



Environmental Checklist/Initial Study

PACKAGE DELIVERY WAREHOUSE PLANNED DEVELOPMENT PERMIT

1. Project Title and Location

Package Delivery Warehouse Planned Development Permit
1680 West Stowell Road
Santa Maria, California 93458
Assessor's Parcel Number: 117-820-012 and 117-820-013 (32 acres)

2. Lead Agency, Contact and Preparer

City of Santa Maria
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Planning Division, Community Development Department
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3. Project Applicant Name and Address

Scott Irwin and Ben Ochoa
Seefried Industrial Properties, Inc.
2321 Rosecrans Avenue, Suite 2220
El Segundo, California 90245

4. Property Information

Lot Size: 33.3 acres/1,449,993 square feet (gross); 32.0 acres/1,395,195 square feet (net)

Existing Land Use: Vacant – interim row crop production

General Plan Designation: Heavy Commercial/Manufacturing (HCM)

Specific Plan: West Stowell Specific Plan

Zoning Designation: West Stowell Specific Plan's Planned Development/Commercial Manufacturing – Agricultural Overlay (PD/CM-AG) Designation

5. Brief Description of Project

Location and Existing Setting

The Package Delivery Warehouse Planned Development Permit (project) would be located at 1680 West Stowell Road in the city of Santa Maria (City) in Santa Barabara County. The property is located in the western portion of the city (Figure 1) within the West Stowell Specific Plan area. The project is in zone district PD/CM-AG (Planned Development/Commercial Manufacturing - Agriculture Overlay) of the Specific Plan.¹ The project would be built on a 32-acre site consisting of two parcels (Assessor's Parcel Numbers:

¹ Santa Maria, City of. 1994. West Stowell Specific Plan, Land Development Pattern, Zoning Map. Available: <https://www.cityofsantamaria.org/home/showpublisheddocument/6437/635530503431800000>. (accessed March 2025).

117-820-012 and 117-820-013)² currently used for growing row crops. As shown in Figure 2, the project site is vacant.

The project site is bordered on the north by West Stowell Road. The land north of West Stowell Road is in unincorporated Santa Barbara County. There is an operating freight rail track abutting the south boundary of the site owned by Santa Maria Valley Railroad. The facility would not be using the rail tracks for the project. Neighboring land uses include agricultural, industrial, and commercial uses, including a Driscoll's packaging facility, an animal shelter, trucking facility, and various farms. The project site is located approximately 0.25 mile west of small-lot single family residential housing. To the east of the project site is a vacant parcel currently being developed as an agriculture box warehouse. Surrounding land uses, General Plan designations, and zoning designations are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Surrounding Land Use Designations

Direction	Land Use	General Plan Land Use Designation	Zoning Designation
North	Row Crops	Santa Barbara County Unincorporated Land	Santa Barbara County Unincorporated Land
South	Row Crops	Light Industrial (LI)	PD/M-1
East	Vacant /Under Development	HCM	PD/CM-AG
West	Crops/AG Industrial	HCM	PD/CM-AG

Project Components

The applicant, Seefried Industrial Properties, Inc., is requesting a Planned Development Permit from the City to develop a package delivery warehouse at 1680 West Stowell Road. The total development area proposed is 244,418 square feet, which includes a 169,104-square-foot single story main distribution warehouse, oriented north to south in the center of the approximated 32-acre site. The main facility building (S-1 occupancy) would include a supporting office area (B occupancy), training room (A-2 occupancy), and break room (A-3 occupancy). In addition to the main facility building, the project contains other small accessory structures as summarized in

Table 2 below. This includes an on-site fleet service center to maintain and repair delivery vans.

Table 2 On-Site Structures

Structure Type	Structure Area (square feet)
Main Warehouse and Office	169,104
Loading Awning - East	33,545
Loading Awning - West	34,325
Remote Restrooms	906
Automated Vehicle Inspection Structures	1,545
Fleet Service Center	4,993
Total	244,418

² Santa Barbara, County of. County Clerk, Recorder and Assessor. Available: <https://sbcassessor.com/Assessor/details.aspx?apn=117820012>. (accessed June 2025).

Planned Development

The project would be processed through a Planned Development Permit. Per Santa Maria Municipal Code (SMMC) Section 12-25.02, the intent of the Planned Development is:

“The PD (planned development overlay) district is designed and intended to provide for the orderly development of land in conformance with the comprehensive land use element and other elements of the General Plan of the City by permitting a flexible design approach to the development of a total community environment equal to or better than that resulting from traditional lot by lot development. The district is designed and intended to accommodate various types of development such as neighborhood and district shopping centers, professional and administrative office complexes, multiple housing developments, single-family residential developments, commercial service centers and light industrial parks or any other use or combination of uses which can be made appropriately a part of a total planned development, in accordance with City General Plan and any applicable specific plan.

The requirements and procedures set in this chapter are designed and intended to be applied in such a manner as to provide maximum design flexibility to the property owner or developer, yet allow the City to retain control over design features and arrangements of uses within the project. The “PD” designation may combine with the various zones called out in the provisions of this title.”

Modification from the 35-foot building height limit in the West Stowell Specific Plan would be needed to permit the project’s proposed building height of 45 feet. This added height is necessary to accommodate the interior height necessary for the function of building operation and to also provide sufficient building parapet screening of the roof-mounted mechanical equipment, which is a requirement of SMMC Section 12-33.202 (b) of the Commercial and Industrial Performance Standards. Per the West Stowell Specific Plan ‘No lot or parcel of land in the CM/AG district shall have a building or structure in excess of thirty-five (35) feet in height unless allowed with a use or planned development permit.’ The applicant has submitted a Planned Development Permit application which includes the request for additional building height. Per SMMC Section 12-35.202, a request for modified building height, may be considered on a case-by-case basis subject to the situational context of the project site to allow flexibility for development, and in order to achieve superior design and community benefit. The Planned Development Permit with requested building height modification will be presented to the Planning Commission for consideration.

Utilities

The City of Santa Maria would provide essential utility services to the project site encompassing water, wastewater, and solid waste management. Electricity would be provided by Pacific Gas & Electric and no natural gas pipes would be installed. Xfinity is the local internet/telecommunication provider.

City capital improvement plans are to enlarge a sewer main that runs below the project site from 30 inches to 48 inches to accommodate planned future demand once warranted. To limit future disruption at the facility, the existing undersized sewer main would be replaced with the larger 48-inch size main during project construction. The project would also establish a public utility easement for the sewer main alignment.

The project would add 890,901 square feet of impervious surfaces. The project would implement a Stormwater Management Plan to ensure the effective flow of water through the project site. Stormwater control measures include installation of a roof drain disconnect, on-site retention-based infiltration, and minimizing impervious areas via permeable pavers and bioretention basins.

Abandoned Oil Well

As identified in the California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) Well Finder database, an oil and gas well is located in the southwestern corner of the project site and was abandoned in the 1950s

(Hope Well# 1, API# 0408302417). The use of this portion of the site would be set aside for parking where access and clearance parameters can be maintained. The applicant would, in coordination with CalGEM, move forward with a plan to re-abandon the oil and gas well to current CalGEM standards. The anticipated work would be noted on project plans submitted to the City, and California Environmental Quality Act clearance is addressed with this Initial Study.

Lighting

Lighting would be installed across the project site to ensure visibility and safety, including in the east, north, and west parking lots, loading dock, open truck yard, beneath the east and west canopy, in the west and east van queuing areas, and on vehicular roads.

Landscaping

Landscaping improvements would include the usage of drought-tolerant and climate-adapted plants, and installation of walk-on-bark mulch in all non-low impact development planting areas and slopes. The irrigation system would measure and use evapotranspiration or soil moisture sensor data, as well as a rain sensor and pressure regulators. Irrigation controllers that do not lose programming data in the event of a power outage would be installed, and areas less than 10 feet in width would use subsurface irrigation to avoid runoff and overspray. The landscape and irrigation plans shall conform to City and State water efficient landscape requirements.

Sustainable Energy Features

The proposed project includes several sustainable energy features. Fifteen electric vehicle chargers would be installed as part of the project, exceeding the minimum requirements. The project would not install any natural gas services to the facility. In addition, solar roof arrays would be installed to offset electrical energy demand with a design capacity of 750kilowatts direct current. To manage energy supply and demand, the project would include an 'after the meter' Battery Energy Storage System to store energy for later use by the facility, with a design rating of 650kilowatts direct current.

Operation

Delivery warehouses are the *last mile* connection between the tenant's customers and their fulfillment process. Delivery warehouses operate 24/7 to support delivery of packages to customer locations between 10:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. The main on-site facility would include delivery and distribution, office and processing uses, including shipping and receiving of packages. It is anticipated that the facility would have two shifts working days and evenings, with a potential third shift during peak season. The operations would be designed to minimize the potential for traffic impacts during peak hour periods by shifting primary trips outside of the standard peak hours. The delivery van departure window would be designed to minimize impact on rush hour periods, and the vans can reach local customers within approximately 125 square miles.

At the proposed delivery warehouse, approximately 34 line-haul trucks (semi-trailer trucks) would be expected to deliver packages to the warehouse each day. The line haul trucks would primarily arrive at the site between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. Once unloaded, the trucks would continue to the next delivery warehouse and would not return to the site. The customer packages would be sorted by address groupings, assigned to the delivery routes, placed onto movable racks, and staged for dispatch.

The first wave of delivery drivers would arrive at the delivery warehouse around 9:20 a.m. and begin queuing for loading. Starting at 9:50 a.m. and ending at 11:10 a.m., 345 delivery vans would load and depart from the delivery warehouse at a rate of up to 72 vans per 20 minutes to facilitate a regulated traffic flow into the surrounding area. Approximately 8–10 hours after dispatch, delivery routes would be

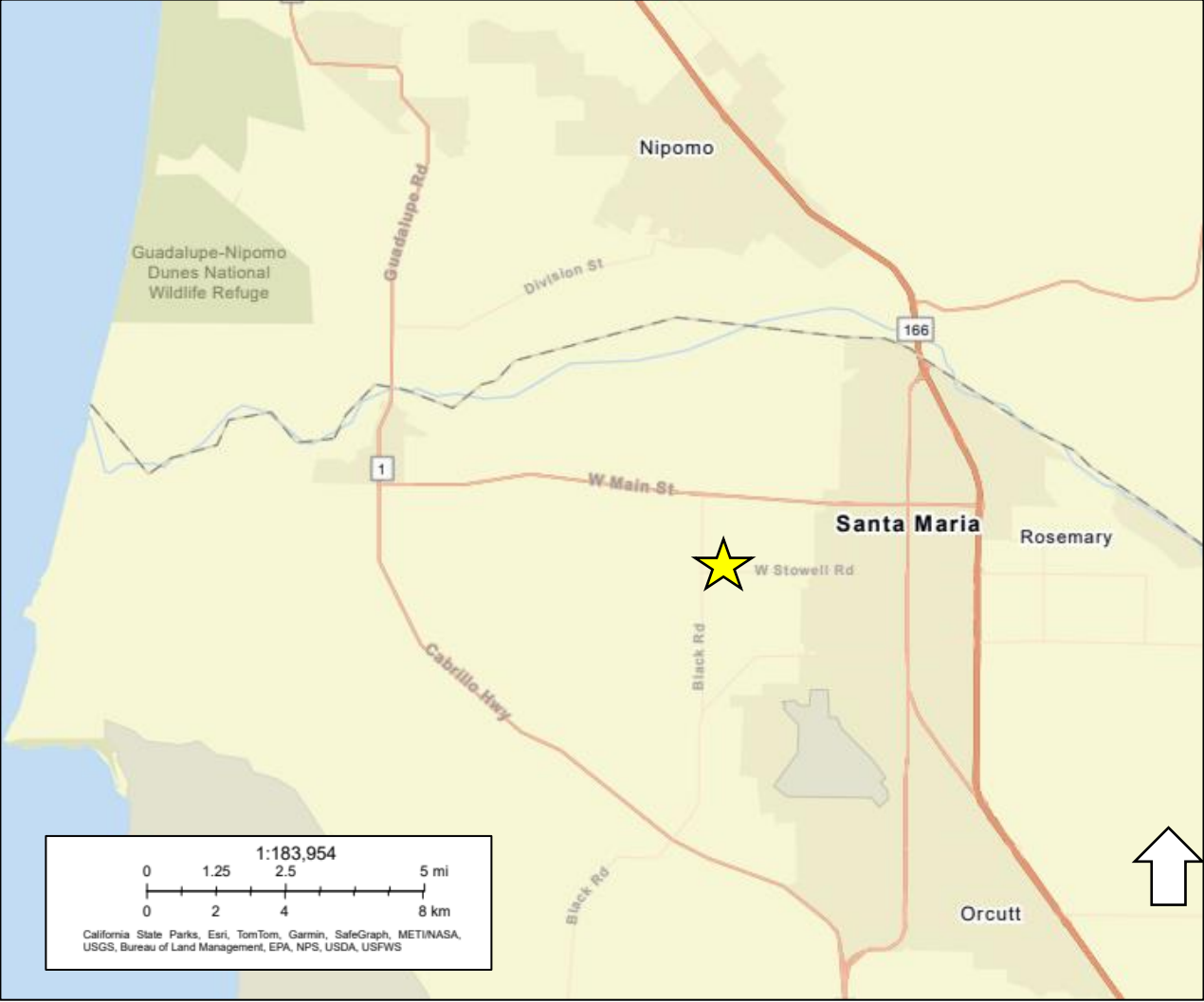
completed, and the vans would return to the station between 8:10 p.m. and 9:50 p.m. The drivers would park all delivery vans onsite and depart using a personal vehicle or other mode of transport. The delivery warehouse would also use private carriers (primarily individual passenger vehicles) to deliver packages from this location. The tenant anticipates 97 passenger vehicles would enter the facility staggered between 4:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Private carrier vehicles would load and depart every 15 minutes. They would not return to the warehouse that day.

Site Circulation and Parking

Access to the site would be provided via three unsignalized driveways (see Figure 3). The westernmost driveway would provide access for all line-haul trucks with vans and employees entering the site via the central and easternmost driveways, which would provide access to parking lots to the north, west, and east of the main building. On-site improvements would involve parking lot striping. Off-site circulation improvements would include installation of parking lot striping, two east bound travel lanes, a bike lane, sidewalk, pedestrian barricade, and streetlights.

Parking for up to 990 passenger cars and vans would be available on-site. There would be 12 stalls at the loading dock to accommodate semi-trucks on the south side of the main facility. Parking for overnight fleet vehicles and drivers' personal vehicles totaling 272 spaces would be available north of the building. The proposed parking meets and exceeds City requirements as shown in Table 3 below. As shown on the project site plan shown in Figure 3, two delivery van parking lots would be located to the east and west of the main distribution building. The main entrance to the building would be to the north facing West Stowell Avenue with parking spots reserved in the north parking lot for associates, guests, or package pick-up customers. The truck loading docks would be along the southern side of the building with dock-high doors for tractor trailer access for unloading. Trucks would enter the site using the northwestern driveway on West Stowell Avenue, and drive south to the loading docks. Trucks would leave the site through the same driveway. Customers, delivery vans, and associate cars would enter and exit the site from the northeastern driveway, also on West Stowell Avenue.

Figure 1 Project Vicinity Map



★ Project Site

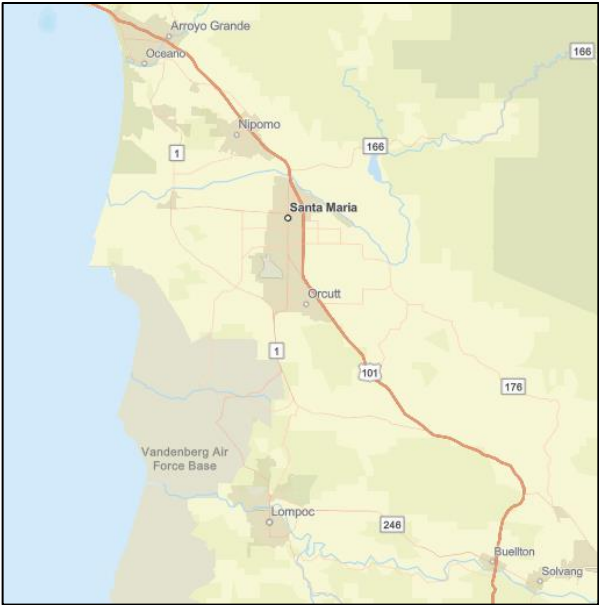


Figure 2 Project Location Map

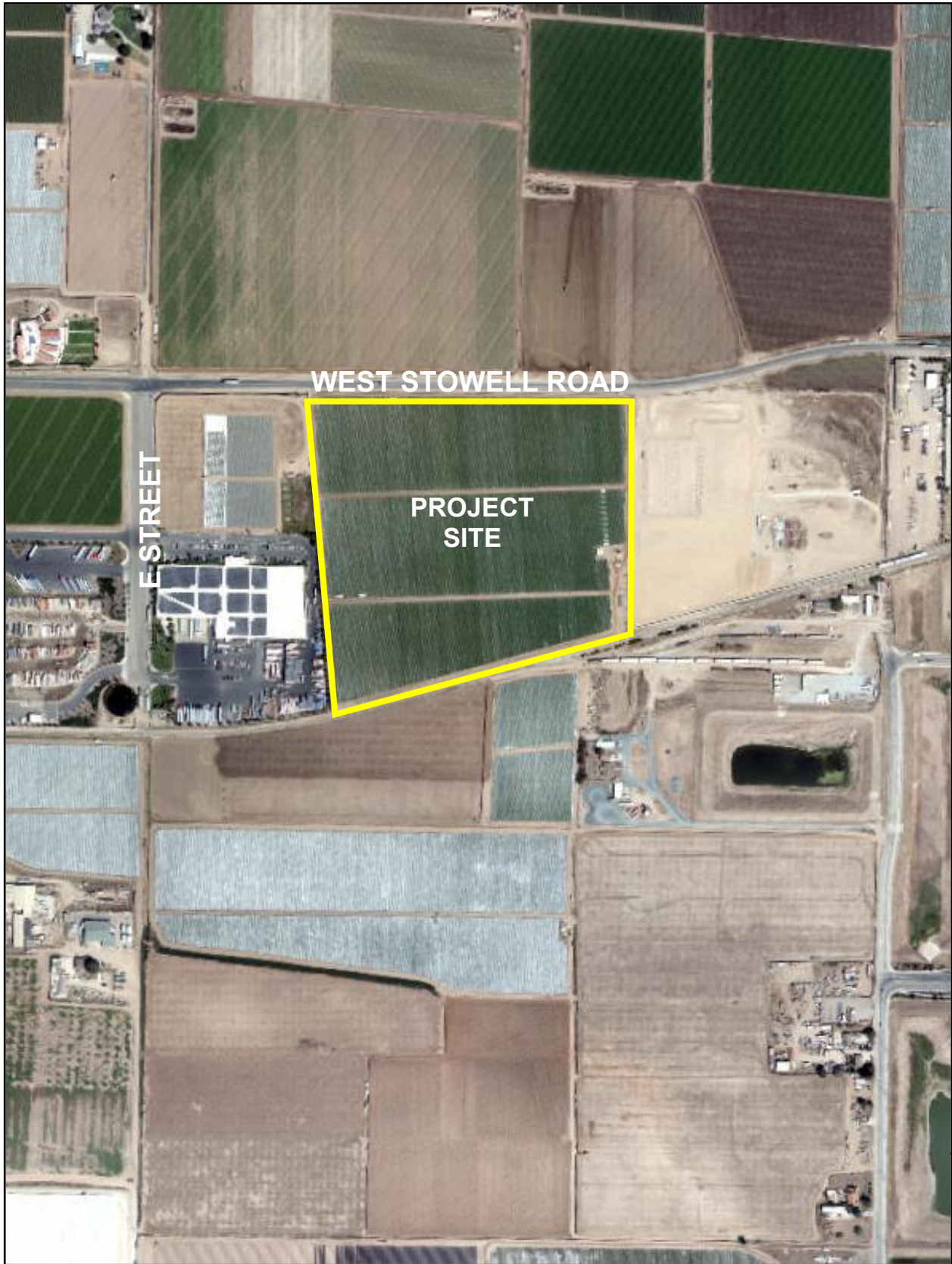


Figure 3 Project Site Plan

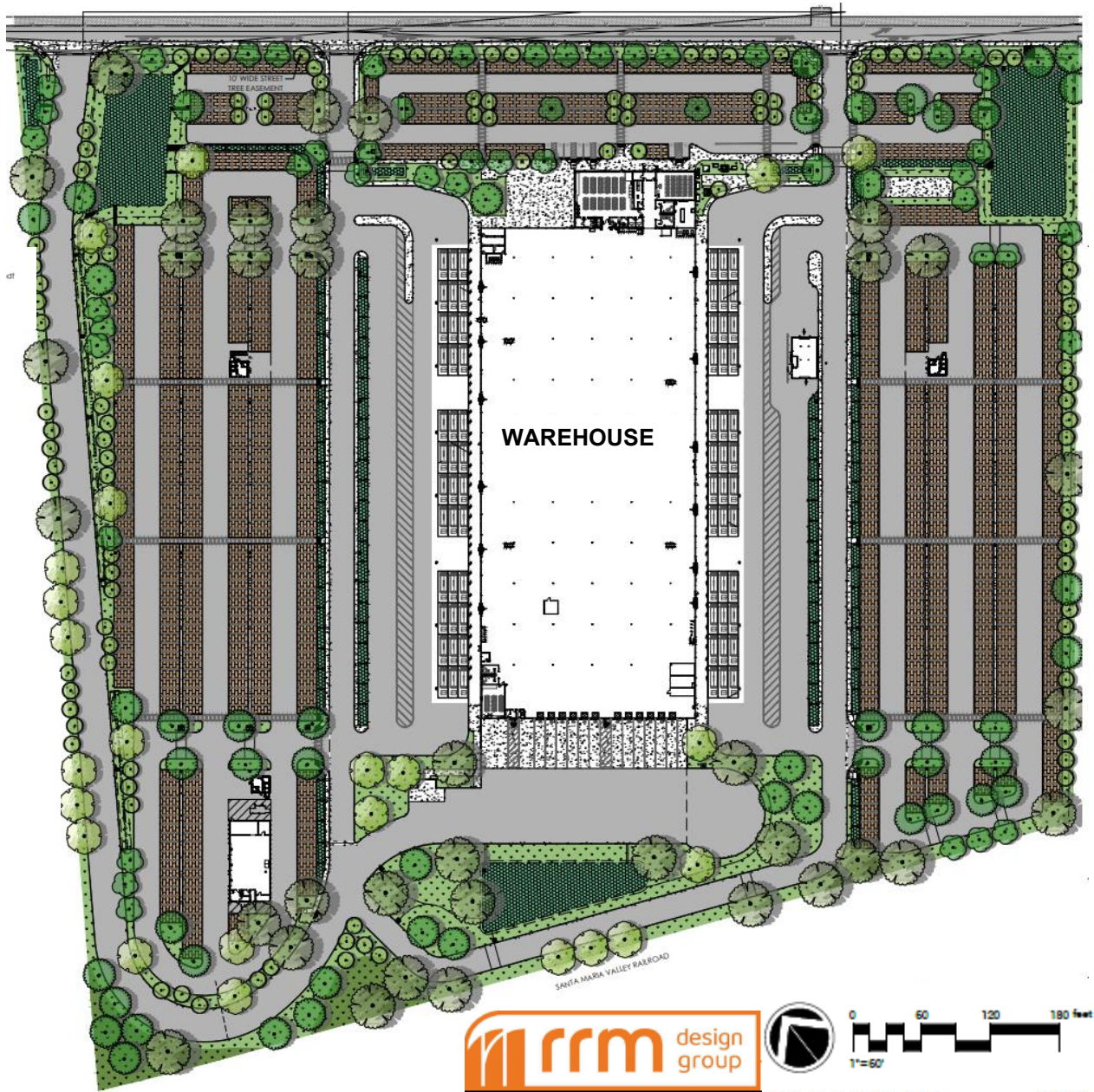


Table 3 Parking Requirements

Stall Type and Size	Parking Type	Floor Area (square feet)	City Requirements	Required Parking Stalls	Parking Stalls Proposed
Standard Vehicle (9'x19')	Warehouse	157,507	1 space per 1,040 square feet	151	
	Office	11,597	1 space per 260 square feet	45	
	Subtotal	169,104	N/A	196	210*
	Handicap		Based on 201 to 300 total stalls	7	8
	EV Capable Stalls		20% of total parking stalls	54*	54
	Standard Vehicle Total			257	272
Delivery Van (11'x27')	Delivery Van Parking				504
	EVCS Delivery Van Parking				202
Semi-Truck (53-foot)	Semi-Truck Parking				12
Total Parking				196	990
* Electronic Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS) 25% Of Overall EV Capable Stalls = 14 stalls					

Construction

Construction of the proposed project is anticipated to occur over one year, from approximately March 2026 through July 2027. Construction would take place between 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekends, which is within the allowable construction hours set by the City.³ Construction of the structures and on-site facilities would be done in five phases: site preparation, grading, building construction, paving, and architectural coating. The warehouse would be constructed with concrete tilt-up construction. The project would use typical construction equipment, including air compressors, welders, excavators, cranes, forklifts, generators, rubber-tired dozers, tractors, loaders, backhoes, and graders. Construction equipment would feature Tier 3 or higher engines. Construction activities are further described below and in the project plans (Attachment 1).

