



Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan Amendment

Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report SCH#1994107909

prepared by

City of Santa Maria

Community Development Department

110 South Pine Street, Suite 101

Santa Maria, California 93458

Contact: Ryan Hostetter, AICP, Planning Manager

prepared with the assistance of

Rincon Consultants, Inc.

1530 Monterey Street, Suite D

San Luis Obispo, California 93401

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Executive Summary

This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared as a Supplemental EIR to the City of Santa Maria *Final EIR for the Sphere of Influence Boundary Expansion and Concurrent Annexation Program* (1992), which included environmental review of the original Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, in accordance with Sections 15163 and 15168 of the *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines*. This section summarizes the characteristics of the proposed project, alternatives to the proposed project, and the environmental impacts and mitigation measures associated with the proposed project.

Project Synopsis

Project Applicant

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Lead Agency Contact Person

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Project Description

The project site covers the northern half (Area 5B) of the original Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan area. The project site is generally located at the southeast corner of Stowell Road and Blosser Road. The project site is bounded by Battles Road to the south, the Santa Maria Valley Railroad (SMVRR) tracks and Depot Street to the east, Blosser Road to the west, and Stowell Road to the north. Following the approval of the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, the Battles Channel was constructed and Battles Road was widened to its current configuration along the southern portion of the project site. The channel construction and roadway improvements reduced the developable area of the project site by approximately nine acres from the existing condition of 155 acres, resulting in the proposed site area of approximately 146 acres.

The project proposes amendments to the City's existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, General Plan and Zoning Code. Under the proposed Specific Plan, the project site would have land use designations of Neighborhood Commercial (NC), Low Medium Density Residential (LMDR-8), High Density Residential (HDR-22), Community Facilities (CF), and Recreation Open Space (ROS). The entire site would remain covered by the Planned Development overlay and zoning districts would be applied consistent with the land use designations. Figure 2-4 shows the proposed land use

designations. The proposed land use designations and their corresponding zoning are detailed in Table ES-1.

Table ES-1 Proposed Land Use and Zoning Designations

Specific Plan Designation	Zoning	Approximate Acreage	Residential Development Potential
Low Medium Density Residential (LMDR-8)	PD/R-1	58 (8 du/ac)	464
High Density Residential (HDR-22)	PD/R-3	32 (22 du/ac)	704
Community Facilities (CF)	PD/PF	21	–
Recreation Open Space (ROS)	PD/OS	19	–
Neighborhood Commercial (NC)	PS/CC	10	–
Basin	None	6	–
Total		146	1,168

Notes: Approximately 9 acres were dedicated to the City for the Battles Road extension and Battles Channel that run along the southern boundary of the project site.

Source: Acquistapace Blosser-Southeast (Area 5B) Amended Specific Plan, November 2018

As shown in Table ES-1, the proposed land use designations and zoning would allow for development of up to 1,168 residential units on the project site, or an increase of 192 units from residential development potential under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. The proposed 10 acres of Neighborhood Commercial area would allow for development of approximately 130,000 square feet of retail uses comprised of small stores near an anchor store. The proposed commercial uses would have a maximum height of 45 feet, with pedestrian walkways, secondary screen and sound walls, and landscaping incorporated into the design. Loading dock areas would be screened, roofed, and enclosed when at all possible.

Project Objectives

The applicant's objectives for the project are as follows:

1. Provide development that expands on and complements the businesses along Blosser Road.
2. Provide coordinated residential, commercial, and school uses and amenities in one central location.
3. Provide safe pedestrian and bicycle connections to onsite commercial, recreational, school, and open space amenities.
4. Develop the property with a variety of housing types to attract diverse community income groups, and to assist the City in complying with State housing mandates.

Alternatives

As required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this Supplemental EIR examines alternatives to the proposed project. Studied alternatives include the following four alternatives. Based on the alternatives analysis, Alternative 3 was determined to be the environmentally superior alternative.

- Alternative 1: No Project – No Development
- Alternative 2: No Project – Development Under Existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan

- Alternative 3: Revised Project – Low Density Residential
- Alternative 4: Revised Project – Commercial Development in Northwest

Alternative 1: No Project – No Development

This alternative assumes that the site would remain undeveloped and in use for agricultural purposes. This alternative would not include any new development on the project site and, therefore, would not provide sales tax, property tax, or employment opportunities as would the proposed new land uses of the project. The existing zoning and land use classifications identified for the site in the current Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan and the Land Use Element of the Santa Maria General Plan would remain on the property under this alternative. Accordingly, it would be reasonable to expect that some type of urban development consistent with the General Plan would be proposed in the future. This alternative would retain the current agricultural uses in the near term. However, in the long-term, this alternative would result in development consistent with the current specific plan, which is considered in Alternative 2.

Alternative 2: No Project – Development Under Existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan

This alternative assumes that the project site would be built out as anticipated in the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. The project site would be developed with 656 low-medium density residential units, 144 medium density residential units, 176 high density residential units, 24 acres of community facility uses, 14 acres of recreational open space, and 15 acres of neighborhood commercial uses under the existing land use designations of Low-Medium Density Residential (LMDR; 8 units per acres), Medium Density Residential (MDR; 12 units per acres), High Density Residential (HDR; 22 units per acres), Community Facilities (CF), Recreation Open Space (ROS), and Neighborhood Commercial (NC). Development would occur under the existing zoning of Single Family Small Lot Residential (PD/RSL-1), Medium Density Residential (PD/R-2), High Density Residential (PD/R-3), Public Facility (PD/PF), Open Space (PD/OS), and Convenience Center (PD/CC), with Planned Development Overlay (PD) special zoning designations over the entirety of the project site.

Alternative 3: Revised Project –Low Density Residential

Similar to the project, this alternative would retain the Community Facilities (CF), Recreation Open Space (ROS), and Neighborhood Commercial (NC) land use designations under the existing zoning of Public Facility (PD/PF), Open Space (PD/OS), and Convenience Center (PD/CC), with Planned Development Overlay (PD) special zoning designations over the entirety of the project. This alternative, however, would replace the proposed Low-Medium Residential (LMDR; 8 units per acre) and High Density Residential (HDR; 22 units per acre) land use designations with the proposed zoning of Single-Family Small Lot Residential (PD/R-1) and High Density Residential (PD/R-3) with a Low Density Residential (LDR-5) land use designation with Single Family Residential (PD/R-1) zoning. The Low Density Residential (LDR-5) land use designation allows for single-family detached dwellings units with an average density not to exceed five dwelling units per acre, while the Single Family Residential (PD/R-1) zoning allows for four to eight dwellings units per acre. As such, this alternative would result in the development of up to 450 residential units.

Alternative 4: Revised Project – Commercial Development in Northwest

Similar to the project, this alternative would require amendments to the City's existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, General Plan, and Zoning Code, and would retain the Planned Development (PD) Overlay. This alternative would retain the Community Facilities (CF), Recreation Open Space (ROS), and Neighborhood Commercial (NC) land use designations under the existing zoning of Public Facility (PD/PF), Open Space (PD/OS), and Convenience Center (PD/CC), with Planned Development Overlay (PD) special zoning designations over the entirety of the project. This alternative, however, would shift approximately 10 acres of High Density Residential (HDR; 22 units per acre) to the southwest portion of the project site and approximately 10 acres of Neighborhood Commercial to the northwest corner of the project site. As for the project, this alternative would allow for development of up to 1,168 residential units and approximately 130,000 square feet of retail uses on the project site. This alternative would provide a commercial buffer between the proposed High Density Residential area on the project site and commercial and industrial uses to the northwest of the site.

Environmentally Superior Alternative

The No Project Alternative (Alternative 1) would result in no physical and environmental impacts in the short-term; however, in the long-term, this alternative would result in development consistent with the current specific plan (Alternative 2). Of the remaining alternatives, the Low Density Residential Alternative (Alternative 3), Alternative 3 would reduce the significant and unavoidable impact to air quality to a less than significant level with mitigation. As a result, Alternative 3 would result in the fewest potentially significant impacts when compared to the project and is identified as the environmentally superior alternative. Refer to Section 6, *Alternatives*, for the complete alternatives analysis.

Areas of Known Controversy

Section 15123 of the *CEQA Guidelines* states that an EIR shall identify areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by the agency and the public. Based on comments received during the NOP comment period, the following issues are known to be of concern for development on the project site. Each issue is further evaluated in this Supplemental EIR. The NOP, as well as comment letters received regarding the NOP, are presented in Appendix A1 of this Supplemental EIR.

- Three known oil wells within or near to the southern boundary of the project site. The two oil wells mapped as being just within the southerly project boundary are not plugged and abandoned to current DOGGR requirements. A third known oil well is located approximately 45 feet south of the project site boundary and is plugged and abandoned consistent with current DOGGR requirements.
- Known oil well sites identification, status, and remediation requirements
- Historical and tribal cultural resources requirements, including compliance with Assembly Bill 52 and Senate Bill 18
- Objection to siting recreational and residential uses adjacent to SMVRR due to issues with access and railroad track crossing
- The existing Battles Channel that runs along the southern boundary of the project site, for which the City is seeking a resolution to bury the drainage within a pipe along Battles Road, requiring a bridge crossing from Western Avenue to Battles Road

- Traffic and circulation, including consideration of non-standard street sections for some of the roadways within the Specific Plan area
- Interchange capacities at United States Highway (U.S.) 101 with increased development

Issues to be Resolved

Implementation of the proposed project would require the following discretionary approvals from the City of Santa Maria:

- Amendment of the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan
- General Plan Maps and Zoning Map Amendments
- Development Agreement
- Planned Development Permits for sub-areas of the project
- Encroachment permit for construction of Western Avenue over the flood control channel along the southern project boundary.

The project would also require the following from other parties:

- Review of coverage for the Specific Plan area under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (Order No. 2012-0006-DWQ, NPDES CAS000002) by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB).

Issues Not Studied in Detail in the EIR

Section 4.1 through Section 4.14 of this Supplemental EIR discusses the following environmental issue areas: Aesthetics, Agricultural Resources, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Noise, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, and Transportation and Traffic. This section presents information about the remaining issue areas in the CEQA Appendix G Checklist, based primarily on information from the City's General Plan and conclusions in the previous 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR. The following issues are addressed in this section:

- Airport Safety Hazards
- Williamson Act Contract, Forest Land, and Timberland Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Habitat Conservation Plans
- Inundation by Tsunamis or Seiches, or Flooding
- Mineral Resources
- Utilities/Service Systems
- Wildland Fire Hazards

Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Table ES-2 summarizes the environmental impacts of the proposed project, proposed mitigation measures, and residual impacts (the impact after application of mitigation, if required). Impacts are categorized as follows:

- **Significant and Unavoidable.** An impact that cannot be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires a Statement of Overriding Considerations to be issued if the project is approved per §15093 of the CEQA Guidelines.
- **Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.** An impact that can be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires findings under §15091 of the CEQA Guidelines.
- **Less than Significant.** An impact that may be adverse, but does not exceed the threshold levels and does not require mitigation measures. However, mitigation measures that could further lessen the environmental effect may be suggested if readily available and easily achievable.
- **No Impact:** The proposed project would have no effect on environmental conditions or would reduce existing environmental problems or hazards.

Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

- The following areas were analyzed and identified as significant and unavoidable impacts:
- Mobile-source operational air pollutant emissions
- Cumulative impacts to air quality

Table ES-2 Summary of Environmental Impacts, Mitigation Measures, and Residual Impacts

Impact	Mitigation Measure (s)	Residual Impact
Aesthetics		
Impact AES-1. Development in accordance with the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista or damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway. these impacts would be Class III, less than significant.	None required	Less than significant
Impact AES-2. The anticipated development on the project site under the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments would alter the existing visual character and quality of public views of the site by converting expansive agricultural land into urban uses. the project's impact on the visual character of the site and quality of public views would be Class II, less than significant with incorporation of mitigation.	AES-1 Specific Plan Aesthetics Policies a. The following policy language shall be added to the Development Standards in the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan: Each Planned Development permit submitted to implement the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan shall include the following requirements: 1. Use landscaping techniques, such as a formal single row of street trees along Stowell Road, Battles Road, La Brea Avenue, Western Avenue and Blosser Road, to soften views of sound walls and new buildings within the Specific Plan site for existing nearby residents. 2. All of the rooftop equipment on commercial structures shall be screened from roadway views. 3. Additional height may be considered for structures on a case-by-case basis, subject to a superior site, architectural, and landscape design. b. The Community Development Department shall recommend, and the Planning Commission shall determine, consistency with the applicable General Plan Land Use goals and design requirements as part of all Planned Development Permit approvals.	Less than significant
Impact AES-3. Development in accordance with the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan would introduce new light and glare sources in an existing agricultural area that could adversely affect nighttime views in the area. Impacts related to light and glare would be Class II, less than significant with incorporation of mitigation.	AES-2 Specific Plan Lighting and Glare Policies The following policy language shall be added to the Development Standards for proposed commercial residential multi-family development applications in the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan: a. Each Planned Development Permit for new construction shall include a Lighting Plan (including photometrics) that minimizes nighttime lighting and glare that may adversely affect traffic along Stowell Road, Depot Street, Battles Road, and Blosser Road, and that might adversely impact the adjacent, existing park and residential areas. b. Site development shall include design features that apply to project lighting on streets, buildings, parking areas, pedestrian and entry areas, landscaped areas, and community facilities, and minimize the potential for overspill onto adjacent properties. c. Lighting standards shall blend architecturally with buildings, pedestrian areas, and other hardscape elements, while conforming to state and local safety	Less than significant

Impact	Mitigation Measure (s)	Residual Impact
	and illumination requirements including design and placement of site lighting to minimize glare affecting adjacent properties, buildings and roadways. Streetlights within the single-family neighborhoods would be the City-approved decorative streetlights. d. Automatic timers on lighting shall be designed to maximize personal safety during nighttime use while saving energy. e. Special condition lighting shall be positioned to enhance the safety of vehicular and pedestrian flows at key points along the roadways and the maximum height of roadway lighting shall be 30-feet. Parking, pedestrian, and entry area lighting shall include architecturally compatible lighting fixtures up to 20-feet in height. Additional height may be considered through a Planned Development permit if it is demonstrated to be an environmentally superior or equivalent design. f. Architectural and landscape lighting used to highlight monument signs or architectural features (i.e., walls, entryways), and landscape features (i.e., specimen trees and pedestrian areas) shall be designed to avoid glare onto adjacent properties and shall be carefully integrated into building details or concealed flush with grade, and shall not be visibly apparent during the daytime. g. All lighting shall be directed away from residential properties and public streets in such a manner as not to create a public or private nuisance or safety hazard. h. Exterior wall mounted lighting and parking lot light fixtures shall be full cut-off and downward directed. i. Commercial sites shall have a maximum illumination of three footcandles. j. Illumination from all commercial areas shall not exceed one-half footcandle at the nearest residential property line.	
Cumulative impacts to aesthetic and visual resources (Class II)	Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2 would be applicable.	Less than significant
Agriculture		
Impact AG-1. Although the specific plan area is classified under the FMMP as Prime Farmland, the project would not result in new or substantially more severe impacts associated with the conversion of prime farmland to non-agricultural uses than identified for the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. Impacts would be Class III, less than significant.	This impact would be less than significant without the need for mitigation. Nevertheless, the policy level mitigation measures adopted by the City Council as part of the 1992 Sphere of Influence boundary adjustment continue to provide guidance in the consideration of development within the City to minimize impacts related to agricultural productivity to the extent feasible.	Less than significant
Cumulative impacts to agriculture resources (Class III)	None required	Less than significant

Impact	Mitigation Measure (s)	Residual Impact
Air Quality		
Impact AQ-1. Project construction emissions would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutants for which the region is in nonattainment. Additionally, City and SBCAPCD construction emission control measures would be implemented to ensure that sensitive receptors are not exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations. This impact would be Class III, less than significant.	None required	Less than significant
Impact AQ-2. The project would produce mobile-source operational air pollutant emissions that would exceed long-term quantitative thresholds for NO _x and expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. This impact would be Class I, significant and unavoidable.	AQ-2a Transportation Demand Management The following policy language, or its equivalent, shall be added to the Development Standards for the project: ▪ Commercial projects shall incorporate, to the maximum extent feasible, the following measures: ▫ Carpool/vanpool coordination and occupant matching; ▫ Carpool/vanpool financial and parking convenience incentives; ▫ Mass transit financial incentives; ▫ Bicycle storage facilities, and showers and lockers for riders; ▫ Alternative work schedules; ▫ Onsite facilities such as cafeterias and child care. AQ-2b Efficient Appliances The following policy language, or its equivalent, shall be added to the Development Standards for the project: ▪ All homes shall be equipped with boilers, water heaters, process heaters, steam generators, or other appliances with NO_x limits as specified by SBCAPCD Rules 360, 361, and 342.	Significant and unavoidable
Impact AQ-3. The project would be consistent with the SBCAPCD 2016 Ozone Plan and, thus, would not obstruct its implementation. This impact would be Class III, less than significant.	None required	Less than significant
Impact AQ-4. The project would not result in emissions, including odors or other toxic air contaminants that would adversely affect a substantial number of people, this impact would be Class III, less than significant.	None required	Less than significant
Cumulative impacts to air quality (Class I)	Mitigation Measures AQ-2a, AQ-2b, and AQ-3.	Significant and unavoidable

Impact	Mitigation Measure (s)	Residual Impact
Biological Resources		
Impact BIO-1. The project would not result in impacts to special status plant species. the project has potential to impact special status wildlife, including nesting birds. Impacts to special status animal species and nesting birds would be Class II, significant but mitigable.	BIO-1(a) California Red-legged Frog (CRLF) Avoidance and Minimization The following measures shall be implemented prior to and during grading and construction activities. - Pre-construction survey for CRLF shall be conducted by a City-approved biologist not more than 48 hours prior to the start of construction activities. The survey area will include the proposed disturbance area. If any life stage of CRLF is found within the survey area, the USFWS shall be consulted. Ground-disturbing activities shall not commence until guidance is received from the USFWS and City. - Project activities at the agricultural basin shall be completed during the dry season, between June 1 and October 31. - No CRLF shall be captured and relocated without expressed permission from the USFWS. - If at any time during construction CRLF enters the construction site or otherwise may be impacted by the project, all construction activities shall cease. Ground-disturbing activities shall commence following guidance from the USFWS and City. - The work area shall remain clean. All food-related trash items shall be enclosed in sealed containers and removed from the site regularly. Plan Requirements and Timing. These measures are to be implemented prior to and during grading and construction activities. Monitoring. The applicant shall maintain a City-approved biologist to conduct above avoidance and minimization measures. The approved biologist shall submit monthly maintenance reports during construction to Planning and Development permit compliance staff. BIO-1(b) Preconstruction Surveys for Nesting Birds and Raptors For grading and/or construction activities occurring during the nesting season (generally February 1 to September 15), surveys for nesting birds and raptors covered by the California Fish and Game Code shall be conducted by a City-approved qualified biologist no more than 14 days prior to vegetation and tree removal activities. The survey area for nesting birds and raptor species shall include the disturbance footprint plus a 50-foot and 300-foot buffer, respectively, where publicly accessible. If active nests (nests with eggs or chicks) are located, the qualified biologist shall establish an appropriate avoidance buffer ranging from 50 to 300 feet based on the species biology and the current and anticipated disturbance levels occurring in vicinity of the nest. The objective of the buffer shall be to reduce disturbances to nesting birds. All buffers shall be marked using high-visibility flagging or fencing, and, unless approved by the qualified biologist, no construction activities shall be allowed within the	Less than significant

Impact	Mitigation Measure (s)	Residual Impact
	buffers until the adults and young have fledged from the nest and are no longer reliant on the nest site. The qualified biologist shall confirm that breeding/nesting is completed and that the young have fledged prior to the removal of the buffer. Plan Requirements and Timing. The surveys shall be conducted no more than 14 days prior to the initiation of vegetation and/or tree removal activities. A report of the nesting bird survey results shall be submitted to Planning and Development for review and approval prior to grading permit issuance for grading or construction activities which involve tree or vegetation removal. Monitoring. The applicant shall maintain a City-approved biologist to monitor compliance with the above measure. Planning and Development staff shall review the report for compliance and inspect the site during construction activities to ensure compliance. Active nests shall be monitored periodically by the City-approved biologist until it has been determined that the nest is no longer being used by either the young or adults. BIO-1(c) Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) Prior to the initiation of grading or construction activities (including staging and mobilization), a City-approved qualified biologist shall conduct a WEAP training to be attended by all personnel associated with project construction. The purpose of the WEAP is to aid personnel in recognizing special status resources, specifically nesting birds, California red-legged frog and western spadefoot. The specifics of this program shall include identification of the sensitive species and habitats, a description of the regulatory status and general ecological characteristics of sensitive resources, and review of the limits of construction and mitigation measures required to reduce impacts to biological resources within the work area. A fact sheet conveying this information shall also be prepared for distribution to all contractors, their employers, and other personnel involved with construction of the project. All employees shall sign a form provided by the trainer documenting that they have attended the WEAP and understand the information presented to them. Plan Requirements and Timing. An initial training shall be conducted prior to the initiation of project construction. For the duration of construction, new personnel shall be provided the training prior to conducting activities on site. Monitoring. Planning and Development compliance monitoring staff shall be notified by the owner/applicant of the date and time the training is scheduled so that they may attend. Fact sheets shall be reviewed and approved by Planning and Development prior to conducting the training. The required notification and an attendance log that includes the names and signatures of all personnel that have received the training shall be provided to Planning and Development compliance monitoring staff prior to the start of grading or construction activities.	

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Impact	Mitigation Measure (s)	Residual Impact
Impact BIO-2. The project would not result in impacts to sensitive habitats, including riparian areas. No impact.	None required	Less than significant
Impact BIO-3. The project would not impact state and federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means. No impact.	None required.	Less than significant
Impact BIO-4. The project would not significantly impact wildlife movement and would be less than significant. The project would not impact native wildlife nursery sites.	None required	Less than significant
Impact BIO-5. The project would not conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. No impact.	None required	No impact
Cumulative impacts to biological resources (Class II)	Mitigation Measures BIO-1 would apply.	Less than significant
Cultural Resources		
Impact CR-1. The project would result in the demolition and removal of the storage building and pump house. Due to the lack of significance and integrity, the structures do not meet the eligibility criteria for listing in the NRHR and CRHR or otherwise constitute historical resources for the purposes of CEQA. Thus, impacts would be less than significant (Class III).	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact CR-2. Construction of the proposed project would involve ground disturbing activities such as grading and surface excavation, which have the potential to unearth or adversely impact previously unidentified archaeological resources. Compliance with applicable general plan policies would ensure impacts remain less than significant (Class III).	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact CR-3. Construction of the proposed project would involve ground disturbing activities such as grading and surface excavations which have the potential to unearth or adversely impact previously unidentified human remains. Impacts would be less than significant (Class III).	No mitigation is required. In addition, Mitigation Measure CR-1 would further reduce impacts to previously unidentified cultural resources on the project site by requiring steps for the identification of subsurface resources, if ground disturbance occurs.	Less than significant

Impact	Mitigation Measure (s)	Residual Impact
Impact CR-4. Construction of anticipated development that would be allowed on the project site under the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments has the potential to unearthen or adversely affect previously unidentified tribal cultural resources. This impact would be Class II, less than significant with incorporation of mitigation.	CR-1 Unanticipated Discoveries The following policy language shall be added to the Development Standards in the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan: a. In the event that a resource of Native American origin is identified during construction, the lead agency shall consult with local Native American(s). If the lead agency, in consultation with local Native Americans, determines that the resource is a tribal cultural resource and thus significant under CEQA, a mitigation plan shall be prepared and implemented in accordance with state guidelines and in consultation with Native American groups. The mitigation plan may include but would not be limited to avoidance, capping in place, excavation and removal of the resource, interpretive displays, sensitive area signage, or other mutually agreed upon measure.	Less than significant
Cumulative impacts to cultural resources (Class II)	Mitigation Measures CR-1a and CR-1b would apply.	Less than significant
Greenhouse Gas Emissions		
Impact GHG-1. Construction and operation of the anticipated development would generate temporary and long-term increases in GHG emissions. These emissions would potentially result in a significant contribution to global climate change; therefore, implementation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1 would be required to reduce the anticipated development's GHG emissions. This impact would be Class II, less than significant with mitigation incorporated.	GHG-1 GHG Emissions Reduction Plan The following policy language, or its equivalent, shall be added to the Development Standards for the project: The proposed development shall reduce operational GHG emissions through implementation of one or more of the following measures: a. Prior to permit issuance, the developer shall prepare a Greenhouse Gas Reduction Program (GGRP) that reduces annual GHG emissions from the development by a minimum of 2,740.2 MT of CO₂e per year (0.6 MT of CO₂e per person per year) over the operational life of the proposed development. The plan shall be implemented on-site by the developer and may include, but is not be limited to, the following components: 1. Installation of renewable energy facilities (e.g., solar photovoltaics) 2. Construction of buildings that achieve energy and water efficiencies beyond those specified in the California Code of Regulations, Title 24 requirements 3. Implementation of green building practices and/or cool roofs 4. Installation of energy-efficient equipment and appliances exceeding California Green Building Code standards 5. Installation of outdoor water conservation and recycling features, such as smart irrigation controllers and reclaimed water usage 6. Installation of low-flow bathroom and kitchen fixtures and fittings 7. Installation of light emitting diode (LED) lights 8. Implementation of waste reduction programs that may include waste minimization, waste	Less than significant

Impact	Mitigation Measure (s)	Residual Impact
	diversion, composting, and material reuse/recycling 9. Provision of incentives and outreach that promote alternative transportation and transit use to future employees and patrons 10. Construction of bicycle and pedestrian-oriented facilities (e.g., bicycle parking spaces) 11. Promotion of alternative fuel vehicles, including through the installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure 12. Implementation of carbon sequestration measures; OR b. If GHG emissions cannot be reduced through implementation of the GGRP, the developer shall purchase carbon offsets to reduce GHG emissions below threshold levels. Carbon offsets shall be purchased from a validated source to offset annual GHG emissions or to offset one-time carbon stock GHG emissions. The GGRP shall be submitted by the developer and reviewed and approved by the City's Community Development Department as being in compliance with this measure prior to the issuance of grading permits. Applicable elements of the approved GGRP shall be reflected on site plans prior to permit approval. If GHG emissions cannot be reduced through compliance with such a plan, purchased carbon offsets shall be approved by City staff prior to permit approval. The purchase of carbon offsets does not subject the project to California's cap-and-trade program, nor is the purchase of carbon offsets required for the project, if GHG emissions reductions can be satisfied with GGRP measures.	
Impact GHG-2. The project would be consistent with the SBCAG 2040 RTP-SCS; however, it would be inconsistent with the GHG reduction targets of the 2017 scoping plan. Therefore, implementation of mitigation measure GHG-1 would be required to ensure that the project is consistent with the 2017 scoping plan. This impact would be Class II, less than significant with mitigation incorporated.	Implementation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1 would be required to reduce the project's GHG emissions to a level that is consistent with the GHG reduction targets contained in the SBCAG 2040 RTP-SCS, 2017 Scoping Plan, and EO B-55-18.	Less than significant
Cumulative impacts to Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Class II)	Mitigation Measures GHG-1 and GHG-2 would apply.	Less than significant

Impact	Mitigation Measure (s)	Residual Impact
Hazards and Hazardous Materials		
Impact HAZ-1. Small quantities of hazardous materials may be used in conjunction with the proposed residential and commercial uses on site. However, these materials would be limited in type and quantity such that they would not create a hazard to the public or environment. Therefore, this impact would be Class III, less than significant.	None required.	Less than significant
Impact HAZ-2. Construction and operation of the proposed residential and commercial uses could result in the accidental release of hazardous materials. However, compliance with applicable regulations related to the handling, transport, and storage of hazardous materials would minimize the risk of potential exposure to these substances, resulting in a Class III, less than significant impact.	None required.	Less than significant
Impact HAZ-3. Two schools are located within one-quarter mile of the project site. The project also includes a proposed school site within the specific plan area. Compliance with existing federal, state, and local regulations would ensure that hazardous materials impacts to schools would remain Class III, less than significant.	None required.	Less than significant
Impact HAZ-4. Residual pesticides and agricultural chemicals in soil due to historical and existing use of pesticides and other agricultural chemicals onsite could create a hazard to construction workers during the construction phase of the project. Impacts would be Class II, significant but mitigable.	HAZ-1a Soil Sampling and Remediation Prior to issuance of any grading permits, a contaminated soil assessment shall be completed in the portions of land to be graded for development. Soil samples shall be collected under the supervision of a professional geologist or environmental professional to determine the presence or absence of contaminated soil in these areas. The sampling density shall be in accordance with guidance from Santa Barbara County Department of Environmental Health Services Hazardous Materials Division, so as to define the volume of soil that may require remediation. Laboratory analysis of soil samples shall be analyzed for the presence of organochlorine pesticides, in accordance with EPA Test Method SW8081A, and heavy metals in accordance with EPA Test Methods 6010B and 7471A. If soil sampling indicates the presence of pesticides or heavy metals exceeding applicable environmental screening levels, the soil assessment shall identify the volume of contaminated soil to be excavated. If concentrations of contaminants exceed EPA action levels and therefore warrant remediation, contaminated materials shall be remediated either prior to or concurrent with construction. Cleanup may include	Less than significant

Impact	Mitigation Measure (s)	Residual Impact
	excavation, disposal, bio-remediation, or any other treatment of conditions subject to regulatory action. All necessary reports, regulations and permits shall be followed to achieve cleanup of the site. The contaminated materials shall be remediated under the supervision of an environmental consultant licensed to oversee such remediation and under the direction of the lead oversight agency. The remediation program shall also be approved by a regulatory oversight agency, such as the Santa Barbara County Department of Environmental Health Services Hazardous Materials Division, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, or DTSC. All proper waste handling and disposal procedures shall be followed. Upon completion of the remediation, the environmental consultant shall prepare a report summarizing the project, the remediation approach implemented, and the analytical results after completion of the remediation, including all waste disposal or treatment manifests. Plan Requirements and Timing. The contaminated soils assessment and remediation program, if necessary, shall be submitted and approved by the City's Community Development Department and applicable regulatory oversight agency prior to the issuance of project grading permits. Monitoring. As applicable, the Community Development Department shall ensure implementation of a remediation program according to the measures included therein and as approved by a regulatory oversight agency. HAZ-1b Oil Well Abandonment All onsite oil and natural gas-related wells shall be abandoned pursuant to current abandonment/re-abandonment requirements, in accordance with DOGGR Construction Project Site Review and Well Abandonment Procedures, as well as site-specific instructions from the DOGGR. Plan Requirements and Timing. Prior to any grading or construction within 100 feet of any previously mapped oil well sites, the applicant shall submit proof that well abandonment/re-abandonment requirements and the removal or remediation of any contaminated soils have been accomplished to the satisfaction of DOGGR, Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services Division, or other applicable agencies. Monitoring. As applicable, the Community Development Department shall ensure compliance with oil well abandonment requirements as approved by DOGGR.	

Impact	Mitigation Measure (s)	Residual Impact
Impact HAZ-5. Asbestos Containing Material and Lead Based Paint may be present in existing on-site structures. Demolition of these structures would be required to comply with applicable state and local policies and regulations for the control and remediation of hazardous materials to prevent human exposure. Therefore, this impact would be Class III, less than significant.	None required.	Less than significant
Impact HAZ-6. Development would not interfere with any emergency evacuation routes in the event of a disaster. Therefore, impacts would be Class III, less than significant.	None required	Less than significant
Cumulative impacts to hazards and hazardous materials (Class II)	Mitigation Measures HAZ-1a and HAZ-1b would apply.	Less than significant
Hydrology and Water Quality		
Impact HWQ-1. Development on the project site would alter the drainage patterns, and result in potentially polluted runoff from the site. The proposed development would be required to comply with City and Central Coast RWQCB requirements. Impact to hydrology and water quality would be Class III, less than significant.	None required.	Less than significant
Cumulative impacts to hydrology and water quality (Class III)	None required.	Less than significant
Land Use and Planning		
Impact LU-1. The project would not physically divide an established community. No impact would occur.	None required.	No impact
Impact LU-2. The project would be consistent with applicable land use plans, policies and regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigation an environmental effect. Impacts would be Class III, less than significant.	The project would be required to implement the mitigation measures referenced in Table 4.9-1, which are discussed in detail in throughout the EIR, to ensure that the project is consistent with the City's General Plan.	Less than significant
Cumulative impacts to land use and planning (Class II).	Mitigation measures, as listed above, would apply.	Less than significant

Impact	Mitigation Measure (s)	Residual Impact
Noise		
Impact N-1. Project construction activities and equipment operations would be sporadic, would vary in location and length in proximity to noise sensitive receivers, and would be required to comply with all City requirements for the control of construction noise. Therefore, the project would not result in new or substantially more severe construction noise impacts than identified for the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. Construction noise impacts would be Class III, less than significant.	None required.	Less than significant
Impact N-2. The project would generate fewer trips than development under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, resulting in a reduced contribution to associated traffic noise increases. The project does not include any other Long-term noise sources that would result in new or substantially more severe noise impacts than identified for the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. Long-term noise impacts would be Class II, potentially significant but mitigable.	N-1 Long-term Noise Exposure Reduction Techniques In addition to the Development Standards for residential uses in the proposed Specific Plan, the following policy language shall be added to the Development Standards in the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan: - Noise insulation, and/or double glazed windows shall be required for all new noise-sensitive land uses located adjacent to arterial roadways with noise levels greater than 60 dBA. Project designs shall require the use of setbacks and double glazing for new two-story residences from the property line adjacent to arterial roadways such that indoor noise levels on the second floor are less than 45 CNEL. - Fresh air circulation systems or air conditioning shall be installed in the in the first row of new residences adjacent to arterial roadways. - Commercial truck operations associated with development in the Specific Plan area shall be limited to the hours between 7:00 am and 7:00 pm along arterial roadways that run through noise-sensitive land use areas. - The design of new commercial areas shall site truck loading areas, garbage dumpsters, and loud speaker systems away from adjacent property lines. - Development in the Specific Plan area shall use block sound attenuation walls, greenbelts, and/or setback between commercial and noise-sensitive land uses. - Building design shall incorporate the use of parapets and muffling systems to reduce noise from fan intake systems.	Less than significant

Impact	Mitigation Measure (s)	Residual Impact
Impact N-3. Construction of the anticipated development would expose nearby sensitive receivers to a temporary increase in vibration. However, vibration levels would not exceed 100 VDB, the threshold at which damage may occur to typical buildings, or 72 VDB, the threshold for residences during nighttime hours. Impacts would be Class III, less than significant.	None required.	Less than significant
Impact N-4. The project would be located outside the Airport Influence Area for the Santa Maria public airport and would not be located beneath the frequently-used approach or departure paths. Therefore, the project would not expose people working in the project area to excessive noise levels. No impact would occur.	None required	Less than significant
Cumulative impacts to noise impacts (Class II)	Mitigation Measure N-2 would apply.	Less than significant
Population and Housing		
Impact PH-1. The project would not result in growth in the planning area that is substantially greater than projected in the SBCAG regional growth forecast for the City of Santa Maria. The project would not facilitate development beyond the bounds of the specific plan that would indirectly induce population growth in the city. This impact would be less than significant (Class III).	None required.	Less than significant
Impact PH-2. Implementation of the project would not displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. Impacts would be less than significant (Class III).	None required.	Less than significant
Cumulative impacts to population and housing (Class III)	None required.	Less than significant

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Impact	Mitigation Measure (s)	Residual Impact
Public Services		
Impact PS-1. The Specific Plan would increase the demand for fire protection services, such that new or expanded facilities would be needed to meet the City's standard response time and level of service standard. Potential impacts would be offset by collection of the AB 1600 fees. Impacts related to the provision of fire protection services would be less than significant (Class III).	None required.	Less than significant
Impact PS-2. The Specific Plan would not impact police services such that new or expanded facilities would be required. The increased demand for police services would be met through the collection of AB 1600 fees, and the impacts to police protection services would be less than significant (Class III).	None required.	Less than significant
Impact PS-3. Development facilitated by the specific plan would increase the demand for schools such that new facilities and staff would be required to provide additional student capacity. Through the required payment of state-mandated impact mitigation fees, and inclusion of a junior high school in the specific plan, potential impacts to public schools would be less than significant (Class III).	None required.	Less than significant
Impact PS-4. The specific plan would increase demand for library services. However, through the required payment of AB 1600 fees, potential impacts to library services and facilities would be less than significant (Class III).	None required.	Less than significant
Cumulative impacts to public services (Class III)	None required.	Less than significant

Impact	Mitigation Measure (s)	Residual Impact
Recreation		
Impact REC-1. The project would accommodate new residents in the City of Santa Maria who would use existing and planned parks and recreation facilities. Provision of on-site parks and recreation facilities would meet the adopted city parkland standard for the specific plan area. Therefore, impacts to parks and recreational facilities would be Class III, less than significant.	None required.	Less than significant
Cumulative impacts to recreation (Class III)	None required.	Less than significant
Transportation		
Impact T-1. With the addition of project generated traffic to existing traffic volumes, two study area intersections would operate at LOS F, which exceeds the City's LOS D intersection operating standard. This impact would be class II, less than significant with incorporation of mitigation.	T-1a Secondary Arterials Stowell Road and Blosser Road shall undergo frontage improvements adjacent to the Specific Plan area to conform to Secondary Arterial standards, including but not limited to, minor widening to provide required shoulders, curb, gutter, and sidewalk. T-1b Collector Roads New street sections of Western Avenue and La Brea Avenue shall be constructed to City standards for Collector Streets. T-1c Stowell Road/Western Avenue The intersection of Stowell Road/Western Avenue shall be controlled by all-way stop signs initially and signalized when traffic signal warrants are satisfied (Refer to mitigation measures below for potential cumulative transportation impacts). T-1d Blosser Road/La Brea Avenue Traffic signal modifications for the La Brea Avenue extension shall include left-turn phasing on La Brea Avenue. T-1e Battles Road/Western Avenue The Battles Road/Western Avenue intersection shall be controlled by traffic signals. T-1f Western Avenue/La Brea Avenue The Western Avenue/La Brea Avenue intersection shall be controlled by a modern roundabout. T-1g School Access Access for the proposed school shall be limited to La Brea Avenue, with vehicle queuing, circulation, and pedestrian access on La Brea Avenue adjacent to the school drop-off/pick-up and parking areas. T-1h Battles Road/Thornburg Street The Battles Road/Thornburg Street intersection shall be controlled by traffic signals.	Less than significant

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Impact	Mitigation Measure (s)	Residual Impact
Impact T-2. The project would be generally consistent with City policies related to public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. This impact would be Class III, less than significant.	No mitigation measures are required. Nevertheless, in order to mitigate potential impacts to air quality, the project would be required to comply with Mitigation Measure AQ-2a, which would require the project to prepare a Transportation Demand Management Plan that includes measures to encourage alternative transportation modes. Compliance with Mitigation Measure AQ-2a would further serve to avoid potential impacts due to conflict with City policies related to public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.	Less than significant
Impact T-3. The project would not increase roadway hazards or result in inadequate emergency access. This impact would be Class III, less than significant.	None required	Less than significant
Cumulative impacts to transportation (Class II)	Mitigation Measures T-1a through T-1h would apply.	Less than significant.

1 Introduction

This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared as a Supplemental EIR to the City of Santa Maria *Final EIR for the Sphere of Influence Boundary Expansion and Concurrent Annexation Program* (1992), which included environmental review of the original Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, in accordance with Sections 15163 and 15168 of the *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines*. The certified Sphere of Influence Final EIR has been reviewed and verified information is referenced in this Supplemental EIR. Existing environmental documentation, including the Sphere of Influence Final EIR and technical studies prepared for the project, informs the analysis in this document. This Supplemental EIR discusses the potential environmental impacts of changes on the project site as a result of the proposed amendments to the Blosser-Southeast (Area 5B) Specific Plan. These amendments are intended to facilitate development of up to 1,168 residences, 10 acres of neighborhood commercial uses, 21 acres for a public school, and 19 acres for recreational open space uses.

CEQA requires the preparation of an EIR when projects would have potentially significant impacts on the environment. EIRs are prepared in order to:

“...identify the significant effects of a project on the environment, to identify alternatives to the project, and to indicate the manner in which such significant effects can be mitigated or avoided.” (California Public Resources Code, Section 21002.1[a])

An EIR is intended to serve as an informational document for decision makers and the general public regarding the environmental consequences of a project.

The impacts identified in the Sphere of Influence Final EIR, preliminary review of the project, and the Notice of Preparation (NOP) process have been utilized as a starting point in determining potential impacts of the project that must be analyzed in this Supplemental EIR. A summary of related impacts and applicable mitigation from the Sphere of Influence Final EIR, where applicable, is included in the discussion of each environmental issue area in Section 4, *Environmental Impact Analysis*. This EIR provides an analysis of the impacts of the proposed development on the project site, which is described in detail in Section 2, *Project Description*.

The following discussions describe: 1) the general background of the project; 2) the purpose of and legal authority for the EIR; 3) the scope and content of the EIR; 4) lead, responsible and trustee agencies; and 5) the environmental review process required under CEQA.

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan Background

The Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan is one of seven specific plans prepared as part of the Santa Maria Sphere of Influence and Concurrent Annexation Study. The specific plans are intended to direct future development, including the distribution of land uses, the location and sizing of supporting infrastructure, site planning and architectural guidelines, methods of financing public improvements, and timetables for annexation and development. Accordingly, the plans are useful in

forecasting future growth and understanding the potential impacts of that growth in advance of any development.

The original Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan was covered by the 1992 *Final EIR for the Sphere of Influence Boundary Expansion and Concurrent Annexation Program* (City No. E-88-10 and SCH#90010930) and officially adopted by the City in 1994. The original Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan was amended in 2002 and 2003 and reformatted in 2011.

The project site covers the northern half (Area 5B) of the original Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan area. The project site is generally located at the southeast corner of Stowell Road and Blosser Road. The project site is bounded by Battles Road to the south, the Santa Maria Valley Railroad (SMVRR) tracks and Depot Street to the east, Blosser Road to the west, and Stowell Road to the north. Under the City's existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, the project site has General Plan land use designations of Low Medium Density Residential (LMDR), Medium Density Residential (MDR), High Density Residential (HDR), Neighborhood Commercial (NC), Recreation Open Space (ROS), and Community Facilities (CF). The entire site is covered by the Planned Development overlay and is zoned Single Family Small Lot Residential (PD/RSL-1), Medium Density Residential (PD/R-2), High Density Residential (PD/R-3), Public Facilities (PD/PF), Convenience Center (PD/CC), and Open Space (PD/OS). The existing land use designations and zoning are divided within the project site area as detailed in

1.1.2 Proposed Changes to the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan

The project applicant requests amending the City's existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, which would require amendment to the City of Santa Maria General Plan (Land Use Policy and Circulation Plan) maps and Zoning Map. With the proposed changes, the project site would have land use designations of Neighborhood Commercial (NC; 10 acres), Low Medium Density Residential (LMDR-8; 58 acres), High Density Residential (HDR-22; 32 acres), Community Facilities (CF; 21 acres), and Recreation Open Space (ROS; 19 acres). The existing Planned Development overlay and zoning districts would be retained over the entire site. The proposed land use designations and zoning would allow for development of up to 1,168 residential units on the project site, or an increase of 192 units from residential development potential under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. Following the approval of the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, the Battles Channel was constructed and Battles Road was widened to its current configuration along the southern portion of the project site. The channel construction and roadway improvements reduced the developable area of the project site by approximately nine acres from the existing condition of 155 acres, resulting in the proposed site area of approximately 146 acres.

Due to the proposed changes to the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, additional environmental analysis is required. This Supplemental EIR addresses the potential environmental effects associated with the changes described above and discussed in detail in Section 2, *Project Description*.

1.1.3 Areas of Known Public Controversy

Section 15123 of the *CEQA Guidelines* states that an EIR shall identify areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by the agency and the public. Based on comments received during the NOP comment period, the following issues are known to be of concern for development on the project site. Each issue is further evaluated in this Supplemental EIR. The NOP, as well as comment letters received regarding the NOP, are presented in Appendix A1 of this Supplemental EIR.

- Three known oil wells within or near to the southern boundary of the project site. The two oil wells mapped as being just within the southerly project boundary are not plugged and abandoned to current DOGGR requirements. A third known oil well is located approximately 45 feet south of the project site boundary and is plugged and abandoned consistent with current DOGGR requirements.
- Known oil well sites identification, status, and remediation requirements
- Historical and tribal cultural resources requirements, including compliance with Assembly Bill 52 and Senate Bill 18
- Objection to siting recreational and residential uses adjacent to SMVRR due to issues with access and railroad track crossing
- The existing Battles Channel that runs along the southern boundary of the project site, for which the City is seeking a resolution to bury the drainage within a pipe along Battles Road, requiring a bridge crossing from Western Avenue to Battles Road
- Traffic and circulation, including consideration of non-standard street sections for some of the roadways within the Specific Plan area
- Interchange capacities at United States Highway (U.S.) 101 with increased development

1.2 Purpose and Legal Authority

The proposed Specific Plan and General Plan amendments and rezoning of the project site are discretionary actions requiring approval by the Planning Commission and City Council. As a discretionary action, the project is subject to the requirements of CEQA. In accordance with Section 15121 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, the purpose of this Supplemental EIR is to serve as an informational document that:

“...will inform public agency decision-makers and the public generally of the significant environmental effects of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project.”

This Supplemental EIR is intended to serve as the primary CEQA document to address impacts of future development on the project site under the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. This Supplemental EIR presents a reasonable projection of the level of development that would likely occur in the foreseeable future. The Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan is not a development plan, and the programmatic Supplemental EIR responds to this by analyzing the intended level of potential development that could occur on the project site under the proposed land use classifications and zoning. All details of future development on the project site are not known at this time, so a project-level analysis is not provided herein. However, the analysis in this Supplemental EIR assumes a reasonable worst-case scenario so as to capture the reasonably foreseeable impacts of future development and prescribes performance based mitigation measures accordingly. Although the legally required contents of a program EIR are the same as those of a project EIR, program EIRs are typically more conceptual and may contain a more general discussion of impacts, alternatives, and mitigation measures than that of a project EIR. As provided in Section 15168 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, a program EIR may be prepared on a series of actions that may be characterized as one large project. Use of a program EIR provides the City (as Lead Agency) with the opportunity to consider broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures and greater flexibility to address environmental issues and/or cumulative impacts on a comprehensive basis.

As discussed above, development of the project site was analyzed in the 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR. However, the project requires updated analysis in the areas of Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Energy, GHG Emissions, Land Use and Planning, Noise, Transportation, Tribal Cultural Resources, Utilities and Service Systems, and Wildfire, pursuant to Section 15152 of the *CEQA Guidelines*.

This Supplemental EIR serves as an informational document for the public and City of Santa Maria decision-makers. The process will culminate with Planning Commission and City Council hearings to consider certification of a Final Supplemental EIR as well as the requested approvals for the project.

1.3 Use of this Supplemental EIR for Future Projects

In practice, this Supplemental EIR will be utilized as a first tier of environmental review for development projects proposed on the project site. This Supplemental EIR has been developed specifically to comply with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15183 in order to minimize future environmental review of proposed projects. Section 15183 of the *CEQA Guidelines* provides an exemption from environmental review for projects that are consistent with the development density established by existing zoning, community plan or general plan policies for which an EIR was certified, except as might be necessary to examine whether there are project-specific effects which are peculiar to the project or its site. Section 15183 also specifies that examination of environmental effects for such projects shall be limited to those effects that: a) are peculiar to the project or parcel on which the project would be located; b) were not analyzed as significant effects in a prior EIR on the zoning action, general plan or community plan with which the project is consistent; c) are potentially significant off-site and cumulative impacts which were not discussed in the underlying EIR; and d) are previously identified in the EIR, but which are determined to have a more severe adverse impact than that discussed in the underlying EIR. Section 15183(c) specifies that if an impact is not peculiar to the parcel or to the proposed project, then an EIR need not be prepared for that project solely on the basis of that impact. Pursuant to Section 15183(f), an effect is not considered peculiar if uniformly applied development policies or standards previously adopted by the City would substantially mitigate the environmental effect. Examples of uniformly applied development policies or standards include, but are not limited to: parking ordinances, flood plain ordinances, habitat protection or conservation ordinances, view protection ordinances, and requirements for reducing GHG emissions [Section 15183(g)].

Consistent with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15183, future development projects in the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan area would not require subsequent environmental review if it can be shown that:

1. The project is consistent with:
 - a. A community plan adopted as part of a general plan,
 - b. A zoning action which zoned or designated the parcel on which the project would be located to accommodate a particular density of development, or
 - c. A general plan of a local agency, and
2. An EIR was certified by the lead agency for the zoning action, the community plan, or the general plan.

Prior to the issuance of any entitlements for future development on the project site, the City must determine either that the Supplemental EIR analysis is sufficiently specific and comprehensive to cover the project proposed, or that the project requires additional environmental review.

1.4 Scope and Content

In accordance with the *CEQA Guidelines*, an NOP for this Supplemental EIR was distributed for review by affected agencies and the public on April 10, 2019. The NOP is presented in Appendix A1 of this Supplemental EIR. Based on review of the project, analysis completed to date, and comments received during the NOP process, the City of Santa Maria determined that there was no substantial evidence that the project would cause or otherwise result in significant environmental effects in the areas of Energy, Geology and Soils, Mineral Resources, Utilities and Service Systems, and Wildfire. No further environmental review of these issues is necessary for the reasons summarized in the Section 4.15, *Less Than Significant Effects*.

This Supplemental EIR addresses the issues determined to be potentially significant based on responses to the NOP and scoping discussions among the public, consulting staff, and the City. The environmental issues addressed in impact sections of this Supplemental EIR include:

- Aesthetics/Visual Resources
- Agriculture and Forest Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural/Tribal Cultural Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation/Traffic

This Supplemental EIR builds upon the programmatic analysis performed in the 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR, addresses the issues referenced above, and identifies potentially significant environmental impacts, including site-specific and cumulative effects of the project in accordance with the provisions set forth in CEQA and the *CEQA Guidelines*. In addition, this Supplemental EIR recommends feasible mitigation measures, where possible, that would reduce or eliminate adverse environmental effects.

A summary of cumulative impacts, which gives consideration to other projects in the vicinity, is described in each resource section within Section 4, *Environmental Impact Analysis*. Cumulative project analyses represent a comprehensive assessment of potential impacts on City resources using a list of past, present, and probable future projects capable of producing related or cumulative impacts.

Alternatives to the project consistent with CEQA requirements are evaluated to examine a reasonable range of approaches to minimize environmental impacts while achieving most of the project objectives. The alternatives to the project are evaluated in Section 6, *Alternatives*, of this Supplemental EIR.

Pertinent City policies and guidelines, existing EIRs and background documents prepared by the City, and documents that guide land use in the City were used to prepare this Supplemental EIR. A full reference list is contained in Section 7, *References*, of this Supplemental EIR.

The level of detail contained throughout this Supplemental EIR is consistent with the requirements of CEQA and applicable court decisions. The *CEQA Guidelines* provide the standard of adequacy on which this document is based. Section 15151 of the *CEQA Guidelines* states:

“An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision-makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of the proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection, but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.”

1.5 Lead, Responsible, and Trustee Agencies

The *CEQA Guidelines* define “lead,” “responsible,” and “trustee” agencies. The City of Santa Maria is the lead agency for the project because it has the principal responsibility for approving the project. Discretionary approval of the project is vested with the Santa Maria Planning Commission and City Council.

A “responsible agency” refers to public agencies other than the “lead agency” that have discretionary approval over the project. The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) would be responsible agencies for review of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit requests that govern potential surface discharges of storm water runoff from construction areas.

A “trustee agency” refers to a state agency having jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a project that are held in trust for the people of the State of California. *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15386 designates the following four agencies as trustee agencies: 1) the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) with regard to fish and wildlife, native plants designated as rare or endangered, game refuges, and ecological reserves; 2) the State Lands Commission, with regard to state-owned “sovereign” lands, such as the beds of navigable waters and state school lands; 3) the California Department of Parks and Recreation, with regard to units of the State Parks system; and 4) the University of California, with regard to sites within the Natural Land and Water Reserves System. CDFW is the only trustee agency for the project.

1.6 Environmental Review Process

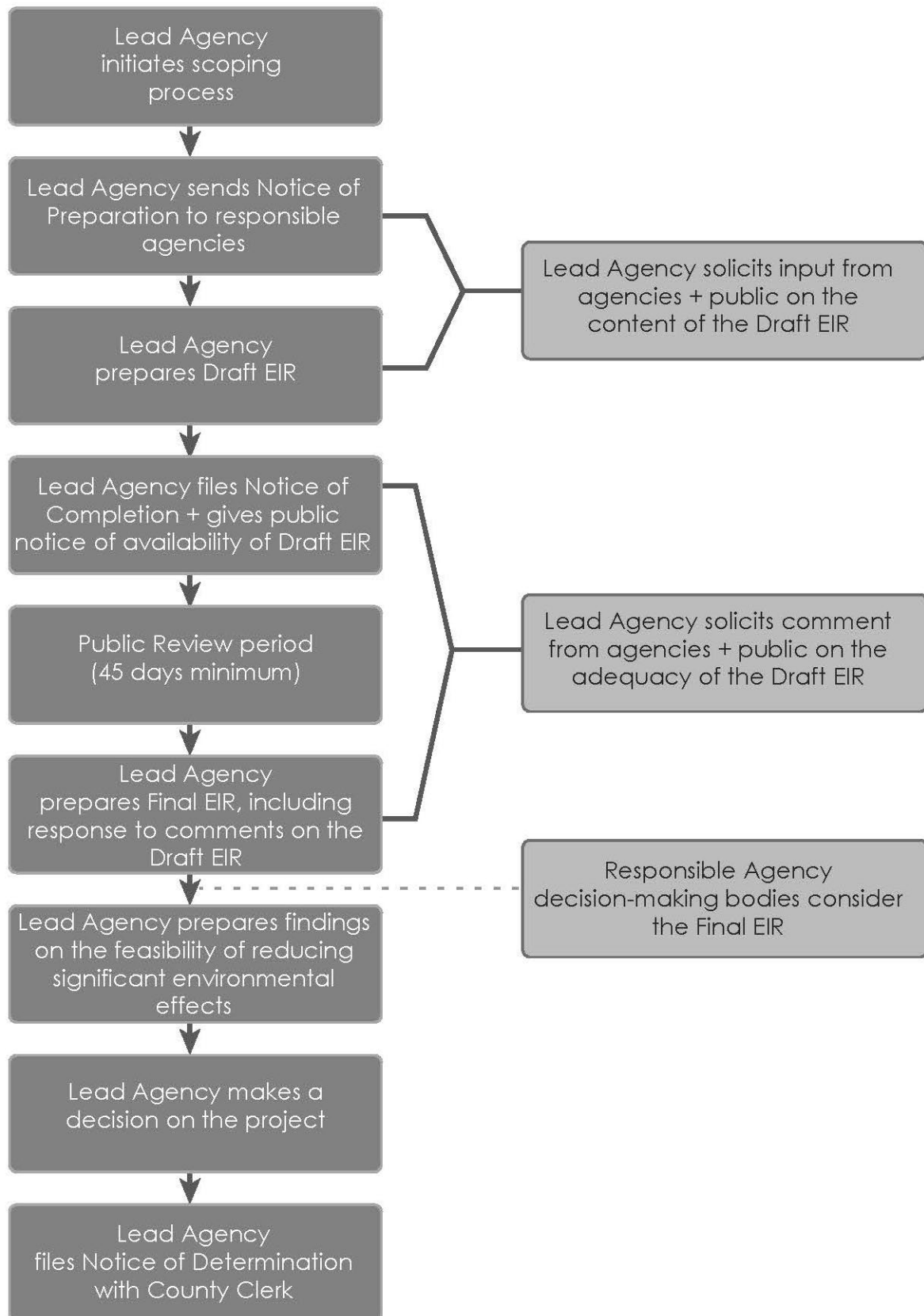
The environmental impact review process, as required under CEQA, is outlined below and in Figure 1-1. The steps are presented in sequential order.

1. **Notice of Preparation (NOP).** Immediately after deciding that an EIR is required, the lead agency must file a NOP soliciting input on the EIR scope to “responsible,” “trustee,” and involved

federal agencies; to the State Clearinghouse, if one or more state agencies is a responsible or trustee agency; and to parties previously requesting notice in writing (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15082; Public Resources Code Section 21092.2). The NOP must be posted in the County Clerk's office for 30 days. The NOP was posted on April 10, 2019. The NOP and responses received regarding the NOP are contained in Appendix A1.

2. **Draft Environmental Impact Report.** The Draft EIR must contain: a) table of contents or index; b) summary; c) project description; d) environmental setting; e) significant impacts (direct, indirect, cumulative, growth-inducing and unavoidable impacts); f) alternatives; g) mitigation measures; and h) irreversible changes.
3. **Public Notice and Review.** A lead agency must prepare a Notice of Completion of an EIR. The Notice must be placed in the County Clerk's office for 45 days (Public Resources Code Section 21092). The lead agency must send a copy of its Notice to anyone requesting it (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15087). Additionally, public notice of Draft EIR availability must be given through at least one of the following procedures: (a) publication in a newspaper of general circulation; (b) posting on and off of the project site; or (c) direct mailing to owners and occupants of contiguous properties. The lead agency must consult with and request comments on the Draft EIR from responsible and trustee agencies, and adjacent cities and counties (Public Resources Code Sections 21104 and 21253). When a Draft EIR is sent to the State Clearinghouse for review, the public review period must be 45 days unless a shorter period is approved by the Clearinghouse (Public Resources Code 21091).
4. **Final EIR.** A Final EIR must include: (a) the Draft EIR; (b) copies of comments received during public review; (c) a list of persons and entities commenting; and (d) responses to comments.
5. **Final EIR Certification.** Prior to approving a project, the lead agency must certify that: (a) the Final EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA; (b) the Final EIR was presented to the decision-making body of the lead agency and that the lead agency considered the information in the Final EIR; and c) the Final EIR reflects the lead agency's independent judgment and analysis (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15090).
6. **Lead Agency Decision.** A lead agency may: (a) disapprove a project because of its significant environmental effects; (b) require changes to a project to reduce or avoid significant environmental effects; or (c) approve a project despite its significant environmental effects, if the proper findings and statement of overriding considerations are adopted (*CEQA Guidelines* Sections 15042 and 15043).
7. **Findings/Statement of Overriding Considerations.** For each significant impact of the project identified in the EIR, the lead or responsible agency must find, based on substantial evidence, that either: (a) the project has been changed to avoid or substantially reduce the magnitude of the impact; (b) changes to the project are within another agency's jurisdiction and such changes have or should be adopted; or (c) specific economic, social, or other considerations make the mitigation measures or project alternatives infeasible (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15091). If an agency approves a project with unavoidably significant environmental effects, it must also prepare a written Statement of Overriding Considerations that set forth the specific social, economic or other reasons supporting the agency's decision.
8. **Mitigation Monitoring/Reporting Program.** When a lead agency makes findings on significant effects identified in a Final EIR, it must adopt a reporting or monitoring program for mitigation measures that were adopted or made conditions of project approval to mitigate significant effects.

9. **Notice of Determination.** The lead agency must file a Notice of Determination after deciding to approve a project for which an EIR is prepared (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15094). A local agency must file the Notice with the County Clerk. The Notice must be posted for 30 days and sent to anyone previously requesting notice. Posting of the Notice starts a 30-day statute of limitations on CEQA challenges (Public Resources Code Section 21167[c]).

Figure 1-1 Environmental Review Process

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2 Project Description

This section describes the proposed project, including the project applicant, the project site and surrounding land uses, major project characteristics, project objectives, and discretionary actions needed for approval.

2.1 Project Applicant

John J. Ruffoni, Landowner
535 West Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, California 93101

2.2 Lead Agency Contact Person

Ryan Hostetter, AICP, Planning Manager
Community Development Department
City of Santa Maria
110 South Pine Street, Suite 101
Santa Maria, California 93458
(805) 925-0951, ext. 2444

2.3 Background

The project area covers the northern half of the City of Santa Maria's original *Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan* area, which was addressed by the 1992 *Final EIR for the Sphere of Influence Boundary Expansion and Concurrent Annexation Program* (City No. E-88-10 and SCH#90010930) and officially adopted by the City in 1994. The original Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan was amended in 2002 and 2003 and reformatted in 2011.

2.4 Project Location

The project site covers the northern half (Area 5B) of the original Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan area. The project site is generally located at the southeast corner of Stowell Road and Blosser Road. The project site is bounded by Battles Road to the south, the Santa Maria Valley Railroad (SMVRR) tracks and Depot Street to the east, Blosser Road to the west, and Stowell Road to the north. Following the approval of the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, the Battles Channel was constructed and Battles Road was widened to its current configuration along the southern portion of the project site. The channel construction and roadway improvements reduced the developable area of the project site by approximately nine acres from the existing condition of 155 acres, resulting in the proposed site area of approximately 146 acres, as shown in Table 2-2.

The project site is located near the center of the United States Geological Survey 7.5 minute Santa Maria quadrangle, and occupies most of the northwest quarter of Section 22, Township 10 North,

Range 34 West, San Bernardino baseline and meridian. The approximate center of the project site is at latitude 34°56'6.4"N and longitude 120°26'57.8"W.

Figure 2-1 shows the regional location of the project site in the central area of the City of Santa Maria. Figure 2-2 shows the project site location relative to land uses in the vicinity.

2.5 Existing Site Characteristics

The project site is currently used for agricultural purposes, primarily as cultivated row crops. On-site structures are limited to those associated with agricultural operations such as storage structures, irrigation works, fencing, and overhead utilities. Other features include equipment storage, access roads and drainage ditches, and an earthen impoundment. Three landscape trees are located on the project site in the vicinity of the agricultural support structures on the northern portion of the site.

A City-maintained flood control channel runs along the southern boundary of the project site and connects to the Hobbs Fee Basin one-half mile west of the project, maintained by the Santa Barbara County Flood Control District. The site is accessible from three adjacent roads including W. Stowell Road to the north, S. Blosser Road to the west, and W. Battles Road the south.

2.5.1 Current Land Use Designations and Zoning

Under the City's existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, the project site has General Plan land use designations of Low Medium Density Residential (LMDR), Medium Density Residential (MDR), High Density Residential (HDR), Neighborhood Commercial (NC), Recreation Open Space (ROS), and Community Facilities (CF). The entire site is covered by the Planned Development overlay and is zoned Single Family Small Lot Residential (PD/RSL-1), Medium Density Residential (PD/R-2), High Density Residential (PD/R-3), Public Facilities (PD/PF), Convenience Center (PD/CC), and Open Space (PD/OS). The existing land use designations and zoning are divided within the project site area as detailed in Table 2-1 and the land use designations are shown in Figure 2-3.

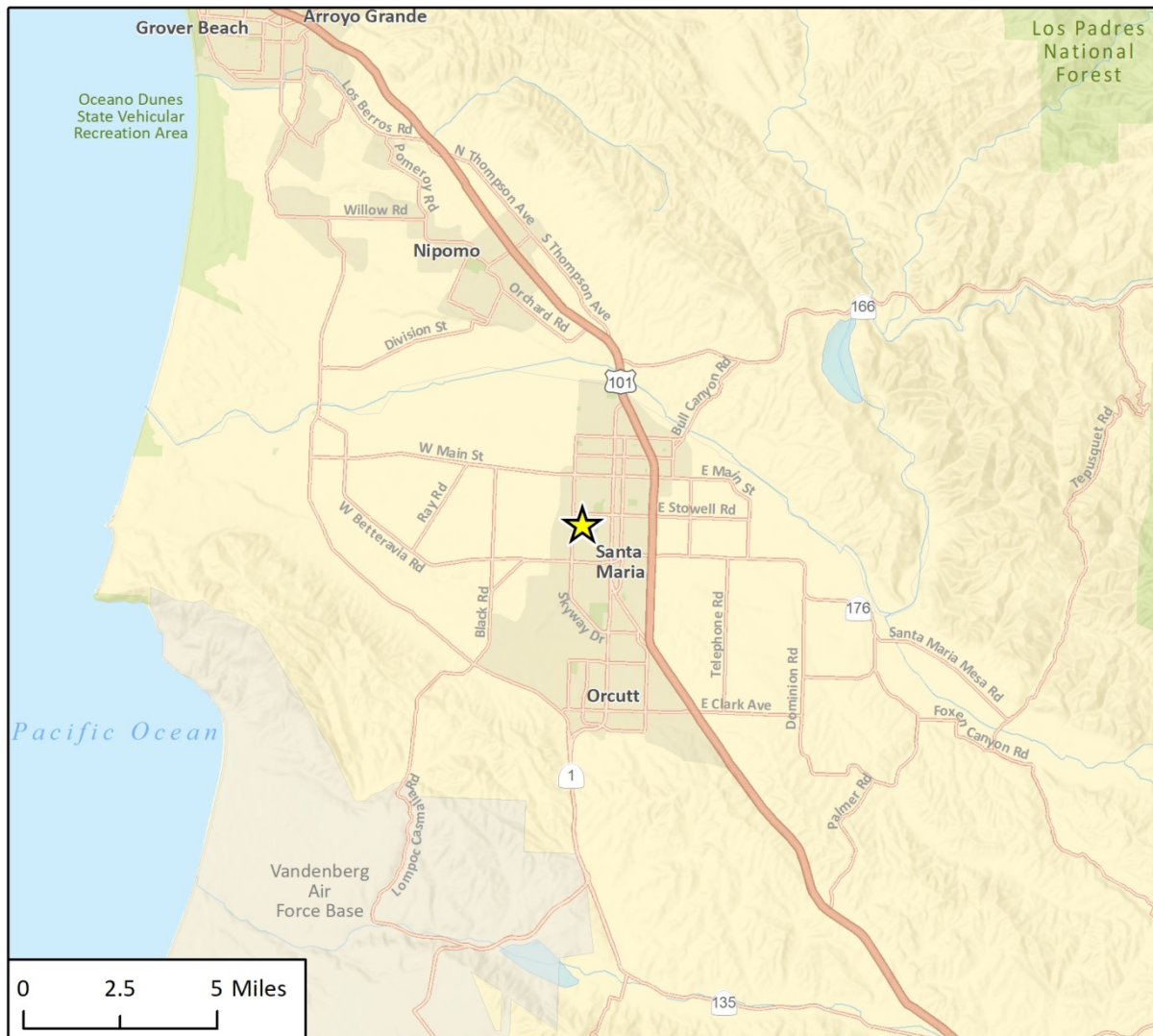
Table 2-1 Existing Land Use and Zoning Designations

Specific Plan Designation	Zoning	Acres	Residential Development Potential
Low Medium Density Residential (LMDR)	PD/RSL-1	82 (8 du/ac)	656
Medium Density Residential (MDR)	PD/R-2	12 (12 du/ac)	144
High Density Residential (HDR)	PD/R-3	8 (22 du/ac)	176
Community Facilities (CF)	PD/PF	24	–
Recreation Open Space (ROS)	PD/OS	14	–
Neighborhood Commercial (NC).	PS/CC	15	–
Total		155	976

Notes: The areas designated LMDR and NC include approximately 9 acres dedicated to the City for the Battles Road extension and Battles Channel that run along the southern boundary of the project site.

Source: Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan (City of Santa Maria 2011: Table 2-1)

Figure 2-1 Regional Project Location



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★ Project Location

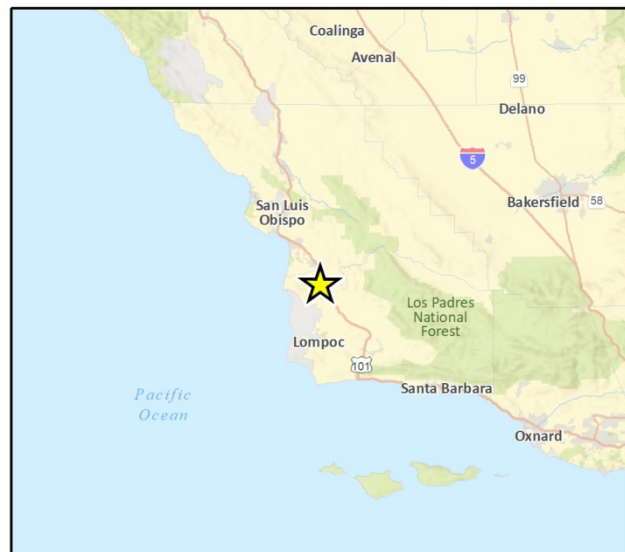


Fig. 3. Regional Location

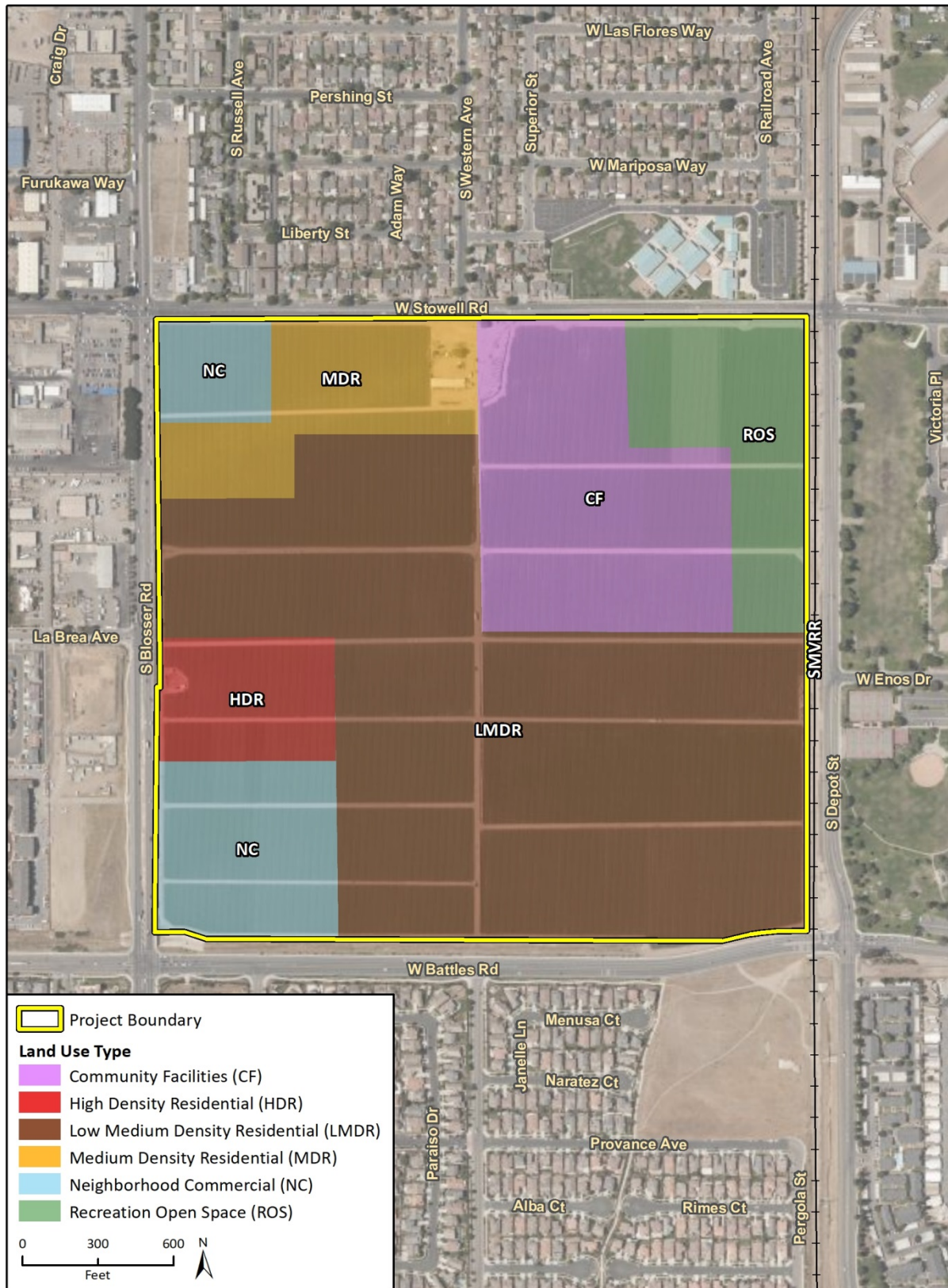
Figure 2-2 Project Site Location



Imagery provided by Microsoft Bing and its licensors © 2019.

Fig. 2-2 Project Location

Figure 2-3 Existing Land Use Plan



2.5.2 Surrounding Land Uses

The project site is bordered by a commercial development and residential development to the west, a park and elementary school to the east, residential development to the south beyond W Battles Road, and residential uses and an additional elementary school to the north. Residential uses to the west include three-story apartments, located approximately 400 feet from the western boundary of the project site. A flood control channel borders the southern boundary of the project area and separates the site from W Battles Road. This channel is part of the County of Santa Barbara flood control system directing runoff to the Hobbs Fee Basin north of W Battles Road, east of A Street.

2.6 Project Characteristics

The project proposes amendments to the City's existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, General Plan and Zoning Code. Under the proposed Specific Plan, the project site would have land use designations of Neighborhood Commercial (NC), Low Medium Density Residential (LMDR-8), High Density Residential (HDR-22), Community Facilities (CF), and Recreation Open Space (ROS). The entire site would remain covered by the Planned Development overlay and zoning districts would be applied consistent with the land use designations. Figure 2-4 shows the proposed land use designations. The proposed land use designations and their corresponding zoning are detailed in Table 2-2.

