Final EIR

Meridian Village Subdivision and Multifamily Development

August 24, 2026

SCH# 2025121246



Prepared by

EMC Planning Group

FINAL EIR

MERIDIAN VILLAGE SUBDIVISION AND MULTIFAMILY DEVELOPMENT

SCH# 2025121246

PREPARED FOR

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August 24, 2026

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 CEQA Requirements

Before approving a project that may cause a significant environmental impact, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires the City of Hollister ("City"), acting as the Lead Agency under CEQA, to prepare and certify a final environmental impact report ("final EIR"). The contents of a final EIR are specified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15132, which states that:

The final EIR shall consist of:

a) The draft EIR or a revision of the draft;

b) Comments and recommendations received on the draft EIR either verbatim or in summary;

c) A list of persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the draft EIR;

d) The responses of the Lead Agency to significant environmental points raised in the review and consultation process; and

e) Any other information added by the Lead Agency.

All comments regarding environmental issues received on the draft EIR during the public review period from April 22, 2026 to June 5, 2026 have been addressed in this final EIR.

CEQA Guidelines section 15204(a) states that in reviewing a draft EIR, persons and public agencies should focus on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts on the environment and ways in which the significant effects of the project might be avoided or mitigated. Comments are most helpful when they suggest additional specific alternatives or mitigation measures that would provide better ways to avoid or mitigate the significant environmental effects. At the same time, reviewers should be aware that the adequacy of an EIR is determined in terms of what is reasonably feasible, in light of factors such as the magnitude of the project at issue, the severity of its likely environmental impacts, and the geographic scope of the project.

Per CEQA Guidelines section15204(a), CEQA does not require a lead agency to conduct every test or perform all research, study, and experimentation recommended or demanded by commenters. Likewise, a lead agency also need not respond to general reference materials submitted in support of comments, comments that repeat those already considered, or comments that are clearly irrelevant.

According to CEQA Guidelines section 15204(a), when responding to comments, lead agencies need only respond to significant environmental issues and do not need to provide all information requested by reviewers, as long as a good faith effort at full disclosure is made in the EIR, as also described in CEQA Guidelines sections 15088(c) and 15132(d).

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

CEQA Guidelines section 15088 requires the lead agency to provide a written proposed response to a public agency on comments made by that public agency at least 10 days prior to certifying an EIR. Written responses to comments have been prepared to address comments on the project and have been sent to the commenting agencies and organizations.

CEQA Guidelines 15095(a) also requires that the lead agency file a copy of the final EIR with the appropriate planning agency of any city, county, or city and county where significant effects on the environment may occur. A copy of this final EIR is available for review at the City of Hollister Planning Division, 339 Fifth Street, Hollister.

1.2 Purpose of Public Review

CEQA Guidelines section 15200 indicates that the purposes of the public review process include the following:

- sharing expertise;
- disclosing agency analysis;
- checking for accuracy;
- detecting omissions;
- discovering public concerns; and
- soliciting counter proposals.

In compliance with CEQA public noticing requirements, the City of Hollister prepared a draft EIR for the proposed project that was circulated for public review from April 22, 2026 to June 5, 2026. The City received a total of 14 comment letters: one (1) from a public agency and 13 from members of the public.

1.3 Final EIR

This final EIR has been prepared to address timely comments received on the draft EIR in the manner specified in the Notice of Completion/Availability and, together with the draft EIR, constitutes the complete *Meridian Village Subdivision and Multifamily Development Final EIR*. This final EIR is organized into the following sections:

- Section 1 - introduction to the final EIR;
- Section 2 - list of persons, organizations, and public agencies that commented on the draft EIR, written comments on the draft EIR and the responses to those comments; and
- Section 3 - list of changes to the draft EIR made primarily in response to comments.

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2.0
Draft EIR Comments and Responses

2.1 CEQA Requirements

CEQA Guidelines section 15132(c) requires that a final EIR contain a list of persons, organizations, and public agencies that have commented on the draft EIR. A list of the correspondence received during the public review period is presented below.

CEQA Guidelines sections 15132(b) and 15132(d) require that a final EIR contain the comments that raise significant environmental points in the review and consultation process, and written responses to those comments. A copy of each comment letter or other form of correspondence received during the public review period is provided, with each letter identified by a number at the top of the first page. Individual comments to which responses are provided are numbered along the left margin in each letter. Responses corresponding to the numbered comments are presented immediately following each letter.

Where required, revisions have been made to the text or graphics of the draft EIR in response to comments. Comments that trigger changes to the draft EIR are so noted as part of the response.

2.2 Written Comments on the Draft EIR

The City received written comments from the following agencies and members of the public during the public review period:

1. Bonnie Wells, May 13, 2026;
2. Julie A. Vance, Regional Manager, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, May 21, 2026 (CDFW);
3. Raul Corpus, May 26, 2026;
4. M. Colosky, June 1, 2026;
5. Laura Colosky, June 1, 2026;
6. Tatiana Gutierrez, June 1, 2026;
7. Kathleen Smith, June 1, 2026;

8. Rene Lopez, June 1, 2026;
9. Patti Knoblich, June 2, 2026;
10. Susan Whitehead, June 2, 2026;
11. Jim Whitehead, June 2, 2026;
12. Valerie Westerdale, June 3, 2026;
13. Valerie Kemp, June 4, 2026;
14. Pete and Jennifer Duran, June 5, 2026; and
15. California Public Utilities Commission, July 24, 2026.

Comments and responses to comments on environmental topics are provided on the following pages.