Construction activities for the project site and frontage would include installation of curb and gutter improvements, such as accessible curb ramps, curb cuts with rock riprap energy dissipater, deepened curb, concrete cross gutter, fire hydrant and fire service backflow prevention assembly, domestic backflow prevention assembly, domestic water meter, and sewer manhole and sewer cleanout.

The site would undergo grading and excavation as estimated in Table 4 below. Overall grading depth for buildings would be up to 5 feet in depth and then backfilled approximately 1 to 3 feet above existing grade. Replacement of the sewer main would be at a depth up to 12 feet.

³ Santa Maria, City of. 2025. Code of Ordinances Chapter 5-5 Noise Regulations, Section 5-5.06(e). Available: <https://ecode360.com/43642649#43642677>. Accessed March 2025.

Table 4 Grading and Excavation

Cut/Fill Evaluation	Area (square feet)	Assumed Section (feet)	Fill (+) (cubic yards)	Cut (-) (cubic yards)	Net (cubic yards)
Surface Cut/Fill	1,449,239		237,492	700	236,792
AC Road Hold down	591,231	1.5		32,846	-32,846
Concrete Flat Work	93,422	0.7		2,318	-2,318
Basin Hold Downs	72,077	4.0		10,678	-10,678
Permeable Pavers	224,592	1.5		12,477	-12,477
Building Foundation	250,205	3.0		27,801	-27,801
Total & Net			237,492	86,820	150,672 Import

6. Public Agencies Whose Approval Is Required

Agency	Permits/Other Approvals
City of Santa Maria	Planned Development Permit (PD2024-0003) and Lot Merger
Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District	Stationary source Authority to Construct (ATC), Permit to Operate (PTO) for point sources in development
California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM)	CalGEM-Construction Site Well Review Program (to re-abandon on-site oil and gas well)

7. California Native American Tribes Consultation

The City has notified California Native American tribes who have formally requested notification on California Environmental Quality Act projects under Assembly Bill 52, and pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1. This notification affords California Native American tribes the opportunity for consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1. The City received a response from Santa Ynez Band Chumash Indians on October 23, 2024, indicating that no further consultation on the project is necessary.

1. Aesthetics

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, 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?				X
b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?				X
c. In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?			X	
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?			X	

Setting:

The project site is located in the City of Santa Maria, in Santa Barbara County. The project would be located on two existing, flat, vacant parcels currently used as row crops for agricultural production on West Stowell Road. There are no significant visual features or scenic resources located within the project site or within the immediate vicinity of the site. The closest eligible highway is U.S. Route 101, which is approximately 2.8 miles east from the edge of the project site. State Route 166 is also a listed eligible state scenic highway east of U.S. Route 101 which is approximately 4.5 miles away from the project site.⁴ Additionally, according to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 21071, an “urbanized area” is defined as an incorporated city that has a population of at least 100,000 persons. The City of Santa Maria has a population of 109,987 and is thus considered an “urbanized area”.⁵

Impact Discussion:

- a. A scenic vista is defined as an expansive view of highly valued landscape as observable from a publicly accessible vantage point. The City’s Resources Management Element of the General Plan⁶ has a Conservation Open Space (COS) designation classification with associated zone district, its purpose is to preserve certain areas to protect natural resources, to provide scenic corridors along railroad rights-of-way

⁴ California Department of Transportation [Caltrans]. 2025. California State Scenic Highway System Map. Available: <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca>. Accessed March 2025.

⁵ Data Commons. 2023. Santa Maria. Available: https://datacommons.org/place/geoid/0669196?utm_medium=explore&mprop=count&popt=Person&hl=en. (accessed April 2025).

⁶ Santa Maria, City of. 1996. General Plan, Resources Management Element. Available: <https://www.cityofsantamaria.org/home/showpublisheddocument/598/635488452761730000>. Accessed March 2025.

(ROW), and utility easements. The south boundary of the project site abuts a railroad line; however, the project site is not zoned as COS⁷, and therefore, does not need to preserve a scenic corridor along the railroad ROW. Additionally, the Resources Management Element does not identify any known unique or important scenic vistas surrounding the project site. No impact to scenic vistas would occur.

- b. As described in the setting, the project site is not located near any officially designated state scenic highways. The project would not require the removal or damaging of trees, rock outcroppings, or historic buildings within a state scenic highway. Therefore, no impact to scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway would occur.
- c. The project site comprises two vacant parcels situated in the CM-AG zone district within an urbanized area. The SMMC Section 12-33.307 sets performance standards and regulations to control glare and light spillage.⁸ The proposed lighting's orientation and intensity (see Attachment 1) have been reviewed by City staff and confirmed that the lights would be directed onto the project site and are appropriately intense, meeting the City's performance standards. The proposed project's architecture and landscaping are consistent with the existing industrial developments along West Stowell Road, and the development intensity on the site aligns with the land uses and zoning planned for the area. As discussed above, the site does not offer high-quality public views or scenic vistas. Future development on the site must comply with all City building standards, as well as the Landscape Standards (Chapter 12-44) in Title 12 of the SMMC. The project proposes to increase the allowable height in the West Stowell Specific Plan from 35' to 45'. The increased height would be reviewed through a Planned Development Permit, and subject to the findings of SMMC Section 12-35.203. If approved through this process, the project height would be determined consistent with City zoning. Therefore, the project would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality, and impacts would be less than significant.
- d. The project would establish new lighting that would create a new source of light or glare upon day and nighttime views. Section 12-33.307 of the SMMC regulates light and glare impacts of industrial uses on residential and other surrounding land uses, while Section 3.3 - Community Design Guidelines of the Specific Plan includes requirements for Street and Site lighting. The project site is surrounded by warehouse development and existing streets which have already introduced building, parking lot, and street lighting that already impacts day and nighttime views. Staff have concluded that the new lighting would not create adverse physical effects on the areas within the immediate vicinity of the surrounding development because the lighting would meet the City's performance standards. Specifically, the new lighting would direct illumination toward the proposed warehouse and parking lots, which reduces light spillage at the areas surrounding the project sites. These regulations would minimize glare offsite from the project for both daytime and nighttime views so there would not be a substantial adverse impact from glare. Therefore, the impacts related to the creation of a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: Implementation of the proposed project would not result in potentially significant environment impacts to aesthetics. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

⁷ Santa Maria, City of. 2024. Zoning Map. Available: <https://www.cityofsantamaria.org/home/showpublisheddocument/10037/638563088414970000>. Accessed March 2025.

⁸ Santa Maria, City of. 2025. Municipal Code, Title 12 Zoning Section 12-49.09. Available: <https://ecode360.com/SA5007/search?query=glare&scope=all&sortOrder=relevance>. Accessed March 2025.

2. Agriculture and Forest Resources

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?			X	
b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?			X	
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))?				X
d. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				X
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?			X	

Setting:

The City of Santa Maria, located in Santa Barbara County, is characterized by its rich agricultural heritage and limited forested areas. Agriculture plays a significant role in the local economy, with vast expanses of farmland dedicated to crops such as strawberries, wine grapes, and various vegetables. The region's fertile soil and favorable climate contribute to its agricultural productivity. The Santa Maria Valley provides a unique climate and soil type which is ideal for a variety of crops year-round including broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce, Asian vegetables, plus spinach, parsley, cilantro, other leafy greens and edible pod peas. Warm season crops include bell peppers, tomatoes, potatoes, sweet corn, dry and green beans and summer squashes.⁹ The project site is located on two existing vacant parcels on West Stowell Road and is a flat space that primarily contains row crops for agricultural production. The project site is designated as Prime Farmland and is not listed under a Williamson Contract.^{10, 11} While forested lands are not predominant within the city limits and the project site does not contain any timberland, nearby areas feature patches of woodland that provide ecological benefits and recreational opportunities.

⁹ University of California Cooperative Extension. 2020. Vegetable Research and Information Center, Central Coast Overview. Available: https://vric.ucdavis.edu/virtual_tour/centralcoast.htm#:~:text=The%20Santa%20Maria%20valley%20produces,green%20beans%20and%20summer%20squashes. (accessed March 2025).

¹⁰ California Department of Conservation. 2020. California Important Farmland Finder. Available: <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/CIFF/> (accessed April 2025).

¹¹ California Department of Conservation. 2023. California Williamson Act Enrollment Finder. Available: <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/WilliamsonAct/App/index.html>. (accessed April 2025).

Impact Discussion:

- a-b. The project site is designated as Prime Farmland and would result in the conversion of approximately 32 acres of Prime Farmland to non-agricultural use. However, the project site is located within the West Stowell Specific Plan, in which the CEQA compliance for that specific plan already mitigated for the loss of Prime Farmland. The City of Santa Maria Sphere of Influence Boundary Amendment and Concurrent Annexation Environmental Impact Report (EIR), certified on September 15, 1992, assessed the potential environmental impacts associated with the adoption of the West Stowell Specific Plan. Alongside the EIR, the City Council adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations acknowledging significant and unavoidable impacts, including the loss of Prime Farmland.

The Heavy Commercial Manufacturing (HCM) Land Use designation of the West Stowell Specific Plan permits activities which manufacture and retail on the same site, as well as other heavy commercial uses which may be land extensive or require transport of materials by heavy truck. It is the intent of the West Stowell Specific Plan to use this designation along with an agricultural overlay as a means of safeguarding and encouraging agriculturally-related industrial activity adjacent to existing agricultural uses.¹² Additionally, the West Stowell Specific Plan designates the zoning of the project site as Planned Development/Commercial Manufacturing/Agricultural Overlay (PD/CM-AG), which is the zoning that corresponds to the Specific Plan's HCM Land Use. The project is not a use permitted by right in the Commercial/Manufacturing/Agricultural Overlay Zoning District (PD/CM-AG), however, under the West Stowell Specific Plan similar uses are permitted subject to obtaining a conditional use permit according to the procedures set forth in Chapter 35 of the Santa Maria Zoning Ordinance. A use may be found to be similar if the Planning Commission finds that the project: (i) falls within the intent and purpose of the Commercial/Manufacturing/Agricultural Overlay Zoning District (PD/CM-AG); (ii) will not be obnoxious or detrimental to the public welfare; and (iii) is compatible with adjoining land uses. The project is consistent with existing land use and zoning designations and would also be similar in use and intensity to nearby commercial and manufacturing areas (e.g., Driscoll's, Central Coast Truck Center, California Giant Cold Storage Facility, and CIM Industrial Contractor). The proposed project would not be obnoxious or detrimental to the public welfare and would not introduce land use conflicts (e.g., noise, dust, or access issues) that might pressure adjacent parcels to convert to non-agricultural uses. Therefore, it is unlikely to induce further farmland conversion in the area. The site is not under a Williamson Act contract.

Further, the Planning Commission has the authority provided in the West Stowell Specific Plan to make a finding that a use is similar enough to the manufacturing uses allowed in the zone and to determine that the proposed use would not have any other adverse impacts on the neighboring agricultural uses. As explained in Section 11 *Land Use and Planning*, Planning Commission findings can be made to find the project consistent with the West Stowell Specific Plan policies and ordinances; should this finding be made, the project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use.

Overall, impacts related to the conversion of Prime Farmland to non-agricultural use and conflicts with agricultural zoning or Williamson Act contract would be less than significant.

- c-d. The project site contains two vacant parcels zoned for industrial use and does not contain land zoned for 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)), nor contain forested land. The proposed project would not conflict with forest land or timberland zoning, nor does it propose a zone change that would convert existing forest or timberland zoning, or contain forest or timberland. Therefore, no impact would occur.

¹² Santa Maria, City of. 1994. West Stowell Specific Plan. Available: <https://www.cityofsantamaria.org/home/showpublisheddocument/6437/635530503431800000>. (accessed April 2025).

- e. The area surrounding the project site includes agricultural, industrial, and commercial uses and is planned for industrial uses. As discussed above, there are nearby commercial industrial properties similar to the use and intensity of the proposed project coexisting with adjacent agricultural uses. The project is an industrial use, centered on the property, and not considered incompatible with adjacent agricultural uses that produce noise or dust. Therefore, it is compatible with continued use of adjacent and nearby lands designated for agricultural production thereby not leading to the conversion of adjacent and nearby Farmland, to a non-agricultural use. Additionally, there is no timberland on or adjacent to the project site. Therefore, impacts that 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 would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: Implementation of the proposed project would not result in potentially significant environment impacts related to agriculture and forest resources. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

3. Air Quality

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?			X	
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?		X		
c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?			X	
d. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?			X	

Setting:

The following air quality analysis is supported by an Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Technical Report produced by NV5 on May 22, 2025. The technical report was peer-reviewed by Rincon Consultants as a part of the preparation of this IS. The complete Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Technical Report can be found in Attachment 2.

The City uses the Santa Barbara Air Pollution Control District (SBCAPCD) thresholds of significance for evaluating air quality. In accordance with the SBCAPCD's *Environmental Review Guidelines* and *Scope and Content of Air Quality Sections in Environmental Documents*, SBCAPCD does not consider a proposed project to have a significant impact on air quality, either individually or cumulatively, if operation of the project will:

- Emit (from all project sources, both stationary and mobile) less than 240 pounds per day for reactive organic gases (ROG) and oxides of nitrogen (NOX), and 80 pounds per day for respirable particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 10 micrometers or less (PM₁₀);
- Emit less than 25 pounds per day of ROG or NOX from motor vehicle trips only;
- Not cause or contribute to a violation of any California Ambient Air Quality Standards or National Ambient Air Quality Standards (except ozone);
- Not exceed the SBCAPCD health risks public notification thresholds adopted by the SBCAPCD Board (10 excess cancer cases in a million for cancer risk and a Hazard Index of more than 1.0 for non-cancer risk); and/or
- Be consistent with the latest adopted federal and state air quality plans applicable to Santa Barbara County.

SBCAPCD does not have construction thresholds specific to land development projects; however, under SBCAPCD Rule 202 D.16, if the combined emissions from all construction equipment used to construct a stationary source which requires an Authority to Construct permit, have the potential to exceed 25 tons of any pollutant, except carbon monoxide, in a 12-month period, the owner of the stationary source shall provide offsets under the provisions of Rule 804 and shall demonstrate that no ambient air quality standard will be

violated. While this rule is intended for permitting of stationary sources, the 25-ton-per-year threshold for pollutants (excluding carbon monoxide) is sometimes used as a conservative benchmark to evaluate construction emissions in the absence of project-specific thresholds. Therefore, this IS-MND uses a 25-ton-per-year screening level for criteria pollutants other than carbon monoxide as a point of reference for assessing construction-related impacts.

Additionally, SBCAPCD requires standard dust control measures to be implemented for any discretionary project involving earth-moving activities. Some projects have the potential for construction-related dust to cause a nuisance. Since Santa Barbara County violates the state standard for PM₁₀, dust mitigation measures are required for all discretionary construction activities regardless of the significance of the fugitive dust impacts based on the policies in the 1979 Air Quality Attainment Plan.

The proposed project's line-haul truck emissions would occur within other air districts including the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD), San Luis Obispo Air Pollution Control District (SLOAPCD), and Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (VCAPCD). The line-haul truck emissions occurring outside SBCAPCD jurisdiction will be compared to each of these air district's significance thresholds as shown in Table 5.

SBCAPCD 2022 Ozone Plan

SBCAPCD adopted the 2022 Ozone Plan in December 2022.¹³ The 2022 Ozone Plan was prepared to develop SBCAPCD's strategies for reducing ozone precursor emissions, ROG and NOX, to meet the state ozone standards. The 2022 Ozone Plan includes control measures for stationary sources and on-road transportation and builds upon measures previously adopted in prior plans.

Stationary Sources

Air districts must demonstrate a five percent reduction in emissions per year or adopt every measure feasibly available to SBCAPCD. Historically, SBCAPCD has not achieved the annual five percent reduction and has relied on adopting feasible reduction measures and has adopted 30 measures to date. For the 2022 Ozone Plan, SBCAPCD evaluated additional stationary source control measures, but no measures were identified for adoption. Instead, SBCAPCD developed contingency measures if the California Air Resources Board (CARB) determines that SBCAPCD is not making adequate progress towards attainment. Contingency measures included revising the ROG contents of solvents used during general solvent operations (i.e., cleaning manufacture products or maintaining production equipment) and revising the ROG content of surface coatings for wood products.

The following analysis is based on the Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Technical Report NV5 prepared on May 22, 2025.

¹³ SBCAPCD. 2022b. 2022 Ozone Plan. December. Available at: <https://www.ourair.org/wp-content/uploads/2022-Ozone-Plan.pdf>. Accessed: April 14, 2025.

Table 5 Air Quality Significance Thresholds for Other Air Districts District

	ROG	NO _x	CO	SO _x	Total PM ₁₀ ^a	Total PM _{2.5} ^a
SJVAPCD Annual Threshold (tons per year) ^a	10	10	100	27	15	15
VCAPCD Daily Threshold (lb per day)	25	25		N/A		
Air District	ROG + NO _x (combined)	CO	DPM (Exhaust PM ₁₀)	Fugitive PM ₁₀		
SLOAPCD Daily Threshold (lb per day)	25	550	1.25	25		
SLOAPCD Annual Threshold (tons per year)	25	N/A	N/A	25		

Source: NV5 2025 (Attachment 2)

Notes:

SJVAPCD = San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

SLOAPCD = San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District

VCAPCD = Ventura County Air Pollution Control District

N/A = No threshold established for this pollutant

^a Value includes emissions from exhaust and fugitive dust.

Impact Discussion:

- a. A stationary source is any fixed emitter of air pollutants, such as engines or industrial equipment, that remains at a single location for an extended period. The proposed project would install one stationary source, an emergency fire pump that would require a permit from SBCAPCD. The emergency fire pump would comply with permit conditions established by SBCAPCD and would meet Tier 4 Final engine standards. As it is an emergency fire pump, its usage would be limited to emergency use during grid power outages to supply water for the fire suppression system, and periodic non-emergency operations for maintenance and testing. The emergency fire pump would not be a significant source of emissions, as shown in Table 7. Overall, the proposed project would not install large stationary sources and would not conflict with SBCAPCD's stationary source control measures.

Transportation Measures

SBCAPCD and Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) collaborate to develop transportation elements for air quality plans. SBCAG assists SBCAPCD with development of transportation elements for SBCAPCD's state and federal air quality plans, including estimates for the on-road mobile sources emissions and transportation control measures (TCM) for the 2022 Ozone Plan. The TCMs are the primary mechanism for reducing vehicle miles travelled (VMT) and are programs or activities that can be implemented to encourage the traveling public to rely less on vehicles or use them more efficiently.

The 2022 Ozone Plan highlights TCM-14: Activity Centers and T-18: Alternative Fuels. A portion of TCM-14 relates to SBCAG's Connected 2050 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2050 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy [RTP/SCS]). The RTP is a long-range planning document that defines how the region plans to invest in the transportation system over 20 plus years based on regional goals, multi-modal transportation needs for people and goods, and estimates of available funding. The SCS sets forth a forecasted development pattern for the region, which, when integrated with the transportation network and other transportation measures and policies, will reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from passenger vehicles and light trucks to achieve the GHG reduction targets set by CARB. The SCS emphasizes the implementation of transit-oriented development and infill approaches to land use and housing complemented by transportation and transit systems to efficiently move people and goods. A portion of T-18 relates to alternative fuel and infrastructure planning efforts for on-road vehicles. SBCAPCD has collaborated with local coalitions, such as the Electric Drive 805 coalition, to secure grants for planning efforts and installation of electric vehicle charging stations and hydrogen fueling infrastructure in the Central Coast region.

The proposed project supports these efforts by incorporating sustainability features including a solar-ready roof, and installing Level 2 and Level 3 (DC Fast-Charging) chargers, which would have the capability to charge electric-powered employee vehicles and delivery vans. These design features promote and encourage the use of electric vehicles, which would reduce on-road criteria pollutant and GHG emissions. Additionally, the proposed project would create job opportunities in the City, which would attract a local workforce and increase the City's employment and jobs-to-housing ratio. The proposed project would install bike racks at the project site, which would encourage employees to use alternative modes of transportation when commuting to the project site. The proposed project would not conflict with transportation control measures.

Overall, the proposed project would not conflict with control measures in the 2022 Ozone Plan for meeting the state ozone standard. Therefore, the proposed project would be considered consistent with the 2022 Ozone Plan, and impacts would be less than significant.

b.

Construction

The proposed project would generate emissions of ROG, NO_x, CO, sulfur oxides (SO_x), PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5} during construction activities. Criteria pollutants would be generated from various construction sources including off-road equipment; mobile sources including worker vehicles, vendor trucks, and haul trucks; fugitive dust emissions during site grading and earth movement activities; and ROG off gassing emissions from paving and application of architectural coatings. Annual construction emissions for the proposed project are summarized in Table 6. As shown therein, annual construction emissions would be below SBCAPCD significance thresholds. Therefore, construction emissions would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria pollutants for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard, and impacts would be less than significant.

Table 6 Project Annual Construction Emissions Summary

Construction Year	Annual Emissions (tons/year)					
	ROG	NO _x	CO	SO _x	PM ₁₀ ^a	PM _{2.5} ^a
2026	<1	2	8	<0.1	<1	<1
2027	2	<1	2	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
Maximum Annual Emissions	2	2	8	<0.1	<1	<1
SBCAPCD Significance Threshold	25	25	N/A	25	25	25
Exceeds Threshold?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Source: NV5 2025 (Attachment 2)

Notes:

N/A = No Threshold established for this pollutant

^a Value includes emissions from exhaust and fugitive dust.

SBCAPCD does not consider a proposed project to have a significant impact on air quality, either individually or cumulatively, if operation of the project meets the significance criteria listed in the Santa Barbara Air Pollution Control District Air Quality Impact Guidelines listed in the *Setting* section at the beginning of this *Air Quality* section of the IS-MND. Because the proposed project's construction emissions would not exceed the applicable SBCAPCD construction significance thresholds, the proposed project's emissions would not be cumulatively considerable, and impacts would be less than significant.

Operation

Operation of the proposed project would generate criteria pollutant emissions from area sources including landscaping equipment, consumer products, and architectural coatings; mobile sources, including employee vehicles, delivery vehicles (vans and private carrier vehicles), and line-haul trucks; and operation of an emergency fire pump for maintenance and testing purposes. Table 7 summarizes the proposed project's unmitigated daily operational emissions occurring within SBCAPCD. As shown therein, the proposed project would exceed SBCAPCD's mobile source threshold for NOX. All other pollutants would be below SBCAPCD significance thresholds. Based on the NOX exceedance, the proposed project's operational emissions would be potentially significant, and mitigation measures are required.

Requiring the use of post-2014 engines would reduce emissions to less than significant thresholds. This is because post-2014 engines must comply with Tier 4 Final off-road diesel engine standards for emissions which reduce PM emissions by 90 percent or more compared to Tier 3 engines and reduce NOx emissions by up to 50 percent.¹⁴

Table 7 Unmitigated Project Operational Daily Emissions in SBCAPCD

Source Category	Daily Emissions (lb/day) ^a					
	ROG	NO _x	CO	Sox	PM ₁₀ ^b	PM _{2.5} ^b
Area	6	<0.1	8	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
Mobile-Employee Vehicles (Onsite)	1	<1	5	<0.1	5	1
Mobile-Employee Vehicles (Offsite)	3	2	20	<0.1	5	1
Mobile-Delivery Vans (Onsite)	1	<1	4	<0.1	<1	<0.1
Mobile-Delivery Vans (Offsite)	3	6	55	<0.1	32	8
Mobile-Private Carrier Vehicles (Onsite)	<1	<1	1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
Mobile-Private Carrier Vehicles (Offsite)	<1	<1	9	<0.1	4	1
Mobile-Line-Haul Trucks (Onsite)	<0.1	<1	<1	<0.1	<1	<0.1
Mobile-Line-Haul Trucks (Offsite)	<1	15	2	<0.1	22	6
Stationary (Fire Pump)	<1	<1	3	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
Project Emissions Total	16	26	106	<0.1	64	16
SBCAPCD Thresholds (All Sources)	240	240	N/A	N/A	80	N/A
Exceeds Threshold?	No	No	N/A	N/A	No	N/A
Project Mobile Emissions Total	10	26	96	<0.1	64	16
SBCAPCD Mobile Source Threshold	25	25		N/A		
Exceeds Threshold?	No	<u>Yes</u>				

Source: NV5 2025 (Attachment 2)

Notes:

N/A = No threshold established for these pollutants

^a Totals may vary due to rounding.