Table 2-2 Proposed Land Use and Zoning Designations

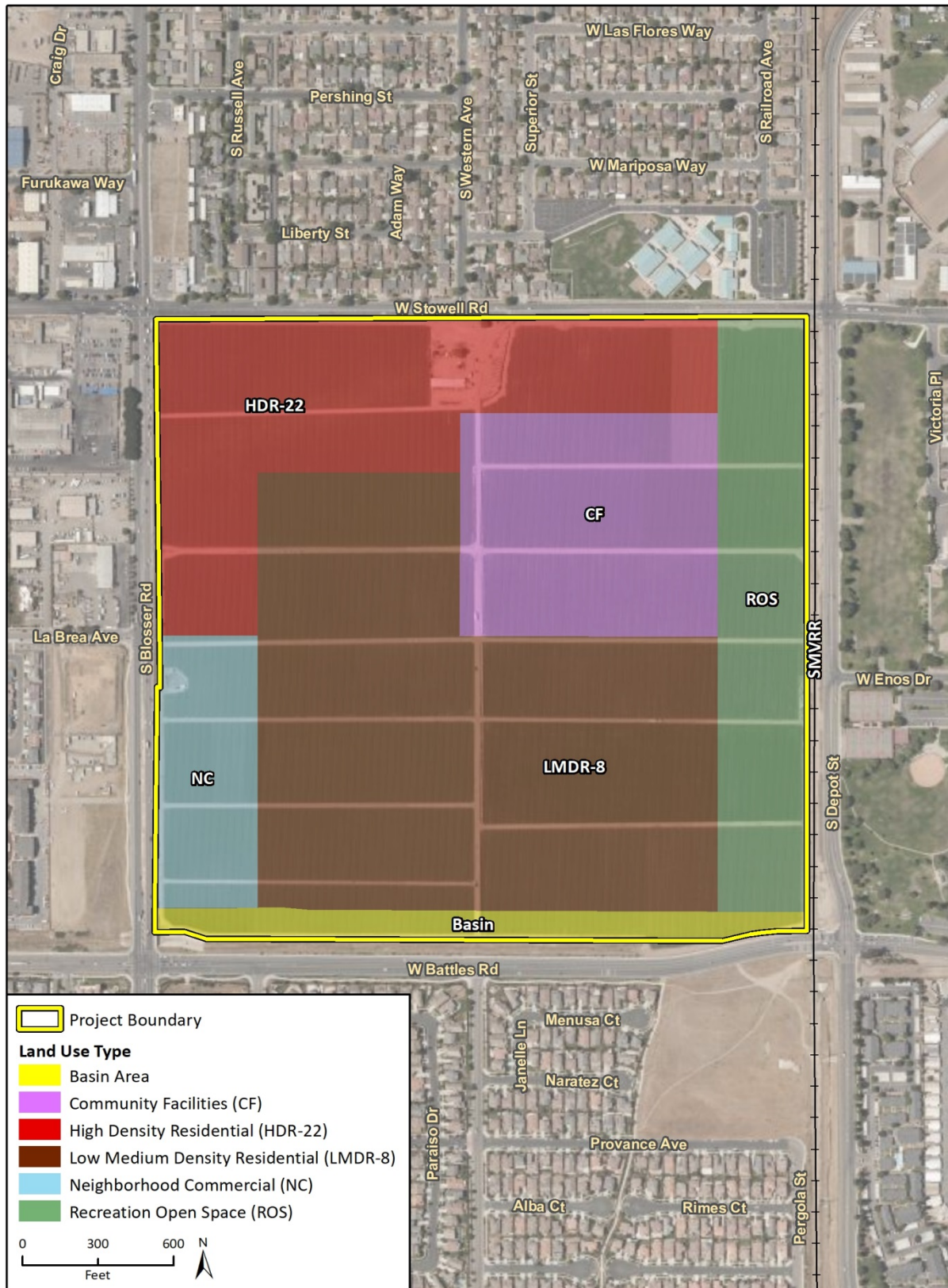
Specific Plan Designation	Zoning	Approximate Acreage	Residential Development Potential
Low Medium Density Residential (LMDR-8)	PD/R-1	58 (8 du/ac)	464
High Density Residential (HDR-22)	PD/R-3	32 (22 du/ac)	704
Community Facilities (CF)	PD/PF	21	—
Recreation Open Space (ROS)	PD/OS	19	—
Neighborhood Commercial (NC)	PS/CC	10	—
Basin	None	6	—
Total		146	1,168

Notes: Approximately 9 acres was dedicated to the City for the Battles Road extension and Battles Channel that run along the southern boundary of the project site.

Source: Acquistapace Blosser-Southeast (Area 5B) Amended Specific Plan, November 2018

As shown in Table 2-2, the proposed land use designations and zoning would allow for development of up to 1,168 residential units on the project site, or an increase of 192 units from residential development potential under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. The proposed 10 acres of Neighborhood Commercial area would allow for development of approximately 130,000 square feet of retail uses comprised of small stores near an anchor store. The proposed commercial uses would have a maximum height of 45 feet, with pedestrian walkways, secondary screen and sound walls, and landscaping incorporated into the design. Loading dock areas would be screened, roofed, and enclosed when at all possible.

Figure 2-4 Proposed Land Use Plan



Imagery provided by Microsoft Bing and its licensors © 2019.

Fig 2-5 Proposed Land Use

2.6.1 Roadways and Traffic

The project site is bounded by Battles Road to the south, the Santa Maria Valley Railroad (SMVRR) tracks and Depot Street to the east, Blosser Road to the west, and Stowell Road to the north.

The circulation system is intended to be a logical extension of the City's existing arterial and collector system reflected in the General Plan, as shown in on Figures 4.14-5 and 4.14-6 in Section 4.14, *Transportation and Traffic*. The project would involve extension of two existing City collector streets. La Brea Avenue would be extended in the west-east direction through the center of the project site, with a terminus at the boundary of the proposed Recreation Open Space area. Western Avenue would be extended in the north-south direction through the center of the entire project site. These street extensions would intersect at the approximate center point of the project site. The project would involve development of local and local minor streets for access to the residential areas of the project site. The project would also include development of a class II bikeway to connect Battles Road to Stowell Road. All proposed interior roads would be public roads installed at the time of development, with sidewalks on both sides. See Figure 2-5a and Figure 2-5b for proposed street sections.

The total unadjusted trip generation estimated for the proposed Specific Plan is approximately 15,400 average daily trips (ADT).

2.6.2 Infrastructure

Proposed infrastructure improvements are described below. Additional offsite improvements for water and sewer service may be required to serve the project and would be determined during the final design process.

Water

City water lines in the roadways north, south, east, and west of the project site would be extended into the site to provide water service. Water infrastructure for the project would consist of 6-inch, 8-inch, and 10-inch public water mains looped through the site. Water lines would be a minimum of 6 inches for the proposed residential development and 8 inches for the proposed commercial development. The project is within the boundaries of the City of Santa Maria and is supplied water through local groundwater and imported State Water. See Section 4.15, *Less Than Significant Effects*, for details regarding water supply in the Utilities/Service Systems subsection.

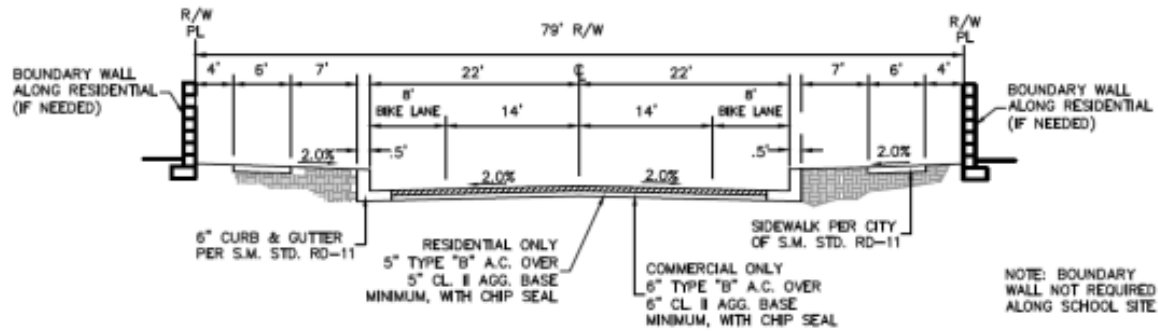
Sanitary Sewer

The proposed sanitary sewer for the site would connect to the City's existing 15-inch sewer main in La Brea Avenue. Treatment would be provided at the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant at Black Road.

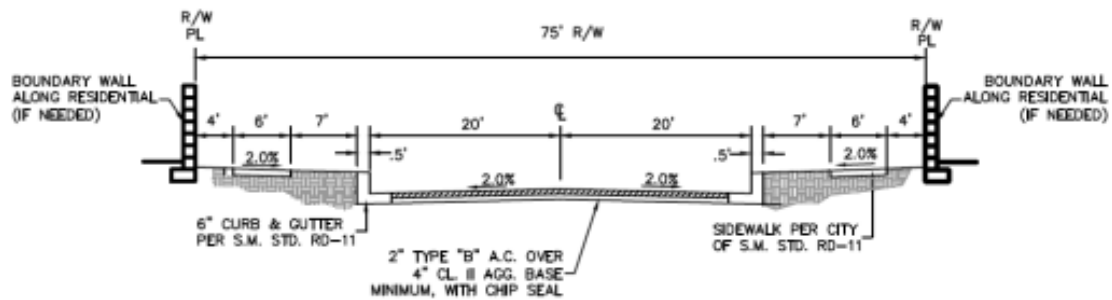
Stormwater Drainage

An approximately 3.3-acre regional stormwater basin has been designated between the southern project boundary and the existing flood control channel along W Battles Road. This facility has been designed to collect, facilitate infiltration, and meter stormwater release to the Battles Channel to emulate pre-development conditions. The volume will be consistent City and County Flood Control requirements. Stormwater will be conveyed to the basin via street gutters and underground stormdrains. A pipe will allow the pre-development flow volume to enter the Battles Channel

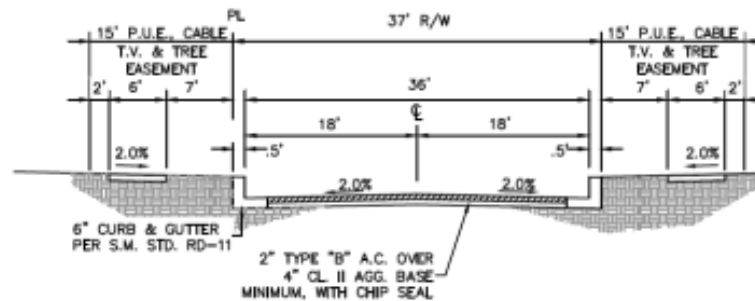
Figure 2-5a Proposed Street Sections



A COLLECTOR STREET SECTION
SECTION TO BE VERIFIED BY AN "R" VALUE TEST NTS
LA BREA / WESTERN



B LOCAL STREET SECTION
SECTION TO BE VERIFIED BY AN "R" VALUE TEST NTS



C LOCAL MINOR STREET SECTION
SECTION TO BE VERIFIED BY AN "R" VALUE TEST NTS

directly. Although the area for this basin has been established to provide required stormwater retention and flood control, the final design of this improvement will be determined by the City. Some of the infiltration and retention function could be provided by underground improvements in this area, which would reduce or eliminate the need for a permanent basin.

Commercial and public facility development areas would include on-site amenities for meeting infiltration and water quality requirements. Residential developments may use a combination of pocket park areas, open space/landscape areas or use the regional basin capacity to address infiltration and water quality requirements. The details of the final drainage design will be developed as part of the Planned Development Permit review and approval for the development within the specific plan adjacent to this channel location.

Soundwalls

The project would include sound walls on all sides of residential development, where such developed is proposed adjacent to existing and proposed new roadways.

2.6.3 Utilities

Electricity

Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) would provide electric service to the project site via 12-kilovolt main lines to be located within the proposed road right-of-way. Auxiliary lines would be located in the remaining roads and tie into mail lines.

Natural Gas

Southern California Gas Company would provide gas service to the project site via development of a 2-inch gas lines along project roads, that would tie into the existing 10-inch gas line on Battle Roads.

Solid Waste

The proposed on-site development would utilize the City's solid waste collection and disposal services.

2.6.4 Public Services

Schools

A 21-acre school site is proposed and envisioned as an 800-student Junior High School for the Santa Maria Bonita School District. The school would be expected to jointly use proposed park and recreation facilities to be located adjacent to the school.

Plan area residents would be served by the Santa Maria Bonita School District for kindergarten through grade 8, and the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District for grades 9 through 12.

Parks

The project would include development of 19-acres of recreational uses, such as neighborhood and community parks, soccer fields, and trails, in the Recreation Open Space-designated area, as shown on Figure 2-4. This area would also include retention basins used for flood control. The community park would be developed with active multi-purpose fields and may be jointly used by the proposed

school. The proposed park system would be linked to surrounding uses by Multi-Purpose Trails (8-feet in width) or bicycle trails.

Public Safety

The plan area would be served by the Santa Maria Police Department and the Santa Maria Fire Department.

2.6.5 Applicant-Proposed Project Design Features (PDFs)

The project would include the following applicant-proposed project design features (PDFs):

- **Sound Walls.** The project would include sound walls at the perimeter of the proposed high density residential area along Blosser Road and Stowell Road, between the neighborhood commercial and low medium density residential uses, and between the basin area and low medium density residential uses.
- **Regional Stormwater Basin.** An approximately 3.3-acre basin will collect and meter stormwater to mimic pre-development stormwater flows consistent the City and County flood control requirements.
- **Active Transportation.** Sidewalks will be constructed on both sides of the roads. Pedestrian paths will link residential, commercial, school, and open space uses. A Multi-Purpose Trail I is proposed along the south side of Battles Road. A Class II bikeway would connect Battle Road to Stowell Road.

2.7 Project Construction

The existing topography of the project site is generally flat. Development of the site would include grading over the entire property. It is anticipated that project grading quantities would be balanced onsite.

2.7.1 Phasing/Timing

Construction of the Western Avenue and La Brea Avenue infrastructure and the installation of public utilities (sewer, water, storm drainage) would occur concurrently. Construction phasing of individual large lots would be dependent on market conditions and the goals and objectives of each future landowner. Future applicants would apply for Tentative Tract Maps, Planned Development Permits, and subsequent building permits designed in conformance with the final map conditions of approval for the Specific Plan area.

2.8 Project Objectives

The applicant's objectives for the project are as follows:

1. Provide development that expands on and complements the businesses along Blosser Road.
2. Provide coordinated residential, commercial, and school uses and amenities in one central location.
3. Provide safe pedestrian and bicycle connections to onsite commercial, recreational, school, and open space amenities.

4. Develop the property with a variety of housing types to attract diverse community income groups, and to assist the City in complying with State housing mandates.

2.9 Required Approvals

The City of Santa Maria is the CEQA Lead Agency in preparing this Supplemental EIR to serve as the environmental review for the project. Implementation of the proposed project would require the following discretionary approvals from the City of Santa Maria:

- Amendment of the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan
- General Plan Maps and Zoning Map Amendments
- Development Agreement
- Planned Development Permits for sub-areas of the project
- Encroachment permit for construction of Western Avenue over the flood control channel along the southern project boundary.

The project would also require the following from other parties:

- Review of coverage for the Specific Plan area under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (Order No. 2012-0006-DWQ, NPDES CAS000002) by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB).

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3 Environmental Setting

This section provides a general overview of the environmental setting for the proposed project. More detailed descriptions of the environmental setting for each environmental issue area can be found in Section 4, *Environmental Impact Analysis*.

3.1 Regional Setting

The project site is located in the Santa Maria Valley, a roughly east-west trending valley in northern Santa Barbara County. The Valley is bound by the Nipomo Mesa and Sierra Madre Mountains on the north and east, by the Solomon Hills and Casmalia Hills on the south, and by the Guadalupe Dunes and Pacific Ocean on the west. In combination with the Solomon Hills, the Casmalia Hills form the highly visible southern boundary of the Santa Maria Valley. The Casmalia Hills are characterized by moderate to steep slopes primarily covered with non-native grasslands and chaparral.

The Santa Maria Valley is primarily a flat coastal plain whose native vegetation consists largely of coastal dune sage; the edges of the valley are characterized by rolling hills with oak woodlands, native and nonnative grasses, and chaparral. Much of the area is rural in nature, characterized by such uses as grazing, crude oil production, open space, and cultivated agriculture, which is the dominant land use due to the valley's fertile alluvial soils and ideal climate for crop production.

Important water features in the Santa Maria Valley include Twitchell Reservoir, Betteravia Lake (also known as Guadalupe Lake), the Santa Maria River, as well as Orcutt/Solomon, Pine, and Graciosa Creeks. The Santa Maria River is the principal drainage for the Santa Maria Valley. It is formed at the confluence of the Cuyama and Sisquoc rivers and ultimately drains into the Pacific Ocean near the Santa Barbara County/San Luis Obispo County border.

The Santa Maria Valley's Mediterranean climate is characterized by warm, dry summers and cool, damp winters with occasional rainy periods. The average annual rainfall is approximately 13 inches, with the majority of precipitation occurring between November and April (Western Regional Climate Center 2016). Light to moderate sea breezes generally occur during the day, while land breezes from the east dominate during night and early morning hours.

3.2 Project Site Setting

Following the approval of the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, the Battles Channel was constructed and Battles Road was widened to its current configuration along the southern portion of the project site. The channel construction and roadway improvements reduced the developable area of the project site by approximately nine acres from the existing condition of 155 acres, resulting in the proposed site area of approximately 146 acres. As shown in Figure 2-1 in Section 2, *Project Description*, the 146-acre project site is located in the central-western portion of the City of Santa Maria. The project site is located south of Stowell Road, west of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad (SMVRR) tracks and South Depot Street, north of Battles Road, and east of Blosser Road. The project site is approximately 1.5 miles west of United States Highway 101 (U.S. 101) and approximately one mile south of State Route 166 (SR 166)/Main Street). The project site has City

General Plan land use classifications of Neighborhood Commercial, Low Medium Density Residential (LMDR), Medium Density Residential (MDR), High Density Residential (HDR), Neighborhood Commercial (NC), and Community Facility (CF).

The project site is currently undeveloped and used for agricultural purposes. The topography of the project site is generally flat. The project site is void of large vegetation or trees, except for planted row crops and three landscape trees in the vicinity of the agricultural support structures on the norther portion of the site. A City-maintained drainage channel runs along the southern boundary of the site from Blosser Road to approximately three quarters of the way to the South Depot Street, where it crosses under Battles Road. The site is entirely surrounded by existing and planned urban development.

The project site is located near the center of the United States Geological Survey 7.5 minute Santa Maria quadrangle, and occupies most of the northwest quarter of Section 22, Township 10 North, Range 34 West, San Bernardino baseline and meridian. The approximate center of the project site is at latitude 34° 56' 6.4"N and longitude 120° 26' 57.8"W.

3.3 Cumulative Development

A project's cumulative impacts are the possible environmental effects that may be cumulatively considerable when considered with other reasonably foreseeable projects (Section 15065[a][3] of the *CEQA Guidelines*). Cumulatively considerable impacts occur when the incremental effects of a particular project or program are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of other past, current, or probable future projects or programs that are not incorporated into baseline or existing conditions.

As defined in Section 15355 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, a cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing related impacts. According to Section 15130 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, the discussion of cumulative impacts must reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, but the discussion need not provide as great detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone. The discussion should be guided by standards of practicality and reasonableness, and should focus on the cumulative impact to which the identified other projects contribute rather than the attributes of other projects that do not contribute to the cumulative impact. Impacts that do not result in part from the project evaluated in the EIR need not be discussed.

Each topic section of this Supplemental EIR includes a discussion of potential cumulative effects and the project's contribution towards the cumulative effects. These discussions are based in part on a review of development projects as listed by the Community Development Department, as well as other regional forecasts for information such as traffic and air quality. The City list identifies recently developed or approved projects, and pending projects for which applications have been received and is summarized in Table 3-1. The locations of the listed projects are shown in Figure 3-1. Additional details regarding each project may be found on the Community Development web page (<https://www.cityofsantamaria.org/city-government/departments/community-development/planning-division/planning-policies-and-regulations/current-development-activity>).

The City's Major Development List is updated and reproduced every six months (January and July) to report current development activity in the City. The data used for cumulative projects is reflective of the best information available at the time the EIR was prepared. Accordingly, some of the

information in Table 3-1 may differ slightly from the most current information contained in subsequent development listings. Based on the information in Table 3-1 at the time this Supplemental EIR was prepared, the City currently anticipates 1,130 new residential units, 108 new hotel rooms, 710,466 square feet of new commercial development, 4.3 million square feet of new greenhouses, 1.04 million square feet of new industrial development, and 569,512 square feet and 558 units of new mixed use/other development.

Table 3-1 City of Santa Maria Major Developments List (January 2019)

No. in Fig. 3-1	Name	Address	Description
Residential Projects			
14	Biely Bradley Apartments	1400 N. Bradley Rd.	8 unit apartments
19	Residences at Depot Street	301 N. Depot St	80 unit affordable apartments
25	Casa Buena Court	905 W. Cook St.	4 dwelling units
29	Sierra Madre Cottages	624 E. Camino Colegio	39 affordable senior apartments
36	Vandenberg Senior Residences	1314 S. Broadway	52 unit senior apartment addition
37	Centennial Square	Miller St. at Plaza Dr.	138 unit apartments
38	Barcellus Senior Apartments	502 E Barcellus Ave.	80 unit senior apartments
43	SerraMonte Townhomes	2065 S. Blosser Rd.	81 townhome units
44	Harvest Glen Gardens	Sonya Ln at Blosser Rd.	126 single-family homes
49	Newlove East Apartments	575 E. Newlove Dr.	16 unit apartments
51	Easton Apartments	E. Battles Rd at College Dr.	318 unit apartments
62	Refugio	W. McCoy Ln at Professional Pkwy.	125 unit townhomes
67	Northman Residential	Santa Maria Wy at E Dauphin St.	63 single family residences
Residential Projects Subtotal			1,130 units
Commercial Projects			
2	Preisker Commercial Center	NW/c N. Broadway and Preisker Ln.	108 room hotel, drive-thru restaurant, retail
8	Broadway Commons	1700 block of N. Broadway	26,879 sq ft commercial center
9	Dorion Map	1790 N. Broadway	Subdivide parcel into 2 commercial lots
10	Santiago's Car Wash & Retail	1640 N. Broadway	Carwash and 1,665 sq ft retail building
11	Peppertree Chevron	1601 N. Broadway	1,675 sq ft retail and 12 fuel pumps
12	SM Alliance	1519 N. Broadway	New canopy and site improvements
15	Superior Sound Systems	1108 N. Broadway	1,800 sq ft building
18	76 Gas Station	815 W. Main St.	1,160 sq ft retail and 8 fuel pumps

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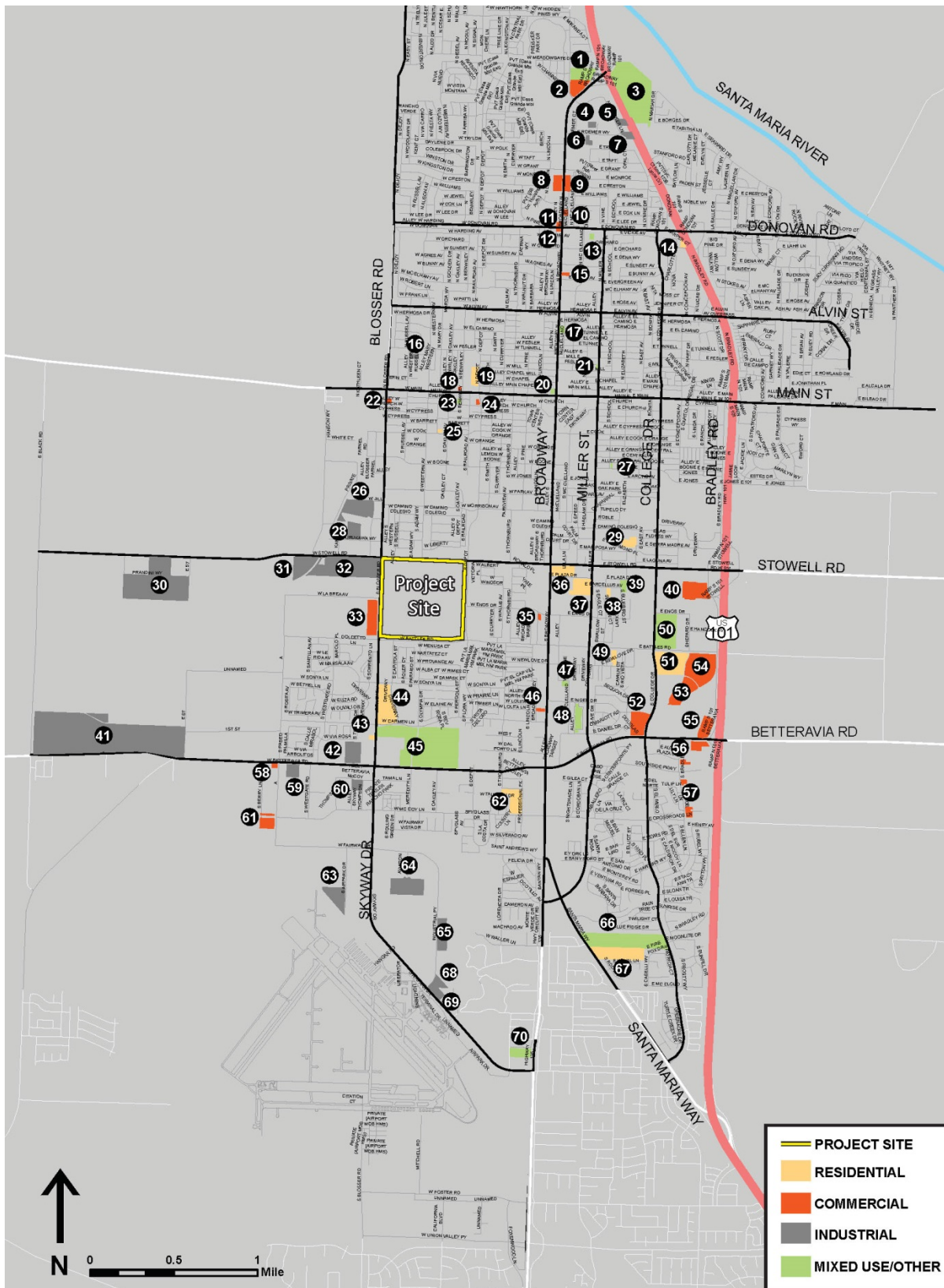
No. in Fig. 3-1	Name	Address	Description
22	Blosser Coin Laundry	122 S. Blosser Rd.	4,410 sq ft coin laundry facility
24	Kassin Retail Building	711 W. Church St.	4,000 sq ft retail building
33	Westgate Marketplace	S. Blosser Rd. at W. Battles Rd.	68,000 sq ft commercial center
35	Joshi Commercial	116 W. Enos Dr.	3,200 sq ft retail
40	Costco Zoning Amendment	1334 South Bradley	130,365 sq ft retail warehouse
46	Smile Santa Maria Dental	1925 S. Broadway	7,750 sq ft dental office
52	Enos Ranchos Mercado	E. Betteravia Rd. at S. College Dr.	80,900 sq ft shopping center
53	Enos Auto Center South	Lot 8-11 Enos Ranchos	Design/layout of auto center
53	Lot 11 Auto	Lot 11 Enos Ranchos	28,000 sq ft auto dealership
53	Honda	Lot 10 Enos Ranchos	44,900 sq ft auto dealership
53	Splash N Dash	Lot 8 Enos Ranchos	8,200 sq ft car wash
54	Enos Auto Center North	Lots 2-7 of Enos Ranchos	Design/layout of auto center
54	Home Motors	S. Bradley Rd. and E. Battles Rd.	52,000 sq ft auto dealership
54	Lot 5 Auto	Lot 5 Enos Ranchos	29,000 sq ft auto dealership
54	Toyota	Lot 4 Enos Ranchos	73,000 sq ft auto dealership
55	CoastHills Corporate Facility	E. Betteravia Rd. at U.S. 101	81,800 sq ft 3-story building
56	Santa Maria Freeway Center	1000 E. Betteravia Rd.	23,455 sq ft retail on 5 pads
57	Crossroads Expansion Pads	2100-2300 S. Bradley Rd.	27,700 sq ft retail on 3 pads
58	A Street Deli	W. Betteravia Rd. at A St.	4,420 sq ft retail building
61	VTC Enterprises (Phase 2)	2445 A St.	6,187 sq ft vocational training building
Commercial Projects Subtotal			108 hotel rooms and 710,466 sq ft commercial
Industrial Projects			
4	Chavez Farming	1965 Roemer Pl.	16,000 sq ft office and warehouse
5	Santa Maria Tire Company	1900 block of N. Preisker Ln.	8,000 sq ft tire sales/service building
6	SMOOTH Bus Wash	240 E Roemer Wy.	1,134 sq ft bus wash building
7	Estrada Produce	1900 block of N. Preikser Ln.	9,915 sq ft produce sales/distribution
16	Candyman Shop	320 N. Russell Ave.	6,670 sq ft multi-tenant building
26	Gold Coast Packing	1205 and 1211 W. Craig Dr.	101,167 sq ft facility
27	Distribution Center	1259 Furukawa Way	30,000 sq ft addition
30	Bonita Packing Expansion	1850 W. Stowell Rd.	173,270 sq ft addition
31	Bishop Grande, LLC	W. Stowell Rd. and SMV Railroad	12 industrial lots

No. in Fig. 3-1	Name	Address	Description
32	Lineage Logistics	1315 S. Blosser Rd.	210,000 sq ft processing facility
41	Windset Farms Greenhouses 7-9	1650 Black Rd.	4.3 million sq ft greenhouses and 93,000 sq ft building
42	Betteravia Self Storage	1265 W. Betteravia Rd.	109,955 sq ft self storage facility
59	CCLI Self Storage	1400 block of W. Betteravia Rd.	122,000 sq ft self-storage facility
59	DMS Electric	2224 S Westgate Rd	10,000 sq ft building
60	Trava Corp	2329 Thompson Way	33,000 sq ft multi-tenant complex
63	2811 Center	2811 Airpark Dr.	51,200 sq ft office in 2 buildings
64	Central Coast Wine Services	2717 Aviation Wy., Ste. 200	Wine tasting in existing industrial
65	Platino Development	2900 block of Industrial Pkwy.	48,717 sq ft in 4 buildings on 4 lots
68	The Gas Company	3138 Industrial Pkwy.	Natural gas fueling station
69	Skyway Office	3200 Skyway Dr.	19,800 sq ft office building
Industrial Projects Subtotal			4.3 million sq ft greenhouses and 1,043,828 sq ft industrial
Mixed Use/Other Projects			
1	Carpenters Union Training	2210 N. Preisker Ln.	30,000 sq ft vocational training
3	Rivergate-Roemer Ranch	N. Broadway/U.S. 101 Interchange	General Plan amendment and rezone
13	Clean N Dash	214 E. Donovan Rd.	18 residential units, 4,800 sq ft commercial
17	The Kitchen	600 N. Broadway	7,795 sq ft commercial/residential mixed use
20	Gateway Mixed Use	101 N. Broadway	33,700 sq ft 4-story mixed use building
21	Bathia Mixed Use	311 N. Miller Street	1,533 sq ft commercial and 6 residential units
23	D&J Sober Living Facility	819 W. Church, 113 S. Benwiley	Mixed use with transitional housing and offices
28	Boone Street Market	501 E. Boone St.	2,280 sq ft addition to market and 2 units
39	Skilled Nursing Center	526 E. Plaza Dr.	99 bed skilled nursing facility
45	Betteravia Plaza	W. Betteravia Rd. at SMVRR	272 apartments and 381,250 sq ft retail/offices
47	Crucified Life Church	NW/c S. McClelland Street	11,700 sq ft church building
48	Celebration I, II, III	S. Miller St. at E. Inger Dr.	56 single family units, 33 senior apartments, 7,000 sq ft commercial, 1 mixed use building
50	First Christian Church	1550 College Dr.	78,454 sq ft church expansion

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No. in Fig. 3-1	Name	Address	Description
66	VCA On-Campus Staff Housing	2970 Santa Maria Way	1 caretaker’s unit and 3 duplex buildings
70	Lakeview Mixed Use	NW/c S. Broadway and Skyway Dr.	164 apartments and 11,000 sq ft commercial
Mixed Use/Other Projects Subtotal			569,512 sq ft and 558 units

Figure 3-1 City of Santa Maria Major Developments



Source: City of Santa Maria, 2019

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4 Environmental Impact Analysis

This section discusses the possible environmental effects for the specific issue areas that were identified through the Notice of Preparation and scoping process as having the potential to experience significant effects. “Significant effect” is defined by the *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15382 as:

“...a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment, but may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.”

The assessment of each issue area begins with a discussion of the environmental setting related to the issue, which is followed by the impact analysis. In the impact analysis, the first subsection identifies the methodologies used and the “significance thresholds,” which are those criteria adopted by the City and other agencies, universally recognized, or developed specifically for this analysis to determine whether potential effects are significant. The next subsection describes each impact of the proposed project, mitigation measures for significant impacts, and the level of significance after mitigation. Each effect under consideration for an issue area is separately listed in bold text with the discussion of the effect and its significance. Each bolded impact statement also contains a statement of the significance determination for the environmental impact as follows:

- **Significant and Unavoidable.** An impact that cannot be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires a Statement of Overriding Considerations to be issued if the project is approved per Section 15093 of the *CEQA Guidelines*.
- **Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.** An impact that can be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires findings under Section 15091 of the *CEQA Guidelines*.
- **Less than Significant.** An impact that may be adverse, but does not exceed the threshold levels and does not require mitigation measures. However, mitigation measures that could further lessen the environmental effect may be suggested if readily available and easily achievable.
- **No Impact.** The proposed project would have no effect on environmental conditions or would reduce existing environmental problems or hazards.

Following each environmental impact discussion is a list of mitigation measures (if required) and the residual effects or level of significance remaining after implementation of the measures. In cases where the mitigation measure for an impact could have a significant environmental impact in another issue area, this impact is discussed and evaluated as a secondary impact. The impact analysis concludes with a discussion of cumulative effects, which evaluates the impacts associated with the proposed project in conjunction with other planned and pending developments in the area listed in Section 3, *Environmental Setting*.

Section 15065 of the *CEQA Guidelines* also requires the following specific issues be addressed as part of the environmental review for the project:

- The potential for the project 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;
- Project 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); and
- Environmental effects of the project which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly.

Section 4.1, *Aesthetics Visual Resources*, describes the potential effects on the project on visual highways and other visual resources. Section 4.2, *Agriculture*, describes the impact of converting agricultural lands. Section 4.3, *Air Quality*, describes the project's potential short-term and long-term impacts to air quality. Section 4.4, *Biological Resources*, describes the potential effects of the project on plant and animal species populations, habitats, communities, and migratory patterns. Section 4.5, *Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources*, describes the project's potential effects on important historical and prehistorical cultural resources, as well as the project's potential effects on tribal cultural resources on the project site. Section 4.6, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, describes the project's potential short-term and long-term impacts to greenhouse gas emissions. Section 4.7, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, describes the potential impact to hazards and the use or transport of hazardous materials. Section 4.8, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, describes the project's potential impacts to existing water systems and the effects on water quality. Section 4.9, *Land Use and Planning*, describes the project's compatibility with existing planning policies and regulations. Section 4.10, *Noise*, describes the project's potential short-term and long-term effects to ambient noise, including ambient noise experienced by sensitive receptors. Section 4.11, *Population and Housing*, describes the project's potential impacts of increasing the population by introducing housing. Section 4.12, *Public Services*, describes the project's potential effects on fire, law enforcement, and public library services. Section 4.13, *Recreation*, describes the project's potential impacts on existing parks, recreation, and open space. Section 4.14, *Transportation and Traffic*, describe the potential impacts to the circulation network surrounding the project site.

As discussed in these sections, the project would not result in significant and unavoidable impacts to biological, cultural, or tribal cultural resources. Potential adverse environmental effects to human beings are discussed in Section 4.3, *Air Quality*, Section 4.9, *Land Use and Planning*, Section 4.10, *Noise*, and Section 4.15, *Less than Significant Effects*. As discussed above, each environmental analysis section of the Supplemental EIR concludes with a discussion of the project's contribution to cumulative effects.

Also refer to the Executive Summary of this Supplemental EIR, which summarizes all impacts and mitigation measures that apply to the project.

4.1 Aesthetics/Visual Resources

The following discussion focuses on the visual resources of the project site, including the existing character, relationship to surrounding areas, the degree of night lighting and glare in the vicinity, and the surrounding architectural style and character. Applicable information has been adapted from the previous environmental impact report (EIR) and the analysis of aesthetic impacts has been updated according to current conditions, and the proposed amendments to the City's General Plan and the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan.

4.1.1 Setting

a. Regional Setting

The project site is located in the Santa Maria Valley, a roughly east-west trending valley in northern Santa Barbara County. The Valley is bound by the Nipomo Mesa and Sierra Madre Mountains on the north and east, by the Solomon Hills and Casmalia Hills on the southeast and southwest, and by the Guadalupe Dunes and Pacific Ocean on the west.

The Santa Maria Valley is primarily a flat coastal plain and the native vegetation consists largely of coastal dune sage. The edges of the valley are characterized by rolling hills with oak woodlands, native and nonnative grasses, sage scrub and chaparral. Much of the area is rural in nature, characterized by such uses as grazing, crude oil production, and cultivated agriculture, which is the dominant land use, and the urban areas in and around Santa Maria.

b. Project Site Setting

Scenic Vistas

A scenic vista is a view of natural environmental, historic, and/or architectural features possessing visual and aesthetic qualities of value to the community. The term "vista" generally implies an expansive view, usually from an elevated point or open area. The City General Plan does not identify any vistas or other scenic resources in the City.

Scenic Highways

The California Scenic Highway Program, maintained by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) protects State scenic highway corridors from changes that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. The project site is not visible from any State scenic highways.

Visual Character of the Project Site

The project site is located near the center of the City of Santa Maria. The project site is surrounded by urbanized development and represents an "infill" parcel. The project site is currently used for agricultural purposes, primarily as cultivated row crops. On-site structures are limited to those associated with agricultural operations such as storage structures, irrigation works, fencing, and overhead utilities. Other features include equipment storage, access roads and drainage ditches, and an earthen impoundment. A City-maintained flood control channel runs along the southern boundary of the project site.

Existing development in the project vicinity includes: agricultural commercial and residential development to the west, across Blosser Road; one-story and two-story residential and school uses to the north and south; and park, school, and residential uses to the east, across the Santa Maria Valley Railroad (SMVRR) tracks and Depot Street.

Public Views of the Project Site and Surroundings

Existing public views of the project site and surrounding lands contain important physical visual attributes including expansive agricultural fields, with the surrounding mountains and hills forming a visual backdrop in all directions. The public roadways bordering the project site, including Stowell Road, Depot Street, Battles Road, and Blosser Road, provide the greatest public opportunities for views of and through the project site. The foothills and steeper slopes of the hills and mountains surrounding the Santa Maria Valley are visible across the project site from travelers on the adjacent roadways. The eastbound lane of Battles Road and northbound lane of Blosser Road provide unobstructed northeasterly views through the project site to the distant foothills of the Sierra Madre Mountains, which are distinctive in the area. Stowell Road provides southerly views of the distant Solomon and Casmalia Hills. Agricultural lands, including the row crops on the project site, are visually distinct in the context of the surrounding urban development, and provide unobstructed views across the project site. Views of surrounding development seen from and through the site are typical of urban development and do not stand out as unique to the area.

Photographs 1 and 2 in Figure 4.1-1 show views of the project site and surroundings.

Surrounding Architectural Style and Character

Existing residential development surrounding the project site includes two- and three-story structures and is characteristic of contemporary California Ranch architectural styles. Nearby commercial development is characteristic of regional shopping areas, including structures up to the Zoning Ordinance limit of 40 feet, with a mix of contemporary styles emphasizing stucco facades.

Night Lighting and Glare

Nighttime lighting conditions vary throughout the City, from heavily lit areas of commercial development to more rural areas with little night lighting. There is limited lighted nighttime activity on the project site for the existing agricultural operations. However, lighting and glare levels in the project vicinity (i.e., surrounding the site) are typical of urban areas. The majority of light and glare in the project vicinity is generated by residential, commercial, and school uses, as well as the roadways surrounding the site. Vehicle headlights, street lighting at intersections and along the streets, and building lighting, contribute to the existing light setting in the vicinity of the project site.

c. Regulatory Setting

The City regulates community design and aesthetics of buildings and public spaces through its General Plan policies and zoning. The General Plan prescribes visual resource policies, and the Zoning Ordinance, including the Planned Development (PD) overlay that applies to the entire project area, requires development review of projects. The Land Use Element, Open Space Element, and Environmental Resources Management Element of the General Plan contain policy statements that serve as a framework for evaluating proposed projects in regard to their potential to affect the aesthetic environment of the city.

Figure 4.1-1 Views of the Project Site and Surroundings



Photograph 1. View facing northeast from Battles Road, with City-maintained flood control channel and row crops on project site visible in the foreground and the Sierra Madre Mountains in the background. Existing urban development is distantly visible in the middle ground.



Photograph 2. View facing south from Stowell Road, with row crops on project site visible in the foreground and the Solomon Hills in the background. Existing urban development is distantly visible in the middle ground.

Adopted Policies and Regulations that Avoid or Reduce Impacts

The General Plan Land Use Element includes the following goals and policies with which future projects must comply. Adherence to these goals and policies would provide some degree of mitigation for potential impacts to aesthetic resources:

Goal L.U.1 – Community Character

Maintain and improve the existing character of the community as the industrial and commercial retail center for northern Santa Barbara County and southern San Luis Obispo County.

Goal L.U.3 – Urban Design

The City will promote quality urban design enhancing Santa Maria's character.

Policy L.U.3 – Rehabilitation of Older Structures and New Development

Emphasize quality urban design features in rehabilitation and new development efforts.

Goal L.U.6c – Urban/Agriculture Equilibrium

Achieve a balance between increased development and the maintenance, management, and/or preservation of local resources.

Policy L.U.7 – Site Design

Avoid land use problems before they arise and create maximum harmony through innovative urban design between various land uses.

Objective L.U.7a

Require the use of buffers between incompatible land uses by using berms, walls, open space, landscaping, bike paths, and arterial streets where appropriate.

Goal L.U.10 – Promote High Quality Commercial and Industrial Development

Continue to promote quality commercial and industrial development in Santa Maria and encourage the upgrading and revitalization of the existing commercial and industrial areas.

Title 12 Chapter 44 of the City of Santa Maria Municipal Code includes policies and regulations for landscape development that are intended to provide for the creation of a water conserving, functional and aesthetic outdoor environment, consistent with the Environmental Resource Management Element of the General Plan and Government Code Section 65590 et seq. Resolution No. 2018-08 was adopted by the City on July 10, 2018, which approved updates and revisions to Title 12 Chapter 44 of the Santa Maria Municipal Code for the purposes of landscape improvements.

This update brought the City into compliance with Title 23 Chapter 2.7 Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance of the California Code of Regulations, effective December 1, 2015, which was created in response to limited supply and increased demand of waters within the State and would apply to the project. The policies therein have been created in order to:

- Promote the values and benefits of landscaping practices that integrate and go beyond the conservation and efficient use of water;
- Establish a structure for planning, designing, installing, maintaining and managing water efficient landscapes in new construction and rehabilitated projects by encouraging the use of a

watershed approach that requires cross-sector collaboration of industry, government and property owners to achieve the many benefits possible;

- Establish provisions for water management practices and water waste prevention for existing landscapes;
- Use water efficiently without waste by setting a Maximum Applied Water Allowance as an upper limit for water use and reduce water use to the lowest practical amount;
- Promote the benefits of consistent landscape ordinances with neighboring local and regional agencies;
- Encourage local agencies and water purveyors to use economic incentives that promote the efficient use of water, such as implementing a tiered-rate structure; and
- Encourage local agencies to designate the necessary authority that implements and enforces the provisions of the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance or its local landscape ordinance.

Besides conserving water, the above City and State landscaping-related ordinances also aid in the City Council's goal for improved community aesthetics, including the provision of abundant landscaping in plans for new development.

With respect to outdoor lighting, City Standard S-106 relates to the design and installation of streetlights that will be within City right of way and operated by the City. This standard includes specifications for materials, and lighting intensities for areas based on the type of road and other factors.

4.1.2 Impact Analysis

a. Methodology and Significance Thresholds

The assessment of aesthetic impacts involves qualitative analysis that is inherently subjective in nature. Different viewers react to viewsheds and aesthetic conditions differently. Visual or aesthetic resources are generally defined as both the natural and built features of the landscape that contribute to the public's experience and appreciation of the environment. Depending on the extent to which a project's presence would alter the perceived visual character and quality of the environment, a visual or aesthetic impact may occur. This evaluation measures the existing visual resource against the project. The project site was observed and photographically documented in its surrounding context. The City's General Plan was reviewed for policy instruction relative to visual resources and design policy.

Views may be characterized in terms of foreground, middleground, and background views. Foreground views are those immediately presented to the viewer, and include objects at close range. Middleground views occupy the center of the viewshed, and tend to include objects that dominate the viewshed in normal circumstances. Background views include distant objects and other objects that make up the horizon.

According to Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*, an aesthetic impact from the project would be significant if the project would:

1. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
2. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway;

3. 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); or in an urbanized area, conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality; and/or
4. Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Views from private property such as backyards, front yards, interior living spaces, or private roadways are not considered public and generally are not analyzed under CEQA. Accordingly, views from the private residences surrounding the project site are not discussed in this impact analysis.

b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold 1: Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Threshold 2: Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

Impact AES-1 DEVELOPMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROPOSED BLOSSER-SOUTHEAST SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENTS WOULD NOT HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL ADVERSE EFFECT ON A SCENIC VISTA OR DAMAGE SCENIC RESOURCES WITHIN A STATE SCENIC HIGHWAY. THESE IMPACTS WOULD BE CLASS III, LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.

With implementation of design and siting requirements, and viewshed preservation mitigation measures, the 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR determined that overall impacts to scenic vistas and resources would be less than significant. No scenic vistas are identified in the city of Santa Maria and the project site is not visible from an eligible or designated state scenic highway. With the anticipated commercial, school, and residential infill development that would be allowed on the project site under the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments, immediate foreground views of agricultural uses on the project site from surrounding public roadways would be converted to urban development. The proposed structures would visually function as an extension of the existing urban development, including residential, commercial, and industrial uses, surrounding the project site, which also fronts on the surrounding roadways. The proposed development would be consistent in height, scale, and character with other residential, commercial, and school uses in the central portion of Santa Maria. The project site is mostly void of large vegetation or trees, and rock outcroppings, with the exception of three landscape trees located on the northern portion of the site. These trees are not identified as scenic resources and as discussed in Section 4.4, *Biological Resources*, the removal of these trees would not conflict with City tree preservation policies or ordinances. As discussed in Section 4.5, *Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources*, the project site does not contain any historic buildings. Therefore, the project site does not contain scenic resources that could be damaged by the proposed project. Because there are no designated scenic vistas within the project site vicinity, the site is not visible from a state scenic highway, and the project site does not contain any identified scenic resources, project impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Threshold 3: Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings or conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

Impact AES-2 THE ANTICIPATED DEVELOPMENT ON THE PROJECT SITE UNDER THE PROPOSED BLOSSER-SOUTHEAST SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENTS WOULD ALTER THE EXISTING VISUAL CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF PUBLIC VIEWS OF THE SITE BY CONVERTING EXPANSIVE AGRICULTURAL LAND INTO URBAN USES. THE PROJECT'S IMPACT ON THE VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE SITE AND QUALITY OF PUBLIC VIEWS WOULD BE CLASS II, LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH INCORPORATION OF MITIGATION.

With implementation of design and siting requirements, and viewshed preservation mitigation measures, the 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR determined that overall impacts to scenic resources, including development on the project site, would be less than significant.

Similar to the development envisioned in the approved Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, the anticipated residential, commercial, school, and recreational development that would be allowed on the project site under the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments would be consistent in scale and proportion to surrounding development, including two- and three-story residential development, and school and commercial uses. The anticipated development that would be allowed on the project site under the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments would convert the project site from agricultural land to urban development.

As previously described, the project vicinity is primarily characterized by existing residential, commercial, school, and park development, with residential development that is up to two-stories in height and characteristic of contemporary California Ranch architectural styles, commercial development that is characteristic of neighborhood shopping centers, and typical public elementary school and community park development. The project site contains row crops with limited agricultural accessory structures and equipment located near Stowell Road. The expansive row crops onsite stand out as aesthetically notable to the area because of the contrast with the urban development that surrounds the project site on all sides. However, when considered in the context of surrounding development, anticipated development of the project site under the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments would change, but not degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site.

Similar to the development envisioned in the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, the proposed residences, and neighborhood commercial and school development would partially obstruct views of the distant Sierra Madre Mountains from Battles Road and Blosser Road and views of the Solomon and Casmalia Hills from Stowell Road. Views from these roadways would change substantially with the replacement of the existing row crops with urban development. However, in the context of surrounding urban development, viewer expectations along this roadway are generally of urban and suburban uses. The proposed development would be consistent with the surrounding development north, south, east, and west of the project site. In addition, specific building layout, height, and massing would be subject to review by City Architectural Review staff to ensure compliance with the City's applicable design guidelines.

The project may result in new signage associated with the anticipated commercial development within public views of and through the project site. This would add to the perceived changes in character of the site to a more urbanized condition. As detailed in Section 2, *Project Description*, signs that may be used throughout the project area would be required to be in compliance with the standards and requirements of the Santa Maria Municipal Code. Signs would require review and approval of a permit issued by the Community Development Director, pursuant to the Santa Maria

Municipal Code Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 34: Signs. Lots with multiple buildings, or buildings with multiple tenants, would require master sign plans. The proposed development would also include landscaping measures consistent with City policies and requirements including the Landscape Standards as defined in the Santa Maria Municipal Code.

Although the anticipated development under the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments would be subject to Title 12 Chapters 34 and 44 of the Municipal Code Signage and Landscaping Standards and the City's development review process wherein visual aesthetics of future development would be considered, approval of the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments has potential to substantially change the character and quality of public views of and through the project site. Consistent with the findings of the 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR, impacts to the visual character of the site and quality of public views would be potentially significant and require mitigation.

Mitigation Measures

Views from roadways surrounding the project site would be partially obstructed by development on the project site. This potential impact can be mitigated through appropriate design measures, consistent with the applicable General Plan Land Use Goals outlined above. Implementation of this mitigation measure would occur via City design review and approval as part of the Planned Development Permit for individual development areas within the specific plan.

AES-1 Specific Plan Aesthetics Policies

The following policy language shall be added to the Development Standards in the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan: Each Planned Development permit submitted to implement the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan shall include the following requirements:

1. Use landscaping techniques, such as a formal single row of street trees along Stowell Road, Battles Road, La Brea Avenue, Western Avenue and Blosser Road, to soften views of sound walls and new buildings within the Specific Plan site for existing nearby residents.
2. All of the rooftop equipment on commercial structures shall be screened from roadway views.
3. Additional height may be considered for structures on a case-by-case basis, subject to a superior site, architectural, and landscape design.

The Community Development Department shall recommend, and the Planning Commission shall determine, consistency with the applicable General Plan Land Use goals and design requirements as part of all Planned Development Permit approvals.

Significance After Mitigation

Incorporation of Mitigation Measure AES-1 would ensure that new structures as experienced from adjacent roadways would be buffered from view through the use of specific landscaping techniques. These measures would help to improve foreground views from adjacent roadways and other public areas, maintaining some of the natural quality of the landscape. Mitigation Measure AES-1 would reduce potential impacts associated with changes to the visual character of the site and quality of public views to a less than significant level.

Threshold 4: Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Impact AES-3 DEVELOPMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROPOSED BLOSSER-SOUTHEAST SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD INTRODUCE NEW LIGHT AND GLARE SOURCES IN AN EXISTING AGRICULTURAL AREA THAT COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT NIGHTTIME VIEWS IN THE AREA. IMPACTS RELATED TO LIGHT AND GLARE WOULD BE CLASS II, LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH INCORPORATION OF MITIGATION.

The 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR did not include specific findings related to light and glare impacts from buildout of the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan area. Similar to the development envisioned in the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, the anticipated development that would be allowed on the project site under the proposed specific plan amendments would result in urban development on existing agricultural land that does not currently include substantial sources of artificial light. There are existing sources of nighttime lighting in the vicinity of the site, provided by the streetlights along Stowell Road, Depot Street, Battles Road, and Blosser Road, spillover lighting from surrounding development, and light from the headlights of vehicles traveling along the surrounding roadways. All of these contribute to the existing urban environment, and degrade the visual quality of the nighttime sky. Development of the project site would result in an increase in ambient nighttime lighting and glare through the addition of urban development and associated exterior lighting and parking areas. This would include lighting for storefronts, security/safety lighting, lighting for internal circulation and parking areas, elevated lighting for sports playing field in the proposed recreational open space area, and glare from the reflection of light from automobiles parked along internal roadways and in parking lots for the commercial, school, and park uses. elevated nighttime lighting and a high parking ratio. Using the classification scheme in the Model Lighting Ordinance prepared by the International Dark Sky Association (2011), the proposed development area would be categorized as Lighting Zone 3 (LZ-3), areas with moderately high ambient lighting, where lighting is generally desired for safety, security and/or convenience and it is often uniform and/or continuous. The Model Lighting Ordinance provides guidelines for outdoor lighting depending on specific uses and conditions, recommending a total of 5.0 lumens/square foot for LZ-3 areas. A lumen/square foot is the equivalent of one candlefoot of illumination.

Anticipated development would be required to comply with the City's lighting standards, including Standard S-106 that provides specifications for materials and lighting intensities for streetlights that will be within City right of way. Nevertheless, the size of the proposed development and expanses of parking areas for commercial, school, and park uses present a source of nighttime lighting and glare that would result in potentially significant impacts to nighttime views from surrounding areas, including the surrounding roadways, and the residential development and parks surrounding the site.

Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measure shall be incorporated into the project. These measures are based in part on guidance in the Model Lighting Ordinance.

AES-2 Specific Plan Lighting and Glare Policies

The following policy language shall be added to the Development Standards for proposed commercial residential multi-family development applications in the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan:

- a. Each Planned Development Permit for new construction shall include a Lighting Plan (including photometrics) that minimizes nighttime lighting and glare that may adversely affect traffic along

Stowell Road, Depot Street, Battles Road, and Blosser Road, and that might adversely impact the adjacent, existing park and residential areas.

- b. Site development shall include design features that apply to project lighting on streets, buildings, parking areas, pedestrian and entry areas, landscaped areas, and community facilities, and minimize the potential for overspill onto adjacent properties.
- c. Lighting standards shall blend architecturally with buildings, pedestrian areas, and other hardscape elements, while conforming to state and local safety and illumination requirements including design and placement of site lighting to minimize glare affecting adjacent properties, buildings and roadways. Streetlights within the single-family neighborhoods would be the City-approved decorative streetlights.
- d. Automatic timers on lighting shall be designed to maximize personal safety during nighttime use while saving energy.
- e. Special condition lighting shall be positioned to enhance the safety of vehicular and pedestrian flows at key points along the roadways and the maximum height of roadway lighting shall be 30-feet. Parking, pedestrian, and entry area lighting shall include architecturally compatible lighting fixtures up to 20-feet in height. Additional height may be considered through a Planned Development permit if it is demonstrated to be an environmentally superior or equivalent design.
- f. Architectural and landscape lighting used to highlight monument signs or architectural features (i.e., walls, entryways), and landscape features (i.e., specimen trees and pedestrian areas) shall be designed to avoid glare onto adjacent properties and shall be carefully integrated into building details or concealed flush with grade, and shall not be visibly apparent during the daytime.
- g. All lighting shall be directed away from residential properties and public streets in such a manner as not to create a public or private nuisance or safety hazard.
- h. Exterior wall mounted lighting and parking lot light fixtures shall be full cut-off and downward directed.
- i. Commercial sites shall have a maximum illumination of three footcandles.
- j. Illumination from all commercial areas shall not exceed one-half footcandle at the nearest residential property line.

Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure AES-2 would ensure that the effect of nighttime lighting and glare on views in the project area would be reduced through use of specific design, materials, and positioning for lighting features. With these measures, impacts on nighttime views from excessive lighting and glare would be reduced to a less than significant level.

c. Cumulative Impacts

As shown in Table 3-1 in Section 3, *Environmental Setting*, the City currently anticipates 1,130 new residential units, 108 new hotel rooms, 710,466 square feet of new commercial development, 4.3 million square feet of new greenhouses, 1.04 million square feet of new industrial development, and 569,512 square feet and 260 units of new mixed use/other development. Most of the listed projects involve infill development of relatively small parcels and are consistent with the surrounding urban and suburban nature of development within the city.

As shown in Figure 3-1, the anticipated cumulative development would primarily occur as infill development in urban areas of the City of Santa Maria. With implementation of design and siting requirements, and viewshed preservation mitigation measures, the 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR determined that overall impacts to scenic vistas and resources would be less than significant. Additionally, no scenic vistas are identified in the city of Santa Maria. Additionally, cumulative development would occur in areas that already possess nighttime lighting and glare typical of urban development. Therefore, cumulative development would not result in significant impacts to scenic vistas, resources in the City, or by introducing new sources of lighting and glare in unlit areas or with potential to adversely affect adjacent land uses. Nevertheless, cumulative development throughout the city would contribute to an overall alteration in the visual character and quality of public views in the area to a more urbanized condition, resulting in a potentially significant cumulative impact to the character of public views in the city.

As development of the project site was evaluated as part of the original Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan in the 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR, would be subject to city signage, landscaping, and lighting standards, and would be required to implement Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2, described above, the project's contribution to potential cumulative impacts on aesthetic and visual resources would be less than significant.

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4.2 Agriculture

This section identifies the agriculture resources that occur on the project site and evaluates potentially significant impacts to those resources in the context of the proposed project. The analysis presented in this section is based on a review of relevant literature and previous assessments and analysis related to the 1992 Sphere of Influence Boundary Expansion and Concurrent Annexation Program and original Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, and related CEQA Environmental Impact Report.

4.2.1 Setting

a. Regional Agricultural Resources

In 2017, agriculture was the largest industry in Santa Barbara County by revenue. Agricultural operations in the County provide 25,370 jobs (Santa Barbara County Agricultural Production Report 2017). Table 4.2-1 summarizes agricultural productivity by crop type in Santa Barbara County for 2017, including harvested acreage and total gross values.

Table 4.2-1 Santa Barbara County Agricultural Summary

Crop Types	Harvested Area	Total Gross Value
Vegetable Crops	66,587 acres	\$588,662,957
Fruit and Nut Crops	17,956 acres	\$605,447,793
Seed Crops	1,401 acres	\$7,916,288
Wine Grapes	21,572 acres	\$146,129,595
Cut Flowers	807 acres/ 9,023,517 greenhouse square feet	\$85,548,067
Cut Foliage	6,001 greenhouse square feet	\$101,397
Nursery Products	373 acres/ 5,667,132 greenhouse square feet	\$100,654,079
Livestock	n/a	36,807,327
Dairy and Apiary	n/a	\$7,430,595
Rangeland and Field Crops	584,855 acres	\$11,652,493
Total	693,551 acres/ 14,696,650 greenhouse square feet	\$1,590,350,591

Source: Santa Barbara County 2017

Rising land values and cost of inputs (water, fuel, fertilizer, etc.) have contributed to an increase in the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses throughout California as well as the intensification of agricultural land uses, whereby lower value products are replaced by high-value crops (e.g., grazing or dry farming replaced with row crops, orchards, or vineyards). Between 1984 and 2012, nearly 1.4 million acres of agricultural land in California were converted to non-agricultural purposes. From the 2010 to 2012, the State experienced no net loss or gain of farmland

due to conversion. Consistent with the statewide trend relative to the conversion of farmland, the County experienced no net loss or gain of farmland between 2010 and 2012 (California Department of Conservation 2015).

b. City Land in Agricultural Production

The City of Santa Maria is an urban area of the County and does not contain large-scale agricultural activities within the City limits. These activities are typically found surrounding the City in unincorporated areas. However, the City functions as an important location for agricultural commerce because of its location within an agricultural region known for its production of agricultural products. A limited number of properties within the City of Santa Maria are designated for agricultural uses and are generally concentrated near the Santa Maria Regional Landfill.

c. Agricultural Resources in the Specific Plan Area

The project site is predominantly used for agriculture with approximately 95 percent of the site in active irrigated row crop production. The balance of the site is use for agricultural related access, irrigation and storage.

Soils

The soils which make up the project site are identified in Table 4.2-2 below and include Corralitos loamy sand, Sorrento sandy loam, and Sorrento sandy loam and substratum (USDA 2019). These soils are generally characterized by 0 to 2 percent slopes, except for Sorrento loam which has slopes from 2 to 9 percent.

Table 4.2-2 Soil Classifications

Soil Type		Acres	Percent
CuA	Corralitos loamy sand	67.9	41.9
StA	Sorrento sandy loam	55.7	34.3
SuA	Sorrento sandy loam, sandy substratum	10.8	6.7
SvA	Sorrento loam	19.9	12.3
SvC	Sorrento loam	7.8	4.8

Source: USDA 2019

Land Use Classifications

Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

The Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) is implemented by the Department of Conservation (DOC) Division of Land Resource Protection and recognizes the suitability of land for agricultural production. The FMMP is non-regulatory and was developed to inventory land and provide categorical definitions of Important Farmlands and consistent and impartial data to decision-makers for use in assessing present status, reviewing trends, and planning for the future of California's agricultural land resources. The program does not necessarily reflect local General Plan

actions, urban needs, changing economic conditions, proximity to market, and other factors, which may be taken into consideration when government considers agricultural land use policies. FMMP produces Important Farmland Maps, which account for both resource quality (soils) and land use information. The FMMP farmland categories are described as follows:

- **Prime Farmland** has the most favorable combination of physical and chemical features, enabling it to sustain long-term production of agricultural crops. This land possesses the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. In order to qualify for this classification, the land must have produced irrigated crops at some point during the two update cycles prior to National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) mapping.
- **Farmland of Statewide Importance** possesses minor shortcomings when compared to Prime Farmland, such as greater slopes and/or less ability to store moisture. In order to qualify for this classification, the land must have produced irrigated crops at some point during the two update cycles prior to NRCS mapping.
- **Unique Farmland** is of lesser quality soils used for the production of the state's leading agricultural crops. Unique Farmland includes areas that do not meet the above stated criteria for Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance, but that have been used for the production of specific high economic value crops during the two update cycles prior to the mapping date. It has the special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high quality and/or high yields of a specific crop when treated and managed according to current farming methods.
- **Farmland of Local Importance** is important to the local agricultural economy, as determined by the County Board of Supervisors and a local advisory committee.
- **Grazing Land** contains existing vegetation that is suited to the grazing of livestock.
- **Urban and Built-up Land** is occupied by structures with a building density of at least one unit to 1.5 acres, or approximately six structures to a 10-acre parcel. This land is used for residential, industrial, commercial, construction, institutional, public administration, railroad and other transportation yards, cemeteries, airports, golf courses, sanitary landfills, sewage treatment, water control structures, and other developed purposes.
- **Other Land** is land not included in any other mapping category. Common examples include low density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities; strip mines, borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than 40 acres. Vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as Other Land.

According to Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, Important Farmland under the FMMP includes Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland. The best quality land is Prime Farmland. The remaining FMMP categories are used for reporting changes in land use as required for the FMMP biennial farmland conversion report.

The project site is classified as Prime Farmland under the FMMP (DOC 2018). Surrounding land is predominantly classified as Urban and Built-up Land, with a small portion of the land to the south and to the west classified as Grazing Land.

Designated Land Uses and Zoning

The existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan establishes the designated land use and zoning for the project site and other Specific Plan areas, and includes: low, medium, and high density residential; community facilities; recreation open space; and neighborhood commercial. See Section 2.5.1, Current Land Use Designations and Zoning, in the Project Description for more details. There are no existing agricultural designations or zoning on the project site.

d. Regulatory Setting

Public Resources Code Section 21060.1

Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21060.1 defines agricultural land for the purposes of assessing environmental impacts under the FMMP. As stated earlier, the FMMP inventories agricultural land use and land use changes throughout California.

Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act)

Preservation of agricultural, recreational, and open space lands through agricultural preserve contracts between the County and property owners is a technique encouraged by the state to implement general plan policy. Agricultural preserve contracts are executed through procedures enabled by the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, also known as the Williamson Act. A contract may be entered into for property with agricultural, recreational, and open space uses in return for decreased property taxes. Land Conservation Act contracts preserve agriculture and open space over a rolling term 10-year contract. The inclusion of a parcel in a Williamson Act contract is entirely voluntary and must have the consent of the property owner.

The project site has been under a Williamson Act Contract in the past. However, the contract was requested for non-renewal and expired in 2001 (City of Santa Maria 2001).

City of Santa Maria Regulations

City of Santa Maria General Plan

The City of Santa Maria General Plan Resources Management Element (2001) addresses the conservation and protection of agricultural land in the City of Santa Maria and the greater Santa Maria Valley. The Resources Management Element describes agricultural land uses and identifies prime agricultural soils and preserves within and surrounding the city. The Resources Management Element contains the following goal, policies, and objectives that would apply to development in the Specific Plan area:

Goal 5 – Agriculture and Soils

Preserve high quality soils to assure that agriculture remains the primary basic industry in the Santa Maria Valley.

Policy 5 – Preserve agricultural lands for continued agricultural activities in the Santa Maria Valley.

Objective 5.1.a – Agriculture

Encourage the provision and maintenance of incentives to owners of undeveloped prime agricultural land to preserve their land for agricultural production.

Objective 5.1.b – Agricultural Soils

Retain prime soils which are presently in agricultural production and discourage development on these soils.

Objective 5.1.c – Agricultural Services

Continue to encourage agricultural support services to locate and operate within the Planning Area and City limits.

Objective 5.1.d – Farmworker Housing

Continue to encourage Santa Barbara County to provide farmworker housing.

The General Plan Land Use Element (2011) establishes future land use patterns and specifies the appropriate residential density and development intensity to allow orderly growth to occur in the City of Santa Maria. The Land Use Element contains the following goals and policy relating to the preservation of agricultural resources in the city:

Goal L.U.6b – Preserve Agricultural Resources.

Accommodate growth while making every effort to preserve agricultural resources in the surrounding region.

Goal L.U.6c – Urban/Agriculture Equilibrium.

Achieve a balance between increased developments and the maintenance, management, and/or preservation of local resources.

Policy L.U.6b – Inter-Governmental Coordination

Work with Santa Barbara County and LAFCO to support mutually reinforcing goals of locating urban development within municipalities and urban areas of the county in order to protect agricultural land and to efficiently utilize public infrastructure.

4.2.2 Impact Analysis

a. Methodology and Significance Thresholds

The following thresholds are based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. Impacts would be significant if the project would result in any of the following:

1. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use;
2. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract;
3. 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));
4. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use; or
5. 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.

The project would not result in conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract. The project would also not have any potential impacts to forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production. These issues are discussed in Section 4.15, Less than Significant Effects.

b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold 1: Would the project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

Threshold 5: Would the project 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?

Impact AG-1 ALTHOUGH THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA IS CLASSIFIED UNDER THE FMMP AS PRIME FARMLAND, THE PROJECT WOULD NOT RESULT IN NEW OR SUBSTANTIALLY MORE SEVERE IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONVERSION OF PRIME FARMLAND TO NON-AGRICULTURAL USES THAN IDENTIFIED FOR THE EXISTING BLOSSER-SOUTHEAST SPECIFIC PLAN. IMPACTS WOULD BE CLASS III, LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.

The 1992 Final EIR, which evaluated implementation of the original Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan on the project site in conjunction with the City's Sphere of Influence Boundary Amendment and Concurrent Annexation Program, included the following findings related to impacts on agriculture: Impacts associated with conflicts between proposed uses and adjacent agriculture would be mitigated to less than significant; impacts associated with the cumulative conversion of irrigated agricultural acreage would be mitigated to less than significant; and impacts associated with the cumulative loss of prime farmland would be significant and avoidable despite the implementation of feasible mitigation.

The 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR identified five "General Measures" as mitigation for the loss of agricultural productivity caused by converting agricultural lands to urban uses. The Tiered Environmental Mitigation Monitoring Program adopted for the Sphere of Influence project explained that the General Measures were consistent with the general nature of the project, and that the identified mitigation measures were to be considered and then applied as appropriate in the review of specific future projects within the annexation areas. Several of these General Measures to mitigate agricultural impacts have been implemented including phasing development to keep land cultivated within an annexation area as long as practical while urban uses were developed (e.g. phasing of the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan areas). Another General Measure involved City adoption of a resolution to establish a greenbelt and agricultural buffer around the City (Resolution 94-9). Other buffer policies, landscape standards, and a right-to-farm policy were also adopted by the City to help minimize conflicts between urban and agricultural uses. Although some of the General Measures from the 1992 Sphere of Influence EIR were not ultimately adopted, including a transfer of development rights program, the Final EIR and the CEQA Findings adopted by the City Council concluded that the mitigation measures would reduce impacts related to potential agricultural use conflicts and the cumulative impact on agricultural productivity to less than significant levels (City Council Resolution 92-136).

With respect to the loss of prime agricultural soils, the 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR concluded that project-specific actions as well as cumulative development associated with the Sphere of

Influence boundary adjustment and annexations would result insignificant and unavoidable impacts. For these reasons, the City Council adopted findings explaining that the impacts were mitigated to the extent feasible, and that there were specific economic and social considerations to support the adoption of the Sphere of Influence boundary adjustment and annexations (Resolution 92-136 and its Exhibit B).

As discussed in Section 4.2.1.d, the project site is classified as Prime Farmland under the FMMP. The project site is currently used for agriculture, with approximately 95 percent of the site in active irrigated row crop production. Development of the project site under the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments would result in the conversion of the site to non-agricultural uses. As discussed in Section 1, Introduction, the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan area has been anticipated for non-agricultural use, including residential development, since the evaluation of the City's Sphere of Influence Boundary Amendment and Concurrent Annexation Program in 1992. As part of the Sphere of Influence Boundary Amendment and Concurrent Annexation Program, the project site was assigned residential growth potentials and did not include any area identified for future agricultural use. The existing land use designations, which include Community Facilities (CF), High Density Residential (HDR), Low Medium Density Residential (LMDR), Medium Density Residential (MDR), Neighborhood Commercial (NC), and Recreation Open Space (ROS), would not facilitate agricultural use of the Specific Plan area.

The properties surrounding the project site are developed with urban uses, and do not possess any agricultural operations. Therefore, development of the project site to extend the surrounding urban development across the site would not result in conflicts with existing agricultural operations. In contrast to the findings of the 1992 Final EIR, impacts associated with potential land use conflicts between proposed uses and adjacent agriculture would be less than significant without the need for mitigation.

Although the Specific Plan area is classified under the FMMP as Prime Farmland, the site is designated by the City for Specific Plan implementation and associated residential, commercial, school, and recreational development. The project would not result in new or substantially more severe impacts associated with the conversion of Prime Farmland to non-agricultural uses than identified for the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

This impact would be less than significant without the need for mitigation. Nevertheless, the policy level mitigation measures adopted by the City Council as part of the 1992 Sphere of Influence boundary adjustment continue to provide guidance in the consideration of development within the City to minimize impacts related to agricultural productivity to the extent feasible.

c. Cumulative Impacts

Planned, proposed, and approved projects in and around the City (refer to Section 3.3, Cumulative Development) would result in conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses. The conversion of agricultural land within the City would potentially result in incompatibilities with existing agriculturally-designated land uses and decrease in FMMP-designated Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and/or Farmland of Statewide Importance. The project would result in conversion of FMMP-designated Prime Farmland and would contribute to the cumulative conversion of agricultural land from planned, proposed, and approved projects in and around the City to non-agricultural uses.

Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan Amendment

The Blosser-Southeast project site has been anticipated for non-agricultural use, including urban development to extend adjacent urban uses in the area, since the evaluation of the City's Sphere of Influence Boundary Amendment and Concurrent Annexation Program in 1992. Additionally, with implementation of the General Measures from the 1992 Final EIR and City agricultural policies, cumulative development would result in less than significant impacts related to potential agricultural land use conflicts and loss of productivity. The proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendment would not result in new or substantially more severe cumulative impacts to agriculture than identified in the 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR, and the project's contribution to cumulative impacts to agriculture would be less than significant.

4.3 Air Quality

This section of the EIR identifies and evaluates issues related to air quality in the context of the proposed project. It describes the physical and regulatory setting, the criteria used to evaluate the significance of potential impacts, the methods used to evaluate these impacts, and the results of the impact analysis.

4.3.1 Setting

The project site is currently undeveloped and used for agricultural purposes. The topography of the project site is generally flat. The project site is void of large vegetation or trees, except for planted row crops. The project site is located in the South Central Coast Air Basin (SCCAB), which includes all of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties. The air quality setting for the region is summarized below in the discussion of Climate and Topography.

a. Climate and Topography

The climate of the SCCAB is strongly influenced by its proximity to the Pacific Ocean and the location of the high-pressure cell in the northeastern Pacific. With a Mediterranean type climate, the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan area is characterized by warm, dry summers and cool winters with occasional rainy periods.

Cool, humid, marine air causes frequent fog and low clouds along the coast, generally during the night and morning hours in the late spring and early summer months. The project area is subject to a diurnal cycle in which daily onshore winds from the west and northwest are replaced by mild offshore breezes flowing from warm inland valleys during night and early morning hours. This alternating cycle can create a situation where suspended pollutants are swept offshore at night, and then carried back onshore the following day. Dispersion of pollutants is further degraded when the wind velocity for both day and nighttime breezes is low. The region is also subject to seasonal “Santa Ana” winds. These are typically hot, dry northerly winds which blow offshore at 15 to 20 miles per hour (mph), but can reach speeds in excess of 60 mph.

Two types of temperature inversions (warmer air on top of cooler air) are created in the area: subsidence and radiational. The subsidence inversion is a regional effect created by the Pacific high in which air is heated as it is compressed when it flows from a high pressure area to low pressure areas inland. This type of inversion generally forms at about 1,000 to 2,000 feet and can occur throughout the year, but it is most evident during the summer months. Radiational, or surface, inversions are formed by the more rapid cooling of air near the ground during the night, especially during winter. This type of inversion is typically lower (0 to 500 feet at Vandenberg Air Force Base, for example) and is generally accompanied by stable air. Both types of inversions limit the dispersal of air pollutants within the regional airshed, with the more stable the air (low wind speeds, uniform temperatures), the lower the amount of pollutant dispersion.

b. Air Pollutants of Primary Concern

The State and Federal Clean Air Acts mandate the control and reduction of certain air pollutants. Under these acts, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and the California Air Resources Board (CARB) have established ambient air quality standards for certain “criteria” pollutants. Ambient air pollutant concentrations are affected by the rates and distributions of corresponding air pollutant emissions, as well as by the climactic and topographic influences

discussed above. The primary determinant of concentrations of non-reactive pollutants (such as carbon monoxide [CO] and fine particulate matter [PM₁₀]) is proximity to major sources. Ambient CO levels usually closely follow the spatial and temporal distributions of vehicular traffic.

Federal and state standards have been established for ozone (O₃), CO, nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), lead (Pb), and fine particulate matter less than 10 micrometers (PM₁₀) and less than 2.5 micrometers (PM_{2.5}) in size. Table 4.3-1 summarizes the current federal and state standards for each of these pollutants. California standards are more restrictive than federal standards for each of these pollutants except lead and the eight-hour average for CO. Standards have been set at levels intended to be protective of public health with an adequate margin of safety. To derive these standards, the U.S. EPA reviews data from integrated science assessments and risk/exposure assessments to determine the ambient pollutant concentrations at which human health impacts occur, then reduces these concentrations to establish an adequate margin of safety that is protective of those segments of the public most susceptible to respiratory distress, such as children under the age of 14, the elderly (over the age of 65), persons engaged in strenuous work or exercise, and people with cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases. As a result, human health impacts caused by the following pollutants generally affect people at the concentrations established by the NAAQS (federal standards).