Comment Letter #1

From: LONNIE WELLS [redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2026 8:15 AM
To: LONNIE WELLS
Cc: Magda Gonzalez (4Leaf)
Subject: Meridian Village

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

You don't often get email from [redacted]. Learn why this is important

Magda,

1 I am sending this email to you regarding the above listed project. After reveiwing the project site plans, traffic and etc., I have a concern. The new extension of Vintage Street creates a major traffic hazard that needs to be addressed. This intersecton for traffic and hunan safety needs to be a 4-way stop with painted crosswalks. There will be increased number of children and adults who will need to cross it to get to schools, Highway 25 and the donwtown area. I often need to enter Meridian from Vintage. Its always dangrous as the drivers are speeding and you cannot see the street adequately without nearly pulling out into the north side traffic lane. I addressed this issue at the Safe Streets meeting held last night at the Veterans Memorial Building with staff and consultants.

Thank you for your time to address this dangerous issue.

Bonnie Wells

Response to Letter 1 – Bonnie Wells

1. This comment is regarding traffic hazards and pedestrian safety.

   The transportation analysis (Appendix H of the initial study, which is included in Appendix A of the draft EIR) concluded that the intersection of Vintage Way and Meridian Street would operate at a level of service C or better under project conditions; therefore, queuing and operational issues are not expected to occur at the Vintage Way site access point (p. 39). However, the transportation analysis also states that development of the proposed project will increase non-vehicular travel to and from land uses surrounding the project, including nearby schools. Therefore, the transportation analysis recommends that the project install a crosswalk at the intersection of Vintage Way and Meridian Street.

   This topic was addressed in the initial study on page 74, which states that the transportation analysis concludes that the project should contribute towards the implementation of crosswalks and curb ramps at the intersection of Vintage Way and Meridian Street, which would provide an alternative and more direct route between the project site and destinations to the east of the site. This safety improvement will be included as a mitigation measure in the final EIR. Refer to Section 3.0, Changes to the Draft EIR, of this final EIR.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
MEGHAN HERTEL, Director

1234 East Shaw Avenue
Fresno, California 93710
(559) 243-4005
wildlife.ca.gov

May 21, 2026

Magda Gonzalez, Contract Senior Planner
City of Hollister
Community Development Department
339 Fifth Street, Hollister, California 95023
(925) 789-7160
mgonzalez.4leaf@hollister.ca.gov

Subject: Meridian Village Subdivision and Multifamily Development (Project)
Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)
SCH No.: 2025121246

Dear Magda Gonzalez:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) received a DEIR from City of Hollister for the above-referenced Project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and CEQA Guidelines.[1]

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations regarding those activities involved in the Project that may affect California fish and wildlife. Likewise, CDFW appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding those aspects of the Project that CDFW, by law, may be required to carry out or approve through the exercise of its own regulatory authority under Fish and Game Code.

1 CDFW originally submitted comments to the City of Hollister for the Project Notice of Preparation (NOP) on February 9, 2026, and provided recommendations pertaining to a habitat assessment and surveys for Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*; CBB). CDFW also recommended the special-status bat measures from the Project's rescinded Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) be included in the DEIR to mitigate for potential impacts to special-status bats. After a review of the DEIR, CDFW acknowledges the results of the CBB habitat assessment and survey and determination in the DEIR that CBB are absent from the Project site, and appreciates the inclusion of mitigation

[1] CEQA is codified in the California Public Resources Code in section 21000 et seq. The "CEQA Guidelines" are found in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, commencing with section 15000.

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1 measures for special-status bats in the DEIR. CDFW has no additional comments at this time.

ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

2 CEQA requires that information developed in environmental impact reports and negative declarations be incorporated into a database, which may be used to make subsequent or supplemental environmental determinations (Pub. Resources Code, § 21003, subd. (e)). Accordingly, please report any special-status species and natural communities detected during Project surveys to the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB). The CNDDB field survey form can be found at the following link: https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDB/Submitting-Data. The completed form can be mailed electronically to CNDDB at the following email address: CNDDB@wildlife.ca.gov. The types of information reported to CNDDB can be found at the following link: https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDB/Plants-and-Animals.

FILING FEES

3 The Project, as proposed, would have an impact on fish and/or wildlife, and assessment of filing fees is necessary. Fees are payable upon filing of the Notice of Determination by the Lead Agency and serve to help defray the cost of environmental review by CDFW. Payment of the fee is required in order for the underlying project approval to be operative, vested, and final (Cal. Code Regs, tit. 14, § 753.5; Fish & G. Code, § 711.4; Pub. Resources Code, § 21089).

CONCLUSION

CDFW appreciates the opportunity to comment on the DEIR to assist City of Hollister in identifying and mitigating this Project's impacts on biological resources.

More information on survey and monitoring protocols for sensitive species can be found at CDFW's website (https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Survey-Protocols). Questions regarding this letter or further coordination should be directed to Evelyn Barajas-Perez, Environmental Scientist, at (805) 503-5738 or evelyn.barajas-perez@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:
Julie Vance
FA83F09FE08945A...

Julie A. Vance
Regional Manager

ec: State Clearinghouse
Governor's Office of Planning and Research
State.Clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov

Response to Letter 2 – Julie A. Vance, Regional Manager, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)

1. This comment is regarding the draft EIR adequately addressing the commenter's concerns regarding Crotch's bumble bee and special-status bat species.

   Acknowledged. The comment does not raise an environmental issue with the draft EIR. Therefore, no response is required. No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

2. This comment provides general requirements associated with sending environmental analyses into a database and requests that any special-status species and natural communities detected during the biological field surveys be sent to the California Natural Diversity Database.

   Acknowledged. The biologist did not identify any special-status species or natural communities during the site investigation and therefore, no report to the CNDDB occurred. If special-status species are identified during the pre-construction surveys, they should be reported to the CNDDB. No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

3. This comment discusses filing fees associated with the future notice of determination that will be required.

   It is acknowledged that filing the notice of determination includes filing the fees. No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

From: [redacted]
To: Magda Gonzalez (4Leaf)
Cc: Planning Dept; City Clerk COH; Roxanne Stephens - Mayor; Rudy Picha - District 1; Rolan Resendiz D2; Dolores Morales D3; Priscilla De Anda - District 4
Subject: Formal Public Comment on the Draft EIR for the Meridian Village Subdivision Project
Date: Tuesday, May 26, 2026 7:03:04 PM

You don't often get email from [redacted] Learn why this is important

Dear Mayor, Council Members, and Ms. Gonzalez,

As a resident directly impacted by the proposed Meridian Village development (APN 054-600-005), I am writing to submit my formal objection to this project. After reviewing the Public Review Draft EIR (April 2026) and the associated Initial Study, it is clear that this project presents unacceptable risks to our community's safety, health, and infrastructure that cannot be mitigated.