^b Value includes emissions from exhaust and fugitive dust.

Table 8, Table 9, and Table 10 summarize the proposed project's emissions from line-haul truck travel occurring outside the SBCAPCD region in other air districts, such as SJVAPCD, VCAPCD, and SLOAPCD. The proposed project's total line-haul emissions occurring outside the SBCAPCD region were compared to thresholds from SJVAPCD, VCAPCD, and SLOAPCD. As shown in these tables, line-haul truck emissions would be below the significance thresholds for these air districts. Therefore, haul truck emissions in SJVAPCD, VCAPCD, and SLOAPCD would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of

¹⁴ California Exhaust Emission Standards and Test Procedures for New 2011 and Later Tier 4 Off-Road Compression-Ignition Engines, California Air Resources Board, 10/25/2012

criteria pollutants for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard, and impacts would be less than significant.

Table 8 Unmitigated Project Line-Haul Truck Emissions in SJVAPCD

Source	Annual Emissions (tons/year)					
	ROG	NO _x	CO	SO _x	PM ₁₀ ^b	PM _{2.5} ^b
Mobile-Line-Haul Trucks (Offsite)	<0.1	2	<1	<0.1	3	<1
SJVAPCD Threshold	10	10	100	27	15	15
Exceeds Threshold?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Source: NV5 2025 (Attachment 2)

Notes:

^a SJVAPCD Air Quality Thresholds of Significance-Criteria Pollutants, March 2015

^b Value includes emissions from exhaust and fugitive dust.

Table 9 Unmitigated Project Line-Haul Truck Emissions in VCAPCD

Source Category	Daily Emissions (lb/day)					
	ROG	NO _x	CO	SO _x	PM ₁₀ ^b	PM _{2.5} ^b
Mobile-Line-Haul Trucks (Offsite)	<0.1	10	<1	<0.1	16	4
VCAPCD Thresholds ^a	25	25		N/A		
Exceeds Threshold?	No	No				

Source: NV5 2025 (Attachment 2)

Notes:

N/A = No threshold established for these pollutants

^a Ventura County Air Quality Assessment Guidelines, October 2003

^b Value includes emissions from exhaust and fugitive dust.

Table 10 Unmitigated Project Line-Haul Truck Emissions in SLOAPCD

Source Category				
	Daily Emissions (lb/day)			
	ROG + NO _x (Combined)	CO	DPM (Exhaust PM ₁₀)	Fugitive PM ₁₀
Mobile-Line Haul Trucks (Offsite)	10	<1	<1	16
SLOAPCD Daily Threshold (lb per day) ^a	25	550	1.25	25
Exceeds Threshold?	No	No	No	No
	Annual Emissions (tons/year)			
	ROG + No _x (Combined)	Source Category	ROG + No _x (Combined)	Source Category
Mobile-Line Haul Trucks (Offsite)	2	<1	<0.1	3
SLOAPCD Annual Threshold (tons per year) ^a	25	N/A	N/A	25
Exceeds Threshold?	No	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: NV5 2025 (Attachment 2)

Notes:

N/A = No threshold established for these pollutants

^a San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District, CEQA Air Quality Handbook, 2023

- c. The proposed project would also generate diesel particulate matter (DPM) during construction from off-road equipment and heavy-duty trucks, and during operations from diesel-powered line-haul trucks and fire pump usage during maintenance and testing. DPM is considered a toxic air contaminant by the CARB and SBCAPCD. The nearest sensitive receptor is the residence located approximately 1,400 feet south of the project site. The Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Technical Report used a conservative 400 feet distance because there appeared to be residential land use from ariel photos. However, it has since been confirmed that these buildings are owned by Santa Maria Valley Railroad and are not used as residential dwellings. CARB conducted health risk modeling for siting new sensitive land uses near various source categories (e.g., freeways/high-traffic roads and distribution centers). For freeways and high-traffic roads, CARB's analysis included a study for Southern California freeways that showed measured concentrations of vehicle-related pollutants decreased dramatically, approximately 70 percent, within approximately 300 feet of the freeways analyzed. Furthermore, CARB's study estimated an 80 percent drop-off in pollutant concentrations at approximately 1,000 feet from a distribution center (CARB 2005). Based on the health risk evaluation results of CARB's study, CARB recommends avoiding siting new sensitive land uses within 1,000 feet of a distribution center that accommodates more than 100 trucks per day, more than 40 trucks with operating transport refrigeration units per day, or where transport refrigeration unit operations exceed 300 hours per week.¹⁵ The proposed project's line-haul trucks would not operate TRUs at the project site as all goods would be dry goods and would not require cold storage. Additionally, CARB's data for distribution centers indicate that pollutant concentrations would be expected to have an approximately 60 percent drop-off at 400 feet.

Construction

Construction activities would be short-term and DPM and criteria pollutant emissions would cease upon construction completion. Based on this fact, combined with CARB observations that pollutant concentrations decrease significantly with distance from a source, such as a 400-foot distance between the project site and sensitive receptors as indicated in the CARB report identified above, the proposed project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial concentrations of criteria pollutants during construction, nor would it expose sensitive receptors to DPM concentrations that would be expected to result in health risks exceeding SBCAPCD's health risk thresholds for cancer risk and noncancer risk. Overall, the proposed project's construction emissions would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations, and impacts would be less than significant.

Operation

Operational activities would require up to 34 daily line-haul truck roundtrips, and occasional maintenance and testing of the diesel-powered emergency fire pump. Based on the low volume of daily truck trips compared to the CARB study's 100 trucks per day, and sporadic use of the emergency fire pump, combined with CARB observations that pollutant concentrations decrease significantly with distance from a source, such as a 400-foot distance between the project site and sensitive receptors, the proposed project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial concentrations of criteria pollutants during operations, nor would it expose sensitive receptors to DPM concentrations that would be expected to result in health risks exceeding SBCAPCD's health risk thresholds for cancer risk and noncancer risk. Overall, the proposed project's operational emissions would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations, and impacts would be less than significant.

¹⁵ CARB. 2005. Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective. April. Available at: <https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/defaultsource/ceqa/handbook/california-air-resources-board-air-quality-and-land-use-handbook-a-community-health-perspective.pdf>. Accessed: April 14, 2025.

d.

Construction

During construction of the proposed project, exhaust from equipment, activities associated with the application of architectural coatings and other interior and exterior finishes, and paving activities may produce discernible odors typical of most construction sites. Construction-generated emissions would occur intermittently throughout the workday and would dissipate rapidly with increasing distance from the source. Such odors would be, at worst, a temporary source of nuisance to adjacent uses, and would not affect a substantial number of people. The proposed project would be required to comply with SBCAPCD Rule 303—Nuisance, which prohibits the discharge of air contaminants or other material that would cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of persons. The proposed project would also use architectural coatings compliant with SBCAPCD Rule 323.1. Overall, these odors would not affect a substantial number of people because construction would be temporary and intermittent, and construction-generated emissions dissipate rapidly with increasing distance from the source. Therefore, odors associated with construction would not create a significant level of objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people, and impacts would be less than significant.

Operation

According to the Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Technical Report produced by NV5, SBCAPCD considers fast food restaurants, bakeries, and coffee roasting facilities to be land uses that may cause significant odor impacts. The proposed project is not associated with any of the aforementioned land uses. The project site would include various trash receptacles, which would be covered and properly maintained to prevent adverse odors. Overall, the proposed project's operations would not create a significant level of objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people, and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: The following mitigation measure is required.

AQ-1 Line-Haul Trucks Requirement. The proposed project owner or operators shall require the use of line-haul trucks with model years 2014 or newer that meet Tier 4 Standards for off-road diesel engines.

Effectiveness of Mitigation Measure: The EPA's Heavy-Duty Vehicle GHG Emissions and Fuel Efficiency Standards (adopted in 2011) established the first fuel efficiency and emissions standards for medium- and heavy-duty trucks starting with model year 2014. These standards require significant reductions in nitrogen oxides (NO_x), reactive organic gases (ROG), and DPM, and are designed to lower lifecycle emissions from heavy-duty truck fleets. By restricting line-haul vehicles to model year 2014 or newer, the project reduces a substantial portion of its potential emissions, particularly from haul and delivery trips that account for the bulk of mobile-source impacts. With implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-1, the proposed project's construction and operations would not exceed the SBCAPCD's current significance thresholds for criteria pollutants. Because the proposed project would not exceed SBCAPCD's significance thresholds for ozone precursors, ROG and NO_x, the proposed project would not cause or contribute to a violation of any California Ambient Air Quality Standards CAAQS or National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Mitigated Project Line-Haul Truck Emissions in SBCAPCD are found in Table 11. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

Table 11 Mitigated Project Line-Haul Truck Emissions in SBCAPCD

Source Category	Daily Emissions (lb/day) ^a					
	ROG	NO _x	CO	SO _x	PM ₁₀ ^b	PM _{2.5} ^b
Area	6	<0.1	8	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
Mobile-Employee Vehicles (Onsite)	1	<1	5	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
Mobile-Employee Vehicles (Offsite)	3	2	20	<0.1	5	1
Mobile-Delivery Vans (Onsite)	1	<1	4	<0.1	<1	<0.1
Mobile-Delivery Vans (Offsite)	3	6	55	<0.1	32	8
Mobile-Private Carrier Vehicles (Onsite)	<1	<1	1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
Mobile-Private Carrier Vehicles (Offsite)	<1	<1	9	<0.1	4	1
Mobile-Line-Haul Trucks (Onsite)	<0.1	<1	<1	<0.1	<1	<0.1
Mobile-Line-Haul Trucks (Offsite)	<1	13	2	<0.1	22	6
Stationary (Fire Pump)	<1	<1	3	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
Project Emissions Total	16	24	106	<1	64	16
SBCAPCD Thresholds (All Sources)	240	240	N/A	N/A	80	N/A
Exceeds Threshold?	No	No	N/A	N/A	No	N/A
Project Mobile Emissions Total	10	24	96	<1	64	16
SBCAPCD Mobile Source Threshold	25	25			N/A	
Exceeds Threshold?	No	<u>No</u>				

Source: NV5 2025 (Attachment 2)

Notes:

N/A = No threshold established for these pollutants

^a Totals may vary due to rounding.

^b Value includes emissions from exhaust and fugitive dust.

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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?		X		
b. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?				X
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?				X
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?			X	
e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?			X	
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?				X

Setting:

The following biological resources analysis is supported by a Biological Resources Assessment (BRA) produced by Kevin Merk Associates (KMA) on July 9, 2024. The BRA was peer-reviewed by Rincon Consultants as a part of the preparation of this Initial Study. The updated report, dated May 6, 2025, clarifies methodologies and findings, however, the conclusions of the original BRA remain unchanged. The complete BRA can be found in Attachment 3.

KMA conducted a comprehensive BRA by first performing a desktop review of natural resource databases, maps, literature, and online sources to identify special-status species potentially present in the project site. Aerial and street-view imagery, parcel data, and various mapping tools were used to evaluate site history and land use. On May 24, 2024, KMA conducted a field survey to assess habitat suitability for specifically special-status plants, documenting all observed species. No specific survey was conducted for animals, but animal

species observed during the plant survey were recorded. Habitat types were mapped using ESRI imagery and classified according to established ecological references. Additional data sources, including the National Wetlands Inventory, United States Geological Survey (USGS) topographic maps, and NRCS soil surveys, were used to assess hydrology and soil conditions. A detailed query of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) and other inventories identified species occurrences within a five-mile radius and broader regional context. Species were evaluated for potential presence based on habitat suitability, elevation, and known distributions, and categorized as “Present,” “Potential,” “Unlikely,” or “Not Expected.” Additional special-status biological resources were included based on KMA knowledge of the local area and other sources of species occurrence records including Calflora and The Cornell Lab of Ornithology.^{16,17}

Existing Soils, Hydrologic Features, and Habitat Types

The project site is located within the western limits of the City of Santa Maria, Santa Barbara County, in the California Central Coast region. The area experiences a Mediterranean climate, characterized by cool, rainy winters and dry summers, with average annual precipitation of approximately 13 inches and temperatures typically ranging from 40°F to 73°F^{18,19}. The 33-acre property is actively farmed and was planted with strawberries at the time of the May 2024 biological survey. Historical aerial imagery confirms that the project site and surrounding areas have been in agricultural use for over 50 years.²⁰

The project site is underlain by Corralitos loamy sand with 0–2% slopes, a deep, somewhat excessively drained soil formed in recent sandy alluvium. These soils are not classified as hydric and were observed to be loose and disturbed due to ongoing agricultural activities.²¹

No natural drainage features, wetlands, or riparian habitats were identified on the property. The National Wetlands Inventory and field observations confirmed the absence of such features, and no hydrologic connection exists between the project site and the Santa Maria River or other natural drainage systems in the region.²² Although artificial water features such as irrigation ponds and stormwater basins exist nearby, they are constructed in upland areas and are not jurisdictional under the Clean Water Act.

Land use on the project site is dominated by active agriculture, with no native habitats present. The field had been recently tilled and planted, with irrigation infrastructure in place. Vegetation was minimal, limited to scattered weedy species along the fenceline, such as ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*), and summer mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*). Areas outside the planting footprint, including an old well and a lone fan palm (*Washingtonia* sp.), were classified as ruderal, indicating disturbed, non-native conditions.²³

¹⁶ Calflora. 2024. Information on Wild California Plants for Conservation, Education, and Appreciation. Berkeley, California. <http://www.calflora.org/> (accessed June 2024).

¹⁷ The Cornell Lab of Ornithology. 2024. eBird. <https://ebird.org> (accessed September 2023).

¹⁸ Weather Spark. 2024. The Weather Year Round Anywhere on Earth. <https://weatherspark.com/> (accessed June 2024).

¹⁹ Western Regional Climate Center. 2024. Cooperative Climatological Data Summaries. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. https://wrcc.dri.edu/Climate/west_coop_summaries.php (accessed June 2024).

²⁰ Google Earth. 2024. Google Earth Pro Version 7.3.6.9345. 12/1985 to 6/2024.

²¹ Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). 2024. Web Soil Survey. National Cooperative Soil Survey, U.S. Department of Agriculture. <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/> (accessed June 2024).

²² United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). 2024. National Wetlands Inventory. U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. <http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/> (accessed June 2024).

²³ California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). 2024. California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR) System. <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/data/cwhr> (accessed June 2024).

Existing Special Status Plants and Animals

A review of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) and other sources identified numerous special-status species and sensitive habitats within a five-mile radius of the project site.^{24,25} However, due to the project site's long history of agricultural use and lack of native vegetation or natural features, the potential for these resources to occur onsite is limited. A Special-status Species Summary Table and map, found in Appendix C of the BRA, show the locations of special-status plants and animals recorded in the CNDDDB within five miles of the project site²⁶. The species that were determined to have potential to occur in the project site are described below.

Special-status plants, including La Graciosa thistle (*Cirsium scariosum* var. *loncholepis*) and several California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) 1B species, were evaluated. None were observed during the May 2024 survey, and the project site lacks suitable habitat due to regular tilling and planting^{27,28}. As such, no special-status plants are expected to occur onsite, and no impacts to botanical resources are anticipated.

No special-status animal species were observed incidentally during the survey, and very little wildlife activity was observed onsite or in the general area. KMA determined that there is no potential for fish to occur on the project site because there is no aquatic habitat on the project site. The CNDDDB identified 11 special status wildlife species within five miles of the project site,²⁹ and the background review, combined with KMA's knowledge of the area, was used to evaluate the potential for additional special status wildlife to occur onsite. KMA determined that there is no potential for fish to occur on the project site because there is no aquatic habitat on the project site. KMA determined that the following species have potential to occur on the project site:

- **California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*)** is a federal endangered and state rare species that is known to occur in the general area. It was considered unlikely to because there are no known breeding ponds in proximity.
- **California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*)** is a federally Threatened species and a CDFW Species of Special Concern which may disperse through the project site during the winter rainy season, although no aquatic habitat is present^{30,31}.
- **Monarch butterfly - California overwintering population 1 (*Danaus plexippus plexippus*)** is a Candidate for federal listing by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under the Endangered Species Act. The project site does not support any suitable woodland habitat nor were milkweed plants observed during the field survey to be used for overwintering or autumnal congregation, and is located too far from the coast to be used by monarch butterflies in the winter. Still, individuals could fly over the project site and potentially forage on agricultural weeds that may be present.
- A diverse group of special-status birds are known to occur in the project area, and several were determined to have potential to occur on the project site, primarily on a periodic basis while moving through the area during migration and foraging. A variety of common species that are protected under

²⁴ California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). 2024. California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB). Commercial version (accessed May 2024).

²⁵ United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). 2024. Threatened and Endangered Species Active Critical Habitat Report. ECOS Environmental Conservation Online System. <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/critical-habitat.html> (accessed May 2024).

²⁶ BRA found in Attachment 3 of this Initial Study

²⁷ California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). 2024. Special Vascular Plants, Bryophytes, and Lichens List. California Natural Diversity Database, Sacramento, California.

²⁸ California Native Plant Society (CNPS). 2024. Rare Plant Inventory. Online edition V9.5. Rare Plant Program. <http://www.rareplants.cnps.org> (accessed June 2024).

²⁹ Figure 5 CNDDDB Map of the BRA found in Attachment 3 of this Initial Study

³⁰ United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). 2005 (August 15). Revised Guidance on Site Assessments and Field Surveys for the California Red-legged Frog.

³¹ Bulger, J.B., N.J. Scott, and R.B. Seymour. 2003. Terrestrial activity and conservation of adult California red-legged frogs *Rana aurora draytonii* in coastal forests and grasslands. *Biological Conservation* 110:85-95.

the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and/or California Fish and Game Code could utilize the palm tree and the offsite hedgerow for nesting. The following species could potentially stopover or forage onsite:

- **American peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*)**
- **California gull (*Larus californicus*)**
- **California horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris actia*)**
- **Ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*)**
- **Prairie falcon (*Falco mexicanus*)**
- **Sharp-shinned hawk (*Accipiter striatus*)**
- Special-status bat species could forage over the project site but are unlikely to use the old palm tree for roosting.
 - **Pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*)** is a CDFW Species of Special Concern
 - **Silver-haired bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*)** is Sensitive
 - **Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*)** is a CDFW Species of Special Concern
 - **Western red bat (*Lasiurus frantzii*)** is a CDFW Species of Special Concern

The project site is not located within any designated critical habitat, although units for California red-legged frog, California tiger salamander, and La Graciosa thistle are mapped within five miles of the project site.³² No adverse effects to these critical habitats are expected.

Migratory birds and raptors protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act may use the lone onsite palm tree or nearby vegetation for nesting. However, the project site lacks large trees or dense vegetation typically used by nesting raptors, and regular agricultural disturbance reduces nesting suitability^{33, 34}.

Only one sensitive natural community, Southern Vernal Pool, is mapped within five miles of the project site.³⁵ However, no vernal pools or other sensitive communities were observed onsite, and the project site's soils and topography do not support such features.³⁶

Impact Discussion:

- a. The project would result in the loss of approximately 33 acres of agricultural lands that are highly disturbed and do not support any native habitat. No special status plants are expected to occur based on the lack of suitable habitat, but several special status wildlife species could occur onsite seasonally. Project effects to important biological resources may occur during the construction phase of the project but are unlikely to result in significant effects to larger populations given the disturbed nature of the project site, lack of native habitat, or stands of trees and shrubs.

A suite of special-status plant and animal species that are known to occur in the project site's vicinity were evaluated to determine their potential to occur at the project site. Not all species with potential to occur

³² United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). 2024. Threatened and Endangered Species Active Critical Habitat Report. ECOS Environmental Conservation Online System. <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/critical-habitat.html> (accessed May 2024).

³³ California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). 2024. California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR) System. <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/data/cwhr> (accessed June 2024).

³⁴ United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). 2021. Birds of Conservation Concern 2021. Migratory Bird Program.

³⁵ California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). 2024. Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program (VegCAMP). <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/VegCAMP> (accessed April and June 2024).

³⁶ Keeler-Wolf, T., D.R. Elam, K. Lewis, and S.A. Flint. 1998 (May). California Vernal Pool Assessment Preliminary Report. California Department of Fish and Game.

onsite would be directly or indirectly affected by the project. Evaluating the significance level of effects under CEQA involves an assessment of how each species would use the project site relative to its life history, what features may be used, and when they would occur relative to when project activities take place.

Construction

Individuals of several special-status animal species have potential to occur in the project impact area on a periodic basis. Most of these species would not be present in the work area, would be able to move away from construction activities, and would not be adversely affected by the project. Since the project site has numerous recorded occurrences of the CRLF, and no significant barriers to movement are present between suitable habitat areas, the project could impact frogs moving during the winter rain season. Should initial project activities commence in the winter when the ground is wet, individual CRLF could be directly affected by construction activities. Frogs may be injured or killed during grading and trenching/excavation, and therefore mitigation in the form of avoidance and protection measures are required. Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-4 aim to reduce such potentially significant impacts.

Special-status and common birds could utilize the one palm tree for nesting and be affected if the project's initial clearing and ground disturbance occurs during the nesting bird season (February 1 to August 31). Because the project site has no large trees and is within an actively farmed area with substantial on-going human disturbance, raptors are not expected to nest in the palm tree or immediately surrounding the project site. However, construction activities could directly impact nesting of special-status avian species as well as birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code. The effects of construction activities on nesting birds would be limited to the seasonal time period that birds nest in this area; if the nesting season is avoided, no adverse effects are expected. This is a potentially significant but mitigable impact. Mitigation measures BIO-5 and BIO-6 would be required to decrease project effects on nesting birds within the project site.

Operation

No rare plant species were found during the seasonally timed, focused botanical survey. The project site is composed of bare sandy soils and is actively farmed. Tilling and site preparation activities have removed all vegetation and the potential to support rare plants is low. The surveys occurred during the blooming period of the plant species on the target list, and rainfall conditions were normal and above normal during the last two years. If special status plants were present onsite, they would have been in identifiable condition. Therefore, the survey effort is considered to be conclusive that no special status plants are present onsite, and no additional surveys are recommended. Impacts to rare plants would be less than significant, and no mitigation is needed.

Other species that were determined to have potential to occur in the project site are mobile species that could use the project site for foraging or on a transitory basis, and would not be significantly affected by the project. Although their behavior could be disrupted, which is a type of effect, the level of effect would be less than significant under CEQA given the large expanses of open space in the region. The nocturnal foraging by special-status bat species would also not be affected, and no roosting habitat is present in the impact area. Therefore, impacts to mobile special-status species would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

The loss of approximately 33 acres of agricultural and ruderal habitats would be a less than significant effect on habitat loss for wildlife because no significant resources for wildlife are present in the small impact area and the site is surrounded by urban and agricultural development. Additionally, there is no designated critical habitat for federally listed species within or near the project site. The wildlife species that use the project site would be tolerant of human activities (such as common birds). In summary, the project would not substantially reduce species diversity or abundance; reduce the quality and quantity of nesting areas; limit reproductive capacity through loss of individuals or habitat; or interfere with natural processes that maintain the native habitats in nearby areas. Therefore, the operational effect, either directly or through

habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species would be less than significant.

- b. No riparian habitat or sensitive natural communities are present on the project site. No drainage features or wetland habitats are present onsite or in close proximity that could be indirectly affected by stormwater runoff. Thereby, there would be no impact to riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community.
- c. No wetlands with hydrophytic vegetation or vernal pools are present onsite. The sandy soils on the project site lack an underlying impervious sandstone or clay layer characteristic of other vernal pools in the region.³⁷ The project would not affect any naturally-occurring or potentially jurisdictional wetlands. No impact would occur.
- d. The proposed project would not affect the movement of native fish because all work would be conducted in upland areas outside of stream channels that could support fish. The project site would be fenced which would be a barrier to the movement of medium- to large-sized mammals. The fenced area would be adjacent to other developed or agricultural areas and there are currently no habitat resources on immediately adjacent sites that terrestrial wildlife could move to. As a result, the project would not substantially fragment, eliminate, or otherwise disrupt foraging areas and/or access to food sources. Additionally, the project would not substantially limit or fragment the geographic range of species, their movement, or dispersal corridors. Project impacts on the movement of native fish or wildlife, wildlife corridors or wildlife nursery sites would be less than significant.
- e. The City of Santa Maria oversees land use planning through implementation of the City's General Plan. Biological resources are specifically addressed in the General Plan Resources Management Element (RME).³⁸ The project would not conflict with the policies related to the protection of biological resources described therein. RME Goal 3, Biological Resources, describes Objective 3.1a to ensure that all development near sensitive habitats avoids significant impacts to these areas. Sensitive habitats known to occur within the City include Central Coast Riparian Scrub and the Coastal and Valley Freshwater Marsh; however, neither of these habitats are found within the project site. The element describes the vernal pool complex to the southwest of the Airport as a significant wildlife habitat area. This habitat is outside of the project site and there would be no direct effects on protected habitats or trees. The RME also describes Objectives 3.1.b and 3.1.c(2) to expand the area of the Urban Forest by increasing the City's tree canopy and to improve private landscaping by requiring commercial and industrial developments to maintain their property in accordance with City Landscaping Standards. The project would convert sparse agricultural land into a parcel with additional tree coverage and landscaped areas would comply with City Landscaping Standards. Thus, the project would be consistent with both RME objectives. Therefore, the project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances related to biological resources and impacts would be less than significant.
- f. No local, regional, or state conservation plans have been prepared for the project site or immediate area. The project site is not located in any Natural Community Conservation Plan area. Therefore, there would be no conflicts and no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: The following mitigation measures are required.