Table 4.3-1 Current Federal and State Ambient Air Quality Standards

Pollutant	Federal Standards	California Standards
Ozone	0.070 ppm (8-hr avg)	0.09 ppm (1-hr avg) 0.070 ppm (8-hr avg)
Carbon Monoxide	9.0 ppm (8-hr avg) 35.0 ppm (1-hr avg)	9.0 ppm (8-hr avg) 20.0 ppm (1-hr avg)
Nitrogen Dioxide	0.053 ppm (annual avg)	0.18 ppm (1-hr avg) 0.030 ppm (annual avg)
Sulfur Dioxide	0.030 ppm (annual avg) 0.14 ppm (24-hr avg) 0.5 ppm (3-hr avg)	0.04 ppm (24-hr avg) 0.25 ppm (1-hr avg)
Lead	1.5 µg/m ³ (calendar quarter)	1.5 µg/m ³ (30-day avg)
Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀)	150 µg/m ³ (24-hr avg)	20 µg/m ³ (annual avg) 50 µg/m ³ (24-hr avg)
Particulate Matter (PM _{2.5})	12 µg/m ³ (annual avg) 35 µg/m ³ (24-hr avg)	12 µg/m ³ (annual avg)

ppm= parts per million

µg/m³ = micrograms per cubic meter

Source: CARB 2016

The Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District (SBCAPCD) monitors criteria pollutant levels to ensure that air quality standards are met, and if they are not met, develops strategies to meet the standards. Depending on whether or not the standards are met or exceeded, the air basin is classified as being in “attainment” or as “non-attainment.” CARB maintains over 60 air quality monitoring stations throughout California, including 18 stations in Santa Barbara County. Of the 18 stations in Santa Barbara County, eight are managed by SBCAPCD, and ten are managed by CARB and private industry. Some pollutants, such as ozone, are measured continuously. Other pollutants are sampled periodically. Particulate matter, for example, is measured over 24 hours every six days.

The nearest monitoring station to the project site is located in the city of Santa Maria and is currently managed by CARB. This station is located at 906 South Broadway, approximately 0.6 mile northeast of the project site. Air quality parameters monitored at this station include O₃, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}, NO₂, wind speed, wind direction, and ambient temperature (ATM). The data collected at this station is considered to be generally representative of the baseline air quality experienced at the project site. Table 4.3-2 summarizes the annual air quality data collected at the Santa Maria monitoring station from 2015 to 2017.

Table 4.3-2 Ambient Air Quality at the Santa Maria Monitoring Station

Pollutant	2015	2016	2017
Ozone, ppm – Hourly Maximum	0.066	0.062	0.068
Number of days of State exceedances (>0.09 ppm)	0	0	0
Ozone, ppm – Eight Hour (State)	0.055	0.056	0.063
Number of days of State exceedances (>0.070 ppm)	0	0	0
Number of days of Nation exceedances (>0.070 ppm)	0	0	0
Particulate Matter <10 microns, µg/m³ – Worst 24 Hours	66.4	78.6	106.9
Number of samples of State exceedances (>50 µg/m ³)	10	16	22
Number of samples of Federal exceedances (>150 µg/m ³)	0	0	0
Particulate Matter <2.5 microns, µg/m³ – Worst 24 Hours	19.2	19.4	19.9
Number of samples of Federal exceedances (>35 µg/m ³)	0	0	0
Nitrogen Dioxide, ppm – Hourly Maximum	46.1	36.0	44.1
Number of samples of State exceedances (>0.18 ppm)	0	0	0

Source: CARB 2018a

As indicated in Table 4.3-2, the state standard for PM₁₀ was exceeded 10 times or more in 2015, 2016, and 2017. There were no recorded exceedances of the federal and state standards for O₃, PM_{2.5}, NO₂ and federal standard for PM₁₀ between 2015 and 2017 at the Santa Maria monitoring station.

Based on the state and federal ambient air quality standards, the County is in attainment of or unclassified for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and is in attainment of or unclassified for all California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS), except for PM₁₀, which is in nonattainment, and O₃, which is in nonattainment-transitional.

c. Health Effects of Criteria Pollutants

The characteristics, sources, and health and atmospheric effects of criteria pollutants (O₃, CO, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}, NO₂, SO₂, and Pb) are described below. As discussed above, NAAQS for criteria pollutants are set at a level that protects public health with an adequate margin of safety.

Ozone

Individuals exercising outdoors, children and people with preexisting lung disease such as asthma and chronic pulmonary lung disease are considered to be the most susceptible sub-groups for ozone effects. Short-term exposures (lasting for a few hours) to ozone at levels typically observed in areas like Los Angeles in Southern California can result in breathing pattern changes, reduction of breathing capacity, increased susceptibility to infections, inflammation of the lung tissue, and some immunological changes. Elevated ozone levels are associated with increased school absences. In recent years, a correlation between elevated ambient ozone levels and increases in daily hospital admission rates, as well as mortality, has also been reported. An increased risk for asthma has been found in children who participate in multiple sports and live in high ozone communities.

Ozone exposure under exercising conditions is known to increase the severity of the observed responses mentioned above. Animal studies suggest that exposure to a combination of pollutants that include ozone may be more toxic than exposure to ozone alone. Although lung volume and resistance changes observed after a single exposure diminish with repeated exposures, biochemical and cellular changes appear to persist, which can lead to subsequent lung structural changes.

Carbon Monoxide

Individuals with a deficient blood supply to the heart are the most susceptible to the adverse effects of CO exposure. The effects observed include earlier onset of chest pain with exercise, and electrocardiograph changes indicative of worsening oxygen supply to the heart.

Inhaled CO has no direct toxic effect on the lungs, but exerts its effect on tissues by interfering with oxygen transport by competing with oxygen to combine with hemoglobin present in the blood to form carboxyhemoglobin (COHb). Hence, conditions with an increased demand for oxygen supply can be adversely affected by exposure to CO. Individuals most at risk include patients with diseases involving heart and blood vessels, fetuses, and patients with chronic hypoxemia (oxygen deficiency) as seen in high altitudes.

Reduction in birth weight and impaired neurobehavioral development has been observed in animals chronically exposed to CO resulting in COHb levels similar to those observed in smokers. Recent studies have found increased risks for adverse birth outcomes with exposure to elevated CO levels. These include pre-term births and heart abnormalities. Additional research is needed to confirm these results.

Nitrogen Dioxide

Population-based studies suggest that an increase in acute respiratory illness, including infections and respiratory symptoms in children (not infants), is associated with long-term exposures to NO₂ at

levels found in homes with gas stoves, which are higher than ambient levels found in the Central Coast. Increase in resistance to air flow and airway contraction is observed after short-term exposure to NO₂ in healthy individuals. Larger decreases in lung functions are observed in individuals with asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (e.g., chronic bronchitis, emphysema) than in healthy individuals, indicating a greater susceptibility of these sub-groups.

In animals, exposure to levels of NO₂ considerably higher than ambient concentrations results in increased susceptibility to infections, possibly due to the observed changes in cells involved in maintaining immune response. The severity of lung tissue damage associated with high levels of ozone exposure increases when animals are exposed to a combination of O₃ and NO₂.

Particulate Matter

A consistent correlation between elevated ambient respirable and fine particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) levels and an increase in mortality rates, respiratory infections, number and severity of asthma attacks and the number of hospital admissions has been observed in different parts of the United States and various areas around the world. In recent years, studies completed by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) have reported an association between long-term exposure to air pollution dominated by fine particles and increased mortality, reduction in life span, and increased mortality from lung cancer (IARC 2016).

Daily fluctuations in fine particulate matter concentration levels have also been related to hospital admissions for acute respiratory conditions in children, to school and kindergarten absences, to a decrease in respiratory lung volumes in normal children and to increased medication use in children and adults with asthma. Studies show that lung function growth in children is reduced with long-term exposure to particulate matter.

The elderly, people with pre-existing respiratory or cardiovascular disease, and children appear to be more susceptible to the effects of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}.

Sulfur Dioxide

A few minutes exposure to low levels of SO₂ can result in airway constriction in some asthmatics. Increased resistance to air flow, as well as reduction in breathing capacity leading to severe breathing difficulties, are observed in asthmatics after acute exposure to SO₂. In contrast, healthy individuals do not exhibit similar acute responses even after exposure to higher concentrations of SO₂.

Animal studies suggest that despite SO₂ being a respiratory irritant, it does not cause substantial lung injury at ambient concentrations. However, high levels of exposure can cause lung edema (fluid accumulation), lung tissue damage, and sloughing off of cells lining the respiratory tract.

Some population-based studies indicate that the mortality and morbidity effects associated with fine particles show a similar association with ambient SO₂ levels. In these studies, efforts to separate the effects of SO₂ from those of fine particles have not been successful. It is not clear whether the two pollutants act synergistically or one pollutant alone is the predominant factor.

Sulfates

Most health effects associated with fine particles and SO₂ at ambient levels are also associated with SO₄. Thus, both mortality and morbidity effects have been observed with an increase in ambient SO₄.

concentrations. However, efforts to separate the effects of SO₄ from the effects of other pollutants have generally not been successful.

Clinical studies of asthmatics exposed to sulfuric acid suggest that adolescent asthmatics are possibly a subgroup susceptible to acid aerosol exposure. Animal studies suggest that acidic particles, such as sulfuric acid aerosol and ammonium bisulfate, are more toxic than non-acidic particles like ammonium sulfate. Whether the effects are attributable to acidity or to particles remains unresolved.

Lead

Fetuses, infants, and children are more sensitive than others to the adverse effects of lead exposure. Exposure to low levels of lead can adversely affect the development and function of the central nervous system, leading to learning disorders, distractibility, inability to follow simple commands, and lower intelligence levels. In adults, increased lead levels are associated with increased blood pressure.

Lead poisoning can cause anemia, lethargy, seizures and death. It appears that there are no direct effects of lead on the respiratory system. Lead can be stored in the bone from early-age environmental exposure, and elevated blood lead levels can occur due to the breakdown of bone tissue during pregnancy, hyperthyroidism (increased secretion of hormones from the thyroid gland) and osteoporosis (breakdown of bony tissue).

d. Regulatory Setting

Federal, State, and Local Clean Air Regulations

The federal and state governments have been empowered by the federal and state Clean Air Acts to regulate the emission of airborne pollutants and have established ambient air quality standards for the protection of public health. The U.S. EPA is the federal agency designated to administer air quality regulation, while CARB is the state equivalent in California. Local control in air quality management is provided by CARB through county-level or regional (multi-county) air pollution control districts (APCDs). CARB establishes air quality standards and is responsible for control of mobile emission sources, while local APCDs are responsible for enforcing standards and regulating stationary sources. CARB has established 15 air basins statewide.

Under state law, SBCAPCD is required to prepare an air quality attainment plan for air quality improvement in the SCCAB. The 2016 Ozone Plan, prepared by SBCAPCD in October 2016, is the eighth triennial update to the initial state Air Quality Attainment Plan that was adopted by the SBCAPCD Board of Directors in 1991. The 2016 Ozone Plan describes the air quality setting for Santa Barbara County, including the local climate and meteorology, current and projected air quality, and the regulatory framework for the management of air quality. The 2016 Ozone Plan is incorporated by reference and is available for review at the SBCAPCD web site, www.ourair.org/planning-clean-air.

State Idling Requirements

CARB is responsible for the coordination and oversight of State and local air pollution control programs in California. California has numerous regulations aimed at reducing the state's emissions of toxics and criteria pollutants including the California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 13, Section 2485, Airborne Toxic Control Measure (ATCM) to Limit Diesel-Fueled Commercial Vehicle Idling. The

measure is aimed at reducing public exposure to diesel particulate matter and other air contaminants by limiting the idling of diesel-fueled commercial motor vehicles with a gross vehicular weight rating of greater than 10,000 pounds. As of February 1, 2005, the driver of any vehicle with this rating is restricted from idling the vehicle's primary diesel engine for greater than five minutes at any location.

4.3.2 Impact Analysis

a. Methodology and Significance Thresholds

Procedures and guidance regarding the evaluation of air quality impacts associated with land development projects are provided by the SBCAPCD *Scope and Content of Air Quality Sections in Environmental Documents* (SBCAPCD 2017). Additional details and guidance, primarily for projects subject to SBCAPCD permitting review, are provided in the SBCAPCD *Environmental Review Guidelines* (SBCAPCD 2015).

Methodology

The California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) was utilized in estimating regional air pollutant emissions associated with construction and operation of development under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan as well development anticipated under the proposed specific plan amendments. Default assumptions in CalEEMod pertaining to estimated construction schedule, vendor/worker trips, and vehicle trip lengths were utilized to calculate construction emissions for the existing and proposed scenarios. Default assumptions were also used to calculate operational emissions associated with development under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan as well as for the project as proposed. The estimates of vehicle trips associated with the existing and proposed projects and included in the emissions modeling are from the Revised Traffic Impact Study, prepared for this project by Associated Transportation Engineers (ATE) in June 2019 (Appendix F; also refer to Section 4.14, *Transportation and Traffic*).

The existing topography of the project site is generally flat. Development of the site would include grading over the entire property. Refer to the CalEEMod output in Appendix B for detailed air pollutant emissions modeling assumptions, including grading assumptions, associated with development under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan and anticipated under the proposed specific plan amendments.

For evaluation of consistency with the 2016 Ozone Plan, several factors were considered, including growth forecasts by the Santa Barbara County Associated of Governments (SBCAG), the pattern and mix of land uses proposed, and the incorporation of SBCAPCD air pollution control measures into the project.

Significance Thresholds

According to Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*, the project would result in a significant air quality impact if the project would:

1. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan;
2. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard;
3. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations; and/or

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

SBCAPCD has not adopted quantitative significance criteria for temporary construction emissions associated with conventional land development projects. However, the SBCAPCD *Scope and Content for Air Quality Sections in Environmental Documents* recommends quantification of construction-related emissions, and uses 25 tons per year for reactive organic gases (ROG)¹ or nitrogen oxides (NO_x) as a guideline for determining the significance of construction impacts. This is a limit that requires offsets if the construction activity is for a project that requires SBAPCD permits (SBAPCD, 2017: page 10), but also provides guidance for other construction projects involving standard grading and building activities. In addition, SBCAPCD (2017: page 10) notes that consistency with the Air Quality Attainment Plan requires the implementation of mitigation measures to minimize dust generation, regardless of the level of the impact.

Long-term air quality impacts occur during project operation and include emissions from equipment or processes used in the project. These emissions must be summed in order to determine the significance of the project's long-term impact on air quality. Based on the criteria suggested by the SBCAPCD *Environmental Review Guidelines* (2015: page 11) a proposed project would have a significant air quality effect on the environment if operation of the project would:

- Emit (from all project sources, both stationary and mobile) more than 240 lbs/day for reactive organic compounds (ROC) and NO_x or more than 80 lbs/day for PM₁₀ (there is no daily operational threshold for CO, as it is an attainment pollutant);
- Emit more than 25 lbs/day of NO_x or ROC from motor vehicle trips only;
- Cause or contribute to a violation of any California or National Ambient Air Quality Standard (except ozone);
- Exceed the APCD health risk public notification thresholds adopted by the APCD 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 inconsistent with the latest adopted federal and state air quality plans.

The above thresholds are repeated in Scope and Content for Air Quality Sections in Environmental Documents (SBCAPCD 2017: pages 7-8). In areas designated as non-attainment for one or more air pollutants, a cumulative air quality impact exists for those air pollutants, and the human health impacts detailed in Section 4.3.1.b, Health Effects of Criteria Pollutants, are already occurring in that area. Project-level significance thresholds established by local air districts are intended to set the level at which a project would cause or have a cumulatively considerable contribution to an exceedance of a federal or state ambient air quality standard. Therefore, if a project's air pollutant emissions exceed the significance thresholds, the project would contribute to the human health impacts detailed in Section 4.3.1.b.

The following discussions provide a review of the potential air quality impacts of the project using the *CEQA Guidelines* criteria and the quantitative thresholds from SBCAPCD where applicable.

¹ ROG and ROC are used interchangeably in the evaluation of air quality pollutants.

b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold 2: Would the project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?

Threshold 3: Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? [Construction]

Impact AQ-1 PROJECT CONSTRUCTION EMISSIONS WOULD NOT RESULT IN A CUMULATIVELY CONSIDERABLE NET INCREASE OF ANY CRITERIA POLLUTANTS FOR WHICH THE REGION IS IN NONATTAINMENT. ADDITIONALLY, CITY AND SBCAPCD CONSTRUCTION EMISSION CONTROL MEASURES WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED TO ENSURE THAT SENSITIVE RECEPTORS ARE NOT EXPOSED TO SUBSTANTIAL POLLUTANT CONCENTRATIONS. THIS IMPACT WOULD BE CLASS III, LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.

With implementation of standard City air quality control measures, including dust control, diesel equipment specifications and limitations, construction vehicle trip scheduling and reduction measures, and efficient appliances in new development, the 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR determined that overall construction impacts to air quality would be less than significant. The 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR did not identify air quality impacts for specific phases or particular development areas, such as the project site, within the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan area. Therefore, construction emissions for buildout of the project site under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, including approximately 196,000 square feet of neighborhood commercial uses, 656 low-medium density dwelling units, 144 medium density dwelling units, 176 high density dwelling units, an 800 student public school, and 14 acres of recreational park space, were estimated in CalEEMod. Table 4.3-3 shows the estimates of maximum annual construction emissions associated with development that is allowed on the project site under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. For full emissions modeling results refer to Appendix B.

Table 4.3-3 Constructions Emissions for Buildout under the Existing Specific Plan

Year	Maximum Emissions (tons/year)			
	ROG	NO _x	CO	PM ₁₀
2020	0.47	4.6	2.9	0.8
2021	0.55	5.9	3.8	1.8
2022	0.60	5.3	4.9	1.5
2023	0.62	4.6	5.3	1.2
2024	0.59	4.5	5.1	1.2
2025	0.55	4.2	4.9	1.2
2026	0.53	4.2	4.7	1.2
2027	0.52	4.1	4.6	1.2
2028	0.50	4.1	4.4	1.2
2029	0.48	4.0	4.3	1.2
2030	0.46	3.4	4.2	1.1
2031	0.44	3.4	4.1	1.1
2032	0.42	3.3	4.1	1.1
2033	0.40	3.3	4.0	1.1
2034	0.24	1.6	2.6	0.4
2035	26.9	0.2	0.7	0.2
Maximum tons/year	26.9	5.9	5.3	1.8
SBCAPCD Threshold	25	25	n/a	n/a
Threshold Exceeded?	Yes	No	No	No

Source: CalEEMod v. 2016.3.2 , Existing Blosser SE Specific Plan – South Central Coast Air Basin, Annual report (Appendix B)

As shown in Table 4.3-3, annual emissions of ROG with the existing Specific Plan would exceed SBCAPCD’s recommended 25 tons per year threshold while all other criteria pollutants would be below SBCAPCD’s recommended threshold for buildout of the project site under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan.

Construction of anticipated development under the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments would generate temporary increases in localized air pollutant emissions during construction. Ozone precursors (NO_x and ROG), as well as CO would be emitted by the operation of construction equipment, while fugitive dust (PM₁₀) would be emitted by activities that disturb the soil, such as grading and excavation, road construction, and building construction. Construction emissions for the project were estimated in CalEEMod. Table 4.3-4 shows the estimates of maximum annual construction emissions associated with anticipated development that would be allowed on the project site under the proposed specific plan amendments. Table 4.3-5 shows the net difference in annual construction emissions between the existing and proposed land use classifications and zoning on the project site.

Table 4.3-4 Constructions Emissions for Buildout under the Proposed Specific Plan

Year	Maximum Emissions (tons/year)			
	ROG	NO _x	CO	PM ₁₀
2020	0.5	4.6	2.9	0.8
2021	0.5	5.9	3.8	1.8
2022	0.7	6.0	5.8	1.8
2023	0.8	5.6	6.7	1.7
2024	0.8	5.4	6.4	1.7
2025	0.7	5.2	6.1	1.6
2026	0.7	5.1	5.8	1.6
2027	0.7	5.0	5.6	1.6
2028	0.6	4.9	5.4	1.6
2029	0.6	4.9	5.3	1.6
2030	0.6	4.2	5.1	1.6
2031	0.6	4.2	5.0	1.6
2032	0.5	4.2	4.9	1.6
2033	0.5	4.1	4.7	1.6
2034	0.3	1.9	2.8	0.5
2035	26.8	0.2	0.8	0.2
Maximum tons/year	26.8	6.0	6.7	1.8
SBCAPCD Threshold	25	25	n/a	n/a
Threshold Exceeded?	Yes	No	No	No

Source: CalEEMod v. 2016.3.2 , Proposed Blosser SE Specific Plan – South Central Coast Air Basin, Annual report (Appendix B)

Table 4.3-5 Net Change in Construction Emissions (Proposed – Existing)

Buildout Scenario	Maximum Emissions (tons/year)			
	ROG	NO _x	CO	PM ₁₀
Existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan	26.9	5.9	5.3	1.8
Proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan	26.8	6.0	6.7	1.8
Net Difference in Maximum Annual Emissions	-0.1	0.1	1.4	0.0
SBCAPCD Threshold	25	25	n/a	n/a
Threshold Exceeded?	No	No	No	No

Source: CalEEMod v. 2016.3.2 , Existing and Proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan Annual reports (Appendix B)

Although annual emissions of NO_x and CO would be greater under the proposed specific plan amendments than would result from development that is allowed on the project site under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, emissions of these pollutants as a result of the project would be below SBCAPCD's recommended 25 tons per year threshold. Annual emissions of ROG would exceed SBCAPCD's recommended 25 tons per year threshold for buildout of the project site under the existing and proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. However, as shown in Table 4.2-5, the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments would result in lower annual emissions of ROG than development under the existing specific plan. Therefore, the proposed project would not exacerbate previously identified exceedances of local air quality thresholds. Impacts to air quality due to project construction emissions would be less than significant.

In addition, because the Santa Barbara County portion of the SCCAB is a nonattainment area for the state PM₁₀ standard and the project would involve earthmoving activities, SBCAPCD construction emissions control measures would be required for the project, further reducing air pollutant emissions from construction. In accordance with standard practices in the City, the following standard SBCAPCD construction emissions control measures would be shown on grading and building plans and implemented with the project:

Dust Control Measures

During construction the applicant shall implement all of the applicable measures from the following list as standard dust control measures to avoid impacts associated with fugitive dust emissions:

- a. Use water trucks or sprinkler systems to keep all areas of vehicle movement damp enough to prevent dust from leaving the site. At a minimum, this should include wetting down such areas in the late morning and after work is completed for the day. Increased watering frequency should be required whenever the wind speed exceeds 15 mph. Reclaimed water should be used whenever possible. However, reclaimed water should not be used in or around crops for human consumption.
- b. Minimize amount of disturbed area and reduce on site vehicle speeds to 15 mph or less.
- c. If importation, exportation and stockpiling of fill material is involved, soil stockpiled for more than two days shall be covered, kept moist, or treated with soil binders to prevent dust generation. Trucks transporting fill material to and from the site shall be tarped from the point of origin.
- d. Gravel pads shall be installed at all access points to prevent tracking of mud onto public roads.
- e. After clearing, grading, earth moving or excavation is completed, treat the disturbed area by watering, or revegetating, or by spreading soil binders until the area is paved or otherwise developed so that dust generation will not occur.
- f. The contractor or builder shall designate a person or persons to monitor the dust control program and to order increased watering, as necessary, to prevent transport of dust offsite. Their duties shall include holiday and weekend periods when work may not be in progress. The name and telephone number of such persons shall be provided to the APCD prior to land use clearance for map recordation and land use clearance for finish grading of the structure.

Equipment Emissions Control Measures

During project grading and construction the applicant shall adhere to the following measures to reduce NO_x and PM_{2.5} emissions from construction equipment:

- a. All portable diesel-powered construction equipment shall be registered with the state's portable equipment registration program OR shall obtain an APCD permit.
- b. Fleet owners of mobile construction equipment are subject to the CARB Regulation for In-use Off-road Diesel Vehicles (Title 13 California Code of Regulations, Chapter 9, § 2449), the purpose of which is to reduce diesel PM and criteria pollutant emissions from in-use (existing) off-road diesel-fueled vehicles. For more information, please refer to the CARB website at www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/ordiesel/ordiesel.htm.
- c. All commercial diesel vehicles are subject to Title 13, § 2485 of the California Code of Regulations, limiting engine idling time. Idling of heavy-duty diesel construction equipment and trucks during loading and unloading shall be limited to five minutes; electric auxiliary power units should be used whenever possible.
- d. Diesel construction equipment meeting the CARB Tier 1 emission standards for off-road heavy-duty diesel engines shall be used. Equipment meeting CARB Tier 2 or higher emission standards should be used to the maximum extent feasible.
- e. Diesel powered equipment should be replaced by electric equipment whenever feasible.
- f. If feasible, diesel construction equipment shall be equipped with selective catalytic reduction systems, diesel oxidation catalysts and diesel particulate filters as certified and/or verified by EPA or California.
- g. Catalytic converters shall be installed on gasoline-powered equipment, if feasible.
- h. All construction equipment shall be maintained in tune per the manufacturer's specifications.
- i. The engine size of construction equipment shall be the minimum practical size.
- j. The number of construction equipment operating simultaneously shall be minimized through efficient management practices to ensure that the smallest practical number is operating at any one time.

Fugitive Dust Control

The project applicant shall comply with SBCAPCD's Rule 345: Control of Fugitive Dust from Construction and Demolition Activities including all applicable standards and measures therein.

Diesel-fired Engine Permits

All portable diesel-fired construction engines rated at 50 brake horsepower (bhp) or greater must have either statewide Portable Equipment Registration Program (PERP) certificates or SBCAPCD permits prior to grading/building permit issuance. Construction engines with PERP certificates are exempt from SBCAPCD permit, provided they will be onsite for less than 12 months.

Permit to Operate

If contaminated soils are found at the project site, SBCAPCD must be contacted to determine if ATC and/or Permit to Operate permits shall be required. (SBCAPCD permits are required for all soil vapor extraction activities. SBCAPCD permits are also required for the excavation, or "dig-and-haul", of more than 1,000 cubic yards of contaminated soils.)

Equipment Idling Requirements

At all times, idling of heavy-duty diesel trucks should be minimized; auxiliary power units should be used whenever possible. State law requires that:

- Drivers of diesel-fueled commercial vehicles shall not idle the vehicle's primary diesel engine for greater than five minutes at any location.
- Drivers of diesel-fueled commercial vehicles shall not idle a diesel-fueled auxiliary power system (APS) for more than five minutes to power a heater, air conditioner, or any ancillary equipment on the vehicle. Trucks with 2007 or newer model year engines must meet additional requirements (verified clean APS label required).
- See www.arb.ca.gov/noidle for more information.

Asphalt Paving Requirements

Asphalt paving activities shall comply with APCD Rule 329, Cutback and Emulsified Asphalt Paving Materials.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Threshold 2:	Would the project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?
Threshold 3:	Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? [Operation]

Impact AQ-2 THE PROJECT WOULD PRODUCE MOBILE-SOURCE OPERATIONAL AIR POLLUTANT EMISSIONS THAT WOULD EXCEED LONG-TERM QUANTITATIVE THRESHOLDS FOR NO_x AND EXPOSE SENSITIVE RECEPTORS TO SUBSTANTIAL POLLUTANT CONCENTRATIONS. THIS IMPACT WOULD BE CLASS I, SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE.

The 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR identified a significant and unavoidable, long-term impact to air quality due to mobile emissions from new vehicle trips and stationary source emissions. The 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR did not identify air quality impacts for specific phases or particular development areas, such as the project site.

Long-term regional emissions are contributed by on-site (stationary) sources and mobile sources. Stationary emissions result from use of natural gas, aerosols, lawn maintenance equipment and other modern conveniences expected in residential and commercial uses. Mobile emissions are based on the estimated volume of vehicle trips for buildout under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan and estimated project-generated vehicle trips, described in the Revised Traffic Impact Study prepared in June 2019 for the project (Appendix F; also refer to Section 4.14, *Transportation and Traffic*).

Operational emissions associated with buildout of the project site under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan and proposed specific plan amendments were estimated in CalEEMod. Table 4.3-6 summarizes operational emissions associated with buildout of the project site under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. For full emissions modeling results refer to Appendix B.

Table 4.3-6 Operational Emissions for Buildout under the Existing Specific Plan

Source	Maximum Emissions (lbs/day)		
	ROG	NO _x	PM ₁₀
Area	55.5	0.9	0.4
Energy	0.7	6.1	0.5
Mobile	13.8	59.9	91.8
Total	70.0	67.0	92.7
Threshold (area + energy + mobile)	240	240	80
Threshold Exceeded?	No	No	Yes
Threshold (mobile only)	25	25	n/a
Threshold Exceeded?	No	Yes	n/a

Source: CalEEMod v. 2016.3.2 , Existing Blosser SE Specific Plan – South Central Coast Air Basin, Summer report (Appendix B)

As shown in Table 4.3-6, operational emissions associated with buildout of the project site under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan would generate an estimated 70.0 pounds of ROG per day, 67.0 pounds of NO_x per day, and 92.7 pounds of PM₁₀ per day. These emissions would not exceed SBCAPCD thresholds for combined operational emissions of ROG and NO_x, but would exceed SBCAPCD thresholds for combined emissions of PM₁₀. Additionally, buildout under the existing specific plan would result in 59.9 pounds NO_x per day from vehicle trips, which would exceed the SBCAPCD thresholds of 25 pounds per day for operational emissions from mobile sources.

Table 4.3-7 summarizes operational emissions associated with buildout of the project site under the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments. Table 4.3-8 shows the net difference in operational emissions between the existing and proposed land use classifications and zoning on the project site.

Table 4.3-7 Operational Emissions for Buildout under the Proposed Specific Plan Amendments

Source	Maximum Emissions (lbs/day)		
	ROG	NO _x	PM ₁₀
Area	55.4	1.1	0.5
Energy	0.6	5.5	0.4
Mobile	12.9	55.9	87.9
Total	68.9	62.5	88.8
Threshold (area + energy + mobile)	240	240	80
Threshold Exceeded?	No	No	Yes
Threshold (mobile only)	25	25	n/a
Threshold Exceeded?	No	Yes	n/a

Source: CalEEMod v. 2016.3.2 , Proposed Blosser SE Specific Plan – South Central Coast Air Basin, Summer report (Appendix B)

Table 4.3-8 Net Change in Operational Emissions (Proposed – Existing)

Buildout Scenario	Maximum Emissions (lbs/day)		
	ROG (mobile/total)	NO _x (mobile/total)	PM ₁₀ (mobile/total)
Existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan	13.8/70.0	59.9/67.0	91.8/92.7
Proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan	12.9/68.9	55.9/62.5	87.9/88.8
Net Difference in Maximum Annual Emissions	-0.9/-1.1	-4.0/-4.5	-3.9/-3.9

Source: CalEEMod v. 2016.3.2 , Proposed RRSP Amendments and Rezone – Santa Barbara-North of Santa Ynez County, Summer report (Appendix B)

As shown in Table 4.3-7 and Table 4.3-8, operational emissions of ROG, NO_x, and PM₁₀ would be lower under the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments than operational emissions resulting from development under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. These project emissions would not exceed SBCAPCD thresholds for combined operational emissions of ROG and NO_x, but would exceed SBCAPCD thresholds for combined emissions of PM₁₀. Although buildout under the under the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments would not exacerbate the exceedance of the SBCAPCD thresholds of 25 pounds per day for operational emissions from mobile sources that was identified for the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, applicable mitigation measures from the 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR would be required for the project to reduce long-term air quality impacts. In addition, the project would be required to comply with CCR Title 13, Section 2485 ATCM to restrict heavy truck idling to five minutes or less.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measures AQ-2a and AQ-2b have been adapted into policy language from Mitigation Measures AQ-4 and AQ-5 in the 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR, and would be applicable to reduce operational emissions associated with development under the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments.

AQ-2a Transportation Demand Management

The following policy language, or its equivalent, shall be added to the Development Standards for the project:

- Commercial projects shall incorporate, to the maximum extent feasible, the following measures:
 - Carpool/vanpool coordination and occupant matching
 - Carpool/vanpool financial and parking convenience incentives
 - Mass transit financial incentives
 - Bicycle storage facilities, and showers and lockers for riders
 - Alternative work schedules
 - Onsite facilities such as cafeterias and child care

AQ-2b *Efficient Appliances*

The following policy language, or its equivalent, shall be added to the Development Standards for the project:

- All homes shall be equipped with boilers, water heaters, process heaters, steam generators, or other appliances with NO_x limits as specified by SBCAPCD Rules 360, 361, and 342.

Significance After Mitigation

Specific emission reductions that would be achieved through implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-2a and AQ-2b cannot be demonstrated in the absence of specific project details to assess. It is reasonable to assume that mobile emissions would continue to exceed SBCAPCD thresholds for PM₁₀. Therefore, this impact would be significant and unavoidable. More extensive and/or offsite mitigation measures recommended by SBCAPCD involve additional efforts to promote non-automobile travel and reduced reliance on vehicle trips. The City of Santa Maria actively promotes its transit service and provides public outreach and facilities to maximize use of transit. For example, all Santa Maria Area Transit buses are already equipped with bicycle racks, and the City transit center already provides an effective interconnection among transit services. The shifts in transportation mode represented by the mitigation measures listed are typically just a few percentage points. Although the project will incorporate all feasible measures applicable to this type of development, it is unlikely that the measures can reduce the mobile source emissions to below the SBCAPCD criteria. This impact would, therefore, remain significant and unavoidable.

Consistent with the *Sierra Club v. County of Fresno (Friant Ranch; 2018)* decision regarding adequate disclosure of the potential human health effects from significant air quality impacts, the following discussion details why it is not possible to quantify the human health impacts associated with project emissions. The Supreme Court opinion in *Friant Ranch* requires projects with significant air quality impacts to “relate the expected adverse air quality impacts to likely health consequences or explain why it is not feasible at the time of drafting to provide such an analysis, so that the public may make informed decisions regarding the costs and benefits of the project.” According to the amicus briefs submitted by South Coast Air Management District (SCAQMD) and San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District on the *Friant Ranch* case, air district staff do not have an established pathway to accurately quantify ozone-related health impacts caused by NO_x or ROG emissions from relatively small projects. The SCAQMD does not explicitly define “relatively small project;” however, it is assumed that the proposed project would be considered a relatively small project in the context of an Air Basin. Air district staff acknowledge that it may be feasible to analyze air quality related health impacts for projects on a regional scale with very high emissions of NO_x and VOCs, where impacts are regional. The example SCAQMD provided in the amicus brief was for proposed Rule 1315, which authorized various newly-permitted sources to use offsets from the District’s “internal bank” of emission reductions. The CEQA analysis accounted for essentially all of the increases in emissions due to new or modified sources in the District between 2010 and 2030, or approximately 6,620 pounds per day of NO_x and 89,947 pounds per day of ROG, to expected health outcomes from ozone and particulate matter (e.g., 20 premature deaths per year and 89,947 school absences in the year 2030 due to ozone). In contrast, in the case of this relatively small project, it would not be feasible to directly correlate project emissions of ROG or NO_x with specific health impacts from ozone. Further, the brief notes that ozone formation is not linearly related to emissions. Therefore, ozone impacts vary depending on the location of the emissions, the location of other precursor emissions, meteorology, and seasonal impacts, and because ozone is formed later and downwind from the actual emission. The amicus briefs also indicate that it is not feasible with existing

modeling techniques to precisely correlate a project's impacts to quantifiable health impacts, unless the emissions are sufficiently high to use a regional modeling program, which is not the case for the proposed project.

Threshold 1: Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

Impact AQ-3 THE PROJECT WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH THE SBCAPCD 2016 OZONE PLAN AND, THUS, WOULD NOT OBSTRUCT ITS IMPLEMENTATION. THIS IMPACT WOULD BE CLASS III, LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.

No findings were made for the 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR with specific regard to consistency with the air quality attainment plan in effect at the time.

To be determined to be consistent with the current air quality attainment plan (2016 Ozone Plan), the project's direct and indirect emissions must be accounted for in the growth assumptions in the 2016 Ozone Plan, and the project must be consistent with the policies adopted in the 2016 Ozone Plan. Additionally, in determining consistency with the 2016 Ozone Plan, commercial and industrial projects must be tracked pursuant to the local Congestion Management Plan (CMP), and are determined to be consistent with the 2016 Ozone Plan if they are consistent with SBCAPCD rules and regulations. The Ozone Plan relies primarily on the land use and population projections provided by SBCAG and CARB on-road emissions forecast as a basis for vehicle emission forecasting (SBCAPCD 2017).

Populations that remain within the 2016 Ozone Plan and SBCAG forecasts are accounted for with regard to SBCAPCD emissions inventories. When population growth exceeds these forecasts, emission inventories could be surpassed, affecting attainment status. The project would result in development of a maximum number of 1,168 dwelling units with low medium and high density residential units. Using the City's average rate of 3.72 people per household, construction of the project would accommodate an estimated 4,345 new residents (DOF 2019). The Specific Plan area does not currently include any existing residential units. As such, project implementation would result in a net increase of 4,345 new residents and 1,168 dwelling units, or an increase of 714 residents and 192 dwelling units from residential development potential of 976 residential units under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. In January 2019, the SBCAG Board approved a resolution exempting the region from the State Congestion Management Program statute.

Accordingly, the project area is not subject to the stipulations of a CMP. Furthermore, the anticipated development of the site under the proposed General Plan amendments and rezoning of the project site would be required to comply with all SBCAPCD rules and regulations for construction and operation. Although the project would result in a slight increase in the City population beyond the population generation anticipated for the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, the proposed Specific Plan amendments would be generally consistent with the SBCAPCD 2016 Ozone Plan and, thus, would not obstruct its implementation. This impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Threshold 4: Would the project result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?
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Impact AQ-4 THE PROJECT WOULD NOT RESULT IN EMISSIONS, INCLUDING ODORS OR OTHER TOXIC AIR CONTAMINANTS THAT WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE. THIS IMPACT WOULD BE CLASS III, LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.

The 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR did not include specific findings related to impacts associated with other emissions, including odor, from buildout of the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. The commercial development facilitated by the proposed General Plan amendments and rezone may have the potential for generating odors on the project site. The anticipated commercial uses would be comprised of neighborhood serving commercial uses, and would be separated from uses on surrounding properties by intervening landscape and parking areas, roadways, and proposed sound walls, which would reduce the potential for incompatibility due to odors associated with the commercial uses. Commercial development facilitated by the project would also be required to comply with the requirements of SBCAPCD Rule 303 that prohibits the discharge of air contaminants or other material that would cause injury, detriment, nuisance or annoyance to any considerable number of persons. In addition, deliveries for commercial uses would be required to comply with CCR Title 13, Section 2485 which would limit delivery truck idling times to five minutes or less. Limiting heavy truck idling times would reduce the potential for nuisance odors or toxic air contaminants associated with diesel exhaust emissions in the vicinity of the proposed development on the project site. For these reasons, impacts associated with the potential for odor or other toxic air emissions to adversely affect a substantial number of people would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

c. Cumulative Impacts

The 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR determined overall buildout of the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, in conjunction with other foreseeable development in the Santa Maria area under the City's Sphere of Influence boundary expansion and concurrent annexation program, would contribute to the air quality impacts in the area.

Based on SBCAPCD thresholds, a project would have a significant cumulative impact if it is inconsistent with the applicable adopted federal and state air quality plans (in this case, the 2016 Ozone Plan). As discussed in Impact AQ-3, the project is generally consistent with the 2016 Ozone Plan. However, as discussed in Impact AQ-2, project operations would result in a cumulatively considerable increase of criteria pollutants. Therefore, the project would contribute to cumulative impacts to air quality and mitigation would be required. Mitigation Measures AQ-2a and AQ-2b would reduce the project's contribution to significant cumulative impacts to air quality by ensuring that development under the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments is designed and implemented in a manner that encourages alternative transportation modes and further reduces potential project contribution to significant cumulative air quality impacts. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that these measures can reduce the mobile source emissions to below the SBCAPCD criteria and the project would result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to air quality impacts.

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4.4 Biological Resources

This section evaluates potential impacts to sensitive biological resources associated with development in accordance with the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan (Project) in the City of Santa Maria in northern Santa Barbara County. To inform the analysis, Rincon Consultants, Inc. (Rincon) conducted a site visit in May 2019 to assess current site conditions.

4.4.1 Setting

a. Environmental Setting

Vegetation Communities and Land Cover

No naturally occurring vegetation communities occur within the project site. Three man-made land cover types occur on project site, row crop agriculture, developed/disturbed, and agricultural basin. These land cover types are described below and are shown in Figure 4.4-1. No natural or historic drainages or wetlands occur on the project site. The ditches and agricultural basins described below are constructed to accept irrigation run-off on the property and therefore are not expected to be considered under the jurisdiction of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (pursuant to the 2015 Clean Water Rule), Regional Water Quality Control Board (pursuant to the State Wetland Definition and Procedures for Discharges of Dredged or Fill Material to Waters of the State), and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (pursuant to Sections 1600 et seq. of the California Fish and Game Code).

Row Crop Agriculture

Row crop agriculture is a land cover type that is not recognized in A Manual of California Vegetation, Second Edition (MCV2; Sawyer et. al., 2009). This land cover occupies the majority of the project site and consists of active growing of strawberries and other crops. These areas are routinely plowed; weeds managed between roads, and consist of primarily bare soils. Shallow constructed drainage ditches are also present within the field to direct irrigation runoff. The location of these ditches varies year to year and is dependent upon the configuration of the crop being grown. Vegetation that can be found within these areas is almost exclusively that of the crop being produced. In addition, agricultural areas have high amounts of daily human disturbance and also contain bare dirt access roads for equipment.

Developed/Disturbed

Developed/disturbed is also a land cover type not recognized in MCV2. These areas are characterized as currently built or graded areas. Developed/disturbed areas occur at the northern portion of the property. This area consists of a graded area with an existing barn. The area is utilized for equipment and material staging as well as parking to support agricultural operations. Three landscape trees and a small number of landscape shrubs also occur in this area. Vegetation occurs sporadically and consists of non-native ruderal species.

Figure 4.4-1 Vegetation Communities an Land Cover Types



Agricultural Basin

A small constructed agricultural basin occurs on the western side of the project site. The basin is approximately 50 feet by 60 feet. Water levels in the basin are dependent upon irrigation run-off from the existing agricultural operation which is currently actively pumped to underground storm drains or sewage system. The basin is highly maintained and no vegetation occurs. Agricultural infrastructure within the basin includes a pump and associated piping. The basin is surrounded by row crop agriculture as well as a dirt access road and Blosser Road to the west.

Special Status Species

For the purpose of this analysis, special status species are those plants and animals listed, proposed for listing, or candidates for listing as threatened or endangered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) or National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) under the federal Endangered Species Act; those listed or proposed for listing, or candidates for listing as threatened or endangered by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) under the state Endangered Species Act; animals designated as “Fully Protected,” “Species of Special Concern,” “Rare,” or “Watch List” by the CDFW, and plants recognized on the California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) lists. Those plants ranked as CRPR 1 and 2 are considered special status species in this EIR, per the following code definitions:

- Rank 1A = Plants presumed extirpated in California, and either rare or extinct elsewhere;
- Rank 1B.1 = Rare or endangered in California and elsewhere; seriously threatened in California (over 80% of occurrences threatened/high degree and immediacy of threat);
- Rank 1B.2 = Rare or endangered in California and elsewhere; fairly threatened in California (20-80% occurrences threatened);
- Rank 1B.3 = Rare or endangered in California and elsewhere, not very threatened in California (<20% of occurrences threatened or no current threats known);
- Rank 2A = Plants presumed extirpated in California, but more common elsewhere;
- Rank 2B = Rare, threatened or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere;

California Rare Plant Rank 3 species are “review list” and CRPR 4 species are considered “watch list” species which do not typically warrant analysis under CEQA except where they are part of a unique community, from the type locality, designated as rare or significant by local governments or where cumulative impacts could result in population-level effects. The CRPR 3 and 4 species reported from the region are not locally designated as rare or significant, are not part of a unique community, and the project site is not known to be the type locality for any ranked plant species. Therefore, CRPR 3 and CRPR 4 species were not included in this analysis.

Queries of the following databases were conducted to assess regionally occurring special status species (Appendix C):

- Query of the CDFW California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) occurrences of special-status species documented within the *Santa Maria, California* USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle and the eight surrounding quadrangles.
- Query of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Online Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California, which included records from the *Santa Maria, California* USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle and the eight surrounding quadrangles.

Special Status Plant Species

Based on the database and literature review, 40 special status plant species documented in the *Santa Maria, California* USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle; the eight surrounding quadrangles were assessed for their potential to occur in the project site (Appendix C). Based on the geographic range of each species and considering the project site consists completely of active agricultural and develop/disturbed areas, no suitable habitat occurs on site for special status plants species. Therefore, no special status plant species are expected to occur. In addition, the project site is not located within federally designated critical habitat for federally listed plant species.

Special Status Wildlife Species

Thirty-one special status animal species were reported to occur regionally, based on the database search and literature review (Appendix C). All but one species, California red-legged frog (CRLF; *Rana draytonii*), were eliminated from further analysis due to the absence of suitable habitat at the project site, or the occurrence of the project site outside of the species' known range. In addition, the project site is not located within federally designated critical habitat for federally listed animal species.

The CRLF is federally listed as threatened and a state species of special concern throughout its range. The historic range of the CRLF extended along the California coast from the vicinity of Point Reyes National Seashore, Marin County, and inland from the vicinity of Redding, Shasta County, southward to northwestern Baja California, Mexico. The species has lost approximately 70 percent of its former range; CRLF are locally abundant in the San Francisco Bay area and the central coast, but only isolated populations have been documented in the Sierra Nevada, northern Coast, and northern Transverse ranges.

The CRLF inhabits quiet pools of streams, marshes, and ponds. All life history stages are most likely to be encountered in and around breeding sites, which include coastal lagoons, marshes, springs, permanent and semi-permanent natural ponds, and ponded and backwater portions of streams, as well as artificial impoundments such as stock ponds, irrigation ponds, and siltation ponds. Eggs are typically deposited in permanent pools, attached to emergent vegetation.

The CNDDDB does not identify occurrences of CRLF on the project site; however they are known to occur off-site to the west at the intersection of A Street and Battles Road. The occurrence is associated with a City storm water ditch and basin which is also connected to the City's stormwater ditch that runs along battles road adjacent to and outside of the southern boundary of the project site. If water is present within the City drainage ditch, CRLF may have access to the site as well as the agricultural basin described above. The on-site agricultural basin may provide suitable habitat if water is present, however based on current conditions, fluctuation in water levels, lack of vegetation as well as high amounts of disturbance, the habitat quality is marginal. Due to water levels being variable and dependent upon water run-off and lack of vegetation, breeding within the basin is not expected. CRLF are therefore have a low potential for occurrence and are expected to only be encountered incidentally on the project site from random dispersal onto the site from regional source populations. The on-site land cover does not provide suitable habitat for long-term occupation by the species.

Sensitive Natural Communities

Five sensitive natural communities are identified by the CNDDDB as occurring in the regional vicinity of the project site and include central dune scrub, central foredunes, coastal and valley freshwater

marsh, southern California threespine stickle back stream, and southern vernal pool. None of these communities are mapped by the CNDDDB within the project site. The Sensitive Natural Communities List in the CNDDDB is not currently maintained and no new information has been added. Therefore, vegetation and land cover types on site were also compared with the List of Vegetation Alliances and Associations (CDFW 2018). According to the CDFW's Vegetation Program, Alliances with State ranks of S1-S3 are considered to be imperiled, and thus, potentially of special concern. Considering no natural vegetation communities occur on site and the site is comprised of active agriculture and other developed and disturbed areas, no sensitive vegetation communities included in CDFW 2018 occur.

Wildlife Movement Corridors

Wildlife movement corridors, or habitat linkages, are generally defined as connections between habitat patches that allow for physical and genetic exchange between otherwise isolated animal populations. Such linkages may serve a local purpose, such as providing a linkage between foraging and denning areas, or they may be regional in nature. Some habitat linkages may serve as migration corridors, wherein animals periodically move away from an area and then subsequently return. Others may be important as dispersal corridors for young animals. A group of habitat linkages in an area can form a wildlife corridor network.

The habitats within the link do not necessarily need to be the same as the habitats that are being linked. Rather, the link merely needs to contain sufficient cover and forage to allow temporary inhabitation by ground-dwelling species. Typically habitat linkages are contiguous strips of natural areas, though dense plantings of landscape vegetation can be used by certain disturbance-tolerant species. Depending upon the species using a corridor, specific physical resources (such as rock outcroppings, vernal pools, or oak trees) may need to be located within the habitat link at certain intervals to allow slower-moving species to traverse the link. For highly mobile or aerial species, habitat linkages may be discontinuous patches of suitable resources spaced sufficiently close together to permit travel along a route in a short period of time.

Corridors usually connect one large habitat area with another, and while there is no pre-defined size limit for such areas, they most often are on the scale of mountain ranges, valleys, rivers and creeks, or clearly delimited ecological situations (e.g., vernal pools). The *Missing Linkages: Restoring Connectivity to California Landscape* (Penrod et al., 2001) conference refers to such corridors as "landscape linkages." These are specifically defined in that report as:

"large, regional connections between habitat blocks ("core areas") meant to facilitate animal movement and other essential flows between different sections of a landscape (taken from Soulé and Terborgh 1999). These linkages are not necessarily constricted, but are essential to maintain connectivity function in the ecoregion."

Wildlife movement corridors can be both large and small scale. The project site is not located within a landscape linkage identified by the above reference. Regionally, the project site is not located within an Essential Connectivity Area (ECA) as mapped in the report, California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project: A Strategy for Conserving a Connected California (2010). ECAs represent principle connections between Natural Landscape Blocks. ECAs are regions in which land conservation and management actions should be prioritized to maintain and enhance ecological connectivity. ECAs are mapped based on coarse ecological condition indicators, rather than the needs of particular species and thus serve the majority of species in each region. The project site is not expected to serve as a significant area for wildlife movement considering its relatively small size as well as being completely surrounded by roadways and urban development.

b. Regulatory Setting

Federal, state, and local authorities under a variety of statutes and guidelines share regulatory authority over biological resources. The primary authority under CEQA for general biological resources lies within the land use control and planning authority of local jurisdictions, which in this instance is the City of Santa Maria. The CDFW is a trustee agency for biological resources throughout the State under the CEQA and also has direct jurisdiction under the CFGC, which includes, but is not limited to, resources protected by the State of California under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). Below are discussions of the federal, state, and local regulations that form the regulatory basis for the impact analysis in Section 4.4.3.

Federal

Federal Endangered Species Act

Under the federal Endangered Species Act (FESA), authorization is required to “take” a listed species. Take is defined under FESA Section 3 as “to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” Under federal regulation (50 Code of Federal Regulations Sections 17.3, 222.102); “harm” is further defined to include habitat modification or degradation where it would be expected to result in death or injury to listed wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding, or sheltering. Critical habitat is a specific geographic area(s) that is essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and that may require special management and protection. Critical habitat may include an area that is not currently occupied by the species but that will be needed for its recovery. FESA Section 7 outlines procedures for federal interagency cooperation to conserve federally listed species and designated critical habitat.

Section 7(a)(2) of FESA and its implementing regulations require federal agencies to consult with USFWS or NMFS to ensure that they are not undertaking, funding, permitting, or authorizing actions likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species, or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat. For projects where federal action is not involved and take of a listed species may occur, the project proponent may seek to obtain an incidental take permit under FESA Section 10(a). Section 10(a) allows USFWS to permit the incidental take of listed species if such take is accompanied by a Habitat Conservation Plan that includes components to minimize and mitigate impacts associated with the take.

The USFWS and NMFS share responsibility and regulatory authority for implementing FESA (7 United States Code [USC] Section 136, 16 USC Section 1531 et seq.).

Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act

The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act is the primary law protecting eagles, including individuals and their nests and eggs. The USFWS implements the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 USC Section 703-711) and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 USC Section 668). Under the Act’s Eagle Permit Rule (50 Code of Federal Regulations 22.26), USFWS may issue permits to authorize limited, non-purposeful take of bald eagles and golden eagles.

State

California Endangered Species Act (California Fish and Game Code Section 2050 et seq.)

CESA establishes the policy of the state to conserve, protect, restore, and enhance threatened or endangered species and their habitats. CESA mandates that state agencies should not approve projects that would jeopardize the continued existence of threatened or endangered species if reasonable and prudent alternatives are available that would avoid jeopardy. For projects that would affect a listed species under both CESA and FESA, compliance with the FESA would satisfy the CESA, if CDFW determines that the federal incidental take authorization is “consistent” with CESA under California Fish and Game Code Section 2080.1. Before a project results in take of a species listed under the CESA, a take permit must be issued under Section 2081(b).

California State Fish and Game Code Sections 2080, 2081

Section 2080 of the CFGC states, “No person shall import into this state [California], export out of this state, or take, possess, purchase, or sell within this state, any species, or any part or product thereof, that the Commission [State Fish and Game Commission] determines to be an endangered species or threatened species, or attempt any of those acts, except as otherwise provided in this chapter, or the Native Plant Protection Act, or the California Desert Native Plants Act.” Pursuant to Section 2081, CDFW may authorize individuals or public agencies to import, export, take, or possess state listed endangered, threatened, or candidate species. These otherwise prohibited acts may be authorized through permits or Memoranda of Understanding if the take is incidental to an otherwise lawful activity, impacts of the authorized take are minimized and fully mitigated, the permit is consistent with any regulations adopted pursuant to any recovery plan for the species, and the project operator ensures adequate funding to implement the measures required by CDFW, which makes this determination based on available scientific information and considers the ability of the species to survive and reproduce.

California Fish and Game Code Sections 3511, 4700, 5050, and 5515

Protection of fully protected species is described in Fish and Game Code Sections 3511, 4700, 5050, and 5515. These statutes prohibit take or possession of fully protected species. Incidental take of fully protected species may be authorized under an approved Natural Community Conservation Plan.

Native Plant Protection Act (California Fish and Game Code Sections 1900-1913)

CDFW also has authority to administer the Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA) (CFGC Section 1900 et seq.). The NPPA requires the CDFW to establish criteria for determining if a species, subspecies, or variety of native plant is endangered or rare. Under Section 1913(c) of the NPPA, the owner of land where a rare or endangered native plant is growing is required to notify the department at least 10 days in advance of changing the land use to allow for salvage of the plant(s).

California Fish and Game Code Section 1600 et seq.

Section 1600 et seq. of the CFGC prohibits, without prior notification to CDFW, the substantial diversion or obstruction of the natural flow of, or substantial change or use any material from the bed, channel, or bank of, any river, stream, or lake, or deposit or dispose of debris, waste, or other material containing crumbled, flaked, or ground pavement where it may pass into any river, stream,

or lake. For these activities to occur, CDFW must receive written notification regarding the activity in the manner prescribed by the department, and may require a lake or streambed alteration agreement. Lakes, ponds, perennial and intermittent streams and associated riparian vegetation, when present, are subject to this regulation.

California State Fish and Game Code Sections 3503 and 3503.5

Under these sections of the CFGC, the project operator is not allowed to conduct activities that would result in the taking, possessing, or destroying of any birds of prey; the taking or possessing of any migratory nongame bird as designated in the MBTA; the taking, possessing, or needlessly destroying of the nest or eggs of any raptors or nongame birds protected by the MBTA; or the taking of any nongame bird pursuant to CFGC Section 3800.

California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15380

In addition to the protections provided by specific federal and state statutes, CEQA Guidelines Section 15380(b) provides that a species not listed on the federal or state list of protected species nonetheless may be considered rare or endangered for purposes of CEQA if the species can be shown to meet certain specified criteria. These criteria are modeled on the definition in FESA and the section of the CFGC dealing with rare or endangered plants or animals.

Local

City of Santa Maria General Plan and Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan

The project site is located within the City of Santa Maria, which oversees land use planning through implementation of the City's General Plan. Biological resources are specifically addressed in the General Plan Resources Management Element. The following goals, policies, and implementation programs are relevant to the current project.

Goal 3 – Biological Resources

Preserve natural biological resources and expand the Santa Maria Urban Forest.

Policy 3

Protect and preserve biological resources, and expand the urban forest within the Planning Area in order to enhance the quality of life in the Santa Maria Valley.

Implementation Programs

Biological Resources

4. Require biological assessments by a qualified biologist in areas where the existence of rare or endangered plants or animals are known or can be reasonably expected to exist.

The project site is also within the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan (Specific Plan) area. The Specific Plan was amended in 2002 and 2003 and reformatted in 2011. The Specific Plan includes the following goal related to biological resources. The Specific Plan does not include policies or implementation programs related to biological resources.

Goal 4 – It shall be the goal of the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan to preserve the area's natural amenities by locating infrastructure, housing and other development such that they do not inhibit visual and biological opportunities.

4.4.2 Previous Environmental Review

The project site was previously analyzed as one of the properties included in the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Santa Maria Sphere of Influence Expansion and Concurrent Annexation Project (City of Santa Maria 1992). The 1992 Final EIR concluded that development within the City's sphere of influence and annexation areas would potentially remove wetlands from Areas A-I and 9-W and that the loss of wetlands in Area 9-W would significantly impact habitat for the California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*). The Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan area does not occur within the areas identified by the 1992 Final EIR. No impacts related to biological resources were identified by the 1992 Final EIR for the project site.

4.4.3 Impact Analysis

a. Methodology and Significance Thresholds

Appendix G of the CEQA guidelines considers a project to have significant impact on biological resources if the project would:

- Have a substantial adverse impact, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- Have a substantial adverse impact 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 Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service;
- Adversely impact state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) either individually or in combination with the known or probable impacts of other activities through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means;
- Interfere substantially with the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of wildlife nursery sites;
- Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance; or
- Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Conservation Community Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.

Potential impacts related to potential conflicts with the provisions of an approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan are discussed in Section 4.15, *Less than Significant Effects*.

b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold:	Would the project have a substantial adverse impact, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?
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Impact BIO-1 THE PROJECT WOULD NOT RESULT IN IMPACTS TO SPECIAL STATUS PLANT SPECIES. THE PROJECT HAS POTENTIAL TO IMPACT SPECIAL STATUS WILDLIFE, INCLUDING NESTING BIRDS. IMPACTS TO SPECIAL STATUS ANIMAL SPECIES AND NESTING BIRDS WOULD BE CLASS II, SIGNIFICANT BUT MITIGABLE.

As noted in Section 4.4.1.a, the project site is comprised entirely of active agriculture and developed/disturbed areas. Special status plants are not expected to occur on the project site due to lack of suitable habitat. Therefore, no impacts to special status plants are expected.

As noted in Section 4.4.1.a, the project site contains marginally suitable habitat for the CRLF (federally listed as threatened). Due to the species being documented at features that are connected to the City's constructed storm water ditch along Battles Road, the species potentially has access to the project site. The agricultural basin on site can be utilized by the California red-legged frog if water is present; however, they would only be expected to occur incidentally as they are moving through the region. The species is not expected to utilize the basin as breeding habitat and therefore, no impacts to breeding habitat are expected. Considering CRLF are only expected to occur incidentally, impacts to CRLF adults and juveniles could occur through mortality or injury, if present, during initial ground disturbing activities.

In addition to the California red-legged frog, several bird species protected by the California Fish and Game Code may also nest in trees on site. Direct impacts to nesting birds protect by California Fish and Game Code may occur due to removal or trimming of trees that may contain active nests. Indirect impacts to nesting birds protected by California Fish and Game Code may occur from construction activities in the vicinity of an active nest resulting in distress to adults and disruption of nesting behavior leading to abandonment or nest failure.

Impacts to special status animal species through direct or indirect impacts are potentially significant.

Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures would be required to reduce potentially significant impacts to special status animal species from the proposed development.

BIO-1 (a) California Red-legged Frog (CRLF) Avoidance and Minimization

The following measures shall be implemented prior to and during grading and construction activities.

- a. Pre-construction survey for CRLF shall be conducted by a City-approved biologist not more than 48 hours prior to the start of construction activities. The survey area will include the proposed disturbance area. If any life stage of CRLF is found within the survey area, the USFWS shall be consulted. Ground-disturbing activities shall not commence until guidance is received from the USFWS and City.
- b. Project activities at the agricultural basin shall be completed during the dry season, between June 1 and October 31.
- c. No CRLF shall be captured and relocated without expressed permission from the USFWS.

- d. If at any time during construction CRLF enters the construction site or otherwise may be impacted by the project, all construction activities shall cease. Ground-disturbing activities shall commence following guidance from the USFWS and City.
- e. The work area shall remain clean. All food-related trash items shall be enclosed in sealed containers and removed from the site regularly.

Plan Requirements and Timing. These measures are to be implemented prior to and during grading and construction activities.

Monitoring. The applicant shall maintain a City-approved biologist to conduct above avoidance and minimization measures. The approved biologist shall submit monthly maintenance reports during construction to Planning and Development permit compliance staff.

BIO-1(b) Preconstruction Surveys for Nesting Birds and Raptors

For grading and/or construction activities occurring during the nesting season (generally February 1 to September 15), surveys for nesting birds and raptors covered by the California Fish and Game Code shall be conducted by a City-approved qualified biologist no more than 14 days prior to vegetation and tree removal activities. The survey area for nesting birds and raptor species shall include the disturbance footprint plus a 50-foot and 300-foot buffer, respectively, where publicly accessible. If active nests (nests with eggs or chicks) are located, the qualified biologist shall establish an appropriate avoidance buffer ranging from 50 to 300 feet based on the species biology and the current and anticipated disturbance levels occurring in vicinity of the nest. The objective of the buffer shall be to reduce disturbances to nesting birds. All buffers shall be marked using high-visibility flagging or fencing, and, unless approved by the qualified biologist, no construction activities shall be allowed within the buffers until the adults and young have fledged from the nest and are no longer reliant on the nest site. The qualified biologist shall confirm that breeding/nesting is completed and that the young have fledged prior to the removal of the buffer.

Plan Requirements and Timing. The surveys shall be conducted no more than 14 days prior to the initiation of vegetation and/or tree removal activities. A report of the nesting bird survey results shall be submitted to Planning and Development for review and approval prior to grading permit issuance for grading or construction activities which involve tree or vegetation removal.

Monitoring. The applicant shall maintain a City-approved biologist to monitor compliance with the above measure. Planning and Development staff shall review the report for compliance and inspect the site during construction activities to ensure compliance. Active nests shall be monitored periodically by the City-approved biologist until it has been determined that the nest is no longer being used by either the young or adults.

BIO-1(c) Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP)

Prior to the initiation of grading or construction activities (including staging and mobilization), a City-approved qualified biologist shall conduct a WEAP training to be attended by all personnel associated with project construction. The purpose of the WEAP is to aid personnel in recognizing special status resources, specifically nesting birds, California red-legged frog and western spadefoot. The specifics of this program shall include identification of the sensitive species and habitats, a description of the regulatory status and general ecological characteristics of sensitive resources, and review of the limits of construction and mitigation measures required to reduce impacts to biological resources within the work area. A fact sheet conveying this information shall also be prepared for distribution to all contractors, their employers, and other personnel involved with

construction of the project. All employees shall sign a form provided by the trainer documenting that they have attended the WEAP and understand the information presented to them.

Plan Requirements and Timing. An initial training shall be conducted prior to the initiation of project construction. For the duration of construction, new personnel shall be provided the training prior to conducting activities on site.

Monitoring. Planning and Development compliance monitoring staff shall be notified by the owner/applicant of the date and time the training is scheduled so that they may attend. Fact sheets shall be reviewed and approved by Planning and Development prior to conducting the training. The required notification and an attendance log that includes the names and signatures of all personnel that have received the training shall be provided to Planning and Development compliance monitoring staff prior to the start of grading or construction activities.

Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of the above mitigation measures would reduce impacts to special status animal species to a less than significant level (Class II).

Threshold:	Would the project 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 US Fish and Wildlife Service?
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Impact BIO-2 THE PROJECT WOULD NOT RESULT IN IMPACTS TO SENSITIVE HABITATS, INCLUDING RIPARIAN AREAS. NO IMPACT.

As discussed in Section 4.4.1a, no sensitive vegetation communities or riparian habitats occur on the project site. Therefore, the project would not result in impacts to sensitive natural communities or riparian habitat.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance After Mitigation

The project would not result in impacts to sensitive natural communities or riparian habitat.

Threshold:	Would the project adversely impact state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?
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Impact BIO-3 THE PROJECT WOULD NOT IMPACT STATE AND FEDERALLY PROTECTED WETLANDS (INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, MARSH, VERNAL POOL, COASTAL, ETC.) THROUGH DIRECT REMOVAL, FILLING, HYDROLOGICAL INTERRUPTION, OR OTHER MEANS. NO IMPACT.

As discussed in Section 4.4.1a, no state or federally protected wetlands or drainages occur on the project site. Therefore, the project would not result in impacts to wetlands or drainages.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance After Mitigation

The project would not result in impacts to state or federally protected wetlands or drainages.

Threshold:	Would the project 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?
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Impact BIO-4 THE PROJECT WOULD NOT SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACT WILDLIFE MOVEMENT AND WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT. THE PROJECT WOULD NOT IMPACT NATIVE WILDLIFE NURSERY SITES.

The project site does not contain wildlife nursery sites and therefore no impacts to nursery sites would occur.

The project site is comprised entirely of active agriculture as well as developed and disturbed areas. In addition, the project site is relatively small as well as situated as in-fill and is completely surrounded by existing roadways and urban development. As noted in Section 4.4.1.a, the project site does not occur in an important landscape linkage or Essential Connectivity Area. Based on the above mentioned factors, impacts to wildlife movement would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance After Mitigation

The project would not result in impacts to wildlife nursery sites and impacts to wildlife movement are less than significant.

Threshold:	Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?
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Impact BIO-5 THE PROJECT WOULD NOT CONFLICT WITH LOCAL POLICIES OR ORDINANCES PROTECTING BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES. NO IMPACT.

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. No city ordinances apply to on-site biological resources, for instance no native trees, street trees or trees on City-owned property will be removed as a result of the project. Therefore, development from the project would not conflict with local policies or ordinances that apply to biological resources.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance After Mitigation

The project would not result in conflict with local policies or ordinances.

Threshold: Would the project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Conservation Community Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

There is no adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or similar plan that applies to the project area. Therefore, the project would have not conflict with any such plans and there would be no impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance After Mitigation

The project would not result in conflicts with an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Conservation Community Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.

c. Cumulative Impacts

Significance for cumulative impacts to biological resources are based on:

- a. The cumulative contribution of other approved and proposed development to fragmentation of natural areas in the project site's vicinity;
- b. The loss of sensitive habitats and species;
- c. Contribution of the proposed project to urban expansion into natural areas; and
- d. Isolation of natural areas within the proposed project by future projects in the vicinity.

Continued urban development in City of Santa Maria in addition to the Proposed project is anticipated to include 1,130 new residential units, 108 new hotel rooms, 710,466 square feet of new commercial development, 4.3 million square feet of new greenhouses, 1.04 million square feet of new industrial development, and 569,512 square feet and 260 units of new mixed use/other development. Considering that the proposed project consists of active agriculture and is situated as in-fill within an already urbanized area, the anticipated cumulative impact contribution of the project to biological resources is expected to be low. No fragmentation or loss of natural areas or loss of sensitive habitats would occur from the proposed project. In addition, impacts to California red-legged frog and nesting birds would less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures. Potential impacts to biological resources from continued development within the City of Santa Maria would be addressed on a project-by-project basis through site-specific investigations and surveys as well as the development of the assessment of potential impacts and prescription of appropriate mitigation. The project-specific mitigation discussed throughout this section would ensure that the project's contribution to cumulative impacts would be less than significant with mitigation. Mitigation applied for individual development projects in the region would reduce cumulative impacts to biological resources to a less than significant level. No additional mitigation measures are required, and cumulative impacts are less than significant with mitigation (Class II).

4.5 Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources

This section assesses potential project impacts to cultural resources, including archaeological, historical and tribal cultural resources. Rincon Consultants, Inc. (Rincon) conducted a cultural resources study of the project site in June 2019, which informs this analysis and is included as Appendix D of this Supplemental EIR.

4.5.1 Setting

a. Regional Setting

Prehistoric Context

During the twentieth century, many archaeologists have developed chronological sequences to explain prehistoric cultural changes within all or portions of southern California (c.f., Jones and Klar 2007; Moratto 1984). Wallace (1955, 1978) devised a prehistoric chronology for the southern California coastal region that included four horizons: Early Man, Milling Stone, Intermediate, and Late Prehistoric. Wallace's chronology was based on early studies and lacked the chronological precision of absolute dates (Moratto 1984:159).

Since then, Wallace's (1955) synthesis has been modified and improved using thousands of radiocarbon dates obtained by southern California researchers over recent decades (Byrd and Raab 2007:217; Koerper and Drover 1983; Koerper et al. 2002; Mason and Peterson 1994). The prehistoric chronological sequence for southern California presented below is a composite based on Wallace (1955) and Warren (1968) as well as later studies, including Koerper and Drover (1983). The project APE lies in what is described as the Santa Barbara Subregion of the Southern Coast (Archaeological) Region, one of eighteen organizational subdivisions of the state (Moratto 1984: Fig. 1).

Early Man Horizon (ca. 10,000 – 6,000 B.C.)

Numerous pre-8000 B.C. sites have been identified along the mainland coast and Channel Islands of southern California (c.f., Erlandson 1991; Johnson et al. 2002; Jones and Klar 2007; Moratto 1984; Rick et al. 2001:609). One of them, the Arlington Springs site on Santa Rosa Island, produced human femurs dating to approximately 13,000 years ago (Arnold et al. 2004; Johnson et al. 2002). On nearby San Miguel Island, human occupation at Daisy Cave (SMI-261) has been dated to nearly 13,000 years ago. This site also included some of the earliest examples of basketry on the Pacific Coast, dating to over 12,000 years old (Arnold et al. 2004). On the mainland, CA-SBA-931 at Vandenberg Air Force Base has produced radiocarbon dates of circa 9,000 years before present (Glassow et al. 1996).

Although few Clovis or Folsom style fluted points have been found in southern California (e.g., Dillon 2002; Erlandson et al. 1987), Early Man Horizon sites are generally associated with a greater emphasis on hunting than later horizons. Recent data indicate that the Early Man economy was a diverse mixture of hunting and gathering, including a significant focus on aquatic resources in coastal areas (e.g., Jones et al. 2002) and on inland Pleistocene lakeshores (Moratto 1984). A warm and dry 3,000-year period called the Altithermal began around 6000 B.C. The conditions of the Altithermal are likely responsible for the change in human subsistence patterns at this time, including a greater emphasis on plant foods and small game.

Milling Stone Horizon (6,000 – 3,000 B.C.)

Wallace (1955:219) defined the Milling Stone Horizon as “marked by extensive use of milling stones and mullers, a general lack of well[-]made projectile points, and burials with rock cairns.” The dominance of such artifact types indicate a subsistence strategy oriented around collecting plant foods and small animals. A broad spectrum of food resources were consumed including small and large terrestrial mammals, sea mammals, birds, shellfish and other littoral and estuarine species, near-shore fishes, yucca, agave, and seeds and other plant products (Kowta 1969; Reinman 1964). Variability in artifact collections over time and from the coast to inland sites indicates that Milling Stone Horizon subsistence strategies adapted to environmental conditions (Byrd and Raab 2007:220).

Lithic artifacts associated with Milling Stone Horizon sites are dominated by locally available tool stone and in addition to ground stone tools such as manos and metates, chopping, scraping, and cutting tools are very common. Kowta (1969) attributes the presence of numerous scraper-plane tools in Milling Stone Horizon collections to the processing of agave or yucca for food or fiber. The mortar and pestle, associated with acorns or other foods processed through pounding, were first used during the Milling Stone Horizon and increased dramatically in later periods (Wallace 1955, 1978; Warren 1968). Sometime during this period, people began making Olivella shell beads, possibly indicating the start of a regional exchange system (Glassow et al. 2007).

Intermediate Horizon (3,000 B.C. – A.D. 500)

Wallace’s Intermediate Horizon dates from approximately 3000 B.C.-A.D. 500 and is characterized by a shift toward a hunting and maritime subsistence strategy, as well as greater use of plant foods. During the Intermediate Horizon, a noticeable trend occurred toward greater adaptation to local resources including a broad variety of fish, land mammal, and sea mammal remains along the coast. Tool kits for hunting, fishing, and processing food and materials reflect this increased diversity, with flake scrapers, drills, various projectile points, and shell fishhooks being manufactured.

Mortars and pestles became more common during this transitional period, gradually replacing manos and metates as the dominant milling equipment. Many archaeologists believe this change in milling stones signals a change from the processing and consuming of hard seed resources to the increasing reliance on acorn (e.g., Glassow et al. 1988; True 1993). Mortuary practices during the Intermediate typically included fully flexed burials oriented toward the north or west (Warren 1968:2-3).

Late Prehistoric Horizon (A.D. 500 – Historic Contact)

During Wallace’s (1955, 1978) Late Prehistoric Horizon, the diversity of plant food resources and land and sea mammal hunting increased even further than during the Intermediate Horizon. More classes of artifacts were observed during this period and high quality exotic lithic materials were used for small finely worked projectile points associated with the bow and arrow. Steatite containers were made for cooking and storage and an increased use of asphalt for waterproofing is noted. More artistic artifacts were recovered from Late Prehistoric sites and cremation became a common mortuary custom. Larger, more permanent villages supported an increased population size and social structure (Wallace 1955:223).

According to Warren (1968), the period between A.D. 500 and European contact is divided into three regional patterns. The Chumash Tradition is present mainly in the region of Santa Barbara and Ventura counties; the Takic or Numic Tradition is present mainly in the Los Angeles and Orange

Counties region; and the Yuman Tradition is present mainly in the San Diego region. The seemingly abrupt changes in material culture, burial practices, and subsistence focus at the beginning of the Late Prehistoric period are considered the result of a migration to the coast of peoples from inland desert regions to the east. This Takic or Numic Tradition was formerly referred to as the “Shoshonean wedge” or “Shoshonean intrusion” (Warren 1968); however, the Chumash were not assimilated or replaced and retained cultural identity.

After A.D. 500, a wealth of ornaments, ceremonial, and artistic items characterize the Chumash Tradition (Warren 1968) along the central coast and offshore islands. Ground stone items include bowls, mortars and pestles, balls, grooved stones, doughnut stones, stone beads, pendants, pipes, tubes, and mammal effigies. Projectile points, both large and small, were typically non-stemmed and leaf-shaped, with convex or concave bases. Chipped stone implements also included drills and scrapers. Utilitarian objects were made from bone (e.g., awls, fishhooks, whistles, and tubes) and shell (e.g., fishhooks and abalone shell dishes). Shell beads and ornaments were abundant, and bowls, pestles, pipes, and stone tubes were inlaid with shell beads and engraved. Bowls, pipes, and ornaments were commonly manufactured from steatite.

Characteristic mortuary practices during the Chumash Tradition included burial in crowded cemeteries. Burials are normally flexed, placed face down, and oriented toward the north or west (Warren 1968:5). The interments are typically marked by vertical pieces of whalebone, and have abundant grave goods, such as ornaments, effigies, and utensils.