I strongly urge the City Council to reject the proposed project and instead adopt the "No Project Alternative" for the following reasons documented in the EIR:

1. **Significant and Unavoidable Traffic Impacts (EIR Section 5.0)**
The EIR confirms that the project will result in a Significant and Unavoidable impact on Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT).

1
- **Failed Thresholds:** The project's VMT is calculated at 22.76 per capita, which drastically exceeds the City's significance threshold of 18.79 (Draft EIR, p. 24).
- **No Solution:** The EIR explicitly states there are "no feasible mitigation measures" to reduce this traffic impact (Draft EIR, pp. 24, 44). Approving this would willfully ignore the state-mandated goals for reducing congestion and emissions on the already failing State Route 25 corridor.

2. **Documented Health Risks to Neighbors (Initial Study Section 3.c)**
The City's own study admits that this project poses a "potentially significant health risk impact" to current residents living immediately west of the site (Appendix A, p. 40).

2
- **Toxic Air Contaminants (TACs):** Construction will expose our families to diesel particulate matter (DPM). While the developer proposes an Air Quality Construction Mitigation Plan (AQ-1), the EIR admits that these are toxic air contaminants linked to cancer and neurological damage (Appendix A, pp. 40-41). Our neighborhood should not be a testing ground for these risks.

3. **Overburdened Utilities and Services**
The EIR flags that the City's Water Reclamation Facility may not have the capacity to serve this project (Draft EIR, p. 24, Section 2.0, UTIL-1).

3
- **The Financial Burden:** It is irresponsible to approve a 219-unit development when basic utility capacity is not guaranteed, potentially leading to service degradation for existing residents. The City recently approved a 30% "bridge" increase to our water bills specifically to close a multimillion-dollar deficit in the water fund.
- **Unfair Subsidization:** It is a direct insult to the tax-paying residents of Hollister to demand we pay more to stabilize a struggling system while simultaneously trying to approve a project that will introduce 723 new consumers into a network that may not even have the capacity to serve them. Existing residents are being asked to subsidize the stability of the system, yet this project will place an even greater strain on that exact infrastructure.

Conclusion
4 The EIR proves that this project is "environmentally inferior" to the No Project Alternative. The developer's desire for profit does not outweigh our right to a safe, healthy, and functional neighborhood. I request that the City Council honor the data in this EIR and deny the application for the Meridian Village Subdivision.

Sincerely,

Raul Corpus
[redacted]
Hollister, CA 95023

Response to Letter 3 – Raul Corpus

1. This comment is regarding the potential significant and unavoidable vehicle miles traveled (VMT) impact in the draft EIR.

   Section 5.0, Transportation -Vehicle Miles Traveled, does conclude that feasible mitigation measures are not available to reduce the VMT impact to a less-than-significant level. However, a mitigation measure has been added that requires the applicant to prepare a transportation demand management plan and implementation of any feasible measures that could reduce the VMT impact. See Section 3.0, Changes to the Draft EIR. Implementation of this mitigation measure would not reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level resulting in the impact remaining significant and unavoidable. The addition of this new mitigation measure does not require recirculation of the draft EIR, as it does not raise a new significant environmental impact or does not result in a substantial increase in the severity of an environmental impact (CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5).

   As discussed in Section 7.0, Significant and Unavoidable Impacts, the City Council will be required to adopt a statement of overriding considerations for this impact.

2. This comment is regarding potential impacts associated with air quality to residents in the vicinity of the project as described in the initial study.

   As described in the initial study under Section D.3, Air Quality, checklist question "c," pages 26 and 27, which is included as Appendix A of the draft EIR, and as described in the draft EIR under Section 9.3, Cumulative Analysis-Air Quality, pages 9-4 through 9-6, implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-1 would reduce the potential exposure of sensitive receptors to temporary construction toxic air contaminants ensuring that health risks from potential exposures to construction TAC emissions would be less than significant. Mitigation Measure AQ-1 reflects the air district's best management practices to reduce potential TAC emissions exposures.

   No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

3. This comment is regarding capacity of the City's Water Reclamation Facility.

   City staff have confirmed that the 12-inch water main that runs along Meridian Street would be able to serve the project. Additionally, the City has determined that there is sufficient capacity to serve the project (Magda Gonzalez, email message, July 28, 2026) as required by Mitigation Measure UTIL-1.

   No change to the draft EIR is necessary

4. This comment is regarding the No Project alternative.

   This comment is acknowledged. The No Project Alternative is discussed in Section 10.0, Alternatives, of the draft EIR. No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

From: m colosky [redacted]
Sent: Monday, June 1, 2026 1:38 PM
To: Magda Gonzalez (4Leaf)
Subject: Meridian Village Project

[You don't often get email from [redacted]. Learn why this is important at https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification]

1 Please STOP this project, I live down the spree and traffic on Hwy 25 will be ultimately worse. Our infrastructure is not ready for this large project. STOP, STOP and mercy for all commuters,

Concerned home owner

Sent from my iPad

Response to Letter 4 – M Colosky

1. This comment is regarding traffic on SR 25.

   Level of service (LOS) analyses, which evaluate the quality of service and operational conditions of a roadway or intersection (i.e., traffic congestion) as experienced by travelers, are no longer required to be evaluated under CEQA. However, the transportation consultant prepared a transportation analysis, which included a LOS analysis, as requested by the City, for transportation planning purposes. This analysis can be found in Appendix H of the initial study, which is included as Appendix A of the draft EIR. The transportation analysis evaluated the following intersections along State Route (SR) 25:

   - San Felipe Road and SR 25;
   - SR 25 and Santa Ana Road;
   - SR 25 and Meridian Street;
   - SR 25 and Hillcrest Road;
   - SR 25 and East Park Street; and
   - SR 25 and Sunnyslope Road/Tres Pinos Road.

