level. In addition, the 2010 Monterey County General Plan contains policies to minimize potential impacts associated with buildout under the General Plan. As a result, construction and operation of the Proposed Project would be required to comply with applicable policies as described in this IS/MND.

CEQA allows a lead agency to determine that a project's contribution to a potential cumulative impact is not considerable and thus not significant when mitigation measures identified in the initial study will render those potential impacts less than considerable (CEQA Guidelines 15064(h)(2). The Proposed Project has the potential to result in cumulatively considerable GHG impacts. *However, implementation of mitigation measure GHG-1 would reduce this cumulative impact to less than significant. Noise impacts were found to be less than cumulatively considerable. Other impacts, including criteria air emissions, would be less than cumulatively considerable with adherence to development standards and regulations* (Source: 1-60).

Mandatory Findings of Significance VII(c). Less than Significant with Mitigation

The Proposed Project would provide highway-oriented commercial services at a currently vacant site. The Proposed Project could result in adverse environmental effects that could result in substantial adverse direct or indirect impacts on human beings. These impacts include visual impacts associated with the 57-foot illuminated pylon sign, the exposure of nearby sensitive receptors (residential uses) to elevated pollutant concentrations during construction of the Proposed Project, generation of GHGs, noise generation exceeding established thresholds at nearby sensitive receptors during construction, operation of the Proposed Project, and associated traffic generation. *However, implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-1, AQ-2, AQ-3, GHG-1, N-1, N-2, N-3 and TI-1 would reduce these potential impacts to a less-than-significant level* (Source: 1-61).

Note: Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21083.05, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 65088.4, Gov. Code; Sections 21080(c), 21080.1, 21080.3, 21082.1, 21083, 21083.05, 21083.3, 21093, 21094, 21095, and 21151, Public Resources Code; *Sundstrom v. County of Mendocino*, (1988) 202 Cal.App.3d 296; *Leonoff v. Monterey Board of Supervisors* (1990) 222 Cal.App.3d 1337; *Eureka Citizens for Responsible Govt. v. City of Eureka* (2007)

147 Cal.App.4th 357; *Protect the Historic Amador Waterways v. Amador Water Agency* (2004) 116 Cal.App.4th at 1109; *San Franciscans Upholding the Downtown Plan v. City and County of San Francisco* (2002) 102 Cal.App.4th 656.

VIII. CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FEES

Assessment of Fee:

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

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

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

Conclusion: The project will be required to pay the fee unless the Applicant can obtain a "no effect" determination from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Evidence: Based on the record as a whole as embodied in the RMA-Planning files pertaining to PLN180441 and the attached Initial Study / Proposed (Mitigated) Negative Declaration.

IX. SOURCES

1. Project Application/Plans
2. Monterey County General Plan & EIR
3. Greater Salinas Area Plan
4. Title 21 of the Monterey County Code (Zoning Ordinance)
5. CEQA Air Quality Guidelines, Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, Revised February 2008
6. Site Visit conducted by the project planner.
7. *Draft Initial Study, Sala Road Project*, September 3, 2020, prepared by EMC Planning Group, Monterey, California.
8. *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Report, Sala Road Project*, August 5, 2020, prepared by EMC Planning Group, Monterey, California.
9. *Due Diligence Planning Services, Biological, and Cultural Resources Consulting Services for the Sala Road Project 17.93-acre Parcel, APN: 13-091-017, North of the City of Salinas, Monterey County, California,* July 18, 2020, prepared by EMC Planning Group, Monterey, California.
10. *Results of Focused Congdon's Tarplant Survey the* (sic) *Sala Road Project 17-93-acre Parcel, APN: 13-091-017, Monterey County,* September 28, 2018, prepared by EMC Planning Group, Monterey, California.
11. *Request for Site Visit to Determine Potential Jurisdiction of a Constructed Ditch The Sobel Company, APN 113-091-017, North of the City of Salinas, Monterey County,* June 11, 2018, prepared by EMC Planning Group, Monterey, California.
12. *Geotechnical Engineering Investigation, Proposed Commercial Development, Harrison Road and Sala Road, Salinas, California,* June 20, 2018, prepared by Krazan & Associates, Inc., Pleasanton, California.
13. *Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Proposed Commercial Development Property, 211 Harrison Road, APN 113-091-017, Salinas, California 93907*, May 25, 2018, , prepared by Krazan & Associates, Inc., Clovis, California.
14. *Preliminary Stormwater Control Plan for Sala Road Center, Harrison Road, Salinas, CA 93907,* May 13, 2020, prepared by Siegfried Engineering, Stockton, California.
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17. *The Sobel Company Commercial Development, Traffic Impact Analysis*, April 9, 2019, prepared by Keith Higgins, Traffic Engineer, Gilroy, California.

18. *Vehicle Miles Traveled Analysis for the Sobel Mixed-Use Development near Salinas, California,* June 22, 2020, prepared by Hexagon Transportation Consultants, Inc., San Jose, California.

19. *Preliminary Sanitary Sewer Assessment, The Sobel Company Commercial Development, Harrison Road, Salinas CA,* February 25, 2019, prepared by Whitson Engineers, Monterey, California.

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21. California State Scenic Highway System Map, 2022, provided by Caltrans. Available at: https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aacaa

22. *Design Guidelines for Exterior Lighting*, January 26, 2016, prepared by County of Monterey. Available at: https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/home/showpublisheddocument/10740/635900997910330000

23. *Monterey County Important Farmland 2018*, September 2021, prepared by California Department of Conservation. Available at: https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/Monterey.aspx

24. *2012-2015 Air Quality Management Plan for the Monterey Bay Region*, March 15, 2017, prepared by Monterey Bay Air Resources District. Available at: https://www.mbard.org/files/6632732f5/2012-2015-AQMP_FINAL.pdf

25. California Earthquake Hazards Zone Application (EQ Zapp), September 23, 2021, prepared by California Department of Conservation. Available at: https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/geohazards/eq-zapp

26. Sites Identified with Waste Constituents Above Hazardous Waste Levels Outside the Waste Management Unit, 2022, prepared by California Environmental Protection Agency. Available at: https://calepa.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2016/10/SiteCleanup-CorteseList-CurrentList.pdf

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31. *2020 Urban Water Management Plan – Salinas District,* June 2021, prepared by California Water Service.

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33. *Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin*, 2019, prepared by Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board.

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