Historic Context

European settlement of the Santa Maria Valley began with the establishment of Mission San Luis Obispo in 1772 and Mission La Purisima in 1787. After gold was discovered elsewhere in California, settlers were drawn to the Santa Maria Valley by the possibility of free land, when mission lands were made available for private ownership. With the arrival of farmers and other settlers after California gained statehood, the Santa Maria River Valley became one of the most productive agricultural areas in the state. Four prominent settlers, Rudolph Cook, John Thornburg, Isaac Fesler, and Isaac Miller, each contributed 40 acres of land where their properties met to form what was then called “Grangerville” in 1875. Ten years later, the city’s name was changed to “Santa Maria” (City of Santa Maria 2013).

Oil exploration began in the valley in 1888, with large discoveries in the early 20th century. Oil discoveries rapidly attracted a growing population to the valley, bringing about the need for local governance. In 1905, Santa Maria was incorporated as a general law city. Until 1954, the city remained four square miles in size. Since that time, annexations have increased the size to approximately 22 square miles (City of Santa Maria 2013).

Since 1957, the city has been heavily affected by programs at Vandenberg Air Force Base, 20 miles south of the city. In the 1970s, the Santa Maria Town Center mall was constructed. Since that time the City Council has worked to maintain Santa Maria’s status as a regional retail hub, continuously working to add retail outlets. Santa Maria remains the leader in retail sales growth for Santa Barbara County. Agriculture, however, remains the city’s chief economic influence. The Santa Maria Valley is home to several vineyards and wineries and primary crops include strawberries, celery, lettuce, peas, and squash. The valley is also home to several cattle ranches (City of Santa Maria 2013).

4.5.1.1 Existing Conditions

Cultural Resources Records Search

Rincon Consultants, Inc. completed a Cultural Resources Study in July 2019 (Appendix D). The study consisted of a cultural resources records search, map review, Native American outreach, and a pedestrian survey.

Rincon conducted a search of the California Historical Resources Information System at the Central Coastal Information Center (CCIC) located at University of California, Santa Barbara. The search was conducted to identify previously recorded cultural resources (prehistoric or historic), as well as prior cultural resources work within a 0.5-mile radius of the project site. The records search also included a review of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the California Register of Historic Places (CRHR), the California State Historic Resources Inventory list, and a review of available historical maps and aerial photographs. The records search identified nine previously conducted cultural resources studies within a 0.5-mile radius of the project site. Of those nine studies, two studies (SR-04452 and SR-04457) include a portion of the project site.

Report SR-04452 consists of a Phase I cultural survey conducted for a proposed replacement of 10 miles of 70-kilovolt transmission line between Cook Street in Santa Maria and 3790 Orcutt-Garey Road in rural Santa Barbara County for the Pacific Gas and Electric Company. The survey was conducted in 2008 by Marc D. Linder, Megan M. Linder, and Barry A. Price of Applied EarthWorks, Inc. The survey identified one historic-age resource (CA-1885-1H) consisting of an oil well and storage tanks. This resource is located outside the current project site and the 0.5-mile buffer.

Report SR-04457 consists of a Phase I cultural survey conducted for a proposed replacement of 2.8 miles of 115-kilovolt conductors and towers in Santa Maria for Pacific Gas and Electric Company. The survey was conducted in 2008 by Marc D. Linder and Barry A. Price of Applied EarthWorks, Inc. The survey identified two historic-age cultural resources, a pump house and shed (P-42-040937) and a wood framed shed designated AE-1851-2H by the authors.

The results of the CCIC record search identified two cultural resources documented within a 0.5-mile radius of the project site. These resources are the Santa Maria Union High School Drafting and Science Building (P-42-040892) and a pump house and associated concrete foundation (P-42-040937). The pump house (P-42-040937) is located within the project site and consists of a wood and corrugated metal building and pipe system. The site was recorded in 2009 by Applied EarthWorks, Inc. as part of the Fairway Tap 115-kV Tower Replacement Project. The pump house was assumed to date to the mid-twentieth century based on materials used. Modern pumps and storage containers have replaced the original pumps and containers. This resource was not evaluated for listing on the CRHR as part of the 2009 cultural resources survey.

Cultural Resources Field Investigations

Historical Resources

Rincon staff conducted field surveys of the project site on June 12 and June 21, 2019. The pedestrian field survey identified two buildings that exceed 45 years in age within the project site, a circa-1930s storage building and the mid-twentieth-century pump house previously recorded as P-42-040937. Although one of these buildings was previously recorded (P-42-040937), both are situated on a single parcel (APN 117-240-028) and are associated in ownership and use; therefore they were recorded and evaluated as a single resource for the current project. Rincon Consultants,

Inc. completed of California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523 Series forms for the project site. The purpose of this work was to determine whether the subject property appeared to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), and the City of Santa Maria Place of Historic Merit. The 1930s storage building has a roughly rectangular plan, concrete foundation, wood-frame structural system, with corrugated-metal-clad gabled roof. The pump house, located on the western portion of the property, was constructed sometime between 1937 and 1952. The shed-type building is rectangular in plan and topped with a gabled roof with deteriorating corrugated metal cladding. Its corrugated-metal-clad exterior is punctuated by an open, east-facing door opening.

Santa Maria and its vicinity were first developed for agriculture in the second half of the nineteenth century. The community of Santa Maria was established in 1875 and grew into a commercial and population center for the agricultural and, later, petroleum industries on its outskirts (City of Santa Maria 2012). Despite ongoing urban encroachment in the surrounding area, the subject property retained its agricultural character. As a result of the evaluations, Rincon Consultants, Inc. recommended the property ineligible for listing in the NRHP and CRHR, and for designation as a City of Santa Maria Place of Historic Merit, due to the lack of historical significance and integrity.

Archaeological Resources

The pedestrian field survey identified no archaeological resources within the project site. The project site is largely disturbed, as it is an active agricultural field. Exposed soils associated with animal burrows, primarily confined to the drainage ditch on the southwestern boundary, were examined to assess the underlying sediments for cultural materials. This examination found no evidence indicating the presence of buried subsurface archaeological deposits within the project site.

Native American Coordination

Rincon Consultants, Inc. contacted the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) on May 24, 2019 to request a Sacred Lands File (SLF) search of the project site. The NAHC responded June 10, 2019 with negative results. Rincon Consultants, Inc. sent letters to the local Native American contacts identified by the NAHC as potentially having knowledge of the project site on June 13, 2019. To date, Rincon has not received any additional responses to these outreach efforts.

4.5.1.2 Regulatory Setting

This section includes a discussion of the applicable State and local laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards governing cultural resources, which must be adhered to before and during implementation of the proposed project.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) was established by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 as “an authoritative guide to be used by federal, State, and local governments, private groups, and citizens to identify the Nation’s cultural resources and to indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment” (CFR 36 CFR 60.2). The NRHP recognizes properties that are significant at the national, State, and local levels. To be eligible for listing in the NRHP, a resource must be significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture. Districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of potential significance must also possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling,

and association. A property is eligible for the NRHP if it is significant under one or more of the following criteria:

- Criterion A:** It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
- Criterion B:** It is associated with the lives of persons who are significant in our past
- Criterion C:** It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction
- Criterion D:** It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history

California Register of Historical Resources

CEQA (Section 21084.1) requires that a lead agency determine whether a project could have a significant effect on historical resources. A historical resource is a resource listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the CRHR (Section 21084.1), a resource included in a local register of historical resources (Section 15064.5[a][2]), or any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript that a lead agency determines to be historically significant (Section 15064.5[a][3]).

California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5024.1 requires an evaluation of potential historical resources to determine their eligibility for listing in the CRHR. The purpose of the register is to maintain listings of the state's historical resources and to indicate which properties are to be protected from substantial adverse change. The criteria for listing resources in the CRHR were expressly developed to be in accordance with previously established criteria developed for listing in the NRHP, as enumerated according to CEQA below:

15064.5(a)(3) [...] Generally, a resource shall be considered by the lead agency to be "historically significant" if the resource meets the criteria for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources (Pub. Res. Code, § 5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4852) including the following:

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.

15064.5(a)(4) The fact that a resource is not listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, not included in a local register of historical resources (pursuant to section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code), or identified in an historical resources survey (meeting the criteria in section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code) does not preclude a lead agency from determining that the resource may be an historical resource as defined in Public Resources Code sections 5020.1(j) or 5024.1.

15064.5(b) A project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment.

In addition, if a project can be demonstrated to cause damage to a unique archaeological resource, the lead agency may require reasonable efforts to permit any 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], and [c]).

PRC, Section 21083.2(g) defines a unique archaeological resource as an 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 does one or more of the following:

1. Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and that there is a demonstrable public interest in that information
2. Has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type
3. Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person

Impacts to significant cultural resources that affect the characteristics of any resource that qualify it for the NRHP or adversely alter the significance of a resource listed in or eligible for listing in the CRHR are considered a significant effect on the environment. These impacts could result from physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of an historical resource would be materially impaired (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064.5 [b][1], 2000). Material impairment is defined as demolition or alteration in an adverse manner [of] those characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion or eligibility for inclusion in the CRHR (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064.5[b][2][A]).

Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52)

As of July 1, 2015, California Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52) was enacted and expands the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) by establishing a formal consultation process for California tribes within the CEQA process. The bill specifies that any project that may affect or cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource would require a lead agency to “begin consultation with a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the proposed project.” According to the legislative intent for AB 52, “tribes may have knowledge about land and cultural resources that should be included in the environmental analysis for projects that may have a significant impact on those resources.” Section 21074 of AB 52 also defines a new category of resources under CEQA called “tribal cultural resources.” Tribal cultural resources are defined as “sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe” and is either listed on or eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources or a local historic register, or if the lead agency chooses to treat the resource as a tribal cultural resource. See also PRC 21074 (a)(1)(A)-(B).

Codes Governing Human Remains

The disposition of human remains is governed by Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and PRC Sections 5097.94 and 5097.98, and falls within the jurisdiction of the NAHC. If human remains are discovered, the County Coroner must be notified within 48 hours and there should be no further disturbance to the site where the remains were found. If the remains are determined by the coroner to be Native American, the coroner is responsible for contacting the NAHC within 24 hours. The NAHC, pursuant to PRC Section 5097.98, will immediately notify those persons it believes to be most likely descended from the deceased Native Americans so they can inspect the burial site and make recommendations for treatment or disposal.

City of Santa Maria General Plan

The City of Santa Maria General Plan 1996 Resources Management Element written in 1996 and last amended in 2001 outline various goals, policies, objectives, and programs in regards to the protection of cultural resources. The following goals, policies, and implementation programs are relevant to the current project.

Goal 4 – Historical

Preserve cultural and archaeological resources to assure that future generations maintain a strong sense of value.

Policy 4

Preserve and identify cultural and archaeological resources that define the historical significance of the City of Santa Maria and the Santa Maria Valley.

Objective 4.1.a - Archaeological

Ensure that development does not impact archaeologically sensitive areas by applying appropriate mitigation measures as required by State Law.

Objective 4.1.b - Historical

Maintain the architectural integrity of historic structures within the City through the preservation of sites and structures located within the "H" overlay zone and other sites designated as local and State landmarks.

Implementation Programs

Historical Resources

1. 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.
2. Compile and retain a list of qualified archaeological, historical and paleontological consultants to provide information to complete initial studies and environmental analysis.
3. As new information regarding archaeological resources is received from authoritative sources, the City will update the archaeological and historical resources section of the General Plan, where appropriate.

4. Adopt a resolution that recognizes sites and events that are deemed to be historically or culturally significant to the City of Santa Maria.
5. Identify areas considered to be of historical significance and place these areas under an "Historical" overlay zone. Examine methods and incentives to implement the "H" Overlay.

4.5.2 Impact Analysis

a. Methodology and Significance Thresholds

The analysis of cultural resources impacts is based on empirical research presented in the Cultural Resources Study prepared for the proposed project. The full report is included as Appendix D of this Supplemental EIR. The methodologies and significance thresholds employed for the cultural resources impact analyses are described below and in Section 4.5.2.4, Regulatory Setting, above.

In accordance with Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, an impact to cultural resources is considered significant if it can be demonstrably argued that the project would:

1. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15064.5;
2. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15064.5;
3. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries.
4. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:
 - a. 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
 - b. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

The significance of an archaeological deposit and subsequently the significance of any impact are determined by the criteria established in the CEQA Guidelines, as provided in the Regulatory Setting.

If an archaeological resource does not meet either the historical resource or the more specific "unique archaeological resource" definition, impacts do not need to be mitigated [13 PRC 15064.5 (e)]. Where the significance of a site is unknown, it is presumed to be significant for the purpose of the EIR investigation.

b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold 1: Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15064.5?

Impact CR-1 THE PROJECT WOULD RESULT IN THE DEMOLITION AND REMOVAL OF THE STORAGE BUILDING AND PUMP HOUSE. DUE TO THE LACK OF SIGNIFICANCE AND INTEGRITY, THE STRUCTURES DO NOT MEET THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR LISTING IN THE NRHR AND CRHR OR OTHERWISE CONSTITUTE HISTORICAL RESOURCES FOR THE PURPOSES OF CEQA. THUS, IMPACTS WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT (CLASS III).

Rincon Consultants, Inc. evaluated the property for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, and designation as a City of Santa Maria Place of Historic Merit. According to the evaluation, the property is ineligible for listing in the NRHP and CRHR and for designation as a City of Santa Maria Place of Historic Merit because the property lacks historical significance. Although the property is associated with agricultural development in Santa Maria, research conducted did not suggest it was significant in this, or any other, context in the history of the city, region, state, or nation. The property is therefore recommended ineligible for listing under Criteria A/1. Because available sources do not suggest any former occupants of the property made important historical contributions, the property is recommended ineligible under Criteria B/2. The buildings located on the property are ordinary and utilitarian and are of types commonly found on agricultural properties. As such, they do not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values and are, as a result, recommended ineligible for listing under Criteria C/3. A review of available evidence and records search results did not indicate that the property may yield important information about prehistory or history. Therefore it is recommended ineligible under Criteria D/4.

The property also appears ineligible for designation as a City of Santa Maria Place of Historic Merit because it does not “have historical, cultural, aesthetic or special character or interest for the general public.” In addition, the subject property is not located within an established City of Santa Maria Historic Overlay District. Therefore, the project, which includes demolition of the existing storage building and pump house, would not adversely affect a historic resource. This impact would be less than significant

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Threshold 2: Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15064.5?
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Impact CR-2 CONSTRUCTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT WOULD INVOLVE GROUND DISTURBING ACTIVITIES SUCH AS GRADING AND SURFACE EXCAVATION, WHICH HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO UNEARTH OR ADVERSELY IMPACT PREVIOUSLY UNIDENTIFIED ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES. COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE GENERAL PLAN POLICIES WOULD ENSURE IMPACTS REMAIN LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT (CLASS III).

As discussed in Existing Conditions 4.5.1.1, there are no previously identified archaeological resources on the project site. In addition, the project site has been periodically graded and tilled in recent years for agricultural purposes. As detailed in the Regulatory Setting above, the City’s General Plan includes measures within its implementation program to protect unanticipated

cultural resources during construction. Given the lack of identified archaeological resources and history of ground disturbance, compliance with applicable General Plan policies, laws and regulations would ensure that impacts to previously unidentified historical and/or archaeological resources would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Threshold 3: Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?

Impact CR-3 CONSTRUCTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT WOULD INVOLVE GROUND DISTURBING ACTIVITIES SUCH AS GRADING AND SURFACE EXCAVATIONS WHICH HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO UNEARTH OR ADVERSELY IMPACT PREVIOUSLY UNIDENTIFIED HUMAN REMAINS. IMPACTS WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT (CLASS III).

Although unlikely, if human remains are found during construction, 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 prehistoric, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), which will determine and notify a most likely descendant (MLD). The MLD shall complete the inspection of the site and make recommendations to the landowner within 48 hours of being granted access. The project would be required to adhere to the discovery of human remains protocol established by State of California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required. In addition, Mitigation Measure CR-1 would further reduce impacts to previously unidentified cultural resources on the project site by requiring steps for the identification of subsurface resources, if ground disturbance occurs.

Threshold 4: Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

- a) 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
- b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

Impact CR-4 CONSTRUCTION OF ANTICIPATED DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD BE ALLOWED ON THE PROJECT SITE UNDER THE PROPOSED BLOSSER-SOUTHEAST SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENTS HAS THE POTENTIAL TO UNEARTH OR ADVERSELY AFFECT PREVIOUSLY UNIDENTIFIED TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES. THIS IMPACT WOULD BE CLASS II, LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH INCORPORATION OF MITIGATION.

The results of the CCIC records search identified one previously recorded historic-era cultural resource within the project site (P-42-040937). This pump house and an associated storage building were recorded and evaluated as a single resource for the current study and found ineligible for federal, state, or local designation; it is therefore not considered a historical resource under CEQA. No additional cultural resources were identified during the records search, Sacred Lands File (SLF) search, or pedestrian survey. As of the date of this Draft EIR, no specific tribal cultural resources have been identified on the project site.

Similar to the development envisioned in the approved Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, the anticipated residential, school, and commercial development that would be allowed on the project site under the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments would include ground disturbing activities and potentially excavation during construction. Ground disturbance activities during construction include excavation of material sources, clearing and grubbing, grading, placement of crushed aggregate base and paved surface, revegetation, and installation of signs and other project features. During ground disturbing activities, there is potential for encountering previously undiscovered cultural resources of Native American origin that could be considered tribal cultural resources. Therefore, impacts to tribal cultural resources would be potentially significant.

Mitigation Measures

CR-1 Unanticipated Discoveries

The following policy language shall be added to the Development Standards in the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan:

- a. In the event that a resource of Native American origin is identified during construction, the lead agency shall consult with local Native American(s). If the lead agency, in consultation with local Native Americans, determines that the resource is a tribal cultural resource and thus significant under CEQA, a mitigation plan shall be prepared and implemented in accordance with state guidelines and in consultation with Native American groups. The mitigation plan may include

but would not be limited to avoidance, capping in place, excavation and removal of the resource, interpretive displays, sensitive area signage, or other mutually agreed upon measure.

Significance After Mitigation

Incorporation of Mitigation Measure CR-1 would reduce potential impacts to previously unidentified tribal cultural resources on the project site to a less than significant level by continued consultation with local Native Americans, if resources of Native American origin are unearthed during construction.

c. Cumulative Impacts

The project, in conjunction with other nearby planned, pending, and potential future projects in Santa Maria as discussed in Section 3, Environmental Setting, would have the potential to adversely impact cultural resources. With compliance with applicable General Plan policies, laws and regulations, such impacts to cultural resources would be less than significant at the project level.

Like the project site, the sites of other planned and pending developments are located in developed and urbanized areas. Individual development proposals are reviewed separately by the City and undergo environmental review when it is determined that the potential for significant impacts exists. In the event that future cumulative development would result in impacts to known or unknown cultural resources, impacts to such resources would be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to the incremental loss of cultural resources may be significant, but the project would not contribute to such impacts.

The geographic scope for considering cumulative impacts to tribal cultural resources is based on the ethnographic use patterns of the project corridor and surrounding region. For the ethnographic period, the geographic extent includes the entire traditional Chumash territory. Development of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future developments could cumulatively contribute to the erasure of Chumash tribal cultural resources from the landscape. However, compliance with the mitigation measures detailed above and with the provisions of AB 52 would ensure that any known or potential tribal cultural resources are treated in consultation with local Native American groups. Compliance with AB 52 and continued involvement by local Native American groups in regional planning would generally limit the destruction of tribal cultural resources such that cumulative impacts would be less than significant. As no tribal cultural resources have been identified on the project site and impacts to any potential tribal cultural resources would be less than significant with mitigation, they would not contribute to a significant cumulative effect. This impact would not be cumulatively considerable.

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4.6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The following discussion focuses on the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions generated by construction and operation of the anticipated development that would be allowed on the project site under the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments, as well as the project's consistency with applicable plans, policies, and regulations adopted for the purposes of reducing GHG emissions. The 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR was published prior to the passage of Senate Bill (SB) 97 in 2007, which requires the analysis of GHG emissions as part of the CEQA process. As a result, the 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR did not include an analysis of the GHG emissions that would be generated by development envisioned under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. Therefore, this analysis does not take into account GHG emissions from buildout envisioned by the existing specific plan because these emissions were not analyzed in the 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR.

4.6.1 Setting

a. Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Gases that absorb and re-emit infrared radiation in the atmosphere are GHGs. The gases that are widely seen as the principal contributors to human-induced climate change include carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxides (N₂O), fluorinated gases such as hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆). Water vapor is excluded from the list of GHGs because it is short-lived in the atmosphere, and its atmospheric concentrations are largely determined by natural processes, such as oceanic evaporation.

GHGs are emitted by both natural processes and human activities. Of these gases, CO₂ and CH₄ are emitted in the greatest quantities from human activities. Emissions of CO₂ are largely by-products of fossil fuel combustion, whereas CH₄ results from off-gassing associated with agricultural practices and landfills. Man-made GHGs, many of which have greater heat-absorption potential than CO₂, include fluorinated gases and SF₆ (United States Environmental Protection Agency [U.S. EPA] 2018). Different types of GHGs have varying global warming potentials (GWPs). The GWP of a GHG is the potential of a gas or aerosol to trap heat in the atmosphere over a specified timescale (generally, 100 years). Because GHGs absorb different amounts of heat, a common reference gas (CO₂) is used to relate the amount of heat absorbed to the amount of the gas emissions, referred to as "carbon dioxide equivalent" (CO₂e), and is the amount of a GHG emitted multiplied by its GWP. Carbon dioxide has a 100-year GWP of one. By contrast, methane (CH₄) has a GWP of 25, meaning its global warming effect is 25 times greater than carbon dioxide on a molecule per molecule basis (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] 2007).

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory

Worldwide anthropogenic emissions of GHGs were approximately 46,000 million metric tons (MMT, or gigatonne) CO₂e in 2010 (IPCC 2014). CO₂ emissions from fossil fuel combustion and industrial processes contributed about 65 percent of total emissions in 2010. Of anthropogenic GHGs, carbon dioxide was the most abundant accounting for 76 percent of total 2010 emissions. Methane emissions accounted for 16 percent of the 2010 total, while nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases accounted for 6 percent and 2 percent respectively (IPCC 2014).

Federal Emissions Inventory

Total United States GHG emissions were 6,511.3 million metric tons (MMT or gigatonnes) of CO₂e in 2016 (U.S. EPA 2018). Total United States emissions have increased by 2.4 percent since 1990; emissions decreased by 1.9 percent from 2015 to 2016 (U.S. EPA 2018). The decrease from 2014 to 2015 was a result of multiple factors, including: (1) substitution from coal to natural gas and other non-fossil energy sources in the electric power sector and (2) warmer winter conditions in 2016 resulting in a decreased demand for heating fuel in the residential and commercial sectors (U.S. EPA 2018). Since 1990, U.S. emissions have increased at an average annual rate of 0.1 percent. In 2016, the industrial and transportation end-use sectors accounted for 29 percent each of GHG emissions (with electricity-related emissions distributed), respectively. Meanwhile, the residential and commercial end-use sectors accounted for 15 percent and 16 percent of CO₂e emissions, respectively (U.S. EPA 2018).

California Emissions Inventory

Based on the California Air Resource Board's (CARB) California Greenhouse Gas Inventory for 2000-2016, California produced 429.4 MMT of CO₂e in 2016 (CARB 2018b). The major source of GHGs in California is associated with transportation, contributing 41 percent of the state's total GHG emissions. The industrial sector is the second largest source, contributing 23 percent of the state's GHG emissions, and electric power accounted for approximately 16 percent (CARB 2018b). California emissions are due in part to its large size and large population compared to other states. However, a factor that reduces California's per capita fuel use and GHG emissions, as compared to other states, is its relatively mild climate. CARB has projected that statewide unregulated GHG emissions for the year 2020 will be 509 MMT of CO₂e (CARB 2018c). These projections represent the emissions that would be expected to occur in the absence of any GHG reduction actions.

b. Potential Effects of Climate Change

Globally, climate change has the potential to affect numerous environmental resources though potential impacts related to future air temperatures and precipitation patterns. Scientific modeling predicts that continued GHG emissions at or above current rates would induce more extreme climate changes during the 21st century than were observed during the 20th century. Long-term trends have found that each of the past three decades has been warmer than all the previous decades in the instrumental record, and the decade from 2000 through 2010 has been the warmest. The observed global mean surface temperature (GMST) for the decade from 2006 to 2015 was approximately 0.87°C (0.75°C to 0.99°C) higher than the average GMST over the period from 1850 to 1900. Furthermore, several independently analyzed data records of global and regional Land-Surface Air Temperature (LSAT) obtained from station observations are in agreement that LSAT as well as sea surface temperatures have increased. Due to past and current activities, anthropogenic GHG emissions are increasing global mean surface temperature at a rate of 0.2°C per decade. In addition to these findings, there are identifiable signs that global warming is currently taking place, including substantial ice loss in the Arctic over the past two decades (IPCC 2014 and 2018).

According to California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment, statewide temperatures from 1986 to 2016 were approximately 1°F to 2°F higher than those recorded from 1901 to 1960. Potential impacts of climate change in California may include loss in water supply from snow pack, sea level rise, more extreme heat days per year, more large forest fires, and more drought years (State of California 2018). While there is growing scientific consensus about the possible effects of climate change at a global and statewide level, current scientific modeling tools are unable to predict what

local impacts may occur with a similar degree of accuracy. In addition to statewide projections, *California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment* includes regional reports that summarize climate impacts and adaptation solutions for nine regions of the state as well as regionally-specific climate change case studies (State of California 2018). Below is a summary of some of the potential effects that could be experienced in California as a result of climate change.

Air Quality

Higher temperatures, which are conducive to air pollution formation, could worsen air quality in California. Climate change may increase the concentration of ground-level ozone, but the magnitude of the effect, and therefore its indirect effects, are uncertain. As temperatures have increased in recent years, the area burned by wildfires throughout the state has increased, and wildfires have been occurring at higher elevations in the Sierra Nevada Mountains (State of California 2018). If higher temperatures continue to be accompanied by an increase in the incidence and extent of large wildfires, air quality would worsen. However, if higher temperatures are accompanied by wetter, rather than drier conditions, the rains would tend to temporarily clear the air of particulate pollution and reduce the incidence of large wildfires, thereby ameliorating the pollution associated with wildfires. Additionally, severe heat accompanied by drier conditions and poor air quality could increase the number of heat-related deaths, illnesses, and asthma attacks throughout the state (California Natural Resources Agency 2009).

Water Supply

Analysis of paleoclimatic data (such as tree-ring reconstructions of stream flow and precipitation) indicates a history of naturally and widely varying hydrologic conditions in California and the west, including a pattern of recurring and extended droughts. Uncertainty remains with respect to the overall impact of climate change on future precipitation trends and water supplies in California. For example, many southern California cities have experienced their lowest recorded annual precipitation twice within the past decade; however, in a span of only two years, Los Angeles experienced both its driest and wettest years on record (California Department of Water Resources [DWR] 2008). This uncertainty regarding future precipitation trends complicates the analysis of future water demand, especially where the relationship between climate change and its potential effect on water demand is not well understood. However, the average early spring snowpack in the western United States, including the Sierra Nevada Mountains, decreased by about 10 percent during the last century. During the same period, sea level rose over 5.9 inches along the central and southern California coast (State of California 2018). The Sierra snowpack provides the majority of California's water supply by accumulating snow during the state's wet winters and releasing it slowly during the state's dry springs and summers. A warmer climate is predicted to reduce the fraction of precipitation falling as snow and result in less snowfall at lower elevations, thereby reducing the total snowpack (DWR 2008; State of California 2018). The State of California projects that average spring snowpack in the Sierra Nevada and other mountain catchments in central and northern California will decline by approximately 66 percent from its historical average by 2050 (State of California 2018).

Hydrology and Sea Level Rise

As discussed above, climate change could potentially affect the amount of snowfall, rainfall, and snow pack; the intensity and frequency of storms; flood hydrographs (flash floods, rain or snow events, coincidental high tide and high runoff events); sea level rise and coastal flooding; coastal

erosion; and the potential for salt water intrusion. Climate change has the potential to induce substantial sea level rise in the coming century (State of California 2018). The rising sea level increases the likelihood and risk of flooding. The rate of increase of global mean sea levels over the 2001-2010 decade, as observed by satellites, ocean buoys and land gauges, was approximately 3.2 mm per year, which is double the observed 20th century trend of 1.6 mm per year (World Meteorological Organization [WMO] 2013). As a result, global mean sea levels averaged over the last decade were about 8 inches higher than those of 1880 (WMO 2013). Sea levels are rising faster now than in the previous two millennia, and the rise is expected to accelerate, even with robust GHG emission control measures. The most recent IPCC report predicts a mean sea-level rise of 10 to 37 inches by 2100 (IPCC 2018). A rise in sea levels could completely erode 31 to 67 percent of southern California beaches, result in flooding of approximately 370 miles of coastal highways during 100-year storm events, jeopardize California's water supply due to salt water intrusion, and induce groundwater flooding and/or exposure of buried infrastructure (State of California 2018). In addition, increased CO₂ emissions can cause oceans to acidify due to the carbonic acid it forms. Increased storm intensity and frequency could affect the ability of flood-control facilities, including levees, to handle storm events.

Agriculture

California has a \$50 billion annual agricultural industry that produces over a third of the country's vegetables and two-thirds of the country's fruits and nuts (California Department of Food and Agriculture 2018). Higher CO₂ levels can stimulate plant production and increase plant water-use efficiency. However, if temperatures rise and drier conditions prevail, certain regions of agricultural production could experience water shortages of up to 16 percent; water demand could increase as hotter conditions lead to the loss of soil moisture; crop-yield could be threatened by water-induced stress and extreme heat waves; and plants may be susceptible to new and changing pest and disease outbreaks (State of California 2018). In addition, temperature increases could change the time of year certain crops, such as wine grapes, bloom or ripen, and thereby affect their quality (California Climate Change Center 2006).

Ecosystems and Wildlife

Climate change and the potential resulting changes in weather patterns could have ecological effects on a global and local scale. Increasing concentrations of GHGs are likely to accelerate the rate of climate change. Scientists project that the annual average maximum daily temperatures in California could rise by 4.4 to 5.8°F in the next 50 years and by 5.6 to 8.8°F in the next century (State of California 2018). Soil moisture is likely to decline in many regions, and intense rainstorms are likely to become more frequent. Rising temperatures could have four major impacts on plants and animals related to (1) timing of ecological events; (2) geographic distribution and range; (3) species' composition and the incidence of nonnative species within communities; and (4) ecosystem processes, such as carbon cycling and storage (Parmesan 2006; State of California 2018).

c. Regulatory Setting

Federal Regulations

The U.S. Supreme Court in *Massachusetts et al. v. Environmental Protection Agency et al.* ([2007] 549 U.S. 05-1120) held that the U.S. EPA has the authority to regulate motor-vehicle GHG emissions under the federal Clean Air Act. The U.S. EPA issued a Final Rule for mandatory reporting of GHG

emissions in October 2009. This Final Rule applies to fossil fuel suppliers, industrial gas suppliers, direct GHG emitters, and manufacturers of heavy-duty and off-road vehicles and vehicle engines, and requires annual reporting of emissions. In 2012, the U.S. EPA issued a Final Rule that establishes the GHG permitting thresholds that determine when Clean Air Act permits under the New Source Review Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) and Title V Operating Permit programs are required for new and existing industrial facilities.

In 2014, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Utility Air Regulatory Group v. EPA* (134 S. Ct. 2427 [2014]) held that U.S. EPA may not treat GHGs as an air pollutant for purposes of determining whether a source is a major source required to obtain a PSD or Title V permit. The Court also held that PSD permits that are otherwise required (based on emissions of other pollutants) may continue to require limitations on GHG emissions based on the application of Best Available Control Technology (BACT).

California Regulations

California Air Resources Board (CARB) is responsible for the coordination and oversight of State and local air pollution control programs in California. California has numerous regulations aimed at reducing the state's GHG emissions. These initiatives are summarized below.

California Advanced Clean Cars Program

Assembly Bill (AB) 1493 (2002), California's Advanced Clean Cars program (referred to as "Pavley"), requires CARB to develop and adopt regulations to achieve "the maximum feasible and cost-effective reduction of GHG emissions from motor vehicles." On June 30, 2009, U.S. EPA granted the waiver of Clean Air Act preemption to California for its GHG emission standards for motor vehicles beginning with the 2009 model year. Pavley I regulates model years from 2009 to 2016 and Pavley II, which is now referred to as "LEV (Low Emission Vehicle) III GHG" regulates model years from 2017 to 2025. The Advanced Clean Cars program coordinates the goals of the Low Emissions Vehicles (LEV), Zero Emissions Vehicles (ZEV), and Clean Fuels Outlet programs, and would provide major reductions in GHG emissions. By 2025, when the rules will be fully implemented, new automobiles will emit 34 percent fewer GHGs and 75 percent fewer smog-forming emissions from their model year 2016 levels (CARB 2011).

Assembly Bill 32

California's major initiative for reducing GHG emissions is outlined in AB 32, the "California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006," which was signed into law in 2006. AB 32 codifies the statewide goal of reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 and requires CARB to prepare a Scoping Plan that outlines the main State strategies for reducing GHGs to meet the 2020 deadline. In addition, AB 32 requires CARB to adopt regulations to require reporting and verification of statewide GHG emissions. Based on this guidance, CARB approved a 1990 statewide GHG level and 2020 limit of 427 MMT CO₂e. The Scoping Plan was approved by CARB on December 11, 2008 and included measures to address GHG emission reduction strategies related to energy efficiency, water use, and recycling and solid waste, among other measures. Many of the GHG reduction measures included in the Scoping Plan (e.g., Low Carbon Fuel Standard, Advanced Clean Car standards, and Cap-and-Trade) have been adopted since approval of the Scoping Plan.

In May 2014, CARB approved the first update to the AB 32 Scoping Plan. The 2013 Scoping Plan update defined CARB's climate change priorities for the next five years and set the groundwork to reach post-2020 statewide goals. The update highlighted California's progress toward meeting the "near-term" 2020 GHG emission reduction goals defined in the original Scoping Plan. It also

evaluated how to align the State's longer-term GHG reduction strategies with other State policy priorities, including those for water, waste, natural resources, clean energy, transportation, and land use (CARB 2014).

Senate Bill 97

SB 97, signed in August 2007, acknowledges that climate change is an environmental issue that requires analysis in California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documents. In March 2010, the California Natural Resources Agency (Resources Agency) adopted amendments to the State CEQA Guidelines for the feasible mitigation of GHG emissions or the effects of GHG emissions. The adopted guidelines give lead agencies the discretion to set quantitative or qualitative thresholds for the assessment and mitigation of GHG and climate change impacts.

Senate Bill 375

SB 375, signed in August 2008, enhances the state's ability to reach AB 32 goals by directing CARB to develop regional GHG emission reduction targets to be achieved from passenger vehicles by 2020 and 2035. In addition, SB 375 directs each of the state's 18 major Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to prepare a "sustainable communities strategy" (SCS) that contains a growth strategy to meet these emission targets for inclusion in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). On March 22, 2018, CARB adopted updated regional targets for reducing GHG emissions from 2005 levels by 2020 and 2035. The Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) was assigned targets of a 13% reduction in GHGs from transportation sources by 2020 and a 17% reduction in GHGs from transportation sources by 2035. The SBCAG 2040 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (August 15, 2013) demonstrated that the SBCAG region would achieve its regional emissions reduction targets for the 2020 and 2035 target years.

Senate Bill 32

On September 8, 2016, the governor signed Senate Bill 32 (SB 32) into law, extending AB 32 by requiring the State to further reduce GHGs to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 (the other provisions of AB 32 remain unchanged). On December 14, 2017, CARB adopted the 2017 Scoping Plan, which provides a framework for achieving the 2030 target. The 2017 Scoping Plan relies on the continuation and expansion of existing policies and regulations, such as the Cap-and-Trade Program, as well as implementation of recently adopted policies and policies, such as SB 350 and SB 1383 (see below). The 2017 Scoping Plan also puts an increased emphasis on innovation, adoption of existing technology, and strategic investment to support its strategies. As with the 2013 Scoping Plan Update, the 2017 Scoping Plan does not provide project-level thresholds for land use development. Instead, it recommends that local governments adopt policies and locally-appropriate quantitative thresholds consistent with statewide per capita goals of six metric tons (MT) CO₂e by 2030 and two MT CO₂e by 2050 (CARB 2017). As stated in the 2017 Scoping Plan, these goals may be appropriate for plan-level analyses (city, county, subregional, or regional level), but not for specific individual projects because they include all emissions sectors in the state (CARB 2017).

Senate Bill 1383

Adopted in September 2016, SB 1383 requires CARB to approve and begin implementing a comprehensive strategy to reduce emissions of short-lived climate pollutants. The bill requires the strategy to achieve the following reduction targets by 2030:

- Methane – 40 percent below 2013 levels
- Hydrofluorocarbons – 40 percent below 2013 levels
- Anthropogenic black carbon – 50 percent below 2013 levels

The bill also requires the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle), in consultation with the CARB, to adopt regulations that achieve specified targets for reducing organic waste in landfills.

Senate Bill 100

Adopted on September 10, 2018, SB 100 supports the reduction of GHG emissions from the electricity sector by accelerating the state's Renewables Portfolio Standard Program, which was last updated by SB 350 in 2015. SB 100 requires electricity providers to increase procurement from eligible renewable energy resources to 33 percent of total retail sales by 2020, 60 percent by 2030, and 100 percent by 2045.

Executive Order B-55-18

On September 10, 2018, the governor issued Executive Order B-55-18, which established a new statewide goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2045 and maintaining net negative emissions thereafter. This goal is in addition to the existing statewide GHG reduction targets established by SB 375, SB 32, SB 1383, and SB 100.

California Environmental Quality Act

Pursuant to the requirements of SB 97, the Resources Agency has adopted amendments to the *State CEQA Guidelines* for the feasible mitigation of GHG emissions or the effects of GHG emissions. The adopted *CEQA Guidelines* provide general regulatory guidance on the analysis and mitigation of GHG emissions in CEQA documents, while giving lead agencies the discretion to set quantitative or qualitative thresholds for the assessment and mitigation of GHGs and climate change impacts. To date, a variety of air districts have adopted quantitative significance thresholds for GHGs.

For more information on the Senate and Assembly Bills, Executive Orders, and reports discussed above, and to view reports and research referenced above, please refer to the following websites: www.climatechange.ca.gov and www.arb.ca.gov/cc/cc.htm.

Local Regulations

SBCAG 2040 RTP-SCS

SBCAG prepared a 2040 RTP-SCS, adopted in August 2017, which shows how the region will achieve the required GHG per capita emission targets as well the co-benefits of reducing criteria pollutants. The 2040 RTP-SCS is based on a preferred land use and transportation scenario, which lays out one possible pattern of future growth and transportation investment for the region. The 2040 RTP-SCS preferred scenario emphasizes a transit-oriented development and infill approach to land use and housing, supported by complementary transportation and transit investments. The 2040 RTP-SCS meets the requirements of SB 375 and successfully achieves the region's GHG emission targets in 2020 and 2035, while accommodating forecast growth and regional housing needs. The 2040 RTP-SCS would meet the SBCAG region's GHG emission targets from passenger vehicles for 2020 and 2035, achieving reductions in per capita CO₂ emissions from passenger vehicles of 13.3 percent by 2020 and 17.7 percent by 2035 (SBCAG 2017).

Santa Barbara Air Pollution Control District

On April 30, 2015, the Santa Barbara Air Pollution Control District (SBCAPCD) adopted an “AB 32 Consistency” threshold for stationary sources that require a Permit to Operate from the District (including a screening level threshold of 10,000 MT CO₂e). The SBCAPCD has not adopted quantitative significance thresholds for land use projects.

City of Santa Maria

The City of Santa Maria has not adopted a qualified greenhouse gas reduction plan pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5(b)(1). Therefore, this analysis does not utilize the tiering and streamlining provisions of CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5(b)(2) in evaluating the significance of the project’s impacts related to GHG emissions.

4.6.2 Impact Analysis

a. Methodology and Significance Thresholds

Methodology

Calculations of CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O emissions are provided to identify the magnitude of potential project effects. The analysis focuses on CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O because these make up 98 percent of all GHG emissions by volume and are the GHG emissions that the anticipated development would emit in the largest quantities (IPCC 2014). Fluorinated gases, such as HFCs, PFCs, and SF₆, were also considered for the analysis. However, because the project would allow development of residential, commercial, school, and recreational land uses, the quantity of fluorinated gases would not be significant since fluorinated gases are primarily associated with industrial processes. Emissions of all GHGs are converted into their equivalent GWP in terms of CO₂ (CO₂e). Minimal amounts of other GHGs (such as chlorofluorocarbons [CFCs]) would be emitted; however, these other GHG emissions would not substantially add to the total calculated CO₂e amounts. Calculations are based on the methodologies discussed in the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) *CEQA and Climate Change* white paper (CAPCOA 2008) and included the use of the California Climate Action Registry (CCAR) General Reporting Protocol (CCAR 2009).

GHG emissions associated with the anticipated development were calculated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) version 2016.3.2 (see Appendix B for calculations). See Section 4.2, *Air Quality*, for a detailed discussion of modeling assumptions.

Construction Emissions

Although construction activity is addressed in this analysis, CAPCOA does not discuss whether any of the suggested threshold approaches (as discussed below under *Significance Thresholds*) adequately address impacts from temporary construction activities. As stated in the *CEQA and Climate Change* white paper, “more study is needed to make this assessment or to develop separate thresholds for construction activity” (CAPCOA 2008). Nevertheless, air districts have recommended amortizing construction-related emissions over the lifetime of the project in conjunction with the project’s operational emissions. Neither the SBCAPCD nor the City of Santa Maria has provided guidance on what the amortization period for individual projects should be. The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) recommends a period of 30 years (SCAQMD 2008). In contrast, the San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District (SLOAPCD) recommends a 50-year period for residential projects and a 25-year period for non-residential or commercial projects (SLOAPCD

2012). To provide a conservative estimate of emissions, the SLOAPCD 25-year amortization period is utilized in this analysis.

CalEEMod was used to estimate emissions associated with the construction period, based on parameters such as the duration of construction activity, area of disturbance, and anticipated equipment use during construction. Complete results from CalEEMod and assumptions can be viewed in Appendix B.

Operational Emissions

CalEEMod provides operational emissions of CO₂, N₂O, and CH₄. Emissions from energy use include electricity and natural gas use. The emissions factors for natural gas combustion are based on EPA's AP-42 (*Compilation of Air Pollutant Emissions Factors*) and CCAR General Reporting Protocol. Electricity emissions are calculated by multiplying the energy use times the carbon intensity of the utility district per kilowatt hour (CAPCOA 2017). The default electricity consumption values in CalEEMod include the California Energy Commission [CEC]-sponsored California Commercial End Use Survey (CEUS) and Residential Appliance Saturation Survey (RASS) studies. As discussed above, SB 100 requires retail sales of electricity to be generated by 33 percent renewable energy by 2020 and 60 percent renewable energy by 2030. However, PG&E currently sources approximately 78 percent of its electricity from renewable sources and has therefore already achieved the 2030 requirement (CEC 2018). Accordingly, no adjustments were made to the carbon intensity of electricity emissions in light of the SB 100 requirements.

Emissions associated with area sources, including consumer products, landscape maintenance, and architectural coating were calculated in CalEEMod and utilize standard emission rates from CARB, U.S. EPA, and emission factor values provided by the local air district (CAPCOA 2017).

Emissions from waste generation were also calculated in CalEEMod and are based on the IPCC's methods for quantifying GHG emissions from solid waste using the degradable organic content of waste (CAPCOA 2017). Waste disposal rates by land use and overall composition of municipal solid waste in California was primarily based on data provided by CalRecycle.

Emissions from water and wastewater usage calculated in CalEEMod were based on the default electricity intensity from the CEC's 2006 Refining Estimates of Water-Related Energy Use in California using the average values for northern and southern California.

For mobile sources, CO₂ and CH₄ emissions from vehicle trips to and from the project site were quantified using CalEEMod based on the Revised Traffic Impact Study prepared for the project by Associated Transportation Engineers in June 2019 (Appendix F). Because CalEEMod does not calculate N₂O emissions from mobile sources, N₂O emissions were quantified using guidance from CARB (CARB 2013; see Appendix B for calculations), which states the following:

- For gasoline vehicles, use 4.16 percent of NO_x emissions (from CalEEMod) to calculate N₂O for all gasoline vehicles; and
- For diesel vehicles, use 0.3316 grams of NO_x per gallon fuel used.

CalEEMod does not list the percentage breakdown of gasoline and diesel vehicles used in the model's fleet mixes. To determine this percentage, EMFAC2014 Emissions Inventory were obtained in a spreadsheet output for the Los Angeles County region, for the anticipated development's earliest-anticipated operational year (2035), using EMFAC2011 categories (CARB 2019).

Significance Thresholds

Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines* considers a project to have a significant impact related to GHG emissions if the project would:

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

In addition, *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.4(b) states that a lead agency should consider the following factors, among others, when assessing the significance of impacts from GHG emissions on the environment:

- The extent to which the project may increase or reduce GHG emissions as compared to the existing environmental setting;
- Whether the project emissions exceed a threshold of significance that the lead agency determines applies to the project; and
- The extent to which the project complies with regulations or requirements adopted to implement a statewide, regional, or local plan for the reduction or mitigation of GHG emissions. Such requirements must be adopted by the relevant public agency through a public review process and must reduce or mitigate the project's incremental contribution of GHG emissions.

Project-Specific Efficiency Threshold

Efficiency thresholds are quantitative thresholds based on a measurement of GHG efficiency for a given project, regardless of the amount of mass emissions. These thresholds identify the emission level below which new development would not interfere with attainment of statewide GHG reduction targets. A project that attains such an efficiency target, with or without mitigation, would result in less than significant GHG emissions. A locally-appropriate 2030 project-specific threshold is derived from CARB's recommendations in the 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan Update, as discussed below.

With the release of the 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan Update, CARB recognized the need to balance population growth with emissions reductions and in doing so, provided a new local plan level methodology for target setting that provides consistency with state GHG reduction goals using per capita efficiency thresholds. A project-specific efficiency threshold can be calculated by dividing statewide GHG emissions by the sum of statewide jobs and residents. However, not all statewide emission sources would be impacted by the proposed land use (e.g., agriculture and industrial). Accordingly, consistent with the concerns raised in the Golden Door (2018) and Newhall Ranch (2015) decisions regarding the correlation between state and local conditions, the 2030 statewide inventory target was modified with substantial evidence provided to establish a locally-appropriate, evidence-based, project-specific threshold consistent with the SB 32 target.

To develop this threshold, the local planning area was first evaluated to determine emissions sectors that are present and would be directly affected by potential land-use changes. A description of major sources of emissions that are included in the State Scoping Plan emissions sectors and representative sources in Santa Maria can be found in Table 4.6-1.

According to Table LU-2 (Existing Land Uses as of January 1, 2011) in the City's General Plan Land Use Element, there are no agricultural land uses classified within the City. Although the project site

is currently in use for agricultural purposes, major GHG emissions generation sources including enteric fermentation, crop residue burning, and manure management do not occur substantially within the City and would not be allowed under the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments. Therefore, the Agricultural Emissions Sector was considered locally inappropriate and was removed from the State 2030 emissions forecast. Furthermore, Industrial Sector source emissions (i.e., oil, gas, and hydrogen production; refineries; general fuel use; and mining operations) would not be directly impacted by the proposed land uses; therefore, the Industrial Emissions Sector was removed from the State 2030 emissions forecast to retain a more conservative locally-appropriate target.¹ Additionally, Cap and Trade emissions reductions occur independent of any local jurisdictional land use decisions and were also excluded from the locally-appropriate target.

After removing Agricultural, Industrial, and Cap and Trade emissions, the remaining emissions sectors with sources within the Santa Maria planning area were then summed to create a locally-appropriate emissions total for a residential, commercial, park, and school project in Santa Maria. This locally-appropriate emissions total is divided by the statewide 2030 service person population to determine a locally-appropriate, project-level threshold of 3.2 MT of CO₂e per service population that is consistent with SB 32 targets, as shown in Table 4.6-1 and Table 4.6-2.

Table 4.6-1 SB 32 Scoping Plan Emissions Sector Targets

GHG Emissions Sector ¹	2030 State Emissions Target (MMT) ¹	Locally Appropriate ²	Project Specific	Major Sources ³
Residential and Commercial	38	Yes	Yes	Natural gas end uses, including space and water heating of buildings
Electric Power	53	Yes	Yes	Electricity uses, including lighting, appliances, machinery and heating
High GWP	11	Yes	Yes	SF ₆ from power stations, HFCs from refrigerants and air conditioning ⁴
Recycling and Waste	8	Yes	Yes	Waste generated by residential, commercial, and other facilities
Transportation	103	Yes	Yes	Passenger, heavy duty, and other vehicle emissions
Industrial	83	No	No	Oil, gas, and hydrogen production, refineries, general fuel use, and mining operations do not occur substantially within the City and would not be allowed under the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments ⁵
Agriculture	24	No	No	Enteric fermentation, crop residue burning, and manure management do not occur substantially within the City and would not be allowed under the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments

¹ Light and general industrial as well as heavy commercial/manufacturing land uses are present in Santa Maria; however, these land uses are considered part of the Commercial sector rather than the Industrial sector for the purposes of the 2017 Scoping Plan.

GHG Emissions Sector ¹	2030 State Emissions Target (MMT) ¹	Locally Appropriate ²	Project Specific	Major Sources ³
Cap and Trade Reductions	-60	No	No	Reductions from facilities emitting more than 10,000 MT CO ₂ e per year ⁶
Scoping Plan Target (All Sectors)	260	No	No	All emissions sectors
Locally Inapplicable Sector (Industrial)	-83	No	No	Oil, gas, and hydrogen production, refineries, general fuel use, and mining operations ⁵
Locally Inapplicable Sector (Agriculture)	-24	No	No	Enteric fermentation, crop residue burning, and manure management
Locally Inapplicable Sector (Cap and Trade)	60	No	No	Reductions from facilities emitting more than 10,000 MT CO ₂ e per year ⁶
2030 Locally Applicable Emissions Sectors	213	Yes	Yes	Emissions applicable to the local planning area

MMT = million metric tons

¹ All State targets in MMT CO₂e. See the 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan, page 31 for sector details (CARB 2017).

² Locally-appropriate is defined as having significant emissions in Scoping Plan Categorization categories within the planning area.

³ See CARB GHG Emissions Inventory Scoping Plan Categorization for details, available at:

<https://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/inventory/data/data.htm>

⁴ SF₆ is used primarily as an insulator in electrical substations while HFCs can be found in many residential and commercial refrigeration and air conditioning units. HFCs are in the process of being phased out through 2036 in most developed countries.

⁵ The majority of this sector is not applicable to the local planning area, and any potential applicable subsectors cannot be disaggregated due to CARB accounting methods. Therefore, the entire sector has been removed to ensure a more conservative target.

⁶ Cap and Trade is excluded as reductions will occur independent of local project land use decisions and are therefore not locally appropriate.

Table 4.6-2 SB 32 Locally-Appropriate Project-Specific Threshold

California 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan	California 2030 Population (persons) ¹	43,939,250
	California 2030 Employment Projection (persons) ²	23,459,500
	Service Population (persons)	67,398,750
Locally-Appropriate 2030 Project Threshold	2030 Locally-Appropriate Emissions Sectors (MT of CO ₂ e)	213,000,000
	2030 Service Population (persons)	67,398,750
	2030 Service Person Target (MT of CO ₂ e per Service Person)	3.2 ³

¹ California Department of Finance 2018

² Average of employment range projections under implementation scenario. See CARB 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan Update, page 55 (CARB 2017).

³ Total of 3.16 has been rounded up per Scoping Plan general methodology. Lead agencies may determine this threshold as they deem appropriate.

At this time, the State has codified a target of reducing emissions to 40 percent below 1990 emissions levels by 2030 (SB 32) and has developed the 2017 Scoping Plan to demonstrate how the State will achieve the 2030 target and make substantial progress toward the 2050 goal of an 80 percent reduction in 1990 GHG emission levels set by EO S-3-05. In the recently signed EO B-55-18, which identifies a new goal of carbon neutrality by 2045 and supersedes the goal established by EO S-3-05, CARB has been tasked with including a pathway toward the EO B-55-18 carbon neutrality goal in the next Scoping Plan update.

While State and regional regulators of energy and transportation systems, along with the State's Cap and Trade program, are designed to be set at limits to achieve most of the reductions needed to hit the State's long-term targets, local governments can do their fair share toward meeting the State's targets by siting and approving projects that accommodate planned population growth and projects that are GHG-efficient. The AEP Climate Change Committee recommends that CEQA GHG analyses evaluate project emissions in light of the trajectory of state climate change legislation and assess their "substantial progress" toward achieving long-term reduction targets identified in available plans, legislation, or EOs. Consistent with AEP Climate Change Committee recommendations, GHG impacts are analyzed in terms of whether the anticipated development would impede "substantial progress" toward meeting the reduction goal identified in SB 32 and EO B-55-18. As SB 32 is considered an interim target toward meeting the 2045 State goal, consistency with SB 32 would be considered contributing substantial progress toward meeting the State's long-term 2045 goals. Avoiding interference with, and making substantial progress toward, these long-term State targets is important because these targets have been set at levels that achieve California's fair share of international emissions reduction targets that will stabilize global climate change effects and avoid the adverse environmental consequences described under Section 4.6.1, *Setting* (EO B-55-18).

Service Population

The following data from United States Green Building Council (USGBC) was used to estimate the number of employment opportunities provided by the anticipated commercial development (USGBC 2008):

- "Community retail" land uses employ approximately 1 employee per 383 square feet
- "Neighborhood retail" land uses, which were used as a proxy for the gas station with convenience market, employ approximately 1 employee per 588 square feet
- "Fast food with drive-thru" land uses employ approximately 1 employee per 92 square feet

The service population (employees) of the anticipated neighborhood commercial development would be approximately 222 persons (130,680 SF/588 SF). As detailed in Section 4.11, *Population and Housing*, the proposed residential uses would result in a net increase of 4,345 new residents. Therefore, the total service population for the project would be 4,567 persons.

b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold:	Would the project generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?
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Impact GHG-1 CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE ANTICIPATED DEVELOPMENT WOULD GENERATE TEMPORARY AND LONG-TERM INCREASES IN GHG EMISSIONS. THESE EMISSIONS WOULD POTENTIALLY RESULT IN A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE; THEREFORE, IMPLEMENTATION OF MITIGATION MEASURE GHG-1 WOULD BE REQUIRED TO REDUCE THE ANTICIPATED DEVELOPMENT'S GHG EMISSIONS. THIS IMPACT WOULD BE CLASS II, LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED.

Construction of the anticipated development would emit GHG through the combustion of fossil fuels by heavy-duty construction equipment and through vehicle trips generated by construction workers and vendors traveling to and from the project site. CalEEMod was used to estimate emissions associated with the construction period, based on parameters such as the duration of construction activity, area of disturbance, and anticipated equipment use during construction.

Based on the CalEEMod results, construction activity generated by the anticipated development would occur over approximately 15 years and generate an estimated 28,081 metric tons of CO₂e (as shown in Table 4.6-3). Amortized over a 25-year period, the anticipated life of the project, construction of the anticipated development would generate approximately 1,123 metric tons of CO₂e per year.

Table 4.6-3 Estimated GHG Emissions during Construction

	Emissions (MT of CO ₂ e)
2020	461.7
2021	672.1
2022	1,717.2
2023	2,347.2
2024	2,323.9
2025	2,271.7
2026	2,231.7
2027	2,197.4
2028	2,159.1
2029	2,140.7
2030	2,156.2
2031	2,138.8
2032	2,129.5
2033	2,098.3
2034	844.5
2035	191.4
Total	28,081.4
Amortized over 25 years	1,123.3

Notes: All emissions modeling was completed using CalEEMod. See Appendix B for modeling results. Some numbers may not sum exactly due to rounding. Emission data shown is from “mitigated” results, which account for compliance with regulations and project design features.

New development would generate long-term GHG emissions from new vehicle trips (mobile emissions), combustion of natural gas and use of electricity (energy emissions), solid waste disposal, water use and wastewater generation, and consumer products, architectural coatings, and landscaping equipment (area emissions). Table 4.6-4 summarizes and combines the amortized construction, operational, and mobile GHG emissions associated with the anticipated development.

Table 4.6-4 Combined Annual GHG Emissions

Emission Source	Emissions (MT of CO ₂ e per year)
Construction	1,123.3
Operational	
Area	14.5
Energy	3,661.4
Solid Waste	579.7
Water	341.4
Mobile	
CO ₂ and CH ₄	11,370.6
N ₂ O	118.1
Total Emissions	17,209.0
Service Population	4,567
Emissions per Service Population (MT CO₂e/SP/year)	3.8
Project-Specific Efficiency Threshold (MT CO ₂ e/SP/year)	3.2
Exceed Project-Specific Threshold?	Yes
See Appendix B for CalEEMod results and N ₂ O mobile emissions data sheets.	

As shown in Table 4.6-4, combined annual GHG emissions from the anticipated development would be approximately 3.8 MT of CO₂e per service person per year, which would exceed the locally-appropriate, project-specific threshold of 3.2 MT of CO₂e per service person per year. Therefore, the anticipated development would result in a potentially significant increase in GHG emissions. Implementation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1 would be required to reduce GHG emissions below the efficiency threshold.

Mitigation Measure

GHG-1 GHG Emissions Reduction Plan

The following policy language, or its equivalent, shall be added to the Development Standards for the project:

The proposed development shall reduce operational GHG emissions through implementation of one or more of the following measures:

- a. Prior to permit issuance, the developer shall prepare a Greenhouse Gas Reduction Program (GGRP) that reduces annual GHG emissions from the development by a minimum of 2,740.2 MT of CO₂e per year (0.6 MT of CO₂e per person per year) over the operational life of the proposed development. The plan shall be implemented on-site by the developer and may include, but is not be limited to, the following components:
 1. Installation of renewable energy facilities (e.g., solar photovoltaics)
 2. Construction of buildings that achieve energy and water efficiencies beyond those specified in the California Code of Regulations, Title 24 requirements
 3. Implementation of green building practices and/or cool roofs

4. Installation of energy-efficient equipment and appliances exceeding California Green Building Code standards
5. Installation of outdoor water conservation and recycling features, such as smart irrigation controllers and reclaimed water usage
6. Installation of low-flow bathroom and kitchen fixtures and fittings
7. Installation of light emitting diode (LED) lights
8. Implementation of waste reduction programs that may include waste minimization, waste diversion, composting, and material reuse/recycling
9. Provision of incentives and outreach that promote alternative transportation and transit use to future employees and patrons
10. Construction of bicycle and pedestrian-oriented facilities (e.g., bicycle parking spaces)
11. Promotion of alternative fuel vehicles, including through the installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure
12. Implementation of carbon sequestration measures;

OR

- b. If GHG emissions cannot be reduced through implementation of the GGRP, the developer shall purchase carbon offsets to reduce GHG emissions below threshold levels. Carbon offsets shall be purchased from a validated source² to offset annual GHG emissions or to offset one-time carbon stock GHG emissions.

The GGRP shall be submitted by the developer and reviewed and approved by the City's Community Development Department as being in compliance with this measure prior to the issuance of grading permits. Applicable elements of the approved GGRP shall be reflected on site plans prior to permit approval. If GHG emissions cannot be reduced through compliance with such a plan, purchased carbon offsets shall be approved by City staff prior to permit approval. The purchase of carbon offsets does not subject the project to California's cap-and-trade program, nor is the purchase of carbon offsets required for the project, if GHG emissions reductions can be satisfied with GGRP measures.

Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1 would reduce GHG emissions from the anticipated on-site development to approximately 3.2 MT of CO₂e per person per year, which would not exceed the locally-appropriate, project-specific 2030 efficiency threshold. Therefore, GHG emissions from the anticipated development would not impede substantial progress toward meeting the State's 2030 and 2045 GHG reduction goals, and impacts related to GHG emissions would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated (Class II).

² Validated sources are carbon offset sources that follow approved protocols and use third-party verification. At this time, appropriate offset providers include only those that have been validated using the protocols of the Climate Action Registry, the Gold Standard, or the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol. Credits from other sources will not be allowed unless they are shown to be validated by protocols and methods equivalent to or more stringent than the CDM standards.

Threshold: Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Impact GHG-2 THE PROJECT WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH THE SBCAG 2040 RTP-SCS; HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE INCONSISTENT WITH THE GHG REDUCTION TARGETS OF THE 2017 SCOPING PLAN. THEREFORE, IMPLEMENTATION OF MITIGATION MEASURE GHG-1 WOULD BE REQUIRED TO ENSURE THAT THE PROJECT IS CONSISTENT WITH THE 2017 SCOPING PLAN. THIS IMPACT WOULD BE CLASS II, LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED.

As discussed under Section 4.8.1, *Setting*, a number of plans have been adopted to reduce GHG emissions in Santa Barbara County and at the state level. The project's consistency with the SBCAG 2040 RTP-SCS, and the 2017 Scoping Plan are discussed below.

SBCAG 2040 RTP-SCS

SBCAG's 2040 RTP-SCS provides land use and transportation strategies to reduce regional GHG emissions. The project's consistency with applicable goals and objectives from the 2040 RTP-SCS are discussed in Table 4.6-5.

Table 4.6-5 Project Consistency with Applicable SBCAG 2040 RTP-SCS Goals and Objectives

Goals and Objectives	Project Consistency
Environment	
Goal: Foster patterns of growth, development and transportation that protect natural resources and lead to a healthy environment. Objective 1: Reduce GHG emissions in compliance with CARB regional targets. Objective 4: Promote transit use and alternative transportation. Objective 5: Reduce vehicle miles traveled. Objective 6: Preserve open space and agricultural land.	Consistent. The project would not inhibit SBCAG from reaching its regional GHG emission targets because anticipated development under the proposed project would generate fewer vehicle trips than development envisioned by the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan (see Section 4.10, <i>Transportation and Traffic</i>). Therefore, the anticipated development would result in lower mobile source GHG emissions than those emitted by development under the existing specific plan. As a result, the project would be consistent with Objectives 1 and 5 because the project would not increase GHG emissions from mobile sources. In addition, it is possible that future development of the project site may result in a reduction in VMT, for example, if neighborhood serving commercial, park, and public school development is proposed that reduces cross-city trips from local residences. When a development plan is submitted for the project site, the project proponent may conduct and submit a VMT analysis demonstrating VMT reduction. The Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments include plans to construct a Class II bicycle lane connecting Battles Road to Stowell Road. Programs in support of the proposed specific plan policies also propose that multi-purpose trails be included in specific plan development, and that the circulation system be developed in cooperation with the City's Public Works Department to provide an integrated system of streets, freeways, public transit, and other transportation facilities. Furthermore,

Goals and Objectives	Project Consistency
	the proposed specific plan requires sidewalks to be constructed on both sides of internal roadways and streets. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Objective 4. As discussed in Section 4.2, <i>Agriculture</i>, the project would not preserve existing agricultural uses on the project site. However, the project site is designated by the City for Specific Plan implementation and associated development. Additionally, the project would increase the amount of land designated for open space on the project site as compared to the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Objective 6.
Mobility & System Reliability	
Goal: Optimize the transportation system to improve accessibility to jobs, schools, and services, allow the unimpeded movement of people and goods, and ensure the reliability of travel by all modes. Objective 3: Increase bike, walk, and transit mode share.	Consistent. The Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments include plans to construct a Class II bicycle lane connecting Battles Road to Stowell Road. Programs in support of the proposed specific plan policies also propose that multi-purpose trails be included in specific plan development, and that the circulation system be developed in cooperation with the City's Public Works Department to provide an integrated system of streets, freeways, public transit, and other transportation facilities. Furthermore, the proposed specific plan requires sidewalks to be constructed on both sides of internal roadways and streets. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Objective 3.
Source: SBCAG 2017	

As summarized in Table 4.6-5, the project would not conflict with the GHG emission reduction goals of the SBCAG 2040 RTP-SCS. Additionally, implementation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1 would reduce GHG emissions to a level consistent with the SB 32 GHG emissions reduction target for 2030. The GHG emissions reduction targets set by CARB for the SBCAG 2040 RTP-SCS are intended to contribute to achieving the statewide SB 32 goal (CARB 2018d). As a result, if the project reduces GHG emissions to a level consistent with the SB 32 target for 2030, then the project would be consistent with the SBCAG 2040 RTP-SCS. Therefore, with incorporation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1, the project would reduce its GHG emissions to a level consistent with the statewide SB 32 target and would be consistent with the SBCAG 2040 RTP-SCS.

2017 Scoping Plan and EO B-55-18

The 2017 Scoping Plan outlines a pathway to achieving the reduction targets set under SB 32, which is considered an interim target toward meeting the State's long-term 2045 goal established by EO B-55-18. As discussed in Section 4.5.2.a, *Methodology and Significance Thresholds*, the project would impede "substantial progress" toward meeting the SB 32 and EO B-55-18 targets if per service person GHG emissions exceeded the locally-appropriate, project-specific 2030 efficiency threshold. As discussed under Impact GHG-1, the project's GHG emissions would exceed the 2030 efficiency threshold. As a result, the project would potentially conflict with the 2017 Scoping Plan and EO B-55-18. However, implementation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1 would reduce GHG emissions below

the 2030 efficiency threshold. Therefore, with incorporation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1, the project would not conflict with or interfere with implementation of the 2017 Scoping Plan or EO B-55-18.

Mitigation Measure

Implementation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1 would be required to reduce the project's GHG emissions to a level that is consistent with the GHG reduction targets contained in the SBCAG 2040 RTP-SCS, 2017 Scoping Plan, and EO B-55-18.

Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1 would ensure that the project is consistent with the GHG reduction targets contained in the SBCAG 2040 RTP-SCS, 2017 Scoping Plan, and EO B-55-18. Therefore, with Mitigation Measure GHG-1, the project would be consistent with applicable GHG reduction plans, policies, and regulations, and impacts would be less than significant with mitigation (Class II).

c. Cumulative Impacts

As shown in Table 3-1 in Section 3, *Environmental Setting*, the City currently anticipates 1,130 new residential units, 108 new hotel rooms, 710,466 square feet of new commercial development, 4.3 million square feet of new greenhouses, 1.04 million square feet of new industrial development, and 569,512 square feet and 260 units of new mixed use/other development. Most of the listed projects involve infill development of relatively small parcels and are consistent with the surrounding urban and suburban nature of development within the city.

Growth within Santa Maria would result in increased GHG emissions from vehicle trips, energy consumption, and other sources. Analyses of GHGs are cumulative in nature because project-level GHG emissions contribute to the cumulative impact of the accumulation of GHGs in the atmosphere. Projects falling below the impact thresholds discussed above would have a less than significant impact, both individually and cumulatively. As indicated in Impact GHG-1, GHG emissions associated with the anticipated development that would be allowed on the project site under the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments would be less than significant with implementation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1. As discussed in Impact GHG-2, the project would not conflict with applicable plans, policies, and regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions with implementation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1. Therefore, the project's contribution to significant cumulative impacts related to GHG emissions is not cumulatively considerable.

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4.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

This section discusses the project's potential impacts relating to hazards and hazardous materials. This section incorporates information provided by the California Department of Conservation Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR) during the Notice of Preparation (NOP) comment period in April 2019, and also contained in the County of Santa Barbara Petroleum Office letter responding to the NOP. The full NOP comment letters are provided in Appendix A1.

4.7.1 Setting

a. Overview

The Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan area is located in an infill area with urban uses surrounding the site. Surrounding land uses include a commercial, industrial, and residential development to the west, a park and elementary school to the east, residential development to the south, and residential uses and an additional elementary school to the north.

The project site is currently used for the production of irrigated row crops. The project site also contains agricultural accessory structures to store agricultural equipment and vehicles. The nearest existing schools to the project site include David J. Sanchez Elementary School located at 804 West Liberty Street, adjacent to Stowell Road which bounds the project site on the north, and William L. Adam Elementary School located at 500 West Windsor Street, approximately 500 feet east of the project site.

b. Known Hazardous Materials Sites

The following databases were searched in June 2019 for records relating to any known hazardous materials contamination within the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan area:

- United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) databases;
- The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Geotracker database;
- Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Information System (CERCLIS) database;
- Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) EnviroStor database;
- State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) solid waste disposal sites, active Cease and Desist Orders (CDOs), and Cleanup and Abatement Orders (CAOs); and
- The Cortese List.

The search of the SWRCB Geotracker database identified 10 listings of the subject property in the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP), a program which regulates discharges from irrigated agricultural land to prevent impairment of the receiving waters. Five of the ten listings of the property in the ILRP have been terminated, while the site is listed with "enrolled" ILRP status under the other five listings. Under the ILRP, SWRCB regulates agricultural discharge by issuing waste discharge requirements (WDRs) or conditional waivers of WDRs (Orders) to growers that contain conditions requiring water quality monitoring of receiving waters and corrective actions when impairments are identified. The SWRBC Geotracker and DTSC EnviroStor databases identified the formerly permitted Santa Barbara Research Center, a hazardous waste storage and treatment facility, adjacent to the project site. On June 2, 1994, the former business submitted a clean closure

certification report for the clean closure of a hazardous waste storage unit and six bromine treatment units pursuant to an approved closure plan, dated September 20, 1993. On August 23, 1994, DTSC acknowledged a closure certification report. The SWRBC Geotracker database also identified one cleanup program site to the southwest and two cleanup program sites to the southeast of the specific plan area. All three identified cleanup program sites have “completed – case closed” statuses. The CERCLIS, EnviroStor, SWRCB solid waste disposal site, CDO, CAO, and Cortese databases did not list any potential contamination sites in the specific plan area. No other sites with known hazardous materials contamination were identified on the project site.

According to the DOGGR and Santa Barbara County Petroleum Office NOP comment letters, there are three known oil wells within or near to the southern boundary of the project site. The two oil wells mapped as being just within the southerly project boundary are not plugged and abandoned to current DOGGR requirements. A third known oil well is located approximately 45 feet south of the project site boundary and is plugged and abandoned consistent with current DOGGR requirements.

c. Airport Safety Hazards

The project site is located approximately 1.8 miles north of the Santa Maria Public Airport. The Airport Area of Influence is divided into three hazard zones to address areas of major concern including height restrictions, safety, and noise. Hazard Zone I includes height restrictions and is also the boundary of the Airport Area of Influence. Hazard Zone II is subject to policies regarding safety and height. Policies regarding height, safety, and noise apply in Hazard Zone III. The project site is located in the Hazard Zone I, outside of the identified airport Safety Areas (Santa Barbara County Airport Land Use Plan, Santa Barbara County Airport Land Use Commission and Santa Barbara Association of Governments [SBCAG], 1993).

d. Other Potential Hazards

Other potential hazards that may occur on the project site include residual agricultural chemicals in soils, asbestos containing materials and lead based paint, wildland fires, and hazardous material release from adjacent properties and hazardous material transport. The project site setting associated with each of these potential hazards is discussed more fully below.

Residual Agricultural Chemicals

The project site is currently in use for agricultural purposes. As a result, residual agricultural chemicals including pesticides, arsenic, and herbicides may be present in the soils onsite.

Asbestos Containing Materials and Lead Based Paint

Asbestos was used as insulation in walls or ceilings or as a component in adhesives in older buildings (pre-1979). Asbestos can pose a health risk when very small particles become airborne. Lead is a highly toxic metal that was used for many years in products found in and around homes, including paint. Lead based paint was commonly used in residential construction prior to the enactment of federal regulations limiting its use in the late 1970s. Exposure to lead can cause a range of health effects, from behavioral problems and learning disabilities, to seizures and death. The primary source of lead exposure in residential settings is deteriorating lead based paint. Lead dust can form when lead based paint is dry scraped, dry sanded, or heated. Dust also forms when painted surfaces bump or rub together. Lead based paint that is in good condition is usually not a hazard.

As detailed in Section 4.5, Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources, the project site includes accessory agricultural structures which date back to the 1930s and mid-twentieth century. Due to the age of the on-site structures, asbestos and lead may be present in those structures.

Wildland Fires

Fires have the potential to cause loss of life and property, and adverse environment effects. Fire hazard severity in rural areas, including areas on the edge between urban and rural land (commonly called the wildland interface), is highly influenced by the slope of the landscape and site vegetation and climate.

Wildland fires affect grass, forest, and brush lands, as well as any structures on these lands, and can result from either human-made or natural causes. The region's topography, type, and amount of fuel, climate, and the availability of water for firefighting are the primary factors influencing the degree of fire risk. According to the City of Santa Maria Hazard Mitigation Plan (2017), there is low probability of wildland fires in the city. The city is surrounded by irrigated row crop farms and has not experienced a wildfire environment since the late 19th Century and very early 20th Century. Although there are undeveloped lots and right-of-ways, vegetation growth is limited and required to be maintained. Accordingly, the project site, which is surrounded by urban development on all sides, has low probability of risks associated with wildland fires.

Hazardous Material Transport and Nearby Facilities

According to the City's Hazard Mitigation Plan states that although incidents may occur anywhere at any time, the most likely sites of an accident involving hazardous materials including major transportation routes including United States Highway 101 (U.S. 101), State Route (SR) 166, Betteravia Road, fixed facilities along Blosser Road, railroads, and airport industrial zones. The proximity of these transportation routes to densely populated areas of the City presents a remote possibility of a catastrophic disaster. Truck and railroad accidents along the surrounding roadways and Santa Maria Valley Railroad (SMVRR), which runs along the eastern project site boundary, could result in spills of such materials. However, all transport of hazardous materials is subject to federal, state, and local laws and regulations pertaining to the transportation of hazardous materials, discussed further in Section 4.7.1.e.

In addition, commercial and industrial uses in the vicinity utilize the roadways surrounding the Specific Plan area for supply and equipment transport, which may involve transport of hazardous materials. The Lineage Logistics industrial agricultural processing facility (including ammonia based coolant systems) is located to the west of the Specific Plan area at 1315 South Blosser Road. This facility was the site of a large warehouse fire in April 2018, creating potential hazardous materials release concerns. The incident was managed by local authorities and cleanup crews, and does not currently present any unique risk of hazardous materials release or exposure in the area. The Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan project site is located within the downwind potential plume area of a potential ammonia leak in the event of an accidental release from the Lineage Logistics facility.

e. Regulatory Setting

The management of hazardous materials and hazardous wastes is regulated at federal, state, and local levels, including through programs administered by the U.S. EPA; agencies within the California EPA, such as the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC); federal and state occupational safety agencies; and the Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Management. Regulations pertaining to flood hazards are further discussed in Section 4.8, *Hydrology and Water Quality*.