   Table 6, Intersection Level of Service Results, of the transportation analysis summarizes the levels of service at each of these intersections and shows that under the Background Plus Project Intersection Operations Conditions (i.e., projects approved by the City but not yet constructed, plus the proposed project if approved), these intersections would continue to operate at acceptable levels of service, based upon Caltrans standards. Additionally, the transportation analysis concludes that under the Year 2045 Plus Project Intersection Operation Conditions, each of these intersections associated with SR 25 are projected to operate at acceptable levels of service during both the AM and PM peak hours.

   According to Table 6 of the transportation analysis, travelers on SR 25 at the various intersections associated with SR 25 will wait about 0.3 seconds to 1.5 seconds longer under Background Plus Project conditions compared to Background conditions.

   No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

From: Laura Colosky [redacted]
Sent: Monday, June 1, 2026 1:54 PM
To: Magda Gonzalez (4Leaf)
Subject: Meridian village

[You don't often get email from [redacted]. Learn why this is important at https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification]

1 This project needs to be stopped. The project will not be good for our city. The infrastructure will not support this development. Our city is already struggling with traffic and the water reclamation cannot handle the sewer system. Your attention to this situation is appreciated.

Sincerely,
Laura

Response to Letter 5 – Laura Colosky

1. This comment is regarding traffic and the water reclamation system.

   See response to letter 4, comment 1 regarding traffic impacts on SR 25. See response to letter 3, comment 3 regarding Water Reclamation Facility impacts.

   No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

From: Itaty Gutierrez [redacted]
Sent: Monday, June 1, 2026 1:59 PM
To: Magda Gonzalez (4Leaf); Planning Dept; City Clerk COH
Subject: Formal Public Comment on the Draft EIR for the Meridian Village Subdivision Project

You don't often get email from [redacted]. Learn why this is important

Dear City Clerk,

I am a Hollister resident and would like to submit the following comment regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Meridian Village Subdivision Project.

1 I am concerned about the potential impacts this project may have on our community, particularly regarding traffic congestion, water and wastewater infrastructure capacity, and public health impacts during construction. I respectfully request that the City carefully review these concerns and ensure that all environmental impacts are fully addressed before any approvals are considered.

2 As our community continues to grow, it is important that infrastructure and public services keep pace with development to maintain the quality of life for current and future residents.

Thank you for considering my comments and for your service to the City of Hollister.

Sincerely,

Tatiana Gutierrez
Hollister Resident

Sent from my iPhone

Response to Letter 6 – Tatiana Gutierrez

1. This comment is regarding traffic congestion, water and wastewater infrastructure capacity, and construction-related public health impacts.

   See response to letter 4, comment 1 regarding traffic congestion. See response to letter 3, comment 3 regarding the Water Reclamation Facility. See response to letter 3, comment 2 regarding public health and potential exposure to toxic air contaminants during construction activities.

   Regarding water infrastructure, the proposed project does include expanding the water distribution system onto the project site, which is addressed in the project description and in Section D.19.0, Utilities and Service Systems, of the initial study (Appendix A of the draft EIR). Implementation of the requirements outlined in City Municipal Code Chapter 13.08, Water Service System, as well as the applicable mitigation measures identified throughout the initial study (e.g., mitigation measures outlined in the following sections of the initial study: biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, noise, etc.) would ensure impacts associated with expanding the water facilities onto the project site would be less than significant.

   No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

2. This comment is regarding infrastructure and public services.

   Utilities are addressed in Section D.19.0, Utilities and Services Systems in the initial study and public services are addressed in Section D.15.0, Public Services, of the initial study.

   No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

From: Kathleen Smith [redacted]
Sent: Monday, June 1, 2026 7:11 PM
To: Planning Dept
Subject: Meridian & Hwy 25 project

[You don't often get email from [redacted]. Learn why this is important at https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification]

1 Please review report on community impact. Need to slow down and reassess “what & when”!!
With Kindness,
Kathleen

Sent from my iPhone

Response to Letter 7 – Kathleen Smith

1. This comment is regarding the report on community impact.

   The comment does not raise an environmental issue. Therefore, no response is required.

   No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

From: Rene Lopez [redacted]
Sent: Monday, June 1, 2026 9:49 PM
To: Magda Gonzalez (4Leaf)
Cc: Planning Dept; City Clerk COH
Subject: Formal Public Comment on the Draft EIR for the Meridian Village Subdivision Project

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [redacted] Learn why this is important

1 I'm writing to express my disapproval of the planned housing development, Meridian Village Project, at Meridian & Hwy 25 and demand the project be reevaluated and subsequently disapproved in light of the facts stated in the Environmental Impact Report.

2 The EIR has clearly pointed out the significant impact to traffic congestion on Highway 25, with apparently no feasible mitigation measures. A sizable segment of Hollister residents pass the proposed project site to and from work, five days a week. Those residents include not only adults but children walking and riding bicycles to and from school. Disregarding the well being of those residents for the benefit of a developer is a blatant disregard for what should be the number one priority of a public official, the safety of the general public.

3 The questionable capacity of the water reclamation facility to accommodate these new residents was identified as a potential failing. The residents already pay an extraordinary price for water. Forcing residents to now live under a cloud of a questionable water supply is asking too much given the expense of water we residents currently carry.