BIO-1 Initial Ground Disturbance Avoidance During Winter and Preconstruction Survey for Winter Months. Initial site disturbance and grading for construction shall be planned to occur outside the winter rain season in which CRLF move through upland habitats. Initial site grading shall occur between May 1st and October 31st to avoid impacts to frogs using upland habitat during the rainy season. In addition, Mitigation Measures BIO-2 through BIO-4 shall be implemented to avoid or minimize project impacts on other wildlife species in addition to CRLF. If construction must occur during winter months (from November 1 through April 30), a qualified biologist shall survey all areas proposed for temporary and permanent disturbance within 48 hours prior to initial ground disturbance to ensure no CRLF are present. If any CRLF

³⁷ Keeler-Wolf, T., D.R. Elam, K. Lewis, and S.A. Flint. 1998 (May). California Vernal Pool Assessment Preliminary Report. California Department of Fish and Game

³⁸ City of Santa Maria. 2001. General Plan Resource Management Element.

<https://www.cityofsantamaria.org/services/departments/community-development/planning-division/planning-policies-and-regulations/general-plan>.

are found in the work area, the animal shall be allowed to leave the work area under its own volition. If the frog does not leave the work area, work shall be delayed or halted in that location plus a 50-foot buffer until the frog can be captured and relocated to suitable habitat away from project impacts pursuant to authorization required by the USFWS. A report describing the methods and results of the survey shall be prepared by the biologist and submitted to the City within two weeks of the start of ground disturbance.

BIO-2 Prepare and Present a Worker Environmental Awareness Program. Prior to initiation of construction activities (including staging and mobilization), a qualified biologist shall conduct a Worker's Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training for all construction personnel. The training shall aid workers in recognizing special-status species, native birds, protected trees, ESHA, or other biological resources that may occur in the construction area. The specifics of this program shall include identification and habitats of special-status species with potential to occur in the project site, description of the regulatory status and general ecological characteristics of sensitive resources, review of the limits of construction, and an explanation of measures required to protect biological resources, with a special focus on CRLF. A fact sheet conveying this information shall be prepared for distribution to all contractors, their employers, and other personnel involved with construction. All employees shall sign a form provided by the trainer indicating they have attended the WEAP training and understand the information presented to them. The crew foreman shall be responsible for ensuring crew members adhere to the guidelines and restrictions designed to avoid impacts to biological resources. If new construction personnel are added to the project, the crew foreman shall ensure the new personnel receive the WEAP training before starting work..

BIO-3 High Visibility Construction Fencing. A high-visibility construction fence (i.e., orange protection fence) together with a silt fence, or an approved wildlife exclusion fence (i.e., ERTEC Triple-function E-fence), shall be erected along the southern, eastern, and western perimeter of the site. To prevent animals from getting under the fence, the bottom edge of the fence shall be trenched into the ground to a depth of at least six (6) inches, and the soil recompacted along either side. The fence shall remain in place throughout all construction and checked weekly by construction personnel for needed maintenance. The fence shall be inspected by construction personnel prior to the start of work each day in which at least one-quarter inch of precipitation has fallen within the prior 24 hours for CRLF that may have entered the work area or are disoriented on the outside of the fence. If any CRLF are found within the work area, the project biologist shall be contacted to inspect the site. If the animal(s) do not leave the site on their own volition, work shall be halted within 50 feet of the frog until the frog can be captured and relocated to suitable habitat away from project impacts pursuant to any authorization required by USFWS.

BIO-4 Prevent Entrapment of CRLF in Open Excavations and Trenches. During the period in which there are open trenches or excavations more than six (6) inches deep, such as during the excavation for building foundations or utility lines, escape ramps shall be installed so that CRLF and other wildlife that may have become entrapped have the ability to escape. Escape ramps shall consist of a 2:1 sloped soil area leading from the bottom to ground level. Alternatively, as a second option, a qualified biologist shall inspect open trenches each day prior to the start of work for entrapped animals. Alternatively, as a third option, all trenches/excavations can be completely covered with plywood, steel plates or similar material during overnight periods. If a CRLF individual is located in a trench by construction personnel, the qualified biologist shall be contacted immediately to assist with relocation upon authorization from USFWS. For common wildlife, the biologist shall capture and relocate the individual out of harm's way. Work shall be halted until the entrapped animal has been relocated.

BIO-5 Vegetation Removal and Grading Avoidance During Nesting Season. All initial site disturbance shall be limited to the time period between September 1 to October 31, if feasible, to avoid construction during the nesting season (February 1 to August 31) and to avoid the seasonal work restriction associated with the CRLF (November 1 to April 30, see Mitigation Measure BIO-1). Tree removal shall occur between September 1 and January 31 to avoid the nesting period. If vegetation removal and grading cannot feasibly be conducted during this time period, then Mitigation Measure BIO-6 shall be followed.

BIO-6 Nesting Bird Preconstruction Survey. For any initial construction (vegetation removal and grading) scheduled to start between February 1 and August 31, a qualified biologist shall conduct a preconstruction survey for nesting birds within a 250-foot buffer of project impact areas. The survey shall

be conducted within seven days before the initiation of construction activities occurring during this time period. During this survey, the qualified biologist shall search for birds exhibiting nesting behavior and inspect all potential nest substrates in the impact and buffer areas. Any nests identified shall be monitored to determine if they are active. If no active nests are found, construction may proceed. If an active nest is found within 50 feet of the construction area, the biologist, in consultation with the City and CDFW as appropriate, shall determine the extent of a buffer to be established around the nest. The buffer shall be delineated with flagging, and no work shall take place within the buffer area until the young have left the nest, as determined by the qualified biologist. The applicant shall submit to the City a report from the qualified biologist documenting the methods and results of the survey.

Effectiveness of Mitigation Measures: Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1 through BIO-6 during construction of the project would reduce potential impacts to special status biological resources including CRLF and nesting birds. Therefore, with implementation of these mitigation measures, impacts would be less than significant.

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?		X		
b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?		X		
c. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?			X	

Setting:

This section provides an analysis of the project's impacts on cultural resources. The term cultural resources includes historical and archaeological resources, as well as human remains. CEQA requires a lead agency determine whether a project may have a significant effect on historical resources (Public Resources Code [PRC], Section 21084.1). A historical resource is a resource listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing, in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), a resource included in a local register of historical resources, or an object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript that a lead agency determines to be historically significant (State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064.5[a][1-3]).

A resource shall be considered historically significant if it:

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
2. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

In addition, if it can be demonstrated that a project would cause damage to a unique archaeological resource, the lead agency may require reasonable efforts be made to permit one or all of these resources to be preserved in place or left in an undisturbed state. To the extent that resources cannot be left undisturbed, mitigation measures are required (PRC Section 21083.2[a], [b]).

PRC Section 21083.2(g) defines a unique archaeological resource as an archaeological artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that, without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it:

- a. Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and that there is a demonstrable public interest in that information;
- b. Has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type; or

- c. Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

The following cultural resources analysis is supported by a Phase I Cultural Resources Inventory (Phase 1) produced by Albion Environmental, Inc. (Albion) in May 2025. This study included: (1) archival and background research; (2) a search of records at the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS), Central Coast Information Center (CCoIC) at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History; (3) a Sacred Lands File search at the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC); (4) pedestrian survey of the project site; and (5) a report of findings and recommendations. The Phase 1 was peer-reviewed by Rincon Consultants as a part of the preparation of this IS and updated in July 2025. The Phase 1 can be found in Attachment 4.

The project site is located within the City's Archaeological Sensitivity Area 3, which is categorized as having a negligible sensitivity to contain archaeological resources. There are no known precolonial archaeological sites located within 1/2-mile radius of the project site, and the results of a pedestrian survey were negative for precolonial resources. The project site is more than 200 meters from a water course and is mapped as a Pleistocene to Holocene aged landform with marine and nonmarine sedimentary rocks. Given this data, it is our assessment that the overall sensitivity of the project site to contain precolonial sites is low. No cultural resource studies have been conducted within the project site and two cultural resource studies have been previously conducted within a 1/2-mile radius of the project site. Two isolated artifacts consisting of a historic-era glass bottle base (Isolate 1) and a historic-era ceramic sherd (Isolate 2) (Photographs 3 and 4; of the Phase 1) were identified during the survey. The two artifacts were located within a heavily plowed agricultural field, and therefore likely not representative of, or an indicator that there is, an intact historic-era archaeological deposit within the project site. The two isolated artifacts were documented, left in place, and do not require further consideration under CEQA.

Tribal cultural resources are discussed in Section 18, *Tribal Cultural Resources*.

Impact Discussion:

a-b. A search of records at the CCoIC indicated that no cultural resource studies have previously been conducted within the project site and two cultural resource studies had been previously conducted within a 1/2-mile radius of the project site. The records search identified no previously recorded cultural resources within the project site and no previously recorded resources within a 1/2-mile radius of the project site. Archival research and an aerial imagery review revealed no evidence of historic-era structures within the project site. The results of the NAHC Sacred Lands File were negative. After reviewing the record search results, Albion conducted an intensive pedestrian survey of the project on April 11, 2025. Throughout the project site, ground surface visibility was poor to fair, as much of the project was covered by vegetation. Visual inspection of the project site yielded two isolated historic-era artifacts consisting of one piece glass and one ceramic sherd. The pedestrian survey did not identify any precolonial cultural resources within the project site.

The project site is located within the City's Archaeological Sensitivity Area 3, which is categorized as having a negligible sensitivity to contain archaeological resources. There are no known precolonial archaeological sites located within 1/2-mile results of the project, and the results of pedestrian survey were negative for precolonial resources. The project is more than 656 feet from a water course and is mapped as a Pleistocene to Holocene aged landform with marine and nonmarine sedimentary rocks. Given this data, the overall sensitivity of the project to contain precolonial sites is low (Attachment 4).

However, potentially significant but previously unidentified cultural materials associated with the historic era may be located within the site. The compound of small structures visible on the southwest corner of the 1954 and 1967 aerial images indicates that the project once contained 20th century architectural resources with an unknown function, likely a farming outpost or other agricultural-related purpose. By 2002, the compound was razed. KMA was not able to identify detailed records of cutting or filling in the project site post-2002. Therefore, it is not possible to determine whether buried historic-era archaeological deposits associated with 20th century land use as depicted on historic maps were preserved or destroyed

by subsequent earth moving activities (e.g., agricultural plowing). Building foundations and refuse associated with this 20th century land use may still be present and intact beneath the plow zone. Therefore, there is a moderate probability that construction could impact historic-era subsurface archaeological features therefore this impact would be potentially significant. Compliance with Mitigation Measures CR-1 and with the City's Resource Management Element Policy 4 Historical Resources Implementation Program 1 that addresses inadvertent discovery of archaeological resources would be required to reduce impacts below a level of significance. Policy 4 specifically states, "if cultural resources are discovered during construction of a project, all work in the area of the find shall cease, and a qualified archaeologist shall be retained by the project applicant to investigate the find and to make appropriate recommendations. If human remains are encountered, all work shall cease and the Coroner's Office shall be contacted."³⁹

- c. No human remains were discovered within the project site during the Phase 1 survey. However, the discovery of human remains is always a possibility during ground disturbing activities. If human remains are found, the State of California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. In the event of an unanticipated discovery of human remains, the County Coroner must be notified immediately. If the human remains are determined to be of Native American origin, the Coroner will notify the NAHC, which will determine and notify a most likely descendant (MLD). The MLD has 48 hours from being granted site access to make recommendations for the disposition of the remains. If the MLD does not make recommendations within 48 hours, the landowner shall reinter the remains in an area of the property secure from subsequent disturbance. With adherence to existing regulations, the project would have a less than significant impact to human remains.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: The following mitigation measure is required.

CR-1 Extended Phase I Assessment. Prior to issuance of a grading permit and/or excavation activities an Extended Phase I (XPI) archaeological testing program shall be performed to determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits at the project site. The XPI may include mechanical backhoe trenching; use of a backhoe will allow for an efficient examination of the soil profile and an assessment of the potential for buried archaeological deposits to be present. This study shall be conducted under the direction of a qualified archaeologist. XPI testing shall be observed by a Native American monitor. An XPI conducted prior to project construction could reduce potential delays caused by unanticipated finds during construction by informing the applicant of the types of resources that may exist on the property. Should a subsurface archaeological resource be found during the XPI, impacts to the resource shall be avoided and preserved in place through project redesign. Avoidance and preservation in place may include capping the resources with fill soil. If project redesign is not feasible and impacts to the resource cannot be avoided, a Phase II significance evaluation shall be performed to determine if the resource is eligible for the CRHR and/or the NRHP. A qualified archaeologist shall prepare a Phase II work plan for review and approval. The Phase II work plan shall address the archaeological excavation, analysis of recovered materials, and report preparation necessary to evaluate the significance of the resource. If the Phase II significance evaluation determines the resource is eligible for the CRHR and/or the NRHP and is considered a significant resource, and impacts to the resource cannot be avoided, then a Phase III data recovery excavation shall be conducted to mitigate impacts to the resource. A qualified archaeologist shall prepare a Phase III work plan/research design for review and approval. The Phase III work plan/research design shall address the archaeological excavation, analysis of recovered materials to answer specific research

³⁹ City of Santa Maria. 2001. General Plan Resource Management Element.
<https://www.cityofsantamaria.org/home/showpublisheddocument/598/635488452761730000> (accessed July 2025).

questions, and technical report preparation necessary to recover, analyze, and interpret the archaeological data associated with the portion(s) of the resources impacted by the project.

Effectiveness of Mitigation Measure: Implementation of Mitigation Measure CR-1 would verify the presence or absence of historic-era resources and develop a data recovery plan for any identified resources. Therefore, with implementation of this mitigation measure, impacts to cultural resources would be less than significant.

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?			X	
b. Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?			X	

Setting:

The City of Santa Maria relies on a diverse energy mix for its electricity supply, with natural gas (47%), solar (28%), nuclear (11%), hydroelectric (8%), and wind (7%) as the primary sources. Santa Maria relies primarily on electricity and natural gas for household energy, and petroleum (gasoline and diesel) for most modes of transportation. The average monthly electricity usage for Santa Maria residents is 806 kWh, resulting in an average monthly bill of \$249 and carbon emissions of 319 pounds of CO₂. Energy conservation has become a prominent local, national and global issue. The City has been actively promoting renewable energy adoption, with solar power gaining traction among homeowners.⁴⁰ The proposed project would be required to comply with the California Building Standards Code (Title 24, California Code of Regulations) including Part 6 (Energy Code) and Part 11 (Green Building Standards or CALGreen).⁴¹ To comply with such code, the proposed project would implement a host of energy related measures including installing electric vehicle (EV) chargers, behind the meter solar and Battery Energy Storage System to meet or exceed City requirements. The property would also be an all-electric facility (no natural gas to be used).

Impact Discussion:

a.

Construction

During construction, energy would be used to power construction equipment as well as heat, cool, and light up on-site work spaces. The temporary impacts of energy consumption during construction are currently unregulated within the state. However, the proposed project would utilize construction equipment with Tier 3 or higher engines, which typically improve fuel efficiency and reduce energy consumption during construction.⁴² There are no unique project characteristics that would require the use of less energy-efficient construction equipment or methods. Therefore, impacts resulting from wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during the project's construction would be less than significant.

⁴⁰ WattBuy. 2024. The State of Electricity in Santa Maria. Available: <https://wattbuy.com/en/electricity-rates/california/santa-maria/>. Accessed March 2025.

⁴¹ CARB. 2025. Building Standards Code. Available: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/building-decarbonization/building-standards-code>. (accessed April 2025).

⁴² The Driller. 2007. What Tier 3 EPA Regulations Mean to Contractors. Available: <https://www.thedriller.com/articles/87099-what-tier-3-epa-regulations-mean-to-contractors>. (accessed April 2025).

Operation

During operation, energy would be used to power heating, cooling (refrigeration), lighting, appliances, loading equipment, and EV chargers. The warehouse would be required to meet Title 24 of the California Building Standards Code, with lighting and appliances conforming to the 2022 California Energy Code. Fixtures and appliances would comply with CALGreen Non-residential Mandatory Measures Sections 5.303.3. Compliance with such requirements would result in the individual project elements (e.g., building design, HVAC equipment) being consistent with State energy reduction policies and strategies. Additionally, the proposed project would implement sustainability and green building features including installation of EV chargers, solar panels, and a behind the meter Battery Energy Storage System to reduce consumption of non-renewable energy associated with facility operations. Fourteen EV chargers would be installed as part of the project, exceeding the City minimum requirements, with infrastructure (electrical conduit) installed to have an additional 40 EV ready stalls. There would also be 202 EV van stalls installed for charging electrical delivery vans. The building would include solar to offset electrical energy demand with a design capacity of 750 kilowatts direct current. To manage energy supply and demand, the project would include a behind the meter Battery Energy Storage System to store the on-site solar generated energy for later use with a design rating of 650 kilowatts direct current. The project would also exceed City requirements by not installing any natural gas infrastructure, effectively building an all-electric facility. All energy use would be essential to business operations, and energy would be conserved whenever possible. Therefore, impacts resulting from wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during the project's operation would be less than significant.

- b. As previously mentioned, the project would comply with the current Title 24 California Green Building Standards including the California Energy Code and CALGreen Non-residential Mandatory Measures. These standards promote sustainable and environmentally friendly building practices, including the conservation of natural resources and the use of energy-efficient materials and equipment. Compliance with state and local laws and standards regarding energy efficiency and renewable energy would ensure the project would have a less than significant impact on state or local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency. As mentioned above, the proposed project would implement sustainable building features that go above and beyond current code for energy efficiency. Therefore, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact on obstruction of a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency during operations.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: Implementation of the proposed project would not result in potentially significant environment impacts to energy. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

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? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.			X	
ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?			X	
iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?			X	
iv. Landslides?				X
b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?			X	
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?			X	
d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the most recent Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?			X	
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?				X
f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?		X		

Setting

This section includes the setting and impact analysis related to seismic activity, soils, erosion, and paleontological resources associated with the project. The proposed project would be located within the Santa Maria Valley, an east-west trending alluvial valley bounded to the north by the San Rafael Range and to the south by the Casmalia Range and the Solomon Hills.

Seismic Setting

Similar to much of California, the site is located in a seismically active region. The USGS defines active faults as those that have had surface displacement within the Holocene period (about the last 11,000 years). Surface displacement can be recognized by the existence of cliffs in alluvium, terraces, offset stream courses, fault troughs and saddles, the alignment of depressions, sag ponds, and the existence of steep mountain fronts. Potentially active faults are those that have had surface displacement during the last 1.6 million years, and inactive faults have not had surface displacement within that period. Several faults are within and near the site, including the San Andreas Fault, the Santa Maria Fault, and the Casmalia Fault. Located approximately 2.45 miles east of the project site, the Santa Maria Fault is the closest major fault to the project site, and is potentially active (California Department of Conservation 2024). As a result of its location and geologic setting, the City of Santa Maria is subject to a variety of seismic and geologic hazards, including fault rupture, strong ground shaking, liquefaction, and landslides.

Ground Shaking

Seismically induced ground shaking covers a wide area and is greatly influenced by the distance of the site to the seismic source, soil conditions, and depth to groundwater. The U.S. Geological Hazards Science Center, a division of the U.S. Geological Survey, has mapped out the intensity of ground-shaking throughout the Santa Barbara region under various earthquake scenarios. The most intense scenario mapped near Santa Maria assumes a 7.49 magnitude earthquake on the San Luis Range, northeast of the project site⁴³.

Liquefaction and Seismically Induced Settlement

Liquefaction is defined as the sudden loss of soil strength due to a rapid increase in soil pore water pressure resulting from seismic ground shaking. Liquefaction potential is dependent on such factors as soil type, depth to ground water, degree of seismic shaking, and the relative density of the soil. When liquefaction of the soil occurs, buildings and other objects on the ground surface may tilt or sink, and lightweight buried structures (such as pipelines) may float toward the ground surface. Liquefied soil may be unable to support its own weight or that of structures, which could result in loss of foundation bearing or differential settlement. Liquefaction may also result in cracks in the ground surface followed by the emergence of a sand-water mixture. The City of Santa Maria Safety Element notes that the liquefaction potential from ground shaking is generally low due to relatively deep groundwater levels that are ordinarily over 70 feet below the ground surface⁴⁴.

Landslides

Landslides result when the driving forces that act on a slope (i.e., the weight of the slope material, and the weight of objects placed on it) are greater than the slope's natural resisting forces (i.e., the shear strength of the slope material). Slope instability may result from natural processes, such as the erosion of the toe of a slope by a stream, or by ground shaking caused by an earthquake. Slopes can also be modified artificially by grading, or by the addition of water or structures to a slope. Development that occurs on a slope can substantially increase the frequency and extent of potential slope stability hazards.

Areas susceptible to landslides are typically characterized by steep, unstable slopes in weak soil/bedrock units which have a record of previous slope failure. There are numerous factors that affect the stability of the slope, including: slope height and steepness, type of materials, material strength, structural geologic relationships, ground water level, and level of seismic shaking. The project site is in a generally flat area. Therefore, the project site is not susceptible to landslides.

⁴³ USGS Earthquake Scenario Map (BSSC 2014)

⁴⁴ City of Santa Maria Safety Element 1995

Expansive Soils

Expansive soils can change dramatically in volume depending on moisture content. When wet, these soils can expand; conversely, when dry, they can contract or shrink. Sources of moisture that can trigger this shrink-swell phenomenon include seasonal rainfall, landscape irrigation, utility leakage, and/or perched groundwater. Expansive soil can develop wide cracks in the dry season, and changes in soil volume have the potential to damage concrete slabs, foundations, and pavement. Special building/structure design or soil treatment are often needed in areas with expansive soils. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey identified the project site to contain Corralitos loamy sand, which is not rated as hydric soil⁴⁵.

Erosion

Erosion is the wearing away of the soil mantle by running water, wind or geologic forces. It is a naturally occurring phenomenon and ordinarily is not hazardous. However, excessive erosion can contribute to landslides, siltation of streams, undermining of foundations, and ultimately the loss of structures. Removal of vegetation tends to heighten erosion hazards. The City of Santa Maria enforces grading and erosion control ordinances to reduce these hazards. The site is relatively level and the proposed project incorporates stormwater control measures to reduce the potential for soil erosion on the site.

Impact Discussion:

a.

- i. The project site is located approximately 2.45 miles southeast of the Santa Maria Fault, a potentially active fault per the California Department of Conservation Fault Activity Map of California⁴⁶. The City of Santa Maria is not located near an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Hazard Zone according to the ArcGIS Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones mapping. The nearest fault zone to the City of Santa Maria is the San Andreas Fault, approximately 50 miles from the project site. While the Santa Maria Fault is considered potentially active, it does not qualify as an Earthquake Fault Zone, as identified by the State Geologist under the Alquist Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones Act.⁴⁷ Impacts to the project site as a result of a rupture of a known earthquake fault would be less than significant.
- ii. The project site is located within Zone A of the Geologic Hazards Map, as identified in the Safety Element of the City's General Plan. Zone A is defined as all areas underlain by Holocene age alluvium and is considered the more hazardous of the two zones identified on the Geologic Hazards Map. The faults in the area are capable of generating earthquakes that could produce violent seismic ground shaking at the project site. The USGS Working Group on California Earthquake Probabilities estimate that each region of California will experience a magnitude 6.7 or larger earthquake in the next 30 years; however, the City of Santa Maria is located in a region of California with infrequent earthquakes that can cause strong shaking⁴⁸. Additionally, compliance with current CBC requirements would ensure that the proposed structure would be able to: (1) resist minor earthquakes without damage; (2) resist moderate earthquakes without structural damage, but with some non-structural damage; and (3) resist major earthquakes without collapse, but with some structural as well as non-structural damage. The construction of the project would meet the standard construction and seismic requirements per the California Building Code to ensure all new buildings would withstand the magnitude of earthquakes that could occur within the area. Additionally, a building permit and soils report would be required to be submitted to the City for review and approval prior to construction. Therefore, impacts from strong seismic ground shaking would be less than significant.