Definition of Hazardous Materials

A material is considered hazardous if it appears on a list of hazardous materials prepared by a federal, state, or local agency, or if it has characteristics defined as hazardous by such an agency. A hazardous material is defined in Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) as follows:

“A substance or combination of substances which, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical, chemical or infectious characteristics, may either (1) cause, or significantly contribute to, an increase in mortality or an increase in serious irreversible, or incapacitating reversible, illness; or (2) pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or environment when improperly treated, stored, transported or disposed of or otherwise managed.” (CCR, Title 22, Section 66261.10)

Chemical and physical properties cause a substance to be considered hazardous. Such properties include toxicity, ignitability, corrosiveness, and reactivity. CCR, Title 22, Sections 66261.20 through 66261.24 defines the aforementioned properties. The release of hazardous materials into the environment can contaminate soils, surface water, and groundwater supplies.

Federal

The Federal Toxic Substances Control Act (1976) and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (RCRA) established a program administered by the U.S. EPA for the regulation of the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste. RCRA was amended in 1984 by the Hazardous and Solid Waste Act, which affirmed and extended the “cradle to grave” system of regulating hazardous wastes. Among other things, the use of certain techniques for the disposal of some hazardous wastes was specifically prohibited by the Hazardous and Solid Waste Act.

The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) was enacted in 1980 and amended by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act in 1986. This law provides broad federal authority to respond directly to releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances that may endanger public health or the environment. Among other things, CERCLA established requirements concerning closed and abandoned hazardous waste sites, provided for liability of persons responsible for releases of hazardous waste at these sites, and established a trust fund to provide for cleanup when no responsible party could be identified. CERCLA also enabled revision of the National Contingency Plan, which provided the guidelines and procedures needed to respond to releases and threatened releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants. The National Contingency Plan also established the National Priorities List.

Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) (1986)

This Act is the federal legislation that governs the control and abatement of asbestos hazards present in school buildings. The purpose of this Act is to also require U.S. EPA to evaluate the extent of danger to human health posed by asbestos in public and commercial buildings and the means to respond to any identified danger.

National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 61 Subpart M

Projects requiring the removal or relocation of utility pipelines or removal or renovation of buildings may be subject to the requirements stipulated in the National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants. These requirements include but are not limited to:

1. Notification requirements to the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District (SBCAPCD);
2. Asbestos survey conducted by a Certified Asbestos Inspector; and
3. Applicable removal and disposal requirements of asbestos containing materials.

Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) - Process Safety Management Standard (29 CFR 1910.119)

This standard includes requirements for preventing or minimizing the consequences of catastrophic releases of toxic, reactive, flammable, or explosive chemicals. Requirements of this standard include providing employees with information pertaining to hazardous chemicals, training employees on the operation of equipment with hazardous materials, and employer requirements to perform a process hazard analysis.

U.S. Department of Transportation

The U.S. Department of Transportation regulates hazardous materials transportation on all interstate roads pursuant to its authority under the Hazardous Materials Transportation Uniform Safety Act (49 United States Code §5101 et seq.). In California, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and California Highway Patrol enforce federal law. Together, these agencies determine driver training requirements, load labeling procedures, and container specifications.

Clean Air Act

Regulations under the Clean Air Act are designed to prevent accidental releases of hazardous materials. The regulations require facilities that store minimum quantities (called threshold quantities) or greater of listed regulated substances to develop a Risk Management Plan including hazard assessments and response programs to prevent accidental releases of listed chemicals.

State

DTSC, a department of the California EPA, is the primary agency in California that regulates hazardous waste, cleans up existing contamination, and looks for ways to reduce the hazardous waste produced in California. DTSC regulates hazardous waste in California primarily under the authority of RCRA and the California Health and Safety Code.

DTSC also administers the California Hazardous Waste Control Law to regulate hazardous wastes. While the Hazardous Waste Control Law is generally more stringent than RCRA, until the U.S. EPA approves the California program, both state and federal laws apply in California. The Hazardous Waste Control Law lists 791 chemicals and approximately 300 common materials that may be hazardous; establishes criteria for identifying, packaging, and labeling hazardous wastes; prescribes management controls; establishes permit requirements for treatment, storage, disposal, and transportation; and identifies some wastes that cannot be disposed of in landfills.

Government Code Section 65962.5 requires the DTSC, the State Department of Health Services, the SWRCB, and CalRecycle to compile and annually update lists of hazardous waste sites and land designated as hazardous waste sites throughout the state. The Secretary for Environmental Protection consolidates the information submitted by these agencies and distributes it to each city and county where sites on the lists are located. Before the lead agency accepts an application for any development project as complete, the applicant must consult these lists to determine if the site at issue is included.

If any soil is excavated from a site containing hazardous materials, it would be considered a hazardous waste if it exceeded specific criteria in Title 22 of the CCR. Remediation of hazardous wastes found at a site may be required if excavation of these materials is performed, or if certain other soil disturbing activities would occur. Even if soil or groundwater at a contaminated site does not have the characteristics required to be defined as hazardous waste, remediation of the site may be required by regulatory agencies subject to jurisdictional authority. Cleanup requirements are determined on a case-by-case basis by the agency taking jurisdiction.

The State of California Food and Agricultural Code regulates the use of pesticides. Section 12972 requires that the use of pesticides not result in substantial drift to non-target areas. Section 12977 empowers the Agricultural Commissioner to enforce this provision. In addition, Section 12982 states that the local health officer shall investigate any health hazard from pesticide use and take necessary action, in cooperation with the Agricultural Commissioner, to abate the hazard. CCR, Title 3, Section 6614 restricts pesticide application when there is a reasonable possibility of: substantial drift to non-target areas; contamination of the bodies or clothing of persons not involved in the application process; damage to non-target crops, animals or other public or private property; or contamination of public or private property, including the creation of a health hazard that prevents normal usage of that property.

In conformance with the Clean Air Act, the U.S. EPA established the National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants to protect the public. The asbestos regulations under National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants control work practices during the demolition and renovation of institutional, commercial or industrial structures. Following identification of friable asbestos the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration and SBCAPCD require that asbestos trained and certified abatement personnel perform asbestos abatement and all asbestos containing material removed from on-site structures be hauled to a licensed receiving facility and disposed of under proper manifest by a transportation company certified to handle asbestos.

Regulations for lead based paint are contained in the Lead-Based Paint Elimination Final Rule 24 CFR 33, governed by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development, which requires sellers and lessors to disclose known lead based paint and lead based paint hazards to prospective purchasers and lessees. Additionally, all lead based paint abatement activities must be in compliance with California and Federal OSHA and with the State of California Department of Health Services requirements. Only lead based paint trained and certified abatement personnel are allowed to perform abatement activities. All lead LBP removed from structures must be hauled and disposed of by a transportation company licensed to transport this type of material at a landfill or receiving facility licensed to accept the waste.

Site-Specific Health and Safety (California Division of Occupational Safety and Health Administration [Cal/OSHA] Title 8 and OSHA 29 CFR 1910)

Under these requirements, employers must develop site-specific Health and Safety Plans. Workers potentially exposed to hazardous materials in their workplace must be trained so that they are aware of the hazards and provided necessary protection from the hazardous materials.

Hazardous Material Release Response Plans and Inventory Law (California Health and Safety Code [HSC], Chapter 6.95)

This law requires businesses to develop a Release Response Plan for hazardous materials emergencies if they handle more than 500 pounds, 55 gallons, or 200 cubic feet of hazardous materials. In addition, the business must prepare a Hazardous Materials Inventory of all hazardous materials stored or handled at the facility over the above thresholds. Also, all hazardous materials must be stored in a safe manner. Both the Release Response Plan and the Hazardous Materials Inventory must be supplied to the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) for the program. For the project site, the CUPA is the Santa Barbara County Department of Environmental Health Services, Hazardous Materials Unit.

California HSC, Division 20, Chapter 6.8, Section 25319.5 - Preliminary Endangerment Assessment

The California HSC requires that a preliminary endangerment assessment provide sufficient information to determine whether or not current or past waste management practices have resulted in the release or a threatened release of hazardous substances that pose a threat to public health or the environment. The preliminary endangerment assessment should also provide sufficient information to conclude whether or not significant response actions are necessary at the site as well as include an analysis of the scope and identity of the affected community.

Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act (Proposition 65) (1986)

In California, pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986: (1) no person in the course of doing business shall knowingly discharge or release a chemical known to the State to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity into water or onto land where such chemical passes or probably will pass into any source of drinking water, and (2) no person in the course of doing business shall knowingly and intentionally expose any individual to a chemical known to the state to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity without first giving clear and reasonable warning to such individual. The “no significant risk” level for carcinogens that is enforced by this Act is one in one hundred thousand (1×10^{-5}).

Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Division 7 of the California Water Code)

The Porter-Cologne Act establishes a regulatory program to protect water quality and to protect beneficial uses of state waters. The Porter-Cologne Act also establishes the State board and regional boards as the principal State agencies responsible for control of water quality. Each of the nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards in California is required to develop guidance to assist in ensuring that the intent of the Porter-Cologne Act is met. Cleanup criteria are based on the type of contaminant (e.g., gasoline, diesel, or oil) released and the depth to groundwater.

HSC, Division 20, Chapter 6.5, and CCR, Title 22 – Hazardous Waste Management

Waste that is toxic, corrosive, flammable, or reactive when tested in accordance with the CCR, Title 22, Article 11, Section 66693, must be handled, stored, transported, and disposed of in accordance with these regulations, which are more stringent than federal regulations.

California Fire Code

To minimize risks to public health and the environment, a Fire Prevention Inspector shall review a list of hazardous materials stored aboveground on a property to assess potential individual and/or cumulative impacts to the property and surrounding areas. The inspector would ensure that hazardous materials stored onsite are in compliance with Chapter 6.95 of the California HSC. The fire code provides uniform fire prevention, hazardous material, and building construction regulations.

Local

City of Santa Maria Fire Department

The City Fire Department serves as the Emergency Services Specialist for the city, and is responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring policies, procedures, budgets, fees, automatic aid agreements, mutual aid agreements, and liaison with other City departments and outside agencies. With regards to life and fire safety, the Fire Department also:

- Coordinates adoption of codes and ordinances, reviews site and building plans for fire code compliance, inspects occupancies for compliance with fire and life safety laws and regulations, investigates fire cause and origin, and presents community education programs;
- Provides public information to the community on the department's emergency and non-emergency activities;
- Coordinates the City's Disaster Preparedness Program, acts as liaison with all City departments and divisions, as well as other public and private organizations, develop, coordinate and implement hazard-specific response plans, and maintain the operational readiness of the City's Emergency Management Team, the EOC and other key elements;
- Manages department contracts and agreements;
- Manages the development of new department facilities and existing facility renovation; and
- Coordinates and administers the Aware and Prepare Program.

City of Santa Maria General Plan Safety Element

The City's General Plan guides the use and protection of various resources to meet community purposes. The Safety Element (1995) establishes goals, policies, objectives, and implementation programs to protect the city from unreasonable risks associated with seismically and geologically induced hazards, flooding, wildland and urban fires, electromagnetic fields, oil wells/sumps, landfill gas migration, safe drinking water, aircraft safety, and hazardous materials. The following policies for hazards and hazardous materials are applicable to the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan:

Policy 3: Discourage construction of habitable structures in areas susceptible to wildland fires and assure the availability of adequate firefighting capabilities.

- Policy 4:** Continue to monitor research regarding EMFs and, if necessary, develop standards as to the safe and unsafe exposure level from EMFs based on standards set by the California Department of Health Services and the Federal Environmental Protection Agency.
- Policy 5:** Continue to follow the regulations contained in the City's Petroleum Ordinance regarding existing oil field operations, and support the regulations of DOGGR and the Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Division regarding abandoned oil facilities.
- Policy 7:** Maintain the potable water supply by continued testing and remedial action, if necessary, in accordance with State and Federal regulations and continue to support the importation of State water.
- Policy 9:** Support the efforts of the City Fire Department, and coordinate efforts with the county of Santa Barbara Environmental Health Division and the California Highway Patrol, to require the proper use, transportation, treatment, and disposal of hazardous materials.
- Policy 10:** Maintain an up-to-date emergency preparedness plan that identifies the authority, responsibility, function, and operation of the City during an emergency.

4.7.2 Impact Analysis

a. Methodology and Significance Thresholds

Assessment of impacts is based on review of the specific plan and environmental conditions on the project site; listed hazardous materials sites within and near the project site; and the DOGGR NOP comment letter (Appendix A2), as well as other applicable laws and regulations related to hazards and hazardous materials issues.

The following thresholds are based on Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*. A significant impact related to hazards and hazardous materials would occur if the project would:

- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials;
- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment;
- Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school;
- 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, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment;
- 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, result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area;
- Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan; and/or
- Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.

Potential impacts related to projects located within the vicinity of an airport and wildland fire hazard areas are discussed in Section 4.15, Less than Significant Effects.

b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold:	Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?
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Impact HAZ-1 SMALL QUANTITIES OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS MAY BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL USES ON SITE. HOWEVER, THESE MATERIALS WOULD BE LIMITED IN TYPE AND QUANTITY SUCH THAT THEY WOULD NOT CREATE A HAZARD TO THE PUBLIC OR ENVIRONMENT. THEREFORE, THIS IMPACT WOULD BE CLASS III, LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.

Residential and commercial uses may involve the routine use and storage of some materials that are considered hazardous. Such materials would be limited to typical solvents, paints, chemicals used for cleaning and building maintenance, and landscaping supplies. These materials would not be substantially different from household chemicals and solvents already in general and wide use throughout the city and in the vicinity of the project site. The use of such materials is also regulated by federal, state, and local laws, discussed in Section 4.7.1.e, Regulatory Setting, with which the project would be required to comply. The proposed residential and commercial land uses included in the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan would not involve the transport, use, or disposal of substantial amounts of hazardous substances. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation would be required.

Threshold:	Would the project 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?
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Impact HAZ-2 CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL USES COULD RESULT IN THE ACCIDENTAL RELEASE OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS. HOWEVER, COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE REGULATIONS RELATED TO THE HANDLING, TRANSPORT, AND STORAGE OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS WOULD MINIMIZE THE RISK OF POTENTIAL EXPOSURE TO THESE SUBSTANCES, RESULTING IN A CLASS III, LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT, IMPACT.

Construction activities associated with build out of the specific plan may include the temporary transport, storage, use, or disposal of potentially hazardous materials including fuels, lubricating fluids, cleaners, solvents, contaminated soils, asbestos, or lead based paint waste (refer to Impact HAZ-5 for a discussion of hazards related to asbestos and lead based paint). Truck and railroad accidents along the surrounding roadways, particularly those utilized by nearby commercial and industrial uses, and SMVRR, which runs along the eastern project site boundary, could also result in spills of such materials. If spilled, these substances could pose a risk to the environment and to human health. However, the transport, storage, use, or disposal of hazardous materials would be subject to federal, state, and local regulations pertaining to the transport, use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials, which would assure that risks associated with handling, transport, and storage of hazardous materials are minimized.

Once operational, the project would include residential, commercial, recreation, and school uses. These uses typically do not use or store large quantities of hazardous materials. Adherence to regulations and standard protocols during the storage, transportation, and usage of any hazardous materials, as discussed in Section 4.7.1.e, Regulatory Setting, would minimize and avoid the potential for significant upset and accident condition impacts. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation would be required.

Threshold:	Would the project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?
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Impact HAZ-3 TWO SCHOOLS ARE LOCATED WITHIN ONE-QUARTER MILE OF THE PROJECT SITE. THE PROJECT ALSO INCLUDES A PROPOSED SCHOOL SITE WITHIN THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA. COMPLIANCE WITH EXISTING FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL REGULATIONS WOULD ENSURE THAT HAZARDOUS MATERIALS IMPACTS TO SCHOOLS WOULD REMAIN CLASS III, LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.

Two schools are located within one-quarter mile of the project site including David J. Sanchez Elementary School adjacent to Stowell Road which bounds the project site on the north, and William L. Adam Elementary School approximately 500 feet east of the project site. The project includes a future school site in the northeast portion of the specific plan area. The project would not emit or handle large quantities of hazardous materials, and would be required to comply with existing federal, state, and local regulations. Impacts from hazardous materials to schools would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation would be required.

Threshold:	Would the project 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, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?
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Impact HAZ-4 RESIDUAL PESTICIDES AND AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS IN SOIL DUE TO HISTORICAL AND EXISTING USE OF PESTICIDES AND OTHER AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS ONSITE COULD CREATE A HAZARD TO CONSTRUCTION WORKERS DURING THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE OF THE PROJECT. IMPACTS WOULD BE CLASS II, SIGNIFICANT BUT MITIGABLE.

As described in Section 4.7.1.b, the search of the SWRCB Geotracker database identified 10 ILRP listings on the project site, with five of the ten listings having “enrolled” ILRP status. Under the ILRP, SWRCB regulates agricultural discharge by issuing WDRs or conditional waivers of WDRs to growers that contain conditions requiring water quality monitoring of receiving waters and corrective actions when impairments are identified. The SWRBC Geotracker and DTSC EnviroStor databases identified the formerly permitted Santa Barbara Research Center, a hazardous waste storage and treatment facility, adjacent to the project site. On August 23, 1994, DTSC acknowledged a closure certification report for the research center. The SWRBC Geotracker database also identified one cleanup program site to the southwest and two cleanup program sites to the southeast of the specific plan

area. All three identified cleanup program sites have “completed – case closed” statuses. The CERCLIS, EnviroStor, SWRCB solid waste disposal site, CDO, CAO, and Cortese databases did not list any other known hazardous materials contamination sites in the specific plan area.

According to the DOGGR and County of Santa Barbara Petroleum Office, there are two known oil wells located just within the southern portion of the project site. The two oil wells are not plugged and abandoned to current DOGGR requirements, and need to be evaluated and properly decommissioned. These features, however, are not considered hazardous waste sites. A third known oil well is located approximately 45 feet from the project site boundary and is plugged and abandoned consistent with current DOGGR requirements.

Due to the presence of historical agricultural practices on site, the potential exists for the presence of residual quantities of agricultural chemicals and other hazardous materials, including undocumented residual quantities of presently-banned chemicals. Ground disturbing activities during construction could expose construction workers to residual agricultural chemicals in on-site soil via direct contact or inhalation of dust particles. Improper handling and disposal of contaminated soils could result in a health risk to people resulting in a potentially significant impact. In addition, the two oil wells on the project site that are not plugged and abandoned to current DOGGR requirements also present potential impacts associated with risk of oil release or seep from the wells. Impacts would be potentially significant, requiring mitigation.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measures HAZ-1a and HAZ-1b are required to reduce potential for exposure to agricultural chemicals and oil from oils wells in the Specific Plan area.

HAZ-1a Soil Sampling and Remediation

Prior to issuance of any grading permits, a contaminated soil assessment shall be completed in the portions of land to be graded for development. Soil samples shall be collected under the supervision of a professional geologist or environmental professional to determine the presence or absence of contaminated soil in these areas. The sampling density shall be in accordance with guidance from Santa Barbara County Department of Environmental Health Services Hazardous Materials Division, so as to define the volume of soil that may require remediation. Laboratory analysis of soil samples shall be analyzed for the presence of organochlorine pesticides, in accordance with EPA Test Method SW8081A, and heavy metals in accordance with EPA Test Methods 6010B and 7471A. If soil sampling indicates the presence of pesticides or heavy metals exceeding applicable environmental screening levels, the soil assessment shall identify the volume of contaminated soil to be excavated.

If concentrations of contaminants exceed EPA action levels and therefore warrant remediation, contaminated materials shall be remediated either prior to or concurrent with construction. Cleanup may include excavation, disposal, bio-remediation, or any other treatment of conditions subject to regulatory action. All necessary reports, regulations and permits shall be followed to achieve cleanup of the site. The contaminated materials shall be remediated under the supervision of an environmental consultant licensed to oversee such remediation and under the direction of the lead oversight agency. The remediation program shall also be approved by a regulatory oversight agency, such as the Santa Barbara County Department of Environmental Health Services Hazardous Materials Division, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, or DTSC. All proper waste handling and disposal procedures shall be followed. Upon completion of the remediation, the environmental consultant shall prepare a report summarizing the project, the remediation approach implemented,

and the analytical results after completion of the remediation, including all waste disposal or treatment manifests.

Plan Requirements and Timing. The contaminated soils assessment and remediation program, if necessary, shall be submitted and approved by the City's Community Development Department and applicable regulatory oversight agency prior to the issuance of project grading permits.

Monitoring. As applicable, the Community Development Department shall ensure implementation of a remediation program according to the measures included therein and as approved by a regulatory oversight agency.

HAZ-1b Oil Well Abandonment

All onsite oil and natural gas-related wells shall be abandoned pursuant to current abandonment/re-abandonment requirements, in accordance with DOGGR Construction Project Site Review and Well Abandonment Procedures, as well as site-specific instructions from the DOGGR.

Plan Requirements and Timing. Prior to any grading or construction within 100 feet of any previously mapped oil well sites, the applicant shall submit proof that well abandonment/re-abandonment requirements and the removal or remediation of any contaminated soils have been accomplished to the satisfaction of DOGGR, Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services Division, or other applicable agencies.

Monitoring. As applicable, the Community Development Department shall ensure compliance with oil well abandonment requirements as approved by DOGGR.

Significance After Mitigation

With implementation of Mitigation Measures HAZ-1a and HAZ-1b, impacts related to exposure to potential hazardous materials would be reduced to a less than significant level.

Threshold:	Would the project 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, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?
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Impact HAZ-5 ASBESTOS CONTAINING MATERIAL AND LEAD BASED PAINT MAY BE PRESENT IN EXISTING ON-SITE STRUCTURES. DEMOLITION OF THESE STRUCTURES WOULD BE REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH APPLICABLE STATE AND LOCAL POLICIES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE CONTROL AND REMEDIATION OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS TO PREVENT HUMAN EXPOSURE. THEREFORE, THIS IMPACT WOULD BE CLASS III, LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.

The project would involve demolition of the structures, located on two of the parcels within the project site. The buildings, due to their age, may contain asbestos and/or lead based paint. As a result, demolition of these structures could result in health hazards to workers if not remediated prior to construction activities.

Demolition activities associated with the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan would be required to comply with SBCAPCD Rule 345 (Control of Fugitive Dust from Construction and Demolition Activities) and Rule 1001 (National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants). Compliance with Rules 345 and 1001 would ensure that if a building includes asbestos-containing or other hazardous materials, those materials would be identified and remediated prior to demolition. The applicant would also be required to comply with California Occupational Safety and Health

Administration (CalOSHA) regulations regarding lead-based materials and the California Code of Regulations Section 1532.1, which requires testing, monitoring, containment, and disposal of lead-based materials such that exposure levels do not exceed CalOSHA standards. Compliance with these regulations would ensure that impacts associated with exposure of construction workers to asbestos containing materials or lead during demolition or disposal of such materials would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation would be required.

Threshold: Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Impact HAZ-6 DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT INTERFERE WITH ANY EMERGENCY EVACUATION ROUTES IN THE EVENT OF A DISASTER. THEREFORE, IMPACTS WOULD BE CLASS III, LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.

The project would include residential and commercial development and associated roadway improvements. The project would not impair implementation of the Integrated Regional Multi-Hazard Emergency Response Plan for the Cities of Santa Maria and Guadalupe, and would not have a significant effect on emergency response or evacuation. In addition, the project would be required to comply with Santa Maria Fire Department specifications and the California Fire Code, which would ensure that the project does not interfere with emergency response or evacuation procedures. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation would be required.

c. Cumulative Impacts

Planned buildout of the City of Santa Maria under the General Plan would cumulatively increase the potential for exposure of people to hazards and hazardous materials, including soil contamination, pesticides, lead based paint, asbestos, and upset risks along major transportation routes. The project would incrementally contribute to this cumulative effect. However, as discussed throughout this section, such risks of exposure are reduced through adherence to existing federal, state, and local regulations. U.S. EPA and U.S. DOT laws regulate the safe interstate transportation of hazardous materials and waste.

Impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials are generally site-specific. Accordingly, as required under applicable laws and regulations, potential impacts associated with cumulative developments would be addressed on a case-by-case basis and appropriate mitigation would be designed to mitigate impacts resulting from individual projects, depending upon the type and severity of hazards present. Enforcement of federal, state, and local laws and regulations would ensure that hazards to the public or environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment would remain less than significant. In addition, adherence to applicable General Plan policies and applicable state and federal regulatory requirements would reduce any cumulative hazards and hazardous materials impacts resulting from buildout of the City under the General Plan, including buildout of the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, to a less than significant level. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials would be less than significant.

4.8 Hydrology and Water Quality

This section discusses the project's potential impacts relating to hydrology, drainage, flooding, and water quality. The analysis of site drainage and potential impacts to water quality are based in part on the Santa Maria Valley Watershed Characterization for Hydromodification Management within the City of Santa Maria (City of Santa Maria 2010).

4.8.1 Setting

a. Regional Hydrology and Drainage

The principal hydrologic feature in the Santa Maria Valley is the Santa Maria Watershed, which drains approximately 1,880 square miles and includes all tributaries of the Cuyama River, Sisquoc River, and the Santa Maria River. The Santa Maria River begins where the Sisquoc and Cuyama Rivers converge and the watershed generally drains to the west where it meets the Pacific Ocean at Guadalupe. In the lower stretches, the Santa Maria River consists of the sandy, braided channel that is leveed along much of its length (City of Santa Maria 2010). Major activities in the Santa Maria Watershed include irrigated and dry-land agriculture, oil production, and urban development. Figure 4.8-1 shows the city as well as the main tributaries within the Santa Maria Watershed.

The City of Santa Maria overlies the Santa Maria Main Basin, one of three subunits to the larger Santa Maria Main Groundwater Basin. The Santa Maria River is identified as a "losing" stream, which indicates that surface water flow infiltrates into underlying permeable layers, thereby serving as a major source of recharge to the Santa Maria Main Basin (City of Santa Maria 2010).

The topography of the city is relatively flat, with a 0.02 percent grade that runs roughly southeast to northwest toward the Santa Maria River. The climate in the Santa Maria Valley is typically mild year-round, with influence from the Pacific Ocean. Temperatures range from average winter lows of 40 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) in December to average summer highs of 75°F in September. Precipitation usually falls from late autumn through early spring, with the majority of rain occurring from November to April.

b. Project Site Hydrology and Drainage

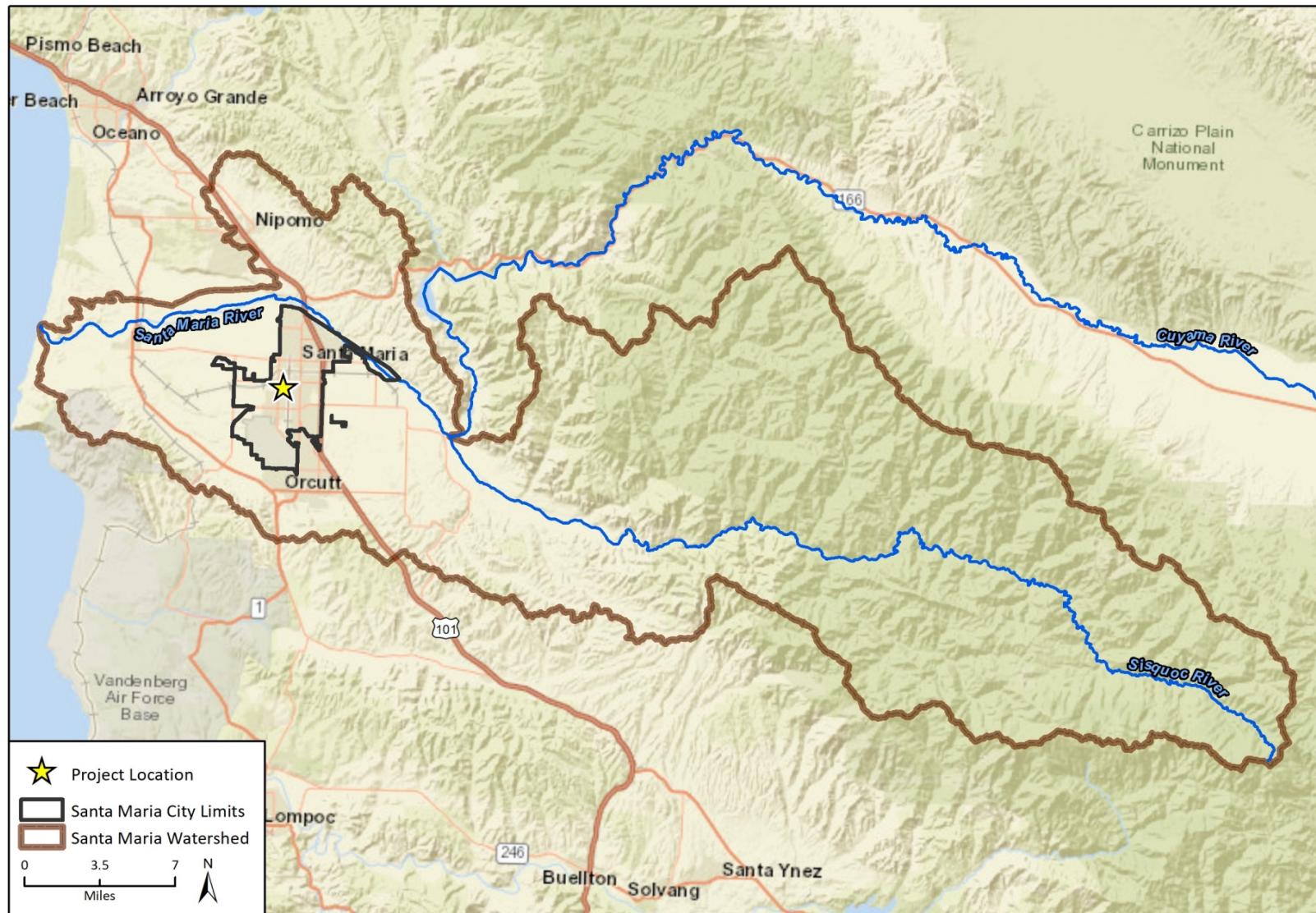
The project site is currently in agricultural use. The permeable agricultural land readily allows for the recharge of water to the subsurface. A City-maintained flood control channel, referred to as the Battles Channel, runs along the southern boundary of the project site and connects to the Hobbs Fee Basin, maintained by the Santa Barbara County Flood Control District, one-half mile west of the project. The general flow of surface water at the site is from the east to the west.

The project site is located within the Green Canyon Subwatershed, within the lower Santa Maria River Watershed. The Green Canyon Subwatershed discharges to high-capacity recharge basins including the Getty, Kovar, and Hobbs Fee Basins (City of Santa Maria 2010).

c. Project Site Flooding

The project site is located in Zone X, which represents areas of minimal flood hazard outside of the 0.2 percent annual chance floodplain, as determined by the Flood Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Figure 4.8-1 Santa Maria Watershed



Imagery provided by ESRI and its licensors © 2019.
Hydrology data provided by U.S. Geological Survey, 2019. Additional data provided by Tetra Tech and City of Santa Maria, 2010.

Fig 4.8-1 Watersheds_Landscape

d. Water Quality

For agricultural areas like the project site, surface waters penetrate permeable areas or travel over the existing vegetative cover, resulting in little erosion or sedimentation. More urbanized areas, where vehicle use and urban land use activities are common, contain pollutants on the ground surface that may be harmful to water quality and natural ecosystems, including heavy metals, hydrocarbons, detergents, fertilizers, and pesticides. For the most part, these pollutants are associated with sediments that collect on roadways and are flushed into the creek systems either in dry weather flows, during construction, or by rainfall. Construction activities can also create erosion and cause sediment to be transported offsite, as surface water runs through the construction site. Water quality depends primarily on the hydrologic characteristics of the drainage basin, the makeup of the soils in the watershed, and source of pollution in the watershed.

Water quality varies in the Santa Maria Valley region depending on climactic and land use conditions. The project site is currently in agricultural use with irrigated row crops. Irrigation and rainwater percolate through the soil or runoff discharge into the Hobbs Fee Basin. The runoff from the site is not currently treated and may carry contaminants such as pesticides or fertilizers, contributing to non-point source runoff including sediment, nutrients, and trace amounts of pesticides and herbicides. Runoff from the project site enters nearby stormwater basins and ditches, which are part of the greater Santa Maria Valley drainage network of stormwater retention and recharge basins that feed into the Santa Maria River.

Pollutants of known concern in the Santa Maria Watershed include fecal coliform, nitrates, sediments, and ammonia in surface water; nitrates and total dissolved solids in groundwater; organochlorine pesticides in the Santa Maria River Estuary (located approximately 10 miles west of Santa Maria); and petroleum production by-product (diluent) in ground and surface water of the Guadalupe Dunes (located directly north and south of the Santa Maria River mouth and estuary) and nearby areas (City of Santa Maria 2010).

The protection of water quality in the City of Santa Maria is under the jurisdiction of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). The Central Coast RWQCB establishes requirements that prescribe the discharge limits and establish water quality objectives through the Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin (Basin Plan; Central Coast RWQCB 2019). Water quality characteristics typically measured include pH, total dissolved solids, levels of herbicides and pesticides, sediment levels, vehicle-related oils, and chemicals such as chloride, sulfate, and nitrate. Water quality objectives are established based on the designated beneficial uses for a particular surface water or groundwater basin.

Impaired Water Bodies

Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act requires states to identify waters that do not meet water quality standards after applying effluent limits for point sources (other than publicly owned treatment works) that are based on the best practicable control technology currently available. States are then required to prioritize waters/watersheds for total maximum daily loads (TMDL) development. A TMDL is a written plan that describes how an impaired water body will meet water quality standards. It contains the following:

- A measurable feature to describe attainment of the water quality standards;
- A description of required actions to remove the impairment; and

- An allocation of responsibility among dischargers to act in the form of actions or water quality conditions for which each discharger is responsible.

The Clean Water Act requires that states develop rankings for TMDLs. California ranks TMDLs as high, medium, or low priority, based on a number of factors. These factors include the severity of impairments and the importance of the specific beneficial uses identified for that water body. Regional Boards develop schedules that set the order for TMDL completion.

States are to compile this information in a list and submit the list to the US Environmental Protection Agency for review and approval. This list is known as the 303(d) list of impaired waters. The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs) monitor and assess water quality to prepare the Section 303(d) list and to develop TMDLs.

The site's receiving water is the Santa Maria River, which drains into the Pacific Ocean at Guadalupe. The Santa Maria River is listed as Category 5B on the 2014-2016 California 303(d) List of water quality limited segments. The Category 5 listing describes a water segment where standards are not met and a TMDL is required, but not yet completed, for at least one of the pollutants being listed for this segment. The "B" listing indicates that the TMDL requirement status definitions for listed pollutants are being addressed by USEPA approved TMDL. The Santa Maria River is included on the Section 303(d) list for nitrate pollutants from agriculture, domestic animals/livestock, natural sources, and urban runoff/storm sewers.

Beneficial Uses

There are 20 categories of "beneficial uses" that are outlined in the Basin Plan (Central Coast RWQCB 2019). Each body of water in the State has a set of beneficial uses that may or may not include all 20 categories. For example, a reservoir may provide beneficial use as a municipal water supply, agricultural supply, wildlife habitat, and groundwater recharge at the same time. Different beneficial uses require different water quality control. Therefore, each beneficial use has a set of water quality objectives designed to protect that use. Table 4.8-1 contains a list of beneficial uses of the Santa Maria River.

Table 4.8-1 Beneficial Uses for the Santa Maria River

Abbreviation	Beneficial Use	Definition
MUN	Municipal & Domestic Water Supply	Community, military, or individual water supply systems including, but not limited to, drinking water supply.
AGR	Agricultural Supply	Farming or ranching including, but not limited to, irrigation, stock watering, or support of vegetation for grazing.
IND	Industrial Service Supply	Mining, cooling water supply, hydraulic conveyance, gravel washing, fire protection, or oil well repressurization.
GWR	Ground Water Recharge	Natural or artificial recharge of ground water for purpose of future extraction or maintenance of water quality.
REC1	Contact Water Recreation	Recreational activities involving body contact with water, where ingestion of water is reasonably possible. Example: swimming, fishing, and wading.
REC2	Non-Contact Water Recreation	Recreational activities close to water, but not normally involving body contact with water. Example: picnicking, hiking, and boating.
WILD	Wildlife Habitat	Terrestrial ecosystems including, but not limited to, preservation and enhancement of terrestrial habitats, vegetation, and wildlife.
COLD	Cold Freshwater Habitat	Cold water ecosystems including, but not limited to, preservation or enhancement of aquatic habitats, vegetation, fish or wildlife.
WARM	Warm Fresh Water Habitat	Support warm water ecosystems through preservation or enhancement of aquatic habitats, vegetation, fish, or wildlife, including invertebrates.
MIGR	Migration of Aquatic Organisms	Support for habitats necessary for migration or other temporary activities by aquatic organisms, such as anadromous fish.
RARE	Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species	Habitats necessary for the survival of plant and animal species identified under state or federal law as rare, threatened, or endangered.
FRSH	Freshwater Replenishment	Natural or artificial maintenance of surface water quantity or quality (e.g. salinity).
COMM	Commercial & Sport Fishing	Commercial or recreational collection of fish or other organisms including, but not limited to, uses of the organism for human consumption or bait.

Source: Central Coast RWQCB 2019

Water Quality Objectives

Water quality objectives are the limits or levels of water quality constituents or the characteristics of a water body that are established for the reasonable protection of beneficial uses of water. Water quality objectives are numeric limits and narrative objectives designed to ensure that bodies of water in the state can support their designated beneficial uses. At concentrations equal to or greater than the numeric objectives, constituents (or pollutants) are considered to have impaired the beneficial uses of the state's water. In some cases, objectives are narrative (qualitative), rather than numerical. The Central Coast RWQCB Basin Plan provides specific water quality objectives for potential releases of pollutants into County surface waters.

e. Regulatory Setting

Several federal, state, and local agencies regulate surface water and groundwater resources and water quality in the City of Santa Maria, including in the vicinity of the project. These agencies are responsible for the protection of watersheds, floodplains, and water quality. These agencies ensure that the hydrologic characteristics of surface water and groundwater are considered, so that the existing identified beneficial uses are not impaired. Similarly, water quality regulations are designed to limit the discharged of pollutants into the environment, maintain surface water and groundwater quality, protect fish and wildlife and their habitats, and protect beneficial uses.

Federal

Federal Clean Water Act (CWA), 33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq. (1977) is the primary federal law regulating water pollution. Relevant sections include:

- Section 208, requiring that states develop programs to identify and control non-point sources of pollution, including runoff.
- Section 303, requiring states to establish and enforce water quality standards to protect and enhance beneficial uses of water for such purposes as recreation and fisheries.
- Section 304(a)(1), requiring the administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to develop and publish water quality criteria that reflect the latest scientific knowledge regarding the effects of pollutants in any body of water.
- Section 313(a), requiring that federal agencies observe state and local water quality regulations.
- Section 405 of the Water Quality Act of 1987 added to Section 402(p) to the CWA. Pursuant to Section 402(p)(4) of the CWA, the EPA is required to promulgate regulations for NPDES permit applications for stormwater discharges.
- Safe Drinking Water Act, 40 U.S.C. 100 et seq. This act sets limits on concentrations of pollutants in drinking water sources.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

FEMA is the federal agency that oversees floodplains and manages the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). FEMA also prepares the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) for communities participating in the NFIP. The FIRMs indicate the regulatory floodplain to assist communities with land use and floodplain management decisions, so that the requirements of the NFIP are met in the event of damaging floods.

State

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)

Any work that is within CDFW jurisdiction requires permitting through CDFW. Section 1602 of the Fish and Game Code requires an entity notify the CDFW prior to commencing any activity that may substantially divert or obstruct the flow of any channel or bank.

California Department of Water Resources (DWR)

DWR is the state agency that studies, constructs, and operates regional-scale flood protection systems, in partnership with federal and local agencies. DWR also provides technical, financial, and emergency response assistances to local agencies related to flooding.

Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (1969)

The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act mandates that waters of the State shall be protected such that activities that may affect Waters of the State shall be regulated to attain the highest quality. The SWRCB is given authority to enforce Porter-Cologne Water Control Act as well as Section 401 of the Clean Water Act and has adopted a statewide general permit that applies to almost all stormwater discharges. This general permit, which is implemented and enforced in the San Luis Obispo area, is implemented by the local Central Coast RWQCB and requires all owners of land where construction activity occurs to:

- Eliminate or reduce non-stormwater discharges to stormwater systems and other waters of the U.S.;
- Develop and implement a Stormwater Pollution Control Plan emphasizing stormwater BMPs; and
- Perform inspections of stormwater pollution prevention measures to assess their effectiveness.

In addition, SWRCB regulations mandate a “non-degradation policy” for state waters, especially those of high quality. Under the authority of the SWRCB, the protection of water quality in the Santa Maria River and its tributaries is under the jurisdiction of the Central Coast RWQCB. The RWQCB establishes requirements prescribing the quality of point sources of discharge and establishes water quality objectives. These objectives are established based on the designated beneficial uses for a particular surface water or groundwater. Beneficial uses of the Santa Maria River include: municipal, domestic, agricultural, and industrial service supply; groundwater recharge; contact water recreation; non-contact water recreation; wildlife habitat; cold freshwater habitat; warm freshwater habitat; migration of aquatic organisms; rare, threatened, or endangered species; freshwater replenishment; and commercial and sport fishing. Within city limits of Santa Maria, the jurisdiction for the water quality of the Santa Maria River watershed overlaps with the city public works and utilities agencies.

In accordance with the California Water Code, the Central Coast RWQCB has developed the Basin Plan (2019) designed to preserve and enhance water quality and protect the beneficial uses of all regional waters. Water quality objectives for the Central Coastal Basin satisfy State and federal requirements established to protect waters for beneficial uses, and are consistent with existing statewide plans and policies.

Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

Since 1990, regulations have increasingly emphasized the control of water pollution from non-point sources, which include stormwater systems and runoff from point-source construction sites and industrial areas. In California, the SWRCB issues a statewide General Permit to regulate runoff from construction sites involving grading and earth moving in areas over one acre. The Construction General Permit also applies to projects of less than one acre that are part of a larger plan of common development. The SWRCB has been designated by the U.S. EPA to enforce requirements of the federal Clean Water Act, as part of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). The State Order¹ requires covered construction projects to use the “best available technology economically achievable,” and the “best conventional pollution control technology.” Each construction project subject to the Construction General Permit is required to have Stormwater

¹ Construction General Permit: Water Quality Order #2009-0009-DWQ, as amended by Water Quality Orders #2010-0014-DWQ and #2012-006-DWQ.

Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) prepared. A SWPPP identifies likely sources of sediment and pollution and incorporates measures to minimize sediment and pollution in runoff water. These objectives are established based on the designated beneficial uses for the receiving water. Under Phase II of the NPDES, the City was required to seek coverage under SWRCB's General Permit for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s).

The Central Coast RWQCB's Resolution R3-2013-0032, which outlines runoff reduction and treatment requirements, are also applicable to the project site. The Resolution R3-2013-0032 requires Central Coast municipalities to implement Post Construction Requirements to comply with the statewide Phase II Municipal General Permit. The following applicable Post-Construction Requirements are summarized below:

1. **Runoff Reduction.** Requirements include limiting disturbance to creeks and drainage features, minimize compaction of permeable soils, limit clearing and grading of vegetation, and minimizing impermeable surfaces.
2. **Water Quality Treatment.** Requirements include treating urban runoff with onsite source control systems such as Low Impact Development (LID) treatment systems, Bio filtration Treatment Systems, or other BMPs to reduce pollution before runoff enters the MS4.
3. **Runoff Retention.** Prevent offsite discharge from events up to the 95th percentile 24-hour rainfall event (as determined from local rainfall data).
4. **Peak Management.** Post development peak flows, discharged from the site, shall not exceed peak flows for the 10-year storm event.

Local Policies and Regulations

The protection of water quality in the Santa Maria River and its tributaries is under the jurisdiction of the Central Coast RWQCB. The City also has the responsibility for regulating water quality under its NPDES MS4 permits program. The Central Coast RWQCB establishes requirements prescribing the quality of point sources of discharge and establishes water quality objectives. These objectives are established based on the designated beneficial uses for a particular surface water or groundwater. Within the City limits, the jurisdiction for the water quality of the Santa Maria Watershed overlaps with the city Public Works and Utilities departments.

City of Santa Maria Storm Water Runoff Pollution Prevention

The City addresses hydrology and water quality issues through implementation of Santa Maria Municipal Code Chapter 8-12, Wastewater Collection, Treatment and Disposal, and Chapter 8-12A, Stormwater Runoff Pollution Prevention. Municipal Code Section 8-12A.04, Prohibited Discharges, Exemptions and Limitations, also incorporates the *Post-Construction Stormwater Management Requirements for Development Projects in the Central Coast Region* (Central Coast RWQCB Resolution No. R3-2013-0032).

4.8.2 Impact Analysis

a. Methodology and Significance Thresholds

Methodology

Potential impacts to drainage are assessed based on site topography, the proposed layout of potential project components, the erodibility of soils, the amount of impervious surfacing proposed, and the regulatory framework necessary for the project.

For the purposes of this EIR, potential construction runoff impacts are evaluated based on a review of typical construction site pollutants found on job sites which may contribute to disproportionate amounts of polluting materials in runoff. The SWRCB has not attempted to identify numerical limits to be achieved in runoff from construction sites. Instead, the General Order contains narrative restrictions referencing best available technology economically achievable and the best conventional pollution control technology. Therefore, the significance of water quality impacts will be evaluated based on conformance with these requirements.

The assessment of water quality impacts for the project includes a review of regulations that control the city's water resources. Construction impacts are assessed based on information provided in the Specific Plan include the size and general location of development areas and drainage infrastructure. As some of this information is at the conceptual or preliminary stage, a conservative, reasonable worst-case approach has been taken to ensure that potential impacts are addressed. Operational impacts are assessed based on the increase of development, impervious surfaces, and changes in drainage features throughout the Specific Plan area.

Significance Thresholds

In accordance with Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, impacts would be considered significant if the project would result in any of the following:

1. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality;
2. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin;
3. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of a 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:
 - Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or offsite;
 - Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;
 - 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
 - Impede or redirect flows;
4. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation; and/or

5. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan.

Potential impacts related to inundation by tsunamis or seiches, flooding, and groundwater resources and water supply are discussed in Section 4.15, Less than Significant Effects.

b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold 1:	Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?
Threshold 3:	Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of a site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would: i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or offsite; ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite; 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 iv) Impede or redirect flows?
Threshold 5:	Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

Impact HWQ-1 DEVELOPMENT ON THE PROJECT SITE WOULD ALTER THE DRAINAGE PATTERNS, AND RESULT IN POTENTIALLY POLLUTED RUNOFF FROM THE SITE. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH CITY AND CENTRAL COAST RWQCB REQUIREMENTS. IMPACT TO HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY WOULD BE CLASS III, LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.

The 1992 Final EIR, which evaluated implementation of the original Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan on the project site in conjunction with the City's Sphere of Influence Boundary Amendment and Concurrent Annexation Program, determined that mitigation would be required to ensure that impacts related to drainage would be less than significant. General mitigation measures to be applied throughout the Sphere of Influence Boundary Amendment and Concurrent Annexation Program area included flood flow retardation, drainage improvements to maintain circulation roadway access during a 25-year storm event, and 100-year flood protection in residential areas. Site-specific mitigation measures for Area 5, which encompasses the project site, include fair share contributions to the Santa Barbara County Flood Control and Water Conservation Districts to construct regional retardation facilities as well as construction of a storm drain or channel prior to development of the Specific Plan area.

The existing, permeable agricultural land readily allows for the recharge of water to the subsurface on the project site. Development facilitated by the proposed Specific Plan amendments would increase the amount of impervious surface throughout the project site. Increased impervious surface would reduce stormwater infiltration and alter drainage patterns and runoff from the site. The construction and operation of the proposed uses on the project site may also increase polluted runoff from the project site.

As shown on Figure III-2, Stormwater, of the proposed Specific Plan and described in Section 2, Project Description, the project includes development of a 3.3-acre regional stormwater basin between the southern project boundary and the existing flood control channel along W. Battles Road. This facility would be designed to collect, facilitate infiltration of, and meter stormwater release to the Battles Channel to emulate pre-development conditions. The volume of the channel would meet City and County Flood Control requirements. Stormwater would be conveyed to the basin via street gutters and underground storm drains. A pipe would allow the pre-development flow volume to enter the Battles Channel directly. The proposed commercial and recreational areas would also include on-site amenities for meeting infiltration and water quality requirements, including retention basins used for flood control of the school site. Residential developments may use a combination of pocket park areas, open space/landscape areas, or use the regional basin capacity to address infiltration and water quality requirements. The details of the final drainage design will be developed as part of the Planned Development Permit review and approval.

The City is covered by the State Water Resources Control Board Order No. 2013-0001-DWQ, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit No. CAS000004. Stormwater drainage systems for the project would be installed in compliance with the standards and requirements of the City's Public Works Department Engineering Division and City Municipal Code Section 8-12A.04 which prohibits stormwater discharges unless such discharges are in conformance with the statewide General Permit and the requirements of the Central Coast RWQCB Resolution No. R3-2013-0032, *Post-Construction Stormwater Management Requirements for Development Projects in the Central Coast Region*. Additionally, there are no streams or rivers running through the project site or located in the vicinity of the site. Therefore, the project would not alter the course of a stream or a river or otherwise substantially increase the rate of surface runoff in a manner that would result in erosion, siltation, and/or flooding in the area.

In addition, full development of the site including grading and construction would comply with the adopted standards contained in the City of Santa Maria Municipal Code, Chapter 8-12, Wastewater Collection, Treatment and Disposal, and Chapter 8-12A, Stormwater Runoff Pollution Prevention. By incorporating these design provisions, and permit review and approval procedures by the City, the project would not violate water quality standards and waste discharge requirements. Impacts related to hydrology and water quality would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

c. Cumulative Impacts

As shown in Table 3-1 in Section 3, Environmental Setting, the City currently anticipates 1,130 new residential units, 108 new hotel rooms, 710,466 square feet of new commercial development, 4.3 million square feet of new greenhouses, 1.04 million square feet of new industrial development, and 569,512 square feet and 260 units of new mixed use/other development. As shown in Figure 3-1, the anticipated cumulative development would primarily occur as infill development in urban areas of the City of Santa Maria. All development in the city would be required to comply with the standards and requirements of the City's Public Works Department Engineering Division and City Municipal Code Section 8-12A.04 to control runoff and stormwater discharges. Cumulative development would also be required to implement the standards contained in the City of Santa Maria Municipal Code, Chapter 8-12, Wastewater Collection, Treatment and Disposal, and Chapter 8-12A, Stormwater Runoff Pollution Prevention to avoid adverse water quality impacts. Therefore,

cumulative development would not result in significant impacts to hydrology or water quality. As development of the project site would also be subject to these same requirements, the project's contribution to potential cumulative impacts to hydrology and water quality would be less than significant.

4.9 Land Use and Planning

This section evaluates impacts related to land use and planning. Both land use compatibility issues and consistency with land use policies are discussed. Applicable information has been adapted from the previous environmental impact report (EIR) and the analysis of land use and planning impacts has been updated according to current conditions, and the proposed rezoning of the project site and amendments to the City's General Plan Land Use Map and a portion of the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan.

4.9.1 Setting

a. Existing Land Use

The 155-acre project site covers the northern half (Area 5B) of the original Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan area. The project site is generally located at the southeast corner of Stowell Road and Blosser Road. The project site is bounded by Battles Road to the south, the Santa Maria Valley Railroad (SMVRR) tracks and Depot Street to the east, Blosser Road to the west, and Stowell Road to the north.

As discussed in Section 1.5.1, *Current Land Use Designation and Zoning*, the project site is currently used for agricultural purposes, primarily as cultivated row crops. On-site structures are limited to those associated with agricultural operations such as storage structures, irrigation works, fencing, and overhead utilities. Other features include equipment storage, access roads and drainage ditches, and an earthen impoundment. The project site is designated for Low Medium Density Residential (LMDR), Medium Density Residential (MDR), High Density Residential (HDR), Neighborhood Commercial (NC), Recreation Open Space (ROS), and Community Facilities (CF). The project site is zoned Single Family Small Lot Residential (PD/RSL-1), Medium Density Residential (PD/R-2), High Density Residential (PD/R-3), Public Facilities (PD/PF), Convenience Center (PD/CC), and Open Space (PD/OS), with Planned Development Overlay (PD) special zoning designation over the entirety of the project site, as defined by the City's Zoning Ordinance.

The existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan anticipated development of up to 656 low-medium density residential units, 144 medium density residential units, and 176 high density residential units based on the site's existing land use designations and zoning. In addition, 24 acres are reserved for community facility uses, 14 acres are reserved for recreational open space, and 15 acres are reserved for neighborhood commercial uses. In Section 2, *Project Description*, Table 2-1 summarizes existing land use and zoning designations of the project site, and Figure 2-3 depicts the existing land use designations at the project site. Additional details about the current setting at the project site can be found in Section 3, *Environmental Setting*.

b. Regulatory Setting

Agencies with roles in establishing and implementing land use policy in Santa Maria include the City of Santa Maria and SBCAG. The City of Santa Maria regulates land use through its General Plan, specific plans, and Municipal Code. The land use planning documents applicable to the project site are discussed generally below. Specific policies are discussed below in Section 4.9.2, *Impact Analysis*.

City of Santa Maria General Plan

California requires every city and county to prepare a comprehensive general plan that guides decision-making and implementation related to land use, zoning, redevelopment, environmental justice, planning, and general decision-making for the jurisdiction for a specified period of time. The Santa Maria General Plan consists of the following elements: Land Use, Circulation, Noise, Safety, Environmental Resource Management (including Conservation and Open Space, Recreation and Parks, Public Facilities and Services, Private Community Services, and Growth Management Elements), Housing, and Economic Development. The City's General Plan elements are summarized below, while specific goals and policies that apply to the proposed project are discussed under Impact LU-2 below.

Land Use

The Land Use Element was adopted in 1991 and amended in 2011. Generally, the goals and policies of this element are intended to maintain the overall land use pattern in the City. The Land Use Element designates the placement and distribution of future development and allows orderly growth to occur in the City by establishing future land use patterns and specifying the appropriate residential density and development intensity.

Circulation

The Circulation Element was adopted in 1994 and amended in 2011. The goals and policies of the Circulation Element are intended to guide the orderly improvement of the circulation system in direct response to the Land Use Element of the General Plan. The Circulation Element has four overarching objectives: 1) to coordinate the transportation and circulation system with planned land uses; 2) to promote the efficient transport of goods and the safe and effective movement of all segments of the population; 3) to make efficient use of existing transportation facilities; and, 4) to protect environmental quality and promote the wise and equitable use of economic and natural resources.

Noise

The Noise Element was adopted in 1997 and amended in 2009. The primary purpose of the Noise Element is to set forth goals and policies that regulate the City's existing and future noise environment to protect residents and workers from exposure to excessive noise.

Safety

The Safety Element was adopted in 1995 and is intended to protect the community from unreasonable risks associated with seismically and geologically-induced hazards, flooding, wildland and urban fires, electromagnetic fields, oil wells/sumps, landfill gas migration, safe drinking water, aircraft safety, and hazardous materials. The Safety Element also serves to address emergency and disaster response capabilities.

Environmental Resources Management Element

The Environmental Resources Management Element, adopted in 1996 and amended in 2001, contains the Conservation and Open Space Element, the Recreation and Parks Element, the Public Facilities and Services Element, the Private Community Services Element, and the Growth

Management Element. The Environmental Resources Management addresses the conservation and preservation of those resources that are valuable to the City of Santa Maria and its planning area.

Housing

The Housing Element, adopted in 2003 and amended in 2015, is a guide for addressing housing needs and expanding housing opportunities for all household types and income groups.

Economic Development

The Economic Development Element, adopted in 2004, is intended to create jobs, raise income levels, diversify the economy and improve the quality of life while protecting the environment.

City of Santa Maria Zoning Ordinance

The City of Santa Maria Zoning Ordinance classifies and regulates the uses of land, buildings, and structures within the City in accordance with the General Plan. The purpose of the Zoning Ordinance is to assure orderly and beneficial development of the City; to encourage the most appropriate uses of land; to maintain and stabilize the value of property; to safeguard the public health and welfare; and to create a comprehensive and stable pattern of land uses upon which to plan transportation, water supply, sewage, schools, park and other facilities and public utilities.

Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan

A specific plan is a planning document for a defined area in the City and is intended to guide proposed development in a manner that would adhere to and implement various goals and policies of the City's General Plan. A specific plan defines development standards, including, but not limited to, density requirements, building heights, setback requirements, and parking plans. Allowed land use types are also defined and attributed to particular portions of a specific plan area. The Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan was adopted by resolution and ordinance as a policy/regulatory plan, and it serves as zoning for the properties involved. Development plans, site plans, tentative parcel or tract maps, and development agreements in the plan area must be consistent with the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan.

The Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, adopted in 1994, was intended to direct future development, including the distribution of land uses, the location and sizing of supporting infrastructure, site planning and architectural guidelines, methods of financing public improvements, and timetables for annexation and development. The Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan anticipated development of 976 residential units (including low to high-density residential), 24 acres for community facilities, 14 acres for recreational uses, and 15 acres for neighborhood commercial uses.

The Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan establishes six zone districts: Planned Development/Single Family Small Lot Residential (PD/RSL-1), Planned Development/ Medium Density Residential (PD/R-2), High Density Residential (PD/R-3), Planned/Development/Public Facilities (PD/PF), Planned Development/Convenience Center (PD/CC), and Planned Development/Open Space (PD/OS).

Santa Barbara County Association of Governments

Santa Maria is located in the planning area of SBCAG, which functions as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for Santa Barbara County. SBCAG has incorporated a sustainable community strategy (SCS) into its Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which is designed to help the region achieve its SB 375 GHG emissions reduction target. The SBCAG administers the state-mandated

Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP-SCS) for the County. The SBCAG 2040 RTP-SCS demonstrates that the SBCAG region would achieve its regional emissions reduction targets for the 2020 and 2035 target years. The 2040 RTP-SCS sets forth goals to establish the guiding principles for the RTP and a framework for decision-making, with a subset of related objectives to identify what needs to be accomplished to reach the goals. One of the goals of the 2040 RTP-SCS is to concentrate growth in core urban areas and protect agriculture and open space land in the unincorporated areas from conversion to urban use.

4.9.2 Impact Analysis

a. Methodology and Significance Thresholds

In accordance with Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*, a land use and planning impact from the project would result if the project would:

1. Physically divide an established community; or
2. 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.

b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold 1: Would the project physically divide an established community?

IMPACT LU-1 THE PROJECT WOULD NOT PHYSICALLY DIVIDE AN ESTABLISHED COMMUNITY. NO IMPACT WOULD OCCUR.

The 1992 Final EIR for the Sphere of Influence Boundary Expansion and Concurrent Annexation Program did not include specific findings for impacts related to the physical division of an established community.

The project site is actively used for cultivation of row crops. It is characterized by well-defined crop rows, internal access roads, and drainage swales, and also features irrigation, agriculture equipment and related storage/staging areas. The site is fenced, in places immediately adjacent to the road. Access to the site is from a north entry gate, or a south road. It is bounded by streets on all sides, by a channel to the south and a railway to the east. These features combine to discourage pedestrian access around or across the site.

There is no adjacent agricultural use. Rather, the areas surrounding the project site are largely developed in residential, park, and school uses, while commercial and industrial uses are west of the project site.

The project would improve connectivity among adjacent uses by extending Western Avenue north-south through the project site and extending La Brea Road eastward to the proposed Recreation Open Space. As a result, the project would not divide an established community. No impact would occur.

Threshold 2: Would the project 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?

IMPACT LU-2 THE PROJECT WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH APPLICABLE LAND USE PLANS, POLICIES AND REGULATIONS ADOPTED FOR THE PURPOSE OF AVOIDING OR MITIGATION AN ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT. IMPACTS WOULD BE CLASS III, LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.

The project would require amendments to the City of Santa Maria General Plan (Land Use Policy and Circulation Plan) maps and Zoning Map but would retain the Planned Development (PD) overlay. The proposed changes in land use and zoning designations, which are summarized in Table 2-2 in Section 2, *Project Description*, would allow for development of up to 1,168 residential units on the project site, or an increase of 192 units from residential development potential under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. In addition, the proposed changes would eliminate the Medium Density Residential (R-2) zoning. The proposed changes would also decrease the areas zoned Community Facilities (PD/PF) and Neighborhood Commercial (PD/CC), and increase the area zoned for Recreation Open Space (PD/OS). Figure 2-4 shows a map of the proposed land use and zoning designations. The proposed changes would result in the majority of the project site (58 acres) zoned Low-Medium Density Residential (R-1), with the Planned Development (PD) Overlay.

City of Santa Maria General Plan Consistency

The Santa Maria General Plan contains a number of goals, policies, objectives, and implementation programs for land development. These goals, policies, and objectives are general in nature and subject to interpretation. The 1992 Final EIR for the Sphere of Influence Boundary Expansion and Concurrent Annexation Program did not include specific findings for impacts related to consistency with the City's General Plan.

Consistency of the proposed project with each General Plan Element and their corresponding goals, policies, and objectives is analyzed in Table 4.9-1. This analysis includes only the goals, policies, and objectives that are related to environmental impacts and that are applicable to the proposed project. Consistency with the City's General Plan Noise Element is discussed in Section 4.7, *Noise and Vibration*. As detailed therein, the project would be consistent with the City's Noise Element with implementation of Mitigation Measures N-1a and N-1b, which address construction noise impacts, and Mitigation Measures N-3a and N-3b as well as standards contained in the approved Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, which address noise/land use compatibility impacts.

Table 4.9-1 City of Santa Maria General Plan Consistency Analysis

General Plan Policy	Consistency Discussion
Land Use Element	
Goal L.U.1 Community Character. Maintain and improve the existing character of the community as the industrial and commercial retail center for northern Santa Barbara County and southern San Luis Obispo County.	Consistent. The proposed project is intended to facilitate the development of up to 1,168 residential units on the project site, which would be an increase of 192 units above that currently allowed under the current Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. As such, the project would be consistent with Policy L.U.1 and Objective L.U.1a. The proposed project is intended to facilitate the development of up to ten acres of neighborhood commercial uses on the project site, which would be a decrease of five acres below that allowed under the
Policy L.U.1 Balanced Land Use Mix. Establish and maintain a balanced mix of land uses to meet the present and future demands of the community.	
Objective L.U.1a Residential. Establish residential areas for 1) the provision of a variety of home sites, housing types, and lifestyles; 2) the promotion of neighborhood	

General Plan Policy	Consistency Discussion
integrity; and 3) the protection of individual property values by encouraging compatible uses and proper standards for design and development. Objective L.U.1b Commercial. Establish and maintain areas in which business may be conducted, merchandise sold and distributed, and public and private services rendered in an efficient, convenient and effective environment with minimal impacts to adjacent land uses. Objective L.U.1c Commercial. Continue to maintain the City's retail sales emphasis to allow the City to maintain a consistent income to support necessary community services and to preserve the City's smaller retail community strip centers. Goal L.U.2 Urban Services. Provide all necessary services and facilities for present and future City residents which includes providing sufficient land for the community facilities (i.e., fire station, police station, library, cultural center). Policy L.U.2 Infrastructure Timing. Insure that all urban services and infrastructure are planned and provided for in a timely manner and sufficient land is reserved for this provision. Objective L.U.2c. Provide well located commercial and industrial sites for the new development that are adequately served by highways, railroads, utilities, and other municipal services and do not impact established residential areas. Objective L.U.2d. Provide for and maintain well-located and community oriented retail shopping centers to allow for convenient community access to essential goods and services as well as convenient employment. Objective L.U.2e. Coordinate future land uses with the Santa Maria-Bonita School District, Orcutt Union School District, and the Santa Maria Unified High School District to ensure that adequate school sites are reserved to support future growth. Objective L.U.2g. Assure that development "pays its own way" by minimizing publicly financed and maintained facilities, and assume that development will be phased with construction and provision of supporting infrastructure. Implement developer fees and improvement districts assuring adequate community facilities are provided as development occurs. Objective L.U.2i (Resolution 2011-111). Encourage the expanded use of retardation basins for the preservation of water quality in association with applicable new development proposals. Wherever feasible, storm water basins should be designed to incorporate flood protection and increased infiltration and recharge capability with flow duration control to meet the purpose and intent of hydro-modification management and in support of the City's Low Impact Development (LID) requirements.	approved Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. However, although the commercial use acreage would be reduced, the project would still allow the City to maintain its character as a commercial retail center and its retail sales emphasis. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Goal L.U.1 and Objectives L.U.1b and L.U.1c. Consistent. As discussed in Section 4.14, <i>Transportation/Traffic</i>, Section 4.10, <i>Utilities and Service Systems</i>, and Section 4.11, <i>Less than Significant Effects</i>, the anticipated development would be adequately served either by existing services and facilities or by planned services and facilities that would be built as part of the project. Planned facilities include the extension of La Brea Avenue and Western Avenue, and the extension of water supply and sewer infrastructure to serve the project site. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Goal L.U.2, Policy L.U.2, and Objectives L.U.2c and L.U.2d. As discussed in Section 4.12, <i>Public Services</i>, the project would increase the local population and would pay the requisite school fees to offset potential impacts to schools. As a result, the project would be consistent with Objective L.U.2e. Section 2.4.2, <i>Infrastructure Objectives, Policies, and Programs</i>, of the approved Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan contains several programs that require developers to pay the appropriate fees for water system, sewer system, and storm drainage system improvements (Programs INF 1.5, INF 2.2, and INF 3.2). Accordingly, the project would be consistent with Objective L.U.2g. As discussed in Section 2, <i>Project Description</i>, a 3.5-acre regional stormwater basin will collect, facilitate infiltration, and meter stormwater released to the Battles Channel to emulate pre-development conditions. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Objective L.U.2i.

General Plan Policy	Consistency Discussion
Goal L.U.3 Urban Design. The City will promote quality urban design enhancing Santa Maria's character. Policy L.U.3 - Rehabilitation of Older Structures and New Development. Emphasize quality urban design features in rehabilitation and new development efforts.	Consistent. As discussed in Section 4.1, <i>Aesthetics</i>, the anticipated residential, commercial, and school development would be consistent in scale and proportion to surrounding development and would be subject to review by City staff to ensure compliance with the City's applicable design guidelines, which would ensure the incorporation of quality urban design features. The anticipated commercial development would also be required to comply with the City's Municipal Code Signage and Irrigation and Landscaping Standards. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Goal L.U.3 and Policy L.U.3.
Goal L.U.5 Development Continuity. Discourage sprawl and "leap-frog" development. Objective L.U.5c. Undertake an infill program which will promote new development within the City on undeveloped or underdeveloped parcels. Objective L.U.5d. Locate new development contiguous to compatible existing development.	Consistent. The project site is surrounded by urbanized development and represents an "infill" parcel. The project would allow for the development of residential and commercial land uses adjacent to commercial and residential development to the west, and residential development to the south and north. Furthermore, Programs CD 3.1 through CD 3.3 of the approved Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan include provisions to reduce potential land use compatibility conflicts between conflicting land uses through the use of landscape buffers, berming, sign restrictions, access driveway limitations, and decorative crosswalks. These programs would continue to apply to the commercial-residential interface created by the proposed project. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Goal L.U.5 and Objectives L.U.5c and L.U.5d.
Goal L.U.6a Balance Growth. Accommodate new development, balancing social, environmental, and economic considerations. Policy L.U.6a - Land Use Conflicts. Resolve conflicts between existing and proposed land uses, particularly residential and industrial uses, and prevent such conflicts in the future. Objective L.U.6h. Promote the use of alternate modes of transit to reduce traffic, improve air quality and reduce noise impacts.	Consistent. As discussed under Goal L.U.5, similar to the development envisioned in the approved Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, the project would allow for the development of residential and commercial uses adjacent to single-family residential and commercial land uses. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Policy L.U.6a. As discussed in Section 2, <i>Project Description</i>, the project includes multiple alternate modes of transit. Sidewalks will be constructed on both sides of the roads. Pedestrian paths will link residential, commercial, school, and open space uses. A Multi-Purpose Trail I is proposed along the south side of Battles Road. A Class II bikeway is proposed to connect Battle Road to Stowell Road. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Objective L.U.6h.
Goal L.U.6b - Preserve Agricultural Resources. Accommodate growth while making every effort to preserve agricultural resources in the surrounding region.	Consistent. As discussed in Section 4.2 Agriculture, the project site was kept under cultivation for decades while surrounding lands developed, and was identified for annexation to the City in the 1992 Sphere of Influence EIR and City Council Resolution 92-136. The project would not create any additional agricultural effects beyond those addressed in the Sphere of Influence documents. Accommodation of development within the project area now will help to preserve agricultural uses on lands bordering the City. For these reasons, the project is consistent with GOAL L.U.6b.

General Plan Policy	Consistency Discussion
Goal L.U.7 - Land Use Conflict Reduction. Reduce existing and potential land use conflicts. Policy L.U.7 - Site Design. Avoid land use problems before they arise and create maximum harmony through innovative urban design between various land uses. Objective L.U.7a. Require the use of buffers between incompatible land uses by using berms, walls, open space, landscaping, bike paths, and arterial streets where appropriate. Objective L.U.7b. Protect residential neighborhoods from encroachment by incompatible nonresidential uses and the impacts associated with adjacent nonresidential activities. Objective L.U.7e. Industrial, commercial, and office uses shall provide sufficient on-site parking facilities to accommodate their equipment and parking needs. Objective L.U.7g. In commercial areas, encourage pedestrian walkways to be located away from traffic areas, and set apart, where possible, providing a separate pedestrian and bicycle circulation system.	Consistent. As discussed under Goal L.U.5, the project would allow for the development of residential and commercial land uses adjacent to commercial and residential development to the west, and residential development to the south and north. Furthermore, Programs CD 3.1 through CD 3.3 of the approved Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan include provisions to reduce potential land use compatibility conflicts between conflicting land uses through the use of landscape buffers, berming, sign restrictions, access driveway limitations, and decorative crosswalks. These programs would continue to apply to the commercial-residential interface created by the proposed project. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Goal L.U.7, Policy L.U.7, and Objectives L.U.7a and L.U.7b. Anticipated commercial development would be required to adhere to the minimum parking requirements contained in Section 12.24 of the City's Zoning Ordinance, which would ensure that sufficient on-site parking is provided. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Objective L.U.7e. Sidewalks will be constructed on both sides of the roads. Pedestrian paths will link residential, commercial, school, and open space uses. A Multi-Purpose Trail I is proposed along the south side of Battles Road. A Class II bikeway is proposed to connect Battle Road to Stowell Road. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Objective L.U.7g.
Goal L.U.9 - Promote Adequate Housing Supply. The City will continue to promote an adequate supply of quality residential development within Santa Maria. Policy L.U.9 - Housing for All Economic Segments of Society. Assure that adequate housing is provided for all economic segments of the population through a diversity of housing types, sizes, and density (similar policies are in the Housing Element). Objective L.U.9d - Provide a balance of areas for all housing types and sizes which are compatible with the surrounding land uses.	Consistent. The proposed project is intended to facilitate the development of up to 1,168 residential units on the project site, which would be an increase of 192 units above that currently allowed under the current Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Goal L.U.9, Policy L.U.9, and Objective L.U.9d.
Goal L.U.10 - Promote High Quality Commercial and Industrial Development. Continue to promote quality commercial and industrial development in Santa Maria and encourage the upgrading and revitalization of the existing commercial and industrial areas. Policy L.U.10.b - Neighborhood Commercial Centers. Design neighborhood commercial centers so they serve the needs of surrounding residents.	Consistent. The proposed project is intended to facilitate the development of up ten acres of neighborhood commercial uses on the project site, which would be a decrease of five acres below that currently allowed under the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. The project also includes residential development and the site is located in close proximity to residential neighborhoods to the north, south, and west. Therefore, the project would facilitate the development of a neighborhood commercial center and would be consistent with Goal L.U.10 and Policy L.U.10b.

General Plan Policy	Consistency Discussion
Goal L.U.12 Water Supply. Participate in and implement programs and measures which will be effective in conserving water resources. Policy L.U.12 – Conservation. Implement programs and measures which will be effective in conserving water resources. Objective L.U.12a. Discourage construction of large impervious surfaces in groundwater recharge areas wherever possible.	Consistent. As discussed in Section 4.10, <i>Utilities and Service Systems</i>, and Section 4.11, <i>Less than Significant Effects</i>, the approved Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan requires all development to utilize ultra-low flow plumbing fixtures, low-water-demand drought-resistant landscaping, automatic landscape irrigation systems, and stormwater retardation basins.¹ In addition, slopes must be graded so that runoff is minimized or directed to on-site pervious areas for groundwater recharge. These measures would conserve water resources and facilitate groundwater recharge from surface runoff on-site. As a result, the project would be consistent with Goal L.U.12, Policy L.U.12, and Objective L.U.12a.
Circulation Element	
Goal C.1 - Comprehensive Transportation System. To provide and maintain a comprehensive transportation system that provides for the safe and efficient transport of people and goods throughout the City. Policy C.1.a - Acceptable Levels of Service. The City shall maintain an acceptable peak-hour level of service on all arterials and collectors and at signalized intersections. Service Level "D" on all roadways and at all signalized intersections shall be the levels maintained. For long-range development plans, Level of Service D need not be strictly maintained if other policies and action plans indicate that a lesser level of service may be acceptable on a short-term basis providing there are sufficient over-riding considerations. Objective C.1.a.2 - New Development Impacts on Road Network. As new development creates the need, existing local roads within the road network will be improved and additional local and regional roads will be constructed, so as to keep all such roads functioning at an acceptable level.	Consistent with Mitigation Incorporated. As discussed in Section 4.14, <i>Transportation/Traffic</i>, anticipated residential and commercial development that would be allowed on the project site under the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments would add new vehicle trips to nearby intersections. However, all study area intersections would continue to operate at LOS D or better under existing plus project and cumulative plus project conditions with incorporation of required mitigation measures. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Goal C.1, Policy C.1.a, and Objective C.1.a.2.
Goal C.6 - Alternative Modes of Transportation. Provide for the development and use of alternative modes of transportation within an integrated system of transportation facilities. Policy C.6.a.1 - Promote Alternative Modes of Transportation. Promote the use of alternative transportation modes such as transit, bicycle, pedestrian, airplane, and light rail to relieve traffic congestion and improve air quality. Policy C.6.a.2 - Conditions on Development. Discretionary development shall be conditioned, where feasible, to minimize traffic impacts by incorporating bicycle and pedestrian paths and those support facilities (e.g. as bicycle lockers and showers), ridesharing programs, and transit improvements (bus turnouts, shelters, and benches) into the project design. Objective C.6.a.1 - Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled. Reduce vehicle miles traveled and disperse peak hour traffic to better utilize the existing and planned transportation infrastructure.	Consistent. The approved Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan requires sidewalks to expand bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities in the project area. Therefore, the project would be consistent with the intentions of Goal C.6, Policies C.6.a.1 and C.6.a.2, Objectives C.6.a.2 and C.6.b.1, Policies C.6.c.1 and C.6.c.2, and Objective C.6.c.1 to promote alternative modes of transportation. As discussed in Section 4.15, <i>Less than Significant Effects</i>, the project site is located approximately 1.8 miles north from the Santa Maria Public Airport and is located in the Hazard Zone I, which is the lowest zone and is outside of the identified airport Safety Areas. Therefore, the project

General Plan Policy	Consistency Discussion
Objective C.6.a.2 - Transit- and Pedestrian-Oriented Developments. Development projects and subdivision designs are to be efficiently served by buses, bike routes and pedestrian connections. Objective C.6.b.1 – Transit. Maintain the current level of bus services and expand such services as required when demand levels increase. Policy C.6.c.1 - Bicycle and Pedestrian. Develop bicycling and pedestrian facilities as a major transportation and recreational mode to serve the transportation and recreational needs of the residents. Policy C.6.c.2 - Safe Streets for Bicycles. Provide safe, efficient and convenient streets for the use of pedestrians and cyclists throughout the City, and where possible, provide separate bikeway access to major destinations (e.g. schools, parks, and commercial and employment centers) to assure safety. Objective C.6.c.1 - Santa Maria Bikeway Policies (Resolution 2009-168). Implement the following bikeway policies in accordance with the adopted Existing and Proposed Bikeways Plan diagram: ▪ A fundamental purpose of the Bikeways Plan diagram is to connect neighborhoods in Santa Maria and in surrounding communities to key destinations (downtown, large employment centers, shopping, civic center, educational centers and recreation areas). ▪ The City will strive to eliminate gaps in the bikeways network as identified in the Bikeways Plan diagram. ▪ Consider bicycle facilities in all newly proposed commercial, institutional, recreational and multi-family residential developments Policy C.6.d.1 Air Transportation. To support air transportation, provide that land uses surrounding the Santa Maria Public Airport are compatible with existing and future airport operations. (See Land Use Element for related policies and programs.)	would be consistent with Policy C.6.d.1. As discussed in Section 4.15, <i>Less than Significant Effects</i>, the project site is located approximately 1.8 miles north from the Santa Maria Public Airport and is located in the Hazard Zone I, which is the lowest zone and is outside of the identified airport Safety Areas. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Policy C.6.d.1.
Safety Element	
Goal 1 Geology/Seismicity: Minimize the community’s risk from potential hazards associated with geologic or seismic activity. Policy 1: Maintain and enforce applicable building codes and other appropriate regulations to minimize the loss of life and damage to structures during an earthquake or other geologic disaster. Objective 1.1.a Geologic Hazards: Take the geologic constraints noted on Figure SE-2 into account during the development review process. Objective 1.1.b Uniform Building Code: Enforce the Uniform Building Code as it relates to seismic safety, including lateral forces, soil constraints, slope stability, and grading.	Consistent. Section 4.15, reviews Geology and Soils on the project site, and explains that conditions have not changed since the previous EIR and Specific Plan approval. Geology and soils conditions on the site do not pose any unique hazards, and potential constraints will be addressed through routine compliance with City grading and building requirements. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Goal 1, Policy 1, and Objectives 1.1.a and 1.1.b.