4 I understand we're mandated by the state to increase our housing capacity but we should not do so to the detriment of the community. This project needs to be stopped. It is harmful to the community, and furthering the project in complete and willful ignorance of the warnings stated in the EIR is a dereliction of your responsibilities as a city official to protect the well being of the general public and the residents of Hollister. Stop proceeding with the project.

Response to Letter 8 – Rene Lopez

1. This comment states the commenter's disapproval of the project.

   The comment does not raise an environmental issue with regard to the analysis in the draft EIR. Therefore, no response is required.

   No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

2. This comment is regarding traffic congestion on SR 25 and bicycle and pedestrian safety.

   The draft EIR does not identify a significant impact related to traffic congestion on SR 25. Traffic congestion, evaluated in the form of a level of service analysis, is no longer required under CEQA. The draft EIR does identify a significant vehicle miles traveled (VMT) impact.

   See response to letter 4, comment 1 regarding the project's effect on traffic congestion on SR 25. See also response to letter 1, comment 1 regarding transportation safety and crosswalks. Additionally, Section D.17, Transportation, of the initial study, as well as the transportation analysis (Appendix H of the initial study, which is included in Appendix A of the draft EIR) evaluates the effects of the project on other transportation issues related to on-site access, on-site circulation, sight distance, and pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities in the immediate area of the project.

   No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

3. This comment is regarding the Water Reclamation Facility and water supply.

   See response to letter 3, comment 3 regarding the Water Reclamation Facility.

   Regarding water supply, which is a separate issue from the wastewater that is conveyed to the City's Water Reclamation Facility, Section D.10, Hydrology and Water Quality, checklist question "b" of the initial study (Appendix A of the draft EIR) concludes that the San Benito County Water District's projected water supplies through 2040 can meet demands and the project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies.

   No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

4. This comment is regarding the state's housing mandate and findings of the draft EIR.

   The comment does not raise an environmental issue with regard to the analysis in the draft EIR. Therefore, no response is required.

   No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

From: Patti Knoblich Gonzales [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, June 2, 2026 11:18 AM
To: Magda Gonzalez (4Leaf)
Subject: New meridian project

[You don't often get email from [redacted]. Learn why this is important at https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification]

1 Sent from my iPhone I am hoping you will deny this project. Tremendous traffic impact. And where are they getting their water……? Please do your best to perused the other members of the board to NOT approve this plan. Patti Knoblich

Response to Letter 9 – Patti Knoblich

1. This comment is regarding traffic and water.

   See response to letter 4, comment 1 regarding traffic impacts. Regarding water sources for the project, refer to Section D.10, Hydrology and Water Quality, as well as Section D.19, Utilities and Service Systems, of the initial study (Appendix A of the draft EIR). Both locations discuss that the City uses both imported water from the Central Valley Project and groundwater from the San Benito Groundwater Basin for its public water supply.

   No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

From: Sue Whitehead [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, June 2, 2026 2:16 PM
To: Magda Gonzalez (4Leaf)
Cc: City Clerk COH; Planning Dept
Subject: Formal Public Comment on the Draft EIR for the Meridian Village subdivision project

You don't often get email from [redacted] Learn why this is important

Dear Sir

Following the release of the Environmental Impact Report (for the massive Meridian Village development)

1 (Meridian & Highway25), the reading of it is alarming. The traffic will be far worse and the EIR states that there are no feasible litigation measures to fix the bottleneck it will cause.It

2 also flags the fact that the Water Reclamation Facility might not handle these 723 new residents.

It also states that the construction will expose families immediately to the west of the site to toxic air components linked to cancer and neurological damage.

3

This is absolute madness and **I demand that the City Council reject this project.** It makes no sense to proceed.

Regards

Susan Whitehead
[redacted]
Hollister
Ca 95023

From: Sue Whitehead
To: Magda Gonzalez (4Leaf); City Clerk COH; Planning Dept
Subject: Formal Public Comment on the Draft EIR for the Meridian Village Subdivision Project
Date: Tuesday, June 2, 2026 2:08:32 PM

You don't often get email from suewhitehead47@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Dear Sir

4 Following the release of the Environmental Impact Report (for the massive Meridian Village development)
(Meridian & Highway25), the reading of it is alarming. The traffic will be far worse and the EIR states that there are no feasible litigation measures to fix the bottleneck it will cause.It also flags the fact that the Water Reclamation Facility might not handle these 723 new residents.
It also states that the construction will expose families immediately to the west of the site to toxic air components linked to cancer and neurological damage.

This is absolute madness and **I demand that the City Council reject this project.**

Regards

Susan Whitehead

Response to Letter 10 – Susan Whitehead

1. This comment is regarding traffic.

   See response to letter 4, comment 1 regarding traffic impacts.

   No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

2. This comment is regarding the Water Reclamation Facility.

   See response to letter 3, comment 3 regarding the Water Reclamation Facility.

   No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

3. This comment is regarding potential construction-related exposure to toxic air contaminants (TAC).

   See response to letter 3, comment 2 regarding potential exposures to construction TAC emissions.

   No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

4. The commenter submitted the same comment with the same language as those identified in the comments above.

   See responses to comments 1 through 3.

   No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

From: James Whitehead [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, June 2, 2026 5:25 PM
To: Magda Gonzalez (4Leaf)
Cc: Planning Dept; City Clerk COH
Subject: Formal Public Comment on the Draft EIR for the Meridian Village Subdivision Project

You don't often get email from [redacted]. Learn why this is important

1 Having read the environmental impact report, regarding the Meridian Village Development, the data is absolutely alarming. It is going to affect the traffic in the worst way. The EIR states there is no way to fix the bottleneck that it will cause. Regarding the water reclamation facility, they will be unable to handle the number of new residents since they can't cope now.

2 We are also appalled at the health risks in the people to the West of the development that will be exposed to toxic air contaminants linked to cancel and neurological damage. The study admits that these people will be exposed.

I demand that this project is rejected by the city council.