⁴⁵ Natural Resource Conservation Service Web Soil Survey, 2025

⁴⁶ California Department of Conservation Fault Activity Map, 2015

⁴⁷ California Department of Conservation Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones, 2018

⁴⁸ USGS Working Group on California Earthquake Probabilities, 2021

- iii. The project site is located in an area which contains Corralitos loamy sand, a soil which is not considered a hydric soil and is found on flat ground with little slope aspect, according to the NCRS Web Soil Survey. Additionally, based on the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone Maps and related information available from the from the California Department of Conservation's website, the City of Santa Maria is not located with a liquefaction hazard area due to relatively deep groundwater levels in the area. Therefore, impacts due to seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction, would be less than significant.
 - iv. The project site and surroundings are generally flat. There are no steep slopes located on or near the site. Therefore, there is no potential for landslides at the site. No impact would occur.
- b. Construction of the project would require earthwork activities to prepare the site for the construction of the industrial structures. The applicant would be required to adhere to conditions under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permit issued by the Regional Water Quality Board and prepare and submit a SWPPP to be administered throughout project construction. The SWPPP would establish BMPs which would ensure that potential water quality impacts during construction from soil erosion would be reduced to less than significant. Additionally, the project would include bioretention basins, which would manage onsite stormwater runoff. Appropriate erosion control and permanent site surface drainage elements per the latest California Building Code would also be implemented, which would reduce soil erosion upon completion and operation of the project. Therefore, impacts related to soil erosion or the loss of topsoil would be less than significant.
- c-d The Geologic Hazards Map of the City's General Plan Safety Element identifies the project site as containing expansive soils. Expansive soils can undergo significant volume change with changes in moisture content. They shrink and harden when dried and expand and soften when wet. Expansion and shrinkage of soils could damage the proposed project, as well as associated utilities on the project site. The project would be required to include a foundation that complies with the Uniform Building Code Section 1808.6.1, which requires the foundation to be designed to prevent uplift of the supported structure or resist forces exerted on the foundation due to soil volume changes, or the project would be required to remove expansive soil to the depth of constant moisture. Compliance with state regulations would reduce impacts related to unstable geological units or expansive soils, including potential direct or indirect risks to life or property, to less than significant.
- e. No septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems are proposed for the project. The City of Santa Maria requires sewer connections to the City's wastewater treatment system, by ordinance, per Title 8 of the Municipal Code. Therefore, soils on the project site would not be required to adequately support the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater systems. No impact would occur.
- f. The City's General Plan Safety Element identifies that the Santa Maria basin is located in an age sequence of sedimentary rocks. According to the City's General Plan Resource Conservation Element, the Santa Maria Valley is not considered to be a major archaeological or paleontological resource area as only a few sites have been recorded or discovered. Project-related ground disturbance would involve cut and fill activities for the proposed building foundations. Given the nature of the proposed project and existing site conditions, project-related ground disturbance (i.e., excavations) would extend to 12 feet in depth due to the replacement of the sewer main, which may impact fossiliferous deposits. Although project implementation is not expected to uncover paleontological resources, as geologic units with potential to yield fossils are generally deeper than proposed construction and excavation, a remote possibility for such resources to be uncovered exists. Therefore, impacts would be potentially significant and mitigation would be required.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: The following mitigation measure is required.

GEO-1 Unanticipated Discovery of Paleontological Resources

Paleontological Worker Environmental Awareness Program. Prior to the start of construction, a Qualified Professional Paleontologist, as defined by the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (SVP; 2010), or their designee shall conduct a paleontological WEAP training for construction personnel regarding the

appearance of fossils and the procedures for notifying paleontological staff should fossils be discovered by construction personnel. The WEAP shall discuss the potential to discover paleontological resources in the project site, legal obligations to protect paleontological resources, examples of paleontological resources that may be found in the project site, procedures in case a paleontological resource is discovered, and contact information for the Qualified Professional Paleontologist.

Unanticipated Discovery of Paleontological Resources. If a potential fossil is discovered during project construction, construction activity within 50 feet of the find shall cease until the discovery is examined by a Qualified Professional Paleontologist. If the find is determined to be significant, the Qualified Professional Paleontologist shall direct all mitigation measures related to paleontological resources consistent with the SVP (2010) standards, which may include, but would not be limited to: paleontological monitoring; fossil salvage, preparation, and curation; and reporting to summarize the paleontological mitigation efforts.

Effectiveness of Mitigation Measure: Implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1 would increase supervision during construction to ensure that, in the case of unanticipated fossil discoveries, the discovery of paleontological resources, and potential impacts to the discovered resources, are reported on and such discoveries are properly salvaged. This measure would apply to all phases of project construction and would reduce the potential for impacts to unanticipated fossils present on site by providing for the recovery, identification, and curation of paleontological resources. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

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?			X	
b. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?			X	

Setting:

The following GHG emissions analysis is supported by an Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Technical Report produced by NV5 on May 22, 2025. The technical report was peer-reviewed by Rincon Consultants as a part of the preparation of this IS. The complete Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Technical Report can be found in Attachment 2.

Climate change is the observed increase in the average temperature of the Earth's atmosphere and oceans along with other substantial changes in climate (such as wind patterns, precipitation, and storms) over an extended period of time. Climate change is the result of numerous, cumulative sources of GHGs. GHGs contribute to the "greenhouse effect," which is a natural occurrence that helps regulate the temperature of the planet. The majority of radiation from the Sun hits the Earth's surface and warms it. The surface in turn radiates heat back towards the atmosphere, known as infrared radiation. Gases and clouds in the atmosphere trap and prevent some of this heat from escaping back into space and re-radiate it in all directions. This process is essential to support life on Earth because it warms the planet by approximately 60° Fahrenheit. Emissions from human activities since the beginning of the industrial revolution (approximately 250 years ago) are adding to the natural greenhouse effect by increasing the gases in the atmosphere that trap heat, thereby contributing to an average increase in the Earth's temperature.

Greenhouse gases occur naturally and from human activities. Human activities that produce GHGs include the burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil and natural gas for heating and electricity, gasoline and diesel for transportation); methane from landfill wastes and raising livestock, deforestation activities; and some agricultural practices. GHGs produced by human activities include carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride. Emissions of GHGs affect the atmosphere directly by changing its chemical composition while changes to the land surface indirectly affect the atmosphere by changing the way in which the Earth absorbs gases from the atmosphere. Potential impacts of climate change in California may include loss in snowpack, sea level rise, more extreme heat days per year, more high ozone days, more large forest fires, and more drought years⁴⁹.

The following analysis is based on the Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Technical Report NV5 prepared on May 22, 2025.

⁴⁹ State of California. 2018. Indicators of Climate Change in California.
<https://oehha.ca.gov/sites/default/files/media/downloads/climate-change/report/2018caindicatorsreportmay2018.pdf>

Impact Discussion:

a.

Construction

Construction of the proposed project would result in temporary GHG emissions from off-road equipment and mobile sources, including worker vehicles, vendor trucks, and haul trucks. According to NV5's Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Technical Report, Construction GHG emissions would be amortized over a project lifetime of 25 years and added to the annual operational GHG emissions. Because construction emission sources would cease once construction is complete, construction emissions are considered short term. Proposed project construction emissions are summarized in Table 12.

Table 12 Project Construction Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Construction Year	GHG Emissions (MTCO _{2e}) ^a
2026	1,856
2027	272
Total Emissions	2,128
Amortized Construction Emissions (25 Years)	85
Source: NV5 2025 (Attachment 2)	

Operation

Project operation would generate long-term GHG emissions from direct and indirect sources. Direct sources consist of mobile sources and area sources related to landscaping equipment, and emergency fire pump usage during maintenance and testing activities. Indirect sources include electricity generation at offsite power plants associated with building electricity consumption and electricity consumption related to water and wastewater conveyance, and waste decomposition at landfills from solid waste generation. Table 13 summarizes the proposed project's unmitigated annual operational GHG emissions.

Table 13 Unmitigated Project Annual GHG Operational Emissions

Source Category	GHG Emissions (MTCO _{2e})
Area	3
Mobile-Employee Vehicles (Onsite)	76
Mobile-Employee Vehicles (Offsite)	783
Mobile-Delivery Vans (Onsite)	66
Mobile-Delivery Vans (Offsite)	3,768
Mobile-Private Carrier Vehicles (Onsite)	18
Mobile-Private Carrier Vehicles (Offsite)	531
Mobile-Line-Haul Trucks (Onsite)	36
Mobile-Line-Haul Trucks (Offsite) ^b	4,344
Electricity Consumption-Buildings	15
Water	25
Waste	58
Refrigerants	224
Stationary (Fire Pump)	6
Construction (amortized)	85
Project Total	10,038

Source: NV5 2025 (Attachment 2)

^b Offsite line-haul truck emissions include the total GHG emissions from haul truck travel within and outside Santa Barbara County

The proposed project would also incorporate sustainability features including a solar-ready roof and installation of Level 2 and Level 3 charging stations. These design features would promote and encourage the use of electric vehicles, which could lead to potential reductions in VMT and GHG emissions compared to the use of fossil-fueled vehicles. The proposed project would also install bike racks at the project site to encourage commuting to the project site via bicycles rather than vehicles.

In the absence of quantitative GHG thresholds and/or a qualified GHG reduction plan for use by a project to tier or streamline its environmental analysis, CEQA provides that a lead agency can rely on regulatory compliance to show a less-than-significant GHG impact if the project complies with or exceeds those programs adopted by CARB or other state agencies. The most applicable regulatory plans and policies for reducing GHG emissions from the proposed project include:

- The 2022 CARB Scoping Plan, which outlines a path to carbon neutrality by 2045, with interim targets for 2030, and includes strategies for decarbonizing buildings, improving vehicle efficiency, reducing VMT, and transitioning to clean electricity;
- The 2023 SBCAG RTP/SCS, which identifies land use strategies to reduce GHG emissions from transportation sources in line with CARB-mandated regional targets.

Although the proposed project would generate GHG emissions from construction and operations, it includes design features and land use efficiencies that support the goals of these plans. Specifically, the proposed project would be located near transit corridors and services consistent with the SCS, helping reduce dependence on single-occupancy vehicle trips; would incorporate energy-efficient systems and appliances, consistent with Title 24 and CALGreen standards and the CARB Scoping Plan; and would not result in excessive energy or fuel consumption relative to its scale or location.

Furthermore, the proposed project would not conflict with or impede implementation of the state's GHG reduction targets under AB 32, SB 32, or Executive Order B-55-18 (carbon neutrality by 2045). As such, and in consideration of the measures and policies discussed above, the proposed project's GHG emissions would not result in a significant impact on the environment. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant. While not required to reduce GHG emission, incorporation of Mitigation Measure AQ-1 would further reduce GHG emissions as shown in Table 14.

Table 14 Mitigated Project Annual GHG Operational Emissions

Source Category	GHG Emissions (MTCO _{2e})
Area	3
Mobile-Employee Vehicles (Onsite)	76
Mobile-Employee Vehicles (Offsite)	783
Mobile-Delivery Vans (Onsite)	66
Mobile-Delivery Vans (Offsite)	3,768
Mobile-Private Carrier Vehicles (Onsite)	18
Mobile-Private Carrier Vehicles (Offsite)	531
Mobile-Line-Haul Trucks (Onsite) ^b	36
Mobile-Line-Haul Trucks (Offsite) ^{a, b}	4,334
Electricity Consumption-Buildings	15
Water	25
Waste	58
Refrigerants	224
Stationary (Fire Pump)	6
Construction (amortized)	85
Project Total	10,028

Source: NV5 2025 (Attachment 2)

Notes:

^a Offsite line-haul truck emissions include the total GHG emissions from haul truck travel within and outside Santa Barbara County

^b Line-haul truck emissions decrease slightly due to Mitigation Measure-AQ-1

b.

Consistency with State and Local Plans

State Plans

AB 32, SB 32, and AB 1279 outline the state's GHG emissions reduction targets for 2020, 2030, and 2045, respectively. In 2008 and 2014, CARB adopted the 2008 Scoping Plan and the First Update to the Climate Change Scoping Plan, respectively, as a framework for achieving the emissions reduction targets in AB 32^{50,51}. These plans outline a series of technologically feasible and cost-effective measures to reduce statewide GHG emissions. CARB adopted California's 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan⁵² in November 2017 as a framework to achieve the 2030 GHG reduction goal described in SB 32, which is to reduce statewide GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 and to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. Most recently, the 2022 Scoping Plan was adopted in September 2022 and outlines how the state will achieve carbon neutrality and reduce statewide GHG emissions 85 percent below 1990 levels by 2045.

⁵⁰ CARB. 2008. Climate Change Scoping Plan. December 11. Available at: https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/classic/cc/scopingplan/document/adopted_scoping_plan.pdf. Accessed: April 14, 2025.

⁵¹ CARB. 2014. First Update to the Climate Change Scoping Plan: Building on the Framework. Pursuant to AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. May. Available at: https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/classic/cc/scopingplan/2013_update/first_update_climate_change_scoping_plan.pdf. Accessed: April 14, 2025.

⁵² CARB. 2017. California's 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan. January 20. Available at: https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/classic/cc/scopingplan/scoping_plan_2017.pdf. Accessed: April 14, 2025.

The 2022 Scoping Plan focuses on key sectors which will need to transition to alternative clean technology and fuels to support decarbonization. Relevant sectors for the proposed project include Transportation Sustainability, Clean Electricity Grid, and Sustainable Manufacturing and Buildings.

The Transportation Sustainability section focuses on transitioning to zero-emission vehicles and reducing VMT by promoting electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, improving public transit, and encouraging active transportation. It also emphasizes developing infrastructure for renewable fuels and hydrogen, and implementing urban planning and incentives to reduce VMT. The proposed project would support transition goals of this key sector by installing Level 2 and Level 3 (DC Fast-Charging) chargers, which would have the capability to charge electric-powered employee vehicles and delivery vans. Additionally, the proposed project would include a 4,993 square-foot fleet service center. The onsite fleet service center would be used to maintain the proposed project's delivery vans, which would substantially reduce the need for delivery vans to be serviced at offsite vendors, thus reducing ancillary VMT and associated GHG emissions. Furthermore, MM-AQ-1 would also lead to reductions in GHG emissions through newer and more efficient line-haul trucks.

The Clean Electricity Grid section aims to transition to 100% renewable and zero-carbon electricity by increasing solar and wind capacity, developing energy storage solutions, and enhancing grid reliability. The proposed project would support transition goals of this key sector by having a solar-ready roof, which would allow for future installation of a solar photovoltaic system that would generate electricity.

The Sustainable Manufacturing and Buildings section focuses on decarbonizing industrial processes and building operations by implementing energy efficiency measures and transitioning to renewable energy sources. It promotes electrification of industrial equipment, use of low-carbon materials, energy-efficient building designs, retrofits, and transitioning to electric appliances. The proposed project would support transition goals of this key sector by using electric appliances for building heat, and would not install a natural gas connection to the project site. The proposed project would not utilize any onsite combustion equipment such as forklifts. Any onsite equipment would be electric.

Overall, the proposed project would support the 2022 Scoping Plan strategies for reducing GHG emissions from transportation, electricity grid, and buildings, and would not conflict with the 2022 Scoping Plan's goals for reducing GHG emissions.

Local Plans

While the City has not adopted a qualified greenhouse gas reduction plan pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5(b)(1), SBCAG's 2050 RTP/SCS was designed to help the county achieve its GHG emissions reduction target. The 2050 RTP/SCS, particularly the SCS, involves land use assumptions that identify general locations, residential densities, and building intensities in the region. Although local jurisdictions retain land use authority under SB 375, Connected 2050 must make land use assumptions and allocate future growth accordingly. These assumptions were developed with local planning staff, and aimed to 1) intensify residential and commercial uses near transit and multi-modal options to reduce VMT and 2) address the jobs/housing imbalance by providing more housing in the jobs-rich South Coast and more jobs in North County, which includes the City of Santa Maria. The City of Santa Maria is the largest city in Santa Barbara County, is forecasted to have the highest population increase over the 2017-2050 period, and is expected to have an increase of 10,900 jobs over this period as well. The proposed project would be consistent with the 2050 RTP/SCS by creating job opportunities in North County.

The 2050 RTP/SCS developed goals to implement the Connected 2050 plan. The proposed project's consistency with relevant goals, objectives, and policies of the 2050 RTP/SCS is discussed in Table 15. As shown therein, the proposed project would be consistent with goals and policies to support implementation of the 2050 RTP/SCS.

Table 15 Consistency of Proposed Project with SBCAG 2050 RTP/SCS

Connected 2050 RTPSCS Goals and Policies		Project Consistency
Goal Area 1: Environment		
Policy 1.1 Land Use		
Policy 1.1.2: Promote better balance of jobs and housing to reduce long-distance commuting by means of traditional land use zoning, infill development, and other, unconventional land use tools, such as employer-sponsored housing programs, economic development programs, commercial growth management ordinances, average unit size ordinances and parking pricing policies.		The proposed project would be consistent with this policy as it would be an infill project. It would create job opportunities in the City, and support reducing long-distance commuting as the project site is near residential neighborhoods.
Policy 1.1.5: Identify, minimize and mitigate adverse environmental impacts and, in particular, require mitigation of traffic impacts of new land development through on-site and related off-site improvements for all models of transportation, including incentives to encourage the use of alternative transportation modes.		The proposed project would be consistent with this policy as it would install onsite Level 2 and Level 3 charging stations which would support the use of electric vehicles. Additionally, the project site would install bike racks to encourage the use of bicycling to the project site. The proposed project would also include an onsite fleet service center to maintain delivery vans, thus reducing the need to send delivery vans for maintenance at offsite vendors.
Policy 1.2 Air Quality		
Policy 1.2.1: Lead to reductions in greenhouse gas and criteria pollutant emissions, consistent with the air quality goals of the region, including targets for greenhouse gas emissions from passenger vehicles in 2020 and 2035 as required by Senate Bill 375 (SB 375).		The proposed project would be consistent with this policy as it would include a solar-ready roof, which would allow for future installation of photovoltaic systems. Additionally, the proposed project would support efforts to reduce GHG emissions from passenger vehicles by installing Level 2 and Level 3 charging stations.
Policy 1.3 Alternative Fuels and Energy		
Policy 1.3.1: Encourage the use of alternative fuels, and the application of advanced transportation and energy technologies to reduce vehicular emission production and energy consumption.		The proposed project would be consistent with this policy as it would install onsite Level 2 and Level 3 charging stations, which would support the use of electric vehicles.
Policy 1.3.2: Promote renewable energy and energy conservation, consistent with applicable federal, State, and local energy programs, goals, and objectives.		The proposed project would be consistent with the policy as it would have a solar-ready roof, which would allow for future installation of photovoltaic systems.
Goal Area 2: Mobility and System Reliability		
Policy 2.3 Alternative Transportation Modes		
Policy 2.3.1: Encourage alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle trips and the use alternative transportation modes to reduce vehicle miles traveled and increase bike, walk and transit mode share.		The proposed project would be consistent with this policy as it would install onsite Level 2 and Level 3 charging stations, which would support the use of electric vehicles. Additionally, the project site would install bike racks to encourage the use of bicycling to the project site.
Source: Source: NV5 2025 (Attachment 2)		

Overall, the proposed project would not conflict with the 2022 Scoping Plan or SBCAG 2050 RTP/SCS policies for reducing GHG emissions. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions, and this impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: Implementation of the proposed project would not result in potentially significant environmental impacts to GHG emissions. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

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?			X	
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?			X	
c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				X
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?		X		
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?				X
f. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?			X	
g. Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?			X	

Setting:

The project site is relatively flat, vacant land (formerly used for agricultural production). Some farming operations use hazardous materials such as pesticides. An oil and gas well is located in the southwestern portion of the project site and was plugged abandoned in the 1950s (Hope Well #1, AP I#0408302417). In addition, hazardous materials are used by numerous businesses surrounding the project site. Typical uses that utilize hazardous materials in their operations include, but are not limited to, hospitals, dry cleaners, automotive repair facilities, exterminators, medical labs, photographic studios, manufacturing facilities, and gasoline stations.

Hazardous Material Release Case Listings

The following databases, compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, were reviewed in March 2025 for known hazardous materials contamination at the project site:

- The State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) GeoTracker database⁵³
- SWRCB's list of solid waste disposal sites with waste constituents above hazardous waste levels outside the waste management unit⁵⁴
- The California Department of Toxic Substances Control's (DTSC) EnviroStor database⁵⁵
- The Superfund Enterprise Management System (SEMS) database⁵⁸
- CalEPA Active Cease and Desist Orders and Cleanup Abatement Orders⁵⁶
- List of hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action pursuant to Section 25187.5 of the Health and Safety Code⁵⁷

According to the SWRCB online GeoTracker database and DTSC online EnviroStor database, the project site is not associated with hazardous material release cases.^{53 55} The project site is not listed in any other Cortese List data resources available via CalEPA or in the USEPA Superfund Enterprise Management System (SEMS)/Envirofacts database.^{57,58} There are no Brownfields, SEMS, or Toxics Release Inventory hazardous materials/wastes sites within 1,000 feet of the project site.⁵⁷

The following known release sites are within 1,000 feet of the project site:⁵⁵

- Unocal Former Orcutt Oil Refinery (1550 West Stowell Road): This site is located adjacent to the eastern boundary of the project site and is associated with an open Cleanup Program case for a former oil refinery as of May 2012. The listed potential contaminants of concern are petroleum hydrocarbons, and the listed potential media of concern are soil and groundwater. Depth to groundwater at this site has been reported between 35 and 145 feet below ground surface (feet bgs) and, as of 2016 has a westerly flow direction. Soil impacted with total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) in the diesel range (TPHd) and motor oil range (TPHo) remains below seven feet bgs as near as approximately 10 feet east of the project site and the site currently has a land use covenant⁵³ (Case No. SL0608331151). Soil remediation occurred in 2014, 2018 and 2023. In 2023, additional remediation at the Former Orcutt Refinery site removed over 7,300 tons of petroleum-impacted soil during redevelopment activities. Post-excavation sampling confirmed that residual contamination was generally below commercial/industrial screening levels, and no further action was deemed necessary by the Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services.⁵⁹

⁵³ California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). 2025. GeoTracker. <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/map/>. (accessed March 2025).

⁵⁴ SWRCB. 2025. List of solid waste disposal sites identified by Water Board with waste constituents above hazardous waste levels outside the waste management unit. <https://calepa.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2016/10/SiteCleanup-CorteseList-CurrentList.pdf>. (accessed March 2025).

⁵⁵ California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). 2025. EnviroStor. . (accessed March 2025).

⁵⁶ California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA). 2025. List of "active" CDO and CAO from Water Board. <https://calepa.ca.gov/sitecleanup/corteselist/>. (accessed March 2025).

⁵⁷ CalEPA. 2025. List of hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action pursuant to Section 25187.5 of the Health and Safety Code, identified by DTSC. <https://calepa.ca.gov/sitecleanup/corteselist/section-65962-5a/>. (accessed March 2025).

⁵⁸ United States Environmental Protection Agency. 2025. Superfund Enterprise Management System (SEMS). . (accessed March 2025).

⁵⁹ Santa Barbara County Public Health Department, 2023. Former Orcutt Refinery. https://documents.geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/regulators/deliverable_documents/2892499625/20167%2011_23.pdf (accessed June 2025).

- Unocal 37 Line (E Street at West Stowell Road): This site is located approximately 730 feet west of the western boundary of the project site and is associated with a closed Cleanup Program case for a former oil pipeline along E Street as of February 2013. The listed potential contaminants of concern are petroleum hydrocarbons, benzene, toluene, and xylenes, and the listed potential medium of concern is soil⁶⁰ (Case No. T10000004583). Soil remediation occurred in 2006 where 1,875 cubic yards of contaminated soil and sludge from pipeline excavated and disposed of at Santa Maria Landfill NHIS Program.⁶⁰

Potential Regional Hazards

The project site is located within the Santa Maria Valley Oil Field. As previously stated, there is one plugged oil and gas well located in the southwestern portion of the project site. Additionally, there are 12 plugged oil and gas wells located within 1,000 feet of the project site.⁶¹

There are no hazardous liquid pipelines located within 1,000 feet of the project site.⁶² There are no landfills located within 1,000 feet of the project site.⁶³ There are no current landfill, airport, chrome plating, publicly owned treatment works, Department of Defense, or bulk fuel storage terminal/refinery sites with per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) orders located within 1,000 feet of the project site.⁶⁴

Historical Resource Review

A review of historical aerial photographs and topographic maps available online indicates that the project site has been developed for agricultural purposes (including row crops), with at least one associated structure, since approximately 1957. Railroad tracks have been present adjacent to the south of the project site since at least 1957, and may have previously traversed the southeastern corner of the project site onto the eastern adjacent property.⁶⁵

Existing Conditions Field Survey Approach

Rincon performed a reconnaissance of the project site on May 1, 2025. The purpose of the reconnaissance was to observe existing project site conditions and to obtain information about existing environmental conditions in connection with the project site. As part of this field survey, Rincon attempted to identify if there were any obvious indicators of prior or current existence of hazardous materials and to evaluate the likelihood of the use, store, generate, transport, or disposal of hazardous materials and hazardous waste at the project site and adjacent properties.