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Goal 3 Wildland/Urban Fires: Provide the public with maximum protection from wildland and urban fire hazards. Objective 3.1.a: Achieve a 5-minute response capability to all areas within the City limits and maintain adequate water storage standards for fire flow pressure requirements.	Consistent. As discussed in Section 4.15, <i>Less than Significant Effects</i>, the project area and surrounding lands are all in an area of low probability of wildland fire. Section 4.12 discusses Fire Department budgeting, staffing, and response times, which have improved through mid-cycle budget increases using Measure U finds. The increased demand for Fire services will be mitigated through payment of development impact fees, and the provision of water service with flow and pressure specifications as required by the City. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Goal 3 and Objective 3.1.a.
Goal 8 Aircraft Safety: Minimize the risk of potential hazards associated with aircraft operations at the Santa Maria Public Airport. Policy 8: Maintain and enforce the Clear Zone and Airport Approach Overlay zoning regulations and continue to consult with the Santa Maria Public Airport District (SMPAD) and the County of Santa Barbara Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) with regard to land use planning within the Airport Area of Influence. Objective 8.1.a Land Use: Continue to enforce the Clear Zone and Airport Approach Overlay zoning regulations in the review of development projects. Objective 8.1.b Airport Area of Influence: Coordinate the review of development projects located in the Airport Area of Influence with the Santa Barbara County Airport Land Use Commission and the Santa Maria Public Airport District.	Consistent. As discussed in Section 4.15, <i>Less than Significant Effects</i>, the project site is located approximately 1.8 miles north from the Santa Maria Public Airport and is in the Hazard Zone I, outside of the identified airport Safety Areas. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Goal 8, Policy 8, and Objectives 8.1.a and 8.1b.
Environmental Resources Management Element	
Goal 1 - Water Resources. Provide high quality water resources to meet existing and future water demands. POLICY 1. Conserve and improve water resources to ensure an adequate supply of high quality water for all existing and future inhabitants in the Santa Maria Valley. Objective 1.1.a(1) – Groundwater. Insure that there are adequate water resources to supply the present needs of both agriculture and urban users as well planned future development as projected in the General Plan Land Use Element. Objective 1.1.a(2) – Groundwater. Minimize overdraft of the Orcutt Sub-Storage Unit of the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin through water conservation management practices, and the importation of State Water. Objective 1.1.b - Surface Water. Improve long-term recharge of the Santa Maria Valley Groundwater Basin through the retention of natural watershed areas, the development of regional recharge basins, and by minimizing impervious surfaces in new development. Objective 1.1.d - Water Quality. Improve and maintain the quality of water in the City by reducing the levels of Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) in the water supply. Objective 1.1.e - Conservation. Reduce the City of Santa Maria's present per capita water consumption rate	Consistent. As discussed in Section 4.15, <i>Less than Significant Impacts</i>, development within the project will comply with current building code water conservation requirements, emphasized through updated policies in the Specific Plan. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Goal 2, Policy 1, and Objectives 1.1.a(1), 1.1.a(2), 1.1.b, 1.1.d, 1.1.e, and 1.1.f.

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through effective conservation measures and public awareness programs. Objective 1.1.f - Efficient Water Use. Provide for the efficient use of water through the use of natural drainage, drought tolerant landscaping, and recycling. Goal 2 - Air Quality. Improve and maintain healthful air quality in Santa Maria and Northern Santa Barbara County. Policy 2. Improve and maintain the quality of air to insure the health of all residents in the Santa Maria Valley by reducing mobile and stationary source air pollutant emissions through the use of efficient land use patterns, the implementation and promotion of alternative transportation modes and other transportation system management programs. Objective 2.1.a - Mobile Sources. Facilitate the development and use of alternative transportation to the private automobile by implementing trip reduction and traffic mitigation measures, when appropriate. Objective 2.1.g - Land Use. Reduce mobile air pollutant emissions through the use of pedestrian and transit oriented design principles and minimize the impacts of stationary sources by locating these uses away from sensitive receptors (e.g. schools and hospitals). Objective 2.1.h - Community Design. Design communities/neighborhoods so that housing, jobs, daily needs and other activities are within easy walking distance of each other. Objective 2.1.i - Urban Activities. Locate urban activities within easy walking distance of existing and planned transit stops. Objective 2.1.j - Streets, Pedestrian Paths and Bikeways. Encourage the design of streets, pedestrian paths, and bike paths so that they are small and spatially defined by buildings, trees and lighting and discourages high speed traffic. Goal 3 - Biological Resources. Preserve natural biological resources and expand the Santa Maria Urban Forest. Policy 3. Protect and preserve biological resources, and expand the urban forest within the Planning Area in order to enhance the quality of life in the Santa Maria Valley. Objective 3.1.a - Plant and Animal Taxa and Habitats. Ensure that all development near sensitive habitats avoids significant impacts to these areas. Objective 3.1.b - Urban Forest. Expand the area of the Urban Forest by increasing the City's tree canopy from eight (8) percent to fifteen (15) percent by the year 2010. Objective 3.1.c(2) - Landscape Maintenance. Improve private landscaping by requiring commercial and industrial developments to maintain their property in accordance with City Landscaping Standards.	Consistent. As discussed under Goal L.U.7, the project includes sidewalks to be constructed on both sides of the roads. Pedestrian paths will link residential, commercial, school, and open space uses. A Multi-Purpose Trail I is proposed along the south side of Battles Road. A Class II bikeway is proposed to connect Battle Road to Stowell Road. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Goal 2, Policy 2, and Objectives 2.1.a, 2.1.g, 2.1.h, 2.1.i and 2.1.j. Consistent with Mitigation Incorporated. As discussed in Section 4.4, <i>Biological Resources</i>, the project would have potentially significant impacts to sensitive species including California red-legged frog, and nesting birds and raptors. Implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1a through BIO-1c would reduce project impacts to biological resources to a less than significant level. Development within the specific plan area will also include new landscaping in accordance with City requirements. Therefore, the project would be consistent with the policy and objectives of Goal 3.

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Goal 4 – Historical. Preserve cultural and archaeological resources to assure that future generations maintain a strong sense of value. Policy 4. Preserve and identify cultural and archaeological resources that define the historical significance of the City of Santa Maria and the Santa Maria Valley. Objective 4.1.a – Archaeological. Ensure that development does not impact archaeologically sensitive areas by applying appropriate mitigation measures as required by State Law. Objective 4.1.b – Historical. Maintain the architectural integrity of historic structures within the City through the preservation of sites and structures located within the "H" overlay zone and other sites designated as local and State landmarks. Objective 4.1.f- Improved Community Identity. Encourage builders to use materials and methods of construction specific to the region, exhibiting continuity of history, and culture and compatibility with, to foster the development of local character and community identity.	Consistent with Mitigation Incorporated. As discussed in Section 4.5, <i>Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources</i>, the only identified cultural resources on the property were old and currently used structures that were evaluated and determined not to be eligible for listing in federal or state registers or eligible for designation as a City of Santa Maria Place of Historic Merit. Performance of an extended Phase 1 cultural resource survey, with limited subsurface testing, and compliance with the State of California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and the historical resources implementation programs of the City's General Plan would ensure that the project does not adversely impact undiscovered archaeological resources or human remains. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Goal 4, Policy 4, and Objectives 4.1.a and 4.1.b with mitigation incorporated. As discussed in Section 4.1, <i>Aesthetics</i>, the anticipated commercial development would be subject to review by City Architectural Review staff to ensure compliance with the City's applicable design guidelines, which would ensure that construction materials and building design would be consistent with the local character and community identity. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Objective 4.1.f.
Goal 6 - Minerals and Energy: Conserve non-renewable resources and wisely use renewable sources of energy. Policy 6.2 - Energy Resources. Promote the reduction of overall consumption of limited, non-renewable energy sources, the increase in the efficient use of energy, and the utilization of cost-effective, renewable sources of energy. Objective 6.1.b(2) - Energy Resources. Encourage innovative building and site design which maximizes energy efficiency in private and public facilities. Objective 6.1.b(4) - Energy Efficiency Through Street and Building Orientation. Contribute to the energy efficiency of the community through street orientation, the placement of buildings and the use of shading. Objective 6.1.b(6) - Preservation of Scarce Resources. Preserve scarce resources through energy conservation, and the development and use of alternative energy sources.	Consistent. As discussed in Section 4.3, <i>Air Quality</i>, the project would be required to implement Mitigation Measure AQ-2b, which would offset the project's energy demand by requiring that energy conservation measures be included in the anticipated commercial development. The anticipated commercial development would also be required to comply with the California Energy Code and CALGreen and adhere to the design standards contained in Section 3.0, <i>Land Development Regulations</i>, of the approved Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, which include the use of timers on outdoor lighting. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Goal 6, Policy 6.2, and Objectives 6.1.b(2), 6.1.b(4), and 6.1.b(6).
Goal 7 - Open Space. Provide and preserve open space areas for conservation, recreation and agriculture. Policy 7. Maintain areas designated for open space purposes, and provide new open space areas to preserve and protect scarce resources, wildlife habitats, and primary agricultural lands. Objective 7.1.b - Recreation Open Space. Maintain existing recreational open space designations and provide new recreational open space areas as the demand increases. Objective 7.1.c - Conservation Open Space. Provide adequate conservation open space areas for natural	Consistent. The project would increase the amount of land designated for open space from 14 acres to 19 acres. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Goal 7, Policy 7, and Objectives 7.1.b and 7.1.c.

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resource protection, wildlife habitat, water resource areas, urban forest, and mineral resources. Goal 10 - Public Safety Facilities and Services. Provide comprehensive public safety and public services. Policy 10.1.a(1). Provide police and fire protection, library resources, solid waste disposal, and other municipal services which meet or exceed the existing and future needs of the residents in the service area. Objective 10.1.a(1) – Police. Provide sufficient law enforcement facilities and services to maintain a high level of service to keep pace with the needs of the City's growing population. Maintain a city police force with a ratio of 1.3 sworn officers for each 1,000 residents. Objective 10.1.b – Fire. Provide sufficient fire protection services to maintain a high level of service, and to keep pace with the needs of the City. Achieve and maintain a five minute response capability to all areas within the City Limits. Objective 10.1.c - Library Services. Maintain centralized library facilities and ensure expansion of library facilities to keep pace with the growing population at a ratio of 0.5 square feet of library space per capita and 1.5 to 2 books per capita. Objective 10.1.d(1) - Comprehensive Solid Waste System. Provide a comprehensive solid waste collection/disposal system to meet the existing and future solid waste demands in the service area. Objective 10.1.d(3) - Reduction of Waste through Community Design. Improve resources and minimize waste through community design.	Consistent. As discussed in Section 4.11, <i>Population and Housing</i> the project would not have an adverse effect on population growth in the City. Section 4.12 <i>Public Services</i>, describes police and fire protection, and other City services, and concludes that all of the project effects in this regard are either less than significant or that mitigation measures described will reduce effects to less than significant. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Goal 10, Policy 10.1.a(1), and Objectives 10.1.a(1), 10.1.b, and 10.1.c. As discussed in Section 4.15, <i>Less than Significant Effects</i>, in the discussion of Utilities and Service Systems, the project includes policies within the Specific Plan to ensure compliance with the City requirements relative to the provision of water and wastewater services. The project would also have less than significant project-level and cumulative impacts to the Santa Maria Regional Landfill, the Santa Maria Integrated Waste Management Facility, and the City's solid waste collection disposal services. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Goal 10 and Objectives 10.1.d(1) and 10.1.d(3).
Goal 11 - Public Infrastructure. Develop a comprehensive system of public infrastructure that maintains a high level of service. Policy 11. Provide necessary public infrastructure to ensure reliable delivery of water, the collection, treatment and disposal of wastewater, and the conveyance, retardation, and recharge of surface drainage. Objective 11.1.a(1) - Water System. Maintain and improve the existing water system so that it is capable of meeting the daily and peak demands of existing and future City residents and businesses. Objective 11.1.b - Wastewater Collection, Treatment, and Disposal. Maintain a wastewater collection, treatment and disposal system which is capable of meeting the daily and peak demand of existing and future City residents and businesses. Objective 11.1.c(1) - Conveyance of Surface Drainage. Ensure that all surface drainage is safely conveyed through the use of retardation basins, storm drains, recharge basins, and other infrastructure. Objective 11.1.c(2) - Retardation Basins. Require all new development projects which modify or increase the surface water flow off the site to construct retardation	Consistent. As discussed in Section 4.15, <i>Less Than Significant Effects</i>, in the discussion of Utilities and Service Systems, the project would have less than significant project-level impacts to water supply and wastewater collection infrastructure and to the City's wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) because it will comply with City water conservation measures and other requirements related to the provision of water and wastewater services. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Goal 11, Policy 11, and Objectives 11.1.a(1) and 11.1(b).

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basins designed to accommodate a 25 year storm event or to develop and pay into a regional system. Objective 11.1.c(4) – Flooding. Require all new structures located within the 100 year flood plain to comply with flooding standards which require the finish floor levels to be constructed a minimum of 2 feet above the 100 year floodplain elevation.	
Housing Element	
Goal 1 New Housing Construction: Assure sufficient development potential to accommodate future residential growth and construction.	Consistent. California Government Code Section 65863 (“No Net Loss”) prohibits local jurisdictions from reducing the residential density of a site listed in its adopted Housing Element Site Inventory to a lower residential density unless it can make written findings that the reduction is consistent with the adopted general plan, including the housing element, and that the remaining sites identified in the housing element are adequate to accommodate the jurisdiction’s share of the RHNA.
Source: City of Santa Maria 2011	

Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan

The overall goal of the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan was to direct future development, including the distribution of land uses, the location and sizing of supporting infrastructure, site planning and architectural guidelines, methods of financing public improvements, and timetables for annexation and development. The 1992 Final EIR for the Sphere of Influence Boundary Expansion and Concurrent Annexation Program did not include specific findings for impacts related to consistency with the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. Table 4.9-2 discusses the project’s consistency with the four objectives of the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan.

Table 4.9-2 Project Consistency with Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan

Objective	Project Consistency
Objective 1. To provide residential opportunities to help meet the housing needs of the growing population of the City of Santa Maria.	Consistent. The proposed project is intended to facilitate the development of up to 1,168 residential units on the project site, which would be an increase of 192 units above that currently allowed under the current Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. Upon completion of the extensions of La Brea Avenue, Western Avenue, and City collector streets, the project site would be easily accessed from residential neighborhoods to the north, south, and west. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Objective 1.
Objective 2. To provide sufficient commercial opportunities to serve local residents.	Consistent. The proposed project is intended to facilitate the development of up to ten acres of neighborhood commercial uses on the project site, which would be a decrease of five acres below that currently allowed under the current Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. However, the proposed ten acres of neighborhood commercial uses on site would still provide sufficient commercial opportunities to local residents. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Objective 2.
Objective 3. To integrate storm drainage facilities into a coherent open space system.	Consistent. An approximately 3.5-acre regional stormwater basin will collect, facilitate infiltration, and meter stormwater release to the Battles Channel to emulate pre-development conditions. In addition, commercial and public facility would include on-site amenities for meeting infiltration and water quality requirements. Residential developments may use a combination of pocket park areas, open space/landscape areas or use regional basin capacity to address infiltration and water quality requirements. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Objective 3.
Objective 4. To preserve the area's natural amenities by locating infrastructure, housing, and other development such that they do not inhibit visual and biological opportunities.	Consistent. With implementation of design and siting requirements, and viewshed preservation mitigation measures, the 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR determined that overall impacts to scenic vistas and resources would be less than significant.
Objective 5. To provide a smooth transition between proposed development and the existing and planned surrounding land uses.	Consistent. The project site is bordered by a commercial development and residential development to the west, a park and elementary school to the east, residential development to the south, and residential uses and an additional elementary school to the north. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Objective 5.

Source: City of Santa Maria 1994

SBCAG 2040 RTP-SCS

The 1992 Final EIR for the Sphere of Influence Boundary Expansion and Concurrent Annexation Program did not include specific findings related to consistency with the RTP-SCS because no such plan existed at the time of its publication. Consistency with SBCAG's 2040 RTP-SCS is discussed in detail in Table 4.5-5 in Section 4.5, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*. As illustrated in this table, the project would potentially conflict with mobile source GHG reduction strategies set forth by the SBCAG 2040 RTP-SCS. Therefore, implementation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1 would be required to reduce impacts to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measures

The project would be required to implement the mitigation measures referenced in Table 4.9-1, which are discussed in detail in throughout the EIR, to ensure that the project is consistent with the City's General Plan.

Significance After Mitigation

As discussed in Section 4.3, *Air Quality*, implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-2b would offset the project's energy demand by requiring that energy conservation measures be included in the anticipated commercial development. Therefore, Mitigation Measure AQ-2 would ensure that the project would be consistent with Goal 6, Policy 6.2, and Objectives 6.1.b(2), 6.1.b(4), and 6.1.b(6) of the City's General Plan Environmental Resources Management Element.

As discussed in Section 4.4, *Biological Resources*, implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1a through BIO-1c would reduce the project's impacts to sensitive species, sensitive natural communities, and riparian habitat to a less than significant level. Therefore, Mitigation Measures BIO-1a through BIO-1c would ensure that the project would be consistent with Goal 3 of the City's General Plan Environmental Resources Management Element.

As discussed in Section 4.6, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, implementation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1 would reduce the project's GHG emissions to a level that is consistent with the GHG reduction targets contained in the SBCAG 2040 RTP-SCS. Therefore, Mitigation Measure GHG-1 would ensure that the project is consistent with the SBCAG 2040 RTP-SCS.

As discussed in Section 4.10, *Noise*, implementation of Mitigation Measures N-1 would ensure that noise generated by operation of the project and project traffic does not significantly impact on- and off-site noise-sensitive receivers.

With implementation of mitigation measures, the project would not result in land use conflicts and would be consistent with all goals, policies, and objectives of the Santa Maria General Plan, Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, and SBCAG 2040 RTP-SCS. Therefore, impacts related to land use plans would be reduced to a less than significant level.

c. Cumulative Impacts

The 1992 Final EIR for the Sphere of Influence Boundary Expansion and Concurrent Annexation Program did not include specific findings related to cumulative land use impacts. As shown in Table 3-1 in Section 3, *Environmental Setting*, the City currently anticipates 1,130 new residential units, 108 new hotel rooms, 710,466 square feet of new commercial development, 4.3 million square feet of new greenhouses, 1.04 million square feet of new industrial development, and 569,512 square feet and 558 units of new mixed use/other development. Most of the listed projects involve infill development of relatively small parcels and are consistent with the surrounding urban and suburban nature of development within the city. Planned cumulative development would incrementally increase overall development intensity throughout the City, while incrementally reducing the amount of undeveloped land and increasing the potential for compatibility conflicts related to issues such as noise, lighting, and traffic. However, similar to the proposed project, impacts associated with individual projects can be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, the project would not have a cumulatively considerable contribution to cumulative land use impacts.

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4.10 Noise

This section identifies and evaluates issues related to noise in the context of the proposed specific plan amendments. The section discusses the physical and regulatory setting; the criteria used to determine the significance of environmental impacts; and potential impacts associated with implementation of the proposed project. Applicable information has been adapted from the previous environmental impact report (EIR) and the analysis of impacts to noise has been updated according to current conditions, the proposed rezoning of the project site and amendments to the City's General Plan and existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan.

4.10.1 Setting

a. Overview of Sound Measurement

Sound is a vibratory disturbance created by a moving or vibrating source, which is capable of being detected by the hearing organs (e.g., the human ear). Noise is defined as sound that is loud, unpleasant, unexpected, or undesired and may therefore be classified as a more specific group of sounds. The effects of noise on people can include general annoyance, interference with speech communication, sleep disturbance, and, in the extreme, hearing impairment (Caltrans 2013a).

Noise levels are commonly measured in decibels (dB) using the A-weighted sound pressure level (dBA). The A-weighting scale is an adjustment to the actual sound pressure levels so that they are consistent with the human hearing response, which is most sensitive to frequencies around 4,000 Hertz (Hz) and less sensitive to frequencies around and below 100 Hz (Kinsler, et. al. 1999). Decibels are measured on a logarithmic scale that quantifies sound intensity in a manner similar to the Richter scale used to measure earthquake magnitudes. A doubling of the energy of a noise source, such as a doubling of traffic volume, would increase the noise level by 3 dB; similarly, dividing the energy in half would result in a decrease of 3 dB (Crocker 2007).

Human perception of noise has no simple correlation with sound energy: the perception of sound is not linear in terms of dBA or in terms of sound energy. Two sources do not “sound twice as loud” as one source. It is widely accepted that the average healthy ear can barely perceive an increase (or decrease) of up to 3 dBA in noise levels (i.e., twice [or half] the sound energy); that a change of 5 dBA is readily perceptible (8 times the sound energy); and that an increase (or decrease) of 10 dBA sounds twice (or half) as loud (10.5 times the sound energy) (Crocker 2007).

Sound changes in both level and frequency spectrum as it travels from the source to the receiver. The most obvious change is the decrease in sound level as the distance from the source increases. The manner by which noise reduces with distance depends on factors such as the type of sources (e.g., point or line), the path the sound will travel, site conditions, and obstructions. Noise levels from a point source (e.g., construction, industrial machinery, ventilation units) typically attenuate, or drop off, at a rate of 6 dBA per doubling of distance. Noise from a line source (e.g., roadway, pipeline, railroad) typically attenuates at about 3 dBA per doubling of distance (Caltrans 2013a). The propagation of noise is also affected by the intervening ground, known as ground absorption. A hard site, such as a parking lot or smooth body of water, receives no additional ground attenuation and the changes in noise levels with distance (drop-off rate) result simply from the geometric spreading of the source. An additional ground attenuation value of 1.5 dBA per doubling of distance applies to a soft site (e.g., soft dirt, grass, or scattered bushes and trees) (Caltrans 2013a). Noise levels may also be reduced by intervening structures; the amount of attenuation provided by this “shielding”

depends on the size of the object and the frequencies of the noise levels. Natural terrain features, such as hills and dense woods, and man-made features, such as buildings and walls, can significantly alter noise levels. Generally, any large structure blocking the line of sight will provide at least a 5-dBA reduction in source noise levels at the receiver (Federal Highway Administration [FHWA] 2011). Structures can substantially reduce occupants' exposure to noise as well. The FHWA's guidelines indicate that modern building construction generally provides an exterior-to-interior noise level reduction of 20 to 35 dBA with closed windows.

The impact of noise is not a function of sound level alone. The time of day when noise occurs and the duration of the noise are also important. Most noise that lasts for more than a few seconds is variable in its intensity. Consequently, a variety of noise descriptors have been developed. One of the most frequently used noise metrics is the equivalent noise level (Leq); it considers both duration and sound power level. Leq is defined as the single steady A-weighted level equivalent to the same amount of energy as that contained in the actual fluctuating levels over a period of time. Typically, Leq is summed over a one-hour period. Lmax is the highest root mean squared (RMS) sound pressure level within the sampling period, and Lmin is the lowest RMS sound pressure level within the measuring period (Crocker 2007). Normal conversational levels are in the 60 to 65 dBA Leq range; ambient noise levels greater than 65 dBA Leq can interrupt conversations (Federal Transit Administration [FTA] 2018).

Noise that occurs at night tends to be more disturbing than that occurring during the day. Community noise is usually measured using Day-Night Average Level (DNL), which is the 24-hour average noise level with a +10 dBA penalty for noise occurring during nighttime hours (10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.). Community noise can also be measured using Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL), which is the 24-hour average noise level with a +5 dBA penalty for noise occurring from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and a +10 dBA penalty for noise occurring from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. (Caltrans 2013a). Noise levels described by DNL and CNEL usually differ by about 1 dBA. Quiet suburban areas typically have CNEL noise levels in the range of 40 to 50 dBA, while areas near arterial streets are in the 50 to 60+ dBA CNEL range.

There is no precise way to convert a peak hour Leq to DNL or CNEL - the relationship between the peak hour Leq value and the Ldn/CNEL value depends on the distribution of traffic volumes during the day, evening, and night. However, in urban areas near heavy traffic, the peak hour Leq is typically 2 to 4 dBA lower than the daily DNL/CNEL. In less heavily developed areas, such as suburban areas, the peak hour Leq is often roughly equal to the daily DNL/CNEL. For rural areas with little nighttime traffic, the peak hour Leq will often be 3 to 4 dBA greater than the daily DNL/CNEL value (California State Water Resources Control Board [SWRCB] 1999). The project site is located in an urban area; therefore, the DNL/CNEL in the area would be approximately 2 to 4 dBA higher than the peak hour Leq.

b. Groundborne Vibration

Groundborne vibration of concern in environmental analysis consists of the oscillatory waves that move from a source through the ground to adjacent structures. The number of cycles per second of oscillation makes up the vibration frequency, described in terms of Hz. The frequency of a vibrating object describes how rapidly it oscillates. The normal frequency range of most groundborne vibration that can be felt by the human body is from a low of less than 1 Hz up to a high of about 200 Hz (Crocker 2007).

While people have varying sensitivities to vibrations at different frequencies, in general they are most sensitive to low-frequency vibration. Vibration in buildings, such as from nearby construction

activities, may cause windows, items on shelves, and pictures on walls to rattle. Vibration of building components can also take the form of an audible low-frequency rumbling noise, referred to as groundborne noise. Groundborne noise is usually only a problem when the originating vibration spectrum is dominated by frequencies in the upper end of the range (60 to 200 Hz), or when foundations or utilities, such as sewer and water pipes, physically connect the structure and the vibration source (FTA 2018). Although groundborne vibration is sometimes noticeable in outdoor environments, it is almost never annoying to people who are outdoors. The primary concern from vibration is that it can be intrusive and annoying to building occupants and vibration-sensitive land uses.

Vibration energy spreads out as it travels through the ground, causing the vibration level to diminish with distance away from the source. High-frequency vibrations diminish much more rapidly than low frequencies, so low frequencies tend to dominate the spectrum at large distances from the source. Discontinuities in the soil strata can also cause diffractions or channeling effects that affect the propagation of vibration over long distances (Caltrans 2013b). When a building is impacted by vibration, a ground-to-foundation coupling loss will usually reduce the overall vibration level. However, under rare circumstances, the ground-to-foundation coupling may actually amplify the vibration level due to structural resonances of the floors and walls.

Vibration amplitudes are usually expressed in peak particle velocity (PPV) or RMS vibration velocity. The PPV and RMS velocity are normally described in inches per second (in/sec). PPV is defined as the maximum instantaneous positive or negative peak of a vibration signal. PPV is often used in monitoring of blasting vibration because it is related to the stresses that are experienced by buildings (Caltrans 2013b).

Although PPV is appropriate for evaluating the potential for building damage, it is not always suitable for evaluating human response. It takes some time for the human body to respond to vibration signals. In a sense, the human body responds to average vibration amplitude. The RMS of a signal is the average of the squared amplitude of the signal, typically calculated over a 1-second period. As with airborne sound, the RMS velocity is often expressed in decibel notation as vibration decibels (VdB), which serves to compress the range of numbers required to describe vibration (FTA 2018).

Vibration significance ranges from approximately 50 VdB, which is the typical background vibration-velocity level, to 100 VdB, the general threshold where minor damage can occur in fragile buildings (FTA 2018). The general human response to different levels of groundborne vibration velocity levels is described in Table 4.10-1.

Table 4.10-1 Human Response to Different Levels of Groundborne Vibration

Vibration Velocity Level	Human Reaction
65 VdB	Approximate threshold of perception for many people
75 VdB	Approximate dividing line between barely perceptible and distinctly perceptible - many people find that transportation-related vibration at this level is unacceptable
85 VdB	Vibration acceptable only if there are an infrequent number of events per day
Source: FTA 2018	

c. Sensitive Receptors

The Santa Maria General Plan Noise Element identifies noise-sensitive land uses as residential areas (including single-family, duplex, multiple-family, and mobile home), motels/hotels, schools, libraries, hospitals, nursing homes, and places of worship (City of Santa Maria 2009).

Vibration-sensitive receivers, which are similar to noise-sensitive receivers, include residences and institutional uses, such as schools, churches, and hospitals. However, vibration-sensitive receivers also include buildings where vibrations may interfere with vibration-sensitive equipment that is affected by vibration levels that may be well below those associated with human annoyance (e.g., recording studios or medical facilities with sensitive equipment).

d. Existing Noise Environment

The project site is bounded by Battles Road to the south, the Santa Maria Valley Railroad (SMVRR) tracks and Depot Street to the east, Blosser Road to the west, and Stowell Road to the north. The land uses surrounding the project site include a commercial development and residential development to the west, a park and elementary school to the east, residential development to the south, and residential uses and an additional elementary school to the north. Noise sources on the project site and in the site vicinity are dominated by vehicular traffic along the surrounding roadways.

Sensitive receivers most likely to be affected by anticipated development include single-family residences and a public elementary school across Stowell Road to the north, and single-family residences across Battles Road to the south. The single-family residences located to the south are separated from the project site by Battles Channel and an approximately eight-foot high brick wall. Additional single-family and multi-family residences are located west of the project site across Blosser Road and east the site across Depot Street.

e. Regulatory Setting

State

California Government Code Section 65302 encourages each local government entity to implement a noise element as part of its general plan. In addition, OPR has developed guidelines for preparing noise elements, which include recommendations for evaluating the compatibility of various land uses as a function of community noise exposure.

Santa Maria General Plan Noise Element

The Santa Maria General Plan Noise Element contains goals and policies that regulate the City's existing and future noise environment to protect residents and workers from exposure to excessive noise. Applicable goals and policies related to the project are as follows:

Goal N.1 – To protect present and future Santa Maria residents and workers from the harmful and annoying effects of exposure to excessive noise levels.

Policy N.1.a – Overall Noise Control in Santa Maria

Protect and enhance the quality of the City's noise environment by controlling noise at its source, along its transmission paths, and at the site of the ultimate receiver.

Policy N.1.b – Location of New Noise Generators

Regulate the placement and construction of new noise generators, to avoid excessive interior and exterior noise level impacts on adjacent noise sensitive properties; and of new noise receptors (such as housing and schools), to minimize the negative effects of local noise generation.

Policy N.1.c – Noise Control with the Required Environmental Planning and Regulatory Process

Control harmful or undesirable noise through the environmental planning and regulatory process with emphasis on noise/land use compatibility planning.

Objective N.1.a – Existing Noise Levels

To have mobile and stationary noise sources in compliance with the Santa Maria Noise Element and Noise Ordinance and state and federal noise regulations.

Objective N.1.c – Mitigation of New Transportation Noise Sources

Noise created by new transportation noise sources, including roadway, airport and railway improvements, shall be mitigated to the maximum extent feasible, using Table N-4 (reproduced herein as Table 4.10-2) or other credible evidence as a guide.

Objective N.1.d – New Development Projects

All new development projects will meet the acceptable exterior and interior noise level standards specified in Table N-4 (reproduced herein as Table 4.10-2).

Table 4.10-2 City of Santa Maria Interior and Exterior Noise Standards

Land Use Category	Uses	Standard (dBA CNEL)	
		Interior	Exterior
Residential	Single Family, Duplex, Multiple Family, Mobile Home	45	60
Noise-Sensitive Land Uses	Motel, Hospital, School, Nursing Home, Church, Library, and Other	45	60
Commercial	Retail, Restaurant, Professional Offices	55	65
Industrial	Manufacturing, Utilities, Warehousing, Agriculture	65	70
Open Space	Passive Outdoor Recreation	–	65

Source: City of Santa Maria General Plan Noise Element, Table N-4

Goal N.2 – Protection of Economic Base

To protect the economic base of the city by preventing incompatible land uses from encroaching upon existing or planned noise-producing uses.

Policy N.2 – Locate Noise-Sensitive Land Uses away from Noise Producers

Discourage the development of noise-sensitive land uses such as residential, hospitals, and schools in areas designated for heavy commercial manufacturing, general industrial and agricultural uses which are considered to be major sources of noise.

Objective N.2 – Right of Commercial/Industrial uses to Continue Operation and Expansion of Facilities

To preserve the rights of existing and future commercial and industrial users to continue operating and to expand their facilities without creating a noise conflict with a noise-sensitive land use.

The City interior and exterior noise standards for various uses are found in Table N-4 of the General Plan Noise Element, which are reproduced here as Table 4.10-2. The following implementation programs under Goal N-1 would also apply to the project:

4. Require discretionary development proposals to meet the interior and exterior noise standards specified in Table N-4.
5. Any intensification of an existing activity, which is subject to discretionary review and can reasonably be expected to generate noise which would exceed the allowable noise levels in Table N-4, may be evaluated for compatibility with adjacent noise sensitive land uses. Appropriate mitigation measures may be imposed to result in the activity meeting the noise levels in Table N-4.
6. As part of project review, discourage the intrusion of commercial and industrial traffic onto local residential streets through the circulation planning process.
13. Control noise intrusion from stationary outdoor machinery, appliances, and air conditioners through effective site design and with site-specific mitigation measures.
14. As part of the planning process, evaluate stationary noise sources to identify potential noise impacts. Where appropriate, require mitigation of those impacts so they do not exceed the noise level standards specified in Table N-4.
15. In reviewing development proposals, minimize traffic noise impacts on commercial and office buildings through effective site design and appropriate mitigation measures.
25. Limit the hours of construction activity in residential areas in order to reduce the intrusion of noise in the early morning and late evening hours, and on weekends and holidays.
26. Control noise at all construction sites through the provision of mufflers and the physical separation of machinery maintenance areas from adjacent residential and noise sensitive land uses.

Santa Maria Municipal Code

Noise regulation is also addressed in Chapter 5-5 of the Santa Maria Municipal Code (SMMC). SMMC Section 5-5.01 prohibits unnecessary, excessive, and annoying noises from all sources subject to its police power. Noises detrimental to the health and welfare of the citizenry shall be systematically proscribed. SMMC Section 5-5.04 prohibits the noise level from exceeding the existing ambient noise level or the ambient base noise level as shown in Table 4.10-3, whichever is higher¹, as follows:

- By any amount for 30 cumulative minutes in an hour
- By five dBA for 15 minutes in an hour
- By 10 dBA for five minutes in an hour
- By 20 dBA at any time

Table 4.10-3 Ambient Base Noise Level for a Range of Intensities (dBA Leq)

Zones	Duration							
	Ambient Base		Fifteen Minutes		Five Minutes		One Minute	
	Day	Night	Day	Night	Day	Night	Day	Night
Residential/Noise-Sensitive Uses	55	45	60	50	65	55	70	60
Commercial	65	60	70	65	75	70	80	75
Industrial	75	70	80	75	85	80	90	85

Notes: Units are dBA Leq. Daytime hours are generally considered to be 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., and nighttime hours are generally considered to be 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.

Source: SMMC Section 5-5.05

If noise generated by outside construction activities within 500 feet of a residential zone exceeds the noise standards in Table 4.10-3, SMMC Section 5-5.09 requires that a permit be obtained from the Noise Control Officer to cover short-term operations.

Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan

The Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan contains several programs and design standards to minimize noise/land use conflicts within the specific plan area. The following programs and design standards would apply to the anticipated development:

Program CD 3.1 requires installation of landscaped buffer edges between conflicting land uses such as where residential is adjacent to commercial, agricultural, or recreations uses, or to major circulation patterns.

Residential structures adjacent to arterial or collector streets shall comply with either one of the following:

¹ Where one zone interfaces with another, the ambient base noise level prescribed for the most restrictive zones shall prevail.

1. The recommendations contained in an acoustical report prepared by an acoustical expert acceptable to the community development department;
2. The installation of solid-core doors and double-glazed windows on all openings in the elevation of the structure facing the arterial or collector streets. Roof vents facing arterial or collector streets shall be baffled in a manner acceptable to the zoning administrator.

4.10.2 Impact Analysis

a. Methodology and Significance Thresholds

The analysis of noise impacts considers the effects of both temporary construction-related noise and long-term noise associated with operation of the anticipated development that would be allowed on the project site under the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments.

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a noise impact from the project would be significant if the project would result in:

1. A substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies;
2. The generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels;
3. 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, the exposure of people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels.

Construction Noise

SMMC Section 5-5.09 specifies that if noise from outside construction activities within 500 feet of a residential zone exceeds the noise standards in Table 4.10-3, a permit must be obtained from the Noise Control Officer. In addition, Implementation Programs 25 and 26 of the Santa Maria General Plan Noise Element establish policies of limiting construction hours in residential areas and controlling construction noise through mufflers and setbacks from residential and noise-sensitive land uses. Therefore, construction noise would be significant if:

- It exceeds the noise standards for residential/noise-sensitive land uses in Table 4.10-3
- Construction activities occur in the early morning or late evening hours, on weekends, or on holidays
- Construction noise is not controlled through mufflers and physical separation of machinery maintenance areas from adjacent residential and noise-sensitive land uses

Vibration

The City of Santa Maria has not adopted a significance threshold to assess vibration impacts during construction and operation. Therefore, the FTA guidelines set forth in the FTA Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual (2018) are used to evaluate potential impacts related to construction vibration for both potential building damage and human annoyance. Based on the FTA criteria, construction vibration impacts would be significant if vibration levels exceed 100 VdB, which is the general threshold where damage can occur to typical buildings or 72 VdB at residences during nighttime hours (FTA 2018).

Land Use Compatibility

The City has adopted exterior and interior noise standards for several different land uses. According to the City's noise standards shown in Table 4.10-3, exterior noise up to 65 dBA CNEL and interior noise up to 55 dBA CNEL are acceptable for commercial land uses, and exterior noise up to 60 dBA CNEL and interior noise up to 45 dBA CNEL are acceptable for residential uses.

On-site Operational Noise

Operational noise would result in a significant impact if it exceeds the ambient base noise levels established for residential/noise-sensitive uses as shown in Table 4.10-3.

On- and Off-site Traffic Noise

As detailed in the Section 4.10.1, Setting, the average healthy ear can barely perceive an increase of 3 dBA in noise levels. Therefore, this analysis utilizes the level of perception (3 dBA) to determine if roadway noise would result in a significant impact to residential receivers located on and in the vicinity of the project site. A doubling of the energy of a noise source, such as doubling of traffic volume, would be required to increase the noise level by 3 dBA. Therefore, if the anticipated development would double the traffic volume on a given roadway, traffic generated by the anticipated development would result in a 3 dBA increase in ambient noise levels and would result in a significant impact related to traffic noise.

b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold 1: Would the project result in a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

Impact N-1 PROJECT CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES AND EQUIPMENT OPERATIONS WOULD BE SPORADIC, WOULD VARY IN LOCATION AND LENGTH IN PROXIMITY TO NOISE SENSITIVE RECEIVERS, AND WOULD BE REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH ALL CITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONTROL OF CONSTRUCTION NOISE. THEREFORE, THE PROJECT WOULD NOT RESULT IN NEW OR SUBSTANTIALLY MORE SEVERE CONSTRUCTION NOISE IMPACTS THAN IDENTIFIED FOR THE EXISTING BLOSSER-SOUTHEAST SPECIFIC PLAN. CONSTRUCTION NOISE IMPACTS WOULD BE CLASS III, LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.

The 1992 Final EIR, which evaluated implementation of the original Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan on the project site in conjunction with the City's Sphere of Influence Boundary Amendment and Concurrent Annexation Program, determined that short-term construction noise impacts would be less than significant. Despite the finding of less than significant construction noise impacts, the 1992 Final EIR provided recommended mitigation measures to reduce short-term construction noise impacts including City ordinance restrictions, equipment inspection, direct haul routes, and portable noise barriers.

Development of the project site would include grading over the entire property. Construction phasing of individual large lots would be dependent on market conditions and the goals and objectives of each future landowner. As a result construction would occur sporadically and in various areas of the site over the life of the construction period, varying the noise effect on individual receivers for short-term periods of time. The nearest noise sensitive receivers to the project site include single-family residences and a public elementary school across Stowell Road to

the north, and single-family residences across Battles Road to the south. Daytime construction activities and equipment on the project site would, at times, be expected to exceed the City's standards shown in Table 4.10-3 at these receivers. The City of Santa Maria has not adopted acceptable hours of construction; therefore, if nighttime construction occurs, construction noise would also be expected to exceed the City's nighttime ambient base noise level of 45 dBA Leq for residential land uses. In accordance with Implementation Programs 25 and 26 of the Santa Maria General Plan Noise Element, construction noise impacts would be significant if construction activities occur in the early morning or late evening hours, on weekends, or on holidays or if construction noise is not controlled through mufflers and physical separation of machinery maintenance areas from adjacent residential and noise-sensitive land uses. SMMC Section 5-5.09 specifies that if noise from outside construction activities within 500 feet of a residential zone exceeds the noise standards in Table 4.10-3, a permit must be obtained from the Noise Control Officer. In addition, Implementation Programs 25 and 26 of the Santa Maria General Plan Noise Element establish policies of limiting construction hours in residential areas and controlling construction noise through mufflers and setbacks from residential and noise-sensitive land uses. Compliance with these City requirements would ensure that potential impacts as a result of temporary construction activities and equipment operating on the project site would be less than significant.

Off-site construction-related noise impacts would primarily result from travel by haul trucks importing soil material, heavy-duty trucks transporting construction equipment and building materials, and light- and medium-duty trucks transporting construction workers to the project site. Construction vehicle traffic would pass by residential and school receivers in the vicinity of the site, but would be dispersed to varying roadways, depending on the area of the site under construction, and for only temporary periods of time. Therefore, temporary off-site traffic noise impacts during construction of the anticipated commercial development would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Threshold 1: Would the project result in a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

Impact N-2 THE PROJECT WOULD GENERATE FEWER TRIPS THAN DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE EXISTING BLOSSER-SOUTHEAST SPECIFIC PLAN, RESULTING IN A REDUCED CONTRIBUTION TO ASSOCIATED TRAFFIC NOISE INCREASES. THE PROJECT DOES NOT INCLUDE ANY OTHER LONG-TERM NOISE SOURCES THAT WOULD RESULT IN NEW OR SUBSTANTIALLY MORE SEVERE NOISE IMPACTS THAN IDENTIFIED FOR THE EXISTING BLOSSER-SOUTHEAST SPECIFIC PLAN. LONG-TERM NOISE IMPACTS WOULD BE CLASS II, POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT BUT MITIGABLE.

The 1992 Final EIR determined that sensitive uses within the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan area, including the project site, as well as residential and school uses to the north and south of the project site, would be exposed to noise levels in excess of City standards, resulting in a potentially significant impact. The 1992 Final EIR estimated that the CNEL at a distance of 100 feet from the center of Stowell Road, east of Blosser Road would be 65.9 dBA under current conditions and would increase by 2.6 to 68.5 dBA with buildout of the specific plan as anticipated (Santa Maria 1992: Table A6.10-1).

For the new development within the project area, the 1992 Final EIR determined that the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan area contained adequate area to provide buffers between commercial land uses from noise sensitive receptors to avoid significant long-term impacts due noise conflict between the various uses. Long-term noise impacts were determined to be less than significant with incorporation of one or more of the following mitigation: requiring sound walls, noise insulation, and/or double glazed windows; reducing speed limits; use of setbacks and double glazing for two-story residences; installation of fresh air circulation systems or air conditioning; limiting commercial truck hours of operation; airport noise abatement; commercial and industrial facility design; incompatible land use buffering; use of parapets; and City adoption of a noise ordinance. Site specific mitigation for the Specific Plan area included a requirement for applicants to submit evidence that all uses within the Specific Plan area meet applicable interior and exterior noise standards prior to the issuance of building permits.

Similar to the development envisioned under the existing Specific Plan, the anticipated development would generate new vehicle trips and increase traffic on area roadways, which would increase off-site traffic noise. As detailed in Section 4.14, Transportation and Traffic, the development facilitated by the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan zoning would result in approximately 16,794 daily trips, while development facilitated by the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments and zoning would result in approximately 15,887 daily trips. The contribution of the project-generated traffic added to existing traffic volumes along the Stowell Road segment discussed above would increase the CNEL at that location by 2.4 dBA. This effect is similar to that estimated in the 1992 EIR and neither represents a substantial increase over existing noise levels. Therefore, the project would not result in new or substantially more severe off-site traffic noise impacts than identified for the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan.

The proposed Specific Plan amendments would ultimately result in similar land use types and distribution throughout the Specific Plan area. The project would not introduce operational noise sources substantially different than those anticipated for development under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. Additionally, the Development Standards in the proposed Specific Plan for residential uses include noise standards requiring that residential structure adjacent to arterial or collector streets shall comply with one of the following: a) The recommendations contained in an acoustical report prepared by an acoustical expert acceptable to the Community Development Department; or b) The installation of solid-core doors and double-glazed windows on all openings in the elevation of the structure facing the arterial or collector streets. Roof vents facing arterial or collector streets shall be baffled in a manner acceptable to the Zoning Administrator. Therefore, the project would not result in new or substantially more severe long-term noise impacts from stationary, operation noise sources. The overall increase in noise exposure at new on-site receptors as a result of development within the Specific Plan area would require mitigation, similar to that set forth in the 1992 Sphere of Influence EIR, to ensure that impacts remain less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measure shall be incorporated into the project. These measures are based in part on the applicable mitigation measures from the 1992 Final EIR.

N-1 Long-term Noise Exposure Reduction Techniques

In addition to the Development Standards for residential uses in the proposed Specific Plan, the following policy language shall be added to the Development Standards in the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan:

- a. Noise insulation, and/or double glazed windows shall be required for all new noise-sensitive land uses located adjacent to arterial roadways with noise levels greater than 60 dBA.
- b. Project designs shall require the use of setbacks and double glazing for new two-story residences from the property line adjacent to arterial roadways such that indoor noise levels on the second floor are less than 45 CNEL.
- c. Fresh air circulation systems or air conditioning shall be installed in the in the first row of new residences adjacent to arterial roadways.
- d. Commercial truck operations associated with development in the Specific Plan area shall be limited to the hours between 7:00 am and 7:00 pm along arterial roadways that run through noise-sensitive land use areas.
- e. The design of new commercial areas shall site truck loading areas, garbage dumpsters, and loud speaker systems away from adjacent property lines.
- f. Development in the Specific Plan area shall use block sound attenuation walls, greenbelts, and/or setback between commercial and noise-sensitive land uses.
- g. Building design shall incorporate the use of parapets and muffling systems to reduce noise from fan intake systems.

Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure N-1 would ensure that the effect of long-term, project-generated noise would be reduced at on- and off-site noise sensitive receptors. With these measures, impacts on long-term noise levels would be reduced to a less than significant level.

Threshold 2: Would the project generate excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Impact N-3 CONSTRUCTION OF THE ANTICIPATED DEVELOPMENT WOULD EXPOSE NEARBY SENSITIVE RECEIVERS TO A TEMPORARY INCREASE IN VIBRATION. HOWEVER, VIBRATION LEVELS WOULD NOT EXCEED 100 VdB, THE THRESHOLD AT WHICH DAMAGE MAY OCCUR TO TYPICAL BUILDINGS, OR 72 VdB, THE THRESHOLD FOR RESIDENCES DURING NIGHTTIME HOURS. IMPACTS WOULD BE CLASS III, LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.

The 1992 Final EIR did not include specific findings related to vibration impacts from buildout of the Specific Plan area. The proposed residential, school, commercial, and recreational uses would not generate significant stationary sources of vibration, such as from heavy equipment operations. Therefore, operational vibration impacts would be less than significant.

Certain types of construction equipment can generate high levels of groundborne vibration. Construction of the anticipated Specific Plan development would potentially utilize loaded trucks and bulldozers during most construction phases and vibratory rollers during the paving phase. Vibration impacts are assessed from the center of construction activity. Therefore, equipment was assumed to operate at an average distance of 500 feet from residential and school receivers located north and south of the Specific Plan area. As shown in Table 4.10-4, groundborne vibration from construction equipment would not exceed 100 VdB, the threshold at which damage can occur to typical buildings. Furthermore, if construction occurs during nighttime hours, groundborne vibration at adjacent residences would not exceed the 72 VdB threshold for residences during nighttime hours. Therefore, vibration impacts during construction of the anticipated commercial development would be less than significant.

Table 4.10-4 Vibration Levels at Sensitive Receivers

Equipment	Estimated VdB at Nearby Sensitive Receivers
Large Bulldozer	58
Small Bulldozer	29
Loaded Trucks	54
Vibratory Roller	65
Threshold	100
Threshold Exceeded?	No

See Appendix E for vibration analysis worksheets.
Source: FTA 2018

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Threshold 3: For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

Impact N-4 THE PROJECT WOULD BE LOCATED OUTSIDE THE AIRPORT INFLUENCE AREA FOR THE SANTA MARIA PUBLIC AIRPORT AND WOULD NOT BE LOCATED BENEATH THE FREQUENTLY-USED APPROACH OR DEPARTURE PATHS. THEREFORE, THE PROJECT WOULD NOT EXPOSE PEOPLE WORKING IN THE PROJECT AREA TO EXCESSIVE NOISE LEVELS. NO IMPACT WOULD OCCUR.

No airport noise impacts were identified in the 1992 Final EIR for the anticipated development within the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan area. The project site is located approximately 1.8 miles north of the Santa Maria Public Airport. The Airport Area of Influence is divided into three hazard zones to address areas of major concern including height restrictions, safety, and noise. Hazard Zone I includes height restrictions and is also the boundary of the Airport Area of Influence. Hazard Zone II is subject to policies regarding safety and height. Policies regarding height, safety, and noise apply in Hazard Zone III. The project site is located in the Hazard Zone I, outside of the identified areas subject to airport noise policies (Santa Barbara County Airport Land Use Plan, Santa Barbara County Airport Land Use Commission and Santa Barbara Association of Governments [SBCAG], 1993). Therefore, the project would not expose people working in the project area to excessive noise levels, and no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

c. Cumulative Impacts

As discussed in Section 3.3, the cumulative analysis in this EIR is based on the City's cumulative project list. Cumulative development in the City would result in additional residential units and non-residential development in the City of Santa Maria. Most of the listed projects involve infill development of relatively small parcels and are consistent with the surrounding urban and suburban nature of development within the city.

Cumulative construction noise and vibration impacts would consist of the combined noise impacts from the construction of the project and other planned projects in the city of Santa Maria. The proposed project would develop the last remaining parcel in the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan Area and few other planned or pending projects would occur in the same area of the City or nearby sensitive receivers nearest to the project site. Therefore, nearby residential receivers would not be significantly impacted by construction noise from nearby planned projects in combination with project-related construction noise. Since construction noise is localized and rapidly attenuates within an urban environment, construction activity at other locations would not result in a perceptible increase in noise to sensitive receivers near the project site. Therefore, no cumulative construction noise and vibration impacts would occur.

Cumulative operational noise impacts would consist of the combined operational noise of the anticipated residential and related development on-site in conjunction with planned projects in the vicinity of the project site. However, as discussed above, the anticipated development would develop the last remaining parcel in the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan area. Because roadways and other properties surrounding the Specific Plan area separate the planned projects from nearby sensitive receivers and act as an intervening noise source, operational noise from planned projects in the immediate vicinity would not combine with operational noise from the anticipated development. As a result, no cumulative operational noise impact would occur.

Traffic generated by the anticipated development in conjunction with traffic generated by planned projects would cumulatively increase off-site traffic noise. Cumulative development may increase traffic on area roadways, which may result in a perceptible increase in ambient noise levels of 3 dBA or greater at sensitive noise receivers. As discussed under Impact N-2, the anticipated development of the site would decrease traffic on area roadways as compared to development under the existing Specific Plan for the site. Therefore, under cumulative conditions, the anticipated development that would be allowed on the project site under the proposed Specific Plan amendments would decrease traffic and associated traffic noise than what is already planned and anticipated for the site. Therefore, the project's contribution to cumulative traffic noise impacts would not be considerable.

4.11 Population and Housing

This section evaluates the potential impacts of unplanned population growth, and displacement of people or housing, associated with implementation of the project. Population, housing, and employment data are available on a city, county, regional, and state level. This Supplemental EIR uses data collected and provided at the city level in comparison to county and state trends.

4.11.1 Setting

The Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan area is currently used for agricultural purposes, primarily as cultivated row crops. On-site structures are limited to those associated with agricultural operations such as storage structures, irrigation works, fencing, and overhead utilities.

a. Population

Table 4.11-1 shows population growth in the city, county, and state since census year 2010.

Table 4.11-1 Population Growth in the City, County, and State

Year	Santa Maria	Santa Barbara County	California
2010	99,553	423,895	37,253,956
Existing (2019)	107,356	454,593	39,927,315
Percent Change	7.8%	7.2%	7.2%

Source: California Department of Finance (DOF) 2019

As shown in Table 4.11-1, the city's population increased by approximately eight percent between 2010 and 2019 (DOF 2019). The city population grew at a slightly higher rate than the county and the state between 2010 and 2019. The city's 2019 population represents 23.6 percent of the county's 2019 population.

b. Housing

A household is defined as a group of people who occupy a housing unit (U.S. Census Bureau 2017). A household differs from a dwelling unit because the number of dwelling units includes both occupied and vacant dwelling units. Typically, not all of the population in a given area lives in households. A portion of the population lives in group quarters, such as board and care facilities, while others are homeless.

Housing Units

Table 4.11-2 shows the growth in number of housing units in the city and the state between 2010 and 2019.

Table 4.11-2 Housing Inventory

	Santa Maria		Santa Barbara County		California	
	2010	2019	2010	2019	2010	2019
Total Housing Units	28,294	30,149	152,834	160,111	13,670,304	14,235,093
Occupied	26,908	28,588	142,104	149,506	12,568,167	13,085,036
Vacancy Rate	4.9%	5.2%	7.0%	6.6%	8.1%	8.1%
Growth from 2010 to 2019	6.6%		4.8%		4.1%	
Source: DOF 2019						

As shown in Table 4.11-2, between 2010 and 2019, 1,855 units were added to the city’s housing inventory resulting in overall growth of 6.6 percent during this period. Between 2010 and 2019, the county and state housing inventory grew at lower rates of 4.8 percent and 4.1 percent, respectively.

In 2019, approximately 62 percent of the housing units in the city were single-family detached homes, approximately 4.7 percent were attached single-family homes, approximately 28.3 percent were multi-family units (buildings of at least two units), and approximately 5.1 percent were mobile homes.

Household Size

Small households (one to two persons per household [pph]) traditionally reside in units with one to two bedrooms; family households (three to four pph) normally reside in units with three to four bedrooms; and large households (five or more pph) typically reside in units with four or more bedrooms. However, the number of units in relation to the household size may also reflect preference and economics. Many small households obtain larger units, and some larger households live in small units for economic reasons. Table 4.11-3 compares the size of households in the city, county, and state in 2010 and 2019.

Table 4.11-3 Household Size in the City, County, and State

	Santa Maria		Santa Barbara County		California	
Year	2010	2019	2010	2019	2010	2019
Household Size (pph)	3.66	3.72	2.86	2.90	2.90	2.99
Growth from 2010 to 2019	1.6%		1.4%		3.1%	
Source: DOF 2019						

As shown in Table 4.11-3, the average household size in Santa Maria increased from 3.66 pph in 2010 to 3.72 pph in 2019 (an increase of 1.6 percent). Over the same period, household size in the county increased from 2.86 to 2.90 pph (an increase of 1.4 percent) and household size in the state increased from 2.90 to 2.99 pph (an increase of 3.1 percent). Between 2010 and 2019, the City of Santa Maria maintained a higher average household size in comparison to both the county and state average household sizes.

c. Regulatory Setting

State

State Housing Element Statutes

State housing element statutes (Government Code Sections 65580-65589.9) mandate that local governments adequately plan to meet the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community. The law recognizes that in order for the private market to adequately address housing needs and demand, local governments must adopt land use plans and regulatory systems that provide opportunities for, and do not unduly constrain, housing development. As a result, state housing policy rests largely upon the effective implementation of local general plans and in particular, housing elements. Government Code Section 65588 dictates that housing elements must be updated at least once every eight years.

Regional

Regional Housing Needs Assessment

California's Housing Element law requires that each county and city develop local housing programs to meet their "fair share" of existing and future housing growth needs for all income groups, as determined by the DOF. Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) is tasked with distributing the total State-projected housing need for the Santa Barbara region among SBCAG's eight cities and the county's unincorporated communities by four income categories (extremely low and very low, low, moderate, and above moderate). This fair share allocation is referred to as the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) process. This RHNA allocation represents the minimum number of housing units by income level each community is required to plan for through a combination of: 1) zoning "adequate sites" at suitable densities that foster affordability; and 2) housing programs to support retention, rehabilitation, and production of lower income units with a reasonable degree of entitlement certainty. Santa Maria's allocation from the SBCAG 2014-2022 *Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan* (RHNP) (SBCAG 2013), covering 2014 through 2022 and distributed among the four income categories, is shown in Table 4.11-4.

Table 4.11-4 Regional Housing Needs Allocation 2014-2022

Income Group	RHNA Allocation (units)	% of Total
Very Low	985	24.0%
Low	656	15.9%
Moderate	730	17.9%
Above Moderate	1,731	42.2%
Total	4,102	100%

Source: SBCAG 2013

Santa Barbara County Association of Governments

As discussed in Section 4.9, *Land Use and Planning*, the City of Santa Maria is located within the SBCAG planning area. SBCAG functions as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for Santa Barbara County and the cities therein, and is responsible for preparing and implementing the region's RHNA and the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP-SCS). The RTP-SCS is a long-term blueprint of the region's transportation system, requires updates every four years, and plans for a 20-year or more timeframe. The plan identifies and analyzes transportation needs of the metropolitan region and creates a framework for project priorities. SBCAG adopted the current RTP-SCS, *Fast Forward 2040*, in August 2017. *Fast Forward 2040* is the 16th iteration of SBCAG's Regional Transportation Plan and the first update to the region's Sustainable Communities Strategy. *Fast Forward 2040* covers the years 2016 through 2040. SBCAG projections for the planning area consider regional, state, and national economic trends and planning policies.

Local

City of Santa Maria Land Use Element

The Land Use Element was adopted in 1991 and amended in 2011. Generally, the goals and policies of this element are intended to maintain the overall land use pattern in the City. The Land Use Element designates the placement and distribution of future development and allows orderly growth to occur in the City by establishing future land use patterns and specifying the appropriate residential density and development intensity.

The Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan is subject to the requirements of Policy L.U.1 of the City's Land Use Element, which is intended to establish and maintain a balanced mix of land uses to meet the present and future demands of the community. In addition, the specific plan would be required to adhere to the land use specifications and implementation programs applied to the site with the Specific Plan classification on the City's Land Use Policy Map. The City's Specific Plan classification designates all land uses, and the geographic boundaries of each use, allowed in the specific plan area. Each use must be consistent with the adopted specific plan and the corresponding zoning noted in the plan.

City of Santa Maria Housing Element

The Housing Element is one of the seven State-mandated elements of the General Plan (Government Code Sections 65300 through 65303.4). The Housing Element serves as a tool to identify and provide for the housing needs of the community. It identifies recent demographic and employment trends that may affect existing and future housing demand and supply. California law requires the Housing Element to establish policies and programs that will support the provision of an adequate housing supply for citizens of all income levels. The Housing Element is the only element that requires review by the State. The element addresses the City's ability to meet the regional housing needs as determined by the State of California.

The City of Santa Maria adopted its current Housing Element in 2015. The Housing Element was submitted to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for review and comment in November 2014, and the City officially adopted the Housing Element on March 17, 2015. The updated Housing Element includes a detailed analysis of housing needs, resources, and constraints; and a review of the current Housing Element goals, policies, and programs, which were used to develop new policies and implementation programs. Housing Element Goal 1 through Goal

5 and the associated policies are intended to insure a total dwelling capacity equal to the new construction need for all income levels, including rental and manufactured housing, homeless shelters and transitional and farmworker housing.

4.11.2 Impact Analysis

a. Methodology and Significance Thresholds

Population and housing trends in the city were evaluated by reviewing the most current data available from the U.S. Census Bureau, DOF, the current Santa Maria General Plan, and SBCAG RHNP. Impacts related to population are generally social or economic in nature. Under CEQA, a social or economic change generally is not considered a significant effect on the environment unless the changes are directly linked to a physical change.

The following thresholds are based on Appendix G to the State CEQA Guidelines. For purposes of this EIR, impacts related to population and housing are considered significant if implementation of the project would:

- Induce substantial unplanned population growth either directly or indirectly; or
- Displace a substantial number of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

For purposes of this analysis, “substantial” population growth is defined as growth exceeding SBCAG regional growth forecasts for the City of Santa Maria. “Substantial” displacement would occur if allowed land uses would displace more residences than would be accommodated through growth accommodated by the project.

b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold 1: Would the project induce substantial unplanned population growth either directly or indirectly?

Impact PH-1 THE PROJECT WOULD NOT RESULT IN GROWTH IN THE PLANNING AREA THAT IS SUBSTANTIALLY GREATER THAN PROJECTED IN THE SBCAG REGIONAL GROWTH FORECAST FOR THE CITY OF SANTA MARIA. THE PROJECT WOULD NOT FACILITATE DEVELOPMENT BEYOND THE BOUNDS OF THE SPECIFIC PLAN THAT WOULD INDIRECTLY INDUCE POPULATION GROWTH IN THE CITY. THIS IMPACT WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT (CLASS III).

The City of Santa Maria has a population of 107,356 (DOF 2019). The Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan project would result in development of a maximum number of 1,168 dwelling units with low medium and high density residential units. Using the City’s average rate of 3.72 people per household, construction of the project would accommodate an estimated 4,345 new residents (DOF 2019). The Specific Plan area does not currently include any existing residential units. As such, project implementation would result in a net increase of 4,345 new residents and 1,168 dwelling units compared to existing conditions, or an increase of 714 residents and 192 dwelling units compared to the residential development potential of 976 residential units under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. Table 4.11-5 presents the 2019 and projected 2050 population and housing estimates for the city based on the SBCAG *Regional Growth Forecast 2050 Santa Barbara County*.

Table 4.11-5 Santa Maria Population and Housing Projections

City of Santa Maria	Existing (2019) ^a	Existing On-Site	Project Scenario	Net Change (Project Scenario – Existing On-Site)	Net Percent Change	SBCAG Regional Growth Forecast 2050 Projections ^c	Change 2019 to 2050	Percent Change
Population (# of residents)	107,356	0	4,345	4,345 ^b	0.0%	143,100	35,744	33.3%
Housing (# of units; total/occupied)	30,149/ 28,588	0	1,168	1,168	0.0%	44,100 ¹	13,951 ²	46.3%

Notes:

1. SBCAG Housing Demand Forecasts.
2. Change in housing units from 2019 to 2050.

Sources:

^a DOF 2019

^b Draft Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan; based 3.72 pph

^c SBCAG 2019

When added to the existing population within the City of approximately 107,356 (DOF 2019), buildout of the Specific Plan area would increase the City's total population to an estimated 111,710 residents, an increase of 4.0 percent from existing conditions, or an increase of 0.7 percent from buildout anticipated under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. Although the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan would allow for more dwelling units and residents in the Specific Plan area than would be allowed under the existing land use designations and distribution, this increase would not result in exceedance of the overall SBCAG population or housing projections for the City of Santa Maria. Additionally, the Specific Plan area is completely surrounded by urban development within the City, and serves as one of the last large infill parcels to be developed in this area of the City. Therefore, population growth that may result from the project would not conflict with local growth management policy or result in substantial unplanned growth, and development of the Specific Plan area would not indirectly facilitate growth beyond the bounds of the Specific Plan area. Impacts would be less than significant.

The project would also include development of neighborhood commercial, school, and recreational uses in the Specific Plan area. Although the commercial and school uses would result in the generation of new employees, these employees would likely come from the existing population in the city, and would not contribute to new population growth. This impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures are not required.

Threshold 2: Would the project displace a substantial number of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

Impact PH-2 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT WOULD NOT DISPLACE SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF EXISTING PEOPLE OR HOUSING, NECESSITATING THE CONSTRUCTION OF REPLACEMENT HOUSING ELSEWHERE. IMPACTS WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT (CLASS III).

The project site does not contain existing residences, is surrounded by urbanized development, and represents an “infill” parcel. Focusing development in this area would maximize the use of an underutilized parcel and minimize displacement of existing housing and people that could otherwise result in development pressure on other portions of the city.

Additionally, the City’s Housing Element serves as a tool to identify and provide for the housing needs of the community. It identifies recent demographic and employment trends that may affect existing and future housing demand and supply. California law requires the Housing Element to establish policies and programs that support the provision of an adequate housing supply for citizens of all income levels. The Housing Element addresses the City’s ability to meet the regional housing needs as determined by the State of California. The project would assist in the City’s effort to meet the housing needs of the community and provide for adequate housing consistent with the Housing Element.

Implementation of the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan would not result in the displacement of any existing residential units, and impacts related to displacement of substantial amounts of housing or people would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures are not required.

c. Cumulative Impacts

As described above, implementation of the specific plan would not displace any existing residential units in the specific plan area. Cumulative development of housing within the city includes approximately 1,130 new residential units and 558 mixed use/other dwelling units. Using the City’s average rate of 3.72 people per household, cumulative development would add approximately 6,280 persons to the city’s population. Growth facilitated by the specific plan (in addition to the cumulative development of housing within the city) would occur within the bounds of the city’s planning area and would be consistent with the regional projections for the City of Santa Maria. Therefore, the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan would not contribute to cumulative impacts related to displacement in the greater cumulative impact analysis area (Santa Barbara County) and would not result in significant cumulative population growth impacts beyond the planning area and the incremental population impacts of the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan would not be cumulatively considerable.

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4.12 Public Services

As described in the City profile in the current 2018-2020 City Budget, the current population of the City is about 108,470 (Santa Maria 2018:xi). Much of the detailed information in the following paragraphs is also from the adopted City Budget, and from the mid-cycle budget adjustment adopted by the City Council on June 18, 2019 (Resolution 2019-81). One major factor in the mid-cycle budget adjustment was the passage of Measure U by the voters in November 2018, which allowed for an increase in sales tax within the City. This increased funding will allow the City to maintain and increase some services with staffing at levels somewhat higher than originally reported in the 2018-2020 budget.

Information related to goals and objectives within the City is generally from the Resource Management Element of the City General Plan (Santa Maria 2001).

This section discusses the project's potential impacts on fire protection, police protection, schools, and libraries. Potential impacts to parks are discussed in Section 4.13, Recreation.

4.12.1 Setting

a. Fire Protection Services

The City of Santa Maria Fire Department provides fire protection services to the City of Santa Maria. The City Fire Department provides emergency services, as well as public education programs, fire prevention, and life safety measures to the City's residents. The nearest fire station to the project site is the Santa Maria City Fire Station Number 2, located approximately 0.53 mile southeast of the site. As shown in the adopted 2018-2020 City Budget, in 2018 the City Fire Department included a total staff of 62 persons including: 18 fire fighters, four battalion chiefs, 15 captains, 18 fire engineers, one fire marshal, two fire prevention officers, one management analyst, one administrative assistant, one fire chief, and one part-time emergency services specialist (City of Santa Maria 2018:page C-11). Based on the City's General Plan Resource Management Element, the City Fire Department calls for a ratio of one firefighting employee per 1,820 residents (City of Santa Maria 2001:41). Given the City's 2018 population of 107,400, approximately 59 firefighting employees were needed to meet the standard in the Resource Management Element. Thus, the 2018 level of staffing in the fire department was generally consistent with this standard. The number of fire department personnel was also increased in the 2019-2020 mid-cycle adjustment to the City Budget, with the addition of 13 full-time fire service personnel (for a total of 74), and this increase allows the City to meet the service ratio stated in the Resource Management Element.

b. Police Protection

Police protection in the City of Santa Maria is provided by the Santa Maria Police Department (SMPD). SMPD's police station is located approximately 0.76 mile south of the project site at 1111 Betteravia Road. As the primary law enforcement agency for the City of Santa Maria, the department operates 24 hours per day and handles approximately 170,000 calls for service each year. In 2018, the SMPD had 129 sworn officers and 51 full-time support personnel (City of Santa Maria 2018-2020 Budget:pages C-3, 4 and C-6). The City's General Plan Resource Management Element calls for a ratio of 1.3 sworn police personnel per 1,000 residents (Santa Maria 2001:50). With the City's 2019 population of 107,396 people approximately 140 police personnel would be needed to achieve this objective. The 2019-2020 mid-cycle adjustment to the City Budget, which

was adopted by the City Council on June 18, 2019, included an increase of 11 full-time police officers (for a total of 140) and four other personnel within the police department. This increase, which was made possible through the assignment of Measure U sales tax increase funds, would bring the staff level back to the objective of 1.3 officers to 1,000 population.

The City of Santa Maria has not adopted a response time goal for police protection. The SMPD currently does not have a mechanism to track average response times. However, a system upgrade is underway which will provide response time tracking, as well as other additional information. Currently, each call for police service is prioritized and dispatched accordingly. In the instance that priority call is received, resources will be pulled from low-priority calls (Schneider 2019).

c. Public Schools

The project would be served by two school districts: the Santa Maria-Bonita Unified School District (SMBUSD) and the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District (SMJUHSD). Based on information in its Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) 2019+ update, the SMBUSD operates 20 schools, including 16 elementary schools and four junior high schools. Private schools are not included in this analysis because they are not funded by the state and are optional sources of education. For the 2017-2018 school year, SMBUSD schools provided public education to 17,122 students in the area. The district has been growing at a rate of about 330 students per year (SMBUSD 2018:page 1).

The SMBUSD as a whole is overcrowded, and some schools in the district rely on portable classrooms and/or schedule multiple uses into shared classrooms. SMBUSD is also constructing a new elementary school in the Enos Ranch Specific Plan area, approximately 1.5 miles east of the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan area.

There are four elementary schools in the vicinity of the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan area, all of which serve grades K-6. Table 4.12-1 below summarizes information for each.

Table 4.12-1 Schools in the Project Vicinity

School	Year Built	Classrooms (Permanent/Portable)	2017-2018 Enrollment
Liberty Elementary 1300 West Sonya Lane	2004	38/0	887
Jimenez Elementary 1970 Biscayne Street	2014	33/0	969
Sanchez Elementary 804 West Liberty Street	2004	27/0	759
Adam Elementary 500 W. Windsor Drive	1967	27/7	980

All information is from the "2017-2018 School Accountability Report Card, Published January 2019" for each of the schools.

Specific attendance boundaries between these and other schools in the vicinity may be adjusted in the future upon completion of the new elementary school, but as a general statement the SMBUSD has indicated that these four schools are currently at or near capacity (as of 2018), and have space for 82 additional students (Beecher, March 5, 2018, letter to Chuen Ng, Community Development Director).

There are four junior high schools in the district. The Blosser-Southeast specific plan area includes a Community Facilities land use designation (with Public Facilities zone) over an area of about 24

acres. In the current (2011) Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, this area was intended for a junior high school site in conjunction with some other community use. In the proposed specific plan update, this area has been reduced to 21 acres, and is still intended as a junior high school site. The configuration of this site, its access and other features, have been developed in consultation with the SMBUSD.

The SMJUHSD operates five schools serving the cities of Santa Maria, Guadalupe, Orcutt, and Los Alamos, as well as the surrounding unincorporated areas in Santa Barbara County. According to the School Facilities Needs Analysis prepared by SchoolWorks, Inc. for SMJUHSD in March 2018, the 2017-2018 total enrollment for grades 9 through 12 at SMJUHSD schools was 7,949 students (SchoolWorks, Inc. 2018). According to the School Facilities Need Analysis, SMJUHSD schools have a total capacity of 7,189 spaces. Accordingly, SMJUHSD schools are operating near or over maximum design capacity and rely on portable buildings to temporarily accommodate students.

d. Libraries

There are five libraries associated with the Santa Maria Public Library System. The main library is located in the City of Santa Maria, located approximately 0.87-mile northeast of the site. Santa Maria Public Library provides reading materials, online resource databases, a study center for children after school, computer use services, and various reading programs and related events. As described in the History of the Santa Maria Public Library, the main library totals 59,850 square feet (City of Santa Maria June 2009:page 4). To determine the adequacy of the public library, the City uses the standard planning ratio of 0.5 square feet of library space per capita. It was determined that the main library facility does not meet the library space standard and requires expansion to accommodate the existing and projected populations. Another measure of library service is volumes per capita (1.5 to 2.0 books per capita). It was determined that the Santa Maria Library does meet the volumes per capita standard that is in the General Plan Resources Management Element (City of Santa Maria 2001:page RME-43).

e. Regulatory Setting

City of Santa Maria General Plan

The City of Santa Maria General Plan Safety Element (1995) and Resource Management Element (1996, amended in 2001) are intended to guide land use planning by providing policies to minimize the adverse effects to public services. Policies and objectives that are applicable to the project include:

Safety Element Policy 3 Discourage construction of habitable structures in areas susceptible to wildland fires and assure the availability of adequate fire fighting capabilities.