Regards, Jim Whitehead
[redacted] Hollister CA 95023

Response to Letter 11 – Jim Whitehead

1. This comment is regarding traffic and the Water Reclamation Facility.

   See response to letter 4, comment 1 regarding traffic impacts. See response to letter 3, comment 3 regarding the Water Reclamation Facility.

   No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

2. This comment is regarding potential to toxic air contaminants (TAC).

   See response to letter 3, comment 2 regarding potential exposures to construction TAC emissions.

   No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

From: Valerie Westerdale [redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, June 3, 2026 2:58 PM
To: Magda Gonzalez (4Leaf)
Subject: Stop the Meridian Project

[You don't often get email from [redacted]. Learn why this is important at https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification]

1 HWY 25 is all ready a nightmare!
Our infrastructure isn't coping now.
As long standing residents, we are already paying the price of all this continuous growth.
Valerie Westerdale
Sent from my iPhone

Response to Letter 12 – Valerie Westerdale

1. This comment is regarding SR 25.

   See response to letter 4, comment 1 regarding traffic impacts on SR 25.

   No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

From: Valerie Kemp [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, June 4, 2026 9:34 PM
To: Planning Dept
Subject: Meridian housing project

[You don't often get email from [redacted]. Learn why this is important at https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification]

1 Hello I'm a resident who owns their home in Hollister. I reject this new project. It will take a lot of the infrastructure that we do not have to offer to 700+ families. We are being charged now 30% more for water and sewage, our roads are not prepared for more people, and Highway 25 by your own admission, is unable to handle the extra people. My name is Valerie Kemp I live at [redacted]. As a resident in Hollister who owns a home I feel that this is a bad project to become involved with.
Sent from my iPhone

Response to Letter 13 – Valerie Kemp

1. This comment is regarding traffic impacts to SR 25 and costs for water and wastewater.

   See response to letter 4, comment 1 regarding traffic impacts on SR 25. The remaining of the comment letter does not raise an environmental issue. Therefore, no further response is required.

   No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

From: Jenny Duran [redacted]
Sent: Friday, June 5, 2026 1:52 PM
To: Magda Gonzalez (4Leaf)
Cc: Planning Dept; City Clerk COH
Subject: Formal Public Comment on the Draft EIR for the Meridian Village Subdivision Project

[You don't often get email from [redacted]. Learn why this is important at https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification]

1 Based on the City's Environmental Impact Report we are respectfully requesting the City Council reject this project.

Pete and Jennifer Duran
Hollister, CA

Sent from my iPad

Response to Letter 14 – Pete and Jennifer Duran

1. This comment states opposition to the project.

   The comment does not raise a specific environmental issue with regard to the analysis in the draft EIR. Therefore, no response is required.

   No change to the draft EIR is necessary.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA Gavin Newsom, Governor

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102

July 24, 2026

ENVR 20260400015

Magda Gonzalez, Senior Planner
City of Hollister Community Development Department
339 Fifth Street
Hollister, CA 95023

Re: Environmental Impact Report for the proposed Meridian Village (Subdivision and Multifamily Development). Project SCH# 2025121246.

Dear Magda Gonzalez:

The California Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC/Commission) Rail Crossing Engineering Branch (RCEB) is taking this opportunity to address the City of Hollister's (City) Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Meridian Village (Subdivision and Multifamily Development). RCEB staff offers the following comments:

Commission Requirements and Policy

The Commission has jurisdiction over the safety of highway-rail crossings (crossings) in California. The Commission has exclusive power over the design, alteration, and closure of crossings, pursuant to Public Utilities Code Section 1201 et al. Pursuant to Commission Rules of Practice and Procedure, Rule 3.9, an application to the Commission is required to construct a railroad crossing on a public road. The Meridian Village project is subject to several other Commission rules and regulations. The proposed project's design criteria will need to comply with the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and Commission General Orders (GO's). The following GO's, among others, may be applicable:

- GO 26-D (regulations governing clearances on railroads and street railroads with reference to side and overhead structures, parallel tracks, and the crossing of public roads, highways, and streets)
- GO 72-B (rules governing the construction and maintenance of crossings at grade of railroads with public streets, roads, and highways)
- GO 75-D (regulations governing standards for warning devices for at-grade highway-rail crossings)
- GO 88-B (rules for altering public highway-rail crossings)
- GO 95 (rules for overhead electric line construction)
- GO 118 (regulations governing the construction, reconstruction, and maintenance of walkways adjacent to railroad trackage and the control of vegetation adjacent thereto).

Specific Project Comments

According to the project documentation, the City of Hollister is evaluating a proposed project to subdivide a 12.75-acre parcel into five lots, accommodating a total of 219 residential units (90 apartments and 129 condominiums). Lot 1 will be 89,104 square feet and will include five apartment buildings (18 units each), a 16,170-square-foot recreation center, and a private park area. Lots 2 through 5 will be developed with townhome-style buildings for the 129 condominium units.

The site is located in close proximity to the following Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) crossings, which will absorb the primary vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian impacts from the development:

Crossing Name	**CPUC Number**	**DOT Number**
Meridian St / 4th St	001EB-11.75	752418E
South St / Hillcrest Rd	001EB-12.30	752422U

The introduction of 219 residential units will significantly increase pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular activity near the active UPRR Hollister Industrial Lead. The Meridian Street/4th Street and South St./Hillcrest Road crossings are of particular concern due to their direct proximity to the project site and their anticipated roles as primary routing paths for local traffic heading toward the downtown area and the broader highway network.

RCEB recommends that the City conduct a thorough traffic study to identify trip generation from the development, potential traffic routes to and from the freeway access, increases in traffic volumes, and impacts on traffic and queues over each railroad crossing, specifically prioritizing the Meridian Street/4th Street and South St./Hillcrest Road crossings. The traffic study can be used to determine needed modifications to any roadways and their geometry, traffic signal system upgrades, including implementing or updating railroad preemption for queue mitigation, as well as modifications to UPRR crossings. This must include considering pedestrian circulation patterns or destinations with respect to railroad right-of-way and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Mitigation measures to consider include, but are not limited to, the planning for grade separations, improvements to existing at-grade crossings due to increases in traffic volumes, and continuous vandal-resistant fencing or other appropriate barriers to limit the access of trespassers onto the railroad ROW.