The site reconnaissance was conducted according to the following methodology:

- Observing the project site from public thoroughfares;
- Observing the adjacent properties from public thoroughfares;
- Walking the project site, and;

⁶⁰ State Water Resources Control Board. 2025. GeoTracker. UNOCAL 37 LINE (T10000004583). https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/profile_report.asp?global_id=T10000004583 (accessed June 2025).

⁶¹ California Geologic Energy Management Division. 2025. "Well Finder." Available at: <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/doggr/wellfinder/>. (accessed March 2025).

⁶² United States Department of Transportation (USDOT). 2025. "National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS) Public Map Viewer." Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA). Available at: <https://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov/PublicViewer/>. (accessed March 2025).

⁶³ California Department of Resources, Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle). 2025. "Solid Waste Information System (SWIS) Facility/Site Search." Available at: <https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/Site/Search>. (accessed March 2025).

⁶⁴ SWRCB. 2025. "GeoTracker PFAS Map." Available at: https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/map/pfas_map. (accessed March 2025).

⁶⁵ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC. 2025. "Historic Aerials by NETR Online." Last modified: 2023. Available at: <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>. (accessed March 2025).

- Observing the project site from paved and unpaved roads.

The field survey identified the presence of an agricultural water well and asphalt and concrete debris from a former on-site structure in the southeastern corner of the project site. Railroad tracks were observed adjacent to the south of the project site.

Impact Discussion:

a.

Construction

Construction of the proposed project would temporarily increase the regional routine transport, use, and disposal of construction-related hazardous materials and petroleum products (e.g., diesel fuel, lubricants, paints and solvents, and cement products containing strong basic or acidic chemicals). These materials are commonly used at construction sites. The construction of the project would utilize equipment such as lifts, backhoes, mixers, compactors, compressors, dozers, dumpers, excavators, forklifts, generators, graders, loaders, tractors, pavers, rollers, scrapers, trenchers, and welders. Construction activities that involve hazardous materials would be governed by several agencies and regulations, including CalEPA, the California Department of Transportation, Cal/ Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), and DTSC. Some notable legislation regulating the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials during project construction includes the OSHA Standard 1917.156,⁶⁶ the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act,⁶⁷ and the Hazardous Waste Control Law.⁶⁸ Best Management Practices would be in place to ensure the lawful and proper storage and use of these materials, as well as the disposal of excess hazardous materials and hazardous construction waste. The construction activities must comply with State and federal regulations for the proper transport, use, storage, and disposal of excess hazardous materials and construction waste. Additionally, regulatory measures would require adherence to waste discharge permit requirements to prevent potential water quality impacts from spills or runoff of hazardous materials used during construction. Pursuant to compliance with these existing regulations, project construction would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. This impact would be less than significant.

Operation

Maintenance and upkeep of the proposed buildings, landscaping, and operational equipment would occasionally require the use of various solvents, cleaners, paints, oils/fuels, and pesticides/herbicides. In addition, potential hazardous materials, such as fuel, paint products, lubricants, solvents, and cleaning products, could be used and/or stored on-site. Trucks accessing the facilities on-site may contain oil and gasoline to power their engines, which could have the potential to result in minor releases of such substances through drips or leaks from truck loading areas.

Like many industrial enterprises, the proposed on-site fleet service center for the maintenance and repair of delivery vans includes a small, controlled storage room that is marked as a hazardous waste area. This area would be restricted as to the quantity and type of materials stored here subject to all applicable requirements as set by governing authorities. Certified Unified Program Agencies, along with the Santa

⁶⁶ OSHA. 1970. OSHA Act of 1970. Available at: <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/oshact/completeoshact>. (accessed March 2025).

⁶⁷ United States Department of Transportation. 2025. How to Comply with Federal Hazardous Materials Regulations. Available at: <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/regulations/hazardous-materials/how-comply-federal-hazardous-materials-regulations>. (accessed March 2025).

⁶⁸ DTSC. 2025. Defining Hazardous Waste. Available at: <https://dtsc.ca.gov/defining-hazardous-waste/> (accessed March 2025).

Barbara County Environmental Health Department, regulates businesses that handle hazardous materials, and establishes programs for managing waste.

As described above, the project's daily uses and operations are not anticipated to be associated with major hazardous materials, and would not create unusually high quantities of hazardous waste. In addition, potential hazardous materials, such as fuel, paint products, lubricants, solvents, and cleaning products, could be used and/or stored on-site. However, due to the limited quantities of these materials anticipated to be used by the project, they would not be hazardous to the public or environment.

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration governs the transportation of hazardous materials in all modes of transportation in the Code of Federal Regulations and develops regulations and standards for the classifying, handling and packaging of over 1 million daily shipments of hazardous materials within the United States to ensure safe and secure movement of hazardous materials to industry and consumers by all modes of transportation.⁶⁹ Further, Chapter 6.95 of the California Health and Safety Code requires businesses to prepare a Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMBP) if the business uses, handles, or stores hazardous material and/or waste, or extremely hazardous materials in quantities greater than or equal to 55 gallons for a liquid, 500 pounds for a solid, 200 cubic feet of any compressed gas, or the threshold planning quantities of an extremely hazardous substance.⁷⁰ HMBPs include facility information, a Hazardous Materials Inventory Statement, an Emergency Response Plan, and an Emergency Response Training Plan.

If the proposed project would require the storage of hazardous materials at quantities greater than the threshold provided in Chapter 6.95 of the California Health and Safety Code, the proposed project would include implementation of an HBMP to minimize the potential for operation of the proposed project to result in upset or accidental conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment.

Pursuant to compliance with these existing regulations, project operation would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. This impact would be less than significant.

b.

Construction

As identified in the CalGEM Well Finder database, an oil and gas well is located in the southwestern portion of the project site and was abandoned and plugged in the 1950s (Hope Well #1, API #0408302417).⁷¹ In conjunction with the project, the applicant proposes to re-abandon the oil and gas well in coordination with CalGEM and in accordance with current CalGEM standards. However, there could be potential release of petroleum hydrocarbons into the soil and air through re-abandonment work, which could 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.

However, prior to soil disturbance at the project site, the applicant would notify CalGEM of planned subsurface work. Per City standards, the applicant is required to provide a 10-foot radius no-build easement surrounding the well head. In addition, the abandoned oil well present on-site would be evaluated by CalGEM to determine if the abandoned oil well requires additional safety features and if proposed improvements allow un-impeded access to the well. Section 1723 of the CCR, Plugging and Abandonment-General Requirements, CalGEM Construction Site Well Review Program per PRC Section

⁶⁹ USDOT. 2025. Hazardous Materials Regulations. Available: <https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/standards-rulemaking/hazmat/hazardous-materials-regulations> (accessed March 2025).

⁷⁰ California Health and Safety Code Division 20, Chapter 6.95, Article 1, Section 25501(c)(5). Available: <https://calepa.ca.gov/hazardous-materials-business-plan-program/#:~:text=California%20State%20Law:%20California%20Health%20and%20Safety%20Code> (accessed March 2025).

⁷¹ California Department of Conservation. 2025. Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) well finder. Available: <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/doggrr/wellfinder/> (accessed March 2025).

3208.1,⁷² and the local permitting agencies would also be consulted to evaluate whether any specific preconstruction requirements would apply to oil wells located within the project construction footprint.

If required by CalGEM (oil well abandonment work, including sealing off oil and gas bearing units, pressure grouting, etc.) actions must be performed by a State-licensed contractor under the regulatory oversight and approval of CalGEM. This re-abandonment work would be conducted prior to conducting subsurface activities that disturb soil, and documentation of the work completed would be provided to the applicant. Undocumented oil wells if observed within the project site would also be subject to this requirement.

Pursuant to compliance with these existing regulations, project construction would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment. This impact would be less than significant.

Operation

Operation of the proposed project, including a proposed 4,993 square foot, 3-bay fleet service center for maintenance of the van fleet, would include the brief storage and transport of traditional consumer products that could contain minimal amounts of hazardous substances such as petroleum products, pesticides, fertilizer, paints, solvents, and cleaning products. These products and substances could create a potential for explosion or accidental release of hazardous materials into the environment. The project is a last-mile logistics facility and would accept and sort packages and then send them out for delivery, resulting in short storage times for these products at the facility. The potential for release of hazardous materials is considered to be negligible given that all materials would be prepackaged in limited quantities for retail consumption and use, and any release would be small and likely to be easily contained.

Transportation, storage, and disposal/recycling of hazardous products are extensively regulated at the local, State, and federal levels. Santa Barbara County maintains a Hazardous Materials Business Plan, which requires businesses handling, using, or storing reportable amounts of hazardous materials to submit inventories, site maps, and other documentation relating to those materials to the Certified Unified Program Agencies (Santa Barbara County), and to develop appropriate employee training and emergency procedures. The proposed project would be reviewed by Santa Barbara County for hazardous material use, safe handling, and storage of materials.

As with any commercial operation, hazardous wastes produced on-site would be subject to requirements associated with accumulation time limits, proper storage locations and containers, and proper labeling. Additionally, for removal of hazardous waste from the site, hazardous waste generators are required to use a certified hazardous waste transportation company, which must ship hazardous waste to a permitted facility for treatment, storage, recycling, or disposal. Any hazardous materials on-site would be handled in accordance with all applicable regulations, including containment, reporting, and remediation requirements, in the event of a spill or accidental release. Compliance with applicable regulations would ensure that potential hazardous material impacts associated with the operation of the proposed project would be less than significant. No mitigation is required.

- c. There are five schools in a 1.5 mile radius and one planned school 0.5 mile from the project site, however, there are no schools within 0.25 mile. Thus, the proposed project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. No impact would occur.
- d. As described above, based on a review of the listed databases compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, the project site is not listed with regulatory agencies as associated with hazardous materials release cases; therefore, the project is not included on a list of hazardous material sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. However, the project site may contain hazardous materials associated with the project site's former agricultural use. Soils at the project site may contain

⁷² CalGEM. 2025. "Construction Site Well Review Program." Available at: https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/for_operators/Pages/construction_site_review.aspx (Accessed March 2025).

contaminants such as pesticides and metals. Additionally, there is one plugged oil and gas well located in the southwestern portion of the project site. Soils surrounding the plugged oil and gas well may contain petroleum hydrocarbons. Railroad tracks are also present adjacent to the south of the project site and may have previously traversed the southeastern corner of the project site. Soils along the southern boundary and in the southeastern corner of the project site may contain contaminants associated with railroad use such as petroleum hydrocarbons, pesticides, and metals.

Two known release sites are located within 1,000 feet of the project site. Based on the information available for the closed Unocal 37 Line case (localized soil impacts only) and distance to the project site (approximately 700 feet away), this known hazardous materials site is not anticipated to pose an environmental concern to the project site.⁷³ The former Orcutt Oil Refinery located at 1550 West Stowell Road (adjacent property to the east), has a Cleanup Program Site case designated 'Open – Site Assessment' and has a land use covenant.⁵³ Based on the information reviewed for this case, TPHd-, TPHo-, and dioxin-impacted soil remains at the site approximately 10 feet east of the project site. According to the quarterly groundwater monitoring report from April 2016, petroleum hydrocarbons and benzene were detected in groundwater above the Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Department Site Mitigation Unit Investigation Levels.⁷³ Depth to groundwater at the former Orcutt Refinery site ranges from approximately 35 to 145 feet bgs.⁵³ Given the westerly flow direction of the groundwater, the presence of petroleum hydrocarbons and benzene in groundwater may pose an environmental concern for the project site. Based on the Project Description, the maximum planned depth of excavation during project construction activities (12 feet), groundwater is not expected to be encountered during construction activities at the project site. With the potential presence of impacted soil at the project site, there is a potential for grading and construction workers to be exposed to contaminants (e.g., total petroleum hydrocarbons, volatile organic compounds, and metals) via impacted dust and/or soil. Therefore, construction activities could create a significant hazard to the public or the environment. This impact would be potentially significant and mitigation is required.

The risk of hazardous materials creating a significant hazard to the public or the environment would primarily occur during construction of the project if on-site contamination is disturbed. Once the project is operational, the contaminated media would mostly be covered and would no longer pose a risk. Therefore, operational impacts would be less than significant.

- e. The project site is located within two miles of the Santa Maria Public Airport. Based on the Santa Barbara County Association of Government's Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, the project site is located outside of the Santa Maria Public Airport's six safety zones. A review of the Plan determined that the project site is not within any noise contour area that would expose workers to unacceptable noise levels or any identified safety area that could pose a hazard to workers.⁷⁴ The project site is not located in the Airport Approach zone and would not need to implement any regulations to protect the safety of people working in the project area.⁷⁵ Therefore, no impact to a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area associated with an airport would occur.
- f. The proposed project does not include any characteristics or features that would interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. The project would not result in the closure of any roads during construction or operation. All access and circulation routes to and from the project site would be developed in compliance with local and state safety regulations and all improvements would be required to comply with applicable California Fire and Building Code requirements pertaining to emergency access. The proposed project would also be required to comply with the Santa Barbara County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazards Mitigation Plan.⁷⁶ Therefore, impacts that would impair the implementation of or

⁷³ Padre Associates, Inc. 2016. First Quarter 2016 Groundwater Monitoring Event, Former Orcutt Refinery, 1550 West Stowell Road, Santa Maria, Santa Barbara County, California (SMU-2 No. 20167). April 2016.

⁷⁴ Santa Barbara County Association of Governments. 2023. SBCAG Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. Available at: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/30eeb151f7f84ab39a6e4bfe6901799f>. (Accessed April 2025).

⁷⁵ Santa Maria, City of. 2024. Zoning Map. Available at: <https://www.cityofsantamaria.org/home/showpublisheddocument/10037/638563088414970000>. (accessed March 2025)

⁷⁶ Santa Barbara, County of. 2023. Multi-Jurisdictional Hazards Mitigation Plan. Available at: <https://content.civicplus.com/api/assets/ebc26205-512c-48d7-bca7-cfa0a18faa24> (accessed March 2025).

physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan would be less than significant.

- g. The project site is primarily surrounded by urban development or intensive agriculture on all sides, and is not located adjacent to a wildland area. The project site is not located in a moderate, high, or very high Fire Hazard Severity Zone in a Local or a State Responsibility Area.⁷⁷ According to the Safety Element in the City's General Plan, the Santa Maria Valley is not generally susceptible to high wildland fire risks; however, an abundance of weeds along roadsides and vacant lots make urban locations potentially hazardous to wildland fire. The Safety Element calls for an enforceable weed abatement program to reduce risks wherever structures are present along with enforcement of fire code and building setbacks.⁷⁸ The proposed project would be fully developed with landscape maintenance for all landscaped areas and would comply with fire code and building setbacks. Therefore, impacts from the exposure of people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: The following mitigation measures are required.

HAZ-1 Soil Management Plan. Prior to commencement of construction and grading activities at the project site, the project applicant shall retain a qualified environmental consultant (Professional Geologist or Professional Engineer) to prepare a Soil Management Plan (SMP) for the project site. The SMP shall address:

1. On-site handling and management of impacted soils or other impacted wastes (e.g., stained soil, and soil with solvent or chemical odors) if such soils or impacted wastes are encountered, and
2. Specific actions to reduce hazards to construction workers and off-site receptors during the construction phase.

The plan must establish engineering controls and soil management practices to protect construction worker safety, protect the health of future workers and visitors, and prevent the off-site migration of contaminants from the project. These measures and practices shall include, but are not limited to:

- Stockpile management, including stormwater pollution prevention and the installation of best management practices.
- Proper disposal procedures of contaminated materials.
- Investigation procedures for encountering known and unexpected odorous or visually stained soils, other indications of hydrocarbon piping or equipment, and/or debris during ground-disturbing activities.
- Monitoring and reporting.
- An environmental health and safety plan for contractors working at the project site that addresses the safety and health hazards of each phase of site construction activities with the requirements and procedures for employee protection.
- The environmental health and safety plan shall outline proper soil handling procedures and health and safety requirements to minimize worker and public exposure to hazardous materials during construction.

⁷⁷ California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. 2024. Fire Hazard and Severity Zone Viewer. Available at: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/6a9cb66bb1824cd98756812af41292a0> (accessed March 2025).

⁷⁸ Santa Maria, City of. 1995. General Plan Safety Element. Available at: <https://www.cityofsantamaria.org/home/showpublisheddocument/612/636100759000270000> (accessed March 2025).

The City shall review the SMP and have the authority to propose and include modifications prior to finalization of the SMP. The City shall review the final SMP prior to issuance of grading permits. The project applicant shall implement the SMP during demolition, grading, and construction at the project site.

Effectiveness of Mitigation Measures: Implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZ-1 during grading and construction of the project would reduce potential hazardous material impacts at the project site below applicable thresholds of significance by ensuring proper use, handling, and transportation of impacted materials and/or site management practices in accordance with regulatory standards, thereby reducing potential impacts to construction worker safety and the health of future workers, occupants, and visitors. Therefore, with implementation of this mitigation measure, impacts would be less than significant.

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 ground water quality?			X	
b. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?			X	
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:			X	
i. result in a substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;			X	
ii. substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;			X	
iii. create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or			X	
iv. impede or redirect flood flows?			X	
d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?				X
e. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?			X	

Setting:

The project site is located within the Santa Maria Watershed, one of the largest coastal drainage basins in California, and includes all areas tributary to the Cuyama, Sisquoc, and Santa Maria Rivers. The Santa Maria Watershed overlies the Santa Maria River Valley Groundwater Basin (SMRVGB), covering more than 280 square miles in the southwestern corner of San Luis Obispo County and the northwestern corner of Santa Barbara County. The project site is within the SMRVGB; the SMRVGB is adjudicated, which specifies that monitoring shall be sufficient to determine groundwater conditions, land and water uses, sources of water supply, and the disposition of all water supplies in the SMRVGB.

Impact Discussion:

a.

Construction

As stormwater flows over a construction site, it can pick up sediment, debris, and chemicals and transport them to receiving water bodies. Additionally, soil disturbance during project construction would increase the potential for erosion and sedimentation. Construction of the project would involve activities such as clearing, grading, utility installation or removal, construction of buildings, and the installation of landscaping, which would result in the generation of potential pollutants such as silt, debris, chemicals, paints, and other solvents with the potential to adversely affect water quality. As such, short-term water quality impacts have the potential to occur during construction activities in the absence of any measures to minimize water quality.

As part of the Clean Water Act §402, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) established regulations under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program to control direct storm water discharges from construction activities disturbing one acre or more of land. In California, SWRCB administers the NPDES permitting program and is responsible for developing NPDES permitting requirements. Because project construction would disturb more than one acre of land, construction activities would be required to obtain coverage under the statewide NPDES Construction Stormwater General Permit (Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ). Obtaining coverage under the Construction Stormwater General Permit requires the creation and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that would include Best Management Practices (BMPs) to prevent polluted stormwater runoff during construction and decommissioning. Construction BMPs would include, but are not limited to, erosion and sediment control BMPs designed to minimize erosion and retain sediment on-site, as well as good housekeeping BMPs that would prevent spills, leaks, and off-site discharge of construction debris and waste. In addition, Section 8-12A.08 of the City's Municipal Code requires implementation of BMPs to reduce stormwater pollutants during construction.

With required regulatory compliance, project construction would not violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality. Impacts from project construction would be less than significant.

Operation

Substantial water quality impacts would not occur from project operation because the proposed project would not result in further ground disturbance and use of bio-retention basins to convey and infiltrate stormwater from a 95th percentile storm event and use permeable pavers to reduce site runoff would capture and treat on-site pollutants. The project would also be required to comply with Section 8-12A.04 that incorporates the Post-Construction Stormwater Management Requirements for Development Projects in the Central Coast Region (Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, Resolution No. R3-2013-0032). These standards are implemented with the post-construction requirements for the NPDES and Waste Discharge Requirements General Permit for Discharges from Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (Phase I MS4). The proposed project would fulfil the post-construction stormwater pollutant treatment requirements of the Phase I MS4 permit through the implementation of the proposed stormwater basin.

With installation of the proposed stormwater basin and compliance with applicable regulations, operation of the proposed project would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality. This impact would be less than significant.

- b. According to the City's Urban Water Management Plan, the City's water supply is available to meet projected demand and is expected to reliably meet the projected demands through 2040.⁷⁹ As such, the proposed project would not substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level.

The City of Santa Maria derives water from multiple supply sources including local groundwater, purchased water from the State Water Project, associated return flows recaptured from the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin, assigned rights to water from the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin, and assigned rights to augmented yield from Twitchell Reservoir. The Santa Maria Groundwater Basin has a total storage capacity of greater than 14,900,000 acre-feet (AF).⁸⁰ According to the 2023 Annual Hydrologic Report, the municipal groundwater pumpage in 2022 for the City was 10,919 AFY and 7,648 AFY for 2023.⁸¹ The Santa Maria River Valley Groundwater Basin was adjudicated in 2008, and as part of the adjudication agreement, the City is entitled 14,300 acre-feet per year of groundwater from the Santa Maria River Valley Groundwater Basin. Even with these management restrictions, the City anticipates having sufficient supply to reliably meet projected water demands in Santa Maria through 2045.⁸² The proposed Project's water use is estimated to be approximately 25 acre-feet per year (AFY), based on Santa Barbara County's average water demand factors for industrial AFY/1,000 square feet and including water use for landscaping. This equates to 0.17 percent of the City's yearly groundwater entitlement. Current water use for row crops is estimated at 61 AFY based on a typical row crop average water use of 1.86 acre-feet annually per acre (33 acres x 1.86 = 61 AFY).⁸³ This equates to a 36 AFY reduction in water use annually.

The project would receive groundwater in accordance with the City's groundwater pumping restrictions and use nearly a quarter of the current water usage. The project includes two stormwater basins to capture project surface runoff on site for percolation back into the aquifer. The greatly reduced water usage combined with proposed percolation of on-site stormwater would ensure the project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies, interfere with groundwater recharge, or otherwise impede groundwater management of the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin. Therefore, the project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin. This impact would be less than significant.

- c. i-iv.

Construction

The project site is generally flat, with minimal elevation change across the site, and does not contain any streams, rivers, or other drainage features that may cause flooding. Alteration of the project site would occur during construction. The project would require 86,820 cubic yards of cut and 237,492 cubic yards of import fill during grading. Approximately 150,672 net cubic yards of soil would be required for the project.

Given the project site's relatively flat topography, erosion during construction is unlikely to be substantial and with implementation of the BMPs required for the SWPPP, discussed in section a. above, would control erosion and siltation during construction. The implementation of BMPs required for the SWPPP would prevent or control on- and off-site run-off or flooding during construction. The construction and operation of the proposed stormwater basin would also prevent flooding on- and off-site during construction by

⁷⁹ Santa Maria, City of. 2015 Urban Water Management Plan. Available: <https://www.cityofsantamaria.org/home/showpublisheddocument/15109/636008185115470000> (accessed March 2025)

⁸⁰ Central Coast Hydrologic Region Santa Maria River Valley Groundwater Basin. 2004. Available: https://water.ca.gov/-/media/DWR-Website/Web-Pages/Programs/Groundwater-Management/Bulletin-118/Files/2003-Basin-Descriptions/3_012_SantaMariaRiverValley.pdf (accessed March 2025)

⁸¹ 2022 Annual Report of Hydrogeologic Conditions, Water Requirements, Supplies and Disposition. 2023. Available: file:///C:/Users/mlara/Downloads/2022_SMVMA_Annual_Report_FINALUpdated_20230519.pdf (accessed March 2025)

⁸² 2022 Annual Report of Hydrogeologic Conditions, Water Requirements, Supplies and Disposition. 2023. Available: file:///C:/Users/mlara/Downloads/2022_SMVMA_Annual_Report_FINALUpdated_20230519.pdf (accessed March 2025)

⁸³ [Water Resources of Santa Barbara County 2000](#)

capturing project runoff to prevent flooding or impact flood flows. Implementation of the BMPs required for the previously discussed SWPPP and construction of the stormwater basin would reduce pollutants in stormwater and not contribute runoff water in exceedance of existing or planned capacities on or off the project site or impede or redirect flood flows during construction. Impacts would be less than significant.