Objective 3.1.a Achieve a 5-minute response capability to all areas within the City limits and maintain adequate water storage standards for fire flow pressure.

Resource Management

Element Policy 10.1a(1) Provide police and fire protection, library resources, solid waste disposal, and other municipal services which meet or exceed the existing and future needs of the residents in the service area.

- Objective 10.1.a(1)** Provide sufficient law enforcement facilities and services to maintain a high level of service to keep pace with the needs of the City's growing population. Maintain a city police force with a ratio of 1.3 sworn officer for each 1,000 residents.
- Objective 10.1.b** Provide sufficient fire protection services to maintain a high level of service, and to keep pace with the needs of the City. Achieve and maintain a five minute response capability to all areas within the City limits.
- Objective 10.1.c** Maintain centralized library facilities and ensure expansion of library facilities to keep pace with the growing population at a ratio of 0.5 square feet of library space per capita and 1.5 to 2 books per capita.

City of Santa Maria Development Impact Fees

Assembly Bill 1600 allows local government agencies to charge a project development fee to support public service infrastructure and facilities that would be provided to a given project area. Development fees may be charged to new developments to pay for a particular project's portion of the cost of providing sufficient infrastructure and facilities for public services such as fire and police protection. Development fees are generally determined in proportion to the additional burden a project would have on the individual public services.

The Fire Department currently collects \$0.059 per square foot of commercial and industrial development and \$0.411 per square foot of multifamily residential development from Growth Impact Fees (City of Santa Maria 2009). These growth mitigation fees are subject to change based on annual review. Any future development within the Specific Plan area would pay these required fees.

The SMPD collects \$0.368 per square foot of development from the Growth Mitigation Fees (City of Santa Maria 2009). Any future development within the Specific Plan area would pay these required fees, which would support infrastructure and facilities that would be provided to the project area.

State law allows school districts to levy three different levels of development fees directly on new residential, commercial, and industrial development (Government Code Section 65995). Level-one fees, which apply to the City of Santa Maria, cannot exceed \$2.97 per square foot of residential construction and \$0.47 per square foot of commercial/industrial construction for K-12 facilities. Districts set their own fees within this limit based on a nexus study establishing their funding requirements. Since Proposition 1A was passed by the voters and Government Code Section 65995(h) was adopted by the State Legislature in 1996, school fees generated by new development are deemed legally sufficient mitigation of any impacts based on generation of students on school facilities.

4.12.2 Impact Analysis

a. Methodology and Significance Thresholds

In accordance with Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan project would result in potentially significant impacts relating to public services if it would:

- Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain

acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

- a. Fire protection
- b. Police protection
- c. Schools
- d. Parks
- e. Libraries

Potential impacts to parks are discussed in Section 4.13, *Recreation*.

b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold:	Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or result in the 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 fire protection services?
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Impact PS-1 THE SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD INCREASE THE DEMAND FOR FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES, SUCH THAT NEW OR EXPANDED FACILITIES WOULD BE NEEDED TO MEET THE CITY'S STANDARD RESPONSE TIME AND LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARD. POTENTIAL IMPACTS WOULD BE OFFSET BY COLLECTION OF THE AB 1600 FEES. IMPACTS RELATED TO THE PROVISION OF FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT (CLASS III).

The project includes up to 1,168 new residences, which would generate an estimated 4,345 residents in the City (1,168 dwelling units x 3.72 people/unit. Although the current staffing in the Fire Department, which was augmented by the assignment of Measure U funds in the 2018-2020 mid-cycle budget adjustment in June, 2019, meets the Resource Management Element standard with respect to population, the increase in residences and population caused by this project will increase the demand for fire protection services.

As discussed in Section 4.12.1, Setting, the Fire Department's average response time standard of five minutes was being met about 70 percent of the time when the 2018-2020 budget was adopted. Increases in staffing and equipment allowed by the mid-cycle 2018-2020 budget adjustment in June 2019, will improve progress towards meeting the five-minute response time regularly. Development within the specific plan area will add up to 1,168 new residences, which would increase the total number and frequency of simultaneous and mutual aid request calls received and would contribute pressure on maintaining the average response time standard. The project would be required to pay AB 1600 fees to offset its contribution to this impact. These fees would provide a proportional share of funding for additional firefighters, equipment, and a new fire station facility to serve the City in the future. This development fee would be adequate to prevent the additional demand for fire protection services from being a significant impact.

New or expanded fire station facilities are not planned at this time. However, future City plans for a new fire station facility is proposed would be subject to City review, including CEQA environmental analysis. Environmental analysis would identify mitigation measures required to avoid, minimize, or reduce any identified environmental effects. The types of impacts that could be identified include effects related to encountering hazardous materials, cultural resources, or biological resources on the site during project construction. During operation of the fire station facility, potential

environmental effects could include changing traffic pattern and intermittent noise from emergency sirens. While a project-level analysis of a future fire station facility would be speculative at this time due to uncertainty regarding project timing, design, and final precise location, the types of impacts associated with such a facility would typically be less than significant or mitigated to a less than significant level. With the payment of the required AB 1600 fees and the requirement for project specific environmental review for any future fire station facilities, the project's potential environmental impacts on the provision of fire protection services would be less than significant, and no additional mitigation would be necessary.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required because this impact would be less than significant.

Threshold:	Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or result in the 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 police protection services?
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Impact PS-2 THE SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD NOT IMPACT POLICE SERVICES SUCH THAT NEW OR EXPANDED FACILITIES WOULD BE REQUIRED. THE INCREASED DEMAND FOR POLICE SERVICES WOULD BE MET THROUGH THE COLLECTION OF AB 1600 FEES, AND THE IMPACTS TO POLICE PROTECTION SERVICES WOULD BE LESS THEN SIGNIFICANT (CLASS III).

The SMPD provides police protection service to the project site. As described in 4.12.1, Setting, the City's General Plan Resource Management Element (2001) calls for a ratio of 1.3 sworn police personnel per 1,000 residents. With the increase in staffing described in the City mid-cycle budget adjustment in June 2019, this level of staffing will be provided in the Police Department. The project includes up to 1,168 new residences, which would generate an estimated 4,345 residents in the City (1,168 dwelling units x 3.72 people/unit). This would translate to a need for six additional police personnel to maintain the city's minimum service ratio of 1.3 sworn police personnel for each 1,000 residents. Project development would be accompanied by the payment of AB 1600 fees, which would help to fund additional staff and facilities as needed. Therefore, the effect of the project on the demand for police services would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required because this impact would be less than significant.

Threshold: Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or result in the 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 schools?

Impact PS-3 DEVELOPMENT FACILITATED BY THE SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD INCREASE THE DEMAND FOR SCHOOLS SUCH THAT NEW FACILITIES AND STAFF WOULD BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL STUDENT CAPACITY. THROUGH THE REQUIRED PAYMENT OF STATE-MANDATED IMPACT MITIGATION FEES, AND INCLUSION OF A JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN, POTENTIAL IMPACTS TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT (CLASS III).

The project would result in development of up to 1,168 dwelling units and would increase the number of students that would attend SMBUSD and SMJUHSD schools. The Santa Maria Bonita Unified School District (SMBUSD) provided research and an update on elementary school student generation rates by various housing types in correspondence to the City dated March 5, 2018. That correspondence was prior to the design revisions and re-submittal of the proposed specific plan update, which occurred in November, 2018. Consequently, the dwelling unit counts and total student generation in the district correspondence were out of date. Using the dwelling unit counts from the currently proposed specific plan update (as presented in Section 2 of this report) and the updated student generation rates provided by the district, Table 4.12-2 below presents the estimate of student generation from the proposed project.

Table 4.12-2 Student Generation in the Specific Plan Area

	Number of Units	Student Generation Rate	Number of Students
Elementary School (K-6) ¹			
Low-Med. Density res.	464	0.609	283
High Density res.	704	0.83	584
Elementary (K-6) subtotal			867
Middle School (7-8) ¹	1,168	0.0969	113
High School (9-12) ²	1,168	0.1754	205
Total Student Generation:			1,185

¹Based on SMBSD Student Generation Rates (Beecher March 5, 2018)

²Based on School Facilities Needs Analysis (SMJUHSD 2019:page 5)

Based on these student generation rates, the project would contribute up to 867 elementary students, 113 middle school students, and 205 high school students for a total of 1,185 new students at SMBUSD and SMJUHSD schools.

At the elementary school level of the SMBUSD, using the updated student generation rates provided by the district, the proposed project would generate approximately 283 more students than the land uses in the current Blosser-Southeast specific plan area. The current issue of overcrowding would be exacerbated by proposed new developments, including the proposed project.

As discussed in Section 4.12.1.c, as the high school level, SMJUHSD schools are currently operating near or over maximum design capacity, with total district enrollment of 7,949 students exceeding the existing total capacity of 7,189 students by 760 students. The generation of 205 high school

aged students from development facilitated by the project would exacerbate the existing capacity issues as SMJUHSD schools such that new facilities and staff would be necessary.

The 2017 District Wide Facility Master Plan and 2018 School Facilities Needs Analysis, for the SMBUSD and SMJUHSD, respectively, summarize remodel and expansion plans in the city intended to accommodate future student body growth for both districts. The potential environmental effects of specific facility improvements would be subject to review by the districts and by local agencies, including CEQA environmental analysis for any discretionary approvals. Environmental analysis would identify mitigation measures required to avoid, minimize, or reduce any identified environmental effects.

In addition, the project includes a 21-acre school site envisioned as a Junior High School for the SMBUSD, which would provide additional school space for junior high students. The configuration of this site, its access and other features, have been developed in consultation with the SMBUSD. Since it is within the current project area, the potential environmental impacts of this planned school with respect to the physical conditions on the site are evaluated throughout this EIR. Other issues related to details of the school design would have to be evaluated at the time school construction is proposed.

New residential and commercial development within the Specific Plan area would be required to pay the state-mandated impact mitigation fees, as the amounts are determined by the school districts and the City. These fees would offset the increased demand for school services by providing funding for additional facilities to serve the area. Section 65995(h) of the California Government Code (Senate Bill 50, chaptered August 27, 1998) states that payment of statutory fees "...is deemed to be full and complete mitigation of the impacts of any legislative or adjudicative act, or both, involving, but not limited to, the planning, use, or development of real property, or any change in governmental organization or reorganization." Therefore, in conjunction with other plans and funding sources used by the school districts, the payment of the state-mandated impact mitigation fees would ensure that the effects of the project on the provision of school services would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required because this impact would be less than significant.

Threshold:	Would the Community Plan Update 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 services ratios, response times or other performance objectives for public libraries?
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Impact PS-4 THE SPECIFIC PLAN WOULD INCREASE DEMAND FOR LIBRARY SERVICES. HOWEVER, THROUGH THE REQUIRED PAYMENT OF AB 1600 FEES, POTENTIAL IMPACTS TO LIBRARY SERVICES AND FACILITIES WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT (CLASS III).

The project includes up to 1,168 new residences, which would generate an estimated 4,345 residents in the City (1,168 dwelling units x 3.72 people/unit [DOF 2019]). The addition of 4,345 residents would result in a library square footage per capita ratio of 1.86 square feet per capita (107,356 existing residents + 4,345 project residents = 111,701 total residents/59,850 square feet = 1.86 square feet per capita). This population increase would increase demand for library use and

would exceed the City's standard of 0.5 square feet per capita. New or expanded library facilities are not planned at this time. However, future City plans for new or expanded library facilities would be subject to CEQA environmental analysis and any identified mitigation measures required to avoid, minimize, or reduce any identified environmental effects. In addition, the project applicant would be required to pay the City's AB 1600 fees to offset potential impacts to library facilities. With payment of AB 1600 fees, the effect of the project on the demand for library services would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required because this impact would be less than significant.

c. Cumulative Impacts

As discussed in Section 3.3, the cumulative analysis in this EIR is based on the City's cumulative project list. Cumulative development in the City would result in additional residential units and non-residential development.

Fire Services

Cumulative development would result in a significant impact if it would delay response times or exceed service level ratios for fire services such that new or expanded facilities would be required. As discussed in Impact PS-1, fire service levels in the city are already below City Fire Department standards, and a cumulative increase in population and development would decrease service levels in the absence of additional staffing, equipment, and facilities. On a cumulative basis, until a new fire station is constructed to serve the area, fire protection staffing levels would not meet City service levels. Additional development attributable to the proposed project, in combination with other cumulative development in the region, would incrementally worsen the service levels and contribute to the need for new or expanded facilities, the construction of which could cause environmental impacts. The construction of a new facility would be subject to subsequent environmental review and mitigation to avoid, minimize, or reduce identified environmental effects. As discussed in Impact PS-1, typical impacts associated with the development of a new fire station facility include effects related to encountering hazardous materials, cultural resources, or biological resources on the site during project construction. During operation of the fire station facility, potential environmental effects could include changing traffic pattern and intermittent noise from emergency sirens. While a project-level analysis of the planned fire station facility would be speculative at this time due to uncertainty regarding project timing, design, and final precise location, the types of impacts associated with such a facility would typically be less than significant or mitigated to a less than significant level. In addition, until planned facilities are constructed, impacts associated with fire protection services would continue to be mitigated on a case-by-case basis through payment of the City's AB 1600 fees. Therefore, the project's contribution to this cumulative impact would not be cumulatively considerable.

Police Services

Cumulative development would result in a significant impact if it would delay response times or exceed service level ratios for police services such that new or expanded facilities would be required. As discussed in Impact PS-2, police department response times in the city are below the City's established standard and the cumulative increase in population and development would decrease service levels in the absence of additional staffing, equipment, and facilities. On a

cumulative basis, until additional staffing is provided, SMPD would not meet City standards. Additional development attributable to the project would incrementally worsen service levels and contribute to the need for additional staffing and potentially additional facilities. Impacts would continue to be mitigated on a case-by-case basis through payment of the City's AB 1600 fees. These fees would be used to fund additional staff members to offset service demand impacts resulting from the project. Therefore, the project's contribution to this cumulative impact would not be cumulatively considerable.

Schools

Cumulative development would result in a significant impact if it would generate student population such that new or expanded facilities would be required. As discussed in Impact PS-3, SMBSD and SMJUHS schools are currently at, or expected to be at or near capacity with the projected student enrollment for the year 2024. Without increases in staffing and facilities to address the anticipated population increase, potentially significant impacts could occur. However, new development in the Specific Plan area would be required to pay the state-mandated impact mitigation fees. These fees would be used to fund facilities to offset service demand impacts. In addition, the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan includes a school site which is intended to provide a location for future development of a junior high school to accommodate additional students. The environmental impacts associated with development of the school site with respect to the physical conditions on the site are discussed throughout this EIR. Therefore, the proposed project's contribution to cumulative impacts to schools would not be cumulatively considerable.

Library

Cumulative development would be considerable if it would increase the demand for library services such that new or expanded facilities would be required. Cumulative development in the city would increase the demand for library services. Without increases in staffing and facilities to address the anticipated population increase, potentially significant impacts could occur. New development in the Specific Plan area would be required to pay the City's AB 1600 fees. These fees would be used to fund facilities to offset service demand impacts. In addition, new or expanded facilities in the future would be subject to CEQA environmental analysis and any identified mitigation measures required to avoid, minimize, or reduce any identified environmental effects. Therefore, the proposed project's contribution to cumulative impacts to library services would not be cumulatively considerable.

4.13 Recreation

This section evaluates potential impacts on recreational resources and facilities in the City of Santa Maria associated with implementation of the project. This EIR uses data from the City of Santa Maria General Resources Management Element (2001), the Land Use Element (2011), and the Housing Element (2015), and from personal communications with City Recreation Services staff (Posada and Teneiente 2019).

4.13.1 Setting

a. Existing Park and Recreation Facilities

The City of Santa Maria includes 27 neighborhood and community parks totaling 367.38 acres. The City also operates the Abel Maldonado Community Youth Center, the Hagerman Softball Complex, Paul Nelson Aquatics Center, Elwin Mussell Senior Center, Veterans' Memorial Center, the 1,774-acre Los Flores Ranch Park property, and other community centers. The Los Flores Ranch Park property is not located within the city boundaries but is owned and operated by the city, and located nearby. Parks within the City system include a variety of recreational facilities including sports fields, picnic areas, play lots, tennis courts, and basketball courts, as well as access to the trails and bicycle paths. In addition, the City has ten (10) Community Centers and Joint Use Agreements to utilize facilities on 11 school campuses. There is no existing parkland in the Specific Plan area (City of Santa Maria 2013).

The City does not currently have park classifications or categories. The Leisure Needs Assessment and Action Plan (2013: pages 24-25) describes the following classifications:

Regional Parks

Regional Parks are defined as parks that exceed over 40 acres of land and serve larger community populations and provide recreation facilities or open space in significant numbers or sizes. The nearest Regional Park to Santa Maria is Waller Park, a Santa Barbara County regional park.

Community Parks

Community Parks are defined as parks that are between 15 to 40 acres in size that can provide a broad range of both passive and active recreational opportunities, but their primary purpose is to provide active recreation opportunities for use by a larger segment of the population than neighborhood parks. Community Parks are generally considered to serve several neighborhoods within an area that exceeds a one-half mile radius. The City of Santa Maria has three community parks named Adam Park Basin, Pioneer Park, and Preisker Park which total 79.75 acres. If a Community Park is located within a residential area, it can also serve a neighborhood park function and, therefore, is included in the service area analysis for Neighborhood Parks.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood Parks are parks that are less than 15 acres in size and are intended to serve City residents who live nearby. However, they also contribute to the overall park system available to the entire community. Ideally, everyone in the City would live within a convenience walking distance (typically one-half mile) of a Neighborhood Park. This is defined as the "service radius" or "service area" of a neighborhood park. Neighborhood Parks should address daily recreation needs of the

surrounding neighborhood. Features of Neighborhood Parks may include playgrounds, multi-purpose open turf areas, sports fields, sports courts, picnic tables and/or picnic shelters, walking paths, small parking areas and recreation features such as basketball or volleyball courts. The City of Santa Maria has 23 neighborhood parks that are listed in Table 1, Existing City of Santa Maria Parks and Recreation Facilities.

Natural Open Space Parks

Natural Open Space Parks are those in which most of the park is undeveloped, and the undeveloped portions contain vegetation, topography, or features that are important to retain in their natural state. Physical public access to natural areas via trails should be encouraged where feasible and appropriate. For purpose of defining this park type, "natural" refers to vegetation and land forms indigenous to the area. Turf, irrigated manufactured slopes, detention basins, weedy disturbed areas and areas landscaped with ornamental vegetation would be considered part of the developed portion of a Natural Open Space Park. Los Flores Ranch Park is the only Natural Open Space Park locally available to City residents. It is located outside of the City limits, about 8.5 miles south of the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan area. This natural park is owned by the City, and is open free to residents of the City for hiking, biking, and horseback riding (by reservation).

Recreation Facilities Near the Project Site

The closest recreation facilities to the Specific Plan area are the Minami Park and Adam Park. The two parks abut each other and are located adjacent to the Specific Plan area across the railroad tracks and South Depot Street on the eastern side of the property. Adam Park is a 29-acre community park; Minami Park is 10 acres and is classified as a neighborhood park.

Table 4.13-1 describes the type, location, and amenities provided by parks and special facilities in the City of Santa Maria.

Table 4.13-1 Existing City of Santa Maria Parks and Recreation Facilities

Facility Name	Address	Facilities	Acres
Natural Open Space Park			
Los Flores Ranch	6271 Dominion Road	Hiking, biking, horseback riding trails	1,778
Community Parks			
Adam Park Basin	600 Enos Drive	Ten acres of soccer fields, lighted tennis courts, bocce ball court, and BBQ pits.	11.09
Pioneer Park	1150 West Foster Road	Large private picnic area, BBQs, pavilion, softball field, children's playground, and horseshoe pits.	29.34
Preisker Park	330 Hidden Pines Way	Old style gazebo/bandstand, two playgrounds, seven reservable picnic areas, five BBQ picnic areas, restrooms, large open grassy area, horseshoe pits, and an 18-hole disc golf course.	39.32
Subtotal			79.75

Facility Name	Address	Facilities	Acres
Neighborhood Parks			
Alice Trefts Parks	1000 East Chapel Street	Portable restrooms and a community garden that functions as a joint educational site with Allan Hancock College.	4.80
Armstrong Park	1000 East Chapel Street	Two BBQ areas, open turf, a gazebo, and a walking trail.	3.09
Atkinson Park	1000 North Railroad	Lighted tennis courts, basketball courts, premier soccer fields, playgrounds, public restroom, community hall, and BBQ pits with tables, benches and a shade cover.	5.84
Bob Orach Park	1800 South Westgate Road	Large playground, open space, public restroom, and BBQ picnic areas.	2.35
Buena Vista Park	800 South Pine Street	Playground, BBQ pits, picnic tables, and basketball courts.	4.03
Fletcher Park	2200 South College Drive	Playground, grassy area, covered, basketball courts, picnic areas, skate park, bicycle-pump track, rock climbing apparatus, and public restrooms.	2.8
Grogan Park	1155 West Rancho Verde	Multi-purpose room, playground, and a BBQ picnic area.	5.92
Hagerman Sports Complex	3300 Skyway Drive	Multi-purpose fields, a snack bar, playground, bike path, and restrooms.	11.0
Jim May Park	809 Stanford Drive	Turf area, walking path, BBQ pit, and a playground.	13.0
Joe White Park	500 South Palisade Drive	A playground, basketball court, gazebo, and BBQ picnic areas.	2.3
Maramonte Park	620 East Sunrise Drive	Multi-purpose room, softball field, lighted tennis courts, horseshoe pits, basketball courts, playground, picnic area with BBQ pit, and public restrooms.	8.6
Minami Park	600 West Enos	Playground, basketball courts, sand volleyball court, softball field, lighted tennis courts, bocce ball, and the Minami Community Center.	10.0
Marilyn Stanley Park	2600 La Costa Drive	Playground and two picnic table areas.	2.0
Oakley Park	1300 North Western	Two Little League fields, a soccer field, parking lot, lighting, and picnic BBQ areas.	5.0
North Preisker Ranch Park	801 West Boxcar (corner of Hidden Pines and Railroad Avenue)	Children's play area, tennis court, basketball courts, and a pergola area that house two picnic areas.	1.81
Rice Park	700 East Sunset	Playground, portable restroom, and picnic areas.	2.74
Rodenberger Park	2725 Santa Barbara Street	Picnic BBQ area, playground, softball field, and fitness course.	5.10
Rosalind Perlman Park	100 North Broadway	Playground, gazebo, rose garden, and waterfall feature.	1.25

Facility Name	Address	Facilities	Acres
Rotary Centennial Park	2625 South College Drive	Robin Venture Tee Ball Field, 10-station exercise trail system, basketball court, play apparatus, tot lot, public restrooms, and a covered picnic area with 30 tables and a large BBQ pit.	14.0
Russell Park	1000 West Church Street	Picnic tables, BBQ areas, portable restroom, and playground.	1.40
Sierra Vista Park	809 Panther Drive	Kon Baseball field, Edwards Community Center, reservable multi-purpose room, and a gymnasium with basketball and volleyball courts, and bleach seating.	6.42
Simas Park	600 South McClelland Street	Lawn bowling green, basketball court, Elks Baseball Field, Little League baseball field, softball field, Paul Nelson Aquatic Center.	5.0
Tunnell Park	1100 North Palisade Drive	Little League baseball field, softball field, playground, and sheltered picnic BBQ areas with Tunnell School.	5.28
Veterans Memorial Park	313 West Tunnell Street	Playground, BBQ picnic areas, and historic plaques and monuments.	4.40
Subtotal			287.78

Source: City of Santa Maria, Website, Park Photos and Descriptions, 2019; Posada, and Teniente, 2019.

b. Regulatory Setting

Quimby Act (1975)

The Quimby Act gives cities and counties the authority to require the dedication of land or payment of in-lieu fees, or a combination of both, for park and recreation purposes as a condition of approval of a tract map or parcel map. The Quimby Act allows fees to be collected for up to five acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. The City of Santa Maria Municipal Code Section 19-9.05 was enacted pursuant to this state law, and describes the dedication and/or in-lieu fee requirements for residential subdivisions in the City.

County of Santa Barbara and City of Santa Maria A.B. 1600 Mitigation Fee Program

Government Code 66000 et seq. (AB 1600) authorizes local jurisdictions to establish Development Impact Mitigation Fees (DIMFs) to fund necessary public infrastructure. The County of Santa Barbara and City of Santa Maria have adopted several DIMF programs. Some of the established programs are imposed Countywide, while others apply to specific geographical areas within the County. The City of Santa Maria fee program is referenced as Growth Mitigation and Development Impact Fees, and is incorporated into Chapter 8-15 of the Municipal Code (and “Attachment A” of the City’s Schedule of Fees and Charges. The Recreation and Parks mitigation fee adopted by the City under this program is separate from the Quimby Act requirements described above.

City of Santa Maria General Plan Resources Management Element (2001)

The City's General Plan Resources Management Element describes existing parks and recreation facilities, activities, and financing in Santa Maria. The following ordinance, goals, and policies listed in the Resources Management Element establish parkland provision standards in the City:

Subdivision Ordinance Standard. The level of service standard, or Subdivision Ordinance standard, requires three to five acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

Goal 8- Recreation. Maintain a high quality and comprehensive recreational system for the residents of Santa Maria.

Policy 8.1. Provide a comprehensive public and private recreation system with diverse recreational opportunities for all residents.

Objective 8.1a. Diverse Recreational Activities. Provide and maintain, in conjunction with school districts, civic organizations, and other private entities, diverse and organized recreational activities that benefit all residents in the community.

Objective 8.1b. Recreational Facility Demands. Provide a balanced recreational facility system that meets recreation demands associated with the projected population in the Land Use Element

Objective 8.1.c. Recreational Facilities Standards. Adopt the recreational facilities and development standards outlined in the Resources Management Element and the Background Information Report.

Goal 9 – Parks and Facilities. Provide and maintain a balanced park system meeting the needs of the residents of Santa Maria as the community continues to grow.

Policy 9. Provide and maintain a balanced system of parks and recreation facilities that are distributed throughout the City which are accessible to all residents.

Objective 9.1.a(1). Adequate Park Facilities. Maintain a high quality, diverse park system which enhances and builds on the variety of community values and provide adequate park acreage and recreation facilities to serve the needs of present and future residents.

Objective 9.1.a(2). Joint Use Agreements. Increase recreational resources through continued coordination with the Santa Maria Area's school districts, Allan Hancock Community College, and Santa Barbara County.

Objective 9.1.b. Balanced Distribution of Parks. Develop new public parks and facilities in all sectors of the City.

Objective 9.1.c. Maintenance of Park Facilities. Improve maintenance of existing park facilities, and establishment of a reliable source of funding for the ongoing maintenance of parks and facilities.

Objective 9.1.d. Dual Use Retardation Basins. Require, where appropriate, new and existing retardation basins, drainage easements, utility easements, and open space corridors to be improved by adjacent developers for recreational purposes as conditions to development.

Objective 9.1.e. Multiple Use of Public Lands. Continue to promote the multiple use of existing public lands (school playgrounds, flood control retardation basins and easements) for recreational purposes.

Objective 9.1.f. Protection of Recreation Open Space. Protect open space areas designated for recreation and parks against conversion to non-recreation purposes.

Objective 9.1.g. Neighborhood Restoration Program. Promote public understanding of the Neighborhood Restoration Program to better serve an involved community.

Objective 9.1.h. Nuisance Mitigation Construct. park facilities in a manner that mitigates user annoyances to surrounding residential areas and are readily accessible to the general public.

Objective 9.1.i. Natural Preservation Areas. Provide natural preservation areas which can be used for environmental education, development of nature appreciation, and the demonstration of water conserving landscape.

4.13.2 Impact Analysis

a. Methodology and Significance Thresholds

The following criteria are based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. The effects of the project on recreation would be significant if the project would:

1. 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;
2. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

b. Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold 1:	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?
Threshold 2:	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?

Impact REC-1 THE PROJECT WOULD ACCOMMODATE NEW RESIDENTS IN THE CITY OF SANTA MARIA WHO WOULD USE EXISTING AND PLANNED PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES. PROVISION OF ON-SITE PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES WOULD MEET THE ADOPTED CITY PARKLAND STANDARD FOR THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA. THEREFORE, IMPACTS TO PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES WOULD BE CLASS III, LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.

The project would result in urban development, including new residential land uses, within the 155-acre Specific Plan area. At full buildout the project would include 1,168 dwelling units and add an estimated 3,177 new residents (1,168 high-density, medium-density, and low-density dwelling units x 2.72 people/unit [Department of Finance 2018]). New residents associated with the project would increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks as well as other recreational facilities.

As shown in the Land Use Plan (refer to Figure 3 in Section 2, Project Description), approximately 12 percent, or 19 acres, of the project area is preserved for recreational and open space uses. The project would include development of a 19-acre public park system in the Recreation Open Space, on the eastern border of the project site adjacent to South Depot Street. The amended Specific Plan

includes a multi-use path in the northern portion of this park area that would connect with bicycle lane and sidewalk improvements in La Brea Avenue. This path would provide access for the proposed junior high school from West Stowell, separate from Western Avenue. A combination of active and passive uses would likely be designed within the park area, and details for development will be determined by the City.

Sidewalks and pedestrian paths will link residential, commercial, school, and open space uses. A Class II bike lane is also proposed to connect Battle Road to Stowell Road along Western Avenue.

The proposed 19 acres of community parkland would provide approximately 6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, which exceeds the City's adopted performance standard of 3 to 5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents and would contribute to the City's policy goal to achieve this standard on a City-wide basis (Subdivision Ordinance Standard of the City of Santa Maria General Plan Resources Management Element). In addition, the project applicant would be required to pay City parkland development fees (Quimby Act fees) in accordance with the City's Development Impact Fee program (A.B. 1600 Mitigation Fee Program). Parkland development fees are intended to offset increased usage of existing recreational facilities attributed to the project buildout. Proposed development may be eligible for a fee credit at the City's determination, based on parks provided as part of the proposed project. Therefore, the project would not increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

Mitigation Measures

This impact would be less than significant without the need for mitigation.

c. Cumulative Impacts

The City of Santa Maria has a population of 107,356 (Department of Finance [DOF] 2019). Based on the City's adopted parkland standard, a minimum of approximately 322 acres of total parkland should be provided in the City. There is currently approximately 367 acres of parkland in the City. This results in approximately 3.42 acres of total parkland per 1,000 residents. Based on existing population and parks acreage conditions, the City is meeting its adopted parkland standard (Subdivision Ordinance Standard of the City of Santa Maria General Plan Resources Management Element).

The project would add 19 acres of community parkland in the City. The project would also add an estimated 3,177 residents to the City, but overall the project would contribute to the City's policy goal to achieve the adopted parkland standard on a City-wide basis. The project would provide additional parkland that would be consistent with achieving the standard on a City-wide basis. In addition, individual projects in the City, including this project, would be required to pay City parkland development fees in accordance with the City's Development Impact Fee program. The project would not contribute to cumulative adverse impacts to existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

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4.14 Transportation and Traffic

This section provides analyses of the potential transportation and circulation impacts associated with the project. This section is based on the Revised Traffic Impact Study (Traffic Study) prepared for the project by Associated Transportation Engineers (ATE) in June 2019 (Appendix F).

4.14.1 Setting

a. Study Area Roadways

The project site is located in the central-western portion of the City of Santa Maria within the northern half of the City's Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan area. The project site is located south of Stowell Road, west of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad (SMVRR) tracks and South Depot Street, north of Battles Road, and east of Blosser Road. The project site is approximately 1.5 miles west of United States Highway 101 (U.S. 101) and approximately one mile south of State Route 166 (SR 166)/Main Street). The project site is served by a network of highways, arterial, and collector streets, as shown on Figure 4.14-1. In classifying roadways in the city, the General Plan Circulation Element distinguishes between those roads for which mobility is emphasized and those for which the primary purpose is to provide access to adjacent land. Freeways and arterials are in the former category, with little or no access provided to adjacent land, while minor and local roads are in the latter category. Collector streets serve to provide access to properties and to connect local streets to arterials. The following paragraphs describe the major components of the street network that would be affected by the project, as presented in the Traffic Study (ATE 2019; Appendix F).

U.S. 101

U.S. 101, located east of the project site, is a north-south freeway that serves as the major link through the Santa Maria Valley and is the principal inter-city route along the Central Coast. U.S. 101 is a six-lane freeway within the Santa Maria area, with four lanes provided north and south of the City. Access between the project site and U.S. 101 is provided via the U.S. 101/Stowell Road and U.S. 101/Betteravia Road interchanges.

East-West Surface Streets

Main Street

Main Street, located north of the project site, is an arterial road within the City of Santa Maria. Main Street is also part of State Route 166, which connects the city with the Guadalupe area to the west of the city. Main Street is a four-lane arterial road east and west of Blosser Road.

Stowell Road

Stowell Road, located along the northern frontage of the project site, is an arterial road that extends from U.S. 101 on the east to Black Road on the west. Stowell Road is a four-lane arterial road east and west of Blosser Road.

Figure 4.14-1 Existing Street Network



Battles Road

Battles Road, located along the southern frontage of the project site, is an arterial road that extends from Bradley Road on the east to “A” Street on the west. Battles Road is a four-lane arterial road in the study area.

Betteravia Road

Betteravia Road, located south of the project site, is an east-west arterial road that extends through the city. Betteravia Road contains four to six lanes within the city and is a two-lane road east and west of the city.

North-South Surface Streets

Blosser Road

Blosser Road, located along the western frontage of the project site, is a four-lane arterial road that extends north of Betteravia Road to the northern city limits. South of Betteravia Road, Blosser Road takes the name Skyway Driveway and extends to State Route 135.

Western Avenue

Western Avenue is a north-south, two-lane collector road that extends north from Stowell Road and south from Battles Road.

Depot Street

Depot Street, located east of the project site, is a two- to four-lane arterial street that extends between Fesler Street on the north to just south of Carmen Lane. A short segment of Depot Street also extends between Betteravia Road and McCoy Lane.

Broadway (State Route 135)

Broadway (State Route 135), located east of the project site, extends from U.S. 101 near the northern city limit to its junction with State Route 1 south of the community of Orcutt. Broadway is a four- to six-lane arterial that serves as the primary north-south route through the Santa Maria/Orcutt area. This roadway is named “Broadway” north of Santa Maria Way and “Orcutt Expressway” south of Santa Maria Way.

Miller Street

Miller Street, located east of the project site, is a north-south, four-lane arterial road within the city. This road is commonly used by local drivers as an alternative to Broadway for north-south travel.

Bradley Road

Bradley Road, located west of the project site, is a north-south, four-lane arterial frontage road that parallels the west side of U.S. 101.

b. Intersection Operations

The analysis of traffic and its effects on roadway operations focuses on intersections during peak travel periods because these factors represent the place and time traffic flow on urban arterials is most constrained. The operating condition of intersections is based on “Level of Service” (LOS) concepts and procedures outlined in the Transportation Research Board’s Highway Capacity Manual (HCM; 2016). LOS is measured on an A to F scale, with LOS A representing the best operating conditions from a traveler’s perspective and LOS F representing conditions where demands exceed capacity. LOS for the signalized intersections included in the Traffic Study are evaluated using the intersection capacity utilization (ICU) methodology, which is a percentage calculated by dividing the number of cars passing through the critical movement of the intersection divided by the capacity of the intersection for that movement, adopted by the City of Santa Maria. The LOS definitions and corresponding ICU range for traffic operations at signalized intersections are shown in Table 4.14-1.

Table 4.14-1 LOS Definitions and Corresponding ICU Range – Traffic Signals

LOS	ICU Range	Definition
A	0-0.60	Conditions of free unobstructed flow, no delays and all signal phases sufficient in duration to clear all approaching vehicles.
B	0.61-0.70	Conditions of stable flow, very little delay, a few phases are unable to handle all approaching vehicles.
C	0.71-0.80	Conditions of stable flow, delays are low to moderate, full use of peak direction signal phases is experienced.
D	0.81-0.90	Conditions approaching unstable flow, delays are moderate to heavy, significant signal time deficiencies are experienced for short durations during the peak traffic period.
E	0.90-1.00	Conditions of unstable flow, delays are significant, signal phase timing is generally insufficient, congestion exists for extended duration throughout the peak period.
F	>1.00	Conditions of forced flow, travel speeds are low and volumes are well above capacity. This condition is often caused when vehicles released by an upstream signal are unable to proceed because of back-ups from a downstream signal.

Source: ATE 2019 (Appendix F)

The City of Santa Maria considers LOS D or better acceptable for roadway and intersection operations, with mitigation required for LOS E and LOS F.

c. Existing Traffic Volumes

Existing peak hour traffic volumes were obtained from traffic count data collected by the City in 2018 and 2019. The traffic counts are included in the Technical Appendix of the Traffic Study included as Appendix F to this Supplemental EIR. Figure 4.14-2 shows the existing traffic volumes at the intersections evaluated in the Traffic Study. The existing LOS for the study area intersections are provided in Table 4.14-2.

Figure 4.14-2 Existing Traffic Volumes

1	80(43) 44(17) 107(203)	2	124(67) 71(17) 31(26)	3	205(198) 84(85)	4	79(150) 296(152) 10(8)	5	90(133) (273)350 (95)109
	399(110) 490(217) 217(94)		219(27) 480(96) 166(41)		81(40) 410(248)		18(7) 345(337) 223(103)		(169)104 (164)322 (87)170
5	97(92) 913(608) 36(83)	6	55(63) 582(286) 104(38)	7	133(58) 482(218) 160(116)	8	5(1) 472(580) 1(1)	9	(5)116 (7)21 (2)2
	75(5) 436(380) 136(89)		138(68) 553(475) 68(54)		177(116) 544(398) 297(131)		994(581) 41(50) 18(8)		(2)0 (2)1 (6)10
9	929(873) 69(88)	10	370(180) 419(167) 44(33)	11	188(55) 611(630) 151(143)	12	(100)86 (147)232 (96)139	13	(403)480 (189)170
	212(91) 38(17)		71(34) 69(27) 50(20)		190(168) 266(267) 31(54)		527(597) 12(6)		(208)136 (14)6
13	130(60) 139(121) 184(147)	14	(59)178 (305)366 (15)21	15	59(5) 919(590) 99(48)	16	66(29) 613(296) 125(61)	17	(44)52 (325)545 (113)122
	150(188) 442(488) 102(125)		476(505) 91(55)		152(157) 351(394) 102(72)		96(58) 346(396) 87(23)		83(91) (314)483 (29)82
17	49(67) 651(729) 127(112)	18	629(727) 80(30)	19	223(209) 556(687) 60(89)	20	311(153) 773(465) 67(84)	21	(113)328 (552)527 (161)230
	40(37) 16(12) 62(93)		58(73) 7(22) 74(121)		198(67) 496(322) 69(48)		204(75) 612(470) 124(85)		99(294) (77)949 (141)141
21	200(60) 308(103) 157(73)	22	71(131) 826(993)	23	(111)287 (169)415				
	236(91) 930(564) 236(116)		1203(710) 394(220)		064(570) 211(276)				

Source: ATE 2019

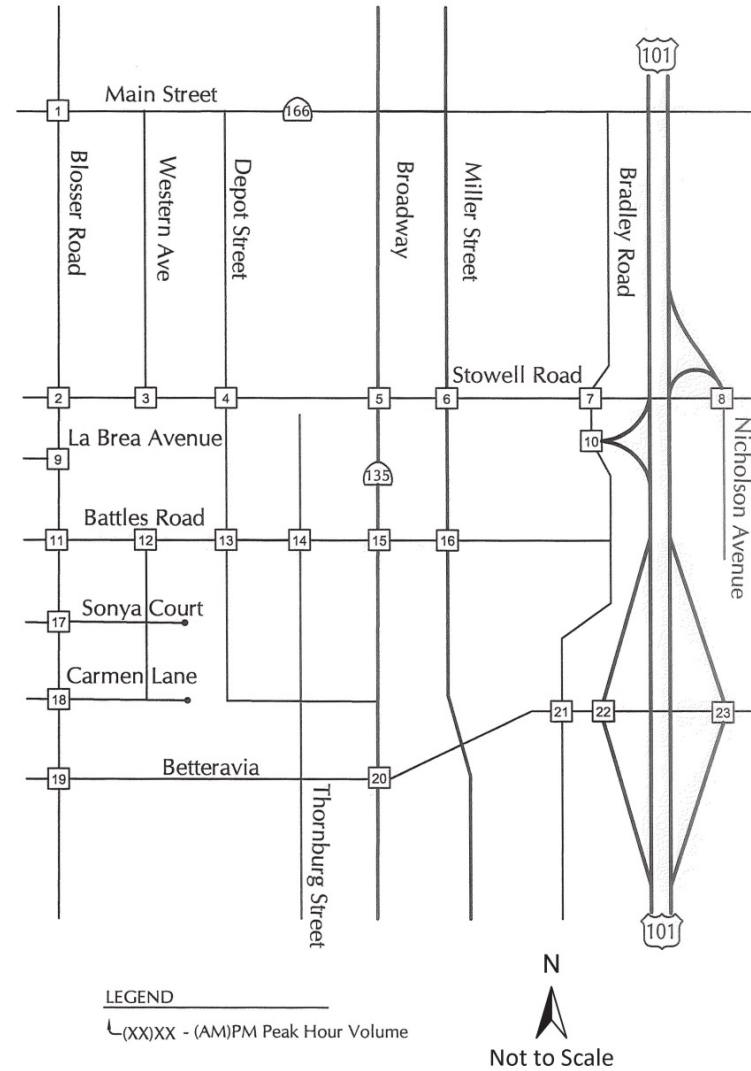


Table 4.14-2 Existing Levels of Service

Intersection	Traffic Control	AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour	
		ICU	LOS	ICU	LOS
Blosser Rd/Main St	Signal	0.60	A	0.75	C
Stowell Rd/Blosser Rd	Signal	0.53	A	0.81	D
Stowell Rd/Western Ave	Stop Sign	12.5 sec	B	18.0 sec	C
Stowell Rd/Depot St	Signal	0.49	A	0.58	A
Stowell Rd/Broadway	Signal	0.57	A	0.78	C
Stowell Rd/Miller St	Signal	0.52	A	0.76	C
Stowell Rd/Bradley Rd	Signal	0.51	A	0.64	B
Stowell Rd/U.S. 101 NB	Stop Sign	8.1 sec	A	8.8 sec	A
Blosser Rd/La Brea Ave	Signal	0.48	A	0.55	A
Bradley Rd/U.S. 101 SB-Colombia	Signal	0.51	A	0.80	C
Battles Rd/Blosser Rd	Signal	0.52	A	0.68	B
Battles Rd/Western Ave	Stop Sign	11.8 sec	B	10.4 sec	B
Battles Rd/Depot St	Signal	0.48	A	0.50	A
Battles Rd/Thornburg St	Stop Sign	12.4 sec	B	21.5 sec	C
Battles Rd/Broadway	Signal	0.47	A	0.68	B
Battles Rd/Miller St	Signal	0.44	A	0.62	B
Blosser Rd/Sonya Ln	Stop Sign	15.3 sec	C	11.8 sec	B
Blosser Rd/Carmen Ln	Signal	0.53	A	0.52	A
Blosser Rd-Skyway/Betteravia Rd	Signal	0.61	B	0.73	C
Betteravia Rd/Broadway	Signal	0.59	A	0.83	D
Betteravia Rd/Bradley Rd	Signal	0.43	A	0.74	C
Betteravia Rd/U.S. 101 SB	Signal	0.82	D	0.90	D
Betteravia Rd/U.S. 101 NB	Signal	0.40	A	0.70	B

Source: ATE 2019 (Appendix F)

As shown in Table 4.14-2 the study area intersections currently operate at LOS D or better during the AM and PM peak hours, which meet the City's LOS D operating standards.

d. Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

The General Plan Circulation Element addresses alternative modes of transportation, including transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities. A series of policies and objectives under Goal C.6 relate to alternative modes of transportation, and the specific policies C.6.c.1 through C.6.c.4 address bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The City also adopted a Bikeway Master Plan in 2009 consistent with Objective C.6.c.1 and Figure C-2 in the General Plan Circulation Element.

Currently, Class II Bike Lanes (striped and stenciled lane for one-way bicycle travel on a street or highway) run along the southern boundary of the project site along Battles Road, along the southern half of the western boundary of the project site along Blosser Road, and along Western Avenue on the southern portion of the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan area south of the project site. Class I Bike Paths (multi-use paths, separate from the vehicle roadway) also run along the southern side of Battles Road, along Blosser Road, and into the southern portion of the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan area south of the project site.

e. Transit Facilities

The General Plan Circulation Element describes four types of public transportation services: (1) the Santa Maria Area Transit (SMAT) local bus service operating within the City, (2) the Breeze intercity bus service among Santa Maria, Lompoc, and Vandenberg Air Force Base, (3) the Clean Air Express interregional bus service that runs between Santa Maria and Lompoc, Goleta, Santa Ynez Valley, and Santa Barbara, and (4) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Paratransit that serves people with disabilities in the City. Greyhound/Trailways Corporation also connects Santa Maria with cities throughout California, and Amtrak bus service connects the City with San Luis Obispo to the north and Santa Barbara to the south. Additionally, SMOOTH Inc. and Dial-A-Ride, provide transit service upon request throughout the City. The nearest transit route to the project site is SMAT Route 4, which includes stops along Depot Street and Stowell Road, adjacent to eastern and northern project site boundaries, respectively.

f. Regulatory Framework

City of Santa Maria General Plan

The General Plan Circulation Element contains goals, objectives, policies, and implementation programs to assist policy makers and City staff in making future transportation decisions. These components also provide guidance for the evaluation and approval of development projects. The relevant goals, objectives, and policies are provided as follows.

Goal C.1 – Comprehensive Transportation System

To provide and maintain a comprehensive transportation system that provides for the safe and efficient transport of people and goods throughout the City.

Policy C.1.a – Acceptable Levels of Service

The City shall maintain an acceptable peak-hour level of service on all arterials and collectors and at signalized intersections. Service Level "D" on all roadways and at all signalized intersections shall be the levels maintained.

Objective C.1.a.1 – Improved Levels of Service

Arterials and collectors with peak hour levels of service worse than D, and all intersections with peak hour levels of service worse than D shall be improved to operate at an acceptable peak-hour level of service within the planning period.

Objective C.1.a.2 – New Development Impacts on Road Network

As new development creates the need, existing local roads within the road network will be improved and additional local and regional roads will be constructed, so as to keep all such roads functioning at an acceptable level.

Policy C.1.b – Driveways and other Encroachments

Develop access standards regarding new driveways and other encroachments to arterial and collector streets so as to minimize conflicts that are detrimental to safe and efficient operating conditions.

Objective C.1.b.1 – Traffic Signal Spacing

Plan spacing between traffic signals to optimize interconnection, signalize only warranted locations, and strive to implement signal timing that will result in efficient travel times and fuel conservation.

Goal C.2 – Consistency with Other Elements of General Plan

Provide transportation facilities and services that are consistent with the land use and development goals, policies, and programs of the City General Plan.

Policy C.2.a – Preservation of road right-of-way

Require appropriate right-of-way dedications and building setbacks of all new developments to facilitate construction of roadways shown on the Circulation Plan Map (Figure C-1), including protection of right-of-way for future roadways.

Objective C.2.a – Implement Roadway Improvements (Resolution 2011-111)

Implement the roadway and intersection improvements to handle the City's projected travel demands. These circulation improvements are designed to alleviate present and anticipated problems with the City's circulation system.

Objective C.2.b – Improve Deficient Roads and Intersections (Resolution 2011-111)

Improve existing roadways and intersections to adequately handle the increased traffic resulting from implementation of the Santa Maria Land Use Element and development of annexation areas located within the City's Sphere of Influence.

Goal C.3 – Funding of Streets

Cost-effective operation, equitable distribution of funding, and development of streets to meet the City's existing and future transportation needs.

Policy C.3.a – Distribution of Costs

Equitably distribute the costs for roadway and intersection improvements among property owners/developers who benefit from new development and roadway users.

Policy C.3.b – Distribution of Costs

Each new development, which would individually and/or cumulatively contribute to the need for improvements or additions to local roads or roads within the regional network, bears its pro-rata share of the costs of all such improvements or additions to the extent taxes or other public revenues are inadequate for such purposes.

Objective C.3.a – Distribution of Costs (Resolution 2011-111)

Establish an equitable method to distribute the costs of regional roadway improvements, traffic signal installation, and interchange improvements among property owners/developers benefiting from new development and, if possible, roadway users.

Goal C.6 – Alternative Modes of Transportation

Provide for the development and use of alternative modes of transportation within an integrated system of transportation facilities.

Policy C.6.a.1 – Promote Alternative Modes of Transportation

Promote the use of alternative transportation modes such as transit, bicycle, pedestrian, airplane, and light rail to relieve traffic congestion and improve air quality.

Policy C.6.a.2 – Conditions on Development

Discretionary development shall be conditioned, where feasible, to minimize traffic impacts by incorporating bicycle and pedestrian paths and those support facilities (e.g. as bicycle lockers and showers), ridesharing programs, and transit improvements (bus turnouts, shelters, and benches) into the project design.

Policy C.6.c.1 – Bicycle and Pedestrian

Develop bicycling and pedestrian facilities as a major transportation and recreational mode to serve the transportation and recreational needs of the residents.

Policy C.6.c.2 – Safe Streets for Bicycles

Provide safe, efficient and convenient streets for the use of pedestrians and cyclists throughout the City, and where possible, provide separate bikeway access to major destinations (e.g. schools, parks, and commercial and employment centers) to assure safety.

Policy C.6.c.3 – Multi-Purpose Trails

Locate multi-purpose trails on exclusive lanes physically separated from automobiles. Where separate bike facilities cannot be provided, the bikeway shall be designated with lane striping and signing for the protection of both cyclists and motorists.

Congestion Management Program

The Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) has been working with the State, local agencies, and transit agencies on implementing congestion relief projects throughout the County for many years. In January 2019, the SBCAG Board approved a resolution exempting the region from the State Congestion Management Program statute. Accordingly, the project area is not subject to the stipulations of a CMP.

4.14.2 Impact Analysis

a. Methodology and Significance Thresholds

The Traffic Study prepared for the project (Appendix F) used assessment and calculation procedures adopted by the City of Santa Maria. The procedure focuses on the flow of traffic through intersections, since these are the points where traffic movement is constrained and congestion develops. The major effort in the analysis involved determining the Level of Service (LOS) for the

various intersections identified by the City as being affected by the project. Consistent with Policy C.1.a above, the City uses LOS D as an operating standard, and requires a response to improve conditions if the LOS is at a worse level (i.e. LOS E or F).

The traffic impact analysis covers all of the development anticipated for the proposed RRSP amendments and rezone, and includes projections of traffic from all of the intended uses within the project site. As such, it addresses the potential traffic and transportation impacts of the project development on area roadways, intersections, and other transportation facilities. It does not, however, include a detailed analysis of individual development projects within the project area to address the exact locations and designs of driveways or internal parking and drive areas. These design details will be reviewed and established by the City during consideration of the individual Planned Development permits that are required for future projects within the project site. Establishment of the final designs within the Planned Development permits is not expected to alter the overall analysis regarding traffic generation and its associated impacts and mitigation as presented in this Supplemental EIR.

The City of Santa Maria is currently implementing an operational improvement project to address existing deficiencies at the U.S. 101/Betteravia Road interchange, which include widening the U.S. 101 southbound off-ramp and installing two new eastbound through lanes on Betteravia Road at the U.S. 101/Betteravia Road southbound ramps intersection. The S. 101/Betteravia Road interchange project is anticipated for completion by the end of 2019 and assumed complete in the traffic analysis for the project. It should be noted that this Supplemental EIR is not intended to meet the CEQA and/or NEPA documentation requirements of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for the improvements at the interchange.

Methodology

The projection of trip generation is based on standardized rates, assumptions, and traffic model procedures used by the City of Santa Maria. The trip generation represents independently estimated traffic volumes for each proposed use, in terms of average daily trips (ADT). Additional details regarding the project trip generation analysis are provided in the Traffic Study in Appendix F (ATE 2019).

Following procedures set forth by the City of Santa Maria, the Traffic Study analyzed the project's effects under existing and cumulative conditions and for both the AM and PM peak hours. The cumulative conditions were forecast assuming the additional traffic that would be generated by development of the approved and pending projects identified by the City. This cumulative analysis is consistent with the City traffic impact assessment procedures.

For signalized intersections, the LOS was based on a calculation of Intersection Capacity Utilization (ICU). The ICU value is a percentage or fraction calculated by dividing an intersection's capacity (in vehicles per hour) by the number of vehicles per hour using the intersection. For non-signalized intersections controlled by stop signs, the LOS was based on a calculation of the average vehicle delay in seconds during the peak hour.

Significance Thresholds

Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines considers a project to have a significant impact on transportation and/or circulation if the project would:

1. Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities;

2. Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b);
3. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible use (e.g., farm equipment); and/or
4. Result in inadequate emergency access.

With respect to Threshold 1 above, the City General Plan Circulation Element Policy C.1.a (listed above) states that Level of Service “D” shall be maintained, and Objective C.1.a.2, along with other policies, indicate that new development would create the need for, and would be responsible for contributing to the funding of, new improvements to maintain this LOS.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b) provides guidance for determining the significance of transportation impacts, based on vehicle miles traveled attributed to each proposed project. However, as stated therein, lead agencies may immediately elect to be governed by the provisions of Section 15064.3(b), evaluating project impacts on transportation on the basis of vehicle miles traveled, but are not mandated to do so until July 1, 2020. Accordingly, the evaluation of transportation impacts for this project does not include a determination of consistency or inconsistency of the project with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3(b), and Threshold 2 is not discussed further herein.

b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold:	Would the project conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?
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Impact T-1 WITH THE ADDITION OF PROJECT GENERATED TRAFFIC TO EXISTING TRAFFIC VOLUMES, TWO STUDY AREA INTERSECTIONS WOULD OPERATE AT LOS F, WHICH EXCEEDS THE CITY’S LOS D INTERSECTION OPERATING STANDARD. THIS IMPACT WOULD BE CLASS II, LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH INCORPORATION OF MITIGATION.

Trip generation estimates were developed for the existing and proposed scenarios using the rates presented in ITE’s Trip Generation Manual (2017) and the San Diego Association of Governments Traffic Generators Manual (2002). Trip generation estimates for the existing and proposed land use scenarios on the project site are shown in Table 4.14-3.

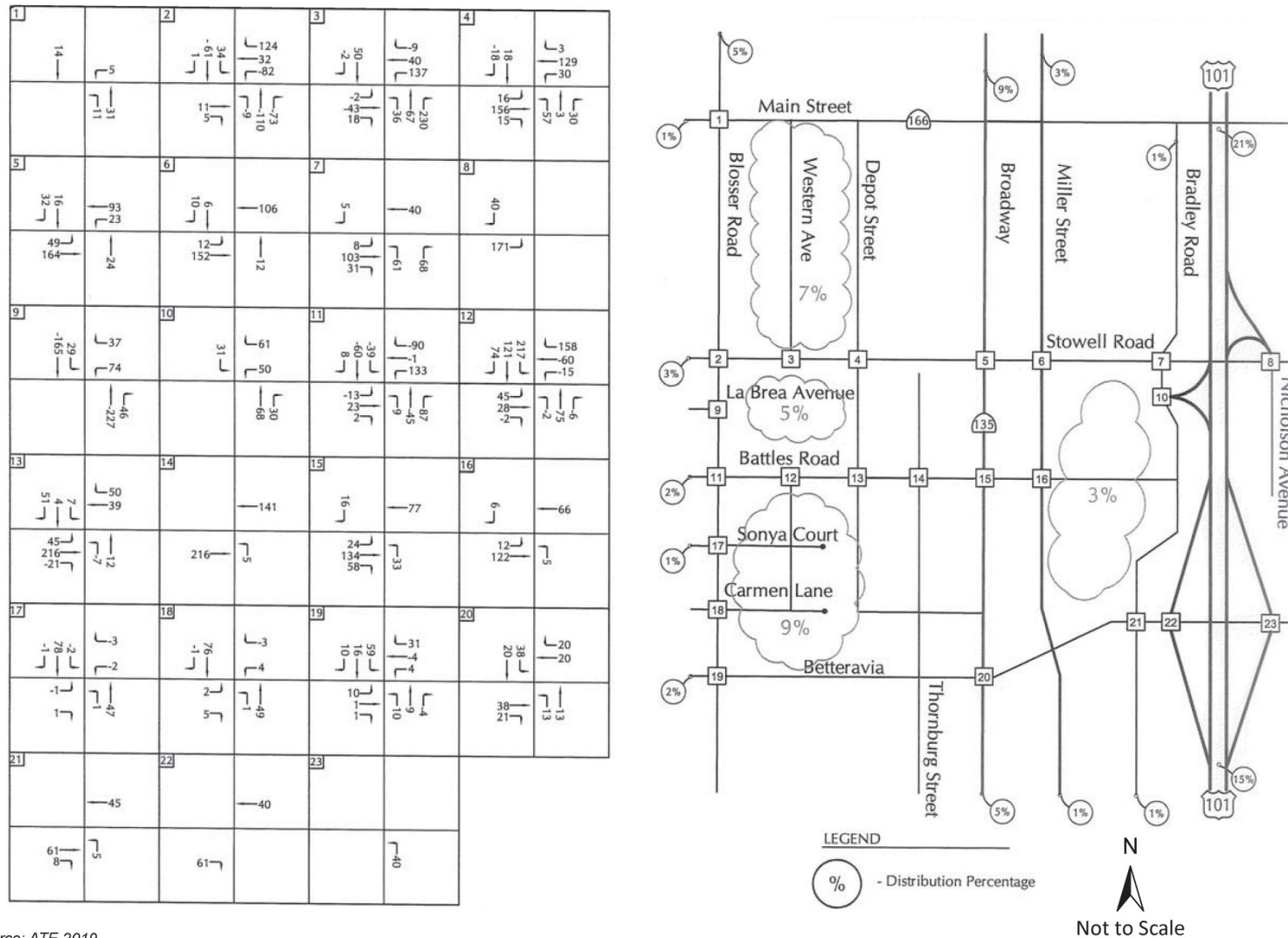
Table 4.14-3 Project Trip Generation

Land Use	Size	ADT		AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour	
		Rate	Trips	Rate	Trips	Rate	Trips
Existing Zoning							
Single Family Residential	656 DU	9.44	6,193	0.74	485	0.99	649
Medium Density Residential	144 DU	9.44	1,359	0.74	107	0.99	143
High Density Residential	176 DU	7.32	1,288	0.46	81	0.56	99
Retail Center	196,020 SF	37.75	5,550	0.94	138	3.81	560
Public Facility (School)	800 students	2.13	1,704	0.58	464	0.17	136
Open Space (Park)	14 acres	50.00	950	6.50	91	4.50	63
Total			16,794			1,366	1,650
Proposed Zoning							
Single Family Residential	464 DU	9.44	4,380	0.74	343	0.99	459
High Density Residential	704 DU	7.32	5,153	0.46	324	0.56	394
Retail Center	130,680 SF	37.75	3,700	0.94	92	3.81	373
Public Facility (School)	800 students	2.13	1,704	0.58	464	0.17	136
Open Space (Park)	19 acres	50.00	950	6.5	124	4.50	86
Total			15,887			1,347	1,448
Source: Traffic Study, Appendix F							

As shown in Table 4.14-3, the development facilitated by the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan zoning would result in approximately 16,794 daily trips, with 1,366 trips occurring in the AM peak hour and 1,650 trips occurring in the PM peak hour, while development facilitated by the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments and zoning would result in approximately 15,887 daily trips, with 1,347 trips occurring in the AM peak hour and 1,448 trips occurring in the PM peak hour.

The trip distribution pattern was developed for the existing and proposed conditions based on “select-zone” model runs, which isolates traffic generated from development on the project site. The AM and PM peak hour distribution and assignment of traffic for the project developed from the select-zone model is illustrated in Figure 4.14-3 and Figure 4.14-4. Figure 4.14-5 and Figure 4.14-6 depict traffic volumes under existing + project conditions.

Figure 4.14-3 AM Peak Hour Trip Distribution and Assignment



Source: ATE 2019

Figure 4.14-4 PM Peak Hour Trip Distribution and Assignment

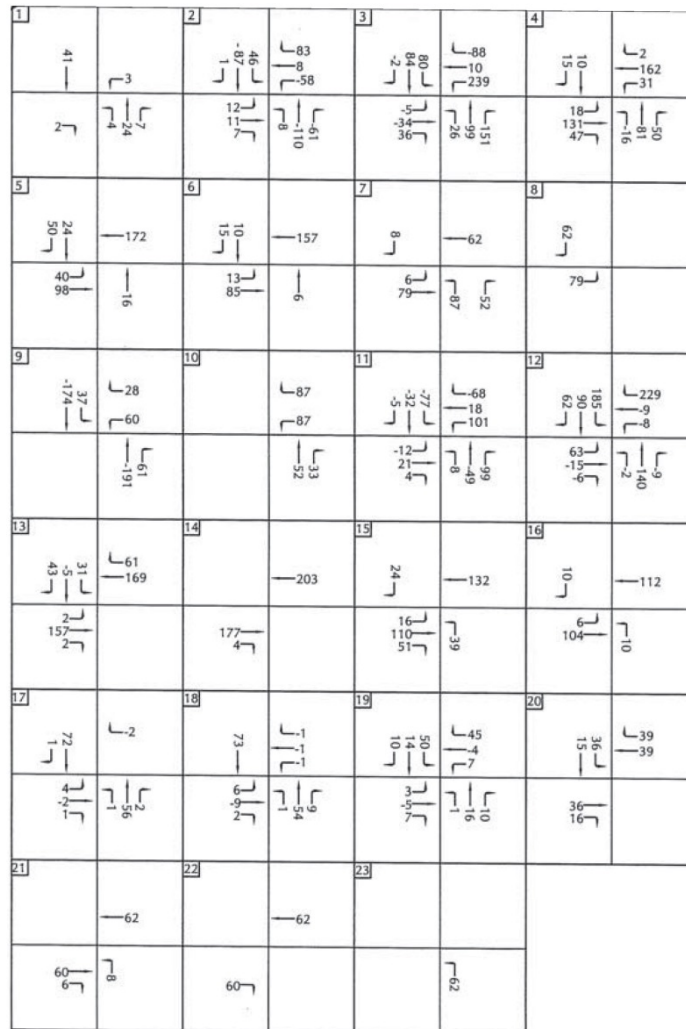


Figure 4.14-5 AM Existing + Specific Plan Traffic Volumes

1	2	3	4
43 724 205	36 193 193	101 679 27	199 138 47
110 217 94	130 446 135	39 512 108	230 292 137
5	6	7	8
92 624 115	66 411 125	38 292 73	57 144 18
138 449 69	149 561 93	80 627 54	23 493 18
9	10	11	12
29 708 88	37 74	439 360	57 144 18
91 71	46 594 30	58 362 13	214 75 12
13	14	15	16
67 125 198	109 344 15	48 590 95	44 391 113
233 704 104	15 140 128	181 624 136	83 314 34
17	18	19	20
65 807 111	63 722	33 22 188	133 572 161
36 12 46	40 642 68	105 617 48	98 730 154
21	22	23	
57 103 73	81 866 320	355 34	
91 625 124	255 96 120	74 270	

Source: ATE 2019

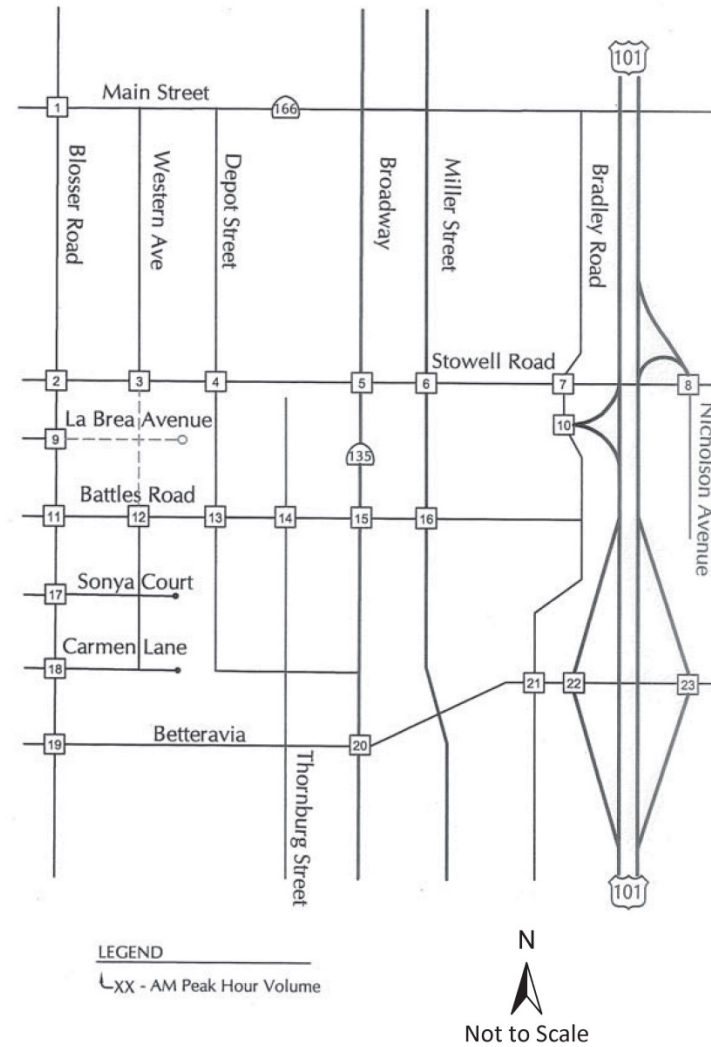
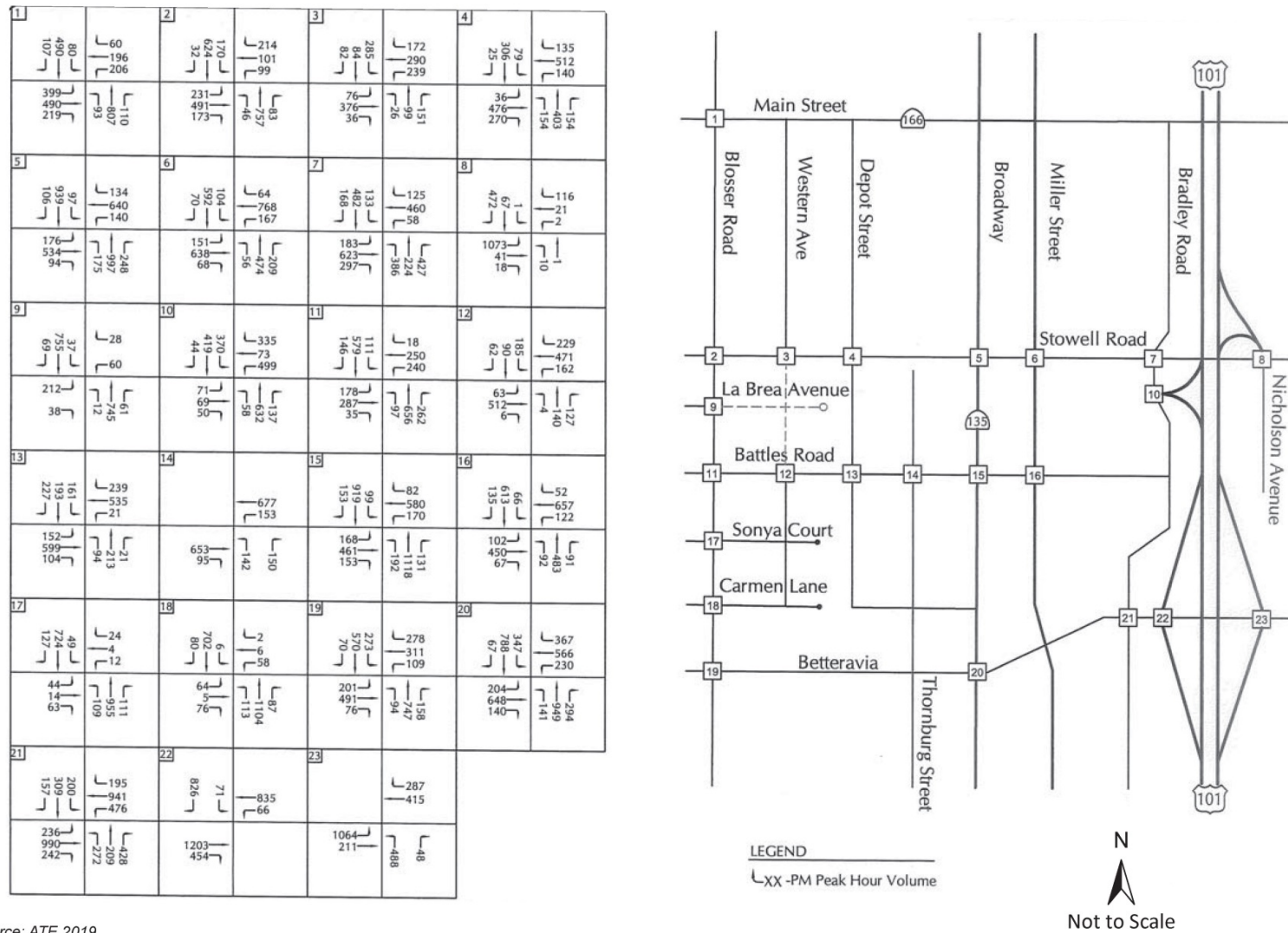


Figure 4.14-6 PM Existing + Specific Plan Traffic Volumes



Source: ATE 2019

Levels of service were calculated for the study area intersections using the existing + project zoning. Table 4.14-4 and Table 4.14-5 compare the existing and existing + project levels of service for the AM and PM peak hour periods.

Table 4.14-4 Existing and Existing + Project Levels of Service – AM Peak Hour

Intersection	Existing		Existing + Project		Impact?
	ICU	LOS	ICU	LOS	
Blosser Rd/Main St	0.60	A	0.62	A	No
Stowell Rd/Blosser Rd	0.53	A	0.49	A	No
Stowell Rd/Western Ave ¹	12.5 sec	B	19.1 sec	C	No
Stowell Rd/Depot St	0.49	A	0.56	A	No
Stowell Rd/Broadway	0.57	A	0.65	B	No
Stowell Rd/Miller St	0.52	A	0.57	A	No
Stowell Rd/Bradley Rd	0.51	A	0.55	A	No
Stowell Rd/U.S. 101 NB	8.1 sec	A	8.2 sec	A	No
Blosser Rd/La Brea Ave ¹	0.48	A	0.45	A	No
Bradley Rd/U.S. 101 SB-Colombia	0.51	A	0.58	A	No
Battles Rd/Blosser Rd	0.52	A	0.59	A	No
Battles Rd/Western Ave ¹	11.8 sec	B	11.8 sec	B	No
Battles Rd/Depot St	0.48	A	0.54	A	No
Battles Rd/Thornburg St	12.4 sec	B	19.2 sec	C	No
Battles Rd/Broadway	0.47	A	0.55	A	No
Battles Rd/Miller St	0.44	A	0.47	A	No
Blosser Rd/Sonya Ln	15.3 sec	C	16.9 sec	C	No
Blosser Rd/Carmen Ln	0.53	A	0.55	A	No
Blosser Rd-Skyway/Betteravia Rd	0.61	B	0.65	B	No
Betteravia Rd/Broadway	0.59	A	0.63	B	No
Betteravia Rd/Bradley Rd	0.43	A	0.44	A	No
Betteravia Rd/U.S. 101 SB ²	0.82	D	0.51	A	No
Betteravia Rd/U.S. 101 NB ²	0.40	A	0.42	A	No

¹ Existing + Project LOS assumes improvements required to connect the Specific Plan area to adjacent streets.

² Existing + Project LOS assumes planned U.S. 101/Betteravia Road interchange improvements.

Source: Traffic Study, Appendix F

Table 4.14-5 Existing and Existing + Project Levels of Service – PM Peak Hour

Intersection	Existing		Existing + Project		Impact?
	ICU	LOS	ICU	LOS	
Blosser Rd/Main St	0.75	B	0.76	B	No
Stowell Rd/Blosser Rd	0.81	D	0.73	C	No
Stowell Rd/Western Ave ¹	18.0 sec	C	26.1 sec	D	No
Stowell Rd/Depot St	0.58	A	0.71	C	No
Stowell Rd/Broadway	0.78	C	0.88	D	No
Stowell Rd/Miller St	0.76	C	0.81	D	No
Stowell Rd/Bradley Rd	0.64	B	0.70	B	No
Stowell Rd/U.S. 101 NB	8.8 sec	A	8.8 sec	A	No
Blosser Rd/La Brea Ave ¹	0.55	A	0.51	A	No
Bradley Rd/U.S. 101 SB-Colombia	0.80	C	0.87	D	No
Battles Rd/Blosser Rd	0.68	B	0.68	B	No
Battles Rd/Western Ave ¹	10.4 sec	B	> 50 sec	F	Yes
Battles Rd/Depot St	0.50	A	0.58	A	No
Battles Rd/Thornburg St	21.5 sec	C	> 50 sec	F	Yes
Battles Rd/Broadway	0.68	B	0.75	C	No
Battles Rd/Miller St	0.62	B	0.67	B	No
Blosser Rd/Sonya Ln	11.8 sec	B	12.5 sec	B	No
Blosser Rd/Carmen Ln	0.52	A	0.53	A	No
Blosser Rd-Skyway/Betteravia Rd	0.73	C	0.78	C	No
Betteravia Rd/Broadway	0.83	D	0.86	D	No
Betteravia Rd/Bradley Rd	0.74	C	0.75	C	No
Betteravia Rd/U.S. 101 SB ²	0.90	D	0.62	B	No
Betteravia Rd/U.S. 101 NB ²	0.70	B	0.72	C	No

¹ Existing + Project LOS assumes improvements required to connect the Specific Plan area to adjacent streets.

² Existing + Project LOS assumes planned U.S. 101/Betteravia Road interchange improvements.