Field Diagnostic meetings are required at all impacted crossings. The Field Diagnostic Team consists of staff and representatives from the City, the CPUC, UPRR, and other

stakeholders. This review includes a detailed analysis of the crossing. During the field diagnostic review, the Field Diagnostic Team evaluates appropriate hazard elimination recommendations and determines whether the project's development is feasible.

Any proposed crossing improvement project, including signal timing modifications and full or partial pedestrian treatments, will require authorization from the Commission under CPUC General Order 88-B (GO 88-B) and must also conform to the goals of the CPUC's Environmental and Social Justice Action Plan.

The Commission is the responsible agency under CEQA section 15381 regarding this project. As such, we greatly appreciate the opportunity to work with the City to improve public safety at crossings. We request that RCEB be kept informed of all developments associated with the Meridian Village (Subdivision and Multifamily Development). Meetings should be arranged with the Commission's RCEB staff to discuss relevant safety issues and conduct diagnostic reviews of any proposed and impacted crossing locations within the proposed project.

If you have any questions, please contact Eyitejumade "Ade" Sogbesan via email at es3@cpuc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Eyitejumade “Ade” Sogbesan
Utilities Engineer
California Public Utilities Commission
Rail Safety Division
Rail Crossings and Engineering Branch

CC:
State Clearinghouse, state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov
Amber Stoffels, amber.stoffels@up.com

Letter 15 – California Public Utilities Commission (Late)

The California Public Utilities Commission submitted a comment letter on July 24, 2026, which is 49 days after the close of the public review period. Therefore, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15207, the City need not respond to the late comment. The comment letter has been included in the administrative record for informational purposes only.

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3.0
Changes to the Draft EIR

3.1 CEQA Requirements

CEQA Guidelines section 15132 requires that a final EIR contain either the draft EIR or a revision of the draft EIR. This final EIR incorporates the draft EIR by reference and includes revisions to the draft EIR made primarily in response to comments included in Section 2.0, Response to Comments.

This section contains text from the draft EIR with changes indicated. Additions to the text are shown with underlined text (underline) and deletions are shown with strikethrough text (~~strikethrough~~). The changes are described below.

3.2 Changes to Section 2.0, Summary

Page 2-8

The following addition in a transportation mitigation measure has been made to Table 2.1, Summary of Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures:

Transportation			
Project could conflict with a policy addressing pedestrian facilities	Significant	**TRA-1.** The developer shall include crosswalks and curb ramps at the intersection of Vintage Way and Meridian Street. This improvement shall be incorporated into the subdivision improvement plans, prior to approval of the final map. Subject to review and approval by the Public Works Department, the improvements shall be implemented prior to issuance of an occupancy permit.	No Impact
Project VMT of 22.76 per capita would exceed the VMT threshold of significance of 18.79 VMT per capita (15% below countywide average)	Significant	~~No feasible mitigation measures~~ **5-1.** Prior to issuance of a grading permit, the project developer shall prepare a transportation demand management plan, which targets a reduction in residential vehicle trips to and from the project site. This plan shall be prepared in coordination with, and require approval by, the Hollister Engineering Division. The measures outlined in the transportation demand management plan shall reduce the vehicle miles traveled impact to the degree feasible. Once the transportation demand management plan is approved by the Engineering Division, the measures chosen to feasibly reduce vehicle miles traveled shall be incorporated into the grading and building plans, and implemented, as appropriate.	Significant and Unavoidable

3.3 Changes to Section 5.0, Transportation (VMT)

Page 5-5

The following discussion and mitigation measure is included at the bottom of page 5-5, before the start of the paragraph stating, "General Plan policies listed above in Section 5.2, Regulatory Setting, would apply…"

However, projects are required to implement mitigation measures that reduce impacts to the greatest feasible extent possible even if the impact remains significant. Therefore, the following mitigation measure is required:

Mitigation Measure

5-1 Prior to issuance of a grading permit, the project developer shall prepare a transportation demand management plan, which targets a reduction in residential vehicle trips to and from the project site. This plan shall be prepared in coordination with, and require approval by, the Hollister Engineering Division. The measures outlined in the transportation demand management plan shall reduce the vehicle miles traveled impact to the degree feasible. Once the transportation demand management plan is approved by the Engineering Division, the measures chosen to feasibly reduce vehicle miles traveled shall be incorporated into the grading and building plans, and implemented, as appropriate.

Implementation of the abovementioned mitigation measure would reduce the VMT impact but not to a less-than-significant level.

Page 5-6

The following changes will occur:

The proposed project would need to implement further VMT reduction measures as mitigations to achieve a 17.4 percent reduction in VMT per capita to reduce its impacts to less than significant levels. According to the transportation analysis, the maximum reduction possible is 20 percent, resulting in 18.21 VMT per capita (Hexagon Transportation Consultants, Inc. 2024, p. 11). The transportation analysis further states that achieving the identified maximum VMT reduction is not feasible for the residential uses of the proposed project due to the limited alternative modes of transportation and supporting employment land uses within Hollister (p. 11 and p. 44). Therefore, the project's impact to VMT, even with implementation of Mitigation Measure 5-1, would be significant and unavoidable.

Conclusion

Implementation of a transportation demand management plan (as described in Mitigation Measure 5-1) would not reduce the VMT impact to a less-than-significant level. The project will still generate a VMT per capita that exceeds the threshold of significance. This is a significant impact.

VMT reduction measures have been investigated, but their implementation is deemed to be unachievable due to Hollister's suburban-type location or infeasible. Therefore, the VMT impact is significant and unavoidable.

3.4 Changes to Section 6.0, California Department of Toxic Substances Control Comment Letter on NOP

Page 6-1

The following change is made to the title of this section:

6.0 ~~California Department of Toxic Substances Control Comment Letter on NOP~~ Changes to the Initial Study Attached to the NOP

Page 6-1

The following title is included as a sub-header to the section, placed just before the start of this text, "The topic of hazardous materials and its potential impacts associated with the proposed project were addressed in Section 9.0, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, of the initial study."

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Page 6-2

The following text regarding the topic of transportation is included after the discussion of hazardous materials:

Transportation

The topic of transportation and its potential impacts associated with the proposed project were addressed in Section 17.0, Transportation, of the initial study (included as Appendix A of the draft EIR). The transportation analysis (Appendix H of the initial study) evaluated operational issues at various intersections in the general vicinity of the project site as well as effects of the project on other transportation issues related to, among other topics, pedestrian facilities in the immediate area of the project site.

The transportation analysis and the initial study address the question, "Would the project conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit,

roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?" Regarding pedestrian facilities, page 74 of the initial study and page 49 of the transportation analysis identifies the potential safety impact to pedestrians and states that the project should contribute towards the implementation of crosswalks and curb ramps at the intersection of Vintage Way and Meridian Street.

As discussed on page 75 of the initial study, the project will be required to comply with General Plan Policy C2.3, Pedestrian Connections, which requires that new developments provide internal pedestrian connections and linkages to adjacent neighborhoods and community facilities. The initial study currently concludes, "Compliance with General Plan Policy C2.3 would ensure that the project's contribution to impacts associated with pedestrian facilities would be less than significant." This is revised to instead state the following:

Implementation of the following mitigation measure would ensure that the project does not conflict with General Plan Policy C2.3 associated with pedestrian facilities.

Mitigation Measure

TRA-1 The developer shall include crosswalks and curb ramps at the intersection of Vintage Way and Meridian Street. This improvement shall be incorporated into the subdivision improvement plans, prior to approval of the final map. Subject to review and approval by the Public Works Department, the improvements shall be implemented prior to issuance of an occupancy permit.

Secondary Environmental Impact

The potential environmental impacts associated with implementation of the above mitigation measure include air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, and noise impacts. However, these impacts would not be significant as discussed below.

The process for implementing crosswalks varies, but the process for a traditional painted or thermoplastic crosswalk involves crews preparing the area by sweeping or blowing way dust and debris; pre-marking the layout of the crosswalk using chalk and measuring tape; applying the thermoplastic material used for the lines of the crosswalk; and glass beads are sprayed ono the material to ensure some level of reflection at night.

The process of implementing curb ramps also varies, but generally consists of demolishing, excavating, and breaking up the sidewalk and curb with concrete saws and jackhammers; leveling and compacting the exposed ground using a plate compactor to prevent future settling and cracks; outlining the exact slopes and boundaries using stakes, hammers, string lines, and measuring levels; pouring of concrete into the forms and using plate compactors or hand tampers to ensure the asphalt is solid.

Air Quality

The implementation of crosswalks and curb ramps could result in the generation of construction-related emissions associated with construction vehicles and equipment, including temporary and limited localized emissions of diesel equipment exhaust. Construction would be short-term and is assumed to not violate any air quality standard or contribute to an existing violation during construction. As described in the initial study under Section D.3, Air Quality, checklist question "c," pages 26 and 27, implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-1 would reduce the potential exposure of sensitive receptors to temporary construction toxic air contaminants ensuring that health risks from potential exposures to construction TAC emissions would be less than significant. Mitigation Measure AQ-1 reflects the air district's best management practices to reduce potential TAC emissions exposures.

Operation of crosswalks and curb ramps would not result in air quality impacts.

Biological Resources

The implementation and operation of crosswalks would not result in impacts to biological resources.

The construction of curb ramps involves noise-generating ground-disturbance activities that could impact protected bird species and special-status bats, if present. Therefore, implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 and BIO-2, respectively, would ensure that potential impacts are reduced to a less-than-significant level. The operation of curb ramps would not result in impacts to biological resources.

Cultural Resources

The implementation of crosswalks would have no impact associated with cultural resources during construction or operation.

The construction of curb ramps would involve some ground disturbance; however, implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-1 and CUL-2 would ensure that impacts associated with significant historic or unique archaeological resources or undiscovered Native American human remains would be reduced to a less-than-significant level. The operation of curb ramps would not have an impact on cultural resources.

Geology and Soils

The implementation of crosswalks would have no impact associated with geology and soils during construction or operation.

The construction and operation of curb ramps could be impacted by the project site's presence of expansive soils. However, implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1, which requires that the project prepare a design-level geotechnical report, would ensure that any potential impacts associated with expansive soils would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The implementation of crosswalks and curb ramps could result in the generation of construction-related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. However, similar to air quality, the potential GHG emissions impacts resulting from the construction of crosswalks and curb ramps are assumed to be less than significant.

The operation of crosswalks and curb ramps would not generate GHG emissions and, therefore, would not result in GHG emissions impacts.

Noise

The construction of crosswalks and curb ramps could result in a short-term, significant increase in ambient noise levels at nearby noise sensitive land uses. However, construction noise is not generally considered to be a significant impact if construction is limited to the daytime hours. Compliance with General Plan Policy HS3.3, which regulates construction activity to reduce noise between 7:00 pm and 7:00 am would ensure that temporary construction noise levels are less than significant. Additionally, the construction of crosswalks and curb ramps would not generate excessive ground-borne vibration because, as concluded in Section D.12, Noise, checklist question "b," none of the vibration levels identified in Table VIII of the noise assessment that could be associated with the project (e.g., use of a jackhammer during construction of the curb ramps) are expected to exceed any significant threshold levels for damage.

The operation of crosswalks and curb ramps would not result in an increase in ambient noise or generate excessive ground-borne vibration.