Operation

Consistent with the City Municipal Code Chapter 8-12A and the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board's stormwater regulatory requirements, the project would construct bio-retention basins to convey and infiltrate stormwater from a 95th percentile storm event and use permeable pavers to reduce site runoff. The proposed stormwater basin would control erosion during operation by capturing stormwater runoff, subsequently capturing sediment in the basin if erosion did occur on-site. The stormwater basin would be engineered to accommodate stormwater flow on the project site, designed to control the flow rate of on-site runoff so that it would not exceed pre-development conditions and comply with mandatory requirements for the NPDES for siltation and sediment control. Additionally, a Stormwater Control Plan would be prepared. Implementation of these requirements would minimize potential impacts related to on-site erosion, siltation, flooding, and runoff; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

- d. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the project site is located outside of a flood hazard area.⁸⁴ Therefore, the proposed project would not impede or redirect flood flows. No impact would occur. The project site is located approximately 10 miles east of the Pacific Ocean and therefore is not subject to flood or tsunami related events. No large bodies of water exist in proximity to the project site which could subject the project site to a seiche. The closest body of water to the project site is the Santa Maria River, located approximately 3.5 miles northeast of the project site. Because the proposed project is located outside of flood hazard, tsunami, and seiche zones, the project would not risk release of pollutants due to project inundation. No impact would occur.
- e. The Basin Plan, published and managed by the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), is the water quality control plan applicable to the project area. The Basin Plan designates beneficial uses and water quality objectives for waters of the state, including surface waters and groundwater. It also includes programs of implementation to achieve water quality objectives.⁸⁵ The project would be required to comply with the Central Coast RWQCB's stormwater regulatory requirements and other water control plans intended to manage water quality and groundwater supply. As stated in Threshold 10(a), project construction would involve soil-disturbing activities that would effectively be controlled through implementation of erosion control measures and BMPs as part of the required SWPPP. Impacts to water quality during operation would effectively be controlled through the implementation of the proposed stormwater basin. Because the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the Basin Plan, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: Implementation of the proposed project would not result in potentially significant environment impacts hydrology or water quality. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

⁸⁴ Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). 2025. FIRM Flood Map.

<https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search?AddressQuery=santa%20maria> (accessed March 2025)

⁸⁵ Regional Water Quality Control Board. (RWQCB) 2025. Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board Available: <https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/> (accessed March 2025)

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?				X
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?			X	

Setting:

The project site is located within the West Stowell Specific Plan area. It is zoned Planned Development/Commercial Manufacturing / Agricultural Overlay Zoning District (PD/CM-AG) and a land use designation of HCM. The project site is bordered on the north by West Stowell Road. The land north of West Stowell Road is in unincorporated Santa Barbara County. There is an operating freight rail track abutting the south boundary of the site. Neighboring land uses include agricultural, industrial, and commercial uses, including a Driscoll's packaging facility, a vacant parcel currently being developed as an agriculture box warehouse, an animal shelter, trucking facility, and various farms.

Impact Discussion:

- a. The proposed project would be compatible with surrounding development, including an existing Driscoll's packaging facility and a new warehouse currently under construction adjacent to the site. These facilities are comparable in type and scale to the proposed project. The project would be confined to a single 33.3-acre project development site and would not obstruct access or bisect any established neighborhoods. Therefore, it would not physically divide an established community. There would be no impact.
- b.. The project would be consistent with the existing land use designation of HCM. According to the City of Santa Maria West Stowell Specific Plan, the Heavy Commercial Manufacturing (HCM) Land Use designation of the Specific Plan permits activities which manufacture and retail on the same site, as well as other heavy commercial uses which may be land extensive or require transport of materials by heavy truck. It is the intent of the West Stowell Specific Plan to use this designation along with an agricultural overlay as a means of safeguarding and encouraging agriculturally-related industrial activity adjacent to existing agricultural uses.⁸⁶ Additionally, the West Stowell Specific Plan designates the zoning of the project site as Planned Development/Commercial Manufacturing/Agricultural Overlay (PD/CM-AG), which is the zoning that corresponds to the Specific Plan's HCM Land Use. The project is not a use permitted by right in the Commercial/Manufacturing/Agricultural Overlay Zoning District (PD/CM-AG) , however, under the West Stowell Specific Plan similar uses are permitted subject to obtaining a conditional use permit according to the procedures set forth in Chapter 35 of the Santa Maria Zoning Ordinance. A use may be found to be similar if the Planning Commission finds that the project: (i) falls within the intent and purpose of the Commercial/Manufacturing/Agricultural Overlay Zoning District (PD/CM-AG); (ii) will not be obnoxious or detrimental to the public welfare; and (iii) is compatible with adjoining land uses.

⁸⁶ Santa Maria, City of. 1994. West Stowell Specific Plan. Available: <https://www.cityofsantamaria.org/home/showpublisheddocument/6437/635530503431800000>. (accessed April 2025).

The project is consistent with the Planned Development/Commercial Manufacturing/Agricultural Overlay Zoning District (PD/CM-AG) as it would not impact or displace any existing nearby agricultural facilities or operations as discussed in Section 2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources. As such, the project will not be obnoxious or detrimental to the public welfare. The proposed project would be compatible with surrounding agricultural operations and would not introduce land use conflicts (such as noise, dust, or access issues) that might negatively impact adjacent parcels. The proposed facility would be comparable in size and massing to both the adjacent Driscoll's packaging facility and the new warehouse currently under construction. Its scale and form are consistent with existing and planned development in the immediate vicinity. If the Planning Commission determines a conditional use permit is appropriate and makes the findings discussed above, the project would not conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect and the impact would be less than significant. Based on this analysis, the impact upon any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environment impact would be less than significant with the Planning Commission making that finding.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: Implementation of the proposed project would not result in potentially significant environment impacts to land use and planning. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

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?				X
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?				X

Setting:

Within the City, the primary resources suitable for mining and conservation are sand, rock, and oil. The Santa Maria River channel is considered to be a valuable mineral resource. The river contains the largest resources of Portland cement concrete-grade aggregate and almost 90 percent of the available alluvial sand and gravel resources in the Santa Barbara-San Luis Obispo County region. Mining has occurred along the Santa Maria and Sisquoc Rivers since the early 1900s.⁸⁷

The project site is not located near areas suitable for mining mineral resources. While the site contains a plugged and abandoned oil well, indicating historical resource extraction, current conditions do not support ongoing mining or drilling. The nearest mineral resource zone, the Santa Maria River, is classified as a Mineral Resource Zone #2 (MRZ-2), indicating the presence or high likelihood of significant mineral deposits. The river is approximately seven miles northwest of the project site. Since the site is not within an MRZ and is in a developed area, it is not practical for mineral extraction or mining.

Impact Discussion:

a-b. The project site is located within the Santa Maria Valley Oil Field. There is one plugged oil and gas well located in the southwest portion of the project site and no identified active oil wells within the project site.⁸⁸ Additionally, there are 12 plugged oil and gas wells located within 1,000 feet of the project site.

Construction of the proposed project would occur on a site designated for industrial development where no mineral extraction activities currently take place. While the site is within a designated Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ-2), there are no known mineral resources of regional or state value, nor any locally important mineral resource recovery sites on or near the project site. Given these conditions, the project would not result in the loss of availability of any known mineral resources. Therefore, construction of the project would have no impact related to mineral resources.

Operation of the project would not interfere with existing or future mineral resource extraction, as the site is not planned or designated for such uses. The project would introduce a warehouse facility, which is consistent with the area's zoning and general plan designation. Additionally, the operation of the facility would not preclude mineral extraction nearby. Since the site is not an active or planned mineral resource

⁸⁷ City of Santa Maria. 2001. City of Santa Maria General Plan Resources Management Element. Available at: <https://www.cityofsantamaria.org/home/showpublisheddocument/598/635488452761730000>

⁸⁸ California Geologic Energy Management Division. 2025. "Well Finder." Available: <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/doggr/wellfinder/>. (Accessed March 2025).

recovery location and would not preclude extraction nearby, project operation would not result in the loss of availability of a known or locally important mineral resource. Therefore, there would be no impact.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: Implementation of the proposed project would not result in potentially significant environment impacts to mineral resources. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

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 excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?			X	
b. Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?			X	
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 to excessive noise levels?			X	

Setting:

The following noise analysis is supported by the Noise Impact Report prepared by NV5 Engineers & Consultants (NV5) on June 18, 2024. The Noise Impact Report was peer-reviewed by Rincon Consultants as part of the preparation of this Initial Study and updated on May 28, 2025. The report analyzes the potential noise impacts related to both temporary construction activity and long-term operation of the proposed project. The complete Noise Impact Report can be found in Attachment 5.

The major sources of noise in Santa Maria include vehicular traffic on U.S. Highway 101 (US 101) and major city streets, aircraft operations from the Santa Maria Public Airport, train movements along the Santa Maria Valley Railroad, construction projects, commercial activity, and industrial plant activity. The primary sources of noise near the project site include vehicular traffic on Stowell Road, idling trucks at nearby warehouse loading docks, loading and unloading activities at adjacent facilities, and passing trains on the Santa Maria Valley Railroad. Ambient noise levels are typically the highest during the daytime and rush hours. Community noise levels are typically measured in terms of A-weighted decibels (dBA). A-weighting is a frequency correction that correlates overall sound pressure levels with the frequency response of the human ear. Equivalent noise level (Leq) is the average noise level on an energy basis for a specific period. The duration of noise and the time of day at which it occurs are important factors in determining the impact of noise on communities. The Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) and Day-Night Average Level (Ldn) account for the time of day and duration of noise generation. These indices are time-weighted average values equal to the amount of acoustic energy equivalent to a time-varying sound over a 24-hour period.⁸⁹ SMMC Chapter 5.5 establishes certain policies to control unnecessary, excessive, and annoying noise in the city in the interest of public health and welfare. According to SMMC Section 5-5.05, construction activities are permitted only between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on weekdays, and between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on weekends. Additional regulations are outlined in Section 5-5.06(e), which defines permitted construction hours, and Section 5-5.09, which details the requirements for obtaining construction noise permits. The City of Santa Maria has adopted specific noise standards for construction-related activities, as outlined in Sections 5-5.03 and 5-5.05. Section 5-5.05 also establishes

⁸⁹ City of Santa Maria General Plan Noise Element. 2009. Available: <https://www.cityofsantamaria.org/home/showpublisheddocument/596/635488452758600000>. (accessed March 2025)

ambient base noise levels by zone and time duration. For residential zones, the daytime noise threshold is 55 dBA Leq for an 8-hour period and 45 dBA Leq during nighttime.

Based on the City's Land Use Element, the project is not located within a major noise impact area or within an Airport Safety Zone.⁹⁰ The City's Noise Element includes noise compatibility standards for noise exposure by land use. In addition, SMMC Title 5 Chapter 5-5, the noise standards for industrial and residential uses are 70 exterior dB CNEL and 60 exterior dB CNEL respectively, or 55/45 dBA Leq for residential (daytime/nighttime) or 75/70 dBA Leq for industrial (daytime/nighttime). According to the City's Noise Element, noise-sensitive land uses include residential uses (single and multi-family dwelling, mobile home parks, dormitories and similar uses); hospitals, nursing homes, convalescent hospitals, and other facilities for long-term medical care; and public or private education facilities, libraries, and churches.⁹¹ Sensitive receptors on the project site vicinity include single-family residences located to the southeast of the project with the nearest single-family residence approximately 1,400 feet south of the project site boundary.

Based on the Santa Maria West Stowell Specific Plan, the project site has a land use designation of HCM.⁹² This designation is intended to provide space for areas where the possibilities of heavy noise generation exist. The project is surrounded by similar uses, with the nearest existing sensitive receptors located approximately 1,400 feet southeast from the project site in a low-density residential development across the train tracks.

Noise Impact Analysis

NV5 took ambient noise level measurements at locations near the proposed facility. Short-term 15-minute measurements were made during the daytime, evening, and nighttime hours on May 23, 2024. The results of the noise level measurements are summarized in Table 16.

Table 16 Summary of Short-Term Noise Measurements (dBA)

Sample Location	ID	Sample Date	Sample Time	Description	Leq (dBA)	L90 (dBA)	LSmax (dBA)
1501 S. Fulton Ct., Santa Maria, CA 93458	1	5/23/2024	4:05pm-4:20pm	Noise was primarily coming from the vehicles driving on A Street and La Brea Avenue	65.8	46.5	83.7
	2		8:22pm-8:37pm	Noise sources were vehicles driving by and pedestrians	56.8	51.1	73.7
	3		11:07pm-11:22pm	During 15-minute sample, only one car drove by. Wind created noise interference and fence rattling	54.2	40.3	75.3

dBA = A-weighted decibels

Leq – Equivalent continuous level over a period of 15 minutes

LS max = The maximum Sound Level with Slow Time weighting during the measurement period

L90 = A-weighted sound level of all sound associated with a given environment, exceeded 90 percent of the time. L90 refers to ambient noise level in this report.

⁹⁰ City of Santa Maria General Plan Land Use Element. 2011. Available:

<https://www.cityofsantamaria.org/home/showpublisheddocument/610/635488452782530000>. (accessed March 2025)

⁹¹ City of Santa Maria General Plan Noise Element. 2009. Available:

<https://www.cityofsantamaria.org/home/showpublisheddocument/596/635488452758600000> (accessed March 2025)

⁹² City of Santa Maria General Plan West Stowell Specific Plan 1994. Available:

<https://www.cityofsantamaria.org/home/showpublisheddocument/6437/635530503431800000>. (accessed June 2025).

Impact Discussion:

a.

Construction

Construction noise levels were modeled for all major phases of the proposed project including site preparation, grading, building, paving, and coating; and were found to remain below the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) 80 dBA Leq threshold at the nearest sensitive receptor, located approximately 1,400 feet away. In addition, all construction activities are expected to occur within the City's permitted hours, further minimizing potential noise impacts.

Construction-related noise impacts were assessed using the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Roadway Construction Noise Model (RCNM), which estimates typical noise levels generated by various types of equipment. This analysis applied the reasonable criteria provided by the FTA for assessing construction noise impacts, as outlined in its Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual.⁹³ Based on this methodology, the Noise Impact Analysis concluded that proposed project construction activities would generate noise levels below the FTA's threshold of 80 dBA Leq during daytime at residential uses. Therefore, the temporary increase in noise levels during construction of the proposed project is not expected to exceed local standards.

The project would be constructed in five primary phases: site preparation, grading, building construction, paving, and architectural coating. Each phase would involve the use of standard construction equipment, as described below. Table 17 provides a summary of the equipment anticipated for use during each phase of construction.

Noise generated by project construction would be temporary and not exceed local thresholds. Project operation noise would be similar to or less than that of the railway traffic along the Santa Maria Valley Railroad. Therefore, off-site traffic noise impacts would also be less than significant.

Table 17 Construction Equipment Maximum Noise Levels

Type of Equipment	Estimated Usage	Lmax at 50 feet (dBA)
Air Compressors	40%	77.7
Excavators	40%	80.7
Cranes	16%	80.6
Forklifts	40%	85.0
Generators	50%	80.6
Rubber Tired Dozers	40%	81.7
Tractors/Loaders/Backhoes	40%	77.6
Graders	40%	85.0
Welders	40%	74.0
Source: Attachment 5		

⁹³ Federal Transit Administration. 2018. Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual. Available: https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/research-innovation/118131/transit-noise-and-vibration-impact-assessment-manual-fta-report-no-0123_0.pdf. (accessed June 2025).

The nearest sensitive receptor considered in this analysis is a single-family residence located at 1501 S. Fulton Court, approximately 1,400 feet from the nearest boundary of the project site. As shown in Table 18, predicted noise levels from construction activities are estimated to range between 44.7 dBA and 55.3 dBA. These levels are well below the FTA construction noise threshold of 80 dBA. Therefore, short-term construction-related noise impacts would be less than significant.

Table 18 Predicted Construction Noise Levels at Nearest Sensitive Receptors

Phase	Expected Equipment	Daytime Ambient Noise Levels (Leq; dBA) ¹	Predicted Noise Levels (Leq; dBA) Sensitive Receptor 1 (1,400 ft)
Site Preparation	Rubber Tired Dozer, Backhoes, Other Equipment >5HP	55.0	54.9
Grading	Rubber Tired Dozer, Backhoes, Excavator, Graders	55.0	55.1
Building Construction	Cranes, Generators, Backhoes, Welders, Other Equipment >5HP	55.0	55.3
Paving	Paver, Roller	55.0	47.7
Architectural Coating	Air compressors	55.0	44.7

¹ Source: City of Santa Maria Municipal Code, Section 5-5.05, Ambient Base Noise Levels.

Source: Attachment 5

Operation

The project would introduce new operational noise sources, including increased on-site traffic from trucks and employee vehicles; stationary equipment such as HVAC units and other mechanical systems; an on-site fleet service station; and intermittent noise from backup alarms from haul trucks during loading and unloading activities. According to SMMC Section 5-5.05, the allowable noise threshold for industrial zones is 75 dBA Leq over an 8-hour daytime period and 70 dBA Leq at night. Additionally, the City's long-term noise standard for industrial land uses such as manufacturing, warehousing, and agricultural operations is 70 dBA CNEL. Noise generation from trucks and vans entering and leaving the facility from Stowell Road would likely be the largest contributor to elevated CNELs. The resulting CNEL levels are anticipated to remain below the 70 dBA threshold established for industrial areas. Table 19 and Table 20 below provide detailed projections of noise levels at the nearest sensitive receptor.

Table 19 Receptor Predicted Noise Levels

No.	Receptor Name	Ambient Noise Levels dBA ¹				Predicted Noise Levels dBA			Predicted Noise Level Exceeded Ambient Noise Levels?		
		Floor	Day	Evening	Night	Day	Evening	Night	Day	Evening	Night
1	1501 S Fulton Ct, Santa Maria, CA 93458	GF	65.8	56.8	54.2	40	40.4	39.3	No	No	No
1	1501 S Fulton Ct, Santa Maria, CA 93458	1	65.8	56.8	54.2	40	40.1	39.2	No	No	No
2	1689 W Stowell Rd, Santa Maria, CA 93458	GF	65.8	56.8	54.2	46.5	38.9	38.7	No	No	No
3	1677 W Stowell Rd, Santa Maria, CA 93458	GF	65.8	56.8	54.2	42.1	40.7	40.2	No	No	No
4	1753 A S. Santa Maria, CA 93458	GF	65.8	56.8	54.2	36.9	37	36.9	No	No	No

¹ Ambient Noise Levels are based on the noise measurements taken by NV5 on May 23, 2024. The measurements were 15-min Leq measurements. Ambient Noise Levels were used as they are greater than Ambient Base Noise Levels provided by the City in Table 16.

Table 20 Receptor Predicted Noise Levels CNEL

No.	Receptor Name	Floor	Exterior CNEL Threshold (dBA)	Predicted CNEL (dBA)	Threshold Exceeded?
1	1501 S Fulton Ct, Santa Maria, CA 93458	GF	60	45.9	No
1	1501 S Fulton Ct, Santa Maria, CA 93458	1	60	45.8	No
2	1689 W Stowell Rd, Santa Maria, CA 93458	GF	60	47.1	No
3	1677 W Stowell Rd, Santa Maria, CA 93458	GF	60	46.9	No
4	1753 A St, Santa Maria, CA 93458	GF	60	43.3	No

As discussed above, the project site is located approximately 1,400 feet north of the nearest sensitive receptor, a single-family residence situated across the Santa Maria Valley Railway. This residence is already subject to comparable or higher ambient noise levels due to ongoing railway operations. Noise modeling conducted for the project indicates that all estimated operational noise levels would remain below the applicable ambient base noise level thresholds established by the SMMC. This compliance with regulatory standards is the primary basis for concluding that long-term operational noise impacts would be less than significant. Additionally, the residential neighborhood is shielded by an eight-foot-tall masonry sound wall, which provides further noise attenuation. Given these conditions, the project is not expected to result in a permanent increase in ambient noise levels or expose nearby residents to long-term noise levels exceeding applicable standards. Therefore, long-term operational noise impacts would be less than significant.

- b. Construction activities known to generate excessive groundborne vibration, such as pile driving and blasting, would not be required for proposed project construction. Therefore, the greatest source of construction vibration is anticipated to be grading and site preparation activities. Project construction would utilize loaded trucks, front-end loaders, and excavators. The proposed project would not include significant stationary sources of vibration, such as pile drivers, vibratory hammers, or large-scale industrial machinery. Typical operational equipment associated with the proposed project would be limited to light-duty mechanical systems that do not generate perceptible groundborne vibration at nearby receptors. As shown in Table 21 below, groundborne vibration levels would not exceed the applicable vibration thresholds for human annoyance and structural damage at the nearest building. Construction-related vibration impacts

would be less than significant, and since the proposed project does not include any substantial operational sources of vibration, operational vibration impacts would also be less than significant.

Table 21 Vibration Levels at Nearest Buildings

Equipment	Nearest Receptor Type	Nearest Receptor Type (sf)	PPV _{ref}	PPV _x	Threshold
Large Bulldozer	Residential	1400	0.089	0.001	0.04
Loaded Truck		1400	0.076	0.001	0.04
Large Bulldozer	Structural	80	0.089	0.02	0.50
Loaded Truck		80	0.076	0.02	0.50

- c. The closest public or public use airport to the project site is Santa Maria Airport, located approximately two miles southeast of the project site. According to Exhibit 4-5 of the Santa Maria Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, the project site is within Review Area 2, which pertains to overflight and airspace protection but not to areas of elevated noise or safety concerns. Since the project site is outside of the airport's primary noise contours and safety zones (Review Area 1), users and workers at the site would not be exposed to excessive aviation-related noise. Therefore, aviation noise impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: Implementation of the proposed project would not result in potentially significant environmental impacts to noise. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

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)?			X	
b. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X

Setting:

Santa Maria has consistently been the fastest growing city in Santa Barbara County over the last two decades. According to the California Department of Finance, over 60 percent of the county's population growth occurred in the City of Santa Maria from 2010 to 2020.⁹⁴ It is anticipated that this trend will continue throughout the current decade as Santa Maria continues to be the hub for northern Santa Barbara County. The proposed project would develop a warehouse in an area of the City zoned for PD-CM AG (Planned Development-Commercial Manufacturing - Agricultural) zone district uses.

Impact Discussion:

- a. The proposed project would not directly induce substantial unplanned population growth, as it does not include residential development. The project also would not induce population growth through the creation of jobs during either construction or operation. While the construction phase would generate temporary employment opportunities, these jobs would likely be filled by the existing regional workforce and would not require an influx of new residents. The operational phase of the project would create approximately 588 new jobs. However, given the project's location within an urbanized portion of the city with an existing employment base, these jobs are expected to be filled by local workers as the City's available worker base is 41,620.⁹⁵ The project would result in a 1.41 percent increase in jobs in the City of Santa Maria, which would not substantially induce population growth indirectly.

The proposed project does not include the extension of roads to currently inaccessible areas, and utility connections would be limited to connections to existing infrastructure adjacent to the project site. As such, the project would not induce growth indirectly. Impacts would be less than significant.

- b. The project site is undeveloped. As such, project construction would not displace existing people or housing, nor necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: Implementation of the proposed project would not result in potentially significant environment impacts to population and housing. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

⁹⁴ California Department of Finance. 2021. Population Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State, 2011-2020, with 2010 Benchmark. Available at: <https://dof.ca.gov/Forecasting/Demographics/Estimates/e-4-population-estimates-for-cities-counties-and-the-state-2011-2020-with-2010-census-benchmark-new/>

⁹⁵ SBCAG. 2019. Regional Growth Forecast 2050 Santa Barbara County. Available at: https://www.sbcag.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/regional_growth_forecast_2050.pdf

15. Public Services

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
i. Fire protection?			X	
ii. Police protection?			X	
iii. Schools?			X	
iv. Parks?			X	
v. Other public facilities?			X	

Setting:

Fire protection is provided to the project site by the Santa Maria Fire Department (SMFD). SMFD provides all risk emergency services, as well as public education programs, fire prevention, and life safety measures to the City's residents. The project site is approximately 2.9 miles to the southwest of SMFD Station #1 located at 300 West Cook Street. The project site would be served by the City of Santa Maria Police Department Station located at 1111 West Betteravia Road, which would be approximately 4.3 miles southeast of the project site. The Santa Maria Bonita School District serves the City's elementary and junior high schools with high schools served by the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District. Minami Park is the nearest park to the project site and is about 2.5 miles east of the project site. Minami Park provides 29 acres of recreational spaces including soccer fields, tennis courts, barbecue pits, and picnic areas.

Impact Discussion:

a. i-v.

The proposed delivery warehouse project would be located within an already developed area of the City of Santa Maria, where existing public services have been established to accommodate urban development. The project would not directly or indirectly induce population growth and, therefore, would not increase demand for public facilities such as fire and police protection, schools, parks, or other public facilities. Additionally, the project would not introduce features requiring additional or unusual fire or police protection that would necessitate the construction of new public facilities, which could result in environmental impacts.

Once operational, the delivery warehouse would function as a logistics facility with 24/7 operations. The facility would include fire suppression systems and comply with all relevant fire safety regulations, ensuring that it does not create a substantial additional burden on fire services. The nature of the facility's operations, which primarily involve package sorting and distribution, does not inherently increase demand for police

services beyond standard enforcement levels. Since the project does not include residential development and would not induce population growth, it would not generate a significant increase in school-aged children or impact local school enrollment. Additionally, because the project does not introduce new residents, there would be no increase in demand for parks or recreational facilities. The project would not introduce any features requiring additional or unusual fire or police protection that would necessitate the construction of new public facilities, which could result in environmental impacts. Therefore, impacts on fire protection, police services, schools, parks, and other public facilities during operation of the facility would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: Implementation of the proposed project would not result in potentially significant environment impacts to public services. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

16. Recreation

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Would the project 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?			X	
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?			X	

Setting:

The Santa Maria Recreation and Parks Department operates 234 acres of developed parkland in 31 neighborhood and community parks, part of the 1,774-acre Los Flores Ranch Park property, Abel Maldonado Community Youth Center, Hagerman Softball Complex, Paul Nelson Aquatics Center, Elwin Mussell Senior Center, Veterans' Memorial Center and other community centers. The department also provides programs in aquatics, youth and adult sports, therapeutics and senior services, Special Olympics, community classes and events, youth and teen programs, and the Mayor's Task Force on Youth Safety⁹⁶. Minami Park is located approximately 2.5 miles east of the project site and provides amenities such as a playground, basketball courts, a sand volleyball court, softball field, lighted tennis courts, bocce ball, and a large open grass area. A future 19-acre sports complex is planned to be developed within the Blosser Southeast Area 5B Specific Plan located approximately 1.6 miles to the east of the project site.

Impact Discussion:

a-b. The proposed project would primarily employ individuals from the existing workforce in Santa Maria and would not induce substantial population growth, directly or indirectly, nor include or necessitate the development or expansion of recreational facilities. As a result, the project would not induce substantial demand for neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities. Any potential increase in use would be minor and would not lead to substantial physical deterioration or accelerated wear of these facilities. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: Implementation of the proposed project would not result in potentially significant environment impacts to public services. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

⁹⁶ City of Santa Maria. Santa Maria Recreation and Parks Department.
<https://www.cityofsantamaria.org/services/departments/recreation-and-parks-5013> (accessed April 2025).

17. Transportation

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?	X			
b. Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	X			
c. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?			X	
d. Result in inadequate emergency access?			X	

Setting:

The following traffic analysis is supported by the Traffic Impact Study and VMT Analysis prepared by NV5 on August 22, 2024, and December 5, 2024, respectively. The Traffic Reports were peer-reviewed by Rincon Consultants as part of the preparation of this Initial Study and updated on May 28 and 29. The report analyzes the potential VMT impacts related to the proposed project. The complete reports can be found in Attachment 6.

US 101 is located approximately 2.80 miles east of the project site. The project site is also approximately 1.08 north of State Route 166 (SR 166) and 4 miles southwest of State Route 1 (SR 1). Local access to the project site is provided by West Stowell Road with regional access provided by US 101, SR 166, and SR 1. The primary north-south streets in the City of Santa Maria are South Broadway, South Blosser Road/Skyway Drive, and Miller Street. The main east-west streets include Donovan Road, Alvin Avenue, Main Street, Stowell Road, Battles Road, McCoy Lane, and Betteravia Road.

The project site is also served by a variety of public transit options, with several Santa Maria Regional Transit (SMRT) Public Transit bus stops along Betteravia Road. The City also provides regional bus services including the Breeze Bus, Clean Air Express, Guadalupe Flyer, and the San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority (RTA) which connects the City of Santa Maria with the City of San Luis Obispo. The city also provides other forms of transportation. The City's Rail System includes passenger and freight service. Trails and paths, as well as bike lanes, serve as the primary form of pedestrian transportation. Additionally, commercial and general aviation services are available from the Santa Maria Public Airport, approximately two miles southeast of the project site.

Impact Discussion:

- The proposed project has the potential to result in a significant impact due to inconsistencies with the City of Santa Maria's transportation-related plans or policies. This includes potential conflicts with local and regional goals aimed at managing traffic congestion, improving intersection performance, and reducing VMT. These potential conflicts would result from the proposed project's potential to generate additional traffic. This potential impact will be further evaluated in the Environmental Impact Report.

- b. The proposed project would generate VMT by accommodating employee commute trips, dispatching delivery vans for package distribution, and utilizing private carrier vehicles for additional deliveries, and could exceed thresholds established by the City of Santa Maria. Therefore, the proposed project has the potential to result in a significant impact related to VMT under CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b). This potential impact will be further evaluated in the Environmental Impact Report.
- c. The proposed project would not change the design or alignment of any adjacent roadways and does not include any road improvements or design features that would increase hazards or would introduce incompatible uses. The proposed project would adhere to the SMMC Section 12-33 (Commercial and Industrial Performance Standards), as well as Sections 12-27.02 and 12-27.03 regarding fence, walls, hedges and corner cutback requirements. The Santa Maria Public Works Department has reviewed the proposed project and confirmed that it would not create hazardous roadway conditions. Therefore, the project would result in less than significant impacts related to hazardous design features.
- d. All public road improvements would be required to adhere to the SMMC Title 7 Traffic Regulations. Emergency access to the project site would be provided by West Stowell Road via three unprotected driveway accesses. The westernmost driveway would provide access for all line-haul trucks and the central and easternmost driveways would provide access for all vans and employees. The proposed project has been reviewed by the Santa Maria Fire Department (SMFD) and would follow the Santa Maria Fire Department's requirements to make all three access roads minimum width to allow fire apparatus access to the proposed facility. Access and circulation would be designed to comply with all safety and street improvement standards per the SMFD and the City's Municipal Code Title 7 Traffic Regulations. Therefore, the proposed project would result in less than significant impacts related to emergency access.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: Mitigation measures may be identified in the Environmental Impact Report and incorporated into the project at that time.

18. Tribal Cultural Resources

	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 or 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			X	
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, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.			X	

Setting:

The project site includes two vacant parcels within the 1600 block of West Stowell Road, and the site is currently occupied by row crops for agricultural production. The Santa Maria Valley is not a highly sensitive area for archaeological or tribal resources. The project site is located within the City's Archaeological Sensitivity Area 3, which is categorized as having a negligible sensitivity to contain archaeological resources.⁹⁷

California Assembly Bill 52 of 2014 (AB 52) expanded CEQA by defining a new resource category of "tribal cultural resources." AB 52 establishes that "a project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment" (PRC Section 21084.2). It further states the lead agency shall establish measures to avoid impacts that would alter the significant characteristics of a tribal cultural resource, when feasible (PRC Section 21084.3). PRC Section 21074 (a)(1) (A-B) defines tribal cultural resources as "sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe" and is:

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

⁹⁷ Cultural Resource Desktop Review, Albion Environmental Inc., Attachment 4

AB 52 establishes a formal consultation process for California tribes regarding those resources. The consultation process must be completed before a CEQA document can be certified. Under AB 52, lead agencies are required to “begin consultation with a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the proposed project,” specifically with those Native American tribes that have requested notice of projects proposed within the jurisdiction of the lead agency. Consultation begins with a written notification that must include a brief description of the proposed project, the project’s location, the lead CEQA agency contact information, and notification that the California Native American Tribe has thirty (30) days to request consultation. Upon receipt of a written response from a California Native American Tribe requesting consultation, the lead CEQA agency and the California Native American Tribe requesting consultation shall begin the AB 52 process.

The Santa Ynez Tribal Elders Council, as well as other Tribes, identified on the Native American Heritage Commission Tribal Consultation List for Santa Barbara County are routinely contacted to determine if AB 52 tribal consultation is required for projects subject to CEQA review. The following tribes were notified for consultation regarding the project:

- Chumash Council of Bakersfield
- Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation
- Northern Chumash Tribal Council
- Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians
- yak tityu tityu yak tiłhini – Northern Chumash Tribe

The City received a response from Santa Ynez Band Chumash Indians on October 23, 2024, indicating that no further consultation on the project is necessary. However, the letter requested that the tribe be notified if supplementary literature reveals additional information, the scope of the work changes, or if the project would warrant the presence of a Native American monitor in place during ground disturbance.

Impact Analysis:

a. i-ii

The City of Santa Maria notified the tribes who formally requested notification on CEQA projects under AB 52. Santa Ynez Band Chumash Indians were the only tribe to respond and requested no further consultation at this time. None of the other California Native American tribes responded to the City’s notification requesting consultation or further information regarding the proposed development. Therefore, no further consultation has taken place for this project.

To assist the City with AB 52 Consultation, Albion coordinated to obtain a list of Native American Stakeholders from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) and conducted an NAHC Sacred Lands Search (SLF) for the project. The results of the SLF were negative, and there are no Tribal Cultural Resources on file at the NAHC that are located within the project site. The NAHC identified seven individuals representing four Tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the project who were all contacted during AB 52 outreach. The lack of request for tribal consultation and identified tribal cultural resources within the project site results in a less than significant impact on tribal cultural resources.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: Implementation of the proposed project would not result in potentially significant environment impacts to tribal cultural resources. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

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?			X	
b. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?			X	
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?			X	
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?			X	
e. Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?			X	

Setting:

The primary utility services the City provides are related to water, wastewater and solid waste. The City of Santa Maria derives water from multiple supply sources including local groundwater, purchased water from the State Water Project, associated return flows recaptured from the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin, assigned rights to water from the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin, and assigned rights to augmented yield from Twitchell Reservoir. The city owned and operated Wastewater Treatment Plant is located on the west side of Santa Maria on Black Road. The City of Santa Maria owns and operates a non-hazardous Class III Regional Landfill located on the east side of Santa Maria. The City operates a fleet of solid waste collection vehicles that collect a majority of solid waste generated in the City and brought to the Santa Maria Regional Landfill. Curbside recycling is also collected by the city fleet.

Impact Discussion:

a-b. A significant impact would occur if a project increased water consumption to such a degree that the capacity of facilities currently serving the project site would be exceeded or that new water sources would need to be identified.

The proposed project's water use is estimated to be approximately 2.55 acre-feet per year (AFY), based on average water demand for industrial warehouse uses (3.4 gallons per square foot per year), which

includes anticipated water use for landscaping.⁹⁸ As stated in the City's 2020 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP), the City of Santa Maria derives water from multiple supply sources including local groundwater, purchased water from the State Water Project, associated return flows recaptured from the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin, assigned rights to water from the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin, and assigned rights to augmented yield from Twitchell Reservoir (City of Santa Maria 2021). The City's groundwater supplies are derived from seven active groundwater wells within the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin, which have a capacity of 23,426 AFY. According to the 2020 Annual Hydrologic Report for the Santa Maria Valley Management Area, the municipal groundwater pumpage in 2020 for the City was 7,492 AFY. Assessment of hydrogeologic conditions in 2020 showed that groundwater levels were similar to those in 2019, with one localized low in the Twitchell Recharge Area. Therefore, the proposed project would not require new, relocated, or expanded facilities to supply water to the project.

The City's Wastewater Treatment Plant on Black Road would provide sewer service to the property. The project must comply with Chapter 8-12 of the City Code (Wastewater Collection, Treatment and Disposal) and any wastewater discharged to the City system must not interfere with the functioning of the City wastewater treatment plant or compliance with its discharge requirements. The City's Sewer System Management Plan established capacity enhancement measures to address ongoing upgrades associated with growth of the city as development occurs. The proposed project would increase existing wastewater generation on-site through the development of the proposed facilities, including restrooms. However, the project is consistent with the General Plan's land use designation for the site and would not generate growth beyond that anticipated in the General Plan and for which wastewater facilities have been planned. The project would replace an existing undersized (30-inch diameter) sewer main that runs below the project site, upgrading to a 48-inch diameter per City capital improvement plans to accommodate planned future demand once warranted. This proposed upgrade is intended to prevent future disruption, when the upgrade is required after the project is constructed. This size increase would not increase capacity as the upstream and downstream pipes would remain at 30 inches in size. Project-generated wastewater does not necessitate this proposed upgrade. Rather, the existing sewer main is undersized for planned development, and would be replaced as part of the project to minimize future disruptions. Therefore, the wastewater treatment requirements of the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant on Black Road would not be exceeded, and potential impacts would be less than significant.

The project would implement a Stormwater Management Plan to ensure the effective flow of water through the project site. Planned stormwater control measures include installation of a roof drain disconnect, on-site retention-based infiltration, and minimizing impervious areas via permeable pavers and bioretention basins. The drainage system would be designed to control the flow rate of on-site runoff to not exceed predevelopment conditions. Additionally, the drainage patterns of the area would remain unaltered. All on-site stormwater management design features would be consistent with the City of Santa Maria standards and specifications and would be approved by the City Engineer. The City is covered by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Order No. 2013-0001-DWQ, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit No. CAS000004. The City Municipal Code includes Chapter 8-12A (Stormwater Runoff Pollution Prevention) as part of meeting the state requirements. Section 8-12A.04 prohibits stormwater discharges unless they are in conformance with the statewide General Permit and the specific requirements of the RWQCB Resolution No. R3-2013-0032 Post-Construction Stormwater Management Requirements for Development Projects in the Central Coast Region. No offsite drainage improvements or modifications would be necessary.

The project would not necessitate the relocation or construction of new or expanded electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities. Pacific Gas & Electric power lines and Xfinity internet/telecommunication lines are located on West Stowell Road at the project site and can adequately provide service with no need to expand facilities. The project is not installing any natural gas appliances or heating, so there are no natural gas connections proposed.

Overall, the project would not 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. In addition, sufficient

⁹⁸ [U.S. Energy Information Administration](#)

water supplies would be available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

- c. Wastewater generated by the project would be treated at the City-owned Wastewater Treatment Plant. The plant's current capacity is 13.5 million gallons per day, allowing the City to serve a population of up to 120,000 people (City of Santa Maria 2024). The City's UWMP includes population projections through 2045 and estimates a service population of 135,411 in 2045.⁹⁹ Santa Maria has a current population of approximately 109,477, as the project does not include residential development, it is not anticipated to increase the City's population. Based on the projected population in Santa Maria, the City's Public Works Department, consistent with the findings from the City's 2012 Utility Capacity Study, has determined that the existing wastewater treatment plant would continue to be adequate for future wastewater demands, including those of the project and future commitments through 2035.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, the project would not require expansion of the City's existing treatment capacity due to the project, in addition to the provider's existing commitments, and this impact would be less than significant.
- d-e. The City currently disposes of solid waste at the Santa Maria Regional Landfill, located on East Main Street in Santa Maria. The Santa Maria Regional Landfill has a remaining capacity of approximately 2.8 million cubic yards of waste and an estimated closure date of 2034.¹⁰¹ The City has also initiated processing of a new landfill, the Santa Maria Integrated Waste Management Facility (IWMF; Facility No. 42-AA-0076), located within Los Flores Ranch, just east of U.S. 101 in an unincorporated portion of Santa Barbara County. The new facility would have a design capacity of approximately 130.9 million cubic yards of waste with an estimate closure date of 2105.¹⁰²

As the project site is currently undeveloped, demolition is unnecessary and would reduce the amount of potential construction debris. The project would be required to comply with local and state regulations regarding solid waste, including CalGreen Code Section 5.408.1, which requires developers to recycle and/or salvage for reuse a minimum of 65 percent of the non-hazardous construction and demolition waste. Waste generated during construction would be short term and not anticipated to exceed capacity of the Santa Maria Regional Landfill.

Operation of the warehouse would produce an estimated 3,378 pounds of trash per day, or 617 tons per year plus total of 11 tons for the service center, based on CalRecycle Commercial Sector Generation Rate of 1.42 lb./100 square foot/day for warehousing and 0.9 lb./100 square foot/day for a service station. This adds up to 628 tons per year.¹⁰³ This equates to approximately 2,466 cubic yards per year, which represents approximately 0.09% of the remaining capacity of the Santa Maria Regional Landfill. The project-generated waste would be sufficiently served by the existing capacity of the Santa Maria Regional Landfill until the Los Flores IWMF becomes operational. Furthermore, solid waste would be diverted from landfills during operation in accordance with applicable regulations such as SB 1383, which requires mandatory organic waste collection for composting. Therefore, the project would have a less-than-significant impact related to solid waste.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: Implementation of the proposed project would not result in potentially significant environment impacts to utilities. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

⁹⁹ City of Santa Maria 2021

¹⁰⁰ 2012 Utilities Capacity Study

¹⁰¹ CalRecycle 2025a

¹⁰² CalRecycle 2025b

¹⁰³ CalRecycle 2025c

20. Wildfire

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:				
a. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				X
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?				X
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?				X
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?				X

Setting:

The potential for wildfire risks in the project area is characterized by limited grassland and brush fires due to the absence of extensive tracts of mountainous and brush covered terrain. The most significant wildfire hazards near the site are associated with the coastal sage scrub and grass covered slopes to the south of the City. The oak savannah hillsides to the east of U.S. 101 and north of Clark Avenue represent another wildfire hazard area.

The project site is generally flat and is comprised of row crops, which does not pose significant potential wildfire risks. The site is in an urbanizing area of Santa Maria, adjacent to existing and under construction industrial development. According to the California FHSZ Viewer, the project site is not located within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) or State Responsibility Area, the nearest Very High FHSZs are more than four miles southwest and northwest from the site.¹⁰⁴

Impact Discussion:

a-d. The project site is not located within or near a Very High FHSZ or State Responsibility Area. As such, project implementation would not interfere with existing emergency evacuation plans or emergency response plans within a FHSZ or State Responsibility Area; exacerbate wildfire risks and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire; require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure within a FHSZ or state responsibility area; or

¹⁰⁴ CAL FIRE 2025

expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslopes or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: Implementation of the proposed project would not result in potentially significant environment impacts to wildfire. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

21. Mandatory Findings of Significance

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
1. 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?		X		
2. Does the project 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.)	X			
3. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?		X		

- As discussed in Section 4, *Biological Resources*, the project site is highly disturbed and currently used for agricultural production. The BRA (KMA 2024, updated 2025) determined that the site does not support native habitat or special-status plant species. While several special-status wildlife species may occur on a transitory basis, the proposed project would not result in significant impacts to these species with implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-6. These measures include seasonal timing restrictions, pre-construction surveys, and protective buffers for CRLF and nesting birds.

As discussed in Section 5, *Cultural Resources*, the project site is located in an area of low archaeological sensitivity. A Phase I (Albion 2025) pedestrian survey identified two isolated artifacts on-site, however, these were not determined to constitute a significant cultural resource under CEQA. Nonetheless, mitigation measures have been included to address the potential for encountering previously unidentified resources during construction. Additionally, due to the presence of historic-era structures in aerial imagery and the potential for buried resources, Mitigation Measure CR-1 and the City's Resource Management Element Policy 4 Historical Resources Implementation Program 1 require an Extended Phase I Assessment and procedures for inadvertent discovery. These measures would ensure that any previously unknown cultural resources are appropriately identified and treated.

Therefore, with implementation of mitigation measures identified in Environmental Checklist Sections 4 and 5, the proposed project would not substantially degrade the quality of the environment, reduce habitat for sensitive 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 California history or prehistory. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

- According to Section 21083 of the CEQA Guidelines, "'cumulatively considerable' means that the incremental effects of an individual project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of

past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.” The geographic scope for cumulative impacts is generally the City of Santa Maria as development within the jurisdiction is regulated by the City’s General Plan and the SMMC. Resource areas with an alternate geographic scope (like air quality) are discussed in more detail below. Sections 1 through 21 of this Initial Study consider potential cumulative impacts to environmental resources. As discussed in these sections, the proposed project would have potentially significant project-level impacts related to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, and transportation. Only these impacts have been identified as having the potential to cumulatively contribute to impacts on the environment. For all other issue areas, the proposed project would have either direct or indirect impacts that have been determined to be less than significant, or less than significant with design elements, standard conditions of approval, or compliance with existing regulations. The assessment of these impacts did not identify residual impacts or a contribution to a cumulative impact.

Cumulative Impacts

Air Quality: Potential cumulative air quality impacts would result when the pollutant emissions of the proposed project combine with those of other projects’ pollutant emissions to degrade air quality conditions below acceptable levels. This could occur on a local level (e.g., increased vehicle emissions at congested intersections or concurrent construction activities at sensitive receptor locations) or a regional level (e.g., potential O₃ impacts from multiple past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects within the City and Santa Barbara County). Santa Barbara County is currently in nonattainment status for the State ozone and PM₁₀ standards. Consequently, cumulative development in Santa Barbara County as a whole could violate an air quality standard or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation. Therefore, cumulative impacts would be potentially significant. However, SBCAPCD does not consider a proposed project to have a significant impact on air quality, either individually or cumulatively, if operation of the project complies with the significance criteria listed in the SBCAPCD Air Quality Impact Guidelines listed in the *Setting* section at the beginning of the *Air Quality* section of this IS-MND. Thus, the project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to significant cumulative effects on air quality as the project complies with the SBCAPCD significance criteria.

Biological Resources: The City is comprised of approximately 12,700 acres of land, of which 32 percent (or 4,064 acres) is currently undeveloped and could be used as potential habitat.¹⁰⁵ The majority of critical habitat for federally listed species is located at the southwest boundary of the City. Cumulative development could have a potentially significant impact on biological resources if located on or near this critical habitat. However, the proposed project would result in the loss of approximately 33 acres of agricultural and disturbed lands (0.8 percent of undeveloped land in the City) planned for development located approximately three miles north of any recorded critical habitat. Other development projects in this general area (i.e., Driscoll’s to the west and Maxco Box Facility to the east) are agriculturally focused commercial facilities that have been designed to preserve the area’s designated agriculture and industrial character. No intact stands of important biological resources remain in this area; however, some wildlife such as the California red-legged frog has been able to persist amongst the farm fields and in nearby stormwater management basins. The project would require focused wildlife preconstruction surveys to confirm that no special-status wildlife occur onsite, as well as measures to avoid or mitigate project effects if species are found on site. Because the project’s relatively small size, distance from critical habitat, and required mitigation of all biological project effects under CEQA, the project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to significant cumulative effects on biological resources.

Cultural Resources: This project is required to comply with mitigation CR-1 to reduce impacts to unidentified cultural resources to less than significant. Cumulative development in the region would continue to disturb areas with the potential to contain cultural and tribal cultural resources. These projects would be required to undergo CEQA review, which would determine the extent of potential cultural

¹⁰⁵ Santa Maria, City of. Notice of Preparation of an EIR and Scoping Meeting for the Santa Maria General Plan Update. Available: https://files.ceqanet.lci.ca.gov/312620-1/attachment/1cSMY8TkSzAB_BwGChqhWWJPDXE089gPltfhLCXzDG429ZY9dgaBeJeeQ-__G2K4cFK-np53DeLrFDXs0 (accessed August 2025)

resources impacts and mitigate those impacts appropriately. Cumulative projects would also be required to comply with the City's Resource Management Element Policy 4 Historical Resources Implementation Program 1 that addresses inadvertent discovery of archaeological resources and human remains and would ensure that cultural resources would be properly documented and protected, if discovered. Thus, cumulative impacts to cultural resources would be less than significant since all future development would be required to comply with this General Plan policy. The project would therefore not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to significant cumulative effects on cultural resources.

Transportation: Potential cumulative transportation impacts would result from the project's generation of VMT and consequential conflicts with Santa Maria's transportation-related plans or policies. Therefore, the potential for cumulative impacts related to transportation will be further analyzed in an EIR.

3. Adverse effects on human beings are typically associated with air quality, hazards and hazardous materials, noise, and wildfire. These impacts are addressed in Environmental Checklist Section 3, Air Quality, Section 9, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Section 13, Noise, and Section 20, Wildfire. As described therein, the proposed project would result in less than significant impacts related to air quality and hazards and hazardous materials with implementation of mitigation, less than significant impacts related to noise without mitigation, and no impacts related to wildfire. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in environmental effects that would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly. The project's impacts on human beings would be less than significant with implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-1 and HAZ-1.

8. Attachments

Attachment 1	Plan Set
Attachment 2	Air Quality/GHG Study
Attachment 3	Biological Resources Assessment
Attachment 4	Cultural Resources Desktop Review
Attachment 5	Noise Impact Analysis
Attachment 6	VMT Analysis

9. Determination

On the basis of the Initial Study, the staff of the Community Development Department:

- _____ Finds that the proposed project is a Class ____ **CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION** and no further environmental review is required.
- _____ Finds that the proposed project **COULD NOT** have a significant effect on the environment, and a **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.
- _____ Finds 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.
- _____ Finds that the proposed project **MAY** have a significant effect on the environment, and an **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required.
- X** Finds 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 acceptable standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on the attached sheets. An **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR)/SUBSEQUENT EIR/SUPPLEMENTAL EIR/ ADDENDUM** is required, but it must analyze the effects that remain to be addressed.
- _____ Finds that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier **EIR** or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** pursuant to acceptable 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.

Cody Graybehl

Cody Graybehl
Environmental Analyst

Chenin Dow

Chenin Dow
Environmental Officer

8-13-25

Date

8-12-25

Date



City of Santa Maria
Community Development Department
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Attachment 1

Plan Set

Attachment 2

Air Quality/GHG Study

Attachment 3

Biological Resources Assessment

Attachment 4

Cultural Resources Desktop Review

Attachment 5

Noise Impact Analysis

Attachment 6

Traffic Impact Study & VMT Analysis