Source: Traffic Study, Appendix F

As shown in Table 4.14-5 the intersections of Battles Road/Western Avenue and Battles Road/Thornburg Street are forecast to operate at LOS F during the PM peak hour with the addition of project traffic to existing traffic levels. LOS F at these intersections exceeds the City's LOS D standard. Therefore, the project-generated traffic would conflict with City policy addressing the

circulation system, and this impact would be potentially significant. Upon development of the Specific Plan area, the project applicant would be required to contribute to the City traffic mitigation fee program to contribute to the street network improvements planned to accommodate future traffic volumes. Figures III-4 through III-6 of the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan generally identify various intersection, roadways, and other circulation system improvements that would be included in development of the Specific Plan area. However, the precise location, design, and components of these improvements are not explicitly outlined in the Specific Plan. Therefore, this impact would remain potentially significant and mitigation would be required, as described below.

Mitigation Measures

The following roadway, intersection, and other improvements are identified in the Traffic Study (Appendix F, pages 29-33). To ensure that these improvements are implemented to reduce the potential impacts of the Specific Plan development on the local transportation and circulation system, the following specifications shall be added to Chapter III Public Facilities, Section C Transportation and Circulation, of the proposed Specific Plan.

T-1a Secondary Arterials

Stowell Road and Blosser Road shall undergo frontage improvements adjacent to the Specific Plan area to conform to Secondary Arterial standards, including but not limited to, minor widening to provide required shoulders, curb, gutter, and sidewalk.

T-1b Collector Roads

New street sections of Western Avenue and La Brea Avenue shall be constructed to City standards for Collector Streets.

T-1c Stowell Road/Western Avenue

The intersection of Stowell Road/Western Avenue shall be controlled by all-way stop signs initially and signalized when traffic signal warrants are satisfied (Refer to mitigation measures below for potential cumulative transportation impacts).

T-1d Blosser Road/La Brea Avenue

Traffic signal modifications for the La Brea Avenue extension shall include left-turn phasing on La Brea Avenue.

T-1e Battles Road/Western Avenue

The Battles Road/Western Avenue intersection shall be controlled by traffic signals.

T-1f Western Avenue/La Brea Avenue

The Western Avenue/La Brea Avenue intersection shall be controlled by a modern roundabout.

T-1g School Access

Access for the proposed school shall be limited to La Brea Avenue, with vehicle queuing, circulation, and pedestrian access on La Brea Avenue adjacent to the school drop-off/pick-up and parking areas.

T-1h Battles Road/Thornburg Street

The Battles Road/Thornburg Street intersection shall be controlled by traffic signals.

Significance After Mitigation

Incorporation of Mitigation Measures T-1a through T-1h would ensure that the study area intersections would operate at LOS D or better with project-generated traffic. Mitigation Measures T-1a through T-1h would reduce potential impacts associated with project-generated traffic to a less than significant level.

Threshold 1: Would the project conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?

Impact T-2 THE PROJECT WOULD BE GENERALLY CONSISTENT WITH CITY POLICIES RELATED TO PUBLIC TRANSIT, BICYCLE, AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES. THIS IMPACT WOULD BE CLASS III, LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.

The project would facilitate development of residential, school, and recreational uses which would include sidewalks and features to interconnect land uses. Figure III-4, Circulation, identifies the general location of proposed multi-use paths and parking/bike lanes within the Specific Plan area. Transit stops are not identified in the proposed Specific Plan. The precise location and design for any new transit stops and bikeways in various areas of the Specific Plan area would be established by the City during review and consideration of Planned Development permits within the project. Improvement of internal roadways, including the extension of Western Avenue and La Brea Avenue through the project area will include the installation of curbs and gutters, providing increased safety for the striped bike lanes along that roadway. Additionally, the project would be required to comply with several policies in the City's General Plan Circulation Element that support GOAL C.6 – Alternative Modes of Transportation, to provide for the development and use of alternative modes of transportation within an integrated system of transportation facilities. Therefore, the project would be generally consistent with City policies related to public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, and this impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required. Nevertheless, in order to mitigate potential impacts to air quality, the project would be required to comply with Mitigation Measure AQ-2a, which would require the project to prepare a Transportation Demand Management Plan that includes measures to encourage alternative transportation modes. Compliance with Mitigation Measure AQ-2a would further serve to avoid potential impacts due to conflict with City policies related to public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.

Threshold 3: Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible use (e.g., farm equipment); and/or

Threshold 4: Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?

Impact T-3 THE PROJECT WOULD NOT INCREASE ROADWAY HAZARDS OR RESULT IN INADEQUATE EMERGENCY ACCESS. THIS IMPACT WOULD BE CLASS III, LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.

Development of the project site would include an extension of Western Avenue through the Project site with connection to the existing segments of Western Avenue north and south of the Specific Plan area, and the extension of La Brea Avenue easterly from Blosser Road. These two roadway extensions would serve as the principal components of the Specific Plan street network. Local roadways for future uses within the Specific Plan area would connect to the principal roadway extensions, but have not been specifically identified at this time. All roadway frontage and circulation system improvements would be constructed according to City standards and policies. Interior drives and parking areas would be of sufficient width to accommodate emergency vehicles, as required by the City. Accordingly, the project would not increase roadway hazards or result in adequate emergency access. This impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

c. Cumulative Impacts

The cumulative traffic forecasts assume development of approved and pending development projects in the project vicinity that would contribute to traffic on area roadways and at intersections. Cumulative traffic volumes are shown in Figure 10 and Figure 11 of the Traffic Study (Appendix F).

Table 4.14-6 and Table 4.14-7 show the cumulative and cumulative + project levels of service for the AM and PM peak hour periods.

Table 4.14-6 Cumulative and Cumulative + Project Levels of Service – AM Peak Hour

Intersection	Cumulative		Cumulative + Project		Impact?
	ICU	LOS	ICU	LOS	
Blosser Rd/Main St	0.61	B	0.62	B	No
Stowell Rd/Blosser Rd	0.60	A	0.55	A	No
Stowell Rd/Western Ave ¹	15.2 sec	C	25.7 sec	D	No
Stowell Rd/Depot St	0.54	A	0.61	B	No
Stowell Rd/Broadway	0.61	B	0.69	B	No
Stowell Rd/Miller St	0.53	A	0.59	A	No
Stowell Rd/Bradley Rd	0.55	A	0.59	A	No
Stowell Rd/U.S. 101 NB	8.1 sec	A	8.3 sec	A	No
Blosser Rd/La Brea Ave ¹	0.58	A	0.55	A	No
Bradley Rd/U.S. 101 SB-Colombia	0.55	A	0.62	B	No
Battles Rd/Blosser Rd	0.57	A	0.65	B	No
Battles Rd/Western Ave ¹	13.0 sec	B	>50 sec	F	Yes
Battles Rd/Depot St	0.55	A	0.61	B	No
Battles Rd/Thornburg St	13.1 sec	B	21.8 sec	C	No
Battles Rd/Broadway	0.48	A	0.56	A	No
Battles Rd/Miller St	0.48	A	0.53	A	No
Blosser Rd/Sonya Ln	16.5 sec	C	18.7 sec	C	No
Blosser Rd/Carmen Ln	0.58	A	0.60	A	No
Blosser Rd-Skyway/Betteravia Rd	0.63	B	0.67	B	No
Betteravia Rd/Broadway	0.62	B	0.65	B	No
Betteravia Rd/Bradley Rd	0.51	A	0.53	A	No
Betteravia Rd/U.S. 101 SB ²	0.55	A	0.56	A	No
Betteravia Rd/U.S. 101 NB ²	0.43	A	0.44	A	No

¹ Cumulative + Project LOS assumes improvements required to connect the Specific Plan area to adjacent streets.

² Cumulative + Project LOS assumes planned U.S. 101/Betteravia Road interchange improvements.

Source: Traffic Study, Appendix F

Table 4.14-7 Cumulative and Cumulative + Project Levels of Service – PM Peak Hour

Intersection	Cumulative		Cumulative + Project		Impact?
	ICU	LOS	ICU	LOS	
Blosser Rd/Main St	0.79	C	0.80	C	No
Stowell Rd/Blosser Rd	0.86	D	0.78	C	No
Stowell Rd/Western Ave ¹	28.9 sec	D	>50 sec	F	Yes
Stowell Rd/Depot St	0.71	C	0.84	D	No
Stowell Rd/Broadway	0.85	D	0.95	E	Yes
Stowell Rd/Miller St	0.79	C	0.84	D	No
Stowell Rd/Bradley Rd	0.68	B	0.73	C	No
Stowell Rd/U.S. 101 NB	8.8 sec	A	8.8 sec	A	No
Blosser Rd/La Brea Ave ¹	0.69	B	0.63	B	No
Bradley Rd/U.S. 101 SB-Colombia	0.84	D	0.91	E	Yes
Battles Rd/Blosser Rd	0.74	C	0.73	C	No
Battles Rd/Western Ave ¹	11.7 sec	B	>50 sec	F	Yes
Battles Rd/Depot St	0.60	A	0.67	B	No
Battles Rd/Thornburg St	27.6 sec	D	>50 sec	F	Yes
Battles Rd/Broadway	0.72	C	0.80	C	No
Battles Rd/Miller St	0.66	B	0.71	C	No
Blosser Rd/Sonya Ln	13.1 sec	B	15.4 sec	C	No
Blosser Rd/Carmen Ln	0.57	A	0.58	A	No
Blosser Rd-Skyway/Betteravia Rd	0.80	C	0.84	D	No
Betteravia Rd/Broadway	0.84	D	0.87	D	No
Betteravia Rd/Bradley Rd	0.88	D	0.89	D	No
Betteravia Rd/U.S. 101 SB ²	0.64	B	0.66	B	No
Betteravia Rd/U.S. 101 NB ²	0.72	C	0.74	C	No

¹ Cumulative + Project LOS assumes improvements required to connect the Specific Plan area to adjacent streets.

² Cumulative + Project LOS assumes planned U.S. 101/Betteravia Road interchange improvements.

Source: Traffic Study, Appendix F

As shown in Table 4.14-6 and Table 4.14-7, under cumulative conditions, the following intersections would operate at LOS E or LOS F during AM and/or PM peak hours with the addition of project-generated traffic:

- Stowell Road/Western Avenue – LOS F (PM peak hour)
- Stowell Road/Broadway – LOS E (PM peak hour)
- Bradley Road/U.S. 101-SB Ramps – Columbia Drive – LOS E (PM peak hour)
- Battles Road/Western Avenue – LOS F (AM and PM peak hours)
- Battles Road/Thornburg Street – LOS F (PM peak hour)

Development facilitated by the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments would add new vehicle trips to study area intersections, resulting in study area intersection operations that exceed the City's acceptable levels of service under the cumulative development scenarios. The project-generated traffic would contribute towards this cumulative traffic impact, and this impact would be potentially significant.

The project applicant would be required to pay City traffic mitigation fees to contribute to the street network improvements planned to accommodate future traffic volumes. The proposed Specific Plan Amendment indicates that these fees may be used for offsite road improvements necessary for the project (page III-14). The precise location, design, and components of these improvements are not explicitly outlined in the Specific Plan. Therefore, the project contribution towards cumulative impacts would remain a potentially significant impact, and mitigation would be required, as described below.

Mitigation Measures

In addition to Mitigation Measure T-1e for improvements at the Battles Road/Western Avenue intersection and Mitigation Measure T-1h for improvements at the Battles Road/Thornburg Street intersection, the following measures are identified in the Traffic Study (Appendix F, pages 33-35) in order to maintain traffic levels of service within the City standard of LOS D under cumulative buildout conditions. These improvements shall be added to Chapter III Public Facilities, Section C Transportation and Circulation, of the proposed Specific Plan. The proportional share of the cumulative impact attributable to the project, and the distribution of collected traffic mitigation fees towards these or other improvements will be determined by the City as part of the review of the Planned Development Permit(s) or subdivision maps, and made conditions of those subsequent approvals.

Mitigation Measures T-2b and T-2c described below may also involve review and approval by Caltrans, since Broadway (SR 135) and U.S. 101 are both part of the state highway system. Neither of these improvements involves substantial modification of a Caltrans facility, and both are typical improvements that are regularly coordinated between the City and Caltrans. Thus, they are both considered feasible and within the scope of routine traffic system improvements performed regularly by the City.

T-2a Stowell Road/Western Avenue

The Stowell Road/Western Avenue intersection shall be constructed with the improvements as shown on Figure 14 in the Traffic Study (Appendix F). These improvements include installation of a traffic signal, constructing the south leg on Stowell Road, restriping to provide a westbound left turn lane on Western Avenue, and restriping to provide a southbound left turn lane on Stowell Road.

T-2b Stowell Road/Broadway

The Stowell Road/Broadway intersection shall be improved to include separate right-turn lanes on the southbound and westbound approaches, as shown on Figure 18 in the Traffic Study (Appendix F). These improvements include constructing a southbound right turn lane on Broadway and constructing a westbound right turn lane on Stowell Road. This is expected to be a future improvement by the City, which may use traffic impact fees generated by development within the proposed Specific Plan area and other areas. Depending on the rate of growth of traffic and when this improvement becomes necessary, the City may condition approval of a future Planned Development Permit or subdivision map within the project area upon completion of this intersection improvement.

T-2c Bradley Road/U.S. 101 SB ramps-Columbia Drive

The off-ramp lanes at the Bradley Road/ U.S. 101 SB ramps-Columbia Drive intersection shall be restriped to provide one left-turn lane, one left + thru lane, and one right-turn lane, as shown on Figure 19 in the Traffic Study (Appendix F).

Significance After Mitigation

The improvements described above would avoid or reduce long term cumulative traffic effects to less than significant levels—meaning they would help to maintain traffic LOS values at “D” or better. All of the improvements described, both within and adjacent to the Specific Plan area, as well as the offsite improvements on Broadway and U.S. 101, are within existing road rights-of-way and in areas that have already been developed. They would all be typical improvements in an urban area that would involve short-term construction related effects, which would be less than significant. Secondary impacts from these mitigation measures are not expected to be significant.

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4.15 Less than Significant Effects

Section 4.1 through Section 4.14 of this Supplemental EIR discusses the following environmental issue areas: Aesthetics, Agricultural Resources, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Noise, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, and Transportation and Traffic. This section presents information about the remaining issue areas in the CEQA Appendix G Checklist, based primarily on information from the City's General Plan and conclusions in the previous 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR. The following issues are addressed in this section:

- Airport Safety Hazards
- Williamson Act Contract, Forest Land, and Timberland Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Habitat Conservation Plans
- Inundation by Tsunamis or Seiches, or Flooding
- Mineral Resources
- Utilities/Service Systems
- Wildland Fire Hazards

The following discussions provide a summary of the analysis and significance determination for the above issue areas.

4.15.1 Airport Safety Hazards

The project site is located approximately 1.8 miles north of the Santa Maria Public Airport. The Airport Area of Influence is divided into three hazard zones to address areas of major concern including height restrictions, safety, and noise. Hazard Zone I includes height restrictions and is also the boundary of the Airport Area of Influence. Hazard Zone II is subject to policies regarding safety and height. Policies regarding height, safety, and noise apply in Hazard Zone III. The project site is located in the Hazard Zone I, outside of the identified airport Safety Areas (Santa Barbara County Airport Land Use Plan, Santa Barbara County Airport Land Use Commission and Santa Barbara Association of Governments [SBCAG], 1993). There would be no impacts related to airport safety hazards.

4.15.2 Williamson Act Contract, Forest Land, and Timberland Resources

The project site has been under a Williamson Act Contract in the past. However, the contract was requested for non-renewal and expired in 2001 (City of Santa Maria 2001). The project site does not contain forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production. Therefore, the project would not conflict with existing zoning or result in changes to the existing environment that would result in the conversion of such resources to non-agricultural uses. Potential impacts would be less than significant.

4.15.3 Energy

The California Energy Code provides energy conservation standards for all new and renovated commercial and residential buildings constructed in California. The Code applies to the building envelope, space-conditioning systems, and water-heating and lighting systems of buildings and appliances. It provides guidance on construction techniques to maximize energy conservation and minimum efficiency standards for a variety of building elements, including appliances, heating and cooling equipment, and insulation for doors, pipes, walls and ceilings.

The project would involve the use of energy during construction and operation. Energy use during the construction phase would be primarily in the form of fuel consumption to operate heavy equipment, light-duty vehicles, machinery, and generators for lighting. Temporary grid power may also be provided to construction trailers or electric construction equipment. Long-term operation of the project would require permanent grid connections for electricity and natural gas service to power internal and exterior building lighting, and heating and cooling systems.

Project operation would result in the annual consumption of approximately 8,564 megawatt hours of electricity and 21,612 million British thermal units (MMBtu) of natural gas each year. Increasingly efficient building fixtures and automobile engines are expected to offset the project's energy demand. Mitigation Measure AQ-2b, detailed in Section 4.2, *Air Quality*, would further offset the project's energy demand by requiring that energy efficient appliances be used in the proposed development on the project site.

The project would be subject to energy conservation requirements in the California Energy Code (Title 24, Part 6, of the California Code of Regulations, California's Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential Buildings) and the California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen) (Title 24, Part 11 of the California Code of Regulations). Adherence to Title 24 requirements, and implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-2b, would ensure that the project would not result in wasteful and inefficient use of non-renewable resources due to building operation.

Buildout under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan as well as the proposed Specific Plan amendments would irretrievably increase the demand for finite resources such as petroleum and natural gas, due to the increase in population. Therefore, the project would result in similar potential impacts related to energy demand as a result of Specific Plan implementation, and impacts would be less than significant.

4.15.4 Geology and Soils

The geologic and soils conditions on the project site have not changed since certification of the previous Final EIR. Therefore, there would be no new additional impacts related to these resources that were not previously discussed.

It is unlikely that construction would extend deep enough to impact previously undisturbed Pleistocene strata with buried paleontological resources. As such, impacts to paleontological resources are not anticipated.

Soils throughout the Santa Maria Valley are generally loose, and consequently, settling can occur. However, site-specific soils reports would be required for each development, thus adequately mitigating this potential impact. The 1992 Sphere of Influence Final EIR identified potentially significant impacts related to seismic hazards, including seismic groundshaking, erosion, and soil expansiveness. However, incorporation of mitigation measures regarding geotechnical studies

would ensure impacts remain less than significant. Further, grading for the project would be required to be in compliance with the requirements of the Uniform Building Code and the City's Seismic Safety Element. Additionally, development of the project site that would disturb areas greater than one acre would be required to prepare of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Permit. The SWPPP would include specific Best Management Practices for erosion control. Compliance with existing standards and regulations would ensure that impacts related to seismic hazards and erosion remain less than significant. Although an earthquake could result in dam inundation of a portion of the City, Twitchell Dam only periodically holds water. Therefore, the likelihood of dam failure is minimal and associated impacts would be less than significant.

4.15.5 Habitat Conservation Plans

The project site does not fall within the jurisdiction of an adapted habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan, therefore, the anticipated development that would be allowed on the project site under the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendments would not conflict with any such provisions. No impact would occur.

4.15.6 Inundation by Tsunamis, Seiches, or Flooding

The project area is approximately 12 miles from the Pacific Ocean and between 195 to 210 feet above sea level. According to Figure SE-2 (Geologic Hazards Map) of the City of Santa Maria's General Plan, there are also no steep slopes within the project area. Therefore, the project would not result in an impact related to inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow.

Flood hazard areas are determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and are shown on Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRMs). Flood hazard areas include land that would be inundated by the flood event having a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year (i.e. a 100-year flood). According to FIRM Panel 06083C0187F, effective September 30, 2005, the project site is located entirely in Zone X, meaning it is outside the 0.2 percent annual chance flood (500-year flood) area. The project is not located within the 100-year flood plain. There would be no impacts related to flooding.

4.15.7 Mineral Resources

The State Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 requires cities and counties to disclose areas classified as Mineral Resource Zone 2 or 3, Scientific Zone, or designated as mineral deposits of regional or statewide importance in their General Plan (Public Resources Code Section 2762 and 2763). According to Figure RME-4 of the City's General Plan Resource Management Element, the project site is located in Mineral Resource Zone 2 (MRZ-2). This zone is designated for areas where adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present or areas with a high likelihood of mineral deposits existing. Future development facilitated by the land use change is anticipated to include construction of up to 1,168 low-medium density and high density residential units, 21 acres of community facility uses, 19 acres of recreation and open space, and 10 acres of neighborhood commercial uses. The project would result in similar impacts associated with future opportunity to extract any mineral resources from the project site as development of the site under the existing Specific Plan. As such, the project would not result in new or increased severity impacts associated with the loss of availability of a valuable known mineral resource or locally important mineral resource recovery site. Impacts would be less than significant.

4.15.8 Utilities/Service Systems

The City of Santa Maria has two sources of water supply; local groundwater and imported State Water. The local groundwater is plentiful, but has a high hardness and mineral content. The City blends the local supply with the imported supply to provide water with a lower hardness and mineral content than that available from the local supply alone. State Water supply is variable, depending on precipitation, State Water reservoir storage, snowpack, and Delta conditions. The City maximizes the use of its available State Water supply each year in order to provide the highest water quality to City residents and businesses. The water supply for the City of Santa Maria is regulated by the Urban Water Management Plan. The Urban Water Management Plan also contains information on how the City plans to provide and maintain a reliable supply of high quality water through efficient use of its existing resources for the anticipated needs of the City.

The 1992 Final EIR identified potentially significant impacts to water, wastewater, and solid waste services and facilities, and determined that these impacts would be less than significant with incorporation of mitigation. These findings have been determined applicable to the current project; therefore, no additional environmental analysis is required. The following mitigation would be incorporated into the Specific Plan and would ensure that impacts related to water, wastewater, and solid waste would remain less than significant. Implementation of these measures would occur via City design review and approval as part of the Planned Development Permit for individual development areas within the specific plan.

UTIL-1 Specific Plan Water Policies

- a. The following policy language shall be added to the Development Standards in the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan: Each Planned Development permit submitted to implement the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan shall include the following requirements:
 1. Ultra low flow toilets (1.6 gallon/flush) and low flow shower heads (2.0 gallons per minute) shall be installed in all new construction.
 2. Where feasible, water conserving landscaping using California native plants, a drip irrigation system using time clocks and/or moisture sensors, and heavy use of mulch shall be implemented in the landscape design of all projects.
 3. Where feasible, water conserving landscaping using California native plants, a drip irrigation system using time clocks and/or moisture sensors, and heavy use of mulch shall be implemented in the landscape design of all projects.
 4. All projects will pay for their share of Santa Maria's increased State Water allocation and associated costs for delivery system improvements based on a fee study for regional water transmission facilities.

The Community Development Department shall recommend, and the Planning Commission shall determine, consistency with the applicable General Plan Land Use goals and design requirements as part of all Planned Development Permit approvals.

UTIL-2 Specific Plan Wastewater Policies

- a. The following policy language shall be added to the Development Standards in the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan: Each Planned Development permit submitted to implement the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan shall include the following requirements:

1. All new homes and businesses using water softeners should be required to use only the rechargeable cartridge type softeners, or water softening systems that do not discharge salt brine into the municipal sewer system, that could be back flushed at one of the plants using a brine injection well.
2. All projects will pay for their share for wastewater system improvements in the city.

The Community Development Department shall recommend, and the Planning Commission shall determine, consistency with the applicable General Plan Land Use goals and design requirements as part of all Planned Development Permit approvals.

UTIL-3 Specific Plan Solid Waste Policies

- a. The following policy language shall be added to the Development Standards in the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan: Each Planned Development permit submitted to implement the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan shall include the following requirements:
 1. Provision of space to store recycled materials shall be provided in individual residences and commercial buildings.
 2. A recyclable material pickup area for commercial projects shall be established.
 3. Inclusion of the project areas in the curbside recycling program.

With implementation of the above mitigation measures, impacts to City water, wastewater, and solid waste systems and services would be less than significant.

The 1992 Final EIR did not include specific findings related to project-level impacts to electric power, natural gas, and telecommunications facilities because this issue was not part of the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Checklist at that time.

Operation of anticipated development would result in electricity consumption for lighting, air conditioning, refrigeration, appliances, and other uses, and natural gas consumption, primarily for heating. The project site is immediately adjacent to existing residential and commercial uses; therefore, the anticipated development is expected to connect to existing electricity transmission and natural gas lines maintained by PG&E in the immediate area and would not require substantial disturbance beyond the boundaries of the project site. Furthermore, these facilities are typically located within roadway rights-of-way; therefore, off-site installation of new electric power and natural gas facilities, if required, would not result in significant environmental effects. Therefore, project impacts related to electric power and natural gas facilities would be less than significant.

Operation of the anticipated development would require installation of telecommunication facilities, such as telephone, cable, and fiber optic lines. The project site is immediately adjacent to existing residential and commercial uses. The proposed development is expected to connect to existing telecommunications facilities in the immediate area and would not require substantial disturbance beyond the boundaries of the project site. Therefore, project impacts related to telecommunications infrastructure would be less than significant.

4.15.9 Wildland Fire Hazards

According to the City of Santa Maria Hazard Mitigation Plan (2017), there is low probability of wildland fires in the city. The city is surrounded by irrigated row crop farms and has not experienced a wildfire environment since the late 19th Century and very early 20th Century. Although there are undeveloped lots and right-of-ways, vegetation growth is limited and required to be maintained. Accordingly, the project site, which is surrounded by urban development on all sides, has low probability of risks associated with wildland fires. Impacts would be less than significant.

5 Other CEQA Required Discussions

This section discusses other issues for which CEQA requires analysis, and which were not covered in Sections 3 and 4. These additional issues include: (1) the potential to induce growth and (2) significant and irreversible impacts on the environment.

5.1 Growth Inducing Effects

Section 15126.2(e) of the *State CEQA Guidelines* requires that EIRs discuss the potential for projects to induce population or economic growth, either directly or indirectly, or by removing obstacles to growth.

Generally speaking, a project may be considered growth inducing if it results in one of the five conditions identified below:

1. Induces population growth.
2. Induces economic expansion.
3. Establishes a precedent setting action (e.g. an innovation, a radical change in zoning or general plan designation).
4. Results in development or encroachment in an isolated or adjacent area of open space (i.e. being distinct from “infill” development).
5. Removes an impediment to growth (e.g. the establishment of an essential public service or the provision of new access to an area).

The impacts identified below are based on buildout of the proposed project, which would allow development of up to 1,168 residential units on the project site, or an increase of 192 units from residential development potential under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, as well as neighborhood commercial, recreational, and public school uses.

5.1.1 Population Growth

As discussed in Section 2, Project Description, under the proposed Specific Plan amendments the project site would have land use designations of Neighborhood Commercial (NC; 10 acres), Low Medium Density Residential (LMDR-8; 58 acres), High Density Residential (HDR-22; 32 acres), Community Facilities (CF; 21 acres), and Recreation Open Space (ROS; 19 acres). The existing Planned Development overlay and zoning districts would be retained over the entire site. The proposed land use designations and zoning would allow for development of up to 1,168 residential units on the project site, or an increase of 192 units from residential development potential under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. Using the City’s average rate of 3.72 people per household, construction of the project would accommodate an estimated 4,345 new residents (DOF 2019). When added to the existing population within the City of approximately 107,356 (DOF 2019), buildout of the specific plan area would increase the City’s total population to an estimated 111,710 residents, an increase of 4.0 percent overall, or an increase of 0.7 percent from buildout anticipated under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. Although the increased population would be greater than anticipated in the City’s General Plan, population growth that may result from the

project would not conflict with local growth management policy or regional targets, or result in substantial unplanned growth. Furthermore, SBCAG projects that the city will grow by approximately 35,744 new residents and 13,951 housing units by the year 2050. Therefore, population growth that may result from the project would not conflict with local growth management policy or result in exceedance of local and regional growth projections. Potential environmental impacts specific to increasing population are discussed in Section 4.11, Population and Housing. Potential secondary environmental impacts associated with this population growth are analyzed throughout Sections 4.1 through 4.15 of this EIR.

5.1.2 Economic Growth

The proposed project would allow for development of commercial, residential, public school, and recreational uses on the project. Neighborhood commercial uses proposed for the project may include bakeries, barbershops, delicatessens, grocery stores, laundry and cleaning establishments, pharmacies, public utility offices, restaurants without sale or consumption of alcohol on premises, beauty shops, and/or florists. Development of these types of commercial uses would contribute to economic growth by providing additional businesses within the city. Residential development also may indirectly contribute to economic growth. As development of Low Medium and High Density residential uses occurs under the project, increasing the city population, the added residents would contribute to the local economy as demand for general goods increases, which in turn could result in economic growth for various sectors.

5.1.3 Precedent Setting Action

The project would require discretionary approvals from the City including the Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan amendment, General Plan maps and Zoning Map amendments, and related approvals. Given the fact the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan anticipated development of up to 976 residential units, and neighborhood commercial, public school, and recreational uses on the project site based on the site's existing land use designations and zoning, this current proposal would not be considered precedent-setting. Nevertheless, the proposed specific plan amendment would be at the discretion of the City Council who may consider it on its own merits in terms of how the new proposal fulfills the City General Plan goals and objectives. Any growth inducement from these actions would be minimal and would occur within an area previously planned for residential, commercial, school, and recreational development in the City.

5.1.4 Development of Open Space/Vacant Land

Development of vacant land is considered growth-inducing when it occurs outside urban boundaries or in isolated locations instead of infill areas. The project site is located near the center of the City of Santa Maria. The project site is surrounded by urbanized development and represents an "infill" parcel. The project site is currently used for agricultural purposes, primarily as cultivated row crops. A City-maintained flood control channel runs along the southern boundary of the project site. Similar to the development allowed on the project site under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, the proposed project would include residential, commercial, public school and recreational development adjacent to existing urban development and does not include development of vacant land outside urban boundaries or in an isolated location. The 14-acre area of the project site zoned Open Space (PD/OS) in the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan would be expanded to 19 acres with the project for development of a public park developed with active multi-purpose fields and for

joint use by the proposed school. Accordingly, the project would not convert more open space area than identified in the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan.

5.1.5 Removal of an Impediment to Growth

The proposed project would not result in the removal of an impediment for growth, as adequate access and services are already available for the adjacent and surrounding areas. Rather, the project would facilitate a mix of urban uses on an infill site near the center of the city. As such, it would reduce the potential for uncontrolled piecemeal growth in the region and it would reduce the pressure for urban sprawl beyond the existing urban limits. The project site is contiguous to urban land uses designated for urban development, and the site is entirely within the City's Urban Limit Boundary. In addition, by focusing development within already urban-designated areas, it is anticipated that implementation of the project would reduce growth pressure in undeveloped areas at the periphery of the city. This would reduce the potential for impacts to biological resources, regional traffic, and air quality as compared to development on lands beyond urban boundaries. No additional utility infrastructure or facilities beyond those necessary to accommodate the project would be required. Overall, the proposed project would not result in the removal of an impediment to growth.

5.2 Significant and Irreversible Environmental Effects

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126(c) requires that an EIR identify those significant impacts that cannot be reduced to a less than significant level with the application of mitigation measures. The implications and reasons why the project is being proposed, notwithstanding, must be described.

As discussed in Section 4.3, *Air Quality*, development anticipated under the proposed project would result in significant, unavoidable air quality impacts due to mobile source air pollutant emissions (Impact AQ-2).

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d) requires a discussion of any significant irreversible environmental changes which would be caused by the proposed project should it be implemented. Such significant irreversible environmental changes may include the following:

- Use of non-renewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project which would be irreversible because a large commitment of such resources makes removal or non-use unlikely.
- Primary impacts and, particularly secondary impacts (such as highway improvement which provides access to a previously inaccessible area) which generally commit future generations to similar uses.
- Irreversible damage which may result from environmental accidents associated with the project.

Project development would result in the permanent conversion of undeveloped, agricultural land to urban uses. It would also require building materials and energy, some of which are non-renewable resources. Consumption of these resources would occur with any development in the region and are not unique to the proposed project. The addition of new development would irreversibly increase local demand for non-renewable energy resources such as petroleum and natural gas. Increasingly efficient building design features and automobile engines, as well as implementation of policies included in the General Plan are expected to offset the demand to some degree. It is not

anticipated that growth accommodated under the proposed project would significantly affect local or regional energy supplies. The project's impacts related to energy use are discussed further in Section 4.15, *Less than Significant Effects*.

Growth accommodated under the project would not require a potentially significant and irreversible commitment of law enforcement, fire protection, water supply, wastewater treatment, or solid waste disposal services. Impacts determined to be less than significant or mitigable to a level of insignificance are discussed in Section 4.15, *Less than Significant Effects*, of this Supplemental EIR.

6 Alternatives

6.1 Introduction

Section 15126.6 of the *CEQA Guidelines* provides guidance for the identification and evaluation of project alternatives in an EIR. The CEQA Guidelines state that an “EIR shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project, but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives.” *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(a) also states that “an EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project. Rather it must consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives that will foster informed decision making and public participation.” The alternatives shall be limited to ones that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project. Other alternatives can be considered, but are not required to satisfy the requirements of CEQA.

In defining feasibility of alternatives, the *CEQA Guidelines* state that “among the factors that may be taken into account when addressing the feasibility of alternatives are site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, general plan consistency, other plans or regulatory limitations, jurisdictional boundaries, and whether the proponent can reasonably acquire, control or otherwise have access to the alternative site.”

As required by Section 15126.6 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, this EIR examines a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan Project that would attain most of the basic project objectives (stated in Section 2, *Project Description*, of this EIR), but would avoid or substantially lessen significant adverse impacts identified for the project. As discussed in Section 4.3, *Air Quality*, one significant and unavoidable impact was identified for the project, related to an increase in mobile-source air pollutant emissions.

6.2 Identification of Alternatives

This discussion focuses on alternatives to the project, including alternatives which were considered and rejected. These alternatives have been selected for their ability to comply with the City’s General Plan, and substantially reduce or eliminate one or more of the adverse impacts associated with the project, while still meeting basic project objectives. The EIR also evaluates a No Project alternative. Consistent with the CEQA Guidelines (Section 15126.6[e]), the “no project” analysis discusses the existing conditions, as well as what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project is not approved, based on current plans and consistency with available infrastructure and community services.

As required by CEQA, this section also includes a discussion of the “environmentally superior alternative” among those studied. The alternatives evaluated in this EIR include:

- Alternative 1: No Project – No Development
- Alternative 2: No Project – Development Under Existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan

- Alternative 3: Revised Project – Low Density Residential
- Alternative 4: Revised Project – Commercial Development in Northwest

6.2.1 Alternatives Considered but Rejected from Further Evaluation

As discussed above, Section 15126.6(c) of the *CEQA Guidelines* requires that an EIR disclose alternatives that were considered and rejected and provide a brief explanation as to why such alternatives were not fully considered in the EIR. As required by the *CEQA Guidelines*, the selection of alternatives for this EIR included a screening process to determine a reasonable range of alternatives, which could reduce significant effects, but also feasibly meet project objectives. Alternatives that do not clearly provide any environmental advantages compared to the project, do not meet basic project objectives, or do not achieve overall lead agency policy goals, have been eliminated from further consideration. *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(a) also states that “an EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project. Rather it must consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives that will foster informed decision making and public participation.” Other alternatives may be considered but are not required to satisfy the requirements of CEQA.

For the project, characteristics used to reject alternatives from further consideration include:

- Failure to meet basic project objectives;
- Limited effectiveness in reducing project environmental impacts;
- Potential for inconsistency with adopted agency plans and policies; and
- Reasonableness of the alternative when compared to other alternatives under consideration.

The General Plan goals, objectives, and policies that apply to these changes are included in Section 2.6 in Section 2, *Project Description*, and environmental analysis sections throughout this EIR. Specific objectives identified by the applicant for the project include the following:

1. To provide development that expands on and complements the businesses along Blosser Road.
2. To provide coordinated residential, commercial, and school uses and amenities in one central location.
3. To provide safe pedestrian and bicycle connections to onsite commercial, recreational, school, and open space amenities.
4. To develop the property with a variety of housing types to attract diverse community income groups, and to assist the City in complying with State housing mandates.

This analysis includes only on-site alternatives. The only significant and unavoidable impact identified for the project, an impact related to an increase in mobile-source air pollutant emissions, is not location-dependent and would not be reduced or eliminated through an alternative site location. Additionally, other alternatives that would not reduce the significant and unavoidable air quality impact were eliminated from further consideration.

6.2.2 Description of Alternatives Evaluated for the Project

Alternative 1: No Project – No Development

This alternative assumes that the site would remain undeveloped and in use for agricultural purposes. This alternative would not include any new development on the project site and, therefore, would not provide sales tax, property tax, or employment opportunities as would the proposed new land uses of the project. The existing zoning and land use classifications identified for the site in the current Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan and the Land Use Element of the Santa Maria General Plan would remain on the property under this alternative. Accordingly, it would be reasonable to expect that some type of urban development consistent with the General Plan would be proposed in the future. This alternative would retain the current agricultural uses in the near term. However, in the long-term, this alternative would result in development consistent with the current specific plan, which is considered in Alternative 2.

Alternative 2: No Project – Development Under Existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan

This alternative assumes that the project site would be built out as anticipated in the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. The project site would be developed with 656 low-medium density residential units, 144 medium density residential units, 176 high density residential units (976 total residential units), 24 acres of community facility uses, 14 acres of recreational open space, and 15 acres of neighborhood commercial uses under the existing land use designations of Low-Medium Density Residential (LMDR; 8 units per acres), Medium Density Residential (MDR; 12 units per acres), High Density Residential (HDR; 22 units per acres), Community Facilities (CF), Recreation Open Space (ROS), and Neighborhood Commercial (NC). Development would occur under the existing zoning of Single Family Small Lot Residential (PD/RSL-1), Medium Density Residential (PD/R-2), High Density Residential (PD/R-3), Public Facility (PD/PF), Open Space (PD/OS), and Convenience Center (PD/CC), with Planned Development Overlay (PD) special zoning designations over the entirety of the project site.

Alternative 3: Revised Project –Low Density Residential

Similar to the project, this alternative would retain the Community Facilities (CF), Recreation Open Space (ROS), and Neighborhood Commercial (NC) land use designations under the existing zoning of Public Facility (PD/PF), Open Space (PD/OS), and Convenience Center (PD/CC), with Planned Development Overlay (PD) special zoning designations over the entirety of the project. This alternative, however, would replace the proposed Low-Medium Residential (LMDR; 8 units per acre) and High Density Residential (HDR; 22 units per acre) land use designations with the proposed zoning of Single-Family Small Lot Residential (PD/R-1) and High Density Residential (PD/R-3) with a Low Density Residential (LDR-5) land use designation with Single Family Residential (PD/R-1) zoning. The Low Density Residential (LDR-5) land use designation allows for single-family detached dwellings units with an average density not to exceed five dwelling units per acre, while the Single Family Residential (PD/R-1) zoning allows for four to eight dwellings units per acre. As such, this alternative would result in the development of up to 450 residential units.

Alternative 4: Revised Project – Commercial Development in Northwest

Similar to the project, this alternative would require amendments to the City's existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, General Plan, and Zoning Code, and would retain the Planned Development

(PD) Overlay. This alternative would retain the Community Facilities (CF), Recreation Open Space (ROS), and Neighborhood Commercial (NC) land use designations under the existing zoning of Public Facility (PD/PF), Open Space (PD/OS), and Convenience Center (PD/CC), with Planned Development Overlay (PD) special zoning designations over the entirety of the project. This alternative, however, would shift approximately 10 acres of High Density Residential (HDR; 22 units per acre) to the southwest portion of the project site and approximately 10 acres of Neighborhood Commercial to the northwest corner of the project site. As for the project, this alternative would allow for development of up to 1,168 residential units and approximately 130,000 square feet of retail uses on the project site. This alternative would provide a commercial buffer between the proposed High Density Residential area on the project site and commercial and industrial uses to the northwest of the site.

Table 6-1 provides a comparison of the proposed project and each of the alternatives to the project evaluated herein based on the buildout characteristics of each alternative.

Table 6-1 Comparison of Alternative Buildout Characteristics

Feature	Proposed Project	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
Land Uses and Associated Area	464 low-medium density residential units (58 acres); 704 high density residential units (32 acres); - Community facilities uses (21 acres); - Open space (19 acres); - Neighborhood commercial uses (10 acres); and - Basin (6 acres)	No development	656 low-medium-density residential units (82 acres); 144 medium-density residential units (12 acres); 176 high density residential units (8 acres); - Community facilities uses (24 acres); - Open space (14 acres); - Neighbor commercial uses (15 acres)	450 low density residential units (90 acres) - Community facilities uses (21 acres); - Open space (19 acres); - Neighborhood commercial uses (10 acres); and - Basin (6 acres)	464 low-medium density residential units (58 acres); 704 high density residential units (32 acres); - Community facilities uses (21 acres); - Open space (19 acres); - Neighborhood commercial uses (10 acres); and - Basin (6 acres)
Total Units	1,168 residential units	No residential units	976 residential units	450 residential units	1,168 residential units

6.3 Alternatives Impact Analysis

Table 6-2 provides a comparison of the environmental impacts of development of the proposed project to each of the three identified alternatives. A comparative analysis of the relative impacts of the proposed project and the alternatives is provided in Sections 6.3.1 through 6.3.3.

Table 6-2 Comparison of Environmental Impacts

Environmental Issue	Impact Classification*				
	Proposed Project	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
Aesthetics/Visual Resources	II	IV	II	II	II
Agriculture	III	IV	III	III	III
Air Quality	I	IV	I	III	I
Biological Resources	II	IV	II	II	II
Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources	II	IV	II	II	II
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	II	IV	II	II	II
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	II	IV	II	II	II
Hydrology and Water Quality	III	IV	III	III	III
Land Use and Planning	III	IV	III	III	III
Noise	III	IV	II	III	III
Population and Housing	III	IV	III	III	III
Public Services	III	IV	III	III	III
Recreation	III	IV	III	III	III
Transportation and Traffic	II	IV	II	II	II

*Impact classifications include: I – Class I, significant and unavoidable; II – Class II, less than significant with incorporation of mitigation; III – less than significant; and Class IV – no impact.

As shown in Table 6-2, Alternative 2 may result in new potentially, significant impacts when compared to the project, while Alternative 3 would reduce the significant and unavoidable impact to air quality to a less than significant level with mitigation.

6.3.1 Alternative 1: No Project – No Development

Under the No Project Alternative, construction and operation of the project would not occur. The baseline environmental conditions would continue to occur into the future, in agricultural use, in the absence of project-related construction activities, unless other development occurred on the site. However, the objectives of the proposed project would remain unfulfilled under the No Project Alternative. This means that the contribution of the proposed project of meeting the City's State

housing mandates would not occur. No environmental impacts would occur, and impacts on the site would be less under the No Project Alternative than for the proposed project.

6.3.2 Alternative 2: No Project –Existing Blosser-Southeast (Area 5B) Specific Plan

Aesthetics

Residential, commercial, and school development on the project site under this alternative would be limited to the same height as the proposed project. Similar to the proposed project, development under this alternative would not result in significant impacts to scenic vistas or scenic resources within a state scenic highway.

Buildout of the project site under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan for this alternative would potentially impact the existing visual character and quality of public views through the conversion of agricultural land to urban development. Similar to the proposed project, the residences, and neighborhood commercial and school development under this alternative would partially obstruct views of the distant Sierra Madre Mountains from Battles Road and Blosser Road and views of the Solomon and Casmalia Hills from Stowell Road. Views from these roadways would change substantially with the replacement of the existing rows crops with urban development under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. However, in the context of surrounding urban development, viewer expectations along this roadway are generally of urban and suburban uses. Development under this alternative would be consistent with the surrounding development north, south, east, and west of the project site. In addition, specific building layout, height, and massing would be subject to review by the City to ensure compliance with the City's applicable design guidelines.

With implementation of viewshed protection mitigation measures, including landscaping, signage, and siting requirements, impacts related to visual character and public views of the project site and its surroundings under this alternative would be less than significant. As required for the proposed project, development under this alternative would be required to comply with the City's lighting standards and Section 21466.5 of the California Motor Vehicle Code for reducing light and glare impacts. Similar to the project, development of the project site, which does not currently include any substantial sources of artificial light, would result in an increase in ambient nighttime lighting and glare, and would require mitigation including screening requirements for nighttime lighting and lighting specifications. Aesthetic impacts from this alternative would be less than significant with mitigation, similar to the proposed project.

Agriculture

This alternative would result in development within the same overall development footprint as the project. As a result this alternative would result in conversion of the same area of agricultural soils and uses to non-agricultural uses as the project. Impacts of this alternative to agriculture would be similar to the project.

Air Quality

As shown in Table 4.3-3 in Section 4.3, *Air Quality*, annual construction emissions of ROG from this alternative would be slightly greater than for the proposed project and, similar to the proposed project, would exceed SBCAPCD's recommended 25 tons per year threshold. Annual construction

emissions of all other criteria pollutants would be less than for the proposed project and would be below SBCAPCD's recommended threshold for buildout of the project site. . Because the Santa Barbara County portion of the SCCAB is a nonattainment area for the state PM₁₀ standard and the project would involve earthmoving activities, SBCAPCD construction emissions control measures would be required for development of the Specific Plan area under this alternative, similar to the project.

As shown in Table 4.14 6, operational emissions associated with buildout of the project site under this alternative would not exceed SBCAPCD thresholds for combined operational emissions (i.e., area plus energy plus mobile source emissions) of ROG and NO_x, but would exceed SBCAPCD thresholds for combined emissions of PM₁₀, as with the proposed project. Additionally, buildout under this alternative would result in 59.9 pounds NO_x per day from vehicle trips, which would exceed the SBCAPCD thresholds of 25 pounds per day for operational emissions from mobile sources, as with the proposed project. As shown in Table 4.3-7 and Table 4.3-8, operational emissions of ROG, NO_x, and PM₁₀ would be greater under this alternative than operational emissions resulting from development of the proposed project. This alternative would be required to comply with CCR Title 13, Section 2485 ATCM to restrict heavy truck idling to five minutes or less, and mitigation would be required to reduce operational emissions. However, mobile emissions would continue to exceed SBCAPCD thresholds for PM₁₀ and operational air quality impacts would be significant and unavoidable, similar to the project.

Biological Resources

Based on the updated biological resources analysis for the proposed project, development on the project site would result in potential impacts to sensitive species. This alternative would result in generally the same development footprint as the proposed project and would result in similar, potentially significant impacts to special status species, requiring mitigation, to those identified for the proposed project. This alternative would also result in no impact to sensitive habitats, wetlands, and wildlife movement. Further, this alternative would not result in any impacts associated with conflict with plans, policies, or ordinances for biological resources in the City. Mitigation for potential impacts to special status species includes implementation of species preconstruction surveys, a worker environmental awareness program, and species avoidance and minimization measures. Impacts to biological resources from this alternative would be similar to the proposed project.

Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources

This alternative would result in a similar development footprint as compared to the proposed project. As with the project, construction for this alternative would involve ground disturbing activities such as grading and surface excavation, which have the potential to unearth or adversely impact previously unidentified historical and/or archaeological resources, and/or human remains. Potential impacts to cultural resources from this alternative would be similar as compared to the proposed project, and would be less than significant with compliance with applicable General Plan policies, and federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Construction and operation of the anticipated development under this alternative would generate temporary and long-term increases in GHG emissions. Similar to the project, the increase in temporary and long-term emissions from this alternative would result in potentially significant GHG

emissions. Similar to the project, this alternative would be consistent with the SBCAG 2040 RTP-SCS, but would be potentially inconsistent with the GHG reduction targets of the 2017 Scoping Plan. As with the proposed project, this alternative would require mitigation for preparation and implementation of a GHG emissions reduction plan to reduce potential GHG emissions impacts to a less than significant level. Overall, GHG emissions impacts from this alternative would be similar to the proposed project.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Development of the Specific Plan area under this alternative would include similar uses to those included in the project, with a slightly altered distribution throughout the site. Similar to the project, residential and commercial uses developed under this alternative may involve the routine use and storage of some materials that are considered hazardous. Construction and operation of the proposed residential and commercial uses could also result in the accidental release of hazardous materials. Additionally, two schools are located within one-quarter mile of the project site, and this alternative includes a proposed school site within the Specific Plan area. The use, transport, storage, and disposal of such materials is regulated by federal, state, and local laws, with which development under this alternative would be required to comply. As with the project, residual pesticides and agricultural chemicals in soils onsite could create a hazard to construction workers during the construction phase of the alternative development, and mitigation would be required to reduce potential for exposure to agricultural chemicals and oil from oil wells in the Specific Plan area. Overall, this alternative would result in similar impacts to the project related to hazards and hazardous materials.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Development of the Specific Plan area under this alternative would occur within the same overall development footprint and would similarly result in an increase of impervious surface throughout the Specific Plan area from existing conditions. Increased impervious surface would reduce stormwater infiltration and alter drainage patterns and runoff from the site. The construction and operation of the proposed uses on the project site may also increase polluted runoff from the project site. Stormwater drainage systems for this alternative would be installed in compliance with the standards and requirements of the City's Public Works Department Engineering Division and City Municipal Code Section 8-12A.04 which prohibits stormwater discharges unless such discharges are in conformance with the statewide General Permit and the requirements of the Central Coast RWQCB Resolution No. R3-2013-0032, *Post-Construction Stormwater Management Requirements for Development Projects in the Central Coast Region*. As for the proposed project, development of the site under this alternative would be required to comply with the adopted standards contained in the City of Santa Maria Municipal Code, Chapter 8-12, Wastewater Collection, Treatment and Disposal, and Chapter 8-12A, Stormwater Runoff Pollution Prevention. By incorporating these design provisions, and permit review and approval procedures by the City, the project would not violate water quality standards and waste discharge requirements. Overall, impacts to hydrology and water quality would be similar to the project.

Land Use and Planning

This alternative would not result in changes to the existing land use or zoning on the project site, and would facilitate development anticipated in the City's existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan and the City's General Plan. As with the project, this alternative would not result in any impacts

associated with dividing an established community and would result in less than significant impacts relating to consistency with land use plans, policies, and regulations with incorporation of mitigation.

Noise

Development of the Specific Plan area under this alternative would include similar uses to those included in the project, with a slightly altered distribution throughout the site. Similar to the project, construction activities and equipment operations would be sporadic, would vary in location and length in proximity to noise sensitive receivers, and would be required to comply with all City requirements for the control of construction noise. As detailed in Section 4.14, *Transportation and Traffic*, the development facilitated by this alternative would result in approximately 16,794 daily trips, while development facilitated by the proposed project would result in approximately 15,887 daily trips. Potential long-term traffic noise impacts under this alternative require mitigation to avoid or reduce impacts to on- and off-site noise-sensitive receptors to a less than significant level, similar to the project.

Population and Housing

The existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan would result in development of a maximum number of 976 dwelling units with low medium, medium and high density residential units. Using the City's average rate of 3.72 people per household, construction under this alternative would accommodate an estimated 3,631 new residents (DOF 2019). Population growth that may result from the development under the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan would not conflict with local growth management policy or result in substantial unplanned growth, and impacts would be less than significant. Further, this alternative would not result in the displacement of any existing residential units, and impacts related to displacement of substantial amounts of housing or people would be less than significant, and similar to the proposed project.

Public Services

This alternative would result in fewer residential units developed within the Specific Plan area in comparison to the project, resulting in fewer residences dependent on public services, including police and fire protection, library, and school facilities and services. Nevertheless, this alternative would increase the demand on these services with development of the site as compared to no development of the site. Development under this alternative would be required to pay the City's AB 1600 fees as well as pay the state-mandated school impact mitigation fees. Overall, impacts to public services would be less than significant under this alternative, similar to the project.

Recreation

The existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan includes 14 acres of open space uses under the Open Space (PD/OS) zoning. Under this alternative, five fewer acres would be dedicated to open space uses when compared to the proposed project. However, this alternative would still meet the City's adopted performance standard of 3 to 5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents and would contribute to the City's policy goal to achieve this standard on a City-wide basis (Subdivision Ordinance Standard of the City of Santa Maria General Plan Resources Management Element). In addition, development under this alternative would still be subject to City parkland development fees (Quimby Act fees) in accordance with the City's Development Impact Fee program (A.B. 1600

Mitigation Fee Program). Recreational impacts under this alternative would be similar to the proposed project, and less than significant.

Transportation

As shown in Table 4.14-3 in Section 4.14, *Transportation and Traffic*, this alternative would result in an estimated 16,794 average daily trips (ADT), which is slightly higher than the proposed project's estimated trip generation of 15,887 ADT. Similar to the project, with the addition of alternative generated traffic to existing traffic volumes, study area intersections would operate at levels of service (LOS) which exceeds the City's LOS D intersection operating standard. Therefore, traffic generated by this alternative would require mitigation to reduce impacts to a less than significant level, similar to the project. Additionally, upon development of the project site under this alternative, the applicant would be required to contribute to the City traffic mitigation fee program to implement the street network improvements planned to accommodate future traffic volumes. All roadway frontage and circulation system improvements would be constructed according to City standards and policies. Interior drives and parking areas would be of sufficient width to accommodate emergency vehicles, as required by the City. Transportation impacts from this alternative would be similar to the proposed project.

6.3.3 Alternative 3: Revised Project –Low Density Residential

Aesthetics

This alternative would replace the proposed Low-Medium Residential (LMDR; 8 units per acre) and High Density Residential (HDR; 22 units per acre) land use designations under the proposed zoning of Single-Family Small Lot Residential (PD/R-1) and High Density Residential (PD/R-3) with a Low Density Residential (LDR-5) land use designation under Single Family Residential (PD/R-1) zoning. As such, this alternative would be subject to applicable City zoning standards and height restrictions for Single-Family Residential (R-1), which would reduce the maximum allowable building height. Commercial development on the project site under this alternative would be limited to the same height and development area as the commercial component of the proposed project. Similar to the proposed project, development under this alternative would be consistent with the surrounding existing development and specific building layout, height, and massing.

Similar to the proposed project, the residences, and neighborhood commercial and school development under this alternative would partially obstruct views of the distant Sierra Madre Mountains from Battles Road and Blosser Road and views of the Solomon and Casmalia Hills from Stowell Road, but would conform to City standards governing scenic quality and would be consistent in scale and proportion to surrounding development. With implementation of viewshed protection mitigation measures, including landscaping, signage, and siting requirements, impacts related to visual character and public views of the project site and its surroundings under this alternative would be less than significant. As required for the proposed project, development under this alternative would be required to comply with the City's lighting standards and Section 21466.5 of the California Motor Vehicle Code for reducing light and glare impacts. Nevertheless, development on existing vacant land that does not currently include any substantial sources of artificial light would result in an increase in ambient nighttime lighting and glare, and would require mitigation including screening requirements for nighttime lighting and lighting specifications. Aesthetic impacts from this alternative would be less than significant with mitigation, similar to the proposed project.

Agriculture

This alternative would result in development within the same overall development footprint as the project. As a result this alternative would result in conversion of the same area of agricultural soils and uses to non-agricultural uses as the project. Impacts of this alternative to agriculture would be similar to the project.

Air Quality

This alternative would result in the development of up to 450 residential units, or an approximately 62 percent reduction in the number of units when compared to the proposed 1,168 units included in the project. The overall grading area and commercial, school, and recreational development under this alternative would be the same as for the project. However, the reduction in residential units would result in a corresponding reduction in vehicle trips for the residential component of this alternative when compared to the project. As a result, operational emissions of ROG, NO_x, and PM₁₀ would be lower than operational emissions generated by the proposed project. The emissions from this alternative would not exceed SBCAPCD thresholds for combined operational emissions of ROG and NO_x or PM₁₀, and this alternative would not exacerbate the exceedance of the SBCAPCD threshold of 25 pounds per day for operational ROG or NO_x emissions from mobile sources that was identified for the existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan. In contrast to the project, the operational air pollutant emissions from this alternative would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant or expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations with implementation of mitigation for travel demand management, energy conservation, and transit route extensions. This alternative would avoid the significant impact to air quality from operational emissions that was identified for the proposed project.

Biological Resources

This alternative would result in generally the same development footprint as the proposed project. Due to the similar area of disturbance, this alternative would result in similar potential impacts to special status species, requiring mitigation. This alternative would also result in no impact to sensitive habitats, wetlands, and wildlife movement. Further, this alternative would not result in any impacts associated with conflict with plans, policies, or ordinances for biological resources in the City. Impacts to biological resources from this alternative would be similar to the proposed project.

Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources

This alternative would result in generally the same development footprint as the proposed project. As with the project, construction for this alternative would involve ground disturbing activities such as grading and surface excavation, which have the potential to unearth or adversely impact previously unidentified historical and/or archaeological resources, and/or human remains. Potential impacts to cultural resources from this alternative would be similar to the proposed project, and would be less than significant with compliance with applicable General Plan policies, and federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

This alternative would result in the development of up to 450 residential units, or an approximately 62 percent reduction in the number of units when compared to the proposed 1,168 units included in the project. The overall grading area and commercial, school, and recreational development under

this alternative would be the same as for the project. However, the reduction in residential units would result in a corresponding reduction in vehicle trips for the residential component of this alternative when compared to the project. Therefore, GHG emissions from this alternative would be less than GHG emissions generated by the proposed project. Nevertheless, the combined annual GHG emissions from this alternative may exceed the locally-appropriate, project-specific efficiency threshold. Similar to the project, these emissions would potentially result in significant GHG emissions, requiring mitigation for preparation and implementation of a GHG emissions reduction plan. Similar to the project, this alternative would be consistent with the SBCAG 2040 RTP-SCS with the required mitigation that would reduce GHG emissions to a level consistent with the statewide SB 32 target, but would be inconsistent with the GHG reduction targets of the 2017 Scoping Plan by exceeding the project-specific efficiency threshold. GHG emissions impacts from this alternative would be similar to the proposed project.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Development of the Specific Plan area under this alternative would include similar uses to those included in the project, with reduced residential density on a portion of the site. Similar to the project, residential and commercial uses developed under this alternative may involve the routine use and storage of some materials that are considered hazardous. Construction and operation of the proposed residential and commercial uses could also result in the accidental release of hazardous materials. Additionally, two schools are located within one-quarter mile of the project site, and this alternative includes a proposed school site within the Specific Plan area. The use, transport, storage, and disposal of such materials is regulated by federal, state, and local laws, with which development under this alternative would be required to comply. As with the project, residual pesticides and agricultural chemicals in soils onsite could create a hazard to construction workers during the construction phase of the alternative development, and mitigation would be required to reduce potential for exposure to agricultural chemicals and oil from oil wells in the Specific Plan area. Overall, this alternative would result in similar impacts to the project related to hazards and hazardous materials.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Development of the Specific Plan area under this alternative would occur within the same overall development footprint and would similarly result in an increase of impervious surface throughout the Specific Plan area from existing conditions. Increased impervious surface would reduce stormwater infiltration and alter drainage patterns and runoff from the site. The construction and operation of the proposed uses on the project site may also increase polluted runoff from the project site. Stormwater drainage systems for this alternative would be installed in compliance with the standards and requirements of the City's Public Works Department Engineering Division and City Municipal Code Section 8-12A.04 which prohibits stormwater discharges unless such discharges are in conformance with the statewide General Permit and the requirements of the Central Coast RWQCB Resolution No. R3-2013-0032, *Post-Construction Stormwater Management Requirements for Development Projects in the Central Coast Region*. As for the proposed project, development of the site under this alternative would be required to comply with the adopted standards contained in the City of Santa Maria Municipal Code, Chapter 8-12, Wastewater Collection, Treatment and Disposal, and Chapter 8-12A, Stormwater Runoff Pollution Prevention. By incorporating these design provisions, and permit review and approval procedures by the City, the project would not violate water quality standards and waste discharge requirements. Overall, impacts to hydrology and water quality would be similar to the project.

Land Use and Planning

This alternative assumes maximum residential and commercial buildout of the site under this condition of low density residential development. Therefore, this alternative is anticipated to result in a maximum of 450 low-density residential units. This alternative would result in the same amount of acreage intended for open space, and school and commercial development, as the proposed project. As with the project, this alternative would not result in any impacts associated with dividing an established community and would result in less than significant impacts relating to consistency with land use plans, policies, and regulations with incorporation of mitigation. Therefore, impacts related to land use and planning from this alternative would be similar to the proposed project.

Noise

Development of the Specific Plan area under this alternative would include similar uses to those included in the project, with a reduced residential development density. The overall grading area and commercial, school, and recreational development under this alternative would be the same as for the project. Construction noise impacts would be similar to the project for this alternative as development would occur throughout the site, in similar proximity to noise sensitive uses. This alternative would result in the development of up 450 residential units, or an approximately 62 percent reduction in the number of units when compared to the proposed 1,168 units included in the project. The reduction in residential units would result in a corresponding reduction in vehicle trips for the residential component of this alternative when compared to the project, resulting in less noise on area roadways as a result of trip generated by this alternative. Although operational noise from project generated traffic would be reduced under this alternative, the overall noise impacts would be less than significant with incorporation of mitigation, similar to the project.

Population and Housing

Development under this alternative would result in development of a maximum number of 450 dwelling units with low density residential units. Using the City's average rate of 3.72 people per household, construction under this alternative would accommodate an estimated 1,674 new residents (DOF 2019). Development under this alternative would result in substantially fewer residents to the population, however impacts regarding conflicts with local growth management policies and displacement of substantial numbers of people would be similar to the proposed project.

Public Services

This alternative would result in approximately 62 percent fewer residential units developed within the Specific Plan area in comparison to the project, resulting in fewer residences dependent on public services, including police and fire protection, library, and school facilities and services. Nevertheless, this alternative would increase the demand on these services with development of the site as compared to no development of the site. Development under this alternative would be required to pay the City's AB 1600 fees as well as pay the state-mandated school impact mitigation fees. Overall, impacts to public services would be less than significant under this alternative, similar to the project.

Recreation

This alternative would include the same amount of acreage of community parkland space as the proposed project. The proposed 19 acres of community parkland would provide approximately 6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, which exceeds the City's adopted performance standard of 3 to 5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents and would contribute to the City's policy goal to achieve this standard on a City-wide basis (Subdivision Ordinance Standard of the City of Santa Maria General Plan Resources Management Element). In addition, development under this alternative would still be subject to City parkland development fees (Quimby Act fees) in accordance with the City's Development Impact Fee program (A.B. 1600 Mitigation Fee Program). Recreational impacts under this alternative would be similar to the proposed project, and less than significant.

Transportation

This alternative would result in reduced residential density and approximately 62 percent fewer residential units within the Specific Plan area when compared to the project. The commercial, school, and recreational uses under this alternative would be the same as for the project. Similar to the project, with the addition of alternative generated traffic to existing traffic volumes, study area intersections may operate at levels of service (LOS) which exceed the City's LOS D intersection operating standard. Therefore, traffic generated by this alternative would require mitigation to reduce impacts to a less than significant level, similar to the project. Additionally, upon development of the project site under this alternative, the applicant would be required to contribute to the City traffic mitigation fee program to contribute to the street network improvements planned to accommodate future traffic volumes. All roadway frontage and circulation system improvements would be constructed according to City standards and policies. Interior drives and parking areas would be of sufficient width to accommodate emergency vehicles, as required by the City. Overall, transportation impacts from this alternative would be reduced but would require mitigation and payment of traffic fees, similar to the proposed project.

6.3.4 Alternative 4: Revised Project – Commercial Development in Northwest

Aesthetics

Residential, commercial, and school development on the project site under this alternative would be limited to the same height as the proposed project. Similar to the proposed project, development under this alternative would not result in significant impacts to scenic vistas or scenic resources within a state scenic highway.

Buildout of the project site under this alternative would potentially impact the existing visual character and quality of public views through the conversion of agricultural land to urban development. Similar to the proposed project, the residences, and neighborhood commercial and school development under this alternative would partially obstruct views of the distant Sierra Madre Mountains from Battles Road and Blosser Road and views of the Solomon and Casmalia Hills from Stowell Road. Views from these roadways would change substantially with the replacement of the existing rows crops with the proposed urban land use distribution for this alternative. However, in the context of surrounding urban development, viewer expectations along the surrounding roadways are generally of urban and suburban uses. Development under this alternative would be consistent with the surrounding development north, south, east, and west of the project site. In

addition, specific building layout, height, and massing would be subject to review by City Architectural Review staff to ensure compliance with the City's applicable design guidelines.

With implementation of viewshed protection mitigation measures, including landscaping, signage, and siting requirements, impacts related to visual character and public views of the project site and its surroundings under this alternative would be less than significant. As required for the proposed project, development under this alternative would be required to comply with the City's lighting standards and Section 21466.5 of the California Motor Vehicle Code for reducing light and glare impacts. Similar to the project, development of the project site, which does not currently include any substantial sources of artificial light, would result in an increase in ambient nighttime lighting and glare, and would require mitigation including screening requirements for nighttime lighting and lighting specifications. Aesthetic impacts from this alternative would be less than significant with mitigation, similar to the proposed project.

Agriculture

This alternative would result in development within the same overall development footprint as the project. As a result this alternative would result in conversion of the same area of agricultural soils and uses to non-agricultural uses as the project. Impacts of this alternative to agriculture would be similar to the project.

Air Quality

Although the land use distribution within the project footprint would be altered under this alternative when compare to the proposed project, the overall amount and density of each land use would be the same as for the project. As a result this alternative would result in the same area of grading, estimated construction period, construction equipment, and traffic generation and, thus, generate the same quantities of air pollutant emissions as the project. Impacts of this alternative to air quality would be similar to the project.

Biological Resources

This alternative would result in the same development footprint as the proposed project. Due to the similar area of disturbance, this alternative would result in similar potential impacts to special status species, requiring mitigation. This alternative would also result in no impact to sensitive habitats, wetlands, and wildlife movement. Further, this alternative would not result in any impacts associated with conflict with plans, policies, or ordinances for biological resources in the City. Impacts to biological resources from this alternative would be similar to the proposed project.

Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources

This alternative would result in the same development footprint as the proposed project. As with the project, construction for this alternative would involve ground disturbing activities such as grading and surface excavation, which have the potential to unearth or adversely impact previously unidentified historical and/or archaeological resources, and/or human remains. Potential impacts to cultural resources from this alternative would be similar to the proposed project, and would be less than significant with compliance with applicable General Plan policies, and federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Although the land use distribution within the project footprint would be altered under this alternative when compared to the proposed project, the overall amount and density of each land use would be the same as for the project. This alternative would result in the same area of grading, estimated construction period, construction equipment, and traffic generation as the project. As a result, this alternative would generate the same quantities of greenhouse gas emissions as the project, would be consistent with the SBCAG 2040 RTP-SCS with the required mitigation that would reduce GHG emissions to a level consistent with the statewide SB 32 target, and would be inconsistent with the GHG reduction targets of the 2017 Scoping Plan by exceeding the project-specific efficiency threshold. The impacts of this alternative related to greenhouse gas emissions would be similar to the project.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Development of the Specific Plan area under this alternative would include the same uses as those included in the project, with a changed land use distribution within the project site. The altered land use distribution to locate the Neighborhood Commercial uses in the northwestern portion of the project site would provide for additional buffer between the High Density Residential development in that area and the commercial and industrial uses northwest of the project site. Commercial and industrial uses in the vicinity utilize roadways surrounding the Specific Plan area for supply and equipment transport, which may involve transport of hazardous materials. The Lineage Logistics industrial processing facility, located to the west of the Specific Plan area, was the site of a large warehouse fire in April 2018, creating potential hazardous materials release concerns. Thus, the primary effect of this alternative would be introducing a buffer that reduces potential impacts to hazards and hazardous materials associated with the existing, neighboring industrial uses. Nevertheless, similar to the project, residential and commercial uses developed under this alternative may involve the routine use and storage of some materials that are considered hazardous. Construction and operation of the proposed residential and commercial uses could also result in the accidental release of hazardous materials. Additionally, two schools are located within one-quarter mile of the project site, and this alternative includes a proposed school site within the Specific Plan area. The use, transport, storage, and disposal of such materials is regulated by federal, state, and local laws, with which development under this alternative would be required to comply. As with the project, residual pesticides and agricultural chemicals in soils onsite could create a hazard to construction workers during the construction phase of the alternative development, and mitigation would be required to reduce potential for exposure to agricultural chemicals and oil from oil wells in the Specific Plan area. Overall, this alternative would result in slightly reduced but similar level of impacts to the project related to hazards and hazardous materials.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Development of the Specific Plan area under this alternative would occur within the same overall development footprint and would similarly result in an increase of impervious surface throughout the Specific Plan area from existing conditions. Increased impervious surface would reduce stormwater infiltration and alter drainage patterns and runoff from the site. The construction and operation of the proposed uses on the project site may also increase polluted runoff from the project site. Stormwater drainage systems for this alternative would be installed in compliance with the standards and requirements of the City's Public Works Department Engineering Division and City Municipal Code Section 8-12A.04 which prohibits stormwater discharges unless such discharges are

in conformance with the statewide General Permit and the requirements of the Central Coast RWQCB Resolution No. R3-2013-0032, *Post-Construction Stormwater Management Requirements for Development Projects in the Central Coast Region*. As for the proposed project, development of the site under this alternative would be required to comply with the adopted standards contained in the City of Santa Maria Municipal Code, Chapter 8-12, Wastewater Collection, Treatment and Disposal, and Chapter 8-12A, Stormwater Runoff Pollution Prevention. By incorporating these design provisions, and permit review and approval procedures by the City, the project would not violate water quality standards and waste discharge requirements. Overall, impacts to hydrology and water quality would be similar to the project.

Land Use and Planning

Similar to the project, this alternative would require amendments to the City's existing Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan, General Plan, and Zoning Code, and would retain the Planned Development (PD) Overlay. This alternative assumes maximum residential and commercial buildout of the site under this condition. Therefore, this alternative would allow for development of up to 1,168 residential units and approximately 130,000 square feet of retail uses on the project site. This alternative would result in the same amount of acreage intended for open space, and school and commercial development, as the proposed project. As with the project, this alternative would not result in any impacts associated with dividing an established community and would result in less than significant impacts relating to consistency with land use plans, policies, and regulations with incorporation of mitigation. Therefore, impacts related to land use and planning from this alternative would be similar to the proposed project.

Noise

Development of the Specific Plan area under this alternative would include the same types of land uses as those included in the project, with a slightly altered distribution on the western portion of the project site. The altered land use distribution to locate the Neighborhood Commercial uses in the northwestern portion of the project site would provide for additional buffer between the High Density Residential development in that area and the commercial and industrial uses northwest of the project site. The overall grading area and commercial, school, and recreational development under this alternative would be the same as for the project. Construction noise impacts would be similar to the project for this alternative as development would occur throughout the site, in similar proximity to noise sensitive uses. As for the project, this alternative would allow for development of up to 1,168 residential units and approximately 130,000 square feet of retail uses on the project site. Therefore, this alternative would result in the same vehicle trips generation as the project, resulting in the same noise on area roadways as the project as a result of trip generated by this alternative. Locating the Neighborhood Commercial uses in the northwest corner of the project site under this alternative may result in reduced roadway noise exposure at the proposed residential uses in this area of the project site as a result of the commercial uses buffering residential uses from the adjacent roadways. Nevertheless, the overall noise impacts of this alternative would be less than significant with incorporation of mitigation, similar to the project.

Population and Housing

Development under this alternative would allow for development of up to 1,168 residential units on the project site. Using the City's average rate of 3.72 people per household, construction under this alternative would accommodate an estimated 4,345 new residents (DOF 2019). Development under

this alternative would add the same number of residents to the existing City population, and impacts regarding conflicts with local growth management policies and displacement of substantial numbers of people would be similar to the proposed project.

Public Services

This alternative would result in the same amount of each of the proposed uses within the Specific Plan area as the project, resulting in the same number of residences and amount of commercial and school development dependent on public services, including police and fire protection, library, and school facilities and services. Nevertheless, this alternative would increase the demand on these services with development of the site as compared to no development of the site. Development under this alternative would be required to pay the City's AB 1600 fees as well as pay the state-mandated school impact mitigation fees. Overall, impacts to public services would be less than significant under this alternative, similar to the project.

Recreation

This alternative would include the same amount of acreage of community parkland space as the proposed project. The proposed 19 acres of community parkland would provide approximately 6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, which exceeds the City's adopted performance standard of 3 to 5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents and would contribute to the City's policy goal to achieve this standard on a City-wide basis (Subdivision Ordinance Standard of the City of Santa Maria General Plan Resources Management Element). In addition, development under this alternative would still be subject to City parkland development fees (Quimby Act fees) in accordance with the City's Development Impact Fee program (A.B. 1600 Mitigation Fee Program). Recreational impacts under this alternative would be similar to the proposed project, and less than significant.

Transportation

As for the project, this alternative would allow for development of up to 1,168 residential units and approximately 130,000 square feet of retail uses on the project site. Therefore, this alternative would result in the same vehicle trips generation as the project. Similar to the project, with the addition of alternative generated traffic to existing traffic volumes, study area intersections may operate at levels of service (LOS) which exceed the City's LOS D intersection operating standard. Therefore, traffic generated by this alternative would require mitigation to reduce impacts to a less than significant level, similar to the project. Additionally, upon development of the project site under this alternative, the applicant would be required to contribute to the City traffic mitigation fee program to contribute to the street network improvements planned to accommodate future traffic volumes. All roadway frontage and circulation system improvements would be constructed according to City standards and policies. Interior drives and parking areas would be of sufficient width to accommodate emergency vehicles, as required by the City. Overall, transportation impacts from this alternative would require mitigation and payment of traffic fees, and would be similar to the proposed project.

6.4 Environmentally Superior Alternative

This discussion identifies the environmentally superior alternative by assessing the degree to which each alternative avoids significant and unavoidable environmental impacts. In some cases, an alternative will avoid one or more significant and/or unavoidable impacts identified for the proposed project but then introduce one or more new significant impacts. Therefore, selection of the environmentally superior alternative requires an overall assessment of the changes in the number and type of significant impacts.

The *CEQA Guidelines* do not define a specific methodology for determining the Environmentally Superior Alternative. For the purposes of this analysis, the three project alternatives have been compared within each issue area to the proposed project, and a determination has been made as to whether the alternative was superior, inferior, or similar to the proposed project (Refer to Table 6-2). For the purpose of this EIR, the analysis assumes that each impact is equally weighted. Decision makers and the community in general may choose to emphasize one issue or another, which could lead to differing conclusions regarding environmental superiority. If the No Project Alternative is identified as the Environmentally Superior Alternative for a given issue area, the development scenario among the remaining alternatives that results in the lowest environmental impact is noted, in accordance with CEQA.

The No Project Alternative (Alternative 1) would result in no physical and environmental impacts in the short-term; however, in the long-term, this alternative would result in development consistent with the current specific plan (Alternative 2). The Revised Project – Commercial Development in Northwest Alternative (Alternative 4) would relocate the Neighborhood Commercial uses in the northwestern portion of the project site in order to provide for additional buffer between the High Density Residential development in that area and the commercial and industrial uses northwest of the project site. Introducing a buffer under this alternative would reduce potential impacts to hazards and hazardous materials associated with the existing, neighboring industrial uses. Nevertheless, Alternative 4 would not reduce the significant and unavoidable impacts to air quality. As discussed above, the Low Density Residential Alternative (Alternative 3), Alternative 3 would reduce the significant and unavoidable impact to air quality to a less than significant level with mitigation. As a result, Alternative 3 would result in the fewest potentially significant impacts when compared to the project and is identified as the environmentally superior alternative